

MEDIA RELEASE

Assessing what matters

Research Conference 2015

14 August 2015: New thinking about the fundamental purposes of assessment for learning, and growing demands for the assessment of a broader range of capabilities, proficiencies, knowledge and skills is driving assessment reform and innovation, Professor Claire Wyatt-Smith will tell delegates to *Research Conference 2015* next week. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) annual conference this year will address the theme, *Learning assessments: Designing the future*.

A speaker at *Research Conference 2015*, Professor Wyatt-Smith said the fundamental purposes of assessment are to inform teachers' and students' decisions about what learning matters, and to inform them in ways that not only guide students' expectations about their learning, but also their engagement in learning.

"A key question is whether assessment standards help students to learn how to recognise, critique and generate 'good work'," Professor Wyatt-Smith said.

"While assessment standards have strong policy currency and are being widely implemented around the world, there is scant large-scale empirical evidence on how teachers and students use these to guide and improve teaching and learning."

ACER Principal Research Fellow Julian Fraillon will report on progress in the development of assessments of difficult-to-measure general capabilities like creative thinking and problem-solving.

"As the expectation for general capabilities and cross-curricular learning outcomes to be taught in schools has increased, so has the need for robust ways to assess and report on them in ways that inform future teaching and learning," Mr Fraillon said.

Also at the conference, ACER Principal Research Fellow Dr Gabrielle Matters will explore how rich, robust and meaningful assessment can best inform reporting for senior assessment and tertiary entrance purposes.

Dr Rosemary Hipkins, Chief Researcher at the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, will report on research investigating challenges and solutions such as the use of e-portfolios to assess students' learning capabilities and capabilities demonstrated in group contexts or across different contexts.

Dr Rukmini Banerji, Chief Executive of India's Pratham Education Foundation, will explain how a 'frugal innovation' involving a citizen-led survey of student assessment is prompting educational change in India.

Dr James Pellegrino, Liberal Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor and Distinguished Professor of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago, will report on a systematic and scalable approach for designing assessment items to measure student proficiency that blends core-curricular and cross-curricular concepts and practices.

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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