



OXFORD UNIVERSITY CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Public Understanding of Assessment

Seminar Series 2011/12

The Minister of Education for England, Michael Gove, considers the examination system to be discredited and has said changing it is one of his main priorities. However, a general lack of understanding of assessment concepts and practices can potentially give rise to inappropriate assessment policies, a lack of trust or even an unwarranted trust in examination systems and outcomes, confusion about attainment standards and inappropriate use of assessment information. It seems reasonable to propose, therefore, that a more developed understanding of assessment processes and their outcomes would promote a more informed level of interpretation and appropriate consequences. Contexts in which concepts such as reliability and validity are hugely important, but perhaps not widely understood, include high-stakes examinations that act as gatekeepers to higher education or employment opportunities, and forms of assessment that require expert judgements from the assessors. This series of seminars seeks to explore various perceptions of assessment in the public, policy and professional domains and to consider how public understanding of assessment needs to develop to ensure more effective use of assessment in the future.

Organising Committee: Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Professor Richard Daugherty, Professor John Gardner (Chair), Joanne Hazell and Professor Jim Tognolini.

The seminars will take place in Seminar Room A, University of Oxford Department of Education, 15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY. The tea and the drinks reception will take place in the Common Room. Limited parking is available behind the Bruner Building at no. 30 Norham Gardens.

4.30-5.00 Tea
5.00-6.30 Seminar
6.30-7.00 Drinks reception

To register your interest or for further information, please contact Joanne Hazell at joanne.hazell@education.ox.ac.uk.

<http://oucea.education.ox.ac.uk/>



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Please note the seminars will be recorded

Seminar 1 - Wednesday 16th November 2011

Public and Media Perceptions of Assessment

Speakers: Anastasia de Waal, Professor Roger Murphy and Warwick Mansell

Chair: Isabel Sutcliffe

Seminar 2 - Wednesday 18th January 2012

Perceptions of the Dependability of Assessment

Speakers: Baroness Onora O'Neill, Dr Suzanne Chamberlain

Discussant: Professor Peter Tymms

Seminar 3 - Wednesday 7th March 2012

Policy-related Perceptions of Assessment

Speakers: Lord Paul Bew, John Bangs

Discussant: Alison Peacock

Chair: Professor Jim Tognolini

Seminar 4 - Wednesday 25th April 2012

Perceptions of the Purposes of Assessment

Speakers: Dr Paul Newton, Professor Val Klenowski, Sir Michael Barber

Discussant: Kathleen Tattersall OBE

Chair: Mark Anderson

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Introducing some of our speakers



Mark Anderson is President, Global Strategy & Business Development, Pearson International. He first worked for Pearson in the period 1984-1997 in the UK and Hong Kong, latterly running a regional professional publishing & information business. For ten years he worked in consumer goods and technology businesses, before rejoining Pearson in April 2007. He was educated at Cambridge University and received an MBA from Ashridge Business School. He is the author of *The Leadership Book* (2010).



John Bangs started his career as a teacher. He joined the National Union of Teachers (NUT) in 1990 as the officer responsible for special needs and for the English National Curriculum and its assessment. In 1993 he was appointed Assistant Secretary (Education/Equal Opportunities). Since leaving the NUT he has focused primarily on teacher policy and the interface between the teaching profession and government. He is special consultant for Education International-the largest global confederation of teacher organisations.



Sir Michael Barber is a leading authority on education systems and education reform. Over the past two decades his research and advisory work has focused on school improvement, standards and performance; system-wide reform; effective implementation; access, success and funding in higher education; and access and quality in schools in developing countries. He recently joined Pearson as Chief Education Advisor, leading Pearson's worldwide programme of research into education policy and efficacy.



Professor Lord Paul Bew is a cross-bench peer, Professor of Irish Politics at Queen's University in Belfast, a Member of the Royal Irish Academy (MRIA) and an honorary Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge. In November 2010, he was appointed to chair the external review into Key Stage 2 testing, assessment and accountability, which reported in June 2011. The report is available from the Department for Education website at (shortened URL): <http://tinyurl.com/6dewa3d>. The government response is at: <http://tinyurl.com/6253pnr>.



Dr Suzanne Chamberlain is a Senior Research Associate at the Centre for Education Research and Policy at AQA (Assessment & Qualifications Alliance), which is the largest provider of GCSE and A-level qualifications in the UK. Suzanne's recent research projects have focused on assessment stakeholders' perceptions of the reliability of public examinations outcomes, and candidates' experiences of test anxiety.



Anastasia de Waal is Deputy Director and Director of Family and Education at think tank Civitas. A qualified primary school teacher, Anastasia is a regular contributor to broadcast and print media and Chair of the parenting charity Family Lives.



Val Klenowski is a Professor of Education at the Queensland University of Technology. She has been Chief Investigator on a number of Australian Research Council funded projects that have focused on achievement standards, teacher judgement and moderation, culture-inclusive assessment, and the use of an eportfolio system with marginalised youth. She has published in the fields of learning and assessment, curriculum, evaluation and educational change.



Warwick Mansell is an education journalist. During nine years as a reporter with the Times Educational Supplement, he covered most aspects of schools policy, specialising for the final six years in curriculum, assessment and accountability. Since January 2009, he has been freelance, writing frequently on issues including the effects of results pressures on schools. He has been shortlisted for several reporting awards. His book, *Education by Numbers: the Tyranny of Testing*, was published in 2007.



Roger Murphy is a Professor of Education at the University of Nottingham. He has had a long standing interest in research into educational assessment and examinations. His many research studies in this area have included work on the reliability of different types of assessment, the public understanding of the limitations of assessments, as well as the media coverage of public examination results in the UK.



Dr Paul Newton is the Director of the Cambridge Assessment Network Division, within Cambridge Assessment. Much of his research has focused on issues related to the design and evaluation of large-scale assessment systems. He has published papers on a range of assessment topics, including: comparability theory; purposes; validity; and the public understanding of measurement inaccuracy. Paul is a Fellow of the Association for Educational Assessment – Europe.



Baroness Onora O'Neill writes on ethics and political philosophy. She was Principal of Newnham College Cambridge from 1992-2006, is a former President of the British Academy and sits in the House of Lords as a crossbencher.



Alison Peacock is Headteacher at The Wroxham Primary School, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire. She is also a National Leader in Education and leads a National School of Creativity. Wroxham was awarded Teaching School status in July 2011. Alison's teaching career spans primary, secondary and advisory roles. She leads the Cambridge Primary Review (CPR) National Network in partnership with Professor Robin Alexander. Together they have established twelve CPR centres at universities across the country.



Isabel Sutcliffe is Edexcel's Regulation, Standards and Research Director and carries the role of Accountable Officer. Before joining Edexcel in 2006, she followed a long career with NCFE, a vocational awarding body based in Newcastle, culminating in serving as its Chief Executive from 2001 to 2006. Prior to joining NCFE, she worked for one of the many predecessor bodies now comprising AQA. Isabel is Chair of the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) Executive Committee.



Kathleen Tattersall began her career as a teacher and worked in both primary and secondary schools prior to joining a CSE Board where she was involved in all aspects of assessment, including research. She was Chief Executive of five assessment organisations, most recently AQA where she was the first Director General. Kathleen has served on several national bodies, including the Tomlinson Committee. She was the first Chair of Ofqual, the regulator of qualifications and tests, serving from 2008 until 2010. Kathleen has been a member since its inception, and is the current vice-President, of the Association for Educational Assessment (Europe).



Professor Jim Tognolini is Senior Vice President of Pearson Research and Assessment and Senior Research Fellow at the Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment. In his current position he is responsible for the implementation and on-going management of assessment systems and learning processes. He has advised and published widely in the area of psychometrics and on standards-based systems of assessment.



Professor Peter Tymms PhD is Head of Department in the School of Education, Durham University. His main research interests include monitoring, assessment, interventions and research methodology generally. He set up the PIPS (Performance Indicators in Primary Schools Project) which runs in thousands of schools around the world. Peter Tymms is an adviser to the German National Educational Panel Study, is on the Expert Board of the European Science Foundation and a member of the Academy of Social Science.