

# Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment

Annual Report 2015-16

June 2016



# Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment

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# Foreword

This has been a year of significant change for the Centre in at least two ways. First, Dr. Therese N. Hopfenbeck has taken over as Director from Professor Jo-Anne Baird. Second, it has had to absorb the implications of the decision by Pearson plc to cease financial support for its ongoing work when the company's original commitment comes to an end in 2017.

In both contexts, from my observation as Chair of the Joint Advisory Board, there can be confidence for the future. Therese inherited an organisation that had already made enormous progress under her predecessor's leadership, and her own previous experience as a researcher in the field and more recently as Deputy Director has prepared her well for the challenges that lie ahead. She could hardly be better placed to motivate and guide the talented and ambitious young team she has around her.

And as regards future funding, there are some very encouraging signs, not least in the form of the ESRC award made in December 2015 for the major research project Assessment for Learning in Africa, more detail about which is given later in this report. That, alongside other research grants and income, means that the Centre has the capacity not only to consolidate what has already been achieved, but to continue to develop its research and enhance its impact.

In that regard I also find it encouraging that as OUCEA comes towards the end of the Pearson funding, for which the Department and University remain very grateful, its researchers will be working in collaboration with colleagues in the company, in particular in the context of the *PIRLS 2016 National Centre*. Again, there is more detail later in the report.

Finally, I should also like to thank the members of the Joint Advisory Board for their support to the Centre during the year. It is greatly appreciated.



on open thing

Sir Jonathan Phillips Warden, Keble College, University of Oxford

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# Director's Overview

In her admission address to the congregation in January 2016, Professor Louise Richardson, the first female Vice-Chancellor at the University of Oxford, spoke of some of the challenges for our great university:

If we can provide leaders for tomorrow who have been educated to think critically, to act ethically and always to question, these are the people who will prevent the next financial crisis; who will help us to grapple with the fundamental questions prompted by the accelerating pace of technological change, as we confront profound ethical choices about the prolongation and even replication of life. People who will force us to confront the costs we are imposing on the next generation by our wasteful use of the earth's resources; who will articulate our obligation to the vulnerable, the poor, the victims of war, oppression and disease, wherever they live. (...). These contributions may never be translatable to a spreadsheet, but they are invaluable.



PROF. LOUISE RICHARDSON

The team at OUCEA acknowledges the challenges ahead, and is motivated to contribute with research in areas of assessment and learning, that supports *all pupils and students*, irrespective of their background, to think critically, act ethically and always feel free to ask questions.

As the incoming Director of OUCEA, I will work to consolidate the work of OUCEA's former Director, Professor Jo-Anne Baird, who took over as the Director of the Department of Education in January 2016. I have had the privilege to work with Jo-Anne, as her Deputy Director, over the past year, and I will ensure that OUCEA achieves the same high level of performance in the years to come. I am proud to lead OUCEA into its next phase of development and the strength of my colleagues in the Centre will enable us to continue to grow and demonstrate our impact on the educational assessment community worldwide.



Dr. Therese N. Hopfenbeck

In reviewing the past year, there are many notable developments to share. In December 2015, OUCEA was awarded funding from the ESRC-DFID Raising Learning Outcomes in Education Systems Programme for the research project Assessment for Learning in Africa (AFLA): Improving Pedagogy and Assessment for Numeracy in Foundation Years (ESRC-DFID Major Research Project, £695,210). As Principal Investigator, I am supported by Professor Jo-Anne Baird as Co-Investigator and Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins, Dr. Daniel Caro, Dr. Jenny Lenkeit, Natalie Usher and Kristine Gorgen as the core team in Oxford. Our international partners in this

research study are 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). The overall purpose of our research is to work with teachers in challenging contexts in Tanzania and South Africa to support numeracy development and learning outcomes in the foundation years of primary schools through assessment for learning practices. Another recent major project marks the collaboration with the Centre for the Science of Learning and Technology (SLATE) at the University of Bergen, led by Professor Barbara Wasson. Professor Jo-Anne Baird has been appointed Professor II at the University of Bergen, with the mandate to support the establishment of the SLATE Centre through specific research. I will also work with Associate Professor Astrid Tolo, Deputy Director of SLATE, in developing assessment research projects over the next few years. We had an initial meeting at OUCEA in February 2016 and our team participated in the launch ceremony and opening of SLATE in Bergen in June 2016.

OUCEA is still growing. We have been fortunate to welcome Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins as a new member of our core team. Until recently she was Director of the Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development, East Africa; and prior to that she was Director of Research, Graduate School of Education, University of Bristol. She brings valuable expertise and knowledge to our Centre, in particular in

areas of language assessment and language in education in multilingual contexts. Pauline is supporting research and publications at OUCEA and is a core team member on the AFLA research project.

Dr. Daniel Caro has attended the OECD Fellowship Network, presenting at seminars in London in April, and attended further meetings in Paris in June 2016. He is also leading the planning of a research seminar on PISA in Oxford in December 2016, after the release of the PISA 2015 results, and we are pleased to confirm that the following people have agreed to present at the seminar: Dr. Sotiria Grek (University of Edinburgh), Dr. John Jerrim (UCL Institute of Education), Professor David Kaplan (University of Wisconsin – Madison), Professor Eckhard Klieme (DIPF - German Institute for International Educational Research), Professor Sølvi Lillejord (Research Council of Norway) and Professor Leonidas Kyriakides (University of Cyprus). The PISA seminar in Oxford is part of a long-term strategy for further research on large-scale assessment on which Daniel is now taking the lead at OUCEA.

Dr. Daniel Caro and Dr. Jenny Lenkeit published the article 'Which countries punch above their weight in education rankings?' in *The Conversation* on the effectiveness of education systems. This article describes an alternative way of looking at which countries come where in the ranking in the PISA tests and represents one example of the way in which OUCEA is able to engage in current and major assessment debates through critical research studies. This is something OUCEA is proud to support. After only 6 weeks online, this article had been downloaded more than 200,000 times, topping the list of the most downloaded articles at the University of Oxford over this period. This provides ample evidence of the impact of our research at OUCEA and it has been an inspiration for the whole team to develop our dissemination and impact plan.

This spring also marks the data collection for PIRLS 2016. Dr. Jenny Lenkeit has been a key person in this project, attending international meetings. She will also lead the writing of our PIRLS Report in autumn 2016, in collaboration with Daniel Caro and myself. Jenny secured further funding from the John Fell OUP Research Fund (£7,500) and is Principal Investigator for the research study *Indicators of Education System Effectiveness* in collaboration with Professor Leonidas Kyriakides (University of Cyprus) and Daniel Caro. In addition, Jenny has been working on the ESRC-funded project, *PIRLS for Teachers*, and has led the development of a new MSc module on International Large-Scale Assessments.

Dr. Yasmine El Masri graduated from the University of Oxford on 7<sup>th</sup> May and has already become a valuable researcher in our core team. She has been awarded funding from the Department of Education to act as a Principal Investigator on a project developing a systematic review of models of task difficulty in educational assessments (£3,366). She has also been successful in submitting articles to various journals, including Assessment in Education and The Curriculum Journal.

One of our strengths is our students who achieve national and international recognition. Natalie Usher was awarded ESRC funding for an Overseas Institutional Visit to Dr. Allyson Hadwin's lab at the University of Victoria, Canada, to work on self-regulated learning as part of her D.Phil research. Christine Paget recently published her first article in Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, and Rachel Taylor has had an article accepted for publication in the Oxford Review of Education. Further, OUCEA has a tradition of working and writing together with its students, and several articles with our students as our co-authors have been submitted this spring. We are also proud to announce that Carol Brown, while writing up her D.Phil thesis in her 4<sup>th</sup> year, has secured a position at Oxford Brookes University as a Senior Lecturer in Child Development and Education, School of Education.

Finally, I am delighted to report that Professor Pamela Sammons delivered the OUCEA Annual Lecture at the Ashmolean Museum on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2016 with almost 100 people participating in this event. The lecture, <u>What Can We Learn from students' reports of their secondary school experiences and their role in shaping academic outcomes at GCSE</u>?, is available as a <u>podcast</u> on the OUCEA website.

Therese N. Hopfinbuck

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



KEYNOTE AT LAUNCH OF CENTRE FOR ASSESSMENT RESEARCH, POLICY AND PRACTICE IN EDUCATION, DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY (L-R: Dr. Therese N. Hopfenbeck, Prof. Brian MacCraith, Michael Brannick, Prof. Daire Keogh, Prof. Michael O'Leary)

# 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 systemlevel 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.

We live in times of rapid changes in our educational and assessment landscapes, and it is crucial for OUCEA to continue working with its partners both nationally and internationally, not only to strengthen our research programme but also to reach out and have an impact on assessment practices in different contexts. With the rise of big data, learning analytics and technology, our expertise is sought after and collaborative research is a central part of OUCEA's strategy in the coming years. Collaboration with other Centres in the world has become even more important and we are pleased to be working with the University of Bergen SLATE Centre, with CEMO at the University of Oslo, with the Aga Khan University, Tanzania, and with Tshwane University of Technology and Cape Peninsula University of Technology in South Africa. Closer to home, it is a pleasure to announce that the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) has awarded OUCEA funds for a 5-year full-time psychometrician position and a part-time research assistant, starting in October 2016. We are delighted that Dr. Joshua McGrane has accepted the position of Research Fellow at OUCEA. He has worked in psychometric research and applied educational assessment for a number of years and therefore will bring a wealth of experience and expertise in measurement to the Centre.

# **Research Projects**

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

# Assessment for Learning in Africa (AFLA): Improving pedagogy and assessment for numeracy in foundation years



Funder: ESRC-DFID (£695,210), I 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 Kristine Gorgen; International Collaborators: Co-Investigator Professor Anil Kanjee (Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa), Co-Investigator Professor Yusuf Sayed (Cape Peninsula University of Technology), Co-

Research jointly supported by the ESRC and DFID

Investigator Professor Anjum Halai and Veronica Sarungi (Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development East Africa, Tanzania).

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 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 work will take place over three years beginning 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) sees the implementation of the workshops in both countries, the establishment of teacher learning communities along with visits to schools by mentors. These continue in the third phase (April to December 2017) along with the analysis of the workshops and a second round of tests. The final phase (January 2018 to March 2019) incorporates final 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.

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AFLA Project Partners (L-R: Dr. Therese N. Hopfenbeck, Prof. Anil Kanjee, Prof. Pauline Rea-Dickins, Prof. Anjum Halai, Prof. Yusuf Sayed, Prof. Jo-Anne Baird)

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

Funder: ESRC Impact Acceleration Award (£49,917), I 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: Professor Ian Menter, Professor Vicky Murphy & Professor Judy Sebba; literacy coordinators and head teachers in local schools.

The 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 and 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 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 policy makers.

### 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 will be 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 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.

## Assessment and Psychometrics Research Fellowship and Standard Setting and Maintaining in National Examinations Project

Funder: AQA Education (£435,790), I 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: Kristine Gorgen.



<u>Research Fellowship</u>: Assessment practice and research is dominated by psychometric ways of thinking. We think psychometrics is valuable, but these techniques are not the only way to view assessment issues and can be unhelpful at times in delivering real education gains. OUCEA has already published influential research in this area and has current projects in collaboration with leaders in the field. We plan to continue this line of work and to address issues at the root of psychometrics and assessment, raising the questions that others have identified or tackled. A Research Fellow, Dr. Joshua McGrane, has been appointed to carry out a programme of work in this area.

Research Project: 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. AQA and OUCEA have already begun a project on the definition of educational standards in national examination systems. Dr. Lena Gray and Professor Jo-Anne Baird have published a 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 will be extended to other countries in the long term in the joint project between Oxford University, AQA and Ofqual: Standard Setting and Maintaining in National Examinations. 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 practitioners and academics will be invited to a symposium in Oxford in March 2017 and to contribute chapters to a book outlining and discussing their national examinations. The editorial board members are Professor Jo-Anne Baird (OUCEA), Dr. Lena Gray (AQA), Dennis Opposs (Ofqual) and Dr. Tina Isaacs (UCL).

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



Funder: Ofqual (£241,420), I 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 & Kristine Gorgen.

GCSE examinations, taken at age 16 in England, are currently all taken 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 there has not been a systematic project to date that collates all of the available research and looks at the empirical effects of these structures on the GCSE examination over time. This collaborative project with Ofqual seeks to do that by 2018.

### **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).

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 to reflect the quality of education systems. They are influential on educational debates when governments and policy makers orient towards other systems to look for inspiration and models to remedy their own system's weaknesses. But, confounded with the test results are very different socio-economic conditions under which education systems operate within countries. In previous work we developed initial quantitative indicators of effectiveness of education systems by accounting for prior performance and the 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 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; Research Assistant: Kate Cantrell.

Predicting the difficulty of tasks accurately is of prime importance in education at pedagogic and testing levels. Teachers need to match classroom activities and assignments with their students' abilities. Similarly, item writers need to manipulate the construct assessed to target specific performance levels identified in the curriculum. Moreover, being able to gauge item difficulty accurately diminishes threats to item security and reduces test development costs due to field trialling with large samples. Many empirical studies have investigated features influencing question difficulty and demands. Nonetheless, predicting item difficulty accurately remains a major challenge in educational assessment for both teachers and test



DR. YASMINE EL MASRI GRADUATION (L-R: PROF. JO-ANNE BAIRD, DR. YASMINE EL MASRI, DR. THERESE N. HOFFENBECK)

designers. Empirical attempts have not yet exceeded 25% of variance explained. This project aims to produce a systematic review of the literature on predicting item difficulty and judging task demands. It gathers seminal empirical work carried out in this area since 1980 and draws on various research fields (e.g. educational research, educational assessment and measurement, language assessment, cognitive psychology). The systematic review is intended to highlight weaknesses and strengths of methodologies applied in earlier studies and to set a research agenda for a future research programme.

# Evaluating Effectiveness of Education Systems and Instructional Approaches with PISA Data

Funder: OECD (£13,846), 1 January – 30 September 2015; Principal Investigator: Dr. Daniel Caro; Collaborator: Dr. Jenny Lenkeit.

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 was 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 proposed a classification of education systems based on indicators of effectiveness performance using cross-sectional and trend data from PISA. Further, it analysed 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 were reported in a peer-reviewed paper (Caro, Lenkeit, & Kyriakides, 2016) and disseminated through a policy note (Caro & Lenkeit, 2015).



**RESEARCH CONFERENCE POSTER: CARO, LENKEIT, KYRIAKIDES** 

## Improving Existing Models for Predicting Task Difficulty

Funder: Pearson Inc. (£46,667) I October 2014 – 31 December 2015; Post-doctoral Fellow: Dr. Yasmine El Masri; Collaborators: Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Dr. Peter Foltz, Professor John de Jong & Dr. Steve Ferrara (Pearson).

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 included various types of activities: (i) reviewing the literature on previous approaches adopted for predicting task difficulty; (ii) investigating strengths and weaknesses of previously used methods; (iii) taking into consideration the distinction between the concepts of task 'difficulty' and task 'demand', reviewing the literature on previous approaches used in evaluating the nature and level of task demands, and (iv) proposing statistical models to predict task difficulty, taking into account the nature and level of task demand.

### **Marking Evidence Review**

Funder: Education Endowment Foundation (£33,541); Principal Investigator: Dr Velda Elliott; Collaborators: Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Dr Therese N. Hopfenbeck, Dr Jenni Ingram; Dr Ian Thompson, Mae Zantout (Oxford University Department of Education); James Richardson, Robbie Coleman (Education Endowment Foundation).

Marking plays a central role in teachers' work and is frequently the focus of lively debate. It can provide important feedback to pupils and help teachers identify pupil misunderstanding. However, the Government's 2014 Workload Challenge survey identified the frequency and extent of marking requirements as a key driver of large teacher workloads. The original purpose of this review was to find evidence that would inform teachers' decision-making about marking. The time available for marking is not infinite, so the central question was: What is the best way to spend it? However, the review found a striking disparity between the enormous amount of effort invested in marking books, and the very small number of robust studies that have been completed to date. While the evidence contains useful findings, it is simply not possible to provide definitive answers to all the questions teachers are rightly asking. This review therefore summarises what we can conclude from the evidence – and clarifies the areas where we simply do not yet know enough. It also identifies a number of key questions that schools should consider when developing their marking strategies, including considerations around workload and the trade-offs teachers face in adopting different approaches.

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

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 & Dr. Ann Childs.

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.

# Publications in 2015-16

A number of articles were submitted for peer review during this period and the following were in print before the end of June 2016. Links to publications are available on the OUCEA website <a href="http://oucea.education.ox.ac.uk/research/publications/">http://oucea.education.ox.ac.uk/research/publications/</a>.

# **Peer-reviewed Journal Articles**

# Baird. J. & Gray, L. (2016) <u>The meaning of curriculum-related examination standards in</u> <u>Scotland and England: a home-international comparison</u>, Oxford Review of Education, 42 (3), 266-284.

<u>Abstract</u> The ways in which examination standards are conceptualised and operationalised differently across nations has not been given sufficient attention. The international literature on standard-setting has been dominated by the psychometrics tradition. Broader conceptualisations of examination standards have been discussed in the literature in England, which has curriculum-related examinations at the end of schooling. There has, however, been little analysis of conceptualisations of examination standards in Scotland. Different education systems and examination sperate in Scotland and England, and the stated value positions and processes relating to examination standards differ markedly. This paper critically examines policy positions on assessment standards in Scotland and England through the lens of recent theories of standard-setting. By analysing public statements on standards, the paper illuminates similarities and differences in conceptual bases and operational approaches, and examines the effects of these on outcomes for candidates. We conclude that both systems are operationalising attainment-referencing, but with different processes in Scotland and England and these practices do not fit within previous examination standards classifications. As such, the paper moves examination standards theory forward by concluding that there is at least one superordinate definitional category that draws upon more than one definitional stance.

## Baird, J., Johnson, S., Hopfenbeck, T.N., Isaacs, T., Sprague, T., Stobart, G. & Yu, G. (2016) <u>On</u> <u>the supranational spell of PISA in policy</u>, *Educational Research*, 8 (2), 121-138, Special issue: International policy borrowing and evidence-based educational policy making: relationships and tensions.

Abstract Background: PISA results appear to have a large impact upon government policy. The phenomenon is growing, with more countries taking part in PISA testing and politicians pointing to PISA results as reasons for their reforms. Purpose: The aims of this research were to depict the policy reactions to PISA across a number of jurisdictions, to see whether they exhibited similar patterns and whether the same reforms were evident. Sources of evidence: We investigated policy and media reactions to the 2009 and 2012 PISA results in six cases: Canada, China (Shanghai), England, France, Norway and Switzerland. Cases were selected to contrast high-performing jurisdictions (Canada, China) with average performers (England, France, Norway and Switzerland). Countries that had already been well reported on in the literature were excluded (Finland, Germany). Design and methods: Policy documents, media reports and academic articles in English, French, Mandarin and Norwegian relating to each of the cases were critically evaluated. Results: A policy reaction of 'scandalisation' was evident in four of the six cases; a technique used to motivate change. Five of the six cases showed 'standards-based reforms' and two had reforms in line with the 'ideal-governance' model. However, these are categorisations: the actual reforms had significant differences across countries. There are chronological problems with the notion that PISA results were causal with regard to policy in some instances. Countries with similar PISA results responded with different policies, reflecting their differing cultural and historical education system trajectories. Conclusions: The connection between PISA results and

policy is not always obvious. The supranational spell of PISA in policy is in the way that PISA results are used as a magic wand in political rhetoric, as though they conjure particular policy choices. This serves as a distraction from the ideological basis for reforms. The same PISA results could motivate a range of different policy solutions.

## Baird, J., Meadows, M., Leckie, G. & Caro, D. (2015) <u>Rater accuracy and training group effects</u> in <u>Expert- and Supervisor-based monitoring systems</u>, Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice (online).

<u>Abstract</u> This study evaluated rater accuracy with rater-monitoring data from high stakes examinations in England. Rater accuracy was estimated with cross-classified multilevel modelling. The data included face-to-face training and monitoring of 567 raters in 110 teams, across 22 examinations, giving a total of 5500 data points. Two rater-monitoring systems (Expert consensus scores and Supervisor judgement of correct scores) were utilised for all raters. Results showed significant group training (table leader) effects upon rater accuracy and these were greater in the expert consensus score monitoring system. When supervisor judgement methods of monitoring were used, differences between training teams (table leader effects) were underestimated. Supervisor-based judgements of raters' accuracies were more widely dispersed than in the Expert consensus monitoring system. Supervisors not only influenced their teams' scoring accuracies, they overestimated differences between raters' accuracies, compared with the Expert consensus system. Systems using supervisor judgements of correct scores and face-to-face rater training are, therefore, likely to underestimate table leader effects and overestimate rater effects.

# Caro, D.H. (2015) <u>Causal mediation in educational research: An illustration using international</u> <u>assessment data</u>, Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness, 8 (4), 577-597.

<u>Abstract</u> This paper applies the causal mediation framework proposed by Kosuke Imai and colleagues (Imai, Keele, & Tingley, 2010) to educational research by examining the causal mediating role of early literacy activities in parental education influences on reading performance. The paper argues that the study of causal mediation is particularly relevant in educational settings because learning outcomes result from complex interactions involving multiple actors. The analyses use retrospective longitudinal data from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2011. The value of international assessment data for producing evidence of causation is discussed. The paper aims to contribute to the study of causation with observational data from educational studies.

# Caro, D.H., Lenkeit, J. & Kyriakides, L. (2016) <u>Teaching strategies and differential effectiveness</u> across learning contexts: Evidence from PISA 2012, Studies in Educational Evaluation, 49, 30-41.

<u>Abstract</u> Modern educational theories emphasise effectiveness enhancing factors at the classroom level and differential effectiveness for sub-groups of students and across different learning contexts. Theoretical developments, however, are generally based on national evidence and have been criticised for lacking cross-cultural perspectives. This study used PISA 2012 data to examine how subject-specific teaching strategies related to mathematics performance of students across education systems whilst considering curvilinear associations and interactions with the socio-economic and instructional context. The results provide consistent evidence of a positive curvilinear relationship between cognitive activation strategies and mathematics performance. The association tends to be stronger in schools with a positive disciplinary climate and for students from advantaged socio-economic backgrounds, but not in every education system. Teacher-directed strategies are positively related to mathematics performance, but the association tends to become negative for high levels of teacher-directed instruction. Associations of student-oriented strategies with mathematics performance are inconsistent. The cross-national evidence contributes to the knowledge base of educational theory.

### Elwood, J., Hopfenbeck, T.N. & Baird, J. (2015) <u>Predictability in high-stakes examinations:</u> <u>students' perspectives on a perennial assessment dilemma</u>, Research Papers in Education (online).

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 come 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. Further, 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., Flórez Petour, M.T. & Tolo, A. (2015) <u>Balancing tensions in educational</u> <u>policy reforms: large-scale implementation of Assessment for Learning in Norway</u>, Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 22 (1), 44-60. Special Issue: Assessment for Learning: Lessons Learned from Large-Scale Evaluations of Implementations.

<u>Abstract</u> 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.

### Hopfenbeck, T.N. & Kjaernsli, M. (2016) <u>Students' test motivation in PISA: The case of</u> <u>Norway</u>, The Curriculum Journal, 27 (3), 406-422.

<u>Abstract</u> Do students make their best effort in large-scale assessment studies such as the *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA)? Despite six cycles of PISA surveys from 2000 to 2015, empirical studies regarding students' test motivation and experience of the tests are sparse. The present study examines students' test motivation in PISA, and how closely students' achievement correlates with students' reported test motivation. A total of 40 students from eight schools that participated in the PISA study in 2006, 2009 and 2012 were interviewed. In addition, questionnaire data from a total of 9400 students who participated in PISA 2009 and 2012 were collected. The findings of this study indicate that students overall were motivated to do their best in the PISA study, despite the fact that these low-stakes tests have no impact on students' grades or future school entrance. In contrast to claims in the media, where it has been suggested that Norwegian students are more relaxed towards the PISA test than students in other countries, students report that they are motivated to do their best, but girls report significantly higher test

motivation than boys. Despite the policy influence of PISA and the large number of countries participating, very few studies have reported findings from students' perspectives regarding their test motivation and experience of the test. The present study aims to fill that gap.

### Lenkeit, J., Chan, J., Hopfenbeck, T.N. & Baird, J.-A. (2015) <u>A review of the representation of</u> <u>PIRLS related research in scientific journals</u>, *Educational Research Review*, 16, 102-115.

<u>Abstract</u> 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.

# **Guest-edited Special Issues**

Newton, P. & Baird, J. (2016) Special Issue on Validity, Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 23 (2).

# **Editorials**

Hopfenbeck, T.N. (2015) Formative assessment, grading and teacher judgement in times of change (Editorial), Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 22 (3), 299-301.

Hopfenbeck, T.N. (2015) <u>Lead Editors' editorial introduction</u>, Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 22 (2), 179-181. Special Issue: Sociocultural Theoretical Perspectives on Assessment: Exploring Links, Limitations and Emerging Considerations.

Hopfenbeck, T.N. (2015) <u>On test development and accuracy in self-assessment</u> (Editorial), Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 22 (4), 393-396.

Newton, P. & Baird, J. (2016) <u>The great validity debate</u> (Editorial), Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 23 (2) - Special Issue on Validity.

# Books

Hopfenbeck, T.N. (2016) Å lykkes med elevvurdering (Succeeding with student assessment). Fagbokforlaget.

# **Book Chapters**

Baird, J. & Hopfenbeck, T.N. (2016) Curriculum in the Twenty-First Century and the Future of Examinations (Chapter 51), in: Wyse, D. Hayward, L. & Pandya, J. (Eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment, Vol.* 2.

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# **Public Reports**

Elliott, V., Baird, J., Hopfenbeck, T.N., Ingram, J., Thompson, I., Usher, N., Zantout, M., Richardson, J. & Coleman, R. (2016) <u>A marked improvement? A review of the evidence on written marking</u>. Education Endowment Foundation.

# **Web Publications**

Caro, D. & Lenkeit, J. (2015) <u>Which countries punch above their weight in education rankings?</u> The Conversation, November

Lenkeit, J. (2015) <u>Value-added PISA: how countries do after accounting for their socioeconomic contexts</u>, Commentary, *OUCEA Website*, June.

Flórez Petour, M.T. (2015) <u>Lessons from the past: high-stakes assessments as a historical barrier for change</u>, Commentary, *OUCEA Website*, July.

Hopfenbeck T.N. (2016) <u>Norske elever er mye bedre enn sitt rykte</u> (Norwegian students are better than their reputation), *Lærerbloggen (Teacher Blog)*, guest blogger, March.



DR. JENNY LENKEIT PRESENTING RESEARCH TO NORWEGIAN COUNTY EDUCATION LEADERS



NORWEGIAN COUNTY EDUCATION LEADERS

# Research Impact and Dissemination

Staff and students have presented at the following external events.

Presenter(s)	Event	Date	Title
Caro & Lenkeit	University of Cyprus lecture series	June 2016	Correcting for prior achievement bias in international assessment studies of teacher effectiveness
Hopfenbeck	Multilingual Learners in Context, Symposium, Oxford Brookes University, UK	June 2016	What can we learn from PIRLS? A brief introduction to <i>PIRLS for Teachers</i>
Hopfenbeck	All Ireland Doctoral Conference in Education, Queen's University, Belfast	June 2016	What I wish someone had told me when I was a PhD student about research, impact and interactions with policy makers
Hopfenbeck & Baird	Centre for the Science of Learning and Technology (SLATE) Opening, University of Bergen, Norway	June 2016	Assessment for Learning
Lenkeit & Caro	University of Cyprus lecture series	June 2016	Investigating the effectiveness of education systems: conceptualisation, measurement and potential explanations
Hopfenbeck	Seminar on Teacher Education, Aalborg, Denmark	May 2016	Learning Strategies: (i) Seminar for students, (ii) Masterclass for students, (iii) Seminar for teacher educators
Usher	Qualitative Methods Special Interest Group Seminar, Department of Education, University of Oxford, UK	May 2016	Tracing academic writing development as it unfolds: case studies of first-year university students
Hopfenbeck	Launch of Centre for Assessment Research and Policy in Education, Dublin City University, Ireland	Apr 2016	The Future of Assessment
Hopfenbeck & Kjærnsli	American Educational Research Association, Washington DC, USA	Apr 2016	Norwegian Students' Test Motivation in PISA
Rea-Dickins	National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum National Seminar, EAL Teaching and Learning in the Early Years, Oxford University, UK	Apr 2016	Early Years' Provision for Young Tanzanians: What are the differences and similarities with UK contexts?
Van Rijn & El Masri	National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), Washington DC, USA	Apr 2016	Single Stage vs. Two-stage Estimation of Latent Regression IRT Models: Implications on international comparisons
Caro	Educational inequality in an international context, British Academy, London, UK	Mar 2016	Educational effectiveness with PISA data

Caro, Lenkeit & Kyriakides	Educational inequality in an international context, British Academy, London, UK	Mar 2016	Instructional approaches and differential effectiveness across learning contexts: Evidence from PISA 2012
El Masri	Ofqual Seminar, University of Warwick, UK	Mar 2016	Predicting item difficulty of science assessments: The case of Key Stage 2 tests in England
Hopfenbeck	British and Chinese Education: What can we learn from each other? Seminar hosted by Oxford Chinese Students & Scholars Association, Wadham College, Oxford, UK	Mar 2016	Speaker and panel participant
Usher	Education and Leadership Studies Seminar, University of Victoria, Canada	Mar 2016	Using self-regulated learning to understand students' writing development during a peer assessment intervention
Caro	Quant Hub seminar, Department of Education, University of Oxford, UK	Feb 2016	Correcting for omitted ability bias in teacher effects on student performance
El Masri	Leibniz Institute for Science and Mathematics Education (IPN), Kiel, Germany	Feb 2016	Predicting item difficulty of science assessments: Progress and challenges
Hopfenbeck	Seminar for Norwegian Schools: Suldal and Erfjord, Oxford, UK	Feb 2016	Strategies for Learning and Assessment for Learning
Caro	International Conference of the College for Interdisciplinary Education Research (CIDER), Berlin, Germany	Jan 2016	Correcting for omitted ability bias in international assessments: An applied example using PIRLS data
Rea-Dickins	English as a Growing Medium of Instruction: Implications for the Aga Khan University (invited panel presentation), Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan	Jan 2016	Towards a Language Policy: Problematising parameters
Baird & Gray	AQA Research Committee meeting, London	Dec 2015	The meaning of assessment standards in Scotland and England
Lenkeit & Hopfenbeck	Families, Effective Learning and Literacy seminar, Department of Education, University of Oxford, UK	Dec 2015	Inequalities in reading performance
Usher	Society for Research into Higher Education Annual Conference, Newport, Wales, UK	Dec 2015	'True', 'fair', or 'too picky': to what extent can students translate their ideas about good essay writing into helpful peer feedback?
Ahmed, Baird, Hopfenbeck & Elwood	Association for Educational Assessment – Europe Conference, Glasgow, Scotland, UK	Nov 2015	Assessing higher order skills: communicating a shared understanding of the construct
Baird & Gray	Association for Educational Assessment – Europe Conference, Glasgow, Scotland, UK	Nov 2015	The meaning of assessment standards in Scotland and England

Brown	Quant Hub seminar, Department of Education, University of Oxford, UK	Nov 2015	'Who am I and what can I achieve?' A mixed methods study on the relationships between identity, expectations, values and A-level achievement
El Masri	Association for Educational Assessment – Europe Conference, Glasgow, Scotland, UK	Nov 2015	Predicting Task Difficulty: The state of the art
El Masri & Hopfenbeck	Language Testing Forum: Assessing general language proficiency: definitions and approaches. Co-hosted by the Department of Education, University of Oxford and the British Council, UK	Nov 2015	Language effects in international tests: The case of PISA science
Hopfenbeck	National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum Annual Conference, King's College London, UK	Nov 2015	The use and abuse of international assessment studies: lessons learned from PISA and PIRLS
Hopfenbeck	ESRC IAA Impact Seminar, Kellogg College, Oxford, UK	Nov 2015	PIRLS for Teachers
Lenkeit, Caro & Schwippert	Association for Educational Assessment – Europe Conference, Glasgow, Scotland, UK	Nov 2015	Attainment gaps related to immigrant background and the assessment of family background constructs
Lenkeit, Hopfenbeck & Baird	Association for Educational Assessment – Europe Conference, Glasgow, Scotland, UK	Nov 2015	PIRLS for teachers: Making sense of inequality issues arising from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
Usher	Association for Educational Assessment – Europe Conference, Glasgow, Scotland, UK	Nov 2015	Making the tacit visible: learning about academic writing through holistic peer assessment
Brown	British Psychology Society Psychology of Education Section Conference, Liverpool, England, UK	Oct 2015	'Who am I and what can I achieve?' A mixed methods study on the relationships between identity, expectations, values and A-level achievement
Andrich	Quant Hub seminar, Department of Education, University of Oxford, UK	Oct 2015	On a law of ordinal error
Baird with Hopfenbeck	International Association for Educational Achievement conference, Lawrence, Kansas, USA	Oct 2015	Challenges to systemic validity in examination systems
Baird with Hopfenbeck, Andrich & Stobart	Association for Achievement and Improvement through Assessment conference, Peterborough, England, UK	Oct 2015	Assessment and learning without levels – removal of the state theory of learning
Baird with Hopfenbeck, Andrich & Stobart	Public Seminar, Department of Education, University Oxford, UK	Oct 2015	Assessment and Learning: Fields apart?

# Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment

Baird	Asia-Pacific Educational Assessment Conference, Singapore	Sep 2015	Assessment and Learning
Baird	Asia-Pacific Educational Assessment Conference, Singapore	Sep 2015	Challenges for the Future of Assessment
Hopfenbeck	Assessment for Learning programme in Norway, Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, Oslo, Norway	Sep 2015	Self-regulation and assessment for learning
Hopfenbeck	Norwegian Education Leaders Symposium, Queen's College, Oxford, UK	Sep 2015	Norwegian case study of the research project Governing Complex Education Systems
Lenkeit	Norwegian Education Leaders Symposium, Queen's College, Oxford, UK	Sep 2015	PIRLS for Teachers project



DR. THERESE N. HOPFENBECK AT SLATE OPENING



SLATE OPENING, UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN, NORWAY



DR. DANIEL CARO AT OECD SYMPOSIUM ON EQUITY AND INCLUSION

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# **OUCEA Events**

OUCEA has had another productive year and held ten events, with approximately 300 students, academics, researchers and professionals attending in total.

**23-24 June 2016** First Assessment for Learning in Africa workshop, Green Templeton College and St Anne's College, Oxford.

**24 May 2016** OUCEA Annual Lecture. Professor Pamela Sammons, <u>What can we learn from students' reports</u> of their secondary school experiences and their role in shaping academic outcomes at GCSE?, Ashmolean Museum.



PROF. PAMELA SAMMONS, OUCEA ANNUAL LECTURE 2016

**19 May 2016**: *Quantitative evidence of the importance of learning to read young*, Professor David Andrich (University of Western Australia). Public Seminar, Department of Education, University of Oxford.

**2 February 2016** SLATE project meeting at St Hugh's College, Oxford. Collaboration between OUCEA and The Centre for the Science of Learning and Technology (SLATE), University of Bergen, Norway.

**16 November 2015** The scare tactic: Does it work? Motivating students for test and examinations, Professor David Putwain (Edge Hill University). Public Seminar, Department of Education, University of Oxford.

**19 October 2015** Assessment and Learning, Professor Jo-Anne Baird & Professor David Andrich (University of Western Australia) Department of Education Public Seminar.

**II September 2015** OUCEA symposium at Queen's College for Norwegian education leaders from 19 counties.

I July 2015 PIRLS for Teachers project invited workshop, Department of Education, University of Oxford.



# **OUCEA Annual Lecture**

Professor Pamela Sammons delivered the Annual Lecture on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at the Ashmolean Museum.

# What can we learn from students' reports of their secondary school experiences and their role in shaping academic outcomes at GCSE?

Pamela Sammons is a Professor of Education at the Department of Education, University of Oxford and a Senior Research Fellow at Jesus College, Oxford. Previously she was a professor at the School of Education, University of Nottingham (2004-2009) and a



DR. THERESE N. HOPFENBECK INTRODUCTION

professor at the Institute of Education University of London (1993-2004) where she was director of the International School Effectiveness and Improvement Centre (ISEIC) from 2000-2004. Her research over more than 30 years has focused on school effectiveness and improvement, school leadership, teaching effectiveness and promoting equity and inclusion in education. She has a particular interest in longitudinal studies and the use of mixed-methods research approaches.



PROF. PAMELA SAMMONS

This lecture discussed the development of various measures of students' experiences and views of their secondary schools based on self-report questionnaire surveys taken at ages 14 and 16. It also investigated how such reports of school vary for different groups of students, including differences by gender and measures of disadvantage. The relationships between these measures of students' school experiences and their attainment and progress were also explored. The research was conducted as part of the major longitudinal Effective Provision of Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education (EPPSE 3-16+) study of a sample of around 3000 children's development from age 3 to 16 conducted in England from 1997 to 2014.

Dr. Daniel Caro acted as a discussant afterwards, commenting on some of the key findings and raising questions for further discussion, inviting the audience to participate.

The lecture is available to view at <u>http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/what-</u> can-we-learn-students-reports-their-secondary-schoolexperiences-and-their-role.



DR. DANIEL CARO AS DISCUSSANT

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# **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-assessmentnetwork/.



The current Chair is Natalie Usher. Seven StAN events have been held this year.

NATALIE USHER ON A RESEARCH VISIT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, CANADA

Date	Speaker	Title
11 May 2016	Klaus Kubinger, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna	Developmental enhancement-directed assessment by the Adaptive Intelligence Diagnosticum
26 Apr 2016	Alex Scharaschkin, OUCEA D.Phil student and Director of Research and Compliance at AQA	Constructing meaning in educational assessment: a theoretical and empirical study in the context of high-stakes examinations in the UK
20 Apr 2016	Convened by Natalie Usher	Peer-led writing group
25 Feb 2016	Reading group, convened by Jeanne Ryan	Policy impact of International Large-Scale Assessment (ILSA)
26 Jan 2016	Convened by Natalie Usher	Peer-led writing group
29 Oct 2015	Natalie Usher	Making the tacit visible: learning about academic writing through holistic peer assessment
15 Oct 2015	Professor David Andrich, University of Western Australia	Controlling Guessing Bias in the Dichotomous Rasch Model Applied to a Large-Scale, Vertically Scaled Testing Program

# Wider Contributions to the Field

We have contributed to the following groups this year.

- \* Association for Educational Assessment Europe, Conference Organising Committee
- Irish Research Council Review of Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme
- Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training
- OECD Expert Group on Global Competence
- OECD Expert Group on Questionnaire Development
- Ofqual Standards Advisory Group
- Scottish Qualifications Authority Qualifications Committee
- Welsh Government Curriculum and Assessment Group

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

#### Conferences

- American Educational Research Association
- European Educational Research Association, Network 9: Assessment, Evaluation, Testing and Measurement
- European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction, SIGs 18 and 23 Joint Conference: Closing the gaps? Differential accountability and effectiveness as a road to school improvement

# Media

How Ofqual grading can give inaccurate results Times Educational Supplement, 3 June 2016

Eight ways teachers can reduce their marking mountain The Guardian, 15 May 2016

Teachers spend nine hours a week marking - despite lack of evidence that it works SecEd, 4 May 2016

Could teachers do less marking for better results? Phys Org, 2 May 2016

£2m announced for research into marking strategies Schools Week, 29 April 2016

Could teachers do less marking for better results? My Science, 29 April 2016

Could teachers do less marking for better results? University of Oxford News, 29 April 2016

'Critical lack of evidence' on effective marking, EEF warns Education Business, 29 April 2016

<u>EEF Announces £2 million Fund For Research Into Primary and Secondary Marking Strategies</u> teachwire, 29 April 2016

<u>Teachers still using 'deep-marking' techniques, despite lack of evidence that it helps pupil learning</u> *Times* Educational Supplement, 29 April 2016

All work and low pay The Economist, 16 April 2016

<u>Finding a balance between English and Chinese education</u> Xinhua News Agency European Times, 19 March 2016

Exam boards on 'final warning' as GCSE results day looms, Times Educational Supplement, 14 August 2015



OXFORD UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LIBRARY

# The Centre

OUCEA is a research community currently consisting of three Academics, three Research Fellows and nine D.Phil students. OUCEA has also employed several research assistants this year due to our successes in securing research bids. We are delighted to welcome Dr. Joshua McGrane who will be joining us in October 2016 as a Research Fellow in Psychometrics.

# 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

Department of Education Director

**OUCEA** Director

Department of Education Administrator

**OUCEA** Administrator

### Joint Advisory Board membership

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

Mark Anderson, Managing Director, Pearson UK

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 and Honorary Research Fellow, University of Oxford

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

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

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

Dr. Kathleen Quinlan, Head of Educational Development, Oxford Learning Institute

Professor Jim Tognolini, Senior Vice President, Research and Assessment, Pearson plc

# 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 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, Principal Investigator for PIRLS for Teachers and the ESRC-funded project Assessment for Learning in Africa. She was appointed by the Norwegian Minister of Education to chair the board of the Norwegian Centre for Learning and Behavioural Research in Education (2013 – 2015) and has been invited as external expert on Assessment for Learning research projects in India and South Africa. She is Lead Editor of Assessment in Education: Principles, policy and practice. 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, University of Oxford and a member of OUCEA. 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 she was appointed Professor II at the University of Bergen, Norway. Jo-Anne is an Editor for Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice and 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 as a research consultant advising on research. She will also be contributing 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 a 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





# **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 crosscultural comparisons of teaching approaches. She has also conducted research on the mechanisms of educational inequalities related to socioeconomic characteristic and

immigrant background and how operationalisations of socioeconomic background differ across groups of students. Jenny has a presence on <u>ResearchGate</u> and <u>LinkedIn</u>.

# Dr. Yasmine El Masri

Yasmine El Masri is a Research Fellow at OUCEA. She leads research on predicting item difficulty and judging cognitive demands in educational assessments. She is also interested in comparability of tests, science assessments, test transadaptation and large-scale assessments. Yasmine is currently a Principal Investigator on a project developing a systematic review of models of task difficulty in educational assessments. She is also working on a project investigating the impact of examination routes on GCSE outcomes. Yasmine has a presence on LinkedIn and Twitter: @Y\_Masri.



### Joanne Hazell



Joanne supports all aspects of the Centre's research activities and her work includes providing administrative support for research projects and bids; organising events and meetings; supporting OUCEA students, staff, research associates and visitors; managing the Centre's finances; maintaining the website and proof reading and editing articles for publication.

# **Research Assistants**

The Centre has also welcomed the following research assistants over the past year: Carol Brown, Kate Cantrell, Jessica Chan, Kristine Gorgen, Lorena Ortega Ferrand, Jeanne Ryan, Andrea Tartakowsky and Natalie Usher. They have participated in research projects where they have also co-authored journals articles and research reports.

# Teaching

Members of staff contribute to teaching in the Department of Education on the following courses.

- MSc in Education: Research Design and Methodology
- MSc in Education: Learning and Technology
- MSc in Learning and Teaching
- MSc in Teacher Education
- Post-Graduate Certificate in Education

OUCEA staff also have also taught the following courses in the Social Sciences Division.

- Introduction to R for the analysis of educational data
- Introduction to multi-level modelling
- Advanced multi-level modelling
- Introduction to structural equation modelling

#### MSc module

The OUCEA team successfully piloted an eight-week MSc module, International Large-Scale Assessments (ILSA) in Hilary Term (Jan – Mar 2016). Nine candidates participated, all submitting formative and summative assessments. The team shared the teaching and assessment of the students and audited lessons for feedback on teaching for future improvement. Written feedback from students has been positive overall, and the course will be offered again in 2017. The module is outlined below.

Session	Title	Tutors
Week I	Introduction to International Large-Scale Assessments – aims, objectives, assessment frameworks	Hopfenbeck & Baird
Week 2	Testing paradigms – Classical Test Theory (CTT) vs. Item Response Theory (IRT)	El Masri & Hutchison
Week 3	Evaluation of test and survey quality – Validity, reliability, fairness	Baird & El Masri
Week 4	Complex designs of international large-scale assessments	Caro & Lenkeit
Week 5	Examining research questions with international large-scale assessment data	Caro & Lenkeit
Week 6	Policy impact of international large-scale assessments – theories, use of data, evidence of effects	Hopfenbeck & Ryan
Week 7	Quantitative and qualitative comparative paradigms – comparative theory, controversies, data use	Lenkeit & Ryan
Week 8	Critical evaluation of research related to international large-scale assessments	Lenkeit & Hopfenbeck

MSc module on International Large-Scale Assessments (pilot)



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# **Research Students**



There are currently nine D.Phil students conducting research in OUCEA and their research is summarised in the following pages. OUCEA staff members also supervise other D.Phil and Masters students in the Department of Education.

### D.Phil students co-supervised by OUCEA staff

Marc Sarazin – Who is transformed? Social networks and relational factors associated with sense of community and associated outcomes in an El-Sistema Inspired Music Education Intervention (Supervisors: Menter & Caro)

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)

### Masters students graduated 2015

Matthew Bryan - Hard work: Assessment of effort in an English preparatory school (Supervisor: Baird)

Terri Barry – Students' autonomy in assessment: an investigation into self-evaluation in the classroom allowing students to progress personally and academically (Supervisor: Hopfenbeck)

### Masters students supervised 2016

Sara Aflab – Teachers' and pupils' perspectives on marking in an GCSE Business studies class (Supervisor: Baird)

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 experience of Black undergraduate women (Supervisor: Caro)

Emma Hawkins – Using student views to develop a formative assessment policy in a sixth-form History department (Supervisor: Hopfenbeck)

George McKirdy – Investigating the Oxford University College Endowment System (Supervisor: Lenkeit)



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PARKS

### Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment



RESEARCH POSTER: MATTHEW BRYAN

RESEARCH POSTER: JAQUELINE DRINKWATER



OXFORD UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LIBRARY

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## **Carol Brown**

Year	4 <sup>th</sup> Year D.Phil (part-time)	
College	Wolfson	10000
Education	Qualified Teacher Status, 1999	20 mg
	Diploma in Social Work, University of Oxford, 1998	
	MSc (Oxon) Applied Social Studies, University of Oxford, 1998	
	BSc (Hons) Psychology, University of London, 1995	
Previous experience	A-level Psychology Teacher for 15 years in Oxfordshire	i

### Working title of thesis

A Mixed Methods Study Exploring the Relationships between Expectations, Values and A-level Achievement

### Supervisors

### Dr. Therese N. Hopfenbeck and Professor Jo-Anne Baird

### **Progress on thesis**

My thesis examines the motivation underlying A-level achievement with a particular focus on the influence of expectations for success and subjective task value. The study employs a mixed methods design. It employs 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 A-levels. It also employs interview data to examine these relationships in more detail. Analyses include structural equation modelling. I am in the final stages of writing up with the aim of submitting at the end of this academic year.

#### Other achievements

- Currently Senior Lecturer in Child Development and Education, School of Education, Oxford Brookes University. I teach on undergraduate modules in early childhood studies, education studies and Bachelor of Education (Primary) degrees.
- Elected to British Psychological Society Psychology of Education Section committee to serve threeyear term
- Conference presentation: 'Who Am I and What Can I Achieve? A Mixed Methods Study on the Relationships between Identity, Expectations, Values and A-level achievement', British Psychological Society Psychology of Education Section Conference, Liverpool, Oct 2015
- Project: Qualitative Research Assistant for Ofqual/OUCEA project on modular and linear GCSEs, Apr-Dec 2015
## **Diana Ng Yee Ping**

Year	2nd Year D.Phil	
College	St Anne's	
Education	<ul> <li>Master of Education (Educational and Psychological Measurement and Evaluation), Nanyang Technological University of Singapore, 2012 (awarded Certificate of Commendation for STU Gold Medal)</li> <li>Diploma in Departmental Management, Nanyang Technological University of Singapore, 2005 (awarded Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Book Prize)</li> <li>Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Secondary) with Distinction, 1997</li> <li>Bachelor of Science, National University of Singapore, 1989</li> </ul>	
Previous experience	Assessment Specialist (Science), Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board (SEAB), 2009- present. Head of Department (ICT) in 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 Associate Professor Jane McNicholl

#### **Progress on thesis**

The Transfer of Status examination took place in January 2016. The research proposal was successfully defended and passed without amendments. The research is currently in the data collection stage.

- Conference presentations
  - Investigating the Scientific Reasoning Skills of Primary Science Pupils, Research Training Session (RTS), Oxford University Department of Education, May 2015
  - Metaphors, Learning and Assessment, Student Assessment Network, Oxford University Department of Education, May 2015
  - Investigating the Scientific Reasoning Skills of Primary Science Pupils, Student Assessment Network, Oxford University Department of Education, May 2015
- Conference attendance
  - 2nd Asia-pacific Educational Assessment Conference, Academy of Principals (Singapore), Sep 2015

## **Christine Paget**

Year	2nd Year D.Phil	
College	Kellogg	
Education	Master of Science with Distinction, Research Design and Methodology, University of Oxford, 2013	
	Master of Arts, Curriculum Studies and Educational Administration, University of British Columbia, 2008	
	Bachelor of Education, High School Social Studies, University of British Columbia, 2004	
	Bachelor of Arts, History and Geography, University of British Columbia, 2002	
Previous experience	Social Studies teacher, grades 8-12, West Vancouver, 2005-2016	

## Working title of thesis

Exploring School Resource and Teacher Qualification Policies, their Implementation and Effects on Schools and Students' Educational Outcomes in Brazil

#### Supervisors

Professor Jo-Anne Baird and Professor Pam Sammons

#### Progress on thesis

In March 2015 I successfully completed my Transfer of Status exam and completed fieldwork in July and August 2015. My confirmation of Status exam will take place in January 2017.

- Publication: Paget, C., Malmberg, L.-E. & Martelli, D. (2016) Brazilian National Assessment Data and Educational Policy: An empirical illustration, Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 23(1), 98–125
- Conference Chair, British Columbia Social Studies Teachers Association, Provincial Specialist Association Professional Development Conference, Vancouver, BC, Canada, Oct 2015
- Visiting Scholar, Universidade Federal da Bahia, Aug 2015
- Consultant to the British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2012 present
  - o Social Studies Curriculum Development Grades K-9
  - o Social Studies Graduation Requirements and Curriculum Development
  - o Social Studies Classroom Assessment and Reporting Strategy Development
  - Historical Wrongs Curriculum Revision Team

# Agni Paramita

Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year D.Phil	
College	St Anne's	-
Education	Master of Arts in Southeast Asia Studies and International Economics, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, 2009 (Fulbright Scholarship recipient) Bachelor of Political Science, Airlangga University, 2004 Certificate in International Conflict Studies, Uppsala University, 2001	
Previous experience	Program Development Officer, Community and Education Program in Aceh, Australian-Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development, 2006-2007 Researcher, The World Bank, Jakarta, 2004-2006	

## Working title of thesis

School-level Use of National Exams Data in Indonesia: A mixed-methods exploratory study

#### **Supervisors**

Professor Jo-Anne Baird and Professor Pam Sammons

#### **Progress on thesis**

I successfully transferred to D.Phil Student status in October 2013 and began my fieldwork in Indonesia in 2014. After several months of productive interviews and visits with school leaders, teachers and district education offices, a spate of rainstorms caused major flooding in my research sites and slowed my progress.

In Trinity term (starting April 2016) I returned from maternity leave and am working towards Confirmation of Status. Some of my preliminary findings support the literature on the importance of leadership and networking with regards to data-driven decision making relating to exam use: principals are key in agenda setting, and district education offices (DEOs) provide useful professional networks that facilitate data-driven decision making skills. Other findings are more difficult to place in the literature: the practice of public schools engaging private tutoring institutions directly to improve exam results, or alternatively, the idea that improving exam scores requires *more* teaching, as opposed to *better* teaching, which translates to public schools holding extracurricular classes which require payment – effectively a private-public hybrid of sorts.

2014 was an important election year for Indonesia, with Jokowi, a reformist, coming out as the victor. His Minister of choice for the Ministry of Education and Culture has been critical of the National Exams regime and introduced major changes to lower the stakes of the exams and instead prioritise the feedback and mapping function of the exams. My study will likely need to assess whether this has significantly altered the ways in which schools and DEOs engage with national exams data.

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## Jeanne Ryan

Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year D.Phil	
College	St Edmund Hall	
Education	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, 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 Dr. Alis Oancea

#### **Progress on thesis**

I am in the process of preparing for Confirmation of Status, and continuing to 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. I also look forward to conducting further interviews with assessment designers affiliated with PISA, the GCSE, and the MCAS.

- Participated in the Summer School in Sociologies of Education in Strasbourg, working with other researchers on theoretical and methodological issues in educational sociology (Sep 2015).
- Took part in the Laboratory of International Assessment Studies at the University of East Anglia (Nov 2015) and University of Lancaster (Apr 2016), bringing researchers and assessment representatives together to debate topics in international assessment.
- Collaborated on founding SPELL (Seminars in Psychology, Education, Language and Literacy) in order to unite researchers working on language-related topics across divisions of the University.
- Taught on the pilot MSc module on International Large-Scale Assessments.

## **Alex Scharaschkin**

Year	I st year D.Phil (part-time)		
College	St Anne's		
Education	BSc, University of Tasmania, Australia, 1988 (Prize for best first class in mathematics)		
Previous	Director of Research and Compliance, AQA Education, 2014-present		
experience	Director (Regulation, Consumers and Competition), National Audit Office, 2010-2014		
	Manager (Health value-for-money audit), National Audit Office, 2004-2010		
	Manager (Statistics and Methods), National Audit Office, 2000-2004		
	Principal Officer (Statistical analysis), Qualifications and 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, as well as directing the Centre for Education Research and Practice (CERP) at AQA. I am currently Executive Secretary of the Association for Educational Assessment, Europe, and have been involved in running the 2015 AEA-Europe conference, in Glasgow, and planning the 2016 conference, in Limassol. In December I hosted an event to mark 40 years of assessment research in AQA and predecessor bodies. To complement that event, CERP published *Examining Assessment* (available at <a href="https://cerp.aqa.org.uk/research-library/examining-assessment">https://cerp.aqa.org.uk/research-library/examining-assessment</a>) – a compendium summarising that body of work, and reflecting on the changing face of assessment research.

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## **Rachel Taylor**

Year	5 <sup>th</sup> Year D.Phil (part-time)	
College	Kellogg	
Education	BSc, Psychology, University of Sheffield, 2003 MRes, Psychology, University of Manchester, 2005	
Previous experience	Research Fellow (Standards), Ofqual, 2015-present Principal Research Manager, AQA, Manchester, 2015-2015 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 Strategic Entry to GCSE Mathematics Assessments: A study of early and multiple examination entry

#### Supervisors

Professor Steve Strand & Professor Jo-Anne Baird

#### **Progress on thesis**

In June 2015 I passed my Confirmation of Status, where I received useful feedback on my progress to date. This process provided an opportunity to consider the overall structure of my thesis, and to make a plan for completing the final few chapters.

Following this, I have been working on the second quantitative section of my thesis, where I have explored the effects of multiple entry on national examination outcomes using simulations. This is the last results chapter in my thesis, and the following chapter will consider the implications of strategic entry for setting and maintaining examination standards, drawing upon examples from live assessments.

In March 2016, I had a paper based on the qualitative phase of my D.Phil accepted for publication in the *Oxford Review of Education*. This paper explores schools' entry strategies to GCSE Mathematics assessments, focusing upon the use of early and multiple examination entry.

#### Other achievements this year

Publication: Taylor, R.C. (in press) The effects of accountability measures in English secondary schools: early and multiple entry to GCSE Mathematics assessments, *Oxford Review of Education*.

## **Nardos Tesfay**

Year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year D.Phil	
College	Wolfson	<b>S</b>
Education	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 of thesis

The Moderated Effects of Wealth on Children's Vocabulary Trajectories in Ethiopia

#### Supervisors

Associate Professor Lars-Erik Malmberg and Associate Professor 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. 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 modeling, I then investigated differences in the children's vocabulary growth by wealth using the scaled scores previously obtained. I am now focused on understanding how initial wealth launches the trajectory and how changes in wealth shape developmental patterns over time. The next steps involve contextualising the wealth-growth relationship and identifying the specific pathways through which improved outcomes may be promoted in contexts of poverty. I have completed, with High Distinction, both the introductory and advanced courses on Rasch Measurement Theory led by Professor David Andrich.

#### 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	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year D.Phil	
College	Wolfson	
Education	<ul> <li>MSc, Education (Research Design and Methodology), University of Oxford, 2013</li> <li>PGCE, English Methods, University of Bristol, 2007</li> <li>BA (Hons), MA (Oxon), English &amp; Modern Languages (French), University of Oxford, 2006</li> </ul>	
Previous experience	Teacher of English for Academic Purposes, University of Durham pre-sessional course, 2012 & 2013 Teacher of English, Ponitificia 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 of thesis

Learning about Academic Writing through Holistic Peer Review

#### Supervisors

Dr. Therese N. Hopfenbeck & Dr. 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 writing to university writing. I use self-regulated learning theory to model how students' learning and development unfolds. In Summer 2015, I ran a series of peer assessment workshops for first-year students. The workshops were well received and the data I collected on evaluative expertise and writing processes indicates that the workshops were useful to students' learning.

I am currently analysing and writing up my data, with Confirmation of Status planned for Summer 2016. I presented preliminary findings from my D.Phil at the AEA-Europe and SRHE conferences in Winter 2015. I have also been accepted to present at the EARLI Writing SIG Conference and Research School in Liverpool in Summer 2016. I believe knowledge exchange is an important part of research, and am looking forward to sharing findings and exchanging perspectives with staff and participants later this year.

I have recently returned from a four-week research visit to Dr. Allyson Hadwin's lab at the University of Victoria, Canada. The lab conducts cutting-edge research into self-regulated learning (SRL) and also teaches an undergraduate course that trains students to self-regulate their learning and collaborate more productively. My research applies the Winne and Hadwin (1998, 2008) model of SRL to trace students' writing development and it was exciting to discuss my research with Allyson and her team. Allyson suggested some new approaches to analysis, which have been very fruitful. I also had the opportunity to meet with Prof Phil Winne, Simon Fraser University and Prof Nancy Perry, University of British Colombia.

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As well as developing my knowledge of SRL theory, I presented on my analysis in lab meetings and to a research methods class, and gave a seminar to the department. The visit really enriched my thesis, and we hope to collaborate in the future. My research is supported by an ESRC studentship, and I was awarded additional funding for this Overseas Institutional Visit.



NATALIE USHER ON HER RESEARCH VISIT



NATALIE USHER PRESENTING AT ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT-EUROPE CONFERENCE, GLASGOW

- Publication
  - Elliott, V., Baird, J., Hopfenbeck, T.N., Ingram, J., Thompson, I., Usher, N., Zantout, M., Richardson, J. & Coleman, R. (2016) <u>A marked improvement? A review of the evidence on written</u> <u>marking</u>. Education Endowment Foundation.
- International conference presentations
  - Making the tacit visible: learning about academic writing through holistic peer review, Association for Educational Assessment-Europe Conference, Glasgow, Scotland, UK, Nov 2015
  - 'True', 'fair' or 'too picky': to what extent can students translate their ideas about good essay writing into helpful peer feedback? Society for Research into Higher Education Annual Conference, Newport, Wales, UK, Dec 2015
  - Tracing academic writing development as it unfolds: case studies of first-year university students, Qualitative Methods Special Interest Group Seminar, Department of Education, University of Oxford, UK, May 2016
- Seminar presentation
  - Using self-regulated learning to understand students' writing development during a peer assessment intervention, University of Victoria, Canada, Mar 2016
- Projects
  - Research Assistant, A review of the evidence on written marking. Funder: Education Endowment Fund.
  - Research Assistant, Assessment for Learning in Africa. Funder: ESRC.
- Other
  - Editorial Assistant, Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice (Jul 2015 present)
  - Student Assessment Network Coordinator (Apr 2015 Apr 2016)

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# **Departmental Associates**

Associate	Research areas
Associate Professor Victoria Elliott	Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in secondary English; judgement in marking and assessment
Associate Professor Jane McNicholl	Science education; modularisation; teaching and learning
Associate Professor Alis Oancea	Research policy and governance; comparative and international education policy
Professor Jenny Ozga	Education policy and governance
Professor Pam Sammons	School effectiveness and improvement; leadership; equity and social disadvantage
Professor Judy Sebba	Policy; assessment and learning; research strategy and impact
Professor Steve Strand	Equity in assessment; school effectiveness
Professor Kathy Sylva	Early years and 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	Assessment for learning; 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 Art Graesser	University of Memphis	Cognitive science; large-scale assessment
Professor Louise Hayward	University of Glasgow	Assessment for learning and social justice in assessment
Dr. Dougal Hutchison	Education Research and Analysis	Psychometrics; design and analysis of national and international studies of educational attainment
Professor David Kaplan	University of Wisconsin - Madison	Bayesian methods applied to a wide range of education research settings
Professor Anil Kanjee	Tshwane University of Technology	Education quality and equity in developing nations; assessment for learning
Dr. Michelle Meadows	Ofqual	Assessment reliability and validity; qualification design; education policy
Professor Sølvi Lillejord	Research Council of Norway	Systematic reviews; school leadership; teacher assessment and school evaluation

Isabel Nisbet	University of Cambridge	Qualifications regulation
Professor Roger Murphy	Education Consultant	Assessment standards; reliability and predictability of examinations
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	Educational Testing Service	Psychometric models; integrating diagnostic procedures
Dr. Edward W. Wolfe	Pearson	Measurement; rater effects

# **Research Visits**

- OUCEA hosted the following researchers in 2015/16.
- Professor David Andrich, University of Western Australia
- Professor Richard Daugherty, Aberystwyth University
- Professor Jannette Elwood, Queen's University, Belfast Professor John Gardner, University of Stirling
- María Teresa Flórez Petour, University of Chile
- Professor Arthur Graesser, University of Memphis, USA
- Dr. Lena Gray, AQA Centre for Education Research and Practice
- Dr. Grace Grima, Pearson
- Dr. Dougal Hutchison, Education Research and Analysis
- Professor Anil Kanjee, Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa
- Professor Leonidas Kyriakides, University of Cyprus
- Professor Sølvi Lillejord, Norwegian Knowledge Centre
- Dr. Michelle Meadows, Ofqual
- Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins, Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development
- Professor Gordon Stobart, UCL Institute of Education
- Associate Professor Astrid Tolo, University of Bergen, Norway
- Dr. Jon S. Twing, Test, Measurement and Research Service, Pearson Assessment, USA

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