

Research News

The Cambridge Assessment Conference:

A Question of Confidence – Maintaining Trust in National Assessment Systems

This conference takes place on 17 October 2005 at Robinson College, Cambridge and will be run by Cambridge Assessment Network. The Network is part of Cambridge Assessment, formerly known as the UCLES Group, a not-for-profit body recognised throughout the world for its professional, rigorous and high-standard assessments.

The conference will address a current issue about public examining and assessment. Leaders from many areas within education are being invited, including senior people from schools, colleges and universities and those working for national and local education bodies, professional organisations, political parties, the media, awarding bodies and employers' organisations.

The four main speakers and the titles of their papers are:

- Baroness Onora O'Neill, Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge
Assessment and Public Accountability
- Professor Barry McGaw, Director for Education, OECD
Assessment in Education
- Dr Nicholas Tate, Director General of the International School of Geneva
The School, the Parents and the Exam Boards
- Professor Alison Wolf, Sir Roy Griffiths Professor of Public Sector Management, King's College, London
What can and should we be measuring?

There will also be five discussion seminars on the following topics:

1. Maintaining standards
2. Teacher assessment
3. Vocational qualifications
4. Information technology
5. Working with the mass media.

For further information and an application form please email thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk.

Tel: 01223 553846;

www.cambridgeassessment/events

Other conferences and seminars

Colleagues from within the Assessment Directorate have attended several conferences and seminars in recent months.

Joint British Educational Research Association/Local Government Association Research Conference, April 2005

Martin Johnson of the Research Programmes Unit gave a keynote presentation entitled *On-line assessment: the impact of mode* at Local

Government House, London. The conference was attended by representatives from LEAs and universities with an interest in assessment research. Other presentations were given by Professor Richard Daugherty who spoke on *Developing assessment policies: a role for academic research?*, Professor Wynne Harlen *Use of teachers' judgements in summative assessment*, and Tonnie Richmond *The uses and abuses of value added data*.

General Teaching Council (GTC) seminar: What kind of assessment model best enhances teaching and learning? May, 2005

Presentations were given by Professor Wynne Harlen, Professor Richard Daugherty and representatives from the Assessment Reform Group, QCA, NAA and Becta. The discussions were intended to further the development of the GTC's assessment policy and the advice it gives to the Government.

The British Psychological Society's Quinquennial Conference, April, 2005

The keynote speaker on one of the days was Robert Sternberg of Yale University who spoke on *Redefining Elementary through Postgraduate Education through the Theory of Successful Intelligence*. This was about his theories on learning styles. Of particular interest was the explanation of research into how an admissions test of items testing each of the three types of intelligence increased quite substantially the amount of variance in College/University grades that could be explained by the American SAT test and High School grades alone.

GTC conference: The future role of e-assessment

The session included presentations and discussions aimed at gathering the opinions of various educational agencies in order to inform the GTC's future policy development and feedback to government. Martin Ripley (Head of the e-assessment team, QCA) reported on the QCA vision for e-assessment over the next 5 to 10 years and on the latest news of the KS3 ICT online test pilot. A representative from the DfES' e-learning strategy unit outlined the department's goal for a unified holistic system for all involved in education.

In June the Innovation in Assessment and Learning Unit was invited to contribute to the *Innovation in Teaching and Learning Workshop* organised by the Learning and Skills Development Agency. The focus was on the vocational sector. As well as members of the Steering Group of the LSDA's Innovation Project, the event was attended by senior members of the DfES Standards Unit, the QCA, the Institute of Education and FE Colleges. Several themes emerged as being of great interest to delegates including e-portfolios, e-communities, collaborative learning and peer assessment.