

Achieve

Autumn 2009



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT



Welcome to *Achieve*

The latest news from Europe's largest assessment agency, Cambridge Assessment.



British business backs functional skills

Teachers find out just how important literacy and numeracy skills are to businesses at an OCR event. see page 6



Helping to shape education in Bahrain

More than 21,000 Bahraini students have taken the new national tests developed by CIE. see page 6

Championing multilingualism in the European Union

The important contribution that language assessment can make to multilingualism was discussed by MEPs and senior policy-makers at the European Parliament in Brussels, for a second year running.

Multilingualism is not just about being highly proficient in two or more languages. It has a huge impact in terms of understanding culture, immigration, education and employment needs.

The event *Supporting multilingualism through language assessment* was organised by Cambridge ESOL with the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE), MEP Hannu Takkula and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe group from 28 September to 1 October 2009.

Dr Nick Saville, Director of Research & Validation at Cambridge ESOL, chaired the event and welcomed key speakers including MEP Hannu Takkula and the distinguished British linguist and author David Graddol.

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The European Parliament's Altiero Spinelli Building, Brussels. © Courtesy of European Parliament – Audiovisual Unit.



Michael Gove MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families.

Our plan to make Britain's schools the best in the world

Comparisons may be odious, but Governments can't avoid them. Labour in 1997 promised that things could only get better. And so they had to prove they were delivering an education system which was demonstrably better than what went before.

On the surface, they succeeded, with headline exam results showing steady improvement. But a comparison with the past only tells you so much. The really telling comparison is a look at how we're doing compared to other countries. Especially our principal competitors. We need to compare ourselves with the best.

And there the story is much less reassuring. During the last ten years we have fallen behind our international competitors, dropping fourth to fourteenth in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) rankings for science, seventh to seventeenth in literacy and eighth to twenty-fourth in mathematics.

It's because we need to do better compared to other nations that Conservative education policy is built around learning from success and innovation in other nations.

The most important lesson is the crucial importance of teacher quality. From Finland to Singapore and South Korea, nations which attract the very best graduates into teaching generate the most impressive results in schools.

And the most exciting innovation in school reform at the moment is the move, across the globe, towards freeing schools from local bureaucratic control. That's why Barack Obama has chosen, so vigorously, to champion charter schools, why so many wish to learn from the success of free schools in Sweden, and why the Canadian province of Alberta, with a highly-developed charter school network, is the English-speaking jurisdiction with the best educational performance in the world.

Independent state schools have to abide by fair admissions policies and cannot charge fees. But they can determine their own ethos, set their own pay structures, reward talent more imaginatively, shape the curriculum more creatively and provide teachers with a more congenial atmosphere in which to work.

At this year's party conference we outlined proposals to both improve teacher quality and free schools from unnecessary bureaucratic control.

I announced plans to expand the excellent Teach First scheme, which like 'Teach for America' has helped to recruit the highest performing graduates into teaching and placed them in the most disadvantaged schools. I explained that we needed to enhance the prestige and esteem of the profession by raising the bar on entry and improving continuous professional development.

I also announced proposals to free more schools from bureaucratic control by allowing any school to apply for academy status. And I explained how we would allow new schools to be set up, as they have in Sweden, by relaxing planning rules, and allowing new state schools to receive the five thousand pounds the state currently spends on a child's education.

The reason we borrow from abroad is because we want Britain to take its place in the first rank of education nations. Ultimately what guides our policy is not what's right or left, but what works.

Dual language education grows in popularity

International education programmes through the medium of English are growing in both number and size. However, implementing dual language programmes raises issues in curriculum development, teacher education, pupil assessment and public understanding.

Increasingly, schools that offer dual language education programmes are choosing to integrate the Cambridge International Curriculum, developed by University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), alongside their own curriculum.

CIE has a long-standing relationship with schools offering dual language education programmes in many countries, particularly in Europe and South America.

Cambridge IGCSE is rapidly becoming one of the most popular internationally benchmarked assessments for bilingual programmes at this level. The qualification enables schools to add breadth to the school programme and gives students a unique opportunity to study, and be assessed, through the medium of English.

Cristina Rimini, CIE International Curriculum Development Manager, said: "Education authorities, schools and parents are keen to develop individuals who will be able to take an active and successful part in the increasingly globalised society and economy. Dual language education is seen not only as a way of achieving this goal, but also as a way of developing skills for the 21st Century."



Dual language education in Europe forum in Cambridge.

Five years on: languages are still an Asset

Proving there is still a demand to learn languages, Asset Languages – the flexible assessment scheme for language learners of all ages and abilities – is celebrating its fifth anniversary.

Although languages are no longer compulsory at KS4, over half a million Asset tests will have been taken by the end of 2009/10 in nearly 1,000 schools.

Originally only available in French, German and Spanish, five years on there are now 25 different

languages available at a variety of levels to suit a wide range of language learners.

Developed by Cambridge Assessment through its exam boards OCR and Cambridge ESOL, Asset Languages is the assessment scheme for the DCSF Languages Ladder.

Increasing access to English

Global school networks give thousands more students access to English language qualifications.

Thanks to a recent Cambridge ESOL collaboration with EF, the world's largest language training organisation with 400 learning centres around the world, even more students will now have access to the qualifications.

More recently it signed an agreement with Kaplan Aspect, which offers English courses worldwide. For more details visit:

www.cambridgeesol.org

Online sensation

A new online game that gives learners the chance to take on the role of a forensic scientist and crack the case of a tricky murder has proved an incredible hit. *Apartment 13* has had over two million plays to date.

During the game, players are encouraged to search for evidence and progress the case to court, discovering the skills and techniques a forensic scientist needs

along the way. The game was designed to showcase the range of OCR Nationals in Science qualifications, in particular its Forensic Science unit.

To play *Apartment 13* visit: www.ocrnationals.com/sciencegame

The importance of training and skills as we emerge from a recession

Qualifications need to be different when countries are coming out of a recession rather than when they are entering one, according to Greg Watson, Chief Executive of OCR.

Speaking at a recent seminar, Greg said: "Let's get shorter, sharper bursts of learning in place that get people from where they are now, with some extra skills, and very quickly out there into the job market again."

He continued: "We've got to think in terms of skills that apply right across the economy. We need to make sure we're really 'skilling people up' in areas that will help them almost wherever they end up working." The seminar, *Working Together to Deliver World Class Skills*, brought together organisations and individuals that are actively involved in the planning and delivery of skills and employment services.



Greg Watson's presentation looked at the post-19 landscape and how OCR fits into the wider skills and employment picture. He also considered how the Government could best be involved and made particular reference to the importance of learners being equipped with the transferable skills that will allow them to respond to the evolving skills needs of the economy.

Complementing Watson's presentation was a showcase of inspirational work from centres across the UK, giving learners and teachers a unique perspective on how a new era of qualifications is opening doors for young people and building world-class skills for the future.

Selected OCR qualifications, such as OCR Nationals, were brought to life via a range of media including 3D art, film, and e-portfolio.

A video of Greg Watson's presentation can be viewed at: http://www.link2portal.com/skills/channel/resource/1H5P-81SU-K7YV-56W4-9SCL/ocr_world_skills

Greg Watson, Chief Executive of OCR.

Championing multilingualism...

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As part of the event, delegates were asked the question: 'Do you know how good your language skills are?' Cambridge ESOL was able to provide the answer by offering free computer-based tests to help delegates determine their level of German, English, Spanish and French in line with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

The role of assessment in language and integration is a big and continuing agenda for Cambridge ESOL. Mike Milanovic, CEO for Cambridge ESOL, recently discussed some of the central issues involved in the linguistic integration of migrants and the impact of language assessment on stakeholders at the International Experts' Conference in September at Goethe-Institut, Berlin.

Cambridge ESOL is part of, and plays a significant role within ALTE, which aims to establish common standards in language certification and collaborate on joint projects across Europe.

Volume 31 of Cambridge ESOL's Studies in Language Testing (SiLT) series addresses a wide range of important issues and new developments in language testing and assessment. It is an indispensable resource for test users, developers and researchers and will be published later this year.

Recognising language ability

Employers want to increase their competitive advantage by hiring a more diverse workforce – but how can they be sure of applicants' English language ability?

Help is now available from the Business Language Testing Service (BULATS) exam. This Cambridge ESOL qualification, which proves English language ability, has recently been recognised by the UK Border Agency.

Mike Milanovic, CEO for Cambridge ESOL, said: "In such turbulent economic times, it is vital that the UK continues to do everything it can to upskill the workforce where required, but this must be done in a controlled and rigorous manner. Furthermore, when coming to the UK, companies and potential employees need to feel confident in their ability to speak English as this will help to improve their chance of success when integrating into society. All of which will have a positive impact on the UK economy moving forward."

BULATS is now recognised for both Tiers 1 and 2 of the UK Border Agency's Points-Based System (PBS). Tier 1 covers highly-skilled workers, investors, entrepreneurs or post-study workers and Tier 2 covers sponsored skilled workers with a job offer.

BULATS has joined other recognised, accredited exams including Cambridge ESOL's Certificate of Proficiency

in English, Business English Certificate Vantage, and International Certificate in Financial English.



BULATS is a test designed to assess language skills of employees.

Challenges of teaching an international curriculum

Teachers from all over the world were given the opportunity to address the challenges of teaching an international curriculum – in particular science and languages – through the medium of English, at the fifth International Teachers' Conference held in Singapore.

New approaches to integrating technology into science and language teaching were also discussed at the conference, hosted by University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) in October.

The annual conference is open to teachers from CIE's global teacher network and offers unrivalled access to leading figures in the development of education. It also enables them to work with peers to develop practical classroom solutions, including lesson plans relating to Cambridge syllabuses.

Education journalist Mike Baker talks to Beth Black about her latest paper on a fast-growing qualification

Getting the most out of Critical Thinking

Teaching Critical Thinking as a discrete subject in the timetable can bring great benefits to student achievement, providing schools approach the subject in a positive way.

A Cambridge Assessment research paper, prepared for the European conference of the Association for Educational Assessment, reports evidence that pupils who study Critical Thinking as a discrete subject at AS level tend to do better in their other A level subjects, whether they are taking sciences, languages or humanities.

However, the paper's author – Beth Black, Senior Research Officer at Cambridge Assessment – says attitudes to this relatively new subject are still very mixed. Those who do not fully understand the subject, she says, might be tempted to regard it as an easy way to use students' existing analytical skills to gain more qualification points for university entrance.

She says evidence suggests there is a much better impact on students in schools that have a positive attitude to the subject, treating it as a discrete academic discipline, and valuing in their own right the skills of analysis, rational discourse and enquiry it involves.

While some may think Critical Thinking is rather like General Knowledge, needing little specific teaching, Beth Black insists that view is mistaken. She says it is 'not a soft or easy subject – it is challenging and students need to engage their brain before entering the examination hall'.

Critical Thinking is still relatively new as a stand-alone qualification. Its early use was largely confined to university entrance tests but it is now widely available at upper secondary school level. This year well over 20,000 students took OCR's Critical Thinking AS level.

Yet Beth Black says there is still ambivalence towards the subject. Many universities fail to include Critical Thinking as part of the A level points tariff they require in their main offer to applicants, although they will give it weight in other ways. This is despite the fact that, as Black says, it's not unusual to hear 'university admissions tutors complaining about the lack of critical thinking skills amongst new undergraduates'.

The paper reports details of a survey of 236 teachers of Critical Thinking in schools in England and Wales. It found only one case where it was not timetabled as a discrete subject. However, in many cases it was given only 1–2 hours a week, well below the 4–5 hours recommended for other AS level subjects.

The paper highlights another issue: 'who should teach Critical Thinking?' Initial teacher training does not produce specialists in the subject, so the school survey found it is being taught by teachers trained in a disparate range of subjects, from religious studies and philosophy through to science and maths. Most are



Beth Black, Senior Research Officer at Cambridge Assessment.

volunteers but there is some evidence of teachers being pressured to teach what is for them an unfamiliar subject.

Beth Black concludes that schools should treat Critical Thinking as a specialist, stand-alone subject. They should also consider introducing it to pupils before the age of 16, as some already do for their Gifted and Talented pupils, and they should provide specialist in-service training to staff who teach the subject.

New Cambridge IGCSE syllabuses available

Worldwide entries for Cambridge IGCSE in the June 2009 examination session grew by nearly 20 per cent. One of the factors behind its global success is the wide and growing range of subject choice.



Students at Bangalore International School in India building a device for collecting water as part of a Global Perspectives project.

Adding to the choice of subjects, two new syllabuses, Cambridge IGCSE Global Perspectives and Cambridge IGCSE International Mathematics, have been launched by University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE).

Cambridge IGCSE Global Perspectives is cross-curricular, stretching across traditional subject boundaries. It taps into the way today's students enjoy learning – including group work, seminars, projects and working with other students around the world.

Cambridge IGCSE International Mathematics has been developed for schools offering an international curriculum and complements the IB curriculum, offering an assessment and certification at the end of the course.

It enables students to develop and sharpen their investigation and modelling skills, and learn how to develop strategies for solving open-ended questions.

In addition, CIE is piloting two further Cambridge IGCSE syllabuses with schools for 2010: India Studies, and Enterprise. The former enables students around the world to study contemporary India, the latter offers students a chance to set up and run their own small enterprise.

What is the future for Diplomas?

Prospects for the new applied learning qualification dominated Cambridge Assessment's fringe events at the annual party conferences.

The future of the Diploma – the new qualification for 14–19 year-olds introduced last year – was the issue that topped the agenda when Cambridge Assessment staged debates on the theme of *Education for Economic Recovery* at all three main political party conferences.

Opinion ranged from those who argued that the new 'middle way' qualifications should be given 'a fair wind' to others who said they had not been clearly thought through and would fail to meet the country's skills needs.

The fringe events – staged jointly by Cambridge Assessment, the Association of Colleges and the Association of School and College Leaders and chaired by journalist and BBC broadcaster Mike Baker – drew good audiences at the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat annual party conferences.

At the Labour event in Brighton, Ian Wright MP, the Minister for 14–19 Reform and Apprenticeships, said education had a key role in economic recovery. He argued that the raising of the education leaving age to 18 would be one of the longest lasting legacies of Gordon Brown's government. Central to this, he said, would be the success of the new Diplomas, which offered a 'flexible but tailored' route for young people to either university or the workplace.

The General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, John Dunford, strongly supported the Diplomas, saying they were an important new educational pathway 'midway between the academic and the vocational'. While conceding that they were 'over complicated', he urged that they be given the chance to succeed as they would provide the very skills that 'employers had been demanding for years'.

But the Conservative Party's schools spokesman, Nick Gibb MP, said the trouble with the Diploma was that 'we don't know what it is'. Speaking at the event in Manchester, he rejected the idea that they should be 'a thing in the middle'. He said a Conservative government would want Diplomas to work but would 'need to reconfigure them'.

David Laws MP, the Liberal Democrat spokesman, was also unimpressed with the Diplomas, arguing that they were 'not working' and that they had been 'set up to fail' as they were up against a whole suite of other qualifications, including GCSEs and A levels. Addressing the fringe event in Bournemouth, he thought they 'may not be there in a few years' time'. He also argued for 'more options for 14 year-olds to be able to move out of schools and into colleges'.



(L:R): Mike Baker, journalist and BBC broadcaster, Ian Wright MP, the Minister for 14–19 Reform and Apprenticeships with Greg Watson, Chief Executive of OCR, at Cambridge Assessment's *Education for Economic Recovery* fringe event at the Labour Party Conference.



(L:R): Mike Baker, journalist and BBC broadcaster, Greg Watson, Chief Executive of OCR, with David Laws MP at the Liberal Democrat Party Conference.



(L:R): John Dunford, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, Pat Bacon, President of the Association of Colleges, Mike Baker, journalist and BBC broadcaster, Nick Gibb MP and Greg Watson, Chief Executive of OCR, at the Conservative Party Conference.

Greg Watson, Chief Executive of OCR, felt there was a need to ensure young people had the right skills for tomorrow's economy but said Diplomas were 'not the answer'. He argued that other, existing qualifications did a better job of 'practical, hands-on, work-based education'. He criticised Diplomas as expensive and bureaucratic. Instead he wanted more 'bite-sized, generic, skills-based' training opportunities.

Pat Bacon, President of the Association of Colleges, was also 'not convinced' about the applied nature of the Diplomas. Like Watson, she felt that the existing qualifications worked well. She also made a plea for better understanding of the needs of the UK's large number of NEETs, those 'Not in Education, Employment or Training'. She said they were not all 'hoodies on street corners' but many were vulnerable young people with a variety of needs that would have to be met if they were to remain in education.

Is teaching Emotional Intelligence the answer?

Cambridge Assessment's research was put under the spotlight in private meetings at the Labour and Conservative Conferences.

Tim Oates, Group Director of Assessment Research and Development, explained that certain aspects of children's emotional intelligence, sometimes called social capital, had been shown to improve attainment. Two fascinating groups of social psychologists, teacher union representatives and other interested parties discussed how this might translate into policy.

The Labour minister Diana Johnson MP claimed that Sure Start at pre-primary and the SEAL programme in schools dealt with the challenge. Others pointed out that these

programmes were more closely related to creating good citizens rather than driving attainment. Ryan Robson of the Centre for Social Justice – a think-tank headed by former Conservative leader Iain Duncan-Smith – agreed that addressing the whole child through teaching emotional literacy as well as subject knowledge gave better outcomes for the student as well as the nation. The place of parents, social services and other stakeholders was discussed at length while teachers' representatives called for greater training to allow teachers to better deliver on the emotional intelligence of students.



Tim Oates, Group Director of Assessment Research and Development at Cambridge Assessment, and Ann Goddard, Head of PSHE at Manchester Grammar, at Cambridge Assessment's *Emotional Intelligence* fringe event at the Conservative Party Conference.

Helping to shape education in Bahrain

This year in Bahrain more than 21,000 pupils in 133 government schools have taken the new national tests developed by University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE).



Grade 3 students (7–8 year olds) were tested in Arabic and Maths, and Grade 6 students (10–11 year olds) were tested in Arabic, Maths, Science and English.

The new national tests for students in public sector schools in Bahrain were developed as a result of CIE winning a competitive tender to work with the Bahrain Economic Development Board and Ministry of Education to establish a new National Examinations Unit (NEU) as part of the Kingdom's National Education Reform Project in October 2007.

CIE's role in the project included the development and implementation of new national tests so student and school performance can be benchmarked across the country.

Extensive training for local markers was provided and CIE will continue to work with the NEU closely to transfer the skills required to deliver exams on an ongoing basis and to extend the tests to Grade 9 students in May 2010.

Examiners meeting to co-ordinate the marking of English examination papers during the first National Test session.

British business backs functional skills

The Confederation of British Industry, in conjunction with UK exam board OCR, has been helping teachers to find out more about functional skills and the value of literacy and numeracy skills to employers.

Functional skills are practical skills in English, Maths and ICT that help learners gain the most out of work, education and everyday life. OCR is running a three-year pilot for functional skills in all three subjects at all levels – Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2.

The new qualifications were introduced to address employers' concerns that young people and adults are not achieving a firm grounding in English, Maths and ICT. As outlined in a recent report by the Confederation of British Industry, one in three employers has to send staff for remedial training in basic English and maths skills.

Speaking at the event Greg Watson, CEO of OCR, said: "Functional skills are not just maths and English repackaged. Teaching an applied skill needs different approaches. Teachers must teach the practical application and how to use maths and English in a range of situations. They're going to need a lot of support and investment in professional development.

"Pupils need to know how to cope with real life problems, which aren't going to be presented as mathematical problems once they leave school. Just knowing some maths doesn't help, if you can't apply it to the particular job you're going to do,

for example a carpet fitter knowing how to calculate the correct quantity of carpet. The worry I have is there's been a huge investment in the vocational element of the Diploma – the Government has spent millions making sure teachers are confident about what they're doing, but they haven't yet put that investment into functional skills. For employers, this is the most important bit but there's been relatively little support." Presentations were also heard from the Confederation of British Industry and the winner of the Association of Colleges Beacon Award for Functional Skills, Russ Warren.

OCR sponsored the 2008/09 Association of Colleges Beacon Award for Functional Skills, which seeks to identify further education colleges with innovative examples of embedding functional skills across the curriculum.

To find out more visit: www.ocr.org.uk



"...Pupils need to know how to cope with real life problems, which aren't going to be presented as mathematical problems once they leave school..."

(L:R): Russ Warren, Project Director at Hull College and winner of the AoC Beacon Award for Functional Skills, with Greg Watson, CEO of OCR, and Fiona Murray, Senior Policy Adviser 14–19 education at the CBI.

Thai teachers take skills home

A group of 30 English language teachers from Thailand recently got the chance to equip themselves with the necessary skills to design and develop their own English language tests at a four-week training course in Cambridge.

Working closely with the Thai Ministry of Education, Cambridge ESOL in collaboration with Bell International delivered the training to help the teachers develop their knowledge of teacher training methodologies and to improve their overall skills.

Yuwadee Yoosabai, a delegate from the course, said: "The course has been extremely useful. Cambridge ESOL and Bell International worked perfectly together

to give us a mix of theory and practical experience. They took time to find out in what areas of teaching we were experiencing difficulties, in order to ensure that the training was tailor-made to our needs. We have all learnt so much in regards to the different types of tests available and feel much more confident about how to extract the best from our students."

Christine Nuttall, Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations at Cambridge ESOL, said: "We worked closely with the Thai Ministry of Education and Bell International to offer our visitors a unique insight into facing the daily challenges associated with teaching English. This is part of our wider objective to support educators all over the world and I'm glad their new skills are already being put into practice."



English language teachers from Thailand during their four-week training course in Cambridge.

Linguistic revolution!

The internet is a linguistic revolution and "netspeak" is a radically new linguistic medium that we cannot ignore, according to leading linguist Professor David Crystal.

Speaking at Cambridge ESOL's inaugural World of Work forum, Professor Crystal, OBE and Patron of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language, discussed how the internet has affected our use of language.

The three-day event provided delegates with the chance to interact with business English experts in order to learn more about the impact technology will have on teaching, learning and assessment, as well as to share best practice and expertise.

"It's really important to encourage and support this type of discussion amongst recognised experts in the industry," explains Deshini Chetty, Cambridge ESOL's Global Manager for Workplace Assessment. She continued, "In the current climate, language competence in the workplace is more important than ever and this is the first in a series of work-related forums we will be holding to discuss these types of issues".

Creating the tools and techniques to support businesses in their efforts to assess employees' language skills accurately and reliably is the founding principle of Cambridge ESOL's World of Work assessment portfolio.

"...language competence in the workplace is more important than ever..."

On-screen essay marking is reliable

Examiners can mark essays just as reliably on screen as in the traditional paper mode, providing it is done properly. That is the finding of a recent Cambridge Assessment study.

The finding has important implications for assessment. Existing literature suggests that readers' comprehension of texts might be weaker when extended texts, such as essays, are read on screen and this might influence assessors' judgements about quality.



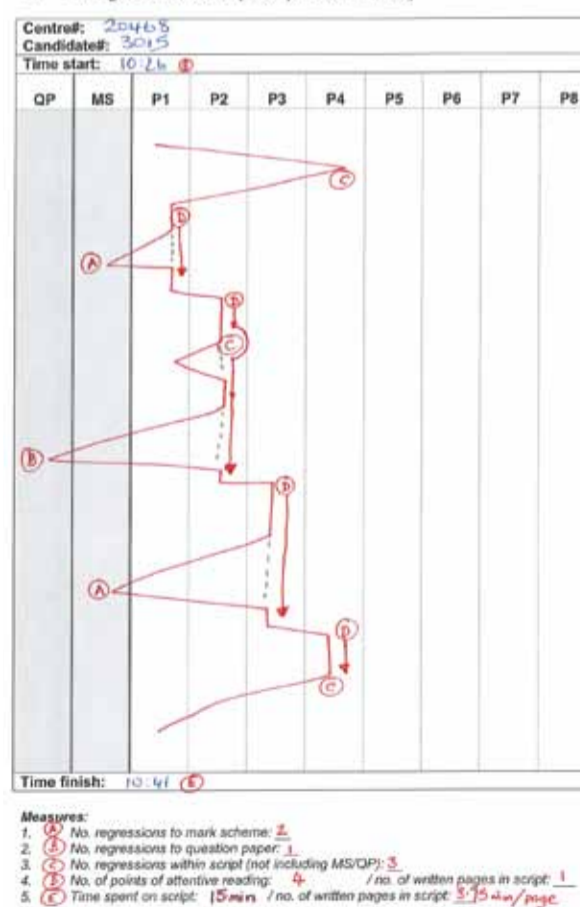
The study says that, at a time when the role and impact of technology in education generates continuous debate, it is imperative that e-assessment solutions are robust, reliable and valid. Cambridge Assessment's research plays a vital role in the continuous improvement of education and assessment policies and practices.

Although some examiners appeared to work harder on-screen to achieve similar outcomes to paper marking, others felt energised by particular aspects of on-screen marking, for example 'seeing the scripts off by a click'.

The study was one of seven Cambridge Assessment papers presented at the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Annual Conference at the University of Manchester in September 2009.

The team's presentations – on a wide range of issues – generated a lot of interest and led to some fruitful discussions within the research community. The full abstracts can be found in our research section at www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk

1: Navigation schedule (4 script observations)



Copy of an observation schedule that researchers used to track the way that an examiner navigates through an essay whilst marking it.

New standards setter at UK board

Sara Coldicott, formerly Head of OCR's Qualifications Development, is now Director of the Standards division. She is also OCR's Accountable Officer with overall responsibility for regulatory compliance. She succeeds Jean Marshall, who retired at the end of September.

With 31 years in the business, Sara has a wealth of expertise and depth of knowledge about assessment and qualifications, making her the ideal replacement.



Sara Coldicott

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Photography: cover (leaves):
Corbis Images
Design: H2 Associates, Cambridge



Language and methodology

Three English teachers from the compulsory education sector in Spain, Taiwan and France recently attended a top teacher development course in Cambridge.



(L:R): Ian Cook, Marketing Manager, School Sector Cambridge ESOL, María Jesús Martín Merino from Palencia, Shu-Ying Su from Fengshan and Ludivine Lefebvre from Cannes.

María Jesús Martín Merino from Palencia, Shu-Ying Su from Fengshan and Ludivine Lefebvre from Cannes were all sponsored by the School Sector at Cambridge ESOL to take part in a *Language and Methodology* refresher course for school teachers, run by the Bell School.

During the two-week summer course, teachers were introduced to new classroom methodologies and were able to take part in a full programme of social and cultural activities with other teachers from around the world.

On her Cambridge experience, Ludivine Lefebvre, who prepares students for Cambridge ESOL's Preliminary English Test, said: "I really enjoyed my stay in Cambridge and found the course incredibly useful. In my job as a teacher I prepare students for an English test set by Cambridge ESOL. This is particularly rewarding for students as the test is recognised all over the world and can help them in their professional life. I'm looking forward to applying my new skills in the classroom".

Excellent first year for Cambridge Pre-U

There has been excellent feedback from schools on the first year of the new Cambridge Pre-U courses. It comes as the pioneering cohort of students enters its crucial second year, preparing for final exams in summer 2010.

Teachers at Walthamstow Hall, Leweston School and Winchester College helped to prepare a 'first year report' on Cambridge Pre-U. Comments were positive, with schools finding that Cambridge Pre-U is delivering the promised benefits: more teaching time because of fewer exams, and a greater opportunity for broader study and independent research.

The first short-course candidates received their exam results in August, and results were found to be in line with schools' expectations. In addition, examiners reported that Cambridge Pre-U candidates had achieved standards above A grade at A level.

More than 75 state-maintained and independent schools will be offering Cambridge Pre-U from September 2009, and a further 200 have expressed interest in offering the qualification in the near future.

For more information visit: www.cie.org.uk



Cambridge Pre-U student at Yarm School, a leading independent school in the north-east of England.