

MEDIA RELEASE

Students defeat zombies, as teachers make stealthy assessments

Research Conference 2015

14 August 2015: ‘Stealthy’ assessments using games like [Physics Playground](#) or even [Plants vs. Zombies](#) enable educators to weave assessment seamlessly into students’ learning experiences, Dr Val Shute will tell delegates to the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) annual conference next week. *Research Conference 2015* addresses the theme, *Learning assessments: Designing the future*.

According to Dr Val Shute, the Mack and Effie Campbell Tyner Endowed Professor of Education at Florida State University, the information educators can obtain through digital learning environments is similar to the continuous stream of data generated by barcodes that retailers can use to monitor and manage stock inventory and identify patterns in customer behaviour.

A keynote speaker at *Research Conference 2015*, Dr Shute noted that the traditional approach in schools usually divorces assessment from learning.

“The typical educational cycle is: teach; stop; administer test; teach, with new content,” Dr Shute said, speaking ahead of the conference. “Digital learning environments enable us to weave assessment seamlessly into the fabric of the learning experience so that it is virtually invisible, blurring the distinction between learning and assessment,” she said.

Speaking ahead of his presentation on assessment in interactive learning environments, Dr Michael Timms, Director of Assessment and Psychometric Research at ACER, said digital technology now enables the development of continuous assessments rather than occasional snapshots in time.

“Interactive learning environments enable educators to undertake continuous assessments of learning through embedding them into the instructional materials so they occur in real time. They also provide feedback directly to students as they learn, and to teachers so they can evaluate the impact of their teaching,” Dr Timms said.

Dr Timms will be co-presenting with Dr Jason Lodge from the Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education and Science of Learning Research Centre at the University of Melbourne.

Also at the conference, Dr Mark Wilson, Professor of Education at the University of California, Berkeley, and also at the University of Melbourne, will report on findings from the Assessment and Teaching of 21st-Century Skills project on the impact of learning in digital networks.

Dr Phillip Dawson, Associate Director of the Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning at Deakin University, will address hacking and explain why technological approaches are less effective in preventing hacking of assessments than redesigning authentic assessments for open-book, open-web administration.

Dr Stanley Rabinowitz, General Manager for Assessment and Reporting at the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, will report on developing and delivering the National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) online as well as research to ensure NAPLAN online is fit for purpose technically, and in terms of equity.

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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