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Achieve

March 2021

The latest news from Cambridge Assessment,  
the University's international exams group.  
[cambridgeassessment.org.uk](https://cambridgeassessment.org.uk)

## The key to educational improvement

*Ambitious curricula, aligned assessment and a focus on all students are the key to educational improvement, a Cambridge Assessment Network seminar has heard.*

Portugal has been highlighted as a success story in curriculum and educational reform, in particular due to the country's leap in PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) test scores between 2006 and 2015. During the latter half of this period Portugal was able to achieve an outcome that many countries aspire to but few attain: increasing the share of top performers while simultaneously decreasing the share of low performers.

Professor Nuno Crato OIH, who served as Minister of Education and Science in Portugal from 2011 to 2015, shared his insights into the country's success story at the seminar, which attracted hundreds of participants from 59 countries.

Referring to his published work on the country's experience, he said that "everything starts with the curriculum". This meant that schools needed a demanding curriculum, centred on essential subjects



Prof Nuno Crato said that ambitious curricula, aligned assessment and a focus on all students are the key to educational improvement.

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## News in brief

### Historical step



A proposal for a new GCSE in Natural History has now been submitted to England's Department for Education (DfE). The proposal is based on a summary of UK exam board OCR's findings from a six week consultation it ran over the summer looking at the purpose and content of a potential new qualification in the subject. There was huge engagement with the consultation, with over 2,000 responses, including more than 200 from young people.

### Canada boost

The largest post-secondary institute in British Columbia, Canada, has selected Linguaskill as a placement test for its students. The British Columbia Institute of Technology needed an accurate, objective English placement test to ensure students received the right teaching and support to drive success. It says the rankings provided by the online, adaptive test Linguaskill were "remarkable".

### Earning credit

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) in the US has voted to increase the number of students who can receive credit through Cambridge International AS & A Level examinations. With the board's approval, 39 public institutions in Virginia will now award credit to students earning an E grade in their examinations.

SCHEV's review process involved a rigorous review of syllabi and curricula, research findings and supporting materials developed by Cambridge International. With this policy change, Cambridge International AS & A Level courses have credit parity with other advanced courses offered to students.

## Single strategy. Single organisation.

*The University of Cambridge is to bring together its publishing and assessment operations to create a single organisation. Cambridge University Press and Cambridge Assessment publish and create world-leading content and examinations that are used across more than 170 countries.*

The move is in response to a growing desire from learners, teachers and researchers to engage with Cambridge in a joined up digital way, and the demand for innovative products that combine expertise in learning and assessment. The need for an integrated approach has been accelerated by the rapid uptake of digital education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The new organisation will have the capabilities to provide world leading assessment, learning and academic research offerings globally, under the Cambridge brand and backed by first class teaching and research departments.

University of Cambridge Vice-Chancellor Professor Stephen J Toope said: "I am delighted to announce this major and hugely exciting development. Cambridge Assessment and Cambridge University Press have a proud history of contributing to

scholarship and education around the world. By bringing together their enormous strengths and capabilities, they will be able to contribute to society more effectively and more powerfully than ever."

Over the next few months Cambridge University Press Chief Executive Peter Phillips and Cambridge Assessment Chief Executive Saul Nassé will continue to work together to create the new unified organisation for launch on 1 August, which Phillips will then lead.

Peter said: "Our customers already see us simply as Cambridge, so joining the two organisations is a natural next step that is given added impetus by the rapid changes we are seeing in education and research. Saul and I have brought the Press and Cambridge Assessment ever closer over the last few years and we have a shared commitment to this change which will enable yet more impact by Cambridge on teachers, learners and researchers."

Saul said: "This is a challenging but exciting time for learning and assessment and this move positions Cambridge to make the most of the opportunities ahead. I will be heading for pastures new, but am looking forward to working with Peter to build a single organisation that's all set for great success in the future."

## Sustainability pledge

knowledge and research at the highest levels of international excellence.

A spokesperson said: "Education is the most powerful long-term solution to poverty, to conflict, and many of the issues facing the world today. The books and research we publish aim to improve our understanding of big, global challenges – from climate change to pandemics – and to find solutions.

"We also seek to increase knowledge and understanding of environmental and sustainability issues in developing curricula, educational programmes and assessments. There is a fundamental connection between our products and services and the way that we produce and deliver them. That means working sustainably and ethically, reducing our environmental impact and supporting diversity and inclusion in our businesses, our supply chains and in education and research around the world."



Continued from page 1

with "knowledge at the base". Frequent assessment was also essential, he said – ideally around school grades six, nine and twelve. "Evaluation is an incentive – it's a key part of system improvement," he said.

Another key part was a "programme to fight failure". This included intervention at first difficulties, special hours and temporary groupings for those who were struggling – although this did not mean tracking or streaming pupils. "This intervention is based on the concept that everybody can reach a reasonable level," he said.

The last part of the formula that saw Portuguese success was school autonomy. Prof Crato said that although autonomy could have different meanings in different countries and contexts, in Portugal it was achieved by giving schools incentives such as credits for supporting students in difficulty and evaluating results instead of trying to control the processes.

Introducing the talk, Cambridge Assessment's Director of Assessment Research and Development Tim Oates

CBE said that Prof Crato's work was particularly important because it highlighted the importance of understanding time lags between policy interventions and educational outcomes. Tim himself has done a lot of research in this area, such as his analysis of Finland's PISA outcomes 'Finnish Fairy Stories'.

"What Nuno does is look at the actions which were taken in Portugal at a particular time and when the impacts subsequently emerge in the data," said Tim. "There was much discussion by the OECD [the organisation that runs PISA tests] of Finland being a particular success, then Poland, Portugal and now Estonia, but throughout those countries being championed I think there has been confusion about which policy has resulted in which outcome and we are seeing that quite tangibly now."

The talk coincided with the release of a book edited by Prof Crato that Tim has contributed a chapter to. *Improving a Country's Education* is an open access book and therefore can be downloaded for free from the publishers Springer.

## PISA to test foreign language skills

*The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has announced that foreign language skills will be assessed as an optional component of the international PISA evaluation of education systems, beginning in 2025 with a comparison of English language levels in schools worldwide. Tests will be developed by Cambridge Assessment English under a partnership with the OECD and future cycles may include the assessment of other languages.*

PISA – the Programme for International Student Assessment – is a worldwide study carried out every three years which measures 15-year-old school pupils' performance in key subjects – currently mathematics, science, and reading. PISA is designed to provide data to help countries to improve their education policies and outcomes. By adding the assessment of foreign languages



Andreas Schleicher, OECD Director for Education and Skills

to PISA, the OECD aims to allow countries to monitor progress and identify best practice in the teaching and learning of foreign languages.

Around 600,000 students from randomly selected schools take part in each PISA assessment, making it the world's largest and most objective comparison of educational outcomes, and the foreign language assessment will provide unprecedented insights into the effectiveness of language teaching and learning worldwide.

Hanan Khalifa, Director of Education Transformation & Impact from Cambridge English, said: "There have been many attempts to compare language learning around the world, but none of these has provided a properly systematic approach to language education in schools which can help to shape education policies at a national and regional level. We are delighted to support the OECD by offering the expert input of our language assessment specialists and to share the techniques and experience we have developed by assessing the language skills of tens of millions of learners over the years and throughout the world."

Andreas Schleicher, OECD Director for Education and Skills, said: "In today's world it is important to be able to communicate in more than one language. Learning other languages is a powerful tool to facilitate global co-operation and intercultural understanding and to discover new and innovative ways of thinking and working. Governments have been placing increased emphasis on foreign language teaching and this new PISA assessment will help them see how they are progressing and how their policies and practices compare with those among the most advanced education systems."

**"Learning other languages is a powerful tool to facilitate global co-operation and intercultural understanding..."**

## A view from... Sitara Amin

### Our story's finally being told



Sitara Amin

Brought up in Tottenham, I was very lucky to have black history all around me. My father loved history and at a young age had me asking questions about Marcus Garvey as we visited the local library (conveniently named after the black nationalist!). I knew about slavery from my own year 8 history lessons and was very aware of British colonial involvement abroad. I was lucky in my own personal difference (my mother migrating from Kenya to escape persecution and my father from Pakistan in the early 1970s). Both instilled the idea of pride in culture and my own ethnic background – something I have tried to emulate myself – especially now I am a mother to a young child.



Marcus Garvey seated at his desk, 5 August 1924.

However, I always felt that school history was not my history – despite studying the power of the "I have a dream" speech or the Montgomery bus boycott. I look back at my own schooling with pleasure and gratitude, as the history I learnt then was diverse for our own time. But it is only now I realise that it was not diverse enough – after all, when did we learn about Kenya, or even India and Pakistan?

I joked to my mother recently that I have taught why William won the Battle of Hastings for 10 years in a row. But it has only been in the last few years that I have begun to tell my own story – of a British Asian living in Britain – and that of my parents. OCR GCSE History's 'Migration to Britain' thematic study has allowed me to do so. Why is it only now in Britain that we are beginning to learn about migrants and their stories? Why is it we know more about Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks than our own struggles for equality and acceptance here?

I am so glad that we are now telling the stories of our own BAME communities, but I sincerely hope that it is not too little, let alone too late. It troubles me when I read the statistics that most students will leave school having never read a book by a black author or learnt about their own British migrant history. We can, and must, try to change this.

*Sitara Amin is a history teacher at Downham Market Academy in Norfolk, England, and teaches OCR GCSE History's Migration to Britain module.*

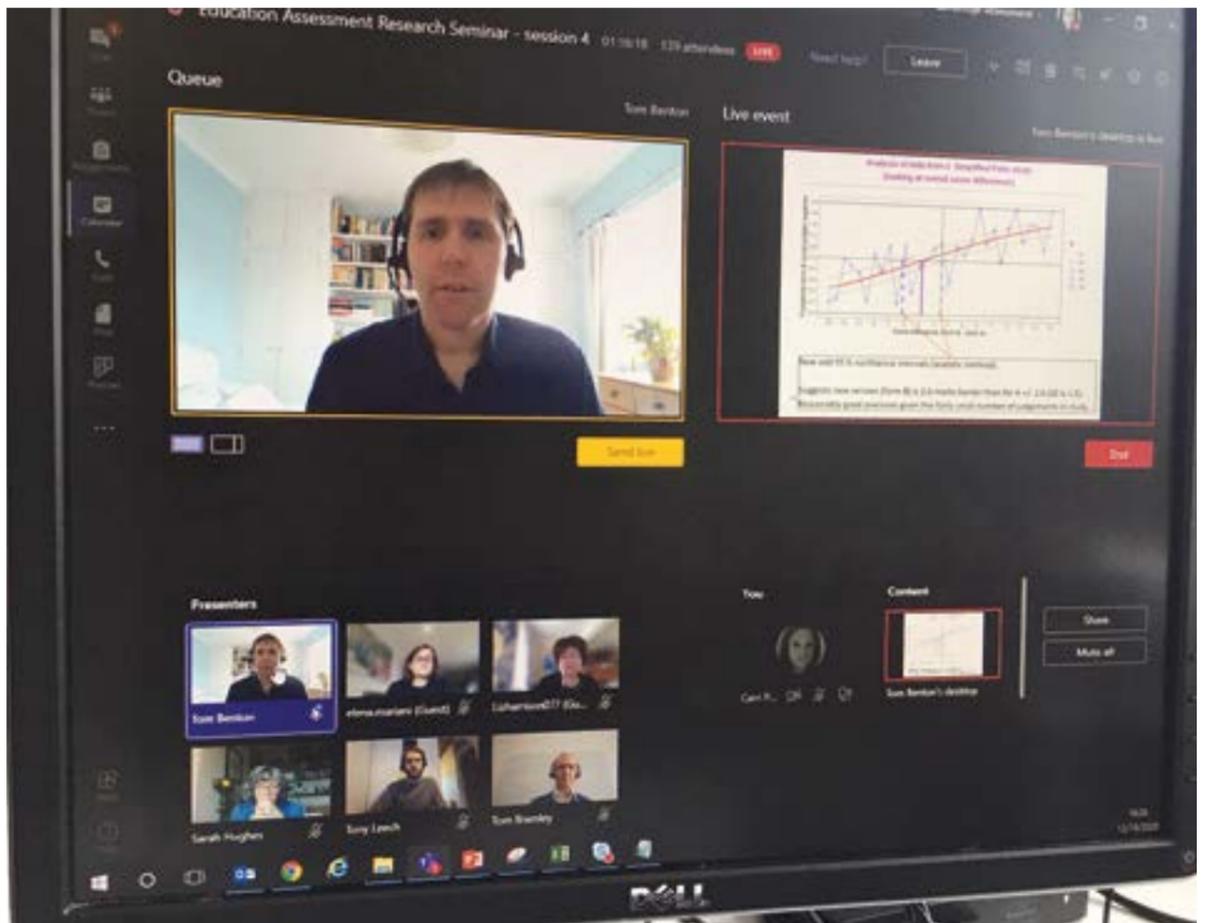
## Conference goes global

*Hundreds of people from across the globe took part in a seminar showcasing the latest research in assessment. With the permission of the England exams regulator Ofqual, Cambridge Assessment curated a series of sessions, reflecting the themes of a seminar which had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic: vocational qualifications, accessibility, marking and maintaining standards.*

Despite COVID-19, there has undoubtedly been a lot of research activity across the fields of education and assessment, both to provide insight into the effect of the pandemic on this generation of students and their teachers, and to provide evidence to underpin future exam series. The seminar provided an opportunity to share just some of that research.

Tom Bramley, Director of Research at Cambridge Assessment, said: "We were conscious that the research that was due to be disseminated and discussed with colleagues across Ofqual and the UK awarding bodies over the last six months still had great value and should not be lost within the wealth of research we are all now working on."

The seminar was held over two half-days in an online format which allowed for a wider audience



**Hundreds of people from across the globe took part in the Education Assessment Research Seminar.**

to be included. Over the five sessions, around 350 participants (from as far afield as Australia, Kazakhstan and Nigeria) heard from 30 assessment researchers and were then able to put questions to them. If you missed the seminar, the sessions are available to watch again on the Cambridge Assessment website here: [www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/news/global-audience-for-assessment-research-seminar](http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/news/global-audience-for-assessment-research-seminar)

**"Despite COVID-19, there has undoubtedly been a lot of research activity across the fields of education and assessment..."**

## India upskills

*A new test of English will help students and professionals at the start of their career in India to demonstrate their English language skills quickly and affordably.*

Cambridge Assessment English has teamed up with a leading English language learning provider in India, Enguru Live English Learning App, to launch Upskill, a new smartphone-based test of English. Upskill aims to

**"Built around a user's lifestyle, the affordable, flexible test can be taken on the app anytime, anywhere."**



enhance the employability of graduates aspiring for entry level jobs in corporate organisations and covers four skills – speaking, listening, reading and writing. Built around a user's lifestyle, the affordable, flexible test can be taken on the Enguru app on an Android device anytime, anywhere. It focuses on Levels A1–B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference, to show potential employers that the candidates have work-ready English skills.

Upskill is the result of collaboration between the assessment specialists behind world-leading tests like IELTS and BEC, and experts in AI from across the University of Cambridge who have also worked on the ground-breaking Linguaskill test. It will be delivered by India's largest live English learning company, Enguru, chosen by Cambridge because of their high level of expertise in Indian education,

their technical platform and their reach, which has already seen more than 40 million downloads of their English learning app.

T.K. Arunachalam, Regional Director – South Asia, from Cambridge English, said: "We've developed Upskill as a quick, flexible, easily accessible, mobile based test which will boost the employability of graduates and entry level working professionals."

Arshan Vakil, CEO of Enguru, added: "The most common goal for Enguru users is to improve their English for stronger career prospects. We are proud to partner with the global leaders in English assessment, Cambridge English, to provide our large community of learners access to Upskill – a high quality, affordable assessment which can help them showcase their English communication skills to prospective employers."



## Cambridge Dictionary reveals Word of the Year

*Cambridge Dictionary has announced 'quarantine' as Word of the Year 2020.*

*Quarantine* was the only word to rank in the top five for both search spikes and overall views (more than 183,000 by early November) on the Cambridge Dictionary website in 2020, with the largest spike in searches (28,545) seen the week of 18–24 March, when many countries around the world went into lockdown as a result of COVID-19.

The Cambridge Dictionary editors have also tracked how people are using *quarantine*, and have discovered a new meaning emerging: *a general period of time in which people are not allowed to leave their homes or travel freely, so that they do not catch or spread a disease*. Research shows the word is being used synonymously with lockdown, particularly in the United States, to refer to a situation in which people stay home to avoid catching the disease.

This new sense of *quarantine* has now been added to the Cambridge Dictionary, and marks a shift from the existing meanings that relate to containing a person or animal suspected of being contagious: *a specific period of time in which a person or animal that has a disease, or may have one, must stay or be kept away from others in order to prevent the spread of the disease*.

Wendalyn Nichols, Cambridge Dictionary Publishing Manager, said: "The words that people search for reveal not just what is happening in the world, but what matters most to them in relation to those events.

"Neither *coronavirus* nor *COVID-19* appeared among the words that Cambridge Dictionary users searched for most in 2020. We believe this indicates that people have been fairly confident about what the virus is. Instead, users have been searching for words related to the social and economic impacts of the pandemic, as evidenced not just by *quarantine* but by the two runners-up on the shortlist for Word of the Year: *lockdown*, and *pandemic* itself."

Cambridge Dictionary is the top dictionary website for learners of English in the world. As well as definitions, the Cambridge Dictionary shows how words are used in real-world contexts. Its 'About Words' blog, written by language usage experts, helps learners gain confidence in using vocabulary related to specific topics. The most highly viewed blog post this year was *Quarantine, carriers and face masks: the language of the coronavirus*, which had almost 80,000 views in the first six weeks after it was posted on 26 February, and now ranks as the ninth most viewed About Words post in the nearly 10 years that the blog has been live. The post covers a range of related terms, such as *infectious, contagious, carriers, super-spreaders, and symptoms*, as well as phrases such as *contract a virus, a spike in cases, contain the spread, and develop a vaccine*.

The Cambridge Dictionary editors regularly monitor a wide range of sources for the new words and meanings that are added monthly to the online dictionary. On the 'New Words' blog, potential new additions are posted weekly for readers to cast their vote on whether they feel these words should be added. In a recent poll, 33 per cent of respondents said *quaranteam* – combining *quarantine* and *team*, meaning *a group of people who go into quarantine together* – should be added to the dictionary. Other suggestions include the portmanteau words *quaranteen, coronnial* and *lockstalgia*.

## Notable achievement

*Taking a music qualification is linked with higher academic achievement, according to Cambridge Assessment research.*

Tim Gill found that the effect of taking GCSE Music on overall attainment at KS4 (Key Stage 4; ages 14–16) is equivalent to a sixth of a GCSE grade per qualification, for students at comprehensive schools. That roughly equates to a typical student taking nine GCSEs getting one grade higher on one or two of their other GCSEs. There was also a positive association (for comprehensive school students) between taking graded music exams and KS4 attainment. For those achieving more advanced grades (4 and above) in music exams, the positive effect was estimated to be a third of a GCSE grade per qualification for girls, compared to those not

taking a graded music qualification, and half a grade for boys. None of the associations described above were present for students in selective schools.

The study has an advantage over much previous research in that it uses a large dataset (478,085 students), which included a range of factors known to affect attainment, such as gender, deprivation, ethnicity, special needs and school type. The main source of the data was the National Pupil Database, which is administered by England's Department for Education.

Tim said: "The results show that a comprehensive school student who typically takes nine GCSEs would expect to get a higher grade in one or two of their other subjects if they studied GCSE Music, or a higher grade in at least three subjects if they achieved a graded music qualification at grade 4 or above.

"The sizes of the effects, whilst not large, are not trivial."

In his research report which is available on the Cambridge Assessment website, The relationship between taking a formal music qualification and



**Cambridge Assessment research has found a link between taking a music qualification and higher academic achievement**

overall attainment at Key Stage 4, Tim says the focus on music is important because for a number of years, there have been concerns about the decline in music education in England.

Tim acknowledges limitations with the study, in particular that we need to be cautious about correlation and causation; it may be, for instance, that students who were more motivated to do well academically were also more likely to take part in extracurricular activities, such as learning a musical instrument. However, because GCSE Music is not an extracurricular activity, the positive link between taking the qualification and attainment is more robust.

Student type	Estimated effect from taking...	
	GCSE Music	Grade 4+ Music exam
Comprehensive school students	+ 1 or 2 GCSE grades	+ 3 GCSE grades
Selective school students	No significant effect	No significant effect
Girls	+ 1 or 2 GCSE grades	+ 3 GCSE grades
Boys	+ 1 or 2 GCSE grades	+ 5 GCSE grades

## Spotlight on the Archives

*Serendipity is often at the heart of new and exciting discoveries for archivists and, on this occasion, we can thank the eagle eyes of a former colleague, who rescued a remarkable collection of papers from a skip, which were presented to Cambridge Assessment in 2018.*

The documents were all written in 1938 and introduce us to Jack Roach, Assistant Secretary at the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES, known as Cambridge Assessment today) and responsible for the Cambridge English examinations. The collection relates to the promotion of English exams in Europe and the papers range from correspondence with Jewish schools in Germany to proposals to MPs for government support to foreign students in England. Given the involvement of Jewish candidates in Germany just a year before the outbreak of war, the ambitions of Roach, seen through this correspondence and his own words, is particularly poignant.

It is clear from the collection that Roach was passionate about language learning and the promotion of the Cambridge English qualifications, and that in 1938

Jack Roach, Assistant Secretary at the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES).

the unescapable political pressures added a new dimension to his work. At the time there was just one Cambridge English qualification, the Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE), but to pass it could mean more than simple career development; it was taken by students to enable them to migrate from Nazi controlled countries and obtain permits to work in English speaking countries. "The circumstances are at present extraordinary and more powerful than our real educational considerations", writes one head teacher of a Jewish school in Berlin.

Astonishingly, the collection links to papers already held in Cambridge Assessment archives which record a visit Roach made to these schools in 1937. The trip opened Roach's eyes to the difficulties faced by the students, including problems with being able to pay examination fees and accessibility to books. At one point, he notes: "the whole question of text-books is very difficult for these people" and this backstory serves to shed further light on the achievements made in 1938.

A consistent theme throughout the collection is Roach's determination to maintain high examination standards and ensure their integrity, even while he lobbied the US authorities for qualification recognition. This potential conflict of interests could have been the reason why the documents were initially discarded, but with this hindsight, it certainly makes the study of them more interesting.

How fascinating too, to discover the rationale behind the development of a Lower Certificate of Proficiency in English (later the First Certificate) as Roach, and his



colleagues, scramble to launch the new qualification in 1939. Written in the moment, the papers are full of emotion and brimming with political thought. In one, Roach raises the idea that English language candidates should be state sponsored and encouraged to "make a serious study of our parliamentary democracy".

Roach's sense of duty to prospective candidates, and the Local Examinations Syndicate, is evident throughout this collection; learning English must be accessible and available to those wanting to better their lives and achieve different things.

Read the full article by Gillian Cooke from Cambridge Assessment Archives and Heritage at: [www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/Images/598387-a-new-cambridge-assessment-archive-collection-exploring-cambridge-english-exams-in-germany-and-england-in-1938.pdf](http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/Images/598387-a-new-cambridge-assessment-archive-collection-exploring-cambridge-english-exams-in-germany-and-england-in-1938.pdf)

## New horizons

*More than 350 educators, researchers, policymakers and experts from across the world attended the launch of a new initiative to explore how digital technology might transform education in the future.*

Established by Director Rupert Wegerif, Professor of Education at the University of Cambridge, the Digital Education Futures Initiative (DEFI) will work with partners in industry, policy and practice to deliver collaborative research projects and build a global community of thought leaders.

Jane Mann, Managing Director of the Cambridge Partnership for Education, hosted DEFI's virtual launch and emphasised that Cambridge Assessment and Cambridge University Press are already pursuing options for close collaboration with DEFI. She explained, "in our work developing coherent and resilient education systems with governments and partners around the world, we seek to draw on the collective knowledge of the University of Cambridge to inform best practice and DEFI will be an important part of this approach".

At the event, PISA study founder, educationalist and Director of the OECD Directorate of Education and Skills, Andreas Schleicher, set the scene for why this conversation around education technology research is vital. Painting a picture of a rapidly changing world in the first quarter of the 21st century, Mr Schleicher shared insights into the rising use of technology alongside the everyday learning realities for students in a wide range of countries.

Speaking next, Executive Director of the World Heritage Group and Honorary President of the Indian Ocean Education Societies, Professor Mmantsetsa Marope, emphasised how critical it was to ensure that research is translated into impactful practice. While celebrating the launch of DEFI, she called on its founders to consider the importance of knowledge brokerage as well as research.

Industry perspectives were also shared by early DEFI supporters, Arm Education and Dipont Education. Nick Sample, who leads the Arm School Program and sits on the Strategic Board of the Cambridge Maths Hub, highlighted the role of industry not only as sponsors, but also as active partners in tackling the issues that DEFI seeks to address. He underlined the need for industry leaders to think critically about how they engage with the education sector, focusing on educational impact, evidence of how technology can accelerate learning and cross-company expert collaboration. Feiyi (Jeff) Zhu, Vice President of Dipont Education, shared Dipont's aspirations of working with DEFI in China to build a bridge of dialogue between Chinese and Western educators. Mr Zhu also raised the importance of this conversation learning from recent events, where schools' and governments' measures to cope with lockdown restrictions have escalated the use and discussion of education technology.

You can find out more about DEFI and how you can get involved with the initiative by visiting its webpage. A video of the launch event, which was held on 21 January, is available on the DEFI YouTube channel.



# An interview with...

*Prof Robert Coe*



*What makes a great teacher? International exam board Cambridge Assessment International Education has partnered with UK research group Evidence Based Education to try and answer this question, resulting in the Great Teaching Toolkit: Evidence Review.*

Professor Rob Coe of Evidence Based Education led the project to analyse, collate and distil more than a hundred individual pieces of global research on the links between teacher performance and student outcomes. Here, he explains what the toolkit is and how it can make a difference.

## What is the Great Teaching Toolkit?

It's a lifetime's work! The question we started out with was: 'If you wanted to make a list of things that actually make a difference, or that indicate real quality in teaching, what should be on it?'. There's a lot of research out there already, but I think there's still a bit of confusion among teachers about what

matters most. So we decided to simplify the evidence and make it accessible in a single report. It's meant to be a bag of tools to help teachers learn to be better. We're giving them clear guidance about what's worth learning and what's worth working to be better at.

## How much of a challenge was it to collate all the research?

It was very challenging because there's a massive amount of literature out there. Some of it is entirely relevant and some of it much less so. It was a process of filtering and sorting the research to find the work of the highest quality, as well as of pushing aside any personal biases.

## What surprised you the most as you read through the findings of the evidence review?

The conclusions weren't what we were expecting. For example, I think there's a lot of enthusiasm for cognitive science, and a lot of teachers get quite excited about things such as cognitive-load theory, but we had a big debate about how necessary that was.

## Do teachers really need to know those kinds of theories? Is that what makes a great teacher?

The interesting thing is that there isn't really much evidence that teachers who have that knowledge are any more effective than teachers who don't. It's possible for a teacher to apply these theories in practice even if they've never heard of them.

## How difficult was it to come up with a toolkit that could be used by teachers across different countries, departments and year groups?

That was another big challenge. My background is in secondary schools as a UK maths teacher, so I found myself thinking of this through the same lens, but this has to equally apply to early-years teachers, as well as to schools all over the world. Obviously, there are going to be a huge number of differences, as well as there being some similarities. Context is very important, but broadly speaking, great teaching is pretty much universal.

## With so many other challenges facing schools this year, how important is it for teachers not to overlook professional development?

I think that if we are invested in education at all then professional development really is key. When it's done well, it really does have a huge effect on educational improvement – it obviously benefits students, but it also really benefits teachers in terms of their identity, their satisfaction and their likelihood of staying in the job. Part of the challenge is that good professional development is actually pretty rare. If you ask a lot of teachers about their experience of professional development, they'll just roll their eyes and tell you horror stories. That's a real shame because the potential is there for something really powerful.

## What are the next steps for the Toolkit?

This is the first stage, which is the literature review, and that sets out a starting point for teacher learning – things that teachers should focus on if they want to get better at what they do. The next stage is for us to try and create a suite of key indicators so a teacher can look at their own practice and get really robust, insightful, actionable feedback about what they're doing well, and to see whether they're improving.

Find out more about the Great Teaching Toolkit on the Cambridge International website at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools/teaching-cambridge-at-your-school/great-teaching-toolkit](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools/teaching-cambridge-at-your-school/great-teaching-toolkit).



## EduTech Africa goes online

*More than 2,000 delegates attended EduTech Africa, the first time the combined conference and exhibition has been held online.*

The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled many businesses to re-evaluate how they work and embrace new ways of doing things, and this year's annual EduTech Africa event was no exception as it was held virtually.

Juan Visser, Regional Director, Sub-Saharan Africa, from international exam board Cambridge International, participated in a panel discussion under the topic 'Beyond the classroom: how to support learners and parents through changes and challenging times

in education'. Juan and his fellow panellists offered guidance on how parents, learners and schools can navigate the challenges of continuing learning outside of the classroom. He was joined by Nan Lutz, Director, Mindfulness Africa and Dominique Hsuan, Chief Executive, BrightSparkz Tutors.

Cambridge International has been participating in the exhibition, which is normally held in Johannesburg, South Africa, for several years. This year's event was held over three days from 13 to 15 October and was attended by educators, organisations and stakeholders in the education industry from all over Africa and beyond the continent.



**More than 2,000 delegates attended EduTech Africa, held for the first time online.**

# Global audience for first virtual Cambridge Schools Conference

*Hundreds of delegates took part in the first virtual Cambridge Schools Conference, with nearly two out of three attending for the first time.*

The popular November Cambridge Schools Conference was held online due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Historically, senior school leaders have made up a large percentage of delegates at Cambridge Schools Conferences, however this time the new accessible and innovative online format of the conference encouraged a higher number of attendances from schoolteachers.

The conference consisted of a number of webinars, panel discussions and Q&A sessions, which all explored the theme of 'assessment for learning in a changed world'. The keynote session in the conference came from British educationalist and Emeritus Professor of Educational Assessment at the UCL Institute of Education, Dylan Wiliam. Prof Wiliam led a live Q&A session, which had over 600 attendees and gave the audience the opportunity to ask questions.



# Dynamic dozen win Cambridge University bursaries

*Twelve exceptionally gifted and community-minded A Level students from the UK's West Midlands region have won bursaries to support their studies at Cambridge University from exam board OCR.*

Jill Duffy, OCR's Chief Executive, sent a special message to each of the students, congratulating them on their achievements. She said: "Awarding the bursaries is a special pleasure for us at OCR. These students have all made the most of every opportunity and we hope the bursary will help them to carry on doing that at university. Their academic achievements are outstanding but they impressed us and their teachers in so many other ways."

She added: "This year has been tougher than most for young people, and it makes their achievements even

greater. One of the students even found time during lockdown to design an extension clip for facemasks for health-care professionals that has gone into production."

The 2020 bursary winners were:

- Aron Alagaraj** who attended Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School in Coventry
- Ria Bacharach** who attended King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Girls in Birmingham
- Tyler Berks** who attended City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College
- Britney Caka** who attended Caludon Castle School in Coventry
- Jack Heath** who attended Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group
- Rayyaan Hector** who attended King Edward VI Aston School in Birmingham
- Zak Ismail** who attended King Edward VI High School for Girls in Birmingham
- Abubakar Mohamud** who attended Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College in Birmingham
- Georgina Nicholls** who attended Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School in Coventry
- Fortina Oshasha** who attended Caludon Castle School in Coventry
- Riya Parshad** who attended Sidney Stringer Academy in Coventry
- Kogulan Vipulan** who attended Bablake School in Coventry



Riya Parshad



Abubakar Mohamud



Kogulan Vipulan

Commenting on winning the bursary, Georgina Nicholls said: "I was over the moon to be offered a place at Cambridge and didn't think I could possibly be any happier – until I found out that I achieved the OCR bursary on top of that!"

Ria Bacharach said: "With the financial support, I am confident I can make the most of the amazing opportunities that will be available to me whilst studying at the University of Cambridge."

Each bursary student will receive £3,000 for every year of their undergraduate degree. They can use the money towards tuition or living costs, or a combination of both. Now in its 17th year, the OCR bursary helps students in the West Midlands to make the most of their studies at the University of Cambridge. The bursary fund arises out of OCR's historical association with the West Midlands Examinations Board.

## ALTE goes online

ALTE, the Association of Language Testers in Europe, has announced the difficult decision not to go ahead with its 7th International Conference as a face-to-face event in Madrid, Spain, due to COVID-19. Instead it will be replaced by a fully online experience, ALTE's first virtual International Digital Symposium.

The new event will take place in the week already allocated for the conference, from 28–30 April, but have an updated theme to allow greater focus on the post-Covid realities in language learning, teaching and assessment: "Safeguarding the Future of Multilingual Assessment in the Post-Covid World".

For more information go to [www.alte.org/Digital-Symposium-2021](http://www.alte.org/Digital-Symposium-2021)



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INTERNATIONAL  
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Watch this space

## Contact us

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