

in this *issue*

1

**The power of aspiration**

A tale of two educations

Page 3

2

**Working with refugees**

Personal journeys from around the world

Page 4

3

**History makers**

Ground-breaking exhibition graces university

Page 8



**Achieve**

*Autumn 2018*

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

---

## A textbook a day

---

*Education experts and government representatives from 16 countries consulted on the importance of high-quality textbooks at a summit jointly hosted by England's Department for Education, The Royal Society and Cambridge Assessment. Delegates heard case studies and analysed strong evidence showing how textbooks reduce teacher workload, retain curriculum coherence and ensure all children have equal access to learning.*

Addressing the international audience, Tim Oates CBE, Group Director of Assessment Research and Development at Cambridge Assessment, asked: "If we had a drug which had so many beneficial outcomes and no adverse side-effects we would prescribe it to everyone, so why, when the benefits of textbooks are well known, with no side-effects yet established over decades of trials, is their use declining?" Tim posited that a reason for the decline in the use of textbooks in UK schools is because they are seen as a "highly traditional instrument" and "somehow retrograde". School Standards Minister Nick Gibb, also



Representatives from 16 countries gather at the Royal Society.

## News in brief

### Miami hosts record-breaking international schools conference



Cambridge International hosted a schools conference in the US for the first time at the end of June – its largest ever event. Over 400 teachers and school leaders from 35 countries played their part in an exciting and inspirational two days in Miami, exploring the theme 'Learning and achievement for all'.

Delegates heard keynote speeches from Lucy Crehan, international education consultant and author of 'Cleverlands', Dr Duncan Astle and Dr Andrea Greve, researchers from the University of Cambridge Cognition & Brain Sciences Unit, and Dr Peeter Mehisto from University College London Institute of Education. Also in attendance was Dr Alison Borthwick, from the University of Cambridge Millennium Maths Project, as a keynote speaker.

### New textbook reveals secrets to teaching 'modern' statistics

Two maths experts from leading UK education bodies have revealed the inspiration behind their new textbook 'Teaching Statistics'.

The discipline of statistics is changing rapidly. New sources of data are becoming available, and new software and statistical techniques are being developed to analyse the ever increasing volume of data that is collected. Employment opportunities for statistics and data scientists have never been more available, and almost everyone is bombarded by statistical information on a daily basis. With this in mind, authors Will Hornby of UK exam board OCR and Darren Macey from Cambridge Mathematics, also part of the Cambridge family, set out to write a book exploring the key ideas underpinning statistics and how to teach it effectively. Drawing on the latest international research in statistics education and the design principles of the 'Cambridge Mathematics' project, the book is divided into two parts. In the first part, the authors discuss the essential concepts underpinning modern statistics and relate them to the classroom context. Part two contains a series of tasks and activities that aim to exemplify the ideas discussed in part one.

This book is aimed at anyone who teaches statistics at school level. While most activities are appropriate for students of secondary school age, the concepts and content were selected to support teachers' knowledge and understanding from primary through to post-16 education.



Professor William H Schmidt addresses the 100+ strong audience.

## Why there's no "holy grail" in education

*One of the leading thinkers on international comparisons in education has called for countries to avoid the "silly notion" that there is a "holy grail" when it comes to system improvement.*

In his talk – the first lecture to be held at the new global headquarters of the University of Cambridge's international exams group, Triangle – Professor William H Schmidt pointed to Finland as an example of where policy borrowing should have been avoided. Celebrated for its performance in the 2003 and 2006 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) studies, educationalists flocked to the country to understand the reasons for its success in what was dubbed "PISA tourism". But in subsequent years Finland has fallen down the PISA rankings.

Professor Schmidt, a University Distinguished Professor at Michigan State University in the US, criticised a tendency to focus exclusively on countries that have taken top spots in international rankings, saying that was "ridiculous". "Every three or four years we're all used to the fact that there will be a headline: 'Country X is number one in the world...' There's a belief, a silly belief, that you find out who is number one and then you seek out the holy grail... if only you can find that and drink of it you will end up with a good educational system. It's a silly notion that these countries are where we will find the answer as to how to improve our situation".

Instead, he said if policymakers wanted to learn lessons from the best, they should look at the deeper common

characteristics of those countries that are continuously at or near the top, such as Japan, Singapore and Korea. He said these countries tended to have three main principles in their education systems: a focus on a small number of topics; rigour – studying these subjects in depth; and coherence - in other words, following the logical structure of the discipline.

Professor Schmidt began his talk by charting the development of PISA and its counterpart the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), both of which he has been involved in and for TIMSS from the start. Now more than 100 countries, from Albania to Zimbabwe, have taken part in at least one study, with TIMSS providing a picture of students aged 13, and PISA providing a picture of students aged 15 primarily. He praised both tests as being done "extremely well", adding: "...they're thoughtfully designed, the sampling and the scaling are both done very professionally".

He suggested that the analysis of both surveys would be improved if 'opportunity to learn' was consistently considered – it is unsurprising that children do not do well on things which have not been taught – and this should be used to refine reporting from the surveys.

He said that importantly the surveys allow policymakers to examine the extent to which schools are improving equity in education. He said that the quest for both excellence in performance and equality in opportunity is attainable – although few countries have achieved it, Canada and Japan being two examples of those that have.

More than 100 people attended the event, and the audience included delegates from the 16 different countries that took part in this year's Cambridge International Study Programme. Many hundreds more watched online and took part in a lively question and answer session afterwards.

Professor Schmidt has also just written a book on the subject, *Schooling Across the Globe*, which is to be published by Cambridge University Press shortly.

Continued from page 1

in attendance, agreed that they had become “worryingly unfashionable,” revealing that he rarely sees a textbook on a desk when visiting UK schools but does see teachers arriving early to miss queues at the photocopier, costing schools “vast sums of money.” In reasserting the vital role of textbooks in system improvement, curriculum coherence and support for teachers, Tim Oates was keen to make clear that “we are not claiming that they should be the sole materials used in schools. A balanced ecosystem can include textbooks, linked online resources, and teacher-designed tasks and materials. What we are saying is that the well-evidenced assets of high-quality textbooks remain clear and proven in some settings and have been neglected in others, to the detriment of equity, attainment and teacher workload.

Moving on to the economic benefits of textbooks and considering the argument that school budgets don't allow for their purchase, Mr Gibb pointed to data from the Publishers Association calculating that textbooks only need to save teachers 4.5 minutes a day to be good value for money. This was a revelation which led audience member and Head of Education and Social Reform at Policy Exchange John Blake to call for the sector-wide debunking of the myth that teacher-created resources save schools money, arguing that, in fact, “teacher-made resources are not free, we pay for their time.”

But when so much value is placed on bespoke teacher-made resources, the fear is that using a textbook will be viewed as passive or dispassionate. Curriculum consultant Emma Lennard shared with the audience her own experience of being shown a dusty cupboard of obviously unused textbooks when she asked where her resources were as a new primary school teacher; she then discovered their value but felt the need to hide the fact she was using textbook content in her lessons and decided to pretend she was creating her own resources from scratch to avoid being “seen as a lazy teacher.”

## New CEO for international exam board

*Cambridge Assessment has announced the appointment of Christine Özden as the new Chief Executive of its international exam board and education services provider.*

Christine joins Cambridge Assessment International Education in January. She has a wealth of experience



Christine Özden



Tim Oates CBE

Also keen to disparage this concept was Debbie Morgan, National Director of Primary Mathematics at the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, who explained that teachers shouldn't feel their professional creativity and ability to inspire a classroom is stifled by using a textbook, much like a “well-written play doesn't take away from an actor's performance or creativity but will rather stimulate and inspire it.”

The summit then heard from an international delegate declaring “no teacher, no matter how passionate, has the stamina to teach an entire year's curriculum, mark, then go home and prepare lessons for the next day, every night”; a workload issue they believed can be overcome by introducing textbooks as a supporting resource in the classroom. This sentiment was echoed by Sweden's Rikard Vinde who warned that the lack of textbooks has “undermined the professional status of teachers” and contributed to the major shortage of teachers that is, in his opinion, the “largest problem facing schools in Sweden.”

Observations and insights from Finland, Iceland, the USA, and Mexico, among others, were then shared and debated before Mr Gibb closed proceedings on the promise that we're witnessing an “emerging grassroots revolution against the negative textbook ethos among education professionals,” before urging international guests to watch the UK for a “sea change.”

in international education, having worked for more than 20 years in senior roles across the education industry. She began her career in international education at Cambridge University Press, where she worked for seven years as an Area Sales Manager in the English Language Teaching Division. In her most recent role, she led the launch of a brand-new portfolio of international GCSE, AS and A Level qualifications for international curriculum schools across the Middle East and Asia.

She will be taking over from Michael O'Sullivan, who leaves in December after more than five successful years, during which time he has grown the range of services the board offers schools and ministries of education worldwide and substantially built up its teacher support network.

Cambridge Assessment Group Chief Executive, Saul Nassé, said: “Christine has an unwavering belief in education's ability to change lives and support families. Couple that with her deep international experience – she's lived in four countries and worked across four continents – and she's a perfect fit for us. Together we have a fantastic opportunity to extend our global reach and transform the organisation for this mobile, machine-learning driven age.”

Christine has an MA in Arabic and Turkish from the University of Edinburgh and a Master's in Business Administration from Warwick University.

## A view from...

*David Ejim-McCubbin*

### The power of aspiration



When we reminisce on our school years, it's often easy to merely reference our academic results or focus on our performance in some way. Now, despite this, on a basic level, being a useful metric in measuring our school experience, it limits this significant time in our lives to a period of information processing, textbook handling and data storing. We sound like robots. It's important that we remember that our respective schools, irrespective of sector or difference in governance, exposed us to particular types of people across society and during 6+ hours in a school day, over many years, shaped our understanding, perception and assumptions of those people groups. The school setting is a powerful influencer, not only in developing our intellectual capabilities, but also (and arguably more importantly so), it provides the primary context, in the most formative stage in our life, to simply learn about other people.

I enjoyed a unique blend of people groups during my own education; first, as a secondary school student at Royal Docks Community School in Newham, East London, where I was surrounded by familiar people groups who I grew up with and who shared a similar outlook to my own; an outlook which recognised perseverance through the adversity in our environment, but sadly that appeared unable to connect the dots between the importance of a good education and good career options and prospects. And secondly as a boarder at Rugby School in Warwickshire. I was a recipient of a full bursary and it was here I witnessed the powerful influence of a very different school setting. What I was most taken by at Rugby School wasn't the pristine lawns or the architectural evidence of privilege, it was the felt aspirational mentality of the students, a people group not restricted by external limitations to their own potential and success.

At my local secondary school I admired the kinship and sense of community which persisted in the face of surrounding negative influences. At Rugby School I appreciated the flourishing of development within the walls of prestige. The question isn't - which one did I prefer? I enjoyed both equally on their respective merits. My educational experience has shaped how I perceive and interact with society today. Schools have an often forgotten purpose of doing this and we should appreciate this more.

*David went on to study Law with Business at the University of Brighton, before gaining a Master's degree in Legal and Political Theory from University College London. He is currently a civil servant at the Department for Education.*

## Working with refugees



### story 1

*Zak Absi, a lecturer from the University of Essex, talks about his life and how he personally helped build the Access to Education initiative.*

I am Zakariya Absi, a language teacher and English for Academic Purposes lecturer at the University of Essex. I came to the UK in 2008 to pursue my postgraduate studies in the Department of Language and Linguistics at the University of Essex. In 2014, I obtained my PhD in English Language Teaching. I have been teaching in the Department of Language and Linguistics and the Essex Pathways Department at the University of Essex since 2010. I have also recently been involved with refugee support programmes in the UK generally and in the local area.

In 2017, I was privileged to take part in the Techfugees Conference in Cambridge after a friend of mine forwarded to me the conference invitation. In that conference, I listened to empowering talks and live witnesses from the refugee camps in the north of Iraq. I decided to be part of the conference efforts to draw on the conference recommendations and establish an online MOOC (Massive open online course) platform to support asylum seekers who would like to know what it is like to pursue a higher education degree in a UK university. The online MOOC course was called '*Aim Higher: Access to Higher Education for Refugees and Asylum Seekers*'. In that course, I was asked to take part in assessing the content of the course and mentoring the students' participation. I was also interviewed by Cambridge Assessment English and the interviews formed part of the content of the course. The course was attended by more

*Highlighting some of the educational projects aiming to raise awareness and celebrate the contribution of refugees to society...*

than a thousand students from many different countries worldwide and was reopened after a few months. My involvement in this project has had a huge impact on shaping my view of what it means to pursue higher education in war-torn parts of the world. Additionally, and most importantly, the project has helped me learn that the existence of educators and academics who care, combined with the full utilisation of new technology, can at least create a glimpse of hope in the eyes of those governed by dark and extenuating circumstances.

Inspired by the Cambridge MOOC initiative, I decided to take part in another project in 2016-17, where I had a closer involvement with Syrian refugees in Turkey. The project aimed to reach some of the Syrian academics displaced in Turkey and give them the English language support they needed in order to enhance their employment opportunities and empower them to be international in their academic scope. This experience was very impressive for me and I was extremely passionate about it as I had to teach English lessons online to a Syrian lecturer who, like many others, had to witness the Syrian tragedy and be a victim of it. I gave that lecturer a one-hour lesson every week, which he highly appreciated and enjoyed. The funny thing about this experience is that the academic never knew that I was Syrian myself and I was very keen not to say any word in Arabic to him so that he could practise his English as much as possible. Every time I met him online, I wanted to tell him that we were both countrymen, but I always managed to suppress my desire to tell him just so that he could speak in English without having the temptation to translate.

I participated in Refugee Week in the local area and I gave a talk about the humanitarian side of the Syrian tragedy in which I reiterated two messages. The first is for the refugees themselves and the second is to those who can and want to help others who are less fortunate.

**My message to the refugees is, language is a peaceful weapon to defeat your extenuating circumstances in the host countries.**

My message to the refugees is, language is a peaceful weapon to defeat your extenuating circumstances in the host countries. I am sorry to use the word 'weapon' as this is perhaps the last word you want to hear, but learning other languages, especially English, is indeed a weapon to defend yourselves on a thorny journey. For those who managed to arrive in Europe, being able to swim did help you to cross the high waves of the sea, but I am sure that as soon as you arrived at the safe shore, you realised that learning the language was paramount for survival.

As for academics who care, my message is, no matter what degree or specialisation you have, unless you possess the human dimension of the profession, your profession is bound to be a mere business that fluctuates with the value of currencies and change of daily trends. An educator has an ethical and moral responsibility before anything else, and unless you care about others who have less fortunate circumstances, and believe in their right to have access to higher education, you are contributing to a world that is only for the elite. Please also remember that by trying to reach refugees and support them linguistically and professionally, you will be building long-term communication bridges of which our world is in dire need.



### story 2

*Georgina Herbert explains how Occupational English Test (OET) is working collaboratively to provide free scholarships so refugee nurses and doctors are able to work in the UK.*

OET, the English test for healthcare professionals, is working with the UK charity RefuAid to offer free tests to refugee doctors and nurses. In order to work in their profession in the UK, foreign-trained doctors and nurses are required to prove English proficiency by achieving a specific grade in a recognised English test.

OET was recently accepted in the UK by the General Medical Council, which regulates doctors, and the Nursing and Midwifery Council, which regulates nurses and midwives. Designed specifically for healthcare professionals, OET assesses English language skills using real healthcare scenarios, which means candidates

prepare for the test using language that is both familiar and useful for their future career.

Academic Ceri Butler, who worked as a medical educator at University College London for 11 years, is currently a doctoral student focusing on research into the integration of refugee healthcare professionals into host countries.

Butler says: "The longer refugee healthcare professionals are away from their profession, the more challenging it can be for them to return to work, and for many the English test is a significant hurdle."

OET aims to lessen this hurdle by providing a number of refugee doctors and nurses with the opportunity to sit OET free of charge, as well as giving the candidates materials to assist in their test preparation. OET recently launched a free online preparation course, the Start for

Success package, which includes grammar lessons, practice tests, sample answers, test-taking tips and learning strategies, which will further assist candidates with preparation.

OET also hopes to engage the support of its test venue partners and preparation providers to give ongoing assistance to refugee healthcare professionals in the future.

Sujata Stead, OET's CEO, says the collaboration with RefuAid, which provides refugees with access to language tuition, education and employment opportunities, will change lives:

"Moving to another country, learning a new language and working in a different culture is daunting, even in the best of circumstances. OET is committed to helping refugee healthcare professionals overcome the challenge of proving English proficiency so they can work in the profession they're qualified for and join the UK's healthcare workforce," she concluded.

*OET is developed by Cambridge Boxhill Language Assessment (CBLA). CBLA is a joint venture between Cambridge Assessment English and Box Hill Institute.*

**OET is committed to helping refugee healthcare professionals...**



## story 3

*Monica Poulter, formerly Teacher Development Manager at Cambridge Assessment English, provides an insight into what she did to help refugees and asylum seekers access education.*

My name is Monica Poulter and I have been involved in providing support for forced migrants both in my official teacher development role and also as a volunteer in my own time.

We identified a need for volunteers to be able to access information and support. It was important that this support should be easily accessible and free, so we developed an online course on the FutureLearn platform. We co-developed the course, Volunteering with Refugees, with Crisis Classroom, a CIC (Community

**So far we have run two courses with over 8,000 registrations. Participants have included paid professionals working with refugees and refugee support groups, and the volunteers themselves...**



**An online course aimed at refugees in the UK looking for a path to start or continue their higher education being filmed.**

Interest Company) that offers training to volunteers on a not-for-profit basis. We anticipated that participants would include teachers who wanted to know more about how to give language support and others who wanted to be able to support or befriend refugees in non-teaching or less formal roles. Supporting refugees who may have suffered trauma is a key part of the course.

So far we have run two courses with over 8,000 registrations. Participants have included paid professionals working with refugees and refugee support groups, and the volunteers themselves including teachers, medical professionals, therapists, social workers, musicians or people who simply want to be good neighbours. They've also included people who have travelled to support refugees living in camps or temporary accommodation; others are helping refugees to settle in a new country. Many of this latter group are providing one-to-one support to individuals or families, and this is the context where I volunteer.

I've been involved in refugee support for 18 months and during that time I have met the most amazing people – both face-to-face and online – all sharing a common goal, which is to make a difference in whatever way they can. The FutureLearn platform allows for social interaction

and the sharing of information, resources and experiences has been inspiring. I would say that 50% of the learning is gained through the course content provided by Cambridge Assessment English and Crisis Classroom, and the other 50% by the course participants themselves, who included participants from across the globe.

On a personal level as a language teaching specialist, I wanted to help refugees develop their English language skills because language is crucial for building a new life in a new country and for social integration. However, my involvement in one-to-one support has made me aware of the many difficulties faced by families who are having to deal with a whole range of issues, of which language learning is only one. It's important that volunteers work within a wider network so that they in turn feel supported, and thankfully in my context in Cambridge there are very active and committed local groups.

The message I would like to give people is do what you can even if you can only help in a small way. (It might just be by being neighbourly, picking up children from school, explaining the contents of an official letter, donating things you don't need such as toys your children have outgrown, or an old mobile.) Find out what's going on in your area and get involved!

## Star students receive bursaries for Cambridge University

*Five fabulous students, all the first in their families to go into higher education, headed off to Cambridge University this term, with the help of a bursary from UK exam board OCR.*

Janet Morris (pictured) commented that the students had all "not only excelled academically but they have pushed themselves in many other ways; volunteering in their local communities, competing in national sports events, being excellent representatives of their schools and, in some cases, having responsibilities as family carers."

Now in its 15th year, the OCR bursary helps students from the West Midlands to make the most of their studies at Cambridge University. The bursary fund arises out of OCR's historical association with the West Midlands Examinations Board.



Pictured from left to right: Trudy Yates, Sam Johnston, Janet Morris (OCR interim Chief Executive), Saul Nassé (Cambridge Assessment Group Chief Executive), Joseph Dulleston and Nickeal Sidhu.

## T Levels – Time to get with the programme

*Paul Steer, Head of Policy at OCR, sets out some principles for T Level success.*

Somewhere in the depths of the Department for Education (DfE) offices, civil servants will be working hard on a massive programme plan, covering all the projects, risks and contingencies associated with the implementation and rollout of T Level programmes. The DfE has responded to concerns by limiting rollout in the first year to a pilot of three of the eleven routes. It is still an epic 'to do' list and there isn't much time in which to get it all done – the very first T Level students are due to start in September 2020. That's real flesh-and-blood students with dreams and aspirations – they will have chosen a T Level because we will have told them they will get an engaging, stretching learning experience and excellent job prospects. We can't let them down, so it is imperative that everyone in the education and skills system does what they can to make sure those students get the very best. Once the T Levels are launched, they have to be sustained. The stakes are highest for the T Level students themselves, but with the uncertainty of Brexit, growing skills shortages and the looming fourth industrial revolution, T Levels have a wider role to play in supporting the UK economy. Nobody wants to see a

repeat of past failures in this sphere such as the 14–19 Diplomas. So how do we get it right? Well, a lot of it is about painstaking programme management and dogged chasing down of risks but there are some higher level principles that need to be applied as well. Here are a few of them:

### Be clear of purpose

T Levels are designed to address a shortage of technical skills in the UK labour market. They will enable T Level students to progress to further technical training and to find rewarding employment opportunities. They are not intended as another route into higher education. Other qualifications have been designed to prepare students for undergraduate study but T Levels are driven by the disciplines of the workplace. It should be of no concern if some higher education institutions won't recognise T Levels for access to some degrees, nor should T Levels be seen as just another way of collecting UCAS (the UK's Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) points.

### Set the bar high

The bar should be set high for schools and colleges selected to deliver T Levels. They will need to be able to source teachers with a strong technical background; they will need to have access to state-of-the-art equipment and to high-quality industry placements. Student entry to T Level programmes should also be carefully controlled. Selection shouldn't be on the basis of prior academic achievement, but prospective students should be clear-eyed about what will be expected of them and the seriousness of the commitment they are making. The demands of T Level programmes should also be fitted to the technical standards on which they are based. Nobody should see T Levels as a soft option or something for those who aren't up to the rigours of an A Level.

### Quality not quantity

A lasting quality technical education system can't be built in a day. If, in the first years of T Levels, the numbers need to be kept small, so be it – an uncontrolled rollout could do irreparable damage. We should learn from the ill-fated '3 million starts' target that was applied to apprenticeships.

### Keep things under review

The first years of T Level delivery should be regarded as a pilot. With the proviso that the core purpose of T Levels is immutable, everything else should be subject to review and changes should be made where there is solid evidence that change is desirable. There should be no ideological or policy-driven sacred cows – whether that be in relation to externally set exams, the size and nature of the industry placement or any of the other design features of the prototype T Level.

### Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater

A Levels and T Levels alone won't serve the needs of all young people. There are many established qualifications for 16-19 year olds which are truly necessary. In our desire to make T Levels a success we should not neglect such qualifications and we certainly shouldn't withdraw funding of any of them unless we are absolutely certain of the implications.

### And finally... Get with the programme

Government, its agencies, regulators, employers, providers and many other stakeholders all need to pull together, respecting and understanding their respective roles and expertise. Now is the time to start building something that will serve those first T Level students well and set the platform for a bright future in technical education.

## Serbia's Minister of Education signs new agreement with Cambridge

*Cambridge Assessment welcomed Serbia's Minister of Education to Triangle – its new purpose-built headquarters.*

Mladen Šarčević, Minister of Education, was accompanied by Professor Dr Ana Langović Miličević, State Secretary for Education. The Minister signed a memorandum of understanding which will see them working with Cambridge Assessment English more closely in the future.

## Asian VIPs visit Cambridge Assessment's new headquarters



Penang State Minister YB Zairil Khir Johari was part of a delegation that visited Triangle recently.

The visit involved schools from Malaysia, India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka and included a behind-the-scenes tour of Cambridge Assessment English and a visit to Cambridge University Press.

Triangle is designed to provide a collaborative, innovative and flexible working environment which allows Cambridge Assessment to better serve customers and stakeholders.



## News in brief

Cambridge Assessment English works with governments all over the world to help improve English language learning, teaching and assessment. Below are some highlights from the range of English language education reform projects it is currently working on.

# University of Cambridge recognises new Egypt, Armenia and Kazakhstan Cambridge-certified qualifications

The University of Cambridge has recently recognised the qualifications of three large education reform projects in Egypt, Kazakhstan and Armenia. Its undergraduate study website now includes these new qualifications, which are jointly certified by the local awarding organisations and the University's international exam board, Cambridge Assessment International Education, which is involved in a variety of education reform projects around the world to help raise standards in education. Gaining global recognition for newly developed qualifications is vital, and an area where Cambridge International contributes expertise.

### REFORM PROJECT 1:

#### Ayb Foundation, Armenia

The Ayb Educational Foundation, which supports the development of education in Armenia, established an Araratian Baccalaureate and Examination Centre (ABEC) with the objective of developing a Baccalaureate-style qualification comprising both Armenian and Cambridge-accredited A Level equivalent subjects.

Cambridge International worked with Ayb on the development of the new Araratian Baccalaureate (AB), with Cambridge Assessment English providing support on the English as a second language element, and helped to gain widespread recognition for the qualification which was first taken in 2016. The Ministry of Education and Science in Armenia has recognised the qualification, and allocated places for AB students at Yerevan State University, the Mkhitar Heratsi Medical University and the Armenian State University of Economics each year. Several UK universities, including the Universities of Cambridge and Manchester, now recognise the Cambridge International-certified subjects that comprise the AB.

### REFORM PROJECT 2:

#### Autonomous Educational Organisation Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (AEO NIS), Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan wants to be among the world's top 30 developed nations by 2050. AEO NIS was established in 2008 by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan as a platform to develop and implement innovative models of education for primary, elementary and high schools. The project, which began in 2011, was for the development of new curricula and assessment models, delivered in three languages (Kazakh, Russian and English), in concept schools for eventual rollout to state schools. AEO NIS also wanted its own series of qualifications at internationally recognised standards.

The reform project team – which included experts from the University of Cambridge's Faculty of Education and its international exam boards – provided a solution which included the development of new curricula in all subject areas from primary to high school level, an in-country assessment service and new qualifications at an international standard. The programme has expanded significantly since 2011, and the task of widening out the reforms to state schools is now underway.

Cambridge University recognises NIS Grade 12 higher level qualifications, certified by Cambridge International.

### REFORM PROJECT 3:

#### Education Development Fund, Egypt

The project's objective was to develop a new bilingual (modern standard Arabic and English) curriculum and qualifications for Egypt from Kindergarten to Year 12. The reform project team, which sees sister organisations Cambridge International and Cambridge Assessment English working in collaboration, began their collaboration on the Nile International Education System (NIES) project in 2009 to develop an innovative bilingual education system benchmarked to international standards.

Nile Egyptian Schools offer students an affordable opportunity to study subjects to AS/A Level standard, increasing their opportunities for admission to the world's leading universities. UK NARIC, the national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills, has evaluated and benchmarked the secondary qualifications as equivalent to GCSE and AS/A Level. Recognition of the A Level equivalent subjects in the Certificate of Nile International Secondary Education – jointly certificated by Cambridge International – has been gained from universities in Egypt and across the globe, including MIT and the University of Cambridge.

The Nile Egyptian Schools project is ongoing, with planned expansion from eight to 30 schools.

**Recognition by the University of Cambridge is a significant milestone and evidence of the high achievements of the reform projects. It will also help to promote further recognition from universities around the globe, widening the opportunities for their students.**

## Enhancing English language teaching, learning and assessment in Kazakhstan

Cambridge Assessment English is starting an exciting new project in the Republic of Kazakhstan in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and one of its authorised centres, StudyInn. The project will involve working closely with 50 state schools to train teachers, provide learning resources and to pilot their English language qualifications for students at Grades 3 and 8. The collaboration is part of a new initiative to deliver a holistic project to enhance English language teaching, learning and assessment in state schools in Kazakhstan.

## Collaboration on English language reforms with the Ministry of Education, Malaysia

Cambridge Assessment English began working with the Malaysian Ministry of Education in 2013 on an evidence-based benchmarking study to evaluate the learning, teaching and assessment of English in schools. An integrated approach to reform and align curricula, learning materials and national assessments has yielded impressive results, especially in terms of teacher development, which forms an important role in supporting the integration of English language reforms into an education system. 815 master trainers have in turn trained 26,500 teachers on initiatives from learning materials adaptations and design, to formative assessment and curriculum implementation.



# Ground-breaking exhibition celebrates history-making alumni

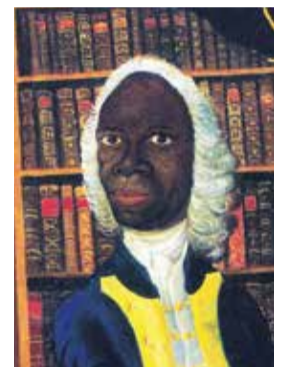
In it, a collection of photographic portraits will celebrate centuries of black students at Cambridge (from 1700 to the present day) and inspire future generations.

Featuring trailblazers from the first black British army officer to the first black female composer to have a composition played at the Proms, the exhibition includes famous faces such as Zadie Smith, Thandie Newton and Diane Abbott MP alongside rare archive images.

Cambridge Assessment sponsored the library exhibition and will welcome the artwork at its new global headquarters, Triangle, in January.



*A ground-breaking exhibition 'Black Cantabs: History Makers' has taken over the 'Royal Corridor' of Cambridge University's library and tells the stories of black students in Cambridge, from the forgotten pioneers of centuries past to the celebrated successes of today.*



## Assessment in a "post-truth" world



The Cambridge Assessment Network is hosting a seminar on 29 January 2019 to discuss a paper by Mary Richardson, which considers how assessment is discussed and perceived within the "post truth" perspective applied to education. Our means of accessing

information may be broader and faster than ever before, but when framed by a "post-truth" narrative, just how are key stakeholders: schools, teachers, pupils, employers etc. expected to believe in the value of educational assessments?

To book a free place at the seminar please go to [www.canetwork.org.uk/seminars](http://www.canetwork.org.uk/seminars)

Watch this space

## Contact us

Please feel free to phone, write or email at any time:

Bene't Steinberg or Hilary Fletcher  
Public Affairs  
Cambridge Assessment  
The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road  
Cambridge, United Kingdom, CB2 8EA

+44 (0)1223 556018 (direct)  
[public.affairs@cambridgeassessment.org.uk](mailto:public.affairs@cambridgeassessment.org.uk)

Also find us on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

*Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, a department of the University of Cambridge. Cambridge Assessment is a not-for-profit organisation.*

© 2018 University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate

## Credits

Design: H2 Associates, Cambridge

Editorial: Ashley Capaldi

