

Research News

Statistical reports

Examinations generate large volumes of statistical data (approximately 800,000 candidates sit general qualifications each year). The objective of this series of reports is to provide statistical information about the system.

It is intended that the reports will focus on different aspects of the examination system and will be produced at a rate of two or three a year. In the first few years the issues addressed will vary from year to year but it is intended that some issues will be revisited, particularly if there has been a relevant change in the system.

Although this is a new report series, statistics of the examination system have been reported in various journal and conference papers listed elsewhere on the Cambridge Assessment website.

- Statistics Report Series No. 1: 'Provision of GCE A-level subjects'
- Statistics Report Series No. 2: 'Provision of GCSE subjects'
- Statistics Report Series No. 3: 'Uptake of GCE A-level subjects in England, 2001-2005'

<http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/research/statisticalreports/>

Conferences and seminars

New Statesman

In July Sylvia Green participated in a roundtable discussion on 'Smart learning for the future' organised by the *New Statesman*. The session was chaired by Barry Sheerman, Chair of the Education and Skills Select Committee and speakers included Andrew Adonis, Minister for Schools. Participants discussed how far technology is a part of smart learning and how far we have gone towards smart assessment and recognition of the skills that it allows us to develop. The discussion was subsequently reported in the July 24th issue of the *New Statesman*.

The Society for Multivariate Analysis in Behavioral Sciences

John Bell attended the 25th Biennial Conference in Budapest in July and presented a paper on 'Modelling the predictive validity of selection tests'.

United Kingdom Literacy Association

In July Gill Elliott and Nat Johnson were invited to present their work on 'Variations in Aspects of Writing in 16+ examinations between 1980 and 2004' at a special session at the UKLA annual conference. The theme of the conference was *Teaching Reading and Phonics: Implications of the Rose Report*.

International Test Commission

John Rust and Vikas Dhawan attended the ITC 5th International Conference on Psychological and Educational Test Adaptation across Language and Cultures in Brussels in July. John Rust presented a paper on 'A multi-method approach to cross cultural test adaptation: a focus on qualitative methods'.

British Educational Research Association, University of Warwick

In September colleagues from the Research Division presented 10 papers at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference. The papers reflected the wide range of research undertaken by the Division and will be discussed in a later issue of *Research Matters*.

Cambridge Assessment Conference

The second Cambridge Assessment Network Conference took place at Robinson College, Cambridge, on 16th October. The conference addressed the important issues surrounding how to assess students' abilities, following Professor Robert Sternberg's proposal that assessment should not only focus on an individual's ability to analyse, but also on their creative and practical skills. The main speakers were Professor Robert Sternberg, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences and Professor of Psychology at Tufts University, Dr Ruth Deakin-Crick, Senior Research Fellow at The Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol, and Professor Peter McCrorie, Head of the Centre for Medical and Healthcare Education, St George's, University of London.

Association for Educational Assessment-Europe

In November Sylvia Green and Andrew Watts attended the 7th Annual AEA-Europe conference in Naples. The theme of the conference was 'Assessment and Equity'.