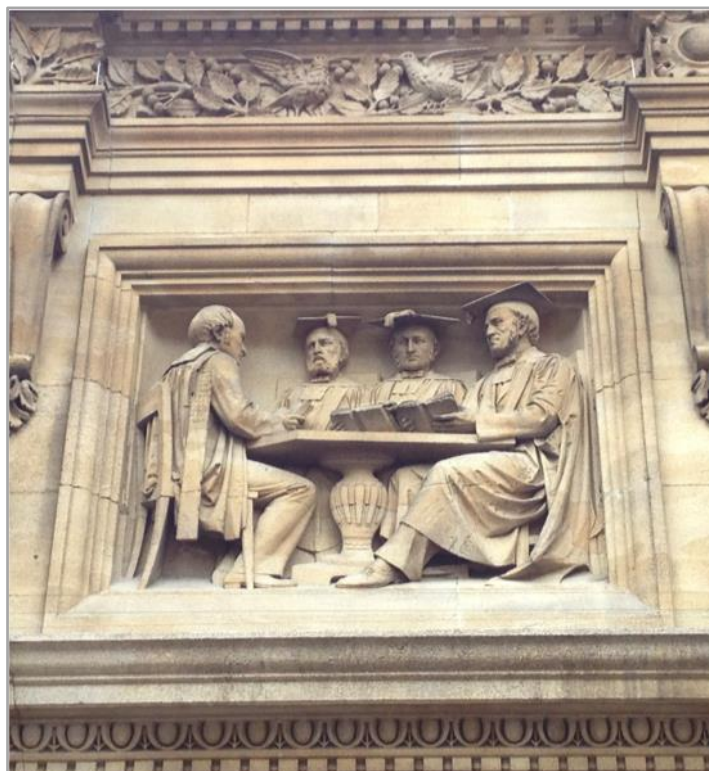


# Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment



## Annual Report 2014-15

June 2015





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## Foreword



In previous annual reports I've remarked on the impact which the Centre is making. In this one, which I am again delighted to introduce as Chair of its Joint Advisory Board, that view can be stated even more firmly. OUCEA should take its share of the credit for contributing to the outcome of the recent Research Excellence Framework which saw the Department of Education, in which it is located, ranked as the highest quality institution of its type in the United Kingdom.

It can be said without fear of contradiction that the Centre is now well established. The scale of the activity in which it is involved continues to grow. As the following pages record, it is well-networked internationally, with members of staff working on conferences and projects in conjunction with a wide variety of organisations in various jurisdictions. It is also clear that the research being undertaken by members of the Centre often resonates strongly with policy makers and, where it doesn't, OUCEA is not afraid to speak truth unto power.

None of that implies complacency. There is always more to be done. However, the outcomes of a positive review of the Centre's progress by three internationally distinguished reviewers suggest that future progress will be from a very strong base. They concluded, among other things, that OUCEA had created an environment in which top quality research can thrive.

The Joint Advisory Board, including representatives of Pearson plc, whose generous donation to the University in 2008 enabled the Centre to be established, welcomed these conclusions. I continue to be grateful to the members of the Board for their various contributions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Jonathan Phillips'.

Sir Jonathan Phillips  
Warden of Keble College, University of Oxford

## Director's overview



The recent results of the Research Excellence Framework (REF)<sup>1</sup> showed the University of Oxford's Department of Education to be the [highest quality department in the UK](#), with a substantial gap between us and the department ranked second. Over half of our research outputs judged were rated at the highest level, as world-leading, and 86% were rated as internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour. Not only did OUCEA contribute to the Department of Education's success, we have benefited from interactions with the high calibre of people within the Department who collectively produced that result.

Over the past two years, it has been an honour to serve as President of the Association of Educational Assessment – Europe. We hosted our Annual Conference in Tallinn, Estonia with the theme of 'Assessment of Students in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century World.' OUCEA continues to be actively involved in the Association and with Professor Louise Hayward (University of Glasgow), I am Co-Chair of the Organising Committee for the Annual Conference in Glasgow, 5 – 7 November 2015.



Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck was appointed as Deputy Director of OUCEA and has been promoted to Associate Professor. Therese has led a number of projects of international acclaim since joining the Centre. This year, her OECD Report [Balancing Trust and Accountability? The Assessment for Learning Programme in Norway](#) was cited nineteen times in a Norwegian Government White Paper [Listening: Achieving a safe psychosocial school environment](#) and she was invited by the Norwegian Minister for Education to give a presentation on *Assessment and School Dropout*. She has also published a co-edited book, [From Political Decisions to Change in the Classroom: Successful Implementation of Education Policy \(CIDREE Yearbook 2014\)](#) and edited a Special Issue of the journal, *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, on [Assessment for Learning: Lessons Learned from Large-Scale Evaluations of Implementations](#). I stood down from a six-year term as Lead Editor of this journal and Therese was appointed by the Editorial Board as the new Lead Editor.

Dr Daniel Caro took up his OECD Fellowship and worked at their headquarters in Paris for three months. His work on effectiveness of education systems and instructional approaches will be completed in 2015. Daniel [has developed 'intsvy'](#) for conducting analysis with international assessment data. 'intsvy' is implemented as a package in the R programming language and includes functions for importing data, performing data analysis, and visualising results of international assessments (e.g. PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS and PIAAC). 'intsvy' functions take into account the complex sample design (with replicate weights) and rotated test forms (with plausible achievement values) of international assessments in the calculation of statistics and associated standard errors. Daniel has published a [technical tutorial](#) on using 'intsvy' and has presented 'intsvy' at different international events, including AERA, EARLI, AEA-Europe and the EERA Spring Schools, as well as in R workshops for students at the University of Oxford and at the OECD. The [number of daily downloads](#) of the package are posted online.

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<sup>1</sup> The UK system for evaluation of research quality in higher education

Yasmine El Masri took up an ETS Internship in summer 2014. This internship was awarded following an international competition and she worked with Dr Peter van Rijn.



OUCEA continues to be an excellent space for international collaboration. Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck, Professor Gordon Stobart and I have been working with Professor David Andrich, one of our Visiting Professors, on the relationships between assessment and learning theory. In February this year, I was a Visiting Scholar at the University of Western Australia, working with Professor Andrich on this project. Professor Art Graesser has continued to collaborate with us on the topic of language effects in assessment. Additionally, Professor David Kaplan has become an Associate of OUCEA and gave a workshop on Bayesian methods of analysis, together with Dr Daniel Caro, in June 2015. Professor Gordon Stobart gave the OUCEA Annual Lecture at St. Anne's College, entitled, *What kind of learning do we want? 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, the standards agenda and expert learners*.

We have been working on 12 projects this year, hosted 20 events with approximately 290 participants, as well as presented at 19 external events, including a Keynote presentation at the Assessment in Higher Education Conference. As part of our ongoing drive to engage with policy and practice, we jointly hosted a [Symposium on Teacher Ethics in Assessment](#) with Glenys Stacey, Chief Executive of Ofqual. Interesting dynamics around the effects of accountability systems upon behaviour in schools were disclosed and debated by an invited audience of teachers, teacher association leaders, regulators, examination board staff and academics. Our research has been quoted in the media a number of times, including the *New York Times*. Professor Sølvi Lillejord, Director of the Research Council of Norway's Knowledge Centre for Education and Professor Sigrid Blömeke, Director of the Centre for Educational Measurement (CEMO) at the University of Oslo jointly hosted a one-day national Symposium relating to our 2014 [Review of Assessment and Learning](#).

Dr Jenny Lenkeit joined OUCEA as a full-time Research Fellow. Soon after Jenny joined us, we won an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) grant to investigate the relevance of assessment data for teachers. Jenny is Co-Investigator on the grant and has brought a great deal of expertise to the Centre. Yasmine El Masri has successfully completed her doctorate and taken up a Research Fellow position, on a Pearson-funded project relating to the prediction of task difficulty. This expands upon Yasmine's award-winning doctoral research on language effects in international testing.



Pearson Professor of Educational Assessment  
Professorial Fellow of St. Anne's College, University of Oxford

More information on our projects and events can be found on our website ([oucea.education.ox.ac.uk](http://oucea.education.ox.ac.uk)).

# Research programme

## Research themes

The Centre's overall aim is to investigate the impact of educational assessment. Connections between policy, assessment theory and practice need to be elucidated, researched and critiqued for assessment to play a better role in improving education.

The Centre's main research priorities are to:

- Conduct research into the role of assessment in developing, implementing and monitoring **system-level change**.
- Develop **models of educational assessment** to increase understanding of learning processes, resource use and outcomes in education systems.
- Undertake systematic analyses of **assessment, public policy and the interaction between them** in various sectors of education and subject domains. For example, the use of international test data within and across education systems.
- Investigate **how assessment is perceived and used by stakeholders** (learners, parents, institutions, employers, policy-makers) within education systems.
- Critically examine notions of **validity, reliability and standards** in relation to different modes of assessment and to different purposes.
- Evaluate the potential for **the use and application of psychometrics** to enhance the validity and reliability of educational assessment.
- Explore the opportunities for, and the impacts of, **new assessment technologies** in test design, test distribution, test administration and results delivery.



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## Projects

Research projects underway in the Centre in the period of this report are detailed below.

### *PISA 2018 framework*

Pearson is developing the frameworks for the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018 international tests, for which the primary focus will be reading literacy. These frameworks specify the domain of the assessment, as well as progress in the domain. International meetings of experts are held to discuss the ways in which the frameworks must be adapted to keep pace with changes in the field. Professor Jo-Anne Baird is a member of the Global Competency Expert Group, which seeks to construct a framework to measure 15-year-olds' capacity to interact in a global world. This is a new domain for the PISA 2018 tests. Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck is a member of the Questionnaire Expert Group for PISA 2018.

Funder: OECD

Principal Investigator: Professor John de Jong (VU University Amsterdam)

Collaborators: Professor Fons van de Vijver, Professor Dominique Lafontain, Professor Andrew Elliot, Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck, Professor David Kaplan, Dr David Cantor, Professor Kit Tai Hau, Professor Hwa-Wei Ko, Dr Małgorzata Mikucka, Thierry Rocher, Professor Herb Marsh, Dr Ben Jensen, Professor David Kerr, Professor Sarah Howie, Dr Sari Sulkunen, Peter Franklin, Dr Jasmine B-Y Sim, Professor Wing On Lee, Dr Darla Deardoff, Tom Franklin, Dr Myunghee Ju Kang, Professor Jim Schrieber, Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Professor Naomi Miyake, Dr Veronica Mansilla, Professor Alicia Cabezudo, Hans Ruesink

### *Progress in International Reading Literacy 2016 National Centre*

PIRLS 2016 will be the fourth cycle of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) assessment of reading comprehension. PIRLS 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 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 Government Department 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 NPD dataset and will disseminate the findings in a range of ways. Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck is the Research Manager responsible for all aspects of the research. More information about this review can be found at: <http://oucea.education.ox.ac.uk/research/recent-research-projects/>.

Funder: Department for Education, England

Principal Investigators: Dr Grace Grima (Pearson UK), Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck

Collaborators: Dr Jenny Lenkeit, Dr Daniel Caro, Pearson UK staff

Advisory Group: Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Professor Art Graesser (University of Memphis), Professor John de Jong (VU University Amsterdam)

## *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study: PIRLS for teachers*

This project addresses the knowledge gap between information provided by international large-scale assessments (ILSA), the publicly available research results, and what is of interest and use to teachers in England. The extensive information that ILSA provide about the contexts of learning, such as students' background and affective characteristics, the conditions of teaching and learning in schools go mostly unnoticed and hardly find their way to relevant stakeholders. A re-conceptualisation of the utility of ILSA results is necessary to increase the value of ILSA for teachers. In this project, the team from OUCEA, led by Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck, will work 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, secondarily researchers and policy makers.

Funder: Economic and Social Research Council Impact Acceleration Award

Principal Investigator: Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck

Collaborators: Dr Jenny Lenkeit, Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Professor Ian Menter, Professor Victoria Murphy, Professor Judy Sebba, Professor Sølvi Lillejord (Research Council of Norway), literacy coordinators and head teachers in local schools

## *Examination reform: The impact of linear and modular examinations at GCSE*

Although we are still in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we have already seen policy reversal in relation to modular examinations. This project includes a broad research programme on the structural reforms of GCSE that will document their impacts so that policy makers can better understand the likely effects of future reform agendas in this area. The research programme is a collaborative project between Ofqual and OUCEA, monitoring the impact of the new GCSE English Literature, English Language and mathematics examinations in 2017. The research programme will be completed in 2018.

The research programme will include three strands:

A: Contextualisation of qualification structure policy

B: Quantitative research on outcomes

C: Qualitative Research on Teachers Views on School Practice

Funder: Ofqual

Principal Investigators: Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Dr Michelle Meadows (Ofqual)

Collaborators: Dr Daniel Caro, Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck, Dr Victoria Elliott, Dr Jane McNicholl, Professor Gordon Stobart, Dr Tina Isaacs, Dr Jenni Ingram, Carol Brown



## *Definitions of examination standards in public examinations internationally*

Educational cultures differ across countries in ways which permeate how examination standards are perceived and enacted. This project investigates the conceptualisation and operation of examination standards, beginning with a home-international comparison of the Scottish and English approaches to defining leaving-school examination standards.

Funder: AQA

Principal Investigators: Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Dr Lena Gray (AQA)

## *Evaluating effectiveness of education systems and instructional approaches with PISA data*

Dr Daniel Caro was awarded the OECD Thomas J. Alexander Fellowship in 2014. His one-year fellowship project conducted in collaboration with Dr Jenny Lenkeit is concerned with the effectiveness of education systems and instructional approaches used by teachers. This project bridges the fields of educational effectiveness research and international assessment studies. It proposes a classification of education systems based on indicators of effectiveness performance using cross-sectional and trend data from PISA. Further, it analyses the relationship between instructional approaches and student performance and whether these approaches are equally effective for different groups of students, schools, and countries. Part of this Fellowship involved a three-month internship at the OECD in Paris. Results will be reported in peer-reviewed paper and disseminated through a policy note.

Funder: OECD

Principal Investigator: Dr Daniel Caro

Collaborator: Dr Jenny Lenkeit

## *Assessment and learning*

OUCEA won a competitive tender to produce a state-of-the-field review for the newly established Knowledge Centre for Education in Norway, led by Professor Sølvi Lillejord. The review encompasses the theme of 'Assessment and Learning', looking at the relationships between theories of learning and assessment theory and practice. Two major areas of research activity in the field of assessment were identified this century; international testing and assessment for learning. The review looks at the extent to which these areas relate to particular views of learning. We also investigated the number and range of doctoral theses on the topic of assessment that were published in Norway over the past 20 years. We conclude that the literature in this field is fragmented, often without clear links to theory. As was the case at the beginning of this century, cognitive learning theory was the dominant paradigm, although we recognise that a number of authors are making in-roads using socio-cultural theory. Education has been characterised by some as an immature field. If we are to grow up, we conclude that thematic reviews like this, which draw the field together, are important. Further information about this review can be found at: <http://oucea.education.ox.ac.uk/research/recent-research-projects/>. We are now following this work by looking in more depth at the relationship between assessment models and learning.

Funder: Knowledge Centre for Education, Research Council of Norway

Principal Investigators: Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck

Collaborators: Professor Paul Newton (Institute of Education, University of London), Professor Gordon Stobart (Institute of Education, University of London), Anna Steen-Uthmeim (BI LearningLab)

Advisory Group: Professor David Andrich (University of Western Australia), Professor Mary James (University of Cambridge), Professor Dylan Wiliam (Institute of Education, University of London)

## *Investigation into the predictability of the Irish Leaving Certificate examinations*

Many nations have concerns about whether their children are learning the right things, in the right way, to compete in the knowledge economy of the future. These concerns arise in conceptually distinct guises which are often related in public narratives: concerns about standards, the content of the curriculum, the thinking skills being developed in the education system, preparation for work or higher education or the predictability of the examinations. It was the latter public narrative that was the focus of this research, although the underlying concerns related also to whether the Irish school examinations provoked rote learning that did not prepare students well for the future. OUCEA was commissioned by the State Examinations Commission in Ireland to investigate the predictability of Irish Leaving Certificate examinations. Three studies were conducted to investigate the issues: an expert review of examinations materials in five subjects, an analysis relating students' examination grades with their views on predictability of three examination subjects, and interviews with students and teachers. Despite the concerns in the media, we did not find that the examinations were predictable in general. We developed a scale for the evaluation of students' perceptions of predictability, which proved to be invariant over three subject areas. We have presented some of the findings at seminars and conferences this year and are now preparing publications.

Funder: State Examinations Commission, Ireland

Principal Investigator: Professor Jo-Anne Baird

Collaborators: Professor Jannette Elwood (Queen's University, Belfast), Dr Therese Hopfenbeck, Dr Daniel Caro, Dr Ayesha Ahmed (CamExam)

With Ana-Maria Aricescu, Rhian Barrance, Roy Bowden, Quintin Brewer, Carol Brown, Daniel Cowling, Roger Firth, Jacqueline Gray, Steve Harrison, John Hoyes, Mary Jay, Malcolm Johnson, Jane McNicholl, Robert Miller, Aisling O'Boyle, Christine Paget, Jeanne Ryan, John Smith, Stephen Turner, Natalie Usher, Eileen Velarde

Advisory Group: Professor Richard Daugherty (Honorary Research Fellow, University of Oxford), Dr Anne Looney (NCCA), Hugh McManus (SEC), Dr Michelle Meadows (AQA), Professor Roger Murphy (Honorary Research Fellow, University of Oxford), Professor Paul Newton (Institute of Education, University of London), Brid Uí Riordáin (SEC), Professor Gordon Stobart (Honorary Research Fellow, University of Oxford; Emeritus Professor, Institute of Education, University of London)

## *Workshop: Bayesian statistics and analysis of international large-scale assessment data in the R environment*

Professor David Kaplan and Dr Daniel Caro, Workshop University of Oxford: Bayesian statistics and analysis of international large-scale assessment data in the R environment.

Funder: Teaching Excellence Award, University of Oxford

## *Improving existing models for predicting task difficulty*

Various psychometric and statistical techniques have been developed to determine task difficulty in educational assessments. However, all of these methods have been problematic and failed at accurately predicting the nature and level of challenges students face when solving tasks in educational assessments. The research project includes various types of activities:

- Reviewing the literature on previous approaches adopted for predicting task difficulty
- Investigating strengths and weaknesses of previously used methods

- Taking into consideration the distinction between the concepts of task ‘difficulty’ and task ‘demand’, review the literature on previous approaches used in evaluating the nature and level of task demands
- Proposing statistical models to predict task difficulty, taking into account the nature and level of task demand

Dr Yasmine El Masri writes blogs relating to this research which are published on Pearson’s Research and Innovation Network [website](#).

- March 2015 [A call for a judgement-free approach to predicting item demands](#)
- April 2015 [Using cognitive load theory for predicting item difficulty: Promises and challenges](#)

Funder: Pearson Inc.

Post-doctoral Fellow: Dr Yasmine El Masri

Collaborators: Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Dr Peter Foltz, Professor John de Jong, Dr Steve Ferrara (Pearson)

## *R package*

Dr Daniel Caro is developing ‘intsvy’, a statistical package to manage and analyse data from international assessments (PIAAC, PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS) using the R language and environment: <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~educ0279/>. Standard software cannot handle the complex study designs (eg two-stage sampling and rotated test forms) of international assessments. Package ‘intsvy’ takes into account these complexities in the calculation of statistics and associated standard errors. ‘intsvy’ and the R software are freely available and can be shared and modified by the users. Daniel released his latest version of ‘intsvy’ in September 2014.

## *Developing appropriate assessments of English language fluency for children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)*

This project forms 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 aims to develop an assessment tool to evaluate year 6 EAL children’s English fluency and collaborate 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.

Funder: OUP John Fell Fund

Principal Investigators: Professor Victoria Murphy

Collaborators: Prof Katie Nation, Dr Mathieu Ichou, Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck, Dr Victoria Elliott, Dr Ann Childs



Punting on the River Cherwell

## Publications in 2014-15

A number of articles were submitted for peer review during this period and the following were in print before the end of June 2015. Publications are available on the OUCEA website.

### *Guest-edited Special Issues*

Hopfenbeck, T.N. & Stobart, G. (2015) [Large-scale implementation of Assessment for Learning](#) (Editorial), *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 22 (1), 1-2. Special Issue: Assessment for Learning: Lessons Learned from Large-Scale Evaluations of Implementations.

### *Peer-reviewed journal articles*

Hopfenbeck, T.N., Flórez Petour, M.T. & Tolo, A. (2015) [Balancing tensions in educational policy reforms: large-scale implementation of Assessment for Learning in Norway](#), *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 22 (1), 44-60. Special Issue: Assessment for Learning: Lessons Learned from Large-Scale Evaluations of Implementations.

**Abstract:** This study investigates how different stakeholders in Norway experienced a government-initiated, large-scale policy implementation programme on *Assessment for Learning* (AfL). Data were collected through 58 interviews with stakeholders in charge of the policy; Ministers of Education and members of the Directorate of Education and Training in Norway, and the main actors such as municipality leaders, teachers, school leaders and students. Successful implementation of AfL processes was found in municipalities where there were dialogue and trust between the municipality level, school leaders, teachers and students and where the programme was adapted to the local context. Implementation was challenged when the policy was interpreted as a way of controlling the schools. Despite the successful implementation in some municipalities, the programme did not have any effect upon students' learning outcome, as measured on national tests in reading and mathematics. The results are discussed in relation to how local assessment cultures with particular characteristics influence governing, accountability and trust.

Lenkeit, J., Caro, D.H. & Strand, S. (2015) [Tackling the remaining attainment gap between students with and without immigrant background: an investigation into the equivalence of SES constructs](#), *Educational Research and Evaluation: An International Journal on Theory and Practice*, 21 (1), 60-83.

**Abstract:** In England, students with immigrant background exhibit lower educational attainment than those without immigrant background. Family socioeconomic status (SES) helps explain differences in educational attainment, but a gap remains that differs in size for students with different immigrant backgrounds. While the explanatory repertoire for the remaining gap is broad, it has been neglected to comprehensively investigate whether family SES constructs are equivalent across students with different immigrant backgrounds. Using data from the first wave of the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey in Four European Countries (CILS4EU) for England ( $n = 4,315$ ), the paper applies exploratory structural equation modelling (ESEM) to evaluate measurement invariance of family background constructs across students without and with immigrant background, specifically Pakistani/Bangladeshi immigrant background. Results suggest differences in the structure of family SES indicators across groups and in their association with educational attainment. Complementary variables are suggested to enhance family SES indicators. Findings are relevant to researchers investigating educational inequalities related to immigrant background.

## Editorials

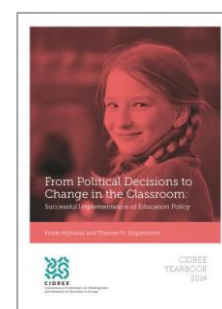
- Baird, J. (2014) [Teachers' views on assessment practices](#), *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 21 (4), 361-364.
- Hopfenbeck, T.N. & Stobart, G. (2015) [Large-scale implementation of Assessment for Learning](#), *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 22 (1), 1-2. Special Issue: Assessment for Learning: Lessons Learned from Large-Scale Evaluations of Implementations.

## Co-edited books

- Nyhamn, F. & Hopfenbeck, T.N. (2014) (Eds) [From Political Decisions to Change in the Classroom: Successful Implementation of Education Policy](#). CIDREE Yearbook 2014.

## Book chapters

- Hopfenbeck, T.N. (2014) Testing Times: Fra PISA til nasjonale prover. Intensjoner, ansvar og anvendelse. (Testing Times: From PISA to national tests. Intentions, accountability and applications.) Chapter 23, 401–419, in: J.H. Stray & L. Wittek, *Pedagogikk, en grunnbok*. Cappelen Damm Akademisk, ISBN: 978-82-02-41424-5.



## Public reports

- Ahmed, A. & Baird, J. (2014) [Predictability in the Irish Leaving Certificate Examination Working Paper 2: Examination Materials Research](#).
- Baird, J., Hopfenbeck, T.N., Ahmed, A., Elwood, J., Paget, C. & Usher, N. (2014) [Predictability in the Irish Leaving Certificate Examination Working Paper 1: Review of the Literature](#).
- Baird, J., Hopfenbeck, T.N., Elwood, J., Caro, D. & Ahmed, A. (2014) [Predictability in the Irish Leaving Certificate](#). OUCEA Report 14/1 commissioned by the State Examinations Commission, Ireland.
- Caro, D. & Hopfenbeck, T.N. (2014) [Predictability in the Irish Leaving Certificate Examination Working Paper 3: Student Questionnaire](#).
- Elwood, J., Barrance, R., Hopfenbeck, T.N., Baird, J., Ryan, J., Paget, C., Brown, C. & O'Boyle, A. (2014) [Predictability in the Irish Leaving Certificate Examination Working Paper 4: Teachers' and Students' Perspectives](#).

## Web publications

- Baird, J. (2014) [Tiered GCSE papers that cap ambition should be abolished](#) *The Conversation*, August
- El Masri, Y. (2015) [A call for a judgement-free approach to predicting item demands](#) *Pearson Research and Innovation Network blog*
- El Masri, Y. (2015) [Using cognitive load theory for predicting item difficulty: Promises and challenges](#) *Pearson Research and Innovation Network blog*
- Lenkeit, J. (2015) [Value-added PISA: how countries do after accounting for their socioeconomic contexts](#) *OUCEA blog*
- Taylor, R. (2014) [Shift from sitting GCSEs a year early wins guarded support](#), *The Conversation*, August



Centre for Educational Measurement (CEMO) & Norwegian Knowledge Centre for Education Conference, March 2015

## Research dissemination

Staff and students have presented at the following external events.

Presenter(s)	Event	Date	Title
Wolfe, Arce-Ferrer, Cohen & Baird	International Testing Conference, San Sebastian, Spain	2 – 5 Jul 2014	Rater effects
Caro	EARLI SIG, Southampton	27 Aug 2014	Introduction to R
Caro	EARLI SIG, Southampton	28 Aug 2014	Causal mediation in educational research
Lenkeit & Caro	EARLI SIG Educational Effectiveness, Southampton University	28 Aug 2014	Education system effectiveness: Linking Educational Effectiveness Research and international large-scale assessments
Baird	Norwegian Centre for Learning Environment and Behavioural Research in Education Seminar	1 Sep 2014	Assessment research at OUCEA
Lenkeit, Caro & Strand	Quant Hub Seminar, Department of Education, Oxford University	20 Oct 2014	Tackling the remaining attainment gap between students with and without immigrant background: an investigation into the equivalence of SES constructs
Baird, Hopfenbeck, Caro & McManus	AEA-Europe Annual Conference, Tallinn, Estonia	6 – 8 Nov 2014	Measuring students' views of the predictability of examinations and their relationships with high-stakes outcomes
Elwood, Hopfenbeck & Baird	AEA-Europe Annual Conference, Tallinn, Estonia	6 Nov 2014	No mercy at all: Students' perspectives on the Irish Leaving Certificate – notions of predictability and re-thinking who is authoritative about assessment in a 21 <sup>st</sup> century world
Flórez Petour	AEA-Europe Annual Conference, Tallinn, Estonia	6 Nov 2014	Validity as a challenge: Critical analysis of the National Curriculum Assessment System (SIMCE) in Chile
Taylor	AEA-Europe Annual Conference, Tallinn, Estonia	6 Nov 2014	Teaching to 21 <sup>st</sup> century tests: Tensions between a broad education and strategic teaching and learning in mathematics assessment
Ryan	AEA-Europe Annual Conference, Tallinn, Estonia	7 Nov 2014	Of Schleicher, skills and Shakespeare: the influence of PISA upon literacy assessment in the UK and US, 2000-2014

El Masri	AEA-Europe Annual Conference, Tallinn, Estonia	8 Nov 2014	Keynote: Educational assessment in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century: Assessment across cultures
Caro & Lenkeit	OECD, Paris	28 Nov 2014	Measuring effectiveness of education systems with PISA data
Caro	OECD, Paris	8 Dec 2014	Workshop: Introduction to R and analysis of international assessments with 'intsvy'
Hopfenbeck	Seminar for the Minister of Education, Oslo, Norway	2 Mar 2015	Assessment and school dropout
Baird & Hopfenbeck	Centre for Educational Measurement (CEMO) & Norwegian Knowledge Centre for Education Conference, Oslo	3 Mar 2015	Assessment and Learning: fields apart
Caro & Lenkeit	Comparative and International Education Society Conference, Washington DC	11 Mar 2015	Evaluating effectiveness of education systems and instructional practices with PISA data
Baird	Public Seminar, Reading University	12 Mar 2015	The relationships between assessment and learning
Baird, Morgan, Wilson & Wolfe	American Educational Research Association, Chicago, US	18 Apr 2015	Psychometric modelling of raters
Baird, Bejar, Cohen, DeCarlo & Wolfe	National Council for Educational Measurement, Chicago, US	19 Apr 2015	Online training, rater monitoring systems and rater accuracy
Caro & Lenkeit	Quant Hub Seminar, Department of Education, Oxford University	18 May 2015	Evaluating effectiveness of education systems and instructional approaches with PISA data
Baird	Assessment in Higher Education Conference, Birmingham, UK	25 Jun 2015	Keynote: Assessment and learning in higher education



Daniel Caro at CIES Conference, March 2015



Jeanne Ryan at AEA-Europe Conference, Tallinn, November 2014



Rachel Taylor at AEA-Europe Conference, Tallinn, November 2014



Art Graesser at AEA-Europe Conference, Tallinn, November 2014

## OUCEA events

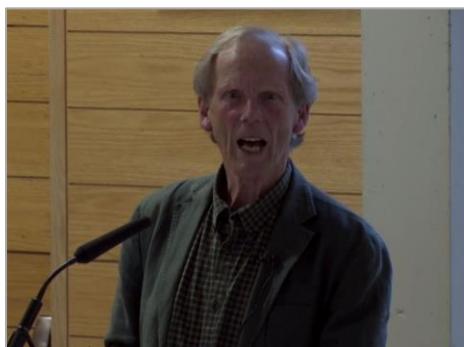
Twenty events were held this year, with approximately 290 students, academics and professionals attending in total.

**17 to 19 June 2015** Professor David Kaplan, *Quantitative Methods Hub Workshop: Bayesian methods for international assessments*

**16 June 2015** Dr Daniel Caro, *Quantitative Methods Hub Workshop: Introduction to R for the analysis of international assessment data*

### 12 May 2015 [OUCEA Annual Lecture](#)

Professor Gordon Stobart, Emeritus Professor, UCL Institute of Education and Honorary Research Fellow, OUCEA, delivered this year's OUCEA Annual Lecture. The lecture, **What kind of learning do we want? 21st century learning, the standards agenda and expert learners**, took place at St Anne's College on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015. Over 100 people attended the lecture. The podcast is available to watch at <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/>.



Gordon Stobart, OUCEA Annual Lecture 2015



**12 May 2015** Dr Daniel Caro, *Introduction to R for the analysis of educational data*

**7 May 2015** Dr Daniel Caro, Dr Lars-Erik Malmberg & Lorena Ortega, *Quantitative Methods Hub Workshop: Multilevel models for educational data*

**26 March 2015** Invited Symposium: Teacher Ethics in Assessment, hosted by Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Director, OUCEA and Glenys Stacey, Chief Regulator, Ofqual



Teacher Ethics Symposium, March 2015





Glenys Stacey, Chief Regulator at Teacher Ethics Symposium



Geraldine Davies, Principal, The UCL Academy and Paola Mattei, Associate Professor in Comparative Social Policy, University of Oxford at Teacher Ethics Symposium

Various resources on this area have been collated on the symposium [web page](#).

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# Invited Symposium: Teacher Ethics in Assessment

This invited symposium, which took place at St Anne's College, Oxford on 26th March 2015, was hosted by Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Director, OUCEA and Glenys Stacey, Chief Regulator, Ofqual.

The programme is available [here](#). Ofqual has issued a [press release](#) about the symposium and Glenys Stacey has published a [blog](#). You can follow some of the [issues from the day](#) and [contribute to the discussion](#) on twitter at [#ethicssymp](#).

Below you will find some relevant background resources as well as

Ofqual website

Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment  
Annual Lecture  
September 12th - 14th May 2015, 5.00 pm  
Housed in the historic building of St Anne's College  
What kind of learning do we want?

**30 January 2015** Dr Daniel Caro, *Introduction to R workshop*

**17 November 2014** Professor Val Klenowski (Queensland University of Technology), *The Rise and Rise of Testing and Use of Assessment Data in Australia* (Department of Education Public Seminar)

**16 October 2014** Professor David Andrich (University of Western Australia), *A controversy in PISA and other large-scale assessments: the trade-off between model fit, invariance and validity*

## 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 around educational assessment. The network is aimed at all students 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. For details, see: <http://oucea.education.ox.ac.uk/students/student-assessment-network/>.

The current Chair is Natalie Usher, who took over from Carol Brown in April 2015. Nine StAN events have been held this year, details of which are below.

11 June 2015	Dr Bryan Maddox, University of East Anglia: <i>Too cool for CATs? Participation, Stance and Affect in the PIAAC assessment</i>
28 May 2015	Reading group on assessment and learning
28 May 2015	Student presentation: Diana Ng, <i>Reasoning about reasoning: investigating the scientific reasoning skills of primary science pupils in written assessment</i>
18 May 2015	Student presentation: Carol Brown, <i>Who am I and what can I achieve?</i> Mind, Brain and Behaviour Research Cluster, Wolfson College
19 February 2015	Dr Camilla Addey, University of East Anglia: <i>The international assessment trend: why do lower and middle income countries join?</i>
25 November 2014	Writing session in the Bodleian Library
30 October 2014	Student conference presentation practice. Jeanne Ryan – AEA-Europe conference presentation: <i>Of Schleicher, skills and Shakespeare: the influence of PISA upon literacy assessment in the UK and US, 2000-2014</i>
23 October 2014	Student conference presentation practice. Yasmine El Masri – AEA-Europe Kathleen Tattersall New Researcher Award Keynote: <i>Educational Assessment in the 21st Century: Assessment across cultures</i> . Carol Brown – British Psychological Society Psychology of Education conference: <i>Who am I and what can I achieve? The relationships between identity, expectations, values and A-level achievement</i>
16 October 2014	Nia Dowell, visiting scholar from Memphis University, <i>What language reveals about you: Modelling learners' cognitive and social dynamics using Coh-Metrix</i> and Visiting Professor David Andrich, <i>A controversy in PISA and other large-scale assessments: the trade-off between model fit, invariance and validity</i>

## Wider contributions to the field

We have contributed to the following groups this year:

### Baird

- Standards Advisory Group, Ofqual, England
- Qualifications Committee, Scottish Qualifications Authority
- OECD Expert Group on Global Competence
- Expert reviewer of the OECD-Scotland Education Policy report for the Scottish Government
- Advisor to Professor Paul Newton's research project on the comparability of standards between higher and ordinary level leaving certificate examinations
- Co-Chair of the Organising Committee for the Glasgow 2015 Association for Educational Assessment-Europe Conference
- Member of AERA (American Educational Research Association), NCME (National Council for Measurement in Education) and AEA-Europe (Association for Educational Assessment, Europe)
- External Examiner, EdD, UCL Institute of Education
- Supervisor to PhD candidate, University of Bristol

### Hopfenbeck

- Chair of the Norwegian Centre for Learning Environment and Behavioural Research in Education
- Lead Editor of *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*
- Expert Advisor, AfL program South Africa, Pretoria. PI: Anil Kanjee, Tshwane University of Technology
- OECD Expert Group for PISA 2018 on Questionnaire Framework
- External Examiner for the MA in Educational Assessment, UCL, Institute of Education
- Member of AERA (American Educational Research Association) and AEA-Europe (Association for Educational Assessment, Europe)
- External examiner, PhD, University of Bergen
- Internal Examiner, DPhil, University of Oxford
- Supervisor to PhD candidate, University of Oslo

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

*Acta Didactica, American Educational Research Journal - Social and Institutional Analysis, Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, Association for Educational Assessment-Europe, British Educational Research Journal, British Journal of Educational Studies, Compare, The Curriculum Journal, Educational Research and Evaluation, Educational Review, European Educational Research Association Network 9: Assessment, Evaluation, Testing and Measurement, Journal for Educational Research Online, Oxford Review of Education, Scandinavian Journal of Education, South African Journal of Education, Studies in Educational Evaluation*

## Media

Irish Times article [Leaving Certificate old fashioned, claims report](#) 2 May 2015

thejournal.ie article [The Leaving Cert is not as predictable as people think...](#) 2 May 2015

State Examinations Commission press release [Publication of Report on Predictability in the Leaving Certificate](#) 2 May 2015

Department of Education and Skills, Ireland press release [Minister for Education and Skills launches Radical Reform of Leaving Certificate Grades and CAO Points System](#) 29 April 2015

RTE.ie article [New LC grade system will spark rounded learning - Govt](#) 29 April 2015

Daily Mail article [How teachers help pupils to cheat in exams: Tactics used to bend rules revealed by more than 500 whistleblowers](#) 27 April 2015

Sunday Times article [Teachers' tricks for helping pupils cheat](#) 26 April 2015

TES article [Don't let statistics do all the talking, says exam board](#) 21 February 2015

Baird profiled in [Schools Week](#) 27 January 2015

New York Times article [Fewer Pass High School Exams, and Some in England Cheer](#) 21 August 2014

The TES podcast – [A-level results day](#) (Baird comments on impact of government reforms) 14 August 2014

Baird article [A-level results fail to prove Gove's theory behind removing exam re-sits](#) Guardian, 14 August 2014



University of Oxford Department of Education

## The Centre

Altogether, OUCEA was composed of a community of 47 researchers this academic year. Our Centre comprises six people who are directly employed in the Centre: academic staff (5) and an administrator. Additionally, there are doctoral students (10), master's students (6), departmental associates (8) and external research associates (17). Interactions between staff, students and associates enhance the quality of the research programme – there are many examples of how those conversations have generated new ideas or challenged existing ones. OUCEA has a presence on LinkedIn, ResearchGate, Academia.edu and Twitter. The LinkedIn group is called [Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment](#) and staff have individual Twitter accounts.



L-R standing: Jeanne Ryan, Joanne Hazell, David Andrich, Jo-Anne Baird, Joshua McGrane  
L-R seated: Nia Dowell, Therese N. Hopfenbeck, Carol Brown, Yasmine El Masri, Natalie Usher

## Governance

The Centre holds Management Group meetings termly, with the following representatives:

- Department of Education Director
- OUCEA Director
- OUCEA Deputy Director
- Department of Education Administrator
- OUCEA Administrator

In addition, we hold an annual Advisory Board meeting, with the following members:

- Sir Jonathan Phillips (Chair), Warden, Keble College, University of Oxford
- Mark Anderson, Managing Director, Pearson UK
- Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Director, Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment
- Professor Richard Daugherty, Honorary Professor, Cardiff University and Honorary Research Fellow, University of Oxford
- Professor John Gardner, Deputy Principal (Education and Students), University of Stirling and Visiting Professor, University of Oxford
- Professor Caroline Gipps, Visiting Professor, Institute of Education, University of London and former Vice Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton
- Professor Ernesto Macaro, Director, Department of Education, University of Oxford
- Dr Kathleen Quinlan, Head of Educational Development, Oxford Learning Institute
- Professor Jim Tognolini, Senior Vice President, Research and Assessment, Pearson plc

## Staff



**Jo-Anne Baird's** research interests include examination standards, policy and systemic aspects of assessment, e-assessment and human judgment in assessment. Her background is in academia (Bristol; London Institute of Education) and in industry (Head of Research at the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance). Jo-Anne is a Visiting Professor at Queen's University, Belfast. College: St. Anne's. Jo-Anne has a presence on [LinkedIn](#), [ResearchGate](#), [Academia.edu](#) and Twitter: [@Baird\\_jo\\_anne](#).



**Therese N. Hopfenbeck** conducts research on international tests, especially the relationship between student motivation and results on the tests. She is also interested in classroom assessment, such as assessment for learning, and self-regulation. Therese is the Research Manager of PIRLS 2016 and has also been appointed by the Norwegian Minister of Education to chair the board of the Norwegian Centre for Learning and Behavioral Research in Education. College: St. Anne's. Therese has a presence on [LinkedIn](#), [ResearchGate](#), [Academia.edu](#) and Twitter: [@TNHopfenbeck](#).



**Daniel Caro** is a Research Fellow at OUCEA and a Thomas J. Alexander Fellow at the OECD. His research interests include education inequality, educational effectiveness research, international large-scale assessments, multilevel models, structural equation models, and causal inference. Daniel is developing a package in R ('[intsy](#)') for the analysis of PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS and PIAAC data. Daniel has a presence on [LinkedIn](#), [ResearchGate](#) and Twitter: [@daniel\\_h\\_caro](#).



**Jenny Lenkeit** is a Research Fellow and 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, cross-cultural comparisons of teaching approaches and mechanisms of educational inequalities. Jenny has a presence on [ResearchGate](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



**Yasmine El Masri** is a Post-doctoral Research Fellow at OUCEA. Her research interests include models for predicting item difficulty, cognitive demands of items, science assessments, large-scale assessments. Yasmine is currently working on a project funded by Pearson which focuses on models of task difficulty. Yasmine has a presence on [LinkedIn](#) and Twitter: [@Y\\_Masri](#).



**Joanne Hazell** is the OUCEA Administrator and supports all of the activities of the Centre. Jo deals with contractual and budgetary matters, as well as research proposal processes, personnel matters, organisation of events and support for students and visitors. She also maintains the website. Jo works part-time at the Centre and is assisted by doctoral students with some of these activities.

## Teaching

Staff contribute to teaching in the Department of Education on the MSc in Education, MSc in Learning and Teaching and the Post-Graduate Certificate in Education.

## Research Assistants

The Centre has employed the following people as research assistants over the past year:

Carol Brown, Jessica Chan, Yasmine El Masri, Lorena Ortega, Natalie Usher.

## Research Students

There are currently ten DPhil students and two Master's students conducting research in OUCEA.

### Master's students graduated 2014

- Charles Cahill, Improving written feedback in key stage 3 religious studies education: An action research study
- Jay Chang, Mathematics in written feedback: A study of year 9 students on how written feedback may influence and develop mathematical thinking
- Shabana Jabine, Students' perceptions on AfL: Purpose, effectiveness and self-efficacy
- Emer Jones, Developing peer and self-assessment in science: An action research project to improve formative assessment in the classroom

### Master's students supervised 2015

- Matthew Bryan, Hard work: Assessment of effort in an English preparatory school (working title)
- Terri Barry, Student autonomy in assessment: An investigation into self-evaluation in the classroom allowing students to progress personally and academically (working title)



Department of Education library

## Carol Brown

Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year DPhil	
College	<a href="#">Wolfson</a>	
Nationality	British	
Education & degrees	Graduate Teacher Programme leading to QTS, 1999 MSc, Applied Social Studies, University of Oxford, 1998 Diploma in Social Work, University of Oxford, 1998 BSc, Psychology, Royal Holloway, University of London, 1995	
Previous experience	Oxon Psychology – own company offering research, tuition, course design, 2009+ Research Assistant, SSAT project - underachievement of white working class boys, 2011 Head of Psychology, Marlborough School, Oxfordshire, 2009-2012 Teacher of Psychology, D'Overbroecks College, Oxford, 2003-2008 Teacher in charge of Psychology, Chenderit School, Northamptonshire, 1998-2003	

### Working title

*Who am I and what can I achieve? A study of the relationships between identity, expectations, values and A-level achievement*

### Supervisors

Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck & Professor Jo-Anne Baird

### Progress on the thesis

In December 2014 I successfully completed my Confirmation of Status examination (examiners: Professors Pam Sammons and Jannette Elwood). My thesis examines whether identity plays a role in motivation and achievement in A-level assessment contexts through its influence on expectations for success and subjective task value. The study employs a mixed methods design and has involved compiling a questionnaire to collect background data (including SES, gender, school type) from 1,007 students and assesses constructs related to their beliefs and values about both A-levels and future life. It also employs interview data to examine these relationships in more detail. I am currently conducting further analyses using structural equation modelling and writing up the remaining chapters of my thesis for submission.

### Other achievements this year

#### Publications

- Brown, C. (2014) Who am I and what can I achieve? *The Psychologist*

#### Conference presentations


- *Who am I and what can I achieve? A study of the relationships between identity, expectations, values and A-level achievement*, British Psychological Society Psychology of Education Conference, 7-9 November 2014, Milton Keynes, UK
- *Who am I and what can I achieve? A study of the relationships between identity, expectations, values and A-level achievement*, Mind, Brain & Behaviour Research Cluster, 18 May 2015, Wolfson College, Oxford

#### External teaching

- UCL Institute of Education – delivered lectures on the relationships between formative assessment and motivation to MSc students studying educational assessment (Jun 2014 & Feb 2015); delivered day course on teaching & learning to psychology PGCE students (Oct 2014)
- University of Oslo – delivered lecture on the relationships between assessment and motivation to trainee teachers; led a seminar on this topic to local head teachers (Aug 2014)

#### Other

- Research Assistant on research project 'Examination Reform: The impact of linear and modular examinations', funded by Ofqual
- Events co-ordinator, Oxford University Centre For Educational Assessment
- Member of the British Psychological Society Psychology of Education section committee

Year	5 <sup>th</sup> Year DPhil	
College	<a href="#">St Anne's</a>	
Nationality	Lebanese	
Education & degrees	DPhil, Education, University of Oxford, 2015 MA, American University of Beirut (AUB), 2009 Teaching Diploma in science for secondary schools, AUB, 2006 BSc, Biology, AUB, 2005	
Previous experience	Science teacher, years 3 – 8, Abu Dhabi, 2008-2010 Biology teacher, years 7 – 9, Beirut, 2006-2008	

### Thesis title

*Comparability of science assessment across languages: The case of PISA science 2006*

### Supervisors

Professor Jo-Anne Baird & Dr Jane McNicholl



### Progress on the thesis

I submitted my DPhil thesis in January and successfully passed my viva voce examination in March. My examiners were Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck (University of Oxford) and Dr Anton Béguin (CITO, AQA).

### Other achievements this year

#### Award

- *Kathleen Tattersall New Researcher Award*, Association for Educational Assessment-Europe (AEA-E) annual conference, 6-8 November 2014, Tallinn, Estonia



#### Presentations

- *Single stage vs. two-stage estimation of latent regression IRT models*, Presentation at Educational Testing Service (ETS), 25 July 2014, Princeton, NJ
- *Assessment across cultures*, Keynote speech at AEA-E annual conference, 6-8 November 2014, Tallinn
- *Be visible: Build your own network*, Seminar presented at the Education Department, University of Oxford, 15 November 2014, Oxford
- *Assessment across Cultures*, Seminar addressed to Masters students at the UCL Institute of Education, 26 November 2014, London

#### Summer internship at ETS (June-July 2014)

- Gained an internship at ETS following an international competition. Worked with Peter van Rijn at ETS Global - Amsterdam and visited ETS headquarters in Princeton. Project: Single Stage vs. Two-stage Estimation of Latent Regression IRT Models

#### Projects

- Hosted visiting scholar, Nia Dowell (PhD student, University of Memphis)
- Editorial Assistant, *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice* since October 2012
- Coordinator of the doctoral network of AEA-Europe since March 2012
- Member of AEA Europe Professional Development Committee (PDC) since September 2013

Year	1 <sup>st</sup> Year DPhil
College	<a href="#">St Anne's</a>
Nationality	Singaporean
Education & degrees	MEd, Educational and Psychological Measurement and 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 and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Book Prize. Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) with Distinction, 1997
Previous experience	BSc, National University of Singapore, 1989 Science teacher, Year 7 – 11, Singapore, 1997-2008 Head of Department (ICT) in school, Singapore, 2003-2008 Assessment Specialist (Science), Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board (SEAB), 2009-current

### Working title

*Reasoning about reasoning: Investigating the scientific reasoning skills of primary science pupils in written assessments*

### Supervisors

Professor Jo-Anne Baird & Dr Jane McNicholl



### Progress on the thesis

I am currently preparing for my Transfer of Status.

### Other achievements this year


#### Presentations

- *Investigating the scientific reasoning skills of primary science pupils*, Research Training Session, Oxford University Department of Education, 4 December 2014
- *Reasoning about reasoning: Investigating the scientific reasoning skills of primary science pupils in written assessment*, Student Assessment Network presentation, Oxford, 28 May 2015



University Parks

## Christine Paget

Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year DPhil	
College	<a href="#">Kellogg</a>	
Nationality	Canadian	
Education & degrees	MSc with Distinction, Research Design and Methodology, 2013, University of Oxford MA, Curriculum Studies and Educational Administration, 2008, University of British Columbia (UBC) BEd, High School Social Studies, 2004, UBC BA, History and Geography, 2002, UBC	
Previous experience	Social Studies teacher, grades 8-12, West Vancouver, 2005-2015	

### Working title

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

### Supervisors

Professor Jo-Anne Baird & Professor Pam Sammons

### Progress on the thesis

In March 2015 I successfully completed my Transfer of Status examination and will begin statistical analyses in April 2015 and fieldwork in July 2015. My confirmation of Status exam will take place in November 2016.

### Other achievements

#### Recent publications

- Baird, J., Hopfenbeck, T., Ahmed, A., Elwood, J., Paget, C. & Usher, N. (2014) Predictability in the Irish Leaving Certificate Examination: Review of the Literature (No. 1). Oxford, UK
- Evangelou, M., Goff, J., Hall, J., Sylva, K., Eisenstadt, N., Paget, C. & Tracz, R. (2014) Evaluation of Children's Centres in England (ECCE) Strand 3: Parenting Services in Children's Centres Research report. Oxford, UK

#### Conference Chair

- BCSSTA PSA Professional Development Conference Vancouver, BC, Oct 2012, 2013, 2014
- Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre: Holocaust Studies Symposium West Vancouver, BC, Feb 2012, 2015

#### Consultant

- Consultant to the British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2012 – present
  - Social Studies Curriculum Development Grades K-10
  - Social Studies Graduation Requirements and Curriculum Development
  - Social Studies Assessment Strategy Development
  - Historical Wrongs Curriculum Revision Team

Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year DPhil
College	<a href="#">St Anne's</a>
Nationality	Indonesian
Education & degrees	MA, Southeast Asia Studies and International Economics, Fulbright Scholarship recipient, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, 2009 Bachelor of Political Science, Airlangga University, 2004 Certificate in International Conflict Studies, Uppsala University, 2001
Previous experience	Program Development Officer for the Community and Education Program in Aceh, Australian-Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development, 2006-07 Researcher, The World Bank, Jakarta, 2004-06

### Working title

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

### Supervisors

Professor Jo-Anne Baird & Professor Pam Sammons


### Progress on the thesis

I am currently based in Jakarta, Indonesia to conduct my fieldwork. Working with Indonesian principals and teachers from the ICSEI network, I piloted my qualitative data-collection instrument, both to refine my interview protocol and to gather early insight into school-level use of the national exams data.

An interesting preliminary finding is the practice of public schools engaging private tutoring institutions to improve exams results, as an outcome of the school's analysis of the exams data. Similar practice is evident in the United States; the No Child Left Behind Act stipulates that districts must provide funding for private tutoring to students in schools that have failed to raise exam scores. Such a mandate, however, does not exist in Indonesia. Thus, the study will need to gauge the prevalence of this type of engagement and take into account the rationale and opportunity costs that underlie it.



## Jeanne Marie Ryan

Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year DPhil	
College	<a href="#">St Edmund Hall</a>	
Nationality	US	
Education & degrees	MSc, Comparative & International Education, University of Oxford, 2013 MPhil, General Linguistics and Comparative Philology, University of Oxford, 2011 BA, Classical Languages and Psychology/Neuroscience, Bryn Mawr College, 2006	
Previous experience	Teacher of Latin and Spanish, The Peddie School, NJ, 2007-2008	

### Working title

*Of words and washback: how has PISA influenced the assessment of reading ability in national contexts?*

### Supervisor

Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck & Dr Alis Oancea

### Progress on the thesis

I am in the process of familiarising myself with literature across the field of assessment, with particular attention to washback, test design, and international assessment policy. As my research advances, the ability for assessments to serve as objects imbued with tremendous power has shifted to the forefront of my enquiry.

Over the course of the past few months I have also piloted a methodology of assessment analysis upon materials used in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). This pilot and preliminary analysis uses a multi-dimensional methodology adapted from previous work done in my MSc upon PISA Reading Literacy and GCSE English materials from 2000 onwards. In the upcoming months, I look forward to commencing interviews with test designers and implementers from PISA, the GCSE, and the MCAS.

### Other achievements this year

Presented at AEA Europe Conference in Tallinn, Estonia

- Presented a paper, *Of Schleicher, skills and Shakespeare: the influence of PISA upon literacy assessment in the UK and US, 2000-2014* at the Association for Educational Assessment-Europe Conference in Tallinn, November 2014
- Attended workshop on How to Assess What's Important (conducted by Alastair Pollitt and Ayesha Ahmed) and gained essential insight into elements of test design and validity
- Attended a number of excellent paper presentations related and unrelated to my own research, providing an opportunity for thoughtful consideration upon the theme of assessment in the 21st century

### Projects

- Research Assistant, Norwegian Research Council-funded project *Assessment and Learning: a state-of-the-field review*, PI: Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck

# Analysing national assessment systems for washback from PISA

## A KNOWLEDGE PROTOCOL

Jeanne Marie Ryan, Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment

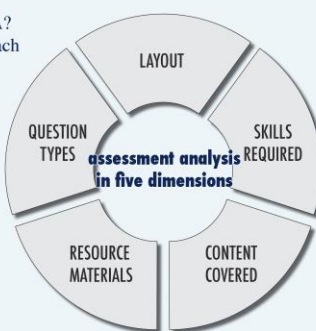
### BACKGROUND

Current literature in the fields of both assessment and policy borrowing sees the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) frequently cited as a decidedly influential force driving change in assessment systems at the national, cross-national and intranational levels. While policy makers and researchers alike often highlight the impact of PISA in various countries, does there exist sufficient evidence to support their claims? How do we analyse national assessment systems – in particular, *national assessment materials* – for possible washback effects from PISA?

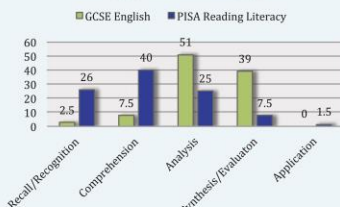
### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**What** elements of PISA do nations borrow?  
**Why** have these elements been chosen?  
**How** does each nation adapt elements of PISA?  
**How** do elements of PISA transform within each national context?

### KNOWLEDGE PROTOCOL



Question Types (by Percentage)



### What is washback?

"It is common to claim the existence of washback (the impact of a test on teaching) and to declare that tests can be powerful determiners, both positively and negatively, of what happens in classrooms." (Wall and Alderson, 1993)

### A new definition of washback?

"Current international comparisons, for instance the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), have introduced a new high-stakes phenomenon – tests that are low-stakes for the individuals taking them and for their schools but high-stakes for politicians, policy makers and governments." (Stobart and Eggen, 2012)

### METHOD

A longitudinal analysis provides the foundation for internal and external comparisons – past, present and future. Have elements of PISA been introduced over time? If so, how have these borrowed elements of PISA been translated into the vernacular of the national assessment system?

As, for example, in the CRAS framework (Hughes, Pollitt and Ahmed, 1998) which evaluates for demand, analysing materials along multiple dimensions allows for a thorough investigation of the relevant assessment materials.

### Content Topics by Frequency

PISA	GCSE
geography	school curriculum: welfare for students, teaching practices,
social issues	skills, educational issues
charities, volunteering	technology: internet, mobile phones, TV, computers, video games
environment: nature, natural disasters	decisions: problems faced, mistakes made, lessons learned
history: places, dates, events, nations	biology: plants, diets, disease, nutrition
retail concerns	environment: global warming, natural disasters, weather
young and old: generation gap, opinions of teenagers, generational relationships	privacy
health	identity: being yourself, independence, your experience
employment	employment for teenagers/secondary school students
scientific technology	
right issues: fairness, law	

### Sample Matrix

Employment	AOA 2004	Edexcel 2006	Edexcel 2007	OCR 2006	PISA
Question (Actual)	Write an article for a careers magazine in which you give advice to other students seeking a job...	Comment on your ideal career...	How well does the typical achieve its purpose...?	What do you think? (Should secondary school students have part-time jobs?)	According to the announcement, where...? List two ways...
Question (Type)	Synthesise/Evaluate	Synthesise/Evaluate	Analysis	Synthesise/Evaluate	Recall/Recognition
Skills Required	(i) communicate clearly and imaginatively, using and adapting forms for different readers and purposes (ii) organise ideas into sentences, paragraphs and whole texts using a variety of linguistic and structural features (iii) use a range of sentence structures effectively with accurate punctuation and spelling	communicate clearly and imaginatively, using and adapting forms for different readers and purposes organise ideas into sentences, paragraphs and whole texts use a range of sentence structures effectively with accurate punctuation and spelling	evaluate how information is presented read with insight and engagement identify implications select material appropriate to purpose understand and evaluate how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational devices	1. read with insight and engagement, making appropriate references to texts 2. evaluate how information is presented 3. follow an argument, identifying implications and recognising inconsistencies 4. understand how writers use linguistic, structural and presentational devices to achieve their effects	correctly retrieved information
Resource Material	None	None	Leaflet about youth employment regulations in England	1. Newspaper article: 'Overworked and underpaid – and only 18!' 2. 'I never want a job' – excerpt from novel	Announcement from personnel department
Context	employment, job seeking, careers, other students, peers	employment, job seeking, career, job, career	employment, youth employment, England	employment, youth employment, England, thoughts and opinions	employment, job seeking, careers

### THE MORPHOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE:

RECONTEXTUALISING THE DECONTEXTUALISED

### RESULTS

A first stage of analysis has been conducted upon GCSE English materials from 2000 to 2012 and upon PISA Reading Literacy materials since the first cycle of PISA in 2000.

As seen here, both PISA and the GCSE feature tasks upon *employment*. The GCSE asks students to contemplate their dream job or interview talking points, and PISA asks test-takers to interpret a personnel announcement. That the GCSE requests elements of self-reflection removes the task from the environs of the office, as in PISA, and instead places focus on the identity of the student and the environs of the school.

While similarities may exist across several dimensions of PISA and the GCSE, the context of each assessment system cannot be ignored. Using the Knowledge Protocol creates insight into the context of an assessment system and, importantly, calls to question the possible *context* of PISA. To what extent can we regard PISA as a decontextualised tool?

### PLANS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Improve and modify dimensions of the Knowledge Protocol in order to analyse assessment materials from other countries. Create a cross-national database of assessment systems to investigate for potential washback from PISA.

And, feedback would be greatly appreciated!  
 jeanne.ryan@education.ox.ac.uk

Examples of washback effects from PISA	
Germany	PISA Shock! and ensuing reforms
Hungary	knowledge debates and curriculum reforms
Japan	curriculum and national testing reforms
Portugal	program reforms and teacher training implementations
Switzerland	cross-cantonal restructuring
Turkey	curriculum reform

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## Rachel Taylor

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Year	4 <sup>th</sup> Year DPhil (part-time)	
College	<a href="#">Kellogg</a>	
Nationality	British	
Education & degrees	BSc, Psychology, University of Sheffield, 2003 MRes, Psychology, University of Manchester, 2005	
Previous experience	Senior Research Associate, AQA, Manchester, 2012-present Research Associate, AQA, Manchester, 2009-2012 Research Assistant, AQA, Manchester, 2006-2009	

### Working title

*Challenges to maintaining standards in the presence of strategic entry to GCSE Mathematics assessments: A case study of early and multiple entry*

### Supervisors

Professor Steve Strand & Professor Jo-Anne Baird

### Progress on the thesis

In June 2014 I completed the qualitative chapter of my thesis that explored school level entry strategies to GCSE mathematics assessments. This chapter was reviewed and well received by the AQA Research Committee, a committee of international experts in assessment, and an amended version is currently under review with a journal.

Following this, I have been working on the final stage of my thesis: two quantitative chapters exploring the impact of early and multiple entry on national GCSE examination outcomes. First, this will involve an analysis of the National Pupil Database, exploring trends in multiple entry and the implications of strategic entry for national examination outcomes. Second, this will involve modelling the extent to which examination outcomes are inflated in the presence of multiple entry due to measurement error in assessment.

I am also currently preparing for my Confirmation of Status which I hope to complete in June 2015.

### Other achievements this year

#### Conference presentation

- *Teaching to 21<sup>st</sup> century tests: Tensions between a broad education and strategic teaching and learning in mathematics assessment*, Association for Educational Assessment-Europe Conference, Tallinn, Estonia, 5-8 November 2014

#### Seminar presentation

- *A qualitative study of school level entry strategies to GCSE mathematics assessments*, Ofqual, Coventry, UK, 27 June 2014

#### Online article

- [Shift from sitting GCSEs a year early wins guarded support](#) The Conversation, 20 Aug 2014

Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year DPhil	
College	<a href="#">Wolfson</a>	
Nationality	Canadian	
Education & degrees	MSc, Educational Research Methodology, University of Oxford, 2012 MA, Economics, University of Saskatchewan, 2003	
Previous experience	Social Policy Officer, United Nations Children's Fund, 2005-2009	

### Working title

*The effects of poverty on children's vocabulary development in Ethiopia*

### Supervisors

Dr Lars-Erik Malmberg and Dr Maria Evangelou

### Progress on the thesis

This year I have been focused on drafting the methodology for my thesis and carrying out the first empirical study. First, I examined the reliability and validity of the measure used to assess vocabulary achievement among the multilingual sample of children, using Item Response Theory. I am now drawing on multilevel modelling techniques to analyse differences in the children's developmental trajectories in terms of their initial level of ability and progress over time. For the rest of the academic year, I plan to examine the relationship between poverty and vocabulary development, exploring notions of poverty timing, depth and duration, while delving deeper into relevant theories for this topic. In November I completed, with High Distinction, the introductory course on Rasch Measurement Theory offered by the University of Western Australia. I am now following the advanced course led by Professor David Andrich, a Visiting Professor at OUCEA.

### Other achievements this year


#### Publication

- Tesfay, N. & Malmberg, L.E. (2014) Horizontal Inequalities in Children's Educational Outcomes in Ethiopia, *International Journal of Educational Development*, 39, 110-120

#### Seminar Presentation

- *Poverty effects on children's vocabulary development in Ethiopia*, Social Science DTC Quantitative Research Method Hub Seminar Series, University of Oxford, 26 January 2015

## Natalie Usher

Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year DPhil	
College	<a href="#">Wolfson</a>	
Nationality	British	
Education & degrees	MSc, Education (Research Design and Methodology), University of Oxford, 2013 PGCE, English Methods, University of Bristol, 2007 BA (Hons), MA (Oxon), English & Modern Languages (French), University of Oxford, 2006	
Previous experience	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 and Media Studies, 11-18 age range, London, 2007-2009 English Assistant, Teacher Training College (IUFM), Reims, France, 2005-2006	

### Working title

*Learning about academic writing through holistic peer review*

### Supervisors

Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck & Dr Kathleen Quinlan

### Progress on the thesis

My research investigates 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 writing at school to writing at university. The research brings together theoretical perspectives from the formative assessment, self-regulated learning and writing development literatures.

In December 2014, I passed my Transfer of Status examination successfully. My examiners were Professor Gordon Stobart and Dr Ian Thompson. I am currently conducting initial analysis of the interview, think-aloud protocol and textual data I gathered in the first phase of my fieldwork. This analysis will inform the forthcoming intervention, which will train students to appraise peers' work holistically. The evaluation of the intervention should provide insights into the learning processes involved in peer assessment, and also make a practical contribution. Although students often struggle with academic writing, it is rarely explicitly taught in higher education in England. Thus the research will also investigate whether peer assessment could be a way of bringing learning about writing back into the discipline.

### Other achievements this year

International conference presentations

- *How classroom assessment practices shape the teaching and learning of writing in secondary education in England*, Paper Presentation, EARLI Conference on Writing Research, Amsterdam, August 2014
- *Developing evaluative expertise and writing processes during the transition to university: research in progress*, Poster presentation, EARLI Writing SIG Research School, Utrecht, August 2015

Other

- Student Assessment Network Coordinator (from April 2015)

## Yanhong (Rose) Li

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My research focuses on grade inflation problems in UK higher education and my supervisor is Professor Ken Mayhew.

Prior to this, I worked at Oxford Brookes University, Middlesex University and Portsmouth University. I have researched and published on issues around performance measurement and assessment in both the public and business sectors. My previous research experiences include:



- Assessment and marking practices in higher education
- Service quality in higher education
- International students' learning experiences
- Assessing supply chain performance – application of data envelopment analysis

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## Departmental Associates

Members of the Centre from the Department of Education and their research areas are:

- Dr Victoria Elliott – English education
- Dr Jane McNicholl – science education
- Dr Alis Oancea – research policy and governance
- Professor Jenny Ozga – policy in education
- Professor Pam Sammons – accountability and management
- Professor Judy Sebba – policy, assessment, learning
- Professor Steve Strand – equity in assessment
- Professor Kathy Sylva – early years and children's development

## Honorary Research Fellows and Research Associates

Visiting Professors, Honorary Research Fellows and visiting Research Associates of the Centre are:

- Professor David Andrich (University of Western Australia) – Rasch measurement
- Professor Richard Daugherty (University of Aberystwyth) – assessment for learning and assessment policy
- Professor Jannette Elwood (Queen's University, Belfast) – gender and children's rights in assessment
- Dr María Teresa Flórez Petour (University of Chile) – assessment policies and discourses, assessment reform
- Professor John Gardner (University of Stirling) – assessment for learning, teachers' understanding of assessment
- Professor Harvey Goldstein (University of Bristol) – statistical modelling techniques, educational effectiveness

- Professor Art Graesser (University of Memphis) – cognitive science and large-scale assessment (he is currently serving as Chair of the Framework group in PISA Collaborative Problem Solving 2015)
- Professor David Kaplan (University of Wisconsin - Madison) – Bayesian methods applied to a wide range of education research settings
- Dr Michelle Meadows (Ofqual) – assessment reliability and validity, qualification design, education policy
- Professor Roger Murphy (Independent Educational Consultant) – educational assessment and evaluation
- Isabel Nisbet (A Level Content Advisory Board) – qualifications regulation
- Professor Gordon Stanley (University of Sydney) – public examinations
- Professor Gordon Stobart (UCL Institute of Education) – assessment for learning
- Associate Professor Astrid Tolo (University of Bergen) – assessment policy
- Dr Jon S. Twing (Pearson) – measurement in assessment
- Dr Matthias von Davier (ETS) – psychometric models, integrating diagnostic procedures
- Dr Ed Wolfe (Pearson) – measurement, rater effects

## Research Visits

OUCEA hosted the following researchers:

- Professor David Andrich, University of Western Australia
- Associate Professor Christian Brandmo, University of Oslo, Norway
- Nia Dowell, University of Memphis, USA
- Professor Art Graesser, University of Memphis, USA
- Professor Anil Kanjee, Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa
- Professor Val Klenowski, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
- Dr Joshua McGrane, University of Western Australia
- Dr Joyce Ndalichako, Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development East Africa
- Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins, Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development East Africa and Tanzania Institute for Higher Education
- Associate Professor Astrid Tolo, University of Bergen, Norway
- Dr Jon S. Twing, Test, Measurement & Research Services, Pearson Assessment, USA
- Dr Ed Wolfe, Research & Innovation Network, Pearson, USA





