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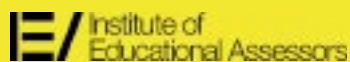
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Is assessment for learning thriving in our schools, or can we do more to support the learning of others?

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Learner drivers

Welcome, everyone, to a New Year. I hope that it will be a happy and productive year for all of us. While none of us can predict the future, it is certain that 2007 will bring new challenges to the educational world, including our own sphere of assessment.

We already know of new developments in the qualifications field. In December, the government announced a new policy on the International Baccalaureate that would see every local authority offering the IB in at least one of its centres by 2010.

What impact this will have on the new specialised diplomas and the new A* grading for A-levels is up for debate. But widening choice among students can only be a good thing – or can it? In this issue, two supporters of A-levels and the IB go head to head on their views of the strengths of both types of qualification.

Good work

Then there is assessment in the classroom and the workplace. Assessment for Learning has been with us in practice for many years now. Up and down the country, there is a great deal of good work carried out by local authorities on developing better assessment models that support every learner's pathway through education. In this issue, Paul Black, one of the leading exponents of this form of assessment, reviews progress in this important and fundamental approach to teaching and learning. Is assessment for learning thriving in our schools, or is there more we can do to support the learning of others?

Those who take responsibility for the special educational needs of students, namely special educational needs co-ordinators (Sencos), are often overlooked in assessment. However, they are constantly assessing their students in order to evaluate their needs and chart their progress. In this issue, we take a look at the day in the life of a Senco. What type of assessments do they make and how can they best assess the needs of others?

If there is only one constant in the assessment community and that is change, then 2007 seems to have begun as it means to continue. I am sure that you and your colleagues will meet the challenges of this year in a manner that supports your students, your centres and your own professional development. Your Institute of Educational Assessors will do all it can to support you in achieving these goals.

Happy New Year!