

MEDIA RELEASE

Transforming assessment; improving learning *Research Conference 2015*

14 August 2015: Assessment to support students' learning is undergoing significant transformation, delegates to a conference in Melbourne next week will hear.

Researchers and practitioners will come together at *Research Conference 2015*, Australia's pre-eminent research conference in education. The annual research conference of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), opening on Sunday 16 August, will address the theme, *Learning assessments: Designing the future*.

Research Conference 2015 will investigate advances in the use of assessment for informed decision-making by teachers, school leaders, system managers and governments.

Speaking ahead of the conference, ACER Chief Executive Professor Geoff Masters AO, said assessment to identify starting points for action requires new metrics to monitor students' long-term progress, including a broader range of skills and capabilities.

The conference will address the design of assessments to improve learning, particularly through the use of new technologies that enable educators to weave assessment seamlessly into the fabric of the learning experience; as well as assessments to identify general capabilities in areas such as computer information literacy, creativity and problem solving; and assessment issues for Indigenous students.

"New thinking about assessment is focusing on understanding where students are in their learning in order to identify appropriate starting points for action, and evaluate the effectiveness of such action," Professor Masters said. "There is also a growing international interest in, and demand for, the assessment of a broader range of skills and attributes than those addressed in most current assessment efforts.

"Beyond this, advances in technology are opening the door to new ways of gathering and visualising information about student learning, including through records of real-time interactions in online learning environments and through real-time assessment for adaptive teaching as students engage in on-screen learning.

"Rather than judging at the completion of teaching how well students have learnt what they have been taught, assessment is moving to a more continuous, personalised and targeted process of identifying and addressing learning needs with a focus on students' ongoing growth."

Keynote speakers at *Research Conference 2015* include Professor Val Shute, Florida State University; Dr Rukmini Banerji, Chief Executive of the Pratham Education Foundation, India; and, by pre-record, Emeritus Professor Dylan Wiliam, University of London.

Research Conference 2015 takes place in Melbourne from 16 to 18 August. Further information is available from www.acer.edu.au/rc

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