The 2nd British Council Symposium on Supporting Reform in Education
New Directions English: Role of English assessment in Internationalisation

Organised by: British Council

Date: Monday 29th September 9:00-17:30  
Tuesday 30th September 9:00-17:00  
(Networking reception is to be held on 29th September from 17:30-19:30)

Venue: Meiji Kinenkan  http://www.meijikinenkan.gr.jp/access/

Background and Objectives:
The main aim of this symposium is to support education reform and internationalisation in Japan. Building on the success of its symposium on possible UK-Japan cooperation in education reform in October 2013, the British Council aims to focus its 2nd symposium on English education and assessment. This theme was widely discussed at our international symposium organised in Beijing last autumn, and we believe that it would be helpful to develop those insights in the context of Japan. However, while focusing on the situation in Japan and while working with Japan-based participants and speakers, we will also draw on expertise and experience from the UK and elsewhere in East Asia.

We aim to provide a forum for dialogue both on language assessment policy as well as on applied assessment practices and systems. We will consider the challenges and benefits of current practice together with the challenges and implications of implementing change in light of Japan’s Education Reform Plan.

Our mission:
A central British Council goal is to promote more widespread and better quality teaching, learning and assessment of English worldwide. We carry out this work for the public good. This symposium seeks to contribute to the transformation of approaches and practices in English language assessment in Japan.

Audience:
The symposium is designed for a wide range of stakeholders in the field of language assessment: education officials at national and local levels; academics and researchers in the field of English language testing; teaching practitioners; members of assessment related associations and examination board representatives; special interest groups in test design, customization and reform, as well as those with specific interest areas such as online language assessment.
Topics:
1. Washback: Assessment for Learning
This topic considers issues related to the positive and negative impact of assessment on teaching and learning and the implications of these on English language curricula and the learning process. The possible impacts of university entrance examination on the curriculum and creating consistency in the curriculum path between secondary and higher education will also be considered.

2. Validity and Validation: Quality and accuracy for fairness
Validity is often defined as how well an assessment can be shown to accurately reflect a candidate’s true level of ability. Validation includes the techniques and processes test creators use to gather evidence to demonstrate this. Several modern approaches for test quality and accuracy will be discussed in this topic.

3. Localisation and Customisation: Adapting tests in the Japanese/local context
General English proficiency tests developed for the global market have advantages but often do not meet the requirements of a specific test-taking group. The possible methods to adapt tests in local contexts will be considered in this topic.

4. Assessing Four Skills: Assessment for specific purpose
The Japanese government has highlighted the development of four skills in English to promote Japan’s internationalisation. This topic considers how four skills tests would contribute to this internationalization. Comprehensive testing encourages broader and more generalizable teaching and learning of language skills, but it would be a huge challenge to the current system. This topic also makes an argument for testing all four language skills, as opposed to more selective assessment.

Plenary Speakers:
- Professor Masashi Negishi (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies)
- Dr David Coniam (Hong Kong Institute of Education)
- Professor Han Baocheng (Beijing Foreign Studies University)
- Professor Tony Green (CRELLA-UK)
- Ms Jessica Wu (LTTC-Taiwan)
- Professor Oryang Kwon (Seoul National University)
- Professor Barry O’Sullivan (Senior Advisor, English Language Assessment, British Council)

Registration fee for the symposium
- Early-bird by 4th September 2014: 7,000JPY : Registration to be submitted by 4th September and payment to be made by 10th September 2014
- Registration submitted between 5th and 19th September 2014: 10,000JPY : Payment to be made by 25th September 2014

To register for the symposium, please go to www.britishcouncil.or.jp/new-direction