



Alastair Pollitt Masterclass

The Importance of being Valid

The essential argument of this seminar is that current notions of validity in assessment run the risk of ignoring the vital role of question and mark scheme writers in ensuring that assessments are valid. I will suggest an alternative model, which does not conflict with the main features of the current model, but which has much more to offer test constructors, and should ensure more valid assessment.

- Purposes and Validity
- The nature of evidence for assessment
- Importance statements
- 'Constructive Alignment'
- Validity for test constructors
- Maintaining validity through the development process

Biography

Alastair Pollitt is an independent consultant specialising in psychological aspects of educational assessment. For fifteen years he was responsible for educational test development and research in the Godfrey Thomson Unit in Edinburgh University, publishing tests of reasoning, English and mathematics, and directing major research projects in item banking and national monitoring. During this period he also began research into the factors that control the difficulty of exam questions.

In 1990 he moved to Cambridge University, to the Research Centre for English and Applied Linguistics, before becoming, in 1994, the Director of the Research and Evaluation Division of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. In 1995 he was able to resume research into causes of difficulty with a much improved understanding of psycholinguistics, which is central to understanding how students tackle exam questions, and has published several papers and carried out training in Singapore, Sweden, Hong Kong, Slovakia, Ireland and the UK.

His current interests also include the use of judgement in place of marking for assessment, and the various conceptualisations of reliability and validity. He is a visiting Fellow in Cambridge and Bristol universities, a Fellow of the Association of Educational Assessment – Europe and co-chair of the its Professional Affairs Board,

deputy chair of AQA's Research Committee, and a member of Ofqual's Technical Advisory Group on reliability.