

Conference theme: Building bridges to future educational assessment

The conference theme focusses on the manner in which professionals in educational assessment are adapting their work to the changing role of assessment in society and are informing these changes in the role of assessment. There is a considerable range of assessment experience found in institutes responsible for educational measurement as well as between the professionals working within these institutes and beyond (such as universities, government departments, etc.). These differences can be found in roles, in tradition, in type of tests or exams and in mode of delivery. Some institutes already have a long-standing tradition in the development of assessments, others have yet to start. Some are examining bodies, responsible for exam construction and administration, while others produce summative standardized tests for the teaching community. Some institutes create formative assessments, others carry out research in support of educational measurement. Some institutes have a long history of test development and have ventured to digitalize their paper-based assessments in order to improve efficiency, while others are only starting to venture into the digital world.

One thing they all have in common is: the ambition to serve education with assessment instruments fit for purpose and of high quality in an ever changing environment, whilst at the same time anticipating future demands that will be put upon assessment.

What might be the main features of this future assessment? And how can we adequately prepare for future assessment – both contexts and types.

Looking around the educational assessment world we observe a number of trends, which we may expect to have an impact on any future educational assessment.

- the growing role of assessment to support learning;
- the significant increase of computer based and multimedia-based learning and assessment environments
- the trend towards the use of more personalized ICT-based learning (and assessment) environments
- the shift away from knowledge transfer towards learning strategies aimed at more generic skills, such as 21st century skills and global competence
- the role of international comparative assessments such as PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS in this process of change.

How do institutes for educational assessment and their professionals cope with the changing demands of society and of learning context? Solutions that are offered at this point in time are very much based on the current position of institutes and individuals and may therefore become less applicable or less fit for purpose. How can we bridge the gaps between the current situation and the demands of future assessment? We believe that in view of the different backgrounds of the institutes and the experts, it is worthwhile looking at the similarities in the approaches.

Development of educational assessment takes place along different dimensions: content, skills, psychometrics and technology whereby technology especially has drawn a fair amount of attention over the last decade. It appears that the role of technology is growing to a level of such complexity that we have to join forces to meet the challenges of future assessment. Technological developments lead to expectations regarding the use of Information Technology (IT) in assessment, such as delivery on different types of devices, adaptivity and instant feedback. Assessment institutes realize more and more that technology is an area of expertise in its own right. Many organizations have gained this insight after first having spent time and resources developing assessment technology for themselves. At the other end of the spectrum, IT companies have started to provide platforms to deliver digital assessments. They however require input from both content and psychometric experts in educational measurement to be able to support or create valid digital assessments.

This conference welcomes proposals that address the conference theme in the widest sense:
We would like you to share contributions that show how you can bridge your current assessments to the demands of future assessments.

Subthemes

The 19th Annual AEA-Europe conference welcomes presentations from delegates on these and related issues and debates. Possible topics that delegates might also wish to consider, within the Conference theme, include (please note that the groupings and list are not definitive – all contextual explorations of the conference theme are welcome):

Assessment and policy contexts

- The transferability and utility of qualifications between different jurisdictions
- Tensions between teacher assessment and external examinations
- The politics of external and school-based assessment
- The social responsibility of test developers and policy agents
 - The relationships between educational assessment and changing systems of governance
- The impact of legislation on educational assessment
- The global reach of assessment in international policy decisions
- Cross-country comparisons of educational reform and associated assessment approaches
 - The impact of the implementation of technology in assessment at the national/system level

Assessment and theoretical contexts

- Technological and psychometric innovations in assessment
- New assessment formats
- Developments in theory and practice of formative assessment
- Links between learning theories and assessment
- Evidence-based policy making in assessment
- Critical approaches in educational assessment
- Validity issues in educational assessment generally and in e-assessment specifically
- Fairness and equality in educational assessment

Assessment and institutional contexts

- Trust in teacher assessment
- Teachers' use of technology in assessment
- Teachers and/or students as stakeholders in the development of new assessment paradigms
- School-based assessment data and its use in monitoring and supporting learning
- Assessment for citizenship and global understandings

- Social and political underpinnings of vocational assessment
- Tensions between assessment for learning and accountability
- Assessment of creativity, creative subjects and the arts

Your submission should clearly and explicitly relate to the conference theme.