

# **Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment**

**Annual Report 2016 / 2017**





# **Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment**

## **Annual Report 2016/17**

L-R (back row): Jo Hazell, Jeanne Ryan, Josh McGrane, Jenny Lenkeit, Pauline Rea-Dickins, Tine Görgen, Jessica Chan, (front row): Yasmine El Masri, Therese N. Hopfenbeck, Jo-Anne Baird, Natalie Usher, Daniel Caro



# Contents

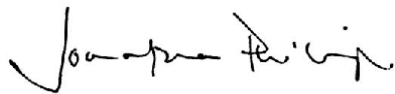
<u>Foreword .....</u>	<u>5</u>
Director's Overview.....	6
The Centre .....	10
Governance.....	10
Management Group Membership .....	10
Joint Advisory Board Membership.....	10
Staff.....	11
Research .....	17
Assessment for Learning in Improving Pedagogy and Assessment for Numeracy in Foundation Years.....	18
Launch Event and First Workshops in South Africa.....	19
Launch Event and First Workshops in Tanzania .....	20
Standard Setting and Maintaining Standards in National Examinations Project .....	21
Examination Reform: The Impact of Linear and Modular Examinations at GCSE .....	21
PIRLS 2016 National Centre .....	22
Higher Education Innovation Funding .....	23
Progress in International Reading Literacy Study .....	23
<i>PIRLS for Teachers</i> .....	23
Developing Appropriate Assessments of English Language Fluency for Children with English as an Additional Language.....	26
Aga Khan University Language Policy Thinking Group.....	27
Using Technology in Science Tasks: Reducing Language Barriers for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon.....	29
Norwegian Review of Reviews.....	30
Indicators of Education System Effectiveness.....	31
Judging Demands and Predicting Task Difficulty: A systematic review of the literature.....	32
Publications .....	33
Presentations .....	41
Events.....	44

AERA Invited Speaker Session .....	45
PISA Seminar 2016 .....	46
Association for Education Assessment - Europe .....	47
42 <sup>nd</sup> International Association for Educational Assessment Conference .....	47
Standard Setting Symposium, Oxford .....	48
OUCEA Annual Lecture, 25 <sup>th</sup> May 2017, Ashmolean Museum .....	50
Impact and Dissemination .....	52
Senior Public Appointments .....	52
Student Assessment Network .....	56
Journals .....	58
Conferences .....	58
Media .....	59
Departmental Associates .....	60
Honorary Research Fellows and Research Associates .....	60
Research Visitors .....	61
Teaching .....	62
MSc in Education: Learning & Technology .....	63
MSc in Learning & Teaching .....	63
MSc in Teacher Education .....	63
Introduction to multi-level modelling .....	63
Advanced multi-level modelling .....	63
Introduction to structural equation modelling .....	63
Research Students .....	64
Masters students supervised 2016 .....	64
DPhil students co-supervised by OUCEA staff .....	65
Current DPhil students .....	66

## Foreword

This will be my final introduction to the Centre's annual report. We have agreed that with the ending of the financial support that has been provided by Pearson plc the role of the Joint Advisory Board needs to be reconsidered. I am very grateful to the members of the Board for the assistance they have given during the past year and during my time as Chair.

OUCEA has now established a strong reputation in the field of educational assessment. This and previous reports record many significant achievements which I shall not repeat. I am sure that Therese N. Hopfenbeck and the team she is developing will build very effectively on these strong foundations. I wish them every success.



Sir Jonathan Phillips

Warden, Keble College, University of Oxford



## Director's Overview

Oxford University is committed 'to empower the creative autonomy of individuals to address fundamental questions of real significance and applied questions with potential to change the world' (Strategic plan 2017). In times when the world faces the challenges of fake news and declining trust in science, the need for critical, innovative research to solve real world problems is more apparent than ever. As Director of OUCEA, I am equally committed to support our young team of independent researchers to take on these challenges by engaging in high quality research addressing the fundamental questions around measurement, assessment and learning.

Having now been Director of OUCEA since January 2016, I remain committed to leading OUCEA as it looks to the future and to continuing to develop it as a research centre with a demonstrable impact on the educational assessment community. The past year has been full of notable developments, particularly in the areas of research, recruitment and teaching. The Centre also continues to host numerous events, notably our Annual Lecture in May each year as well as one-off seminars from both members based in Oxford and associate members from other institutions. Another measure of the Centre's continued success is our publication record, not only by more senior members but including collaborative efforts with some of our DPhil students. An overview of the publications follows in this report.

On the recruitment front, I am pleased to announce that we have appointed a new research fellow, Dr Joshua McGrane, who joined the Centre in October 2016. Josh is a psychometrician who completed his university medal-winning PhD in quantitative psychology at the University of Sydney. Josh joined us from the Graduate School of Education at the University of Western Australia and has also worked as a psychometrician for the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) in the New South Wales Department of Education.

Dr Jessica Chan also joined our team in mid-July 2017 as a research officer. Jessica obtained her DPhil from Oxford's Department of Education in 2015 and we are delighted to be able to welcome her back. She will be supporting the Centre on various different research projects.



The research funded by the ESRC-DFID Raising Learning Outcomes in Education Systems Programme, *Assessment for Learning in Africa (AFLA): Improving Pedagogy and Assessment for Numeracy in Foundation Years* (ESRC-DFID Major Research Project, £695,210), which commenced in April 2016, has continued with the launch of the project in Tanzania and South Africa in January and February 2017. This project works with teachers in challenging contexts in these countries to support enhanced numeracy development and learning outcomes in the foundation years of primary schools, through assessment for learning practices. As Principal Investigator for this research project, in Oxford I am supported by Professor Jo-Anne Baird as co-investigator as well as Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins, Dr Joshua McGrane, Dr Jessica Chan and DPhil student Tine Görgen. On the ground in Tanzania and South Africa, we are privileged to continue working with Professor Anil Kanjee (Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa), Professor Yusuf Sayed (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa), Professor Anjum Halai and Veronica Sarungi (Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development East Africa, Tanzania) as well as many [others](#).

Dr Yasmine El Masri has continued to successfully attract funding from various internal (University of Oxford) and external sources (Aga Khan University, ESRC), coordinating the research for the *Aga Khan University Language Policy Thinking Group (LPTG)*, supported by Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins. Yasmine also spent three months in Lebanon, earlier this year, collecting data for a project entitled *Using technology in science tasks: Reducing language barriers for Syrian refugees in Lebanon*, funded by the ESRC, under the *Global Challenges Scheme* (£100,000).

Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins continues to work as a research consultant for us, and remains a core team member on the AFLA research project, supporting the Director with research and publication. She has also been part of the Aga Khan University Language Policy Thinking group working closely with Yasmine El Masri. The project, which focuses upon English as the medium of instruction in all Aga Khan Universities, will publish its final OUCEA report and literature review in fall 2017.

The fourth cycle of the PIRLS project (*Progress in International Reading Literacy Study*), which is coordinated by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, has also continued to be a key project for the Centre, with OUCEA due to deliver the national



PIRLS report for England in December 2017. In this I am grateful for the support of the PIRLS Team, which now includes Dr Joshua McGrane, with his particularly relevant expertise in the conceptual, empirical and statistical aspects of psychometrics and educational assessment. Josh has had the main responsibility for the report that will be made publically available in December 2017. Jamie Stiff, who joined OUCEA and PIRLS in June 2017 as a research assistant, has been part of the PIRLS team and supporting the work on the analysis.

On the teaching front, I am also delighted to report that OUCEA's part-time MSc programme on Assessments has now been fully approved by the University and that we will be accepting applications for this programme from this coming Autumn, with the first students due to take up their places in October 2018. Our target audiences will primarily be from examination boards, ministries of education, test developers and researchers, and those interested in the implementation and validation of educational assessments.

In addition to the research conducted by staff members, the work carried out by our students also continues to be recognised both nationally and internationally: Natalie Usher was awarded the Best Early Stage Short Talk 2016 award at the *EARLI SIG Writing Research School* in Liverpool in July 2016 with Carol Brown, Tine Görden, Jeanne Ryan and Rachel Taylor also having presented at conferences in the UK and abroad. Tine Görden, Christine Paget, Shailen Popat and Rachel Taylor have had their work (as co-authors) published in the *European Journal of Education* (April 2017), *Frontiers in Psychology* (November 2016), by the *Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment* (January 2017), and *The Oxford Review of Education* (December 2016) respectively. This is partly due to the Centre's positive view of collaborative work, encouraging and recognising input from DPhil students as they make the transition to early stage researchers. We are also proud to announce that Carol Brown has been awarded a degree of Doctor of Philosophy for her thesis *What Motivates A-level Students to Achieve? The Role of Expectations and Values*. Her examiners were Professor Robert Klassen, University of York and Professor Steve Strand, University of Oxford. Carol Brown has been supervised by Dr. Therese N. Hopfenbeck and Prof. Jo-Anne Baird, both OUCEA and she is currently employed as a Senior Lecturer in [Psychology and Education](#) at Oxford Brookes University.

Finally, I am delighted to report that Professor P. David Pearson delivered the OUCEA Annual Lecture at the Ashmolean Museum on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017, which was attended by around 100 people. The lecture, *Recent developments in reading assessment in the USA National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): An analysis of conceptual, digital, psychometric, and policy trends*, is available as a podcast [here](#).

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Therese N. Hopfenbeck". The script is cursive and elegant, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Associate Professor Therese N. Hopfenbeck

Director, Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment

# The Centre

## Governance

The Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment has a Management Group, which meets termly and a Joint Advisory Board, which meets annually.

## Management Group Membership

**Professor Jo-Anne Baird**, Department of Education Director

**Associate Professor Therese N. Hopfenbeck**, OUCEA Director

**Professor Alis Oancea**, Department of Education Director of Research

**Eve Rodgers**, Department of Education Administrator

**Ellie Gaspar**, OUCEA Administrator

## Joint Advisory Board Membership

**Sir Jonathan Phillips** (Chair), Warden, Keble College, University of Oxford

**Professor David Andrich**, Chapple Chair in Education, University of Western Australia

**Professor Jo-Anne Baird**, Director, Department of Education, University of Oxford

**Dr Rose Clesham**, Head of Assessment Research and Design, Pearson UK

**Professor Richard Daugherty**, Professor Emeritus, Aberystwyth University / Honorary Research Fellow, University of Oxford

**Professor John Gardner**, Deputy Principal (Education and Students), University of Stirling / Research Associate, University of Oxford

**Professor Caroline Gipps**, Visiting Professor, Institute of Education, University of London / former Vice Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton

**Associate Professor Therese N. Hopfenbeck**, Director, Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment

## Staff

### **Associate Professor Therese N. Hopfenbeck**



Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck is Associate Professor and Director of the Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment. Before joining OUCEA in January 2012, Therese held a post-doctoral position at the Oslo University's research group for Measurement and Evaluation of Student Achievement at the Unit for Quantitative Analysis of Education. Originally a secondary school teacher with many years' experience in the classroom, Therese has also worked as a school district supervisor and as a consultant for the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, regarding the development and evaluation of national exams. Therese is the Research Manager of *PIRLS 2016* and Principal Investigator for *PIRLS for Teachers* and the ESRC-funded project *Assessment for Learning in Africa*. She is Lead Editor of *Assessment in Education: Principles, policy and practice*. In 2017 - 18, she was appointed Associate Professor at the University of Bergen, Norway. Therese has a presence on [LinkedIn](#), [ResearchGate](#), [Academia.edu](#) and Twitter: [@TNHopfenbeck](#).

### **Professor Jo-Anne Baird**

Professor Jo-Anne Baird is Director of the Department of Education, at the University of Oxford and a member of OUCEA. This year she took up the position as Standing Specialist Adviser to the House of Commons Education Select Committee. Her research interests focus upon assessment systems, and recent projects include the effect of examination structures, predictability of examinations, marking quality and the definition of examination standards. She was previously Director of OUCEA, Head of the Centre for Assessment and Learning at the University of Bristol, and Head of Research at the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance. In 2016 - 17, she was appointed Professor II at the University of Bergen, Norway. Jo-Anne is an Editor for the *Oxford Review of Education*. Jo-Anne has a presence on [LinkedIn](#), [ResearchGate](#), [Academia.edu](#) and Twitter: [@Baird\\_jo\\_anne](#).



### **Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins**



Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins joined OUCEA in January 2016. She advises on research, is mentor to post-doctoral fellows, and contributes to research projects, in particular language assessment and the ESRC-funded project, *Assessment for Learning in Africa*. Her research interests focus on language testing and assessment and language in education, in particular in multilingual and development contexts. She was previously Director of the Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development, East Africa and prior to that, Director of Research, Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol.

### **Dr Daniel Caro**

Daniel Caro is a Research Fellow at OUCEA. He completed his PhD in Education at the Freie Universität, Berlin and a Master's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of New Brunswick. He is an alumnus of the OECD's Thomas J. Alexander Fellowship Programme and the International Max Planck Research School on the Life Course (LIFE). His research interests include education inequality, international large-scale student assessments, R programming, mixed models in cross-sectional and longitudinal settings, and causal inference with observational data. Daniel has a presence on [LinkedIn](#), [ResearchGate](#) and Twitter: [@daniel\\_h\\_caro](#).



### **Dr Jenny Lenkeit**



Jenny Lenkeit is a Research Fellow at OUCEA. She conducts research on the effectiveness of education systems, particularly focusing on the methodological and conceptual link between educational effectiveness research and international large-scale assessments. Jenny is interested in the impact of international studies on educational policy making and cross-cultural comparisons of teaching approaches. She has also conducted research on the mechanisms of educational inequalities related to socioeconomic characteristics and immigrant background, and how operationalisations of socioeconomic background differ across groups of students. Jenny has a presence on [ResearchGate](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

### **Dr Yasmine El Masri**

Yasmine El Masri is a Research Fellow at OUCEA. She won two research grants in September and October 2017, one of which is a prestigious one-year ESRC Postdoctoral Research Fellowship under the Global Challenges research scheme. Yasmine is currently a Principal Investigator on two projects. The first is the *Aga Khan University (AKU) Language Policy Thinking Group* project that aims to provide evidence-based guidance for the development of an AKU Language Policy. The second one, *Using Technology in Science Tasks: Reducing Language Barriers for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*, aims to apply her doctoral and more recent research, in a global challenge context, where she engages with different academic and non-academic users. Yasmine has a presence on LinkedIn and Twitter: @Y\_Masri.





### ***Dr Joshua McGrane***



Josh McGrane completed his university medal-winning PhD in Quantitative Psychology and a BA (Hons.) in Psychology at the University of Sydney. He has been a postdoctoral fellow at the Graduate School of Education, University of Western Australia, and also worked as a psychometrician for the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) in the New South Wales Department of Education. This has provided him with extensive experience across academic and government contexts in education, including psychometric analysis and the innovation of state and national-level educational assessments. At

OUCEA, Josh's research fellowship is funded by AQA. He is involved in a number of projects, including developing research alliances with AQA, *Assessment for Learning in Africa (AFLA)*, the *PIRLS 2016 National Centre*, and pursuing his own research interests in psychometrics.

### ***Rachel Dryden***

Rachel joined the Centre as a temporary, part-time administrator, in April 2017. She manages the day-to-day business of the Centre, including organising events and meetings, keeping on top of the Centre's finances, and proofreading and editing material for publication. Rachel has worked at a number of University departments, most recently as a project assistant at the School of Archaeology and at the Faculty of English Language and Literature, where



she is currently a research assistant on the [Creative Multilingualism – Prismatic Translation](#) research project. Rachel completed her MPhil in Islamic studies and History at Oxford, in 2016 and will begin her PhD in Theology and Religious Studies in Cambridge in October 2017.





### ***Eleanor Gaspar***

Eleanor Gaspar joined OUCEA full time in October 2017 as the Centre's new Administrator following Rachel Dryden's departure to begin her PhD in Cambridge.

Eleanor joins OUCEA from Oxford University Press where she was an Account Manager for international distributors within the English Language Teaching division. Her experience is in efficiency and organization with a view to reviewing and improving

processes, and in reporting and forecasting on finances.

### ***Jamie Stiff***



Jamie Stiff joined OUCEA as a research assistant, working primarily on the PIRLS project. Prior to this, he completed his undergraduate degree in experimental psychology and his master's degree in education, both at the University of Oxford. He is particularly interested in the assessment of reading and numeracy abilities in primary education, and how international assessments impact on school and teacher practices.

### ***Joanne Hazell***

Joanne Hazell was the Centre's administrator from 2008 – 2017. In April 2017, Joanne moved to take up a new post within the Department of Education. We would like to thank Joanne for her support over the years with all aspects of the Centre's research activities and wish her all the best in her new position as Editorial Assistant for the *Oxford Review of Education*.



## **Research Assistants**

The Centre has also welcomed the following Research Assistants over the past year: Jill Boggs, Carol Brown, Kate Cantrell, Jessica Chan, Tine Görden, Shailen Popat, Jeanne Ryan, Andrea Tartakowsky and Natalie Usher. They have participated in research projects for which they have also co-authored journals articles and research reports.

## Research

Post Brexit, collaboration with other centres around the world has become even more crucial and we are pleased to be working with the University of Bergen's SLATE Centre, the Aga Khan University in both Pakistan and Tanzania, and Tshwane University of Technology, and Cape Peninsula University of Technology in South Africa. The Centre has been successful in attracting new research funding, with Dr Yasmine El Masri's ESRC post-doctoral research fellowship for the project *Using Technology in Science Tasks: Reducing Language Barriers for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*, and the research and development work for the *Aga Khan University Language Policy Thinking Group*.

Our research capacity has been strengthened by new appointments. Dr Joshua McGrane joined OUCEA on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016, with funding from the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance and is supporting OUCEA's psychometric research and applied educational assessment. He has recently obtained research funding from OUP to produce a systematic review of writing assessment.. Jamie Stiff is working as Research Assistant on the PIRLS Project and in July 2017, we are welcoming Dr Jessica Chan as a new Research Officer.

Research projects underway in the centre in the period of this report are outlined below. For more details please visit <http://oucea.education.ox.ac.uk/research>

## Assessment for Learning in Improving Pedagogy and Assessment for Numeracy in Foundation Years

Funder: ESRC-DFID (£695,210), 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2019; Principal Investigator: Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck; Co-PI: Professor Jo-Anne Baird; OUCEA Collaborators: Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins, Dr Daniel Caro, Dr Jenny Lenkeit, Natalie Usher and Tine Görden; International Collaborators: Co-Investigator Professor Anil Kanjee (Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa), Co-Investigator Professor Yusuf Sayed (Cape Peninsula University of Technology), Co-Investigator Professor Anjum Halai and Veronica Sarungi (Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development East Africa, Tanzania).



Research jointly supported by the ESRC and DFID

The low levels of numeracy skills of millions of marginalised students living in poverty, particularly in developing nations, are of international concern. This project focuses on improving standards of numeracy through developing teachers' and teacher trainers' pedagogical and assessment skills in extremely deprived urban areas in South Africa and Tanzania. Eighteen schools and three teacher training colleges will participate in this three-year research project.

Our approach is to develop classroom materials for primary school numeracy and use these as the basis for teacher workshops and the development of teacher learning communities in each geographical area. The workshops will focus on how formative assessment (Assessment for Learning) can be used to enhance the quality of the teaching and learning of numeracy. The aim is to improve teachers' own numeracy skills and their understanding of how numeracy can be more effectively communicated to their students. The workshops and teacher learning

communities that will be developed during the research period will draw on the extensive experience which has been generated by the implementation of Assessment for Learning internationally. One task for participants will be to draw on this experience and modify this approach to meet the specific needs of schools in slum areas experiencing significant challenges, for example, large classes with very limited, if any, resources.

The project team includes researchers with extensive experience of implementing formative assessment internationally, numeracy specialists and academics based in the two countries, who are familiar with local conditions. The project started in April 2016 and has four phases. The first is a preparatory phase, in which participants are confirmed and briefed, materials are developed and baseline testing conducted. The second phase (January to March 2017), saw the implementation of the workshops in both countries, the establishment of teacher learning communities, along with visits to schools by mentors. These are continuing into the third phase (April to December 2017), along with the analysis of the workshops and a second round of achievement tests. The third phase (January 2018 to March 2019) will incorporate interviews, school visits, dissemination of the research findings, as well as, importantly, the final production of materials for teacher classroom assessment in early years' numeracy, journal articles, and an edited book on AFLA findings.

### **Launch Event and First Workshops in South Africa**

AFLA's work in South Africa was officially presented to the public with launch events and teacher workshops at the two research sites on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2017, in Pretoria and Cape Town respectively. These events were organised by Professor Anil Kanjee and his team from Tshwane University of Technology and Professor Yusuf Sayed and his team at Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The Governments of Gauteng Province and Western Cape respectively co-hosted the launch events. Principal Investigator Dr Therese Hopfenbeck and Dr Joshua McGrane from Oxford, as well as Advisory Board member Professor Gordon Stobart, attended the events and participated in the carrying out of the workshops. Professor Beets, also a member of the Advisory Board, participated in a panel discussion on 'Why will AFLA make a difference?', during the launch on the 9<sup>th</sup> February.

## Launch Event and First Workshops in Tanzania



The launch of AFLA in Tanzania took place at the Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development East Africa on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Speaking on behalf of the Minister of Education, Science Technology and Vocational Training, the Honorable Professor Joyce Ndalichako, Professor Sylvia Temu, Director of Higher Education, addressed the very well-attended event. Participants included head teachers, teachers, Teacher Training College and university representatives and other educational professionals. Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck, Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins and Dr Joshua McGrane from Oxford University participated in this launch event and workshop that was organized by the AFLA team in Tanzania, led by Professor Anjum Halai, Professor Naomi Katunzi and Veronica Sarungi.

## Standard Setting and Maintaining Standards in National Examinations Project

Funder: AQA Education (£435,790), 1 January 2016 – 31 December 2020; Principal Investigator: Professor Jo-Anne Baird; Research Fellow: Dr Joshua McGrane; Collaborators: Dr Lena Gray (AQA), Dennis Opposs (Ofqual), Dr Tina Isaacs (UCL); Research Assistant: Tine Görden.

Examination standards are not well-defined in theoretical terms and this leads to problems in their public understanding, with consequent periodic crises in public confidence. Baird and Gray published a 2016 paper, in the *Oxford Review of Education*, setting out the differences in the ways standards are perceived and enacted in Scotland and England. This work is being extended to other countries in the joint project between OUCEA, AQA, Ofqual and the University College London Institute of Education. The project aims to describe the processes used to set or to maintain, (or link over time) standards in these examinations, and to explore the concepts relating to standards behind them. The project focuses on how standards in national, school-leaving or university entrance examinations are set and maintained in a wide range of jurisdictions around the world.

## Examination Reform: The Impact of Linear and Modular Examinations at GCSE



Funder: Ofqual (£241,420), 1 December 2014 – 31 March 2018;  
Principal Investigators: Professor Jo-Anne Baird (OUCEA) & Dr Michelle Meadows (Ofqual); Collaborators: Dr Daniel Caro, Dr Yasmine El Masri, Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck, Dr Victoria

Elliott, Dr Jane McNicholl, Professor Gordon Stobart, Dr Tina Isaacs, Dr Jenni Ingram; Research Assistants: Carol Brown and Tine Görden.

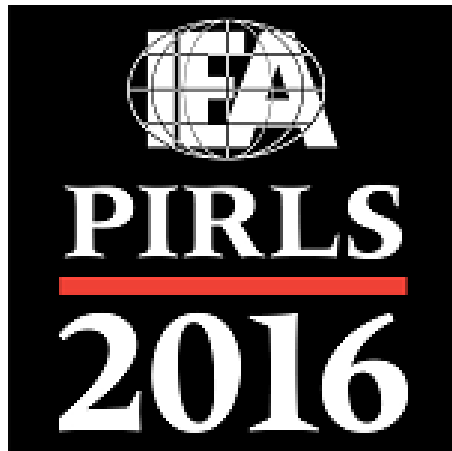
GCSE examinations, taken at the age of 16 in England, are currently administered at the end of the two-year course in a linear manner. In the early part of this century, they were modular examinations. Much has been written about the effects of these examination structures, but to date there has not been a systematic project collating all of the available research and looking at the empirical effects of these structures on the GCSE examination over time. This collaborative project with Ofqual seeks to do that by 2018.



## PIRLS 2016 National Centre

Funder: Department for Education (£178,254), 1 February 2014 – 31 December 2018;

Research Manager: Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck; Co-Investigators: Dr Jenny Lenkeit, Dr Daniel Caro; Collaborator: Pearson staff led by Dr Grace Grima; Advisory Group: Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Professor Art Graesser (University of Memphis) & Professor John de Jong (VU University Amsterdam).



PIRLS 2016 was the fourth cycle of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) assessment of reading comprehension. *PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study)* investigates levels of reading comprehension at five-year intervals and has been in operation since 2001. It is conducted with children who have received four years of primary schooling and is accompanied by a questionnaire that enables researchers

to investigate connections between home support for literacy, curriculum and curriculum implementation, instructional practices and school resources and outcomes in the tests. These outcomes and relationships can then be compared between participating countries. In partnership with Pearson UK, OUCEA won a competitive tender to provide the services of the PIRLS National Centre to the Department for Education in England. Dr Grace Grima (Pearson UK) is the National Research Coordinator for the project and OUCEA will produce the PIRLS Encyclopaedia chapter for England, the National Report, a matched National Pupil Database dataset, and will disseminate the findings in a range of ways.



**L-R: DR JOSHUA MCGRANE, DR THERESE N. HOPFENBECK, JAMIE STIFF, DR GRACE GRIMA**

## Higher Education Innovation Funding

Professor Jo-Anne Baird and Dr Lena Gray's application to the University of Oxford's Social Sciences HEIF Knowledge Exchange Fellowship has been successful and Dr Gray's Fellowship started on 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2016. The project is entitled: *Overcoming political and organisational barriers to international practitioner collaboration on national examination standard-setting* and runs to 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2017. This Fellowship has enabled Dr Gray to develop guidelines for practitioners working in the highly politically sensitive area of setting national examination standards. The guidelines will enable assessment practitioners to be more transparent about the procedures they use and the challenges they face within their national contexts, thus creating a space for dialogue about use of best practices. Professor Baird and Dr Gray have already conducted a study on A-level and Higher examinations. This project builds upon research conducted by Baird and others on the meaning of examination standards in England.

## Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

### *PIRLS for Teachers*

Funder: ESRC Impact Acceleration Award (£49,917), 1 May 2015 – 31 October 2016; Principal Investigator: Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck; Co-PIs: Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Dr Jenny Lenkeit; Collaborators: Oxford University Department of Education colleagues: Professors Ian Menter, Vicky Murphy and Judy Sebba; literacy coordinators and head teachers in local schools.



**PARTICIPANTS AT THE FIRST PIRLS FOR TEACHERS WORKSHOP**

The project addresses the knowledge gap between information provided by international large-scale assessments (ILSAs), the publicly available research results, and what is of interest and use to teachers in England. The extensive information that ILSAs provide about the contexts of learning, such as students' backgrounds and affective characteristics and the conditions of teaching and learning in schools, go mostly unnoticed and rarely find their way to relevant stakeholders. A re-conceptualisation of the utility of ILSA results is necessary to increase the value of ILSAs for teachers. In this project, the OUCEA team is working collaboratively with teachers, examination advisors and international assessment managers to produce materials to support literacy teaching in primary schools in England. These materials will help teachers beyond those directly involved in this knowledge exchange project to understand the PIRLS findings, relate them to their teaching practices and draw practical conclusions for their own teaching. The audience for the materials is primarily teachers, but they will also be of interest to researchers and policymakers.



Follow the link below or click on the picture to hear about head teacher Alice Roberts' experience of being involved in the project:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B3AxkrQQCVhDaVVPb3BJVEx4Sm8/view>



# Supporting Pupils' Reading Motivation with Instructional Materials

Project background: In the "PIRLS for Teachers"-project the Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment (OUCEA) collaborates with teachers to identify which information provided in PIRLS is particularly interesting for them. PIRLS is the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, a study conducted in 5-year cycles and in which over 50 countries participate.



## What do we know about reading motivation and instructional materials?

- ❖ Pupils' motivation to read is fostered by confrontation and mastery of language codes and styles in different text genres.
- ❖ Pupils apply a variety of comprehension processes for different text genres which helps them develop their reading skills.
- ❖ Teachers can provide pupils with a choice of different texts forms and genres to support their engagement with literacy activities.

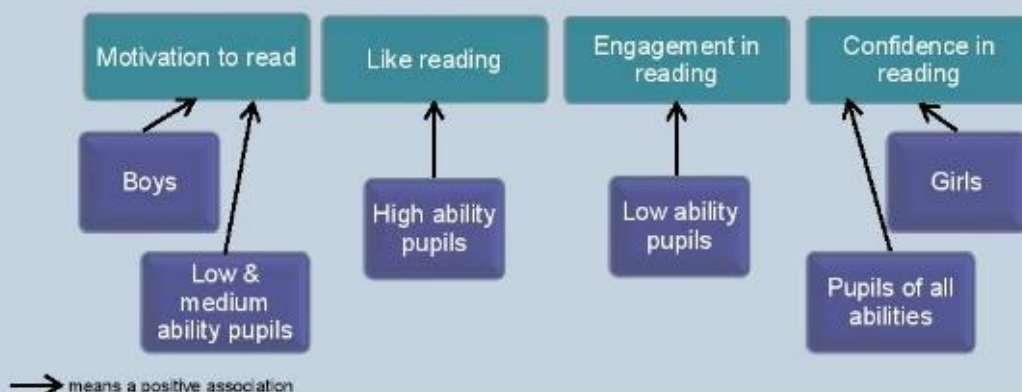


## Data & Information

- ❖ Pupil information (5,000 Year 5 pupils): reading motivation, confidence and engagement, liking to read, gender and ability levels in reading.
- ❖ Teachers' use of a variety of resources and genres for reading instruction, including textbooks, reading series, workbooks, children's books, material from other curriculum areas, newspapers, computer software and reference materials.



How using a high variety of reading resources and genres – 7 to 8 different ones – benefits motivation towards reading for different groups of pupils



## Results

While an important goal in primary school years is to teach pupils how to comprehend different text forms and genres (see English programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2), 1 in 3 teachers in England use a low or medium variety of reading resources in their lessons. Our research suggests that using a high variety of reading resources can:

- ❖ enhance motivation towards reading for pupils of all reading abilities. It is especially important for lower ability pupils, as it fosters their motivation, engagement and confidence to read.
- ❖ benefit girls' reading confidence and boys' motivation to read.

## Developing Appropriate Assessments of English Language Fluency for Children with English as an Additional Language

Funder: OUP John Fell Fund (£37,000), 1 September 2015 – 31 August 2016; Principal

Investigator: Professor Victoria Murphy; Collaborators: Professor Katie Nation, Dr Mathieu Ichou, Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck, Dr Victoria Elliott, Josh McGrane and Dr Ann Childs.

This project formed part of the University of Oxford Education Deanery award. 'English fluency' (a general term used to denote English language skills) is a strong predictor of academic success in EAL pupils, yet no appropriate measure currently exists for teachers to assess EAL children's English fluency. This project aimed to develop an assessment tool to evaluate year 6 EAL children's English fluency. It also involved collaboration with year 7 teachers to identify ways to use this tool most effectively to support academic learning, thus enabling better transition information from primary to secondary phases of education, for this population of children. Interviews were first carried out with year 7 teachers of students with EAL to ascertain their attitudes and concerns about assessing EAL pupils. The results of our interviews suggested that individual teachers do not feel it is their responsibility to measure the English language/literacy of EAL pupils in their classes, and that this is regarded as falling under the purview of a specific individual with that role (EAL coordinator, literacy coordinator, SENCO). Furthermore, assessment of EAL pupils is viewed as having one major function – to identify progress on key measures of English language/literacy, and is not currently viewed as a formative tool that can guide teachers on language choice in their classrooms. With respect to the first draft of the measure of English language fluency, we prepared a test called the EAVITT (Extended and Academic Vocabulary in Teaching Tool), which was administered to 106 students (both EAL and non-EAL) across four schools. The preliminary results indicated that there were no differences between EAL and non-EAL pupils. Furthermore, while the EAVITT was very challenging for most pupils, with a mean number correct falling below a 50% pass mark, a Rasch analysis on the total sample suggests that while the test showed a reasonable fit to the Rasch model (with good levels of reliability), many items can be adjusted to reduce the possibility of correct guessing and remove ambiguities in the responses. This pilot project is now serving as a foundation for a more well-developed, larger-scale project, investigating the inter-relationships between assessment and classroom interaction in supporting vocabulary knowledge of EAL (and non-EAL) pupils.

## Aga Khan University Language Policy Thinking Group

Funder: The Aga Khan University (£20,000), 1 October 2016 – 30 June 2017; Principal Investigator: Dr Yasmine El Masri. Collaborators: Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins, OUCEA, Roger Smith, Aga Khan University, Karachi.



**L-R: DR YASMINE EL MASRI (LPTG RESEARCH COORDINATOR, OUCEA), DANIEL RAYNOR, (ELE\_NET, AKU), DR TASHMIN KHAMIS (DIRECTOR OF QAI\_NET AND T&L\_NET, AKU), CAROL ARIANO, VICE-PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES, AKU), DAVID ARTHUR (DEAN OF SCHOOL OF NURSING & MIDWIFERY, AKU), PROFESSOR PAULINE REA-DICKINS (LPTG CHAIR, OUCEA), ELIZABETH SHEPHERD (SENIOR RESEARCHER, BRITISH COUNCIL), ROGER SMITH (DIRECTOR, ELE\_NET, AKU), DR AHMAR MAHBOOB (ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY), DR DAVID TAYLOR (DIRECTOR OF ISMC, AKU) LOUIS ARIANO (ASSOCIATE VICE-PROVOST & UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR, AKU).**

English is the medium of instruction (EMI) in all Aga Khan University institutions (AKU) (Karachi, East Africa and London). However, most AKU students, faculty and staff are non-native speakers of English and very often demonstrate a low proficiency in this language, making it significantly challenging to operate effectively in the medium of English.

To address this challenge, AKU built the Network of English Language Enhancement (ELE\_net), in September 2014, offering a wide range of activities to foster English language provision for its



students, staff and faculty members. It also recognised that developing an AKU language policy is essential for building an effective strategy that tackles language-related issues. In October 2016, the Language Policy Thinking Group (LPTG) was set up to undertake the work needed to develop an AKU language policy. The LPTG consists of senior faculty and staff of the Aga Khan University, as well as experts in applied linguistics and assessment and a representative from the British Council.



**INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE LANGUAGE POLICY THINKING GROUP AT THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY IN KARACHI PAKISTAN (OCTOBER 2016).**

**LEFT TO RIGHT: PROFESSOR FARHAT ABBAS (DEAN, MEDICAL COLLEGE); PROFESSOR DAVID ARTHUR (DEAN, SCHOOL OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY); DR YASMINE EL MASRI (LPTG RESEARCH COORDINATOR, OUCEA); PROFESSOR PAULINE REA-DICKINS (LPTG CHAIR, OUCEA); ROGER SMITH (DIRECTOR, ELE\_NET); ELIZABETH SHEPHERD (SENIOR RESEARCHER, BRITISH COUNCIL)**

The Language Policy Thinking Group has met three times between October 2016 and June 2017. As part of its work to inform the empirical phase of the project a literature review, forthcoming as an OUCEA report, described the complex linguistic landscape in which AKU is



embedded and highlighted the main context-specific challenges related to the use of English as a medium of instruction and language of communication in the workplace. In the research phase language proficiency tests and attitude surveys were administered to samples of students, staff and faculty across the University's faculties and departments in Pakistan, East Africa and London. The aim of this data collection was to investigate the levels of proficiency in English of AKU's constituencies and examine their needs and their attitudes towards using English and other languages (Urdu, Kiswahili as well as local languages), as a medium of instruction and communication at AKU.

In June 2017, the LPTG met at the British Council in London to discuss the findings of the language tests and surveys. The final report will go to the AKU Executive Committee and will ultimately be submitted to the Board of Trustees, with recommendations for further actions.

### Using Technology in Science Tasks: Reducing Language Barriers for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

Funder: Economic and Social Research Council, Global Challenges Research Fund (£20,000), 9 January 2017 – 8 January 2018; Principal Investigator: Dr Yasmine El Masri, OUCEA. Mentor: Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins, OUCEA.



**CERTIFICATION OF ATTENDANCE PRESENTED AT THE END OF THE TEACHERS' CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP HELD AT EDUTEK-CHTAURA IN APRIL 2017**

The foreign language of instruction and assessment (English or French) of mathematics and science constitutes a significant challenge to accessing quality education for underprivileged young people in Lebanon, including Syrian refugees, who are typically not proficient in these languages. The project aims to help address this issue with different stakeholders through: 1) knowledge exchange with a local NGO, Lebanese Alternative Learning (LAL), providing educational support to underprivileged youth, 2) capacity building and knowledge exchange with science teachers in schools serving deprived communities and 3) working with underprivileged Lebanese and Syrian refugee students.

## Review of Reviews on Assessment for Learning

Funder: The Norwegian Knowledge Centre, Principle Investigator: Therese N. Hopfenbeck, collaborators: Kristin Borte, Jill Boggs, Jessica Chan, Solvi Lillejord.

A review of reviews, 14 reviews about Assessment for Learning (AfL) (2 meta-reviews, and 12 empirical reviews) have been analyzed with the aim to elicit stated implications and findings in the more than 700 primary studies reviewed. The overarching ambition has been to analyze how researchers use their findings to advise teachers about their classroom assessment practice.



**KRISTIN BØRTE OF THE NORWEGIAN KNOWLEDGE CENTRE AND OUCEA RESEARCH ASSISTANT JILL BOGGS**

## Indicators of Education System Effectiveness

Funder: John Fell OUP Research Fund (£7,500), 1 April – 30 November 2016; Principal

Investigator: Dr Jenny Lenkeit; Co-Investigator: Dr Daniel Caro; Collaborator:

Professor Leonidas Kyriakides (University of Cyprus).



**DR JENNY LENKEIT**

International tests of student attainment such as the *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)* present their test results in the form of country league tables. These league tables are problematic because they give the impression of reflecting the quality of education systems. They are influential on educational debates when governments and policymakers orientate towards other systems in the search for inspiration and models to remedy their own systems' weaknesses. But, confounded with the test results, are very different socio-economic conditions under which education systems

operate within countries. In previous research, we developed initial quantitative indicators of effectiveness of education systems by accounting for prior performance and countries' socio-economic conditions. We showed that high-performing systems are not necessarily effective systems. But educational effectiveness is a complex and multi-dimensional construct and its assessment at the system level requires further investigation to elaborate the quality and comprehensiveness of quantitative effectiveness indicators. This project will further investigate different conceptualisations, dimensions (e.g. effectiveness along characteristics of gender or migration background) and methods for measuring indicators of effectiveness at the system level. It will propose a comprehensive and innovative research programme to investigate education system effectiveness with data from international tests of student attainment.

## Judging Demands and Predicting Task Difficulty: A systematic review of the literature

Funder: Oxford University Department of Education (£3,366), 1 April – 31 October 2016;

Principal Investigator: Dr Yasmine El Masri; Advisors: Professor Jo-Anne Baird,  
Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins.



**DR YASMINE EL MASRI**

Predicting the difficulty of items accurately is of prime importance in education at pedagogic and testing levels. However, empirical attempts to explain variance have not yet exceeded 25% of variance explained. This project's aim was to produce a systematic review of the literature on predicting item difficulty and judging task demands in language tests to highlight the weaknesses and strengths of methodologies applied in earlier studies, and to set a research agenda for a future research programme.

## Publications

A number of articles were submitted for peer review during this period and the following were in print before the end of June 2017. Links to publications are [given](#) where available.

**Baird, J.-A., Andrich, D., Hopfenbeck, T.N., & Stobart, G. (2017).** [Assessment and learning: fields apart?](#) *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 24(3).

**Abstract:** Educational assessments define what aspects of learning will formally be given credit and therefore have a huge impact upon teaching and learning. Although the impact of high-stakes national and international assessments on teaching and learning is considered in the literature, remarkably, there is little research on the connection between theories of learning and educational assessments. Given the voluminous assessment that takes place annually in systematic ways in most many nations, it is surprising that more has not been gained from these assessments in the development of theories of learning and *vice versa*. In this article, we consider both theories of learning and assessment and draw the main message of the article, that if assessments are to serve the goals of education, then theories of learning and assessment should be developing more closely with each other. We consider fundamental aspects of assessment theory, such as constructs, unidimensionality, invariance and quantifiability, and in doing so, we distinguish between educational and psychological assessment. Second, we show how less traditionally considered cases of (a) international assessments and (b) *Assessment for Learning* affect student learning. Through these cases we illustrate the otherwise somewhat theoretical discussion in the article. We argue that if assessment is to serve the learning goals of education, then this discussion on the relationship between assessment and learning should be developed further and be at the forefront of high-stakes, large-scale educational assessments.

**Baird, J.-A., Andrich, D., Hopfenbeck, T.N., & Stobart, G. (2017).** [Metrology of education.](#) *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 24(3).

**Elwood, J., Hopfenbeck, T. & Baird, J. (2017).** [Predictability in high-stakes examinations: students' perspectives on a perennial assessment dilemma.](#) *Research Papers in Education*, 32(1), 1-17.

**Abstract:** Key debates within educational assessment continuously encourage us to reflect on the design, delivery and implementation of examination systems as well as their relevance to students. In more recent times, such reflections have also required a rethinking of who is authoritative about assessment issues and whose views we seek in order to better understand these perennial assessment dilemmas. This paper considers one such dilemma, predictability in high-stakes assessment, and presents students' perspectives on this issue. The context is the Irish Leaving Certificate (LC) taken by upper secondary students (aged between 16 and 18) in order (mainly) to enter tertiary-level education. The data came from 13 group interviews with 81 students across a range of schools in Ireland. Listening to students about complex, high-stakes examining problems has a limited history within the educational assessment literature. The findings from the study address this shortcoming and depict how students' insightful reflections can improve our understanding of these dilemmas. Furthermore, students are more than able to reflect on their own situations with regard to high stakes examining contexts and have important contributions to make to our fuller understanding of those elements that will promote high quality and fair assessment.

**Hopfenbeck, T.N., Lenkeit, J., El Masri, Y., Cantrell, K., Ryan, J. & Baird, J. (2017).** [Lessons learned from PISA: A systematic review of peer-reviewed articles on the Programme for International Student Assessment.](#) *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 2017, 1-21.

**Abstract:** International large-scale assessments are on the rise, with the *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)* seen by many as having strategic prominence in education policy debates. The present article reviews PISA-related English-language peer-reviewed articles from the programme's first cycle in 2000, to its most current in 2015. Five literature bases were searched, and results were analysed with SPSS. Results map the frequency of publications according to journal, country, and scientific discipline. They also summarise major themes within three identified categories: secondary analysis, policy impact, and critiques. Findings



indicated that studies based on the PISA dataset have led to progress in educational research while simultaneously pointing to the need for caution when using this research to inform educational policy.

**El Masri, Y.H., Ferrara, S., Foltz, P., & Baird, J. (2017).** [Predicting item difficulty of science national curriculum tests: The case of key stage 2 assessments.](#) *Curriculum Journal*, 28(1), 59–82.

**Abstract:** Predicting item difficulty is highly important in education for both teachers and item writers. Despite identifying a large number of explanatory variables, predicting item difficulty remains a challenge in educational assessment with empirical attempts rarely exceeding 25% of variance explained. This paper analyses 216 science items of key stage 2 tests which are national sampling assessments administered to 11 year olds in England. Potential predictors (topic, subtopic, concept, question type, nature of stimulus, depth of knowledge and linguistic variables) were considered in the analysis. Coding frameworks employed in similar studies were adapted and employed by two coders to independently rate items. Linguistic demands were gauged using a computational linguistic facility. The stepwise regression models predicted 23% of the variance with extended constructed questions and photos being the main predictors of item difficulty. While a substantial part of unexplained variance could be attributed to the unpredictable interaction of variables, we argue that progress in this area requires improvement in the theories and the methods employed. Future research needs to be centred on improving coding frameworks as well as developing systematic training protocols for coders. These technical advances would pave the way to improved task design and reduced development costs of assessments.

**Hopfenbeck TN. & Görge K. (2017).** [The politics of PISA: The media, policy and public responses in Norway and England.](#) *European Journal of Education*, 52, 192–205.

**Abstract:** Using the PISA 2015 releases in Norway and England, this article explores how PISA has been presented in the media and how the policy level has responded to the results. England will be used as an example for comparison. The article presents early media responses from the 20 most circulated daily newspapers in the two countries and discusses them in relation both to the national PISA reports in Norway and England, as well as the international report of the



OECD. The media responses are further interpreted in light of previous research in both countries, with a particular focus upon Norway, where previous Ministers of Education have been interviewed about assessment policy and education reforms.

**El Masri, Y. H., Baird, J., & Graesser, A. C. (2016).** [Language effects in international testing: The case of PISA 2006 science items](#). *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 23(4), 427–255.

**Abstract:** we investigate the extent to which language versions (English, French and Arabic) of the same science test are comparable in terms of item difficulty and demands. We argue that language is an inextricable part of the scientific literacy construct, be it intended or not by the examiner. This argument has considerable implications on methodologies used to address the equivalence of multiple language versions of the same assessment, including in the context of international assessment where cross-cultural fairness is a concern. We also argue that none of the available statistical or qualitative techniques are capable of teasing out the language variable and neutralising its potential effects on item difficulty and demands. Exploring the use of automated text analysis tools at the quality control stage may be successful in addressing some of these challenges.

**Lenkeit, J. (2016).** [Review of national reports on PIRLS](#). *Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment Report*, 16(1).

**Abstract:** The purpose of this report is to review previous national reports on PIRLS for the education systems of the United Kingdom and other countries. It thereby aims to: (1) Give an overview of how results from previous PIRLS cycles have been reported in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland; (2) Show how other countries produce relevant knowledge with PIRLS data and how they present it; (3) Identify 'best practices' with a particular focus on reports from leading countries in educational research. This report will consequently explain the methodological approach of the review (2) and elaborate on the results, focussing on the relationship between authoring institution, study focus and report length (3.1), the link between theoretical background and methodological complexity (3.2), report structure (3.3), integration of findings in national contexts (3.4) and the reporting of PIRLS results in the UK (3.5). Section (4) will argue for the 'best practice' in reporting PIRLS results.

**Baird, J. & Hopfenbeck, T.N. (2016). Curriculum in the twenty-first century and the future of examinations. In Wyse, D. Hayward, L. & Pandya, J. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment*, Vol. 2, 821 – 837. London: Sage.**

**Abstract:** Looking to the future of tests and examination systems, Baird and Hopfenbeck (Chapter 51) identify five challenges currently being faced by examination systems: crises of knowledge, spiralling reform cycles, globalisation, performativity and grade inflation. They explore tensions running through education systems internationally, for example the politicisation of assessment and the emergence of assessment for accountability. They also highlight the power struggles over what constitutes knowledge and the contentious relationship between the nature of knowledge and qualifications, and they predict more tension in the relationship between supranational and local curricula and assessment. These are complex debates, and for teachers to engage critically with them requires a high level of professional expertise. Critique also takes courage, and Baird and Hopfenbeck anticipate that many of the institutions involved in supranational and national assessment and testing may be resistant to critique. The alternative to a critical stance is one that emerges in many of the chapters in these volumes, where teachers are compliant and de-professionalised; a scenario, they argue, that puts the quality of state education at risk.

**Baird, J.-A., Caro, D. H., & Hopfenbeck, T.N. (2016). [Student perceptions of predictability of examination requirements and relationship with outcomes in high-stakes tests in Ireland](#). *Irish Educational Studies*, 35(4), 361-379.**

**Abstract:** Entirely predictable examinations are ones for which the questions are known in advance. Some assessments are designed this way, but in public examinations, predictability is subtler. Students familiarise themselves with the requirements broadly: likely topics that will come up, question formats and how to maximise their marks. If students can predict what they have to do, they can memorise performances, such as essays, and restrict their learning to fit only with examination requirements. The danger is that this focus could undermine curriculum aims. Further, examinations that are overly predictable might produce results that do not generalise to other performances or have predictive validity. This paper presents part of a broader project investigating whether the Higher Level Irish Leaving Certificate (LC)

examinations were too predictable. Here, the development of a rating scale for students' views of examination predictability is described. Data was collected from 1002 Irish LC students taking higher level examinations in biology ( $n = 536$ ), English ( $n = 749$ ) and geography ( $n = 387$ ). Students' views on predictability of the examination could be grouped consistently across subject areas into three factors: valuable learning, predictability and narrowing of the curriculum. Belief that narrowing of the curriculum was a good examination preparation tactic had a negative relationship with examination scores and the perceived learning value of examinations was positively associated with students' scores in biology and English. These findings indicate that the scoring system rewards students who believe they must study the discipline broadly.

**Caro, D.H., & Lenkeit, J. (2017).** [Why global education rankings don't reveal the whole picture](#) [Blog], *The Conversation*.

**Abstract:** Country rankings in international education tests – such as PISA and TIMSS – are often used to compare and contrast education systems across a range of countries. But the playing field is not always even. This is because countries with very different social and economic realities participate, so countries such as Norway, Russia, Chile, Lebanon and Thailand are compared against each other, without the different socio-economic backgrounds of these countries being taken into account. If the latest world education rankings are anything to go by, Turkey and Thailand perform poorly when it comes to their students' achievement in science but our analysis shows that if you look at the rankings differently (from an even starting point), both Thailand and Turkey may in fact be just as good as some of the high-performing Asian countries. Our analysis is a much fairer comparison, as it allows for the differences in wealth and social development, in which students learn and teachers teach. It builds upon our previous work, where we produced and analysed an indicator of “effectiveness”. The effectiveness indicator ranks performance of countries as if they all had similar socio-economic conditions – thus levelling the playing field. This makes it easier to see which countries are actually the most effective at educating their students, taking socio-economic factors like wealth into account.

Caro, D.H. (2016). [The R package 'intsvy': An alternative statistical tool for data analysis](#). *International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement Newsletter*, 44, 11-13.

**Abstract:** This article presents an example of how 'intsvy' can be used to analyse international assessment data, using data taken from PIRLS as an example. I outline here, how to import and analyse the data, and generate a graphical summary of the results using tools available within intsvy. This example concentrates on two of the analysis functions: average student performance and regression analysis. I calculated average student performance by education system, using plausible values in reading achievement, and taking into account replicate weights. The regression analysis demonstrates how to estimate a regression of reading achievement on the student's gender and early literacy activities scale.

Lenkeit, J., Schwippert, K., & Knigge, M. (forthcoming). **Configurations of multiple disparities in reading performance: Longitudinal observations across countries.** *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, Special Issue on Assessment of Reading in International Studies, Autumn 2017.*

**Abstract:** Research provides evidence that gender, immigrant background and socio-economic characteristics present multiple disadvantaging characteristics the relative importance and configurations of which change over time. When evaluating inequalities, researchers tend to focus on one particular aspect and often use composite measures when evaluating socio-economic characteristics. Neither of these approaches can fully represent the complexity of students' various disadvantaging characteristics, which have autonomous associations with attainment and with each other. This paper investigates how the relative importance and configurations of different disadvantaging factors have changed over time to form educational inequalities and how these changes differ between countries. Data from five PISA cycles (2000 – 2012) for France, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom was used and configurations of gender, immigration background, parents' occupational and educational levels, and the number of books at home were evaluated. Results enable us to relate changes (or a lack thereof) in configurations of disadvantaging factors to recent reforms targeted at reducing educational inequality after the first PISA results.

**Popat, S., Lenkeit, J., Hopfenbeck, T.N. (2017). [PIRLS for Teachers – A review of practitioner engagement with international large-scale assessment results](#). Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment, 17(1).**

**Abstract:** The focus of this review is to glean actions that have been taken to inform and educate teachers on ILSA outcomes, the presentation of results being structured by the type of engagement. These are distinguished as teacher exchanges (3.1), tests assessing teachers (3.2), teacher training (3.3) and informal learning (3.4).

**El Masri, Y.H., Rea-Dickins, P., Smith, R., & Boggs, J. (2017). State of the field review. Towards a university language policy: The case of the Aga Khan University, Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment.**

**Lenkeit, J. & Schwippert, K. (eds.) (forthcoming 2017). The assessment of reading in international studies. *Special Issue of Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*.**

**Lenkeit, J. (forthcoming). England. In Mullis, I.V.S., Martin, M.O., Minnich, C.A., Drucker, K.T., & Ragan, M.A. (eds.), *PIRLS 2016 Encyclopedia: Education Policy and Curriculum in Reading*. Chestnut Hill, MA: TIMSS & PIRLS.**

**Maul, A, McGrane, J (2017) [“As Pragmatic as Theft Over Honest Toil: Disentangling Pragmatism From Operationalism”](#), Measurement: Interdisciplinary Research and Perspectives.**

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15366367.2017.1342484>

**McGrane, JA, Nowland, T (2017) [“Likert or Not, Survey \(In\)validation Requires Explicit Theories and True Grit”](#), Measurement: interdisciplinary research and perspectives. Taylor & Francis (Routledge): STM, Behavioural Science and Public Health Titles.**  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15366367.2017.1369783>

## Presentations

Staff and students have presented at the following external events:

Presenter(s)	Event	Date	Title
El Masri	Open University, Milton Keynes	June 2017	Innovations in migrant and refugee learning
El Masri, Rea-Dickins & Smith	Oxford EMI Centre Symposium, Oxford	June 2017	Addressing the EMI challenge: The case of the Aga Khan University
Smith & Rea-Dickins	Going Global, British Council, London	May 2017	Enhancing English language capacity: The case of the Aga Khan University
Hopfenbeck	AERA Invited Speaker Session	May 2017	Ethical dilemmas related to assessment testing and selection
McGrane	National Council on Measurement in Education Conference, San Antonio, Texas	June 2017	Quantitative attributes, interval scales, and the representational fallacy:  Re-educating educational measurement
Hopfenbeck, Lillejord, Borte	AERA Roundtable	June 2017	Potential impact of research on Assessment for Learning: A systematic review of reviews
Baird	David Watson Memorial Lecture, Green Templeton College, Oxford	May 2017	The supranational spell in education policy
Baird, Gray & Opposs	Department of Education Seminar, Oxford	May 2017	Setting and maintaining standards in examinations
El Masri	Edutek E-Learning Centre	April 2017	Workshops for science teachers on designing tasks and writing questions in science
Baird	University of Edinburgh	April 2017	Standard setting in national examinations: What are exam standards?
Baird, Gray & Opposs	Standard Setting Symposium, Oxford	March 2017	Setting and maintaining standards in examinations



El Masri	Education Forum, American University, Beirut	March 2017	Is scientific literacy more difficult than 'culture scientifique' or "المعرفة العلمية" in PISA? Implications for the fairness of high-stakes examinations in Lebanon
Baird & Gray	St Anne's College Education Seminar, Oxford	March 2017	The meaning of exam standards in different countries
Hopfenbeck	University of Glasgow	March 2017	Lessons learned from large-scale implementation of Assessment for Learning
Görge	Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain (Oxford branch)	Feb 2017	Teaching and testing citizenship for naturalisation
Hopfenbeck	Community Cohesion Seminar, Brasenose College, Oxford	Jan 2017	Building trust within communities of teachers
Baird & El Masri	SLATE, University of Bergen, Norway	Dec 2016	Research impact for social justice: Some strategies and examples from the assessment field
Scharaschkin	AEA-Europe, Limassol, Cyprus	Nov 2016	Applying formal concept analysis in assessment: Can it help mediate between socio-political and technical understandings of the meaning of exam grades?
Lillejord, Borte & Hopfenbeck	AEA-Europe, Limassol, Cyprus	Nov 2016	Teacher evaluation – Trapped between accountability and learning: Assessing teacher professionalism – formatively
El Masri, Baird, Ferrara & Foltz	AEA-Europe, Limassol, Cyprus	Nov 2016	Predicting item difficulty: Methodological challenges and way forward
Ng	AEA-Europe, Limassol, Cyprus	Nov 2016	The primary scientific reasoning test – In pursuit of content validity
Usher	AEA-Europe, Limassol, Cyprus	Nov 2016	The complex interplays between assessment and learning that shape writing development during the transition to university from A-level
Hopfenbeck, Lenkeit, El Masri, Cantrell, Ryan & Baird	Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research's 60th Anniversary Research Seminar	Oct 2016	Lessons learned from PISA: A systematic review of peer-reviewed articles on the Programme for International Student Assessment

Lenkeit & Hopfenbeck	Public Seminar, Department of Education, Oxford	Oct 2016	Making use of international large-scale assessment data in national contexts: PIRLS for Teachers
Lenkeit & Schwippert	Joint Conference of the EARLI SIGs 18 & 23 (Educational Effectiveness & Educational Evaluation, Accountability & School Improvement), Oslo, Norway	Sept 2016	Configurations of inequalities in student performance: Longitudinal observations across countries
Caro	EARLI SIG 18, Oslo	Sept 2016	Correcting for omitted prior achievement bias in international assessments
Caro & Carrasco	Ministry of Education, Peru	Sept 2016	Longitudinal modelling workshop
Hopfenbeck	Laboratory of International Assessment Studies	Sept 2016	The futures and promises of international education assessment
Baird, Gray & Opposs	ESRC Seminar, Humboldt University, Berlin	Aug 2016	Setting and maintaining standards in national examinations around the world
Lenkeit	42 <sup>nd</sup> International Association for Educational Assessment Conference, Cape Town, South Africa	July 2016	Effectiveness of education systems
Usher	To delegates from Hainan Normal University of China visiting Oxford	July 2016	Using multiple sources of qualitative data to trace the impact of peer assessment on academic writing development
Usher	15 <sup>th</sup> EARLI SIG Writing International Conference and Research School, Liverpool Hope University	July 2016	Assessment for Learning
Hopfenbeck	Sutton Trust Teacher Summer School	July 2016	Investigating the effectiveness of education systems: Conceptualisation, measurement and potential explanations
Caro & Lenkeit	University of Cyprus, Nicosia	June 2016	Correcting for prior achievement bias in international assessment studies of teacher effectiveness

## Events

OUCEA has had another productive year and held ten events, with approximately 300 students, academics, researchers and professionals attending in total. One example is the participation of OUCEA members at the ESRC seminar Laboratory of International Assessment Studies, Humboldt University, Berlin September 2016.

ESRC seminar Laboratory of International Assessment Studies



L-R Dr. Jenny Lenkeit, Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck, Kristine Gorgen and Jeanne Ryan.



From panel discussion: L-R: Sylvia Schmelkes Mexican Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación (INEE), Therese N. Hopfenbeck, Eckhard Klieme, German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF) and Thierry Rocher from the French Ministry of Education.

## AERA Invited Speaker Session

Dr Therese Hopfenbeck presented a paper at the *AERA invited speaker session – Ethical dilemmas related to assessment testing and selection* – at the *AERA 2017 Annual Meeting* in San Antonio, Texas, which was held from 27<sup>th</sup> April – 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2017. The Symposium brought together four panelists from various backgrounds, to discuss unique dilemmas related to assessment, testing, and selection. These dilemmas arise in fields ranging from classroom testing and higher education admissions, to vocational assessment. The panel consisted of Dr Avi Allalouf (NITE), Dr Ida M. Lawrence (ETS), Professor Stephen G. Sireci (Massachusetts – Amherst) and Dr Craig N. Mills (National Board of Examiners) in addition to Dr Hopfenbeck.



**L-R: DR THERESE N. HOPFENBECK, DR CRAIG N. MILLS, DR IDA M. LAWRENCE, DR AVI ALLALOUF  
AND PROFESSOR STEPHEN G. SIRECI**

## PISA Seminar 2016



On Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December, 60 people from 18 different countries gathered at Lady Margaret Hall, at the University of Oxford, to discuss the recent release of PISA 2015. Participants explored the challenges and consequences of the release, and the future direction of research.

The day began with a presentation by Professor Eckhard Klieme (German Institute for International Educational Research, DIPF) on the design, innovations, challenges and limitations of PISA 2015, followed by a discussion led by Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck (Oxford University). This was then followed by a presentation by Professor David Kaplan (University of Wisconsin-Madison) on building optimal predictive models with large-scale assessment, and a discussion led by Dr Lars Malmberg (Oxford University). Dr John Jerrim (University College London, Institute of Education) presented the PISA 2015 Results for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, which was followed by a discussion led by Professor Steve Strand (Oxford University).

After a networking lunch, Professor Leonidas Kyriakides (University of Cyprus), presented a synthesis of studies using PISA data, which was discussed by Professor Pam Sammons (Oxford University). Yuri Obara (OECD) then provided the audience with insights into OECD's perceptions of the future of PISA innovations, which was followed by comments from the Head of the University of Oxford's Department of Education, Professor Jo-Anne Baird, and a



discussion. Professor Sølvi Lillejord (Knowledge Centre, Norway) then summarised the day and provided further discussion points. The seminar programme is available [here](#) while presentations from the day can be found [here](#).

**DR LARS-ERIK MALMBERG &  
PROFESSOR DAVID KAPLAN**



## Association for Education Assessment - Europe



**L-R: NATALIE USHER, DR YASMINE EL MASRI,  
DR THERESE N. HOPFENBECK**

OUCEA members presented a total of 5 papers at the 17th Annual Association for Educational Assessment – Europe Conference in Limassol, Cyprus, in November 2016. The theme of the conference was: *Social and political underpinnings of educational assessment: Past, present and future.*



## 42<sup>nd</sup> International Association for Educational Assessment Conference



**L-R: PROFESSOR JO-ANNE BAIRD, DENNIS OPPOSS, DR LENA GRAY**

A presentation on the project *Setting and maintaining standards in national examinations* was given in Cape Town, South Africa, in August 2016. The theme of the conference was: *Assessing the achievement of curriculum standards – An ongoing dialogue*.

## Standard Setting Symposium, Oxford

From the 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2017, assessment practitioners and academics from approximately 20 countries came to Brasenose College, Oxford, for the Standard Setting Symposium. The symposium was part of the project *Setting and maintaining standards in*



*national examinations*, led by Professor Jo-Anne Baird, in cooperation with Dr Lena Gray (AQA), Dennis Opposs (Ofqual) and Dr Tina Isaacs (UCL).

## DELEGATES AT THE STANDARD SETTING SYMPOSIUM



**L-R: DENNIS OPOSS, DR TINA ISAACS,  
PROFESSOR JO-ANNE BAIRD, DR LENA  
GRAY, TINE GÖRGEN**



## PARTICIPANTS AT THE STANDARD SETTING SYMPOSIUM



## OUCEA Annual Lecture, 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017, Ashmolean Museum

Professor P. David Pearson, University of California at Berkley

*Recent developments in reading assessment in the USA National Assessment of Educational Progress*

*(NAEP): An analysis of conceptual, digital, psychometric, and policy trends*



**PROFESSOR P. DAVID PEARSON**

In his presentation, Professor P. David Pearson, who serves as the Chair of the Standing Committee on Reading for NAEP, provided an update on recent innovations in the conceptualisation and operationalisation of NAEP Reading. He explained that the Standing Committee provides oversight on passage selection, item development, and scoring to the Educational Testing Service, and discussed the conceptual bases for new digital initiatives, as well as the progress made in identifying and resolving

challenges to an entirely new digital delivery of NAEP Reading. Professor Pearson also commented upon NAEP reading developments in relation to those recently undertaken by PIRLS and PISA.

Professor Pearson's presentation was followed by a discussion, led by Dame Professor Maggie Snowling, President of St John's College, Oxford.

Full link to the presentation can be found here:

<https://www.podcasts.ox.ac.uk/people/david-pearson>



**DAME PROFESSOR MAGGIE SNOWLING**

# Impact and Dissemination

## Senior Public Appointments



### Education Select Committee

[Professor Jo-Anne Baird](#), Director of the Department of Education, has been appointed Standing Specialist Adviser on Education to the Select Committee on Education. The Education Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to monitor the policy, administration and spending of the Department for Education and its associated bodies, including Ofsted and Ofqual.

The role involves Professor Baird providing advice on the wide range of education issues monitored by the Committee. Following Prime Minister May's changes to the remit of the Department for Education, this now includes higher education policy. Of her new role, Professor Baird said: *Change is a perennial feature of the education policy environment. The Select Committee's role in holding the Government to account for the effects of policy is crucial to a well-functioning democracy, as well as for the quality of the education system.*

## **DfE Analytical Associate Pool**

[Dr Jenny Lenkeit](#) has been selected by the Department for Education to be a member of its Analytical Associate Pool. The DfE regularly commissions small-scale projects to external organisations. The pool of Analytical Associates brings specialist expertise, knowledge and skills into the DfE to supplement and develop its internal analytical capability. The pool comprises over 160 independent academics and researchers who can be commissioned to carry out small-scale data analysis, rapid literature reviews, primary research and peer review.

## **Election to the Academy of Social Sciences**

Professor Jo-Anne Baird was elected to the Academy of Social Sciences for being a leader in the field of educational assessment, pioneering the research-based identification and analysis of the educational policy implications of different approaches to assessment. The Academy of Social Sciences is the national academy of researchers, learned societies and practitioners in the social sciences. Its mission is to promote social science in the United Kingdom for public benefit. Jo-Anne is joining a fellowship of distinguished scholars and practitioners from academia and the public and private sectors.



## **Election to the Welsh Government Curriculum and Assessment Expert Advisory Group**



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Professor Jo-Anne Baird has been appointed to the Welsh Government Curriculum and Assessment Expert Advisory Group. This role involves assisting the Welsh Government in their wide-ranging curriculum and assessment review, policy development and implementation. Other members of the group include Professor Richard Daugherty, Professor Louise Hayward, Professor Mary James, Professor Wynne Harlen and Professor Dame Alison Peacock.



## AEA Europe Election

[Professor Jannette Elwood](#), an Honorary Research Fellow at OUCEA, has been elected Vice-President of the Association for Educational Assessment – Europe. Professor Elwood has extensive expertise in the field of assessment across research, policy and higher education domains. Her main research interests are in the social constructions and consequences of examinations and assessment practices.



## Ofqual Regulator



[Dr Michelle Meadows](#), a Research Associate at OUCEA, has been appointed the Deputy Chief Regulator at the examinations regulator, Ofqual. Dr Meadows has been an Associate at OUCEA for a number of years and is currently collaborating with the Department on the *linear examinations policy* project.

## Director of Research, AQA

[Dr Lena Gray](#), Research Associate at OUCEA, has been appointed as Director of Research at AQA. Dr Gray was formerly Head of Research at AQA and Head of Service, Policy, Assessment, Statistics and Standards at the Scottish Qualifications Authority.



## Ofqual Expert Adviser

[Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck](#) was appointed expert adviser to the Ofqual's Research Advisory Group, chaired by Professor Mike Cresswell. Read more on the Ofqual blog [here](#).

## Member of Editorial Board

Dr Hopfenbeck has also been appointed as a Member of the Editorial Board for the *European Journal of Psychological Assessment* from and Review Editor in Assessment, Testing and Applied Measurement, part of the journal(s) Frontiers in Education.

## AQA's Centre for Education Research and Practice

[Dr Joshua McGrane](#) has been appointed a member of the advisory group for [AQA's Centre for Education Research and Practice](#) from May 2017 – March 2020:



## Student Assessment Network

The [Student Assessment Network \(StAN\)](#) is a student-led network of graduate students who have an interest in assessment. StAN is chaired by a student and meets two or three times a term to discuss issues concerning educational assessment. The network is aimed at all students



**DR JOSHUA MCGRANE**

in the Department and beyond, whose research interests include or overlap with assessment, and members of other research groups are also welcome. Many of StAN's members are also members of the AEA-Europe's Doctoral Network. StAN organises at least one informal student-led meeting each term, where students present and discuss their work, and receive constructive feedback from peers and academics in the field of assessment. It also hosts at least one more formal meeting where an outside speaker or an academic member of the Department is invited to present on an aspect of their research. StAN also holds reading groups and writing groups, and weekly informal lunch meetings. The current Chair is Natalie Usher. Seven StAN events have been held so far this year, including:

Date	Speaker	Title
Nov 2016	Alex Scharaschkin,	An insider's view of public examinations: How GCSEs and A-levels in England are set, marked, and graded – and how this will all change from 2017 onwards
Nov 2017	Dr Joshua McGrane	Psychometrics: measurement or magic, or both, or neither?
June, 2017	Ding Wenjun Elyse	English language assessment reform in China
June, 2017	Professor David Andrich	Logarithmically decelerating growth in mathematics achievement



**DR JOSHUA MCGRANE**

**This year we have reviewed for the following journals and conferences:**

### **Journals**

- ❖ Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice
- ❖ Educational Research
- ❖ Journal of Curriculum Studies
- ❖ Learning and Individual Differences
- ❖ Learning and Instruction
- ❖ Oxford Review of Education
- ❖ Research Papers in Education
- ❖ Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education

### **Conferences**

- ❖ American Educational Research Association
- ❖ European Educational Research Association, Network 9: Assessment, Evaluation, Testing and Measurement
- ❖ AEA-Europe, The Association for Educational Assessment - Europe

## Media

Professor Jo-Anne Baird is quoted in a *Guardian* newspaper article, entitled: [Biggest drop in GCSE pass rate for 30 years due to exam changes](#). The article discusses the drop in A\*-C grades and whether the government's policy of retaking exams is succeeding in tackling underachievement.

Professor Baird was also quoted in a piece on the Sky News website: [SATs probe after concerns over tougher tests for primary school pupils - The introduction of a new set of rigorous exams will be the focus of a Westminster inquiry, as some schools threaten to shun them](#).

Professor Jo-Anne Baird was interviewed by the *Oxford Mail* in advance of GCSE results day 2017, for her views on the [recent changes to GCSE assessment](#).



## Departmental Associates

Associate	Research areas
Associate Professor Victoria Elliott	Curriculum, pedagogy & assessment in secondary English; judgement in marking & assessment
Associate Professor Alis Oancea	Research policy & governance; comparative & international education policy
Professor Pam Sammons	School effectiveness & improvement; leadership; equity & social disadvantage
Professor Judy Sebba	Policy; assessment & learning; research strategy & impact
Professor Steve Strand	Equity in assessment; school effectiveness
Professor Kathy Sylva	Early years & children's development

## Honorary Research Fellows and Research Associates

Associate	Affiliation	Research Areas
Professor David Andrich	University of Western Australia	Rasch measurement; measurement in the social sciences
Professor Richard Daugherty	Aberystwyth University	AfL; assessment policy
Professor Jannette Elwood	Queen's University Belfast	Gender & children's rights in assessment
Dr María Teresa Flórez Petour	University of Chile	Assessment policies & discourses; assessment reform
Professor John Gardner	University of Stirling	AfL; teachers' understanding of assessment
Professor Art Graesser	University of Memphis	Cognitive science; ILSAs
Professor Louise Hayward	University of Glasgow	AfL & social justice in assessment
Dr Dougal Hutchison	Education Research & Analysis	Psychometrics; design & analysis of national & ILSAs
Professor David Kaplan	University of Wisconsin - Madison	Bayesian methods in different education research settings
Professor Anil Kanjee	Tshwane University of Technology	Education quality & equity in developing nations; AfL
Dr Michelle Meadows	Ofqual	Assessment reliability & validity; qualification design; policy
Professor Sølvi Lillejord	The Norwegian Knowledge Centre	Systematic reviews; school leadership; teacher assessment & school evaluation

Isabel Nisbet	University of Cambridge	Qualifications regulation
Professor Gordon Stanley	University of Sydney	Public examinations
Professor Gordon Stobart	UCL Institute of Education	AfL
Associate Professor Astrid Tolo	University of Bergen	Assessment policy
Dr Jon S. Twing	Pearson	Measurement in assessment
Dr Matthias von Davier	Educational Testing Service	Psychometric models; integrating diagnostic procedures
Dr Edward W. Wolfe	Pearson	Measurement; rater effects

## Research Visitors

OUCEA also hosted the following researchers in 2016/17:

Kristin Børte, Norwegian Knowledge Centre

Dr Lena Gray, AQA Centre for Education Research and Practice

Dr Grace Grima, Pearson

Professor Anjum Halai, Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development, East Africa

Professor Leonidas Kyriakides, University of Cyprus

Professor Nancy Perry, University of British Columbia

Professor Yusuf Sayed, Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), South Africa

Dr Roger Smith, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

Professor Gordon Stobart, UCL Institute of Education

Professor David Kaplan, University of Wisconsin - Madison

Professor Solvi Lillejord, The Norwegian Knowledge Centre

Professor Anil Kanjee, Tshwane University of Technology

## Teaching

2016 – 2017 has seen an exciting development with the full approval by the University of the development of our new two-year, part-time MSc in Educational Assessment, which will focus on the indepth analysis of international large-scale assessments. It is aimed at researchers and professionals in the field of educational assessment, encompassing all levels (from early childhood to higher education) and sectors of education (such as academic and vocational). It will provide the opportunity for participants to further their knowledge in a specialist topic such as international large-scale assessments, advanced analysis techniques or teacher assessment.

The course will take place part-time over two academic years, with contact teaching and online support in the first three terms and supervision of dissertation projects in the final three. In terms one to four, students will take three core papers and one optional one. All students will study the three compulsory papers (1) to (3). Each paper will include training on research methods and their application to the specific contents taught in each paper. Papers (2) and (3) focus particularly on training in quantitative research methods.

- 1) Assessment Issues and Practice – History, Policy, Standards, Validity, Reliability
- 2) Assessment Design and Statistical Evaluation of Assessment Data
- 3) Assessment Analysis – Classical Test Theory (CTT) and Item Response Theory (IRT)

All students will additionally study one of the three following optional papers:

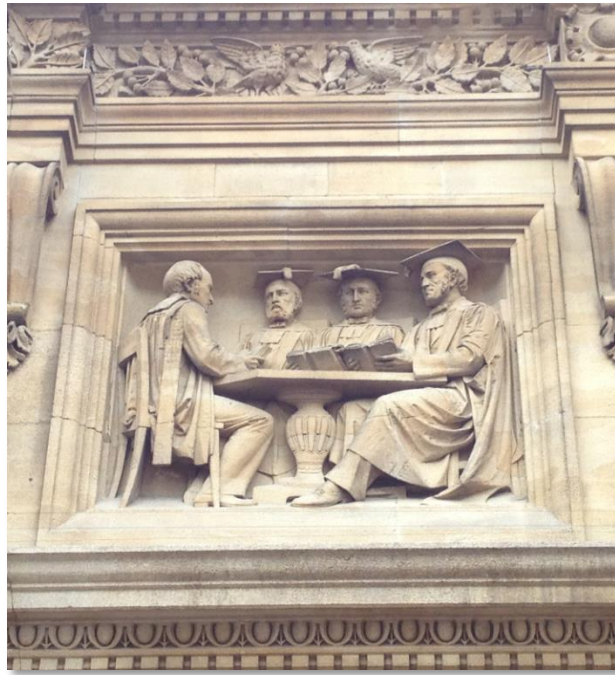
- I. Teacher Assessment
- II. International Large-Scale Assessments (ILSAs)
- III. Advanced Analysis Techniques

It is anticipated that graduates of this course will be sought after for senior positions in educational assessment organisations both nationally and internationally.

OUCEA staff also make regular contributions to teaching in the University, the Department of Education and the Social Sciences Division. Over the period of this report, these have included:

MSc in Education: Research Design & Methodology MSc in Education: Learning & Technology MSc in Learning & Teaching MSc in Teacher Education Post-Graduate Certificate in Education	Intro. to R for the analysis of educational data Introduction to multi-level modelling Advanced multi-level modelling Introduction to structural equation modelling
--	--

## Research Students



### **Masters students supervised 2016**

Sara Aflab – Teachers' and pupils' perspectives on marking in a GCSE business studies class.  
(Supervisor: Baird)

James Barringer – To what extent do students' and teachers' perspectives demonstrate that dialogic marking is an effective approach to feedback in a UK secondary school?  
(Supervisor: El Masri)

Nicholas Dennis – Exploring the testing 'effect' to enable knowledge retention and deployment.  
(Supervisors: Hopfenbeck & Burn)

Jacqueline Drinkwater – What are Year 12 students' and teachers' perceptions of the purposes and effects of written marking in a selective school? (Supervisor: Baird)

Robert Fisher – Overlooked and left out: A qualitative assessment of institutional responses to the experience of black undergraduate women. (Supervisor: Caro)

Emma Hawkins – Using student views to develop a formative assessment policy in a sixth form history department. [Winner of the 2016 MLT prize](#) for the highest mark (85) awarded to a dissertation. (Supervisors: Hopfenbeck and Burn)

George McKirdy – Investigating the Oxford University college endowment system.  
(Supervisor: Lenkeit)

Alyssa Muzyk – Teaching international relations to an international audience: Navigating the challenges and merits of the international student body in Scotland.  
(Supervisor: Hopfenbeck)

There are currently nine DPhil students at OUCEA and their research is summarised in the following pages. OUCEA staff members also supervise other DPhil and masters students within the Department of Education.

### **DPhil students co-supervised by OUCEA staff**

Najla Malaibari – The effects of computerised working memory training on working memory capacity and L2 reading comprehension in Saudi secondary English-Language learners.  
(Supervisors: Walter & Caro)

Marc Sarazin – Who is transformed? Social networks and relational factors associated with a sense of community and associated outcomes in an El-Sistema inspired music education. Intervention.  
(Supervisors: Menter & Caro)



## **Current DPhil students**

### ***Carol Brown Awarded Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 2017***

Her examiners were Professor Robert Klassen, University of York and Professor Steve Strand, University of Oxford. Carol is currently employed as a Senior Lecturer in Psychology and Education at Oxford Brookes University.



**College**      Wolfson

### **Education**

Qualified Teacher Status, Chenderit School, Banbury, 1999

Diploma in Social Work, Oxford, 1998

MSc (Oxon) Applied Social Studies, Oxford, 1998

BSc (Hons) Psychology, London, 1995

### **Previous experience**

Senior Lecturer in Psychology and Education, School of Education, Oxford Brookes University,  
2017 – present

Member of the British Psychological Society Psychology of Education Section Committee  
2017 - 2020

Research Assistant for Ofqual/OUCEA project on modular and linear GCSEs,

April - December 2015.

A-level psychology teacher for 15 years in Oxfordshire

### **Title of thesis**

What motivates A-level students to achieve? The role of expectations and values.

### **Supervisors**

Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck and Professor Jo-Anne Baird

### **Progress on thesis**

This research explored the relationships between expectations, values and A-level achievement in 930 students based on Eccles' expectancy-value model of achievement motivation. A mixed methods design was used. A questionnaire collected information on a student's background (SES, gender, ethnicity), the expectations and subjective task value attached to A-levels, and their future and general life expectations and values. These relationships were also explored using 20 semi-structured interviews. It was found that A-levels confirmed aspects of students' identity but also facilitated changes to their goals and academic skills. Expectations and values were related to A-level achievement. Socio-economic status was positively related to both achievement and expectations about achievement. Girls had lower expectations but placed higher value on their A-levels. There were, however, no gender differences in achievement. The findings are useful for explaining the motivational patterns underlying A-level qualifications and the findings have implications for enhancing outcomes and narrowing educational gaps in this student population.

### **Other achievements this year**

- ❖ Conference presentation: What motivates A-level students to achieve? The role of expectations and values, *British Psychological Society Psychology of Education Section Conference*, Birmingham, UK, November 2016.

## **Kristine Gorgen**

**Year** 2<sup>nd</sup> Year

**College** Green Templeton

### **Education**

MSc Comparative and International Education, Oxford, 2016

BA (Summa cum laude), Comparative Politics and History,

Columbia University, New York, 2014

BA Social Sciences, Sciences Po Paris au Havre, 2012

### **Previous experience**

Research Assistant, OUCEA and AFLA projects, April 2016 - present

German teacher, Goethe Institut, Chennai, India, 2015

Project assistant (education), Mercator Foundation, Essen, Germany, 2014 - 2015

Intern, Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Hessen, Germany, 2014



### **Working title of thesis**

Teaching and testing citizenship for naturalization: Immigrants' educational journey to (good) citizenship.

### **Supervisors**

Drs Therese N. Hopfenbeck Liam Gearon

### **Progress on thesis**

My DPhil research focuses on naturalisation tests; the teaching and testing of citizenship to immigrants wanting to become citizens. I am investigating how ideals of citizenship are constructed by the state, taught to immigrants and tested through naturalisation tests. My case studies include the UK, Germany and the USA. My work bridges citizenship, immigrant education, and education assessment. I completed my transfer of status in July 2017 and will spend the autumn of 2017 as a visiting researcher at WZB Social Science Research Centre in Berlin.

## Other achievements this year

- ❖ Hopfenbeck T. N, Görden K. (2017) [The politics of PISA: The media, policy and public responses in Norway and England](#), *European Journal of Education*, 52:192–205.
- ❖ High-stakes testing reinvented – naturalisation tests in Germany, the UK and the USA. *Philosophy of Education Society GB Annual Conference, 2017*.
- ❖ Teaching and testing citizenship. *STORIES Conference*, Oxford, 2017.
- ❖ Who are the good immigrants? Teaching and testing citizenship for naturalisation. [Philosophy, Religion and Education Research Forum](#), Department of Education, Oxford, 2017.

## Diana Ng Yee Ping

**Year** 3rd Year

**College** St Anne's

### Education

MEd (Educational & Psychological Measurement & Evaluation),  
Nanyang Technological University of Singapore, 2012 (awarded  
Certificate of Commendation for STU Gold Medal)

Diploma in Departmental Management, Nanyang Technological  
University of Singapore, 2005

(awarded Association for Supervision & Curriculum  
Development Book Prize)

Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Secondary), National  
Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, 1997 (distinction)

BSc, National University of Singapore, 1989

### Previous experience

Assessment Specialist (Science), Singapore Examinations & Assessment Board (SEAB),  
2009-present

Head of Department (ICT), Coral Secondary School, Singapore, 2003 - 2008

Science teacher, Year 7 – 11, Singapore, 1997 – 2008



**Working title of thesis**

The construction and validation of the primary scientific reasoning test

**Supervisors**

Professor Jo-Anne Baird and Dr Joshua McGrane

**Progress on thesis**

My study examines the scientific reasoning abilities measured the Primary Scientific Reasoning Test (PSRT), on school children from Singapore and the UK, who have just completed their primary education. I am investigating the construct validity of the PSRT by considering the extent to which explanatory concepts from emerging scientific reasoning research accounts for the children's test performance. This study addresses the need to develop valid and reliable instruments for testing scientific reasoning skills.

My transfer of status took place in January 2016. From July to October last year, I administered my test instruments to 431 pupils in Singapore. I am currently analysing the data collected in Singapore and will take my confirmation of status in September this year with the aim of submitting my thesis in July 2018.

**Other achievements this year**

In Michaelmas term, I was invited by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE) to complete a review of a Next Generation Science Standard (NGSS) prototype task. This revealed interesting insights into and innovative methods of assessing cognitive abilities, which have proven useful in my research on scientific reasoning. I also presented my study's conceptual framework at the *2016 Association for Educational Assessment (AEA) Europe Conference*, in Cyprus.

In Hilary term, I was awarded a studentship by the National Association for Research in Science Teaching (NARST) and subsequently spent a week at the National Taiwan Normal University in June 2017. I also had two articles accepted: in St. Anne's College's *STAAR Journal*, and a presentation at a qualitative hub session organised by Oxford's Department of Education. To conclude the term, I presented some of the preliminary findings from my research at the [11<sup>th</sup> UK Rasch Day](#).

## **Christine Paget**

**Year** 3rd Year

**College** Kellogg

### **Education**

MSc in Research Design & Methodology, Oxford, 2013  
(distinction)

MA in Curriculum Studies & Educational Administration,  
University of British Columbia, 2008

BEd in High School Social Studies, University of British  
Columbia, 2004

BA History & Geography, University of British  
Columbia, 2002

### **Previous experience**

Consultant to the British Columbia Ministry of Education,  
2012 – present.

Treasurer & Executive Member, [British Columbia Social Studies Teachers' Association](#)  
(BCSSTA), 2012 - present

Editor-in-Chief, [Detours: Social Science Education Research Journal](#), 2016 - present

Conference Chair, British Columbia Social Studies Teachers' Association, Provincial Specialist,  
*Association Professional Development Conference*, Vancouver, BC, Canada, 2012 - 2017.

Social Studies teacher, grades 8 - 12, West Vancouver, 2005 – present

### **Working title of thesis**

Exploring school resource and teacher qualification policies, their implementation and effects on  
schools and students' educational outcomes in Brazil

### **Supervisors**

Professors Jo-Anne Baird and Pam Sammons





## Progress on thesis

Christine successfully defended her work for the Confirmation of Status exam on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2017 and plans to submit her thesis for her final VIVA exam in Michaelmas 2017.

## Other achievements this year

- ❖ Menezes, I. G., Duran, V. R., Mendonça Filho, E. J., Veloso, T. J., Sarmento, S. M. S., Paget, C. L., & Ruggeri, K. (2016). [Policy implications of achievement testing using multilevel models: The case of Brazilian elementary schools](#), *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7(November).

## Agni Paramita

**Year** 4<sup>th</sup> year

**College** St Anne's

### Education

MA in Southeast Asia Studies & International Economics,  
Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies,  
Washington DC, 2009 (Fulbright Scholar)

Bachelor of Political Science, Airlangga University,  
Indonesia, 2004

Certificate in International Conflict Studies, Uppsala  
University, Sweden, 2001

### Previous experience:

Program Development Officer, Community & Education

Program in Aceh, Indonesia, Australian-Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and  
Development, 2006 - 2007

Researcher, The World Bank, Jakarta, Indonesia, 2004 - 2006



### Working title of thesis

School-level use of national exams data in Indonesia: A mixed-methods exploratory study

### Supervisors

Professors Jo-Anne Baird and Pam Sammons

## Progress on thesis

I successfully transferred to DPhil status in October 2013 and began my fieldwork in Indonesia in 2014. Unfortunately, a few months later, major flooding in the region in which my research sites were located, slowed my progress. Since returning from maternity leave in Trinity term, I have been working towards my confirmation of status.

## Shailen Popat

**Year** 1<sup>st</sup> year

**College** Brasenose

### Education

MA in Educational Innovation, University of Warwick, 2015,  
(distinction)

BA (Hons) Applied Social Sciences, London, 2002

### Previous experience

Research Assistant, PIRLS (Progress in international reading literacy study: PIRLS for teachers, 2016 - 2017

Founder & Managing Director, Realize Youth Services, 2008–16

Youth Work Leader (South Northants), Northamptonshire County Council, 2008-10

Senior Practitioner, Young People's Services, Warwickshire County Council, 2005-7

Diversity Team Leader, Young People's Services, Oxfordshire County Council, 2004 - 2005

Specialist Personal Advisor, Oxfordshire County Council, 2003 - 2004



### Working title of thesis

How have primary schools interpreted and enacted assessment without levels?

### Supervisors

Drs Velda Elliott and Therese N. Hopfenbeck

## **Progress on thesis**

I have successfully completed my transfer of status and have commenced documentary analysis and interviews with head teachers.

## **Other achievements this year**

### **❖ Publications**

Popat, S., Lenkeit, J., Hopfenbeck, T.N. (2017). PIRLS for teachers – [A review of practitioner engagement with international large-scale assessment results](#), *Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment*, 17(1).

### **❖ Events organised**

May 2017: *Education leadership and community connection*, Brasenose College, Oxford.

May 2017: *OUCEA Annual Lecture*, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (with Rachel Dryden).

## ***Jeanne Ryan***

**Year** 4<sup>th</sup> Year

**College** St Edmund Hall

### **Education**

MSc Comparative & International Education, Oxford, 2013

MPhil General Linguistics & Comparative Philology,  
Oxford, 2011

BA Classical Languages & Psychology/Neuroscience,  
Bryn Mawr College, USA, 2006

### **Previous experience**

Teacher of Latin and Spanish, The Peddie School,  
New Jersey, USA, 2007 – 2008



### **Working title of thesis**

Of words and washback: A longitudinal analysis of alignment across PISA Reading Literacy, GCSE English and MCAS English Language Arts

### **Supervisors**

Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck and Professor Alis Oancea

### **Progress on thesis**

I am in the process of preparing for my confirmation of status, and continuing work on a method of longitudinal assessment analysis, looking at materials from PISA Reading Literacy, GCSE English and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) English Language Arts.

### **Other Achievements this Year**

- ❖ Co-founded SPELL (Seminars in Psychology, Education, Language and Literacy) uniting researchers working on language-related topics across university divisions
- ❖ Taught on the pilot MSc module on International Large-Scale Assessments.

## **Alex Scharaschkin**

**Year** 2<sup>nd</sup> year (part-time)

**College** St Anne's

### **Education**

BSc, University of Tasmania, Australia, 1988

(Prize for best first class in mathematics)

### **Previous experience**

Executive Secretary of the Association for Educational

Assessment, Europe, 2015 - present

Director, Centre for Education Research & Practice (CERP),

AQA, 2014 - present

Director of Research & Compliance, AQA Education, 2014 - present

Director (Regulation, Consumers and Competition), National Audit Office, 2010 - 2014

Manager (Health value-for-money audit), National Audit Office, 2004 - 2010

Manager (Statistics & Methods), National Audit Office, 2000 - 2004

Principal Officer (Statistical analysis), Qualifications & Curriculum Authority, 1998 - 2000

Research Officer, Associated Examining Board, 1996 - 1998

Research Officer, International Centre for Research on Assessment, University of London,  
1994 - 1996

Research Assistant, Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne,  
Australia, 1989 – 1993

### **Working title of thesis**

Constructs, Valuations and Counterfactuals: A mathematical theory of assessment

### **Supervisor**

Professor Jo-Anne Baird

### **Progress on thesis**

I am currently working towards my transfer of status. Over the past few months, I have been drawing on literature in measurement theory and cognitive science to examine the scope for



using models from fields such as knowledge representation and formal semantics in assessment. I would like to establish whether such models can help appraise some of the philosophical underpinnings of assessment theory, and account, to some degree, for what assessors do when they construct accounts of what 'good performance' looks like in an assessment domain, and decide the extent to which particular performances meet the standards they have constructed.

### **Other achievements this year**

Alongside my research, I have overseen standards setting and maintenance and assessment design in AQA's qualifications.. In my role as Executive Secretary of the Association for Educational Assessment, Europe, I was involved in organising the 2016 conference, in November in Limassol, Cyprus.

### ***Rachel Taylor***

**Year**            **6<sup>th</sup> year (part-time)**

**College**       **Kellogg**

#### **Education**

BSc, Psychology, Sheffield, 2003

MRes, Psychology, Manchester, 2005

#### **Previous experience**

Research Fellow (Standards), Ofqual, 2015 - present

Principal Research Manager, AQA, Manchester, 2015

Senior Research Associate, AQA, Manchester, 2012 - 2015

Research Associate, AQA, Manchester, 2009 - 2012

Research Assistant, AQA, Manchester, 2006 - 2009



#### **Working title of thesis**

Maintaining standards in the presence of early and multiple entry to GCSE mathematics assessments



## **Supervisors**

Professors Steve Strand and Jo-Anne Baird

## **Progress on thesis**

My thesis considers the practice of early and multiple exam entry to GCSE mathematics and the implications of this for setting and maintaining standards. I have recently completed the final quantitative chapters of my thesis. These explored trends in early and multiple exam entry, and considered the implications for exam outcomes. The final chapter in the main body of my thesis considers the implications of early and multiple entry for the operational maintenance of exam standards, and the defining of standards. My paper based on the qualitative phase of my DPhil was published in *The Oxford Review of Education* in December 2016.

## **Other achievements this year**

### ***Conference Presentations***

- ❖ Supporting stakeholder trust in A-level modern foreign language outcomes: Is there a native speaker effect? *Association for Educational Assessment - Europe Conference*, Paphos, Cyprus, November 2016.
- ❖ Drivers of standards in England. *Standard Setting Symposium*, Oxford, UK, March 2017.

## ***Nardos Tesfay***

**Year**            4<sup>th</sup> Year

**College**        Wolfson

### **Education**

MSc Educational Research Methodology, Oxford, 2012

MA Economics, University of Saskatchewan, 2003

### **Previous experience**

Social Policy Officer, United Nations Children's Fund, 2005 - 2009

**Working title of thesis**

The moderated effects of wealth on children's vocabulary trajectories in Ethiopia

**Supervisors**

Associate Professors Lars-Erik Malmberg and Maria Evangelou

**Progress on thesis**

My thesis examines the effects of wealth on children's vocabulary development in Ethiopia, drawing on the Young Lives International Longitudinal Study of Childhood Poverty (ODID, University of Oxford). I have now carried out the first two (of three) empirical studies on this. Using psychometric techniques, I first examined the cross-cultural validity of the vocabulary measure when applied across the multilingual sample of children. Using hierarchical linear modelling, I then investigated differences in the children's vocabulary growth by wealth using the scaled scores previously obtained. I am now focusing on understanding how initial wealth launches the trajectory, and how changes in wealth shape developmental patterns over time.

**Other achievements this year**

This year, I have been working with the Social Statistics Tutor at Hawassa University (Ethiopia) to disseminate my research tools for pedagogical purposes. I provided my own constructed data files and related syntax files for students to replicate the research findings and to take the research forward.

**Natalie Usher**

**Year** 4<sup>th</sup> Year (part-time)

**College** Wolfson

**Education**

MSc Education (Research Design & Methodology),  
Oxford, 2013

PGCE, English Methods, Bristol, 2007

BA (Hons), MA (Oxon), English & Modern Languages (French),  
2005



## **Previous experience**

Editorial Assistant, *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, July 2015 - present

Student Assessment Network Coordinator, April 2015 – December 2016

Teacher of English for Academic Purposes, University of Durham pre-session course, 2012 & 2013

Teacher of English, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile, 2010 - 2011

Teacher of English, Drama & Media Studies, 11-18 age range, London, 2007 - 2009

English Assistant, Teacher Training College (IUFM), Reims, France, 2005 – 2006

## **Working title of thesis**

Learning about Academic Writing through Holistic Peer Review

## **Supervisors**

Drs Therese N. Hopfenbeck Kathleen Quinlan

## **Progress on thesis**

My research focuses on the role of peer assessment in academic writing development.

Specifically, I am interested in how undergraduate students can learn from giving, as well as receiving feedback on work, as they transition from school to university writing. I use self-regulated learning theory to model how students' learning and development unfolds.

I am currently finalising some complex data analysis with NVivo, and focussing on writing up my findings.

## **Other achievements this year**

### ***International conference presentations***

- ❖ 'Thinking about how I write instead of just what I write': Developing task representations in university writing through peer assessment, / Using multiple sources of qualitative data to trace the impact of peer assessment on academic writing development, *EARLI SIG Writing Research School*, Liverpool, July 2016 (awarded Best Early Stage Short Talk 2016)
- ❖ The complex interplays between assessment and learning that shape writing development during the transition to university from A-level, *Association for Educational Assessment-Europe Conference*, Limassol, Cyprus, November 2016.

## **Owen Henkel**

My research focuses on the potential that recent advances in “data science” have for improving the analysis of student-level educational performance. Traditional learning environments (i.e. schools) are extremely data-rich, providing a wealth of student-specific information, such as work products, time on task, or even body language; however, this data is typically captured informally, if at all, and is rarely used in a systematic way to better understand student's learning trajectories.



I am exploring whether methodological approaches originally designed for website optimization, online marketing, and sports analytics, can be used to improve the design, analysis, and use of formative assessments and student progress trackers. A key element of this research is to explore how these methodologies can be adapted to incorporate existing models of learning from the fields of education and psychology.

Prior to starting at Oxford, I spent the better part of the past 10 years working and studying in the field of education. After working as a classroom teacher in New Orleans as part of Teach for America, I completed a dual master's degree at the University of Michigan where I focused on big data and education technology with a particular emphasis on MOOCs. After graduating I worked as a consultant to ed-tech startups in Latin America, and then joined Pearson Affordable Learning Fund (PALF) where I am currently Director of Efficacy and Research. My primary responsibility is working with PALF portfolio companies - education startups with a focus on accessibility - to measure, report and improve student learning outcomes. I am continuing my role at PALF while I pursue my DPhil part-time.



© University of Oxford

Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment (OUCEA)  
<http://oucea.education.ox.ac.uk>

