

Introduction

The Assessment Research Centre (ARC) was established in 1989 at RMIT and relocated to the Faculty of Education at the University of Melbourne in November 1996. Since it began, the Centre has developed a strong research culture and an international reputation for its work in assessment research, development and teaching. In 1997, the Assessment Research Centre, in collaboration with the New South Wales TAFE Assessment Centre, was funded by the Australian National Training Authority to form the Centre for Vocational Assessment Research (CVAR). The Centre was formally recognised by the University of Melbourne and established as a university collaborative Centre in 1997.

The Centre's mission is to promote change and improvement in the fields of assessment, reporting and applied measurement. To achieve this mission, the centre undertakes research, consultancies and development projects, and participates in higher and vocational training in both award and non-award programs.

A national and international program of research, development and teaching has been pursued by the Centre with activities undertaken within Australasia, as well as within Europe, North America, Asia and Southern Africa. Projects have included many of Australia's leading research and development studies in schools, higher education, vocational education and industry.

The Centre's 1998 National Assessment Institute attracted over 100 participants attending eight courses. The Centre also hosts the National Assessment Awards, which recognise excellence in assessment practice. Winners are identified in

schools and vocational education and training. The Commonwealth Minister for Schools, Vocational Education and Training, Senator Christopher Ellison, presented the awards at an Institute award dinner.

The Centre's teaching program has attracted local postgraduate students as well as others from Australian states, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Ghana, China and the United States.

Collaborative projects were established with universities and government departments in Australia (with organisations from Queensland, Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania), France, Vietnam, Southern Africa and the United States, reflecting the truly national and international nature of the Centre's profile and emphasis. Nationally competitive projects were successfully won through competitive tender procedures and the Centre's status as a recognised provider of training for non-award courses was retained. The Centre for Vocational Assessment Research successfully competed for major competency assessment research projects, including the evaluation of the training and assessment practices within the Victorian Taxi Industry.

Professor Patrick Griffin

Director

The Assessment Research Centre

Mission and philosophy

The Centre focuses on improving assessment and reporting in education and learning through a four-step process of research, publication, development and training. These provide the framework for strategic planning by the Centre and guide the Centre's core business as well as its link to the university's mission. Research that leads to change, strategically affects change, or sets up the basis for change and improvement in assessment, forms the focus of the Centre's work. International transfer of the research output is regarded as the test of its theoretical strength.

Research

The Centre focuses on research either in or using assessment. All activities and projects have a research focus and emphasise assessment or evaluation models based on assessment. The Centre's research program is the basic tool for educational change. Assessment research is regarded as a way of testing ideas, of checking the theoretical and practical nature of theories, new approaches and ideas.

Publication

Through publishing the research outcomes in a variety of media to cater for a wide variety of audiences, the Centre is able to disseminate its ideas and procedures to assist the change process. Publications for each project are listed in this report.

Development

The development strategies employed by the Centre translate research outcomes into materials that practitioners can evaluate and use. The end user is one who can

judge the practicality of research outcomes and their application potential. This is the basis of the change and improvement of practices. Therefore, the development of materials is also given priority in each project.

Training

Each project at the development stage plans a series of seminars, workshops, publications and other means of dissemination. Training also assists research and development to be disseminated. It makes research available for widespread use. This is the technology transfer of the Centre's work.

Graduate supervision and teaching of award and non-award courses compliments the Centre's research program by having graduates actively participating in, or even managing, components of the Centre's research agenda.

Internal seminars provide graduate students and research associates with the opportunity to present and discuss their activities in an informal, collegial environment. The seminars involve a range of academic and industry/community/education speakers and are publicised outside the university.

The ARC conducts a series of short course training programs in assessment research and related fields. It is conducted as the National Assessment Institute, which offers a variety of short courses for participants from government and research departments, as well as personnel from the education, training, employment and industry sectors.

The Assessment Research Centre

Personnel

- Professor Patrick Griffin, Director
- Shelley Gillis, Principal Research Officer
- Kelvin Lai, Principal Research Officer
- Jack Keating, Research Associate
- Karen Corneille, Research Assistant
- Anne Pitman, Office Manager

Professor Patrick Griffin, Director

Qualifications: B.Sc., M.Ed., T.S.T.C., Ph.D., F.A.C.E.

Professor Patrick Griffin holds the Chair in Education (Assessment) and is the Director of the Assessment Research Centre and the Centre for Vocational Assessment Research at the University of Melbourne. He specialises in assessment and reporting and item response model applications to workplace competency assessment, literacy and numeracy profiles and their use and development for standard setting and benchmarking. He has published widely on topics including competency and criterion-referenced assessment, language proficiency assessment, industrial and school literacy and numeracy, profile development, and portfolio assessment.

Shelley Gillis, Principal Research Officer (Vocational Assessment)

Qualifications: B.B.Sc., Grad.Dip. (Applied Psychology)

Shelley Gillis is a vocational assessment researcher. Her major research interests are in the area of competency based assessment and system design. She has considerable experience with industry training advisory bodies in the design of standards, development of training packages and assessment protocols. She is currently undertaking her Ph.D. studies in the field of competency based assessment and her research examines factors influencing decision making processes in performance based assessments. Her research interests include: assessment decision-making models, criterion referenced assessment, competency based assessment, performance appraisal, performance based assessment, quality assurance mechanisms, assessment system design and management, and assessment of higher order competencies.

Kelvin Lai, Principal Research Officer (Applied Measurement)

Qualifications: B.A., Dip.Ed., Adv.Dip.Ed., M.Ed., M.Sc.

Kelvin has over 20 years teaching experience in the area of Mathematics and Statistics, having taught at all levels of secondary, as well as pre-university and university levels in both Hong Kong and Australia. Whilst teaching in Hong Kong,

Kelvin played an active role in the design of curricula and assessment items for public examinations at the Certificate of Education and the Advanced Level. He was also a statistics consultant for different projects conducted by the Education Department in Hong Kong. Kelvin has participated in research projects conducted by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) and the University of Melbourne, his areas of expertise being statistical analysis, item writing and psychometric modelling. His research interests include item response modelling especially multi-component models, parameter estimations, local independence problems, test theory, statistical applications, mathematics problem and mathematics education.

Jack Keating, Research Associate (Vocational Assessment)

Qualifications: B.Econ., Dip.Ed., M.Ed.

Jack is a research associate with the Centre for Vocational Assessment Research. He has worked in three sectors of education and training (schools, Vocational, Education and Training (VET) and higher education). He has an active interest in research in all aspects of the VCE and the VET sector in Australia. His work in the area of vocational education in upper secondary education is widely acknowledged. He has worked recently with the CVAR on the development of models of assessment for school-industry programs at the upper secondary level.

Karen Corneille, Research Assistant (Applied Measurement)

Qualifications: B.A. (Statistics), Dip.Ed.

Karen's technical skills enable her to work in many areas of assessment and evaluation. She has been involved in projects such as statewide literacy and numeracy testing in Tasmania, a school entrant health questionnaire for all preparatory students in Victoria, and a longitudinal study of the destination of adult literacy students commissioned by the Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA). She has had experience in most aspects of a quantitative focussed research project cycle, including instrument development, sampling, interviewing, data entry, data analysis and report writing. She oversees the use and management of the Centre's optical mark readable scanner (Opscan 5), which is used for the data entry phase of projects and for exam marking. She is also interested in scannable questionnaire design.

Anne Pitman, Office Manager

Qualifications: Assoc. Dip. Social Science, Dip. Community Services.

Anne has worked in the area of research for more than ten years and has over 30 years experience in office management and business administration, data processing, coordinating and organising conferences, functions, etc. Anne has published several papers and co-written research reports.

Consultants and casual staff

Casual/short term staff

Ms Kate Ashford
Ms Lyn Beeley
Ms Judi Champion
Ms Helen Greenwood
Mrs Sue Griffin
Ms To Thi Thu Huong
Ms Margaret Kermodé
Mr Low Chi Keen
Ms Elisabeth Lundahl-Hegedus
Mrs Audrey Mason
Mr John Nicholls
Mr Don Palmer
Mr Kevin Piper
Ms Beryl Pollock
Mr Karl Siemon
Ms Prue Spencer
Mr Andrew Stephanou
Ms Janet Treweek
Ms Julie Waide
Ms Charlotte Walsh
Mrs Gwenda West

Consultants/Associates

Ms Andrea Bateman
Mr Marc Bowles
Mr Tom Brennfleck
Associate Professor Ralph Catts
Dr Ian Falk
Ms Pauline Flynn
Ms Margedd Heliosz
Mr Phil Holmes Smith
Dr John Izard
Mr Graeme Jane
Dr Tony Lee
Mrs Margaret McGregor
Dr Magdalena Mok
Mr Ken Rowe
Dr Patricia Smith
Ms Bettina Stevenson

Research Programs

The Centre conducts its activities in research and development as well as its teaching/administration programs. Each area has a co-ordinator responsible for project development, proposal preparation and project scheduling and outputs. Program areas are as shown below and details of each project are provided in following sections.

1. Applied Measurement Programs

- 1.1 Tasmanian Years 3 & 7 Literacy and Numeracy Assessment and Monitoring Program
- 1.2 Southern African Consortium for Monitoring in Education Quality
- 1.3 Exemplary Item Development for English Studies of Society and Environment
- 1.4 International English Language Testing System
- 1.5 Problem Solving in Mathematics
- 1.6 School Entrant Health Questionnaire
- 1.7 Learning Technology Survey
- 1.8 Transfer of Profiles to International Settings
- 1.9 Outcomes Based Education
- 1.10 Determinants of Literacy and Numeracy among Primary School Children in Vietnam
- 1.11 Australian Development Scholarships: Feasibility Study of the Preselection Knowledge Test

2. Vocational Assessment Programs

- 2.1 The Centre for Vocational Assessment Research
- 2.2 The Examination of the Theoretical Underpinning of Assessment Decision Making
- 2.3 Workplace Assessor Training
- 2.4 Development and Implementation of an On-line Assessment System
- 2.5 Development of the National Training Package for Workplace Assessment and Training
- 2.6 Assessing in VET: Issues of Validity and Reliability
- 2.7 Workplace Assessment in School-Industry Partnerships
- 2.8 Evaluation of the Training and Assessment Procedures and Practices in the Melbourne Metropolitan Taxi Industry

3. Teaching and Administration Programs

- 3.1 Graduate Student Supervision
- 3.2 Award Teaching Subjects
- 3.3 National Assessment Institute
- 3.4 National Assessment Awards – Schools and Training
- 3.5 Seminars

Program 1 Applied Measurement

Project 1: Tasmanian Years 3 & 7 Literacy and Numeracy Assessment and Monitoring Program

Staffing

P. Griffin, K. Lai, K. Corneille, E. Lundahl-Hegedus, P. Flynn, A. Stephanou, K. Rowe

Summary

Following their 1997 work on Year 9 Numeracy testing in Tasmania, the Assessment Research Centre was commissioned to develop and administer Literacy and Numeracy tests for all Years 3 and 7 students in Tasmania for the Assessment and Monitoring Program. The Catholic Education Office participated in the process and was involved in all stages of test development.

The tests addressed outcomes selected from the Education Department's Key Intended Numeracy Outcomes (KINOs) and Key Intended Literacy Outcomes (KILOs). Item writers developed items that were panelled and piloted for the tests. Trials were conducted in New South Wales, Queensland and some Tasmanian schools that were not participating in the program.

The final test item selection was determined using a reference group that examined item performance in the trials, together with the executive group who provided additional items needed for linking purposes and for ensuring adequate allocation per Key Intended Numeracy Outcome (KINO) and Key Intended Literacy Outcomes (KILO) strand.

Two hundred and sixty five (265) schools participated in the testing program, with over 6300 Year 3 students and almost 5900 Year 7 students sitting the tests.

Optical Mark Readable (OMR) answer sheets were used for students' answers where Year 7 students wrote answers directly onto answer sheets and Year 3 students' work was transcribed from the test booklets onto the answer sheets by markers. Trained markers scored all open-ended items and scores were entered onto the student's OMR answer sheet. After the answer sheets were scanned the data was calibrated using the Rasch Model software QUEST. This enabled examination of student and item performance from which cut off scores were determined for each of the achievement levels within each KINO and KILO strand.

Funding Source

Office for Educational Review, Department of Education, Community and Cultural Affairs, Tasmania

Publications

Callingham, R. and Griffin, P. (1997). *Assessing student performance via the internet*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, International Hilton Hotel, Brisbane, November 30 - December 4.

Callingham, R. and Griffin, P. (1998a). *Constructed response items in large scale assessment*. Paper presented at the MERGA Conference, Belfast, September.

Callingham, R. and Griffin, P. (1998b). *Internet based assessment*. Paper presented at the MERGA Conference, Belfast, September.

Callingham, R. and Griffin, P. (1998c). *Large-scale assessment: The importance of contextual information*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the British Educational Research Association, Belfast, September.

Callingham, R. and Griffin, P. (1998). *Large-scale assessment: The importance of contextual information*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Adelaide, November.

Griffin, P. (1997). *Achievement monitoring in Tasmania*. Report to the Office for Educational Review, Hobart. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. (1997). *Assessment of numeracy investigative task (Year 9 numeracy program)*. Annual Meeting of the Tasmanian Mathematical Association, Burnie, Tasmania.

Griffin, P. (1997). *Year 9 Numeracy Assessment and Monitoring Program. Task 1: Unassisted task.* Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne and the Office for Educational Review, Hobart.

Griffin, P. (1997). *Year 9 Numeracy Assessment and Monitoring Program. Task 2: Calculator assisted task.* Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne and the Office for Educational Review, Hobart.

Griffin, P. (1997). *Year 9 Numeracy Assessment and Monitoring Program. Task 3: Constructed response.* Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne and the Office for Educational Review, Hobart.

Griffin, P. (1997). *Year 9 Numeracy Assessment and Monitoring Program. Task 4: Extended task: An analysis of a daily newspaper.* Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne and the Office for Educational Review, Hobart.

Griffin, P. (1997). *Year 9 Numeracy Assessment and Monitoring Program: Teachers' manual.* Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne and the Office for Educational Review, Hobart.

Griffin, P. (1997). *A new assessment of the numeracy standards of Tasmanian students has come up with a positive result.* Interview with Professor Patrick Griffin on the Morning Program of Radio 7ZR, Broadcast Transcript, Media Monitors Tasmania Pty Ltd, Hobart, November 27.

Griffin, P. and Callingham, R. (1997). *Dimensions of numeracy in a large scale testing program.* Paper presented at the annual conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, International Hilton Hotel, Brisbane, November 30 – December 4.

Griffin, P. and Callingham, R. (1997). *Use of the ARC learning profile scales (ALPS) software and reports.* Office for Educational Review, Department of Education, Community and Cultural Affairs, Hobart.

Griffin, P. and Callingham, R. (1997). *Using the ALPS software.* Office of Educational Review, Department of Education, Community and Cultural Affairs, Hobart.

Griffin, P., Cornelle, K. and Lundahl-Hegedus, E. (1997). *Student numeracy outcomes in the Tasmanian Year 9 Assessment and Monitoring Program.* Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. (1998). *Assessing and monitoring students.* Paper presented at the Mathematical Association of Tasmania Inc. Annual Conference.

Griffin, P. (1998). *Assessment and reporting in a developmental assessment framework*. IARTV Seminar Series, (No. 75 Ed.). Incorporated Association of Registered Teachers of Victoria, Melbourne.

Griffin, P., Callingham, R., Smith, A. and Kays, M. (1998). *A twenty year equating study of mathematics achievement*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Adelaide, November.

Griffin, P. and Corneille, K. (1998). *Tasmanian Year 3 and 7 Literacy and Numeracy Assessment and Monitoring Program*. Report to the Office for Educational Review, Hobart. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. and Corneille, K. (1998). *Tasmanian Year 3 and 7 Literacy and Numeracy Assessment and Monitoring Program*. Report to the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Le, Thi Kim Anh (1998). *Comparison of two methods of setting cut scores for benchmarks in Tasmanian numeracy year 9 tests*. Unpublished minor thesis for the Masters Degree. Faculty of Education, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Project 2: Southern African Consortium for Monitoring in Education Quality (SACMEQ)

Staffing

P. Griffin (with K. Ross [UNESCO IIEP, Paris]; N. Postlethwaite [Hambourg]; F. Voigts [UNESCO, Harare])

Summary

The project established procedures to link the literacy assessments in five Southern African nations - Zimbabwe, Zanzibar, Mauritius, Namibia and Zambia. A training project was offered to participants in the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning in Paris. Subsequent data analysis led to further UNESCO projects in Santiago and South Africa. A second stage of the project is planned for 1999-2001.

Funding Source

UNESCO

Publications

Griffin, P. (1997). *Introduction to the Rasch model: A report for the Latin American assessment project*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. (1997). *Introduction to the Rasch model: Developing equivalent scores from a common item pool*. UNESCO-International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris (in press).

Griffin, P. (1997). Monitoring is an international phenomenon. *Directions in Education*, 6 (7), p.3.

Griffin, P. (1998). *An introduction to the Rasch model*. Report prepared for the Latino Americano de Evaluacion de la calidad de la Education. Santiago, Chile.

The Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (1998). *Grade 6 study of reading and mathematics. Pupil reading pilot test (Form A)*. IIEP, Paris.

The Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (1998). *Grade 6 study of reading and mathematics. Pupil reading pilot test (Form B)*. IIEP, Paris.

The Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (1998). *Grade 6 study of reading and mathematics. Teacher reading pilot test*. IIEP, Paris.

The Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (1998). *Grade 6 study of reading and mathematics. Pupil mathematics pilot test (Form A)*. IIEP, Paris.

The Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (1998). *Grade 6 study of reading and mathematics. Pupil mathematics pilot test (Form B)*. IIEP, Paris.

The Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (1998). *Grade 6 study of reading and mathematics. Teacher mathematics pilot test*. IIEP, Paris.

Project 3: Exemplary Item Development for English and Studies of Society and Environment

Staffing

P. Griffin, J. Pollock, P. Nix, C. Kelly, P. Flynn, P. Smith, M. McGregor

Summary

This project provided many assessment tasks to help link the classroom teacher's assessments to external standardised assessment tasks. To do this, the item bank includes many items very similar in structure to the external assessment items. However, the teacher still needs to supplement this information with the everyday forms of classroom assessment. One use of these items can be to provide a form of self-moderation for teachers. The item bank does not, on its own, provide enough information to make definitive statements about outcome achievement or Curriculum and Standards Framework level progress for individual students.

Funding Source

Victorian Board of Studies

Publications

Griffin, P. (1997). Double marking. *Directions in Education*, 6 (8), p.4.

Griffin, P. (1997). Testing and assessment: Monitoring now a global trend. *Directions in Education*. Newsletter of the Australian Council for Education Administration, May, pp.3-4.

Griffin, P. (1997). Testing in schools. *Directions in Education*. Newsletter of the Australian Council for Educational Administration, March.

Griffin, P. (1997). *Trial and calibration of exemplary assessment items in SOSE and English key learning areas*. A Report to the Victorian Board of Studies, Melbourne. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. (1997). Reliability and VCE moderation. *Directions in Education*, 6 (9), p.3.

Griffin, P., Kelly, C., Pollock, J. and Flynn, P. (1998b). *Effective assessment for English*. Addison Wesley Longman, Melbourne.

Griffin, P., Nix, P. and Flynn, P. (1998c). *Effective assessment for studies of society and the environment*. Addison Wesley Longman, Melbourne.

Lai, K. (1997). *Item response theory*. National Assessment Institute, Melbourne.

Lai, K. (1998). *Item parameter estimation under the violation of local independence*. Unpublished paper presented at the 1998 Australian Association of Educational Research Conference, Adelaide.

Project 4: International English Language Testing System

Staffing

P. Griffin, S. Gillis

Summary

This was an international investigation of language tests and the influence of culture on item behaviour. Rasch analyses of the IELTS receptive test items (Reading and Listening Test Components) enabled cross-national analyses of item behaviour and the establishment of an international calibration of test items. Comparisons of European and Australasian data illustrated slightly different response patterns. Implications for Australian higher education institutions accepting international students were drawn from the data analyses.

Further investigations include the effects of washback on teaching and learning in Hanoi University language classes. The predictive validity of the IELTS as a selection process is also being investigated with Vietnamese students studying in Australia.

Funding Source

The British Council (British Council Grant)

Publications

Griffin, P. and Gillis, S. (1994). *A cross-national investigation of language tests: The international English language testing system in Europe and Australasia*. Paper presented at annual conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Newcastle, November.

Griffin, P. and Gillis, S. (1997). Results of trials: A cross-national investigation. *Constructing and trialling the IELTS test*. In C. Clapham and J.C. Alderson, (Eds.). Cambridge, University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate.

Nguyen, P.N. (1998). *The washback effects of the IELTS on language classes at Vietnam National University-Hanoi*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Faculty of Education, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

To, T.T.H. *The predictive validity of the IELTS tests*. Ph.D. Thesis. Faculty of Education, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne (in progress).

Project 5: Problem Solving in Mathematics

Staffing

K. Lai, P. Griffin, K. Corneille

Summary

The project is undertaken in collaboration with the North Shore Coaching and Development Centre and its colleges. Items along the strands of Numeration, Measurement, Space, Chance and Data were designed by the Assessment Research Centre to test the problem-solving skills of pupils at Years 3, 4 and 5 in both Melbourne and Sydney. The items assessed the pupils' performance in different key steps in the problem-solving process in situations familiar and also unfamiliar to the pupils. These items were then scored by the Assessment Research Centre. Reports on the performance together with constructive feedback were given to each participant after the competition.

Funding Source

North Shore Coaching and Development Centre

Project 6: School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ)

Staffing

P. Griffin, K. Corneille

Summary

This project involved the development of a comprehensive health questionnaire to be administered annually to all preparatory children in Victoria under the Human Services (Victoria) School Nursing Program. The questionnaire (SEHQ) has been designed to assist the school nurse with identification of health and wellbeing concerns that require intervention. This includes concerns relating to psychosocial matters, behaviour, development, disabilities, parenting and family stress, in addition to physical health and sensory deprivation.

Staff at the Assessment Research Centre advised on the methodology and undertook the questionnaire design, data entry, data analysis and scale development components of the project.

Funding Source

Department of Human Services, Victoria

Publications

Ballard, S., Edgecombe, G. and Jovanovska, D. (1997). *Development of a parent report child health questionnaire for Victoria's school nursing program*. 2nd National School Nurses' Conference: Parallel Pathways Towards a Common Goal, Hilton on the Park, Melbourne.

Edgecombe, G., Avant, K., Griffin, P. and Corneille, K. (1997). *Development of a parent report questionnaire as an adjunct to school nursing practice*. 6th International Nursing Practitioner Conference: Working Together, Department of Human Services, Carlton Crest Hotel, Melbourne.

Edgecombe, G., Avant, K., Griffin, P. and Corneille, K. (1997). *Development and testing of a parent report questionnaire for assessing the health needs of first grade children*. Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting. Department of Human Services, Washington.

Edgecombe, G., Avant, K., Griffin, P. and Corneille, K. (1997). Development of the school entrant health questionnaire. *Journal of Nursing Measurement*.

Edgecombe, G., Avant, K., Griffin, P. and Corneille, K. (1997). *Manual for the school entrant health questionnaire*. Department of Human Services, Melbourne.

Edgecombe, G., Avant, K., Griffin, P. and Corneille, K. (1997). The school entrant health questionnaire (SEHQ): Increasing effectiveness of school nurses in the primary school setting. *Collegian: Journal of the Royal College of Nursing*.

Edgecombe, G., Avant, K., Griffin, P. and Corneille, K. (1998). School nurse assessment of primary school children: Analysis of data from the school entrant health questionnaire. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 4 (1), pp.40-50.

Edgecombe, G., Avant, K., Griffin, P. and Corneille, K. (1998). School nursing practice in primary schools: An analysis of school entrant health questionnaire data. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 4 (1), March.

Project 7: Learning Technologies Survey

Staffing

K. Cornelle

Summary

The Northern Metropolitan Region of the Department of Education in Victoria engaged the Centre to advise on the survey design, produce an OMR (optical mark readable) version, process and analyse the data. The survey investigated the activity, resources and issues relating to learning technologies in all primary and secondary schools in the region.

Funding Source

Northern Metropolitan Region, Department of Education, Victoria

Publications

Northern Metropolitan Region. (1998). *Learning technologies survey 1998: Report to schools*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Project 8: Transfer of Profiles to International Settings

Staffing

P. Griffin, P. Smith

Summary

This project investigates the transportability of the Literacy, ESL and Interview test of ESL as profiling mechanisms to the international contexts. It further seeks to develop new material in response to findings. In addition, the program aims to extend the work of the Literacy Profile Scales and develop ways of reporting usefully to stakeholders, especially parents, in a multicultural society, and to facilitate the reporting process providing a useful account of how literacy is developing in a school. Profiles for Special Learners are being developed to assist teachers with children who have reading difficulties and with Reading Recovery programs in particular. This project also proposes to develop scales for children in ESL and to publish for the US school system.

Funding Source

Core Funding

Publications

Griffin, P. (1997). *The ARC learning profiles*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. and Callingham, R. (1997,1998). *Using the ALPS software*. Office of Educational Review, Department of Education, Community and Cultural Affairs, Hobart.

Griffin, P. (1998). *The ARC learning profile scales (ALPS): A computer based developmental assessment reporting program*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. (1998). *Profiles and reporting in a developmental assessment framework*. IARTV, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. (1998). *Profiles, origins and development*. Paper presented at the National Developmental Assessment Conference, Melbourne.

Smith, P. (1997). *Down the track with profiles*. Reading Association of Ireland Conference, Dublin, Ireland, September.

Profiles web page at - <http://www.educationprofile.com.au>

Project 9: Outcomes Based Education

Staffing

P. Griffin, P. Smith, A. Pitman

Summary

This project investigated the best practices of schools implementing profiles, and methods used to pass on their experience and expertise to others. Outcomes Based Education (OBE) emerged as a highly significant aspect of National Profiles or their state equivalents and the impact on teachers' work became the focus of the project.

Schools in five Australian states were surveyed and responses from more than 360 teachers were received. Examples of best practice were identified and case studies documented. The results were expected to lead to the identification of experienced practitioners, administrators, consultants and academics who could deliver appropriate support materials. All this was taking place while states and territories had already developed support materials and products to assist in the implementation of national profiles or their state equivalents. Professional development support was diminishing within some states, responsibility being delegated to schools.

The implications that arose from the study were far reaching. The implementation of profiles requires a substantial rethink of approaches to teaching and learning, to

assessment and to curriculum delivery. Professional development was not usually being aimed at the processes of OBE. Teachers and others know the rhetoric of OBE, but they need professional development which is based on an understanding of criterion referenced interpretation of assessment, knowledge of how teachers may become facilitators rather than transmitters of learning, and curriculum that maximises students' opportunities to establish an inquiry approach to learning, using a range of resources.

Funding Source

Department of Education Employment Training & Youth Affairs and
Australian Curriculum Studies Association

Publications

Griffin, P. (1997). *Assessing and monitoring outcomes based education*. Paper presented at Curriculum Corporation's fourth annual conference, The Curriculum Agenda: 1997 and Beyond. Landmark Parkroyal Hotel, Potts Point, Sydney.

Griffin, P. (1997). Assessing and reporting outcomes. In P. Griffin and P. Smith (Eds.). *Outcomes based education: Issues and strategies for schools*. Australian Curriculum Studies Association, Canberra, pp.11-25.

Griffin P. (1997). Assessment principles for OBE. In P. Griffin and P. Smith (Eds.). *Outcomes based education: Issues and strategies for schools*. Australian Curriculum Studies Association, Canberra, pp.26-31.

Griffin, P. (1997). *Criterion referenced assessment*. National Workshop on Outcomes Based Education, The University of Melbourne. Australian Curriculum Studies Association, Canberra.

Griffin, P. (1997). Hindering and facilitating factors in OBE. In P. Griffin and P. Smith (Eds.). *Outcomes based education: Issues and strategies for schools*. Australian Curriculum Studies Association, Canberra, pp.48-50.

Griffin, P. (1997). *Outcomes and profiles: Changes in teachers' assessment practices*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Australian Curriculum Studies Association, University of Sydney.

Griffin, P., Pollock, J., Corneille, K. and Kitzpatrick, M. (1997). *Skilling me softly: The impact of adult literacy classes: The characteristics and activities of clients*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. and Smith, P. (1997). *Changing the focus: Teachers introducing profiles to move towards outcomes based education*. Australian Curriculum Studies Association, Canberra.

Griffin, P. and Smith, P. (Eds.). (1997). *Outcomes based education: Issues and strategies for schools*. Australian Curriculum Studies Association, Canberra.

Griffin, P. (1998). Accountability: National aptitude test. *Directions in Education*, 7 (6), p.4.

- Griffin, P. (1998). Assessment: Trust in judgement. *Education Alternatives*, 7 (7), p.2.
- Griffin, P. (1998). Marketing export education: Poor recruiting strategy. *Directions in Education*, 7 (6), p.4.
- Griffin, P. (1998). Outcomes and profiles: Changes in teachers' assessment practices. *Curriculum Perspectives*, 18 (1), pp.9-20.
- Griffin, P. (1998). Testing and assessment in adult basic education. *Fine Print*, 21 (1), pp.11-15.
- Mackay, A., Jane, G., Hill, P. and Griffin, P. (1998). *Review of standards based assessment and reporting in years 11 and 12 in the Australian Capital Territory*. A report to the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies. National Curriculum Services, Melbourne.
- Smith, P. and Griffin, P. (1997). *The impact of outcomes based education on teachers' work*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Brisbane, Nov-Dec.

Project 10: Determinants of Literacy and Numeracy among Primary School Children in Vietnam.

Staffing

P. Griffin (with staff of the National Institute for Educational Science - Hanoi)

Summary

This project investigates the school, home and community factors influencing literacy and numeracy of Vietnamese primary school children. Tests in mathematics and Vietnamese language have been developed for children in years 3 and 5. Samples have been drawn from 5 provinces (Ha Noi, Hien Bai, Thanh Hon, Quang Nam, Vinh Long). Questionnaires were developed for head teachers, teachers and students. Tests of mathematics (number, chance problem solving and measurement) and Vietnamese (reading, language structure and writing) were linked across years 3 and 5 to estimate growth. The project is the first phase of a longitudinal project that aims to monitor achievement levels and provide policy advice to the Ministry of Education and Training, within the World Bank Primary Education project.

Funding Source

World Bank, Primary Education Co-ordination Unit, Ha Noi

Publications

Griffin, P. (1998). *Vietnamese national study of student achievement in mathematics and Vietnamese*. National Institute for Education and Science, Hanoi.

Project 11: Australian Development Scholarships: Feasibility Study of the Preselection Knowledge Test.

Staffing

P. Griffin

Summary

This project investigates the feasibility of the Selection Test developed by the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training for its potential in selecting scholarship students for study in Australia. University examination procedures, scholarship ranking and scaling approaches to assessment of scholarship students were evaluated.

Funding Source

AusAID

Publications

Griffin, P. (1998). *Australian development scholarship (ADS) preselection knowledge test (PSKT) feasibility study*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Program 2 Vocational Assessment

Project 1: Centre for Vocational Assessment Research (CVAR)

Staffing

P. Griffin, S. Gillis, A. Pitman, J. Keating

Summary

The Centre for Vocational Assessment Research is a partnership between the Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, and the Vocational Education and Assessment Centre, TAFE NSW. In 1997 the Centre received set-up funding as a national centre from the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). In 1998, the Centre was officially recognised as a research centre at the University of Melbourne.

The Centre aims to provide leadership in competency based assessment research and improve assessment practices in the workplace. Research is at the core of CVAR's work. The Centre conducts an active program of dissemination of its research findings in user friendly ways to target audiences such as VET policy makers, training providers and industry based trainers and assessors. The Centre also encourages contact between assessors, the development of competencies in planning, conducting and reviewing assessment procedures, tasks and systems in vocational education and training settings as well as industrial settings.

It provides information and advice to assessors. Clients include:

- Workplace trainers and assessors
- Registered training organisations
- VET policy makers
- TAFE teachers
- Other research centres
- Universities

Funding Source

Training and Research Programs

Project 2: The Examination of the Theoretical Underpinning of Assessment Decision Making

Staffing

S. Gillis, P. Griffin, R. Trembath, P. Ling

Summary

This project investigated the theoretical underpinnings of assessment decision making. Factors influencing decision making processes in competency based assessment were explored across both industrial and vocational education and training settings. This involved a national survey of workplace assessors and VET trainers who were actively participating in competency based assessment. The study explored and tested a theoretical model of decision making and revealed significant differences in the use of interpretative frameworks; influences of assessor bias in predicting workplace performance; organisational influences; the assessment and reporting process; the complexity of relationships among stakeholders; and the perceived consequences associated with the assessment outcomes among workplace assessors and VET trainers. The outcomes include eight measures of factors influencing decision making and the findings have direct implications for assessor selection, training and monitoring.

Funding Source

Australian National Training Authority - Research Advisory Council

Publications

Gillis, S. and Griffin, P. (1997). *Factors influencing decision making in competency based assessments*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Brisbane, November.

Gillis, S., Griffin, P., Trembath, R. and Ling, P. (1998). *The theoretical underpinnings of assessment*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Project 3: Workplace Assessor Training

Staffing

P. Griffin, S. Gillis

Summary

The Assessment Research Centre (ARC) is recognised under the Australian Recognition Framework (ARF) as a registered training organisation. The ARC has developed curriculum and training manuals that reflect findings from current research activities and developments in the field of competency based assessment. The Centre delivers customised industry assessor training. An Assessment Review Board (comprised of industry representatives and ARC personnel) has been established to examine appeals, to moderate assessment decision, and to evaluate the training delivered.

Funding Source

Fee for training services

Publications

Gillis, S. and Griffin, P. (1996). *Workplace assessor training: Introduction*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Gillis, S. and Griffin, P. (Eds.). (1996). *Workplace assessor training: Reading Guide*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. and Gillis, S. (1996). *Workplace assessor training: Workbook*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. and Gillis, S. (1996). *Workplace assessor training: Primer*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. and Gillis, S. (1996). *Workplace assessor training: Workshop guide*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. and Gillis, S. (1997). *The evaluation of assessment processes and practices*. Paper presented at the NCVET Research Conference, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. (1998). *Critical success factors for assessing learning competency*. Paper presented at the Performance Measure for Training, The Stamford Plaza, Melbourne, March 30-31.

Project 4: Development and Implementation of an On-Line Assessment System

Staffing

S. Gillis, P. Griffin (with G. Jane)

Summary

CompAssess is an on-line assessment, recording and monitoring system designed to allow assessors to conduct performance and competency assessments within an authentic context. In the case of the VET sector and industry and curriculum standards in the school sector, it provides sophisticated reports for individuals and profile reports for teachers, trainers, administrators and managers.

CompAssess calibrates the data using Multifaceted Rasch Procedure to take mathematically modelled observations for a person and for each competency across candidates before calculating an overall assessment for each person by competency. Organisations can set their own cut-off points for assessments on any number of rating scale levels (for example: Competent, Highly Competent and Not Yet Competent). The system is designed for multi site operation to allow administrators to ensure that common procedures and information are used across sites and that all assessors are maintaining common standards.

It operates as a secure Intranet for an organisation, providing access from any computer with Internet access via secure log-on procedures. No client software needs to be loaded or maintained at the organisation. The screens are generally customised to display documents and logo particular to the organisation.

Funding Source

Core funding

Publications

Gillis, S. (1996). *Internet-based: Australia's on-line recording and monitoring system for industry competency based assessment*. Paper presented at the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System Summer Institute on Assessment, San Diego, California.

Gillis, S. and Griffin, P. (1996). *Internet-based: On-line recording and monitoring of competency assessments assisting industry penetration*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. (1997). *An interactive on-line assessment system for outcomes based assessment for special educators*. In D. Greaves and P. Jeffrey (Eds.). *Learning difficulties, disabilities and resource teaching*. Selected papers from the Australian Resource Educators Association 1996 Conference, Melbourne, pp.11-26.

Griffin, P., Gillis, S. and Jane, G. (1998). *CompAssess: an overview*:
<http://www.compassess.com.au/compassess/>

Project 5: Development of the National Training Package for Workplace Assessment and Training

Staffing

P. Griffin, S. Gillis, (with I. Falk, R. Catts, M. Bowles, A. Bateman, R. King, K. Lee, A. Foot)

Summary

The Centre for Vocational Assessment Research led a consortium to review the Assessment and Workplace Trainer Competency Standards and to develop the Training Package for Workplace Assessment and Training, for national endorsement by the Australian National Training Authority. The consortium included representatives from the Centre for Vocational Assessment Research (NSW TAFE and The University of Melbourne), the Work Education Research Centre (Central Queensland University, Townsville), the Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia (The University of Tasmania), and the Institute of Working Futures (Tasmania). To develop the endorsed components of the package, a national survey was conducted with a sample of purchasers of the standards, all National Industry Training Advisory Bodies and a selection of State Industry Training Advisory Bodies, all State/Territory Recognition Authorities and all registered training providers who were accredited to deliver training and/or assessment against the standards. The survey identified changes needed in the Workplace Trainer Competency Standards

and the Competency Standards for Assessment. The investigation led to the production of a research report as well as the endorsed components of the Training Package for Workplace Training and Assessment: Revised Competency Standards for Workplace Training and Assessment, Assessment Guidelines and Qualifications.

Under the project management of the Assessment Centre at the School of Mines (Ballarat), the CVAR was also involved in developing the non-endorsed components of the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training. This involved conducting an industry audit of existing materials and products to support the training of workplace trainers and assessors nationally. The outcomes of the project led to the production of a number of assessment, learning and professional development materials to support the endorsed components of the national training package. Such materials will be published and distributed by the National Assessors and Workplace Trainers Body in 1999.

Funding Source

National Assessors and Workplace Trainers Body
Australian National Training Authority

Publications

Gillis, S. and Griffin, P. (1997). *The assessment guidelines: Endorsed component of the training package for workplace training and assessment*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Gillis, S., Griffin, P., Catts, R. and Falk, I. (1997). *Draft competency standards for workplace training and assessment: Endorsed component of the training package for workplace training and assessment*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Gillis, S., Griffin, P., Catts, R., Falk, I. and Bowles, M. (1997). *Review of the assessment and workplace trainer competency standards: Research report*. National Assessors and Workplace Trainers Body, Sydney.

Gillis, S., Griffin, P., Catts, R. and Falk, I. (1998). *A review of the competency standards for assessment and workplace training*. Paper presented at the Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA) National Conference, the University of Technology, Sydney, 16-17 February.

Griffin, P., Gillis, S., Catts, R. and Falk, I. (1998). Cracks in the foundation? Researching the content and use of the workplace trainer and assessment competency standards. *Transfer VET Research & Practice* 3 (2), pp.8-11.

Project 6: Assessing in VET: Issues of Validity and Reliability

Staffing

S.Gillis (with A. Bateman)

Summary

A review of international studies examined validity and reliability issues associated with two major forms of assessment - objective tests and performance based assessments. This project examined the relevance of these within a competency based assessment system and the potential for the adoption of both forms of assessment to help ensure that assessments measure both the underpinning knowledge and understanding, together with the skills required for competent performance in the workplace.

This review is one of a series of reports commissioned by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research to draw conclusions from the research on key topics in vocational education and training. The paper therefore reviews both the Australian discussion papers on validity and reliability as well as the international empirical research in this field.

Funding Source

National Research Evaluation Committee (NREC)

Publications

Gillis, S. and Bateman, A. (1998). *Assessing in VET: Issues of validity and reliability*.
Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne (in
press).

Project 7: Workplace Assessment in School Industry Partnerships

Staff

S.Gillis, J. Keating, P. Griffin

Summary

The Centre has been commissioned by the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation to examine and trial workplace-based assessment approaches within the context of industry and education assessment and accreditation frameworks. The research investigation conducted 22 case studies nationally across three industry sectors: office, hospitality and metals engineering. The case studies involved examining how secondary students who are undertaking vocational education and training are assessed for workplace learning. The outcome of Stage 1 led to case study reports of models of successful practice.

The research investigation then used this information in Stage 2 of the study to develop assessment materials and procedures to assist other teachers and employers to conduct assessments of students' vocational skills and knowledge. These procedures and materials will then be trialled in 1999 across a number of schools and workplaces throughout Australia and across a number of different industries (office, hospitality and metals industries).

Funding Source

The Australian Student Traineeship Foundation

Publications

Gillis, S. and Keating, J. (1998). *Best practice in assessment in school industry programs*. Paper presented at the National VETNetwork Conference: Changing Work – Changing Society, Adelaide.

Gillis, S., Keating, J. and Griffin, P. (1998). *Best practice in assessment in school industry programs: Research report, stage 1 & 2*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Griffin, P. (1998h). Vocational education: Education and work. *Directions in Education*, 7 (8), pp.2-3.

Griffin, P. and Gillis, S. (1998). Competency based assessment of structured workplace learning. *VOCAL: The Australian Journal of Vocational Education and Training in Schools*, 1 (1), pp.5-8.

Keating, J. and Gillis, S. (1998). *Workplace assessment in school industry partnerships*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Adelaide.

Project 8: Evaluation of Training and Assessment Procedures and Practices in the Melbourne Metropolitan Taxi Industry

Staff

P. Griffin, S. Gillis

Summary

The Centre was commissioned by the Victorian Taxi Directorate to review the training and assessment practices currently in operation within Melbourne. The purpose of this research was to review the training and assessment of Melbourne taxi drivers with the view of recommending changes that could deliver a world class taxi service.

Funding Source

Victorian Taxi Directorate

Publications

Griffin, P. and Gillis, S. (1998). *The Melbourne metropolitan taxi industry: A review of driver training and assessment*. Assessment Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

Program 3 Teaching and Administration

1: Graduate Student Supervision

Doctorate

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|---|
| 1. | Chan Pong Lai | The application of the Rasch model to a multi component mathematics problem |
| 2. | Lynette Martin | Factors affecting the implementation of primary school language other than English programs |
| 3. | Shelley Gillis | Decision making in workplace competency assessment |
| 4. | To Thi Thu Huong | Predictive validity of the IELTS in Vietnam |
| 5. | Bernadette Pierce | Gifted underachieving boys in secondary school – knowledge rich domain |
| 6. | Ha Tak Shing | Assessing problem solving skills in physics |
| 7. | Nick Stone | Assessing effects of organisational culture |
| 8. | Ian Hood | Assessing electro-technology competencies using remote procedures |

Masters Degree (Research)

1. Susan Casey The development and validation of a language placement test
2. Peter Congdon Rater reliability in performance assessment
3. Duong Mong Ha University entrance requirements in Vietnam
4. Jillian Favero Early school leavers and employability in rural Victoria
5. Pham Xuan Thanh Quality assessment in higher education in Vietnam

Masters Degree (Coursework)

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. Le Thi Kim Anh | Minor thesis: Comparison of two methods of setting cut scores for benchmarks in Tasmanian numeracy year 9 tests |
|-------------------|---|

Post Graduate students completing degrees in 1998

1. Ms Lynette Martin
2. Mr Chan Pong Lai
3. Duong Mong Ha
4. Le Thi Kim Ahn

2: Award Teaching Subjects

In the Masters Degree by coursework specific subjects are taught by the Centre staff.
The subjects offered are as follows:

1. Research methods in education (485-646) - Module B – Assessment
2. Competency and performance assessment (476-662)
3. Assessment design and analysis (476-661)
4. Educational measurement assessment and evaluation (476-694)
5. Assessment and monitoring of student achievement (482-716)
6. Assessment and reporting for student learning (476-695)

3: National Assessment Institute

The Centre for Vocational Assessment Research co-directs the three-day National Assessment Institute which is held annually at the Faculty of Education, the University of Melbourne. In 1998, over 100 people attended the Institute from Vietnam, Canada, London and all states except the Northern Territory. Courses offered this year included:

Course Title	Presenter(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Competency Based Assessment Tools & Procedures 	P. Griffin and S. Gillis (The University of Melbourne)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing & Managing a Competency Based Assessment System 	A. Bateman (SMB Ballarat)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Evaluation: Models and Methods 	K. Piper (private consultant)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of Cognitive Skills 	J. Izard (ACER)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multilevel Analysis with MLn 	K. Rowe (VBOS) and H. Goldstein (Institute of Education – London)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numeracy Assessment 	L. Earl (University of Toronto) and R. Callingham (OER – Tasmania)

4: National Assessment Awards

Senator Christopher Ellison, Minister for Schools, Vocational Education and Training presented the 1998 National Assessment Awards to schools and industry who have shown exemplary assessment practices. A dinner was held at the University of Melbourne on 24th September 1998, where Senator Ellison emphasized its importance in education and training.

The awards, which aim to encourage excellence in assessment, are the result of collaboration between the University of Melbourne and the Centre for Vocational Assessment Research and schools, industry and assessment bodies both nationally and internationally.

Three awards were presented:

1. The National Assessment Award for Vocational Education and Training was awarded to BHP Westernport, Victoria.
2. The National Assessment Award for Schools was awarded to The Knox College, Victoria.
3. A special award for excellence on the advice of the sponsor for the schools sector was awarded to Sharyn Lidster, Claremont College, Tasmania.

1998 National Assessment Awards (Schools)

The 1998 National Assessment Award (Schools) was won by The Knox College. The school received the award for its exemplary and comprehensive school assessment using commercially developed tests and assessment tools. The school draws on a sound theoretical foundation aiming at improving each individual student's learning through an integral link to programs and curriculum development. It sets out a monitoring, reporting and evaluation process for each student. The process promotes a team approach and assessment is multi-layered to incorporate a thorough knowledge and understanding of each child's starting point, which is then carefully monitored to ensure that each student's learning pathway is planned to meet future directions and needs. The school is dedicated to quality, equity, accountability, partnerships, and the celebrating of success of each individual with the respective stakeholders.

Finalists for the award were James Harrison College, Geelong, who have integrated competency-based learning into traditional assessment-based secondary school curriculum in an exemplary way. Their assessment program is presented as a comprehensive, collaborative process involving the Principal, VET Manager, Industry Liaison Officers, Teachers, Students and Workplace Supervisors. A measure of the success of this integration is that James Harrison College boasts a 98% employment success rate for its 1997 exit VCE students in a region with a 46.5% youth unemployment rate. The school has a strong focus on the 'client' and has shown commendable leadership in implementing the Federal Government's training reform agenda. Successful partnerships have ensured that the students who attend James Harrison College are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet future developments and changes.

Darryl Cross and Garry Simcock from Darryl Cross & Associates and Prince Alfred College were also finalists with their Vocational Interest Questionnaire. This tool for assessment of work interest is unique in the workplace. The Vocational Interest Questionnaire (VIQ) is a career guidance test designed and validated in Australia (it directly relates to the eleven interest categories used in the "Job Guide") that provides a profile of an adolescent's or adult's work interests together with a list of suitable jobs leading towards a successful career path. It is used most commonly with Year 10 and 11 students who need to make subject choices for later secondary years as well as for tertiary students who lack motivation or consider that they are enrolled in the wrong courses. It is also used with adults who are considering a career change, are unemployed, or dissatisfied in their current job and are seeking re-entry or retraining.

The special award sponsored by NEC Australia was awarded to Sharyn Lidster of Claremont College in Tasmania. Sharyn has used a standard assessment task from the Year 9 Tasmanian Numeracy Assessment and Monitoring Program with a difficult group of learning disabled students. Many teachers express concern that such open-ended tasks are too difficult for their students. Sharyn has shown that there are no limits to how open-ended assessment tasks can be used for understanding and promoting the learning of students. Sharyn's students have produced high quality work that is a direct tribute to her willingness to take risks and set high expectations for her students.

1998 National Assessment Awards (Training)

The 1998 National Assessment Award (Training) was won by BHP Western Port. David Minto and his colleagues have developed and implemented a quality system approach to assessment with strong emphasis upon safety and consistency of performance. An important and innovative approach to the system is the development of assessment tasks and procedures that have been designed and validated to elicit evidence beyond performing a task, to that of contingency management skills and transferability of competencies to new situations. The assessment task bank and procedures developed by BHP have established a model for others to follow in implementing assessments against the fully defined competency.

Catie Pitman from the Recognition and Assessment Centre, Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE was a finalist for her outstanding research and development work in the field of recognition of prior learning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. She trialled and developed a resource kit for assessors that addressed important cultural issues to be considered by those responsible for conducting RPL assessments. The kit has been designed with respect for the appreciation and recognition for the unique and valuable work and life skills of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The project has demonstrated the importance of a systematic and thorough approach to the investigation of background issues in development of assessments in new and relatively unknown areas of competency assessment.

Patrick Gavaghan from Chubb Fire has been instrumental in developing an enterprise specific training package, which is the first of its kind to be endorsed by the National Training Framework Committee of the Australian National Training Authority. The training package contains a comprehensive assessors guide which is designed to not only meet the assessment principals of a competency based assessment system, but more importantly, it clearly documents ways in which the assessors can design and implement assessment tools and procedures that maximises both valid and reliable judgements. The system has quality assurance procedures, such as extensive record keeping procedures, appeals policy and internal and external verification and auditing mechanisms, which helps ensure the credibility and continuous improvement of the system.

1998 Sponsors

Curriculum Corporation co-sponsored the 1998 National Assessment Awards for both schools and industry.

North Shore Development & Coaching Centre co-sponsored the 1998 National Assessment Awards.

NEC also sponsored the special award in the 1998 National Assessment Awards.

Addison Wesley Longman sponsored the 1998 National Assessment Awards, and to support the efforts of those who have competed.

5: Seminars

Date	Presenter	Topic
March	Dr Pat Smith (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology)	The impact of outcomes based education on teacher's work
April	Andrew Stephanou (The University of Melbourne)	The CSHE physics project
May	Rosemary Callingham (Office for Educational Review, Hobart)	Assessing student performance via the internet
June	Philip Holmes-Smith (Consultant)	An examination of ways of measuring the levels of use of an innovation in Victorian schools.
July	Ben Wright (University of Chicago)	Issues and developments in the history of the Rasch model
August	Stephanie Fehey (Victorian University of Technology)	Cultural influences on Vietnamese field work.
September	Lorna Earl (University of Toronto)	Large scale assessment in Ontario.