

# **ASSESSMENT LITERACY – 80 YEARS OF RELIABLE ENGLISH TESTING FOR A GLOBAL WORLD**

12 November 2019  
hotel Hilton, Sofia

## **AGENDA**

START	END	DURATION	ACTIVITY
09.00	10.00	60 min	<b>Registration</b>
10.00	10.30	30 min	<b>Opening</b> <b>Tanya Mihaylova</b> , Deputy Minister of Education and Science <b>Emma Hopkins</b> , British Ambassador to Bulgaria <b>Lyubov Kostova</b> , Country Director British Council in Bulgaria
10.30	11.30	60 min (45 min plenary +15 min Q&A)	<b>Plenary: Developing a Fair and Valid Assessment System</b>  <b>Professor Barry O’Sullivan OBE FAcSS FAALA</b> Head of Assessment Research & Development, British Council
11.30	12.00	30 min	<b>Coffee break</b>
12.00	13.00	60 min (45 min plenary +15 min Q&A)	<b>Plenary: Quality and Validation in Language Assessment: the Cambridge Assessment English Approach</b>  <b>Alistair Starling, Simona Petrescu</b> Cambridge Assessment English
13.00	14.00	60 min	<b>Lunch</b>
14.00	15.00	60 min	<b>Breakout sessions</b>
30 min presentation + 30 min discussion			<b>Session 1</b> <b>CEFR – Impact on Policy, Teaching, Curriculum Design and Assessment</b>  Speaker: <b>Dr Victoria Clark</b> , Manager Assessment Solutions Group, British Council
			<b>Session 2</b> <b>The Importance of Assessment Literacy for Language Teachers</b>  Speaker: <b>Carolyn Westbrook</b> , Test Development Researcher, British Council
15.00	15.30	30 min	<b>Coffee break</b>

START	END	DURATION	ACTIVITY
15.30	16.30	60 min	<b>Breakout sessions</b>
30 min presentation + 30 min discussion			<p><b>Session 3: The Changing Landscape of the English Language Accreditation in Spain</b></p> <p>Speaker: <b>Fiona Mitchell</b>, Global Commercial Development Manager, British Council</p> <p><b>Session 4: Addressing Employers' Needs in Leadership Assessment and Language Proficiency</b></p> <p>Speaker: <b>Mariela Boycheva</b>, Senior Consultant Executive Search and Leadership Assessment, AIMS Human Capital</p>
16.30	17.30	60 min	<p><b>Panel discussion: English Proficiency Assessment on a National Level – Sharing Best Practice</b></p> <p><b>Panel members:</b> Professor Barry O’Sullivan OBE FAcSS FAALA, British Council  Dr Victoria Clark, British Council  Alistair Starling/Simona Petrescu, Cambridge Assessment English  Lyubka Stoimenova, Senior expert, Ministry of Education and Science</p> <p><b>Panel chair:</b> Lyubov Kostova</p>
18.00	19.30		<b>Networking event – all participants</b>

# SPEAKERS

**PROFESSOR BARRY O'SULLIVAN OBE FACSS  
FAALA**



**HEAD OF ASSESSMENT RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT,  
BRITISH COUNCIL  
FOUNDING PRESIDENT OF THE UK ASSOCIATION OF  
LANGUAGE TESTING AND ASSESSMENT (UKALTA)**

Professor Barry O'Sullivan is the Head of Assessment Research & Development at the British Council where he was responsible for the design and development of the Aptis test service. He has undertaken research across many areas on language testing and assessment and its history and has worked on the development and refinement of the socio-cognitive model of test development and validation since 2000. He is particularly interested in the communication of test validation and in test localisation. He has presented his work at many conferences around the world, while almost 100 of his publications have appeared in a range of international journals, books and technical reports. He has worked on many test development and validation projects over the past 25 years and advises ministries and institutions on assessment policy and practice.

He is the founding president of the UK Association of Language Testing and Assessment (UKALTA) and holds honorary and visiting chairs at a number of universities globally. In 2016 he was awarded fellowship of the Academy of Social Science in the UK, and was elected to Fellowship of the Asian Association for Language Assessment in 2017

**Abstract from plenary: Developing a Fair and Valid Assessment System**

In order to build a successful assessment system, we need to understand how the symbiotic relationship between the key elements of the education system – the curriculum, the delivery system, and the assessment system – can be harnessed to create an environment in which true learning can not only take place, but be shown to take place.

In order to create a fair and valid assessment system, we need to fully understand the educational, social and political context in which the system operates, that should be obvious. In addition, however, we need to ensure that we fully understand the importance of a clearly defined operational model of test development and validation, and the parallel requirement of a cadre of professional testing experts to ensure that the tests that are delivered are truly fair and valid.

In this talk, I will begin by briefly tracing the historical development of assessment expertise within the British Council which is important as it underpins our current comprehensive learning system approach to language learning and assessment. The approach will then be described in some detail. Following on from that, an overview of the socio-cognitive model of test development and validation will be presented, giving examples of its use around the world. In order to demonstrate its practicality, I will show how it was used to create the specifications for the British Council's Aptis testing system.

Finally, there will be focus on the idea of building a team of language testing professionals to ensure the continuing success of any assessment system.

## CAROLYN WESTBROOK



### TEST DEVELOPMENT RESEARCHER, ASSESSMENT RESEARCH GROUP, BRITISH COUNCIL

Carolyn Westbrook is a Test Development Researcher at the British Council in the UK. Formerly an Associate Professor in EFL, she has over 25 years' experience teaching and assessing General English, Business English, EAP and ESP. A Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy in the UK, she has been a teacher, tester, teacher trainer and materials writer. Carolyn has been interested in Language Assessment since 2007, taking part in a number of testing and assessment projects, including a major project teaching Russian university lecturers about language assessment, and designing and developing a Maritime English test for cadets graduating from maritime academies.

#### Abstract from plenary: **'But I'm a teacher, not an assessment specialist!' – The Importance of Assessment Literacy for Language Teachers**

Research shows that teachers spend around 30% of their time marking students' papers (Ward, 2016). However, the total amount of time that teachers spend on assessment is likely to be somewhat higher when we take into account the time spent on developing and administering tests or preparing students for external tests. Add to that the time spent on formative assessment and other types of informal assessment such as using questioning techniques in the classroom and it becomes clear that the percentage of time spent on assessment is a considerable proportion of a teacher's total working time. For this reason, Popham argued a decade ago that language assessment literacy should be seen as a 'sine qua non ... for today's competent educator' (Popham, 2009: 4) yet even today, relatively few teacher training courses include courses on assessment literacy. Consequently, many teachers 'reside in blissful ignorance' (Popham, 2004: 82-83) when it comes to understanding the basics of one of the most fundamental parts of their job.

This presentation will consider the importance of assessment literacy, what aspects teachers should be aware of before discussing a few top tips to assist teachers who need to design classroom assessments. Finally, a number of freely available resources that teachers can access to improve their assessment literacy skills will be presented.

## DR VICTORIA CLARK



### MANAGER ASSESSMENT SOLUTIONS GROUP, GLOBAL ASSESSMENTS, BRITISH COUNCIL

Dr Victoria Clark is currently Manager of Global Assessment Solutions for the British Council. She holds two master's degrees in Applied Languages and in TEFL and has received her PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Reading, in which she focused on the assessment of productive skills. She has published many books on the General English Proficiency Test and has presented all over the world. She worked as an EFL teacher and teacher trainer before specialising in language assessment.

## Abstract from plenary: **CEFR – Impact on Policy, Teaching, Curriculum Design and Assessment**

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has had a major impact on language learning, teaching, and assessment. Since its publication in 2001, the document has been translated into more than 40 languages and its influence now extends well beyond Europe. In 2018, a Companion Volume was published to complement the CEFR and update the illustrative descriptors. Though the CEFR has been used to inform language policy, develop curricula and syllabi and develop tests, its impact is less visible at the classroom level and in teacher education. In this workshop, the reasons for the CEFR's influence will be explored with examples of the framework's impact from around the world. Then the tensions and debates around the CEFR will be explored, with a focus on the phenomenon of 'CEFR borrowing' and the accessibility of its content to various stakeholders. Finally, a series of questions will be posed to promote discussion from the audience.

**FIONA MITCHELL**

**GLOBAL COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGER,  
GLOBAL ASSESSMENTS, BRITISH COUNCIL**



Fiona Mitchell is currently in the role of Global Commercial Development Manager with the British Council, within the Global Assessments unit. She is originally from a teaching background, and as well as her first degree in modern languages, she has an MSc in TESOL. Fiona has extensive experience of the ELT and broader education sectors across many countries and is especially interested in the world of assessment and examinations. She is currently studying for an MSc in Coaching and Behavioural Change.

## Abstract from plenary: **The Changing Landscape of English Language Accreditation in Spain**

This presentation focuses on the dynamic relationship between language policy and language assessment in Spain over the last 10 years, highlighting how approaches to assessment are changing in response to a context which has evolved fast.

Influences such as the mainstreaming of bilingual education and initiatives relating to the European Higher Education Area have contributed to the growing demand for the formal accreditation of English for secondary school students, teachers of English and university students across Spain.

The speaker will explore through data and anecdote the ways in which both the language assessment landscape and levels of English language proficiency in Spain have developed over the years and how the British Council in particular has responded to these changes.

The presentation will be of interest to colleagues directly or indirectly involved in bilingual/CLIL/EMI programmes, especially those concerned with the influence of policy on language assessment, and the interdependencies between both in a given context.

## **LYUBOV KOSTOVA**



### **COUNTRY DIRECTOR OF BRITISH COUNCIL IN BULGARIA**

Lyubov Kostova is the Country Director of the British Council in Bulgaria. She first joined in 2000 as the Public Communications & Marketing

Manager, then from 2008 was Head Projects and Partnerships. Before the British Council she worked for 9 years at the National Academy of Theatre & Film Arts where, among other duties, she was also National Accreditor for Higher Education. She has been involved in initiating and managing bilateral and multilateral cultural, art, educational and science projects, as well as international partnerships since 1992. She delivers training for PR professionals at the London School of PR in Sofia, sits on juries and presents regularly at various events, including as a TEDx speaker.

## **ALISTAIR STARLING**



### **STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT HEAD, EUROPE & NORTH AFRICA, CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT ENGLISH**

Alistair leads Cambridge Assessment English's business-to-government efforts on the ground across Europe and North Africa, in close liaison with our International Development team in Cambridge. Alistair was previously Regional Director Northern Europe in the Berlin office. He works closely with Directors in other regions and colleagues in Cambridge in formulating and implementing global strategies.

Alistair is passionate about language learning, taught English in Italy for 2 years, and learnt German, Italian and French by working overseas most of his adult life. Before joining in November 2013, he was Higher Executive Officer in the British Diplomatic Service (Foreign & Commonwealth Office), and General Manager in the UK's National Trust.

Previously, Alistair headed up the Inward Investment Team for UK Trade & Investment in Italy for 4 years, following 10 years in the private sector in the UK and Italy, culminating in heading up Marketing for a multinational software company based in Milan.

## **SIMONA PETRESCU**



### **ASSESSMENT SERVICES MANAGER EUROPE, CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT ENGLISH**

Simona Petrescu is an assessment expert with Cambridge Assessment English, providing guidance on both assessment issues and pedagogical aspects related to Cambridge



English Qualifications and English Language Teaching in general. She is also an experienced teacher trainer and teaching materials writer, with a long track record of examining and examiner training.

Abstract from plenary: **Quality and Validation in Language Assessment: the Cambridge Assessment English Approach**

What is quality, and what does quality entail in an assessment context? The talk will outline the key elements of a Quality Management System in language assessment, as laid down by the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE), and exemplified by the Cambridge Assessment English set of principles of good practice. Key concepts in Quality Management such as standards, best practice, process management, customer satisfaction will be linked with validity, validation, fairness, fitness for purpose, within a learning and assessment paradigm.

**MARIELA BOYCHEVA**

**SENIOR CONSULTANT EXECUTIVE SEARCH AND LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT, AIMS HUMAN CAPITAL**

Ms. Mariela Boycheva is a Senior Consultant at AIMS Human Capital Bulgaria, with expertise in executive search and leadership assessment, managing Key Accounts for Life Sciences, Finance and Accounting, Supply Chain and Logistics, Sales and Marketing.



Ms. Boycheva is a member of AIMS International Life Sciences Global Team and a certified SHL assessor for ability tests and personality questionnaires. She holds a master's degree in English and American Studies from St Kliment Ohridski Sofia University and has 20+ years' experience in EFL teaching and testing, educational and team management.

Abstract from plenary: **Addressing Employers' Needs in Leadership Assessment and Language Proficiency**

Foreign language proficiency is a key requirement for top and middle management roles at multinational companies represented in Bulgaria. Committed professionals with leadership capacity are the corporate world's most valuable assets and need to be highly competitive and marketable in a global context. Industry specific language can only be mastered building on a solid foundation of fluency and accuracy to meet the ever-rising standards and tough challenges of a volatile business environment.

Drawing on our 25 years of extensive expertise in executive search and leadership assessment, we will demonstrate how corporate competency models and professional profiles correlate with the CEFR communicative language activities and strategies and how AIMS selection and assessment process represents a comprehensive tool for FL proficiency evaluation within a business framework.