

# Completed outputs 2000/2001

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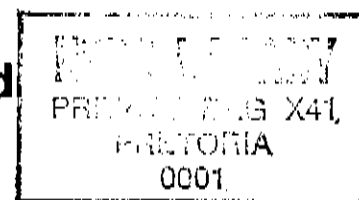
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# Report Back on Trip Abroad



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**From:** Dr. Kivilu JM  
**Conference:** 27<sup>th</sup> Annual International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA)  
**Venue:** Othon Palace, Rio De Janeiro- Brazil  
**Date** 6<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2001

## Introduction

The conference is held every year and draws participants from all the countries across the world. Although participants are encouraged to register as either institutional or as individuals, the conference is open to all whose abstracts are accepted by the IAEA committee. Over 150 participants represented over fifty countries. Registration started at the venue on the 6<sup>th</sup> May and the Conference was opened on the night of 6<sup>th</sup> May 2001 with a Welcome Cocktail at the Othon Palace Hotel in Rio De Janeiro.

Presentation of papers began on the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2001 morning with my paper entitled "A framework for assessing communicative language ability in two indigenous South African languages" scheduled for the afternoon of 7<sup>th</sup> May 2001. I was the only participant from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). Other participants from South Africa included three lecturers from RAU, two officials from the South African Certification Council and one from the Gauteng Department of Education.

My major interest in the conference was on papers that were focussing on issues related to application of advanced statistical methods to social science data, application of computers to assessment, that is, computerized adaptive testing, assessment resource banks, development and implementation of large scale assessment programmes.

The daily proceedings of the conference were summarised according to some identified themes (see attached copies). Available in my office are copies of about 60 papers that were presented and considered them relevant to assessment in education. The papers could be grouped into the following categories:

- Teacher empowerment
- International Assessment tests and research
- Assessment as a way of improving quality of teaching
- New technologies and paradigms
- Language, translation and multiculturalism
- University entrance exams
- New technologies in assessment
- External evaluation of schools

### **Benefits to the HSRC**

The following are some of the gains from the conference.

#### **Assessment Modelling Initiative- DDSP-RTI**

A paper presented by Croft Cedric on Assessment Resource Banks in New Zealand was very enlightening. He explained the process and administration of ARBs that his organization-The New Zealand Council for Educational Research, has been involved in. His presentation was very relevant to the Assessment Modelling Initiative that the HSRC has been granted by the RTI. I held some discussions with him regarding resource materials and he promised to send me some. He also directed me to their website that has details about the ARBs. I am confident that this information will be a useful resource for the Assessment Modelling Initiative project. E-mail communication with Croft Cedric indicated that he is willing to offer his expertise if requested. Discussions are underway to have him as one of our external references for the Assessment Modelling Initiative Project.

#### **Computerized testing**

A number of papers were presented on work in progress on projects dealing with computer applications to testing. Issues raised are pertinent to the work we are currently doing in the Assessment Studies Unit with regard to psychological testing and computer adaptive testing in education.

#### **Structural Modelling**

Research results using some structural modelling statistical techniques such as LISREL, path analysis and Hierarchical linear modelling were reported in a number of papers. Applications of these techniques in social science data were discussed further with the respective presenters. Important insights were gained that will assist

in the data analysis of some of our current projects such as the Quality Learning Project (QLP)

### **Established contacts**

During the conference I was able to interact with assessment specialists from a number of organizations such the Educational Testing Service of USA, New Zealand Council of Educational Research, CITO of the Netherlands, National Foundation for Educational Research of the UK etc. I also had a chance to talk to assessment specialists involved in large-scale assessment programmes from both developed and developing countries. Experiences gained from these interactions are of relevance to the research work we do in the HSRC and to transformation of education in South Africa.

### **Conclusion**

HSRC as a research organization in the social sciences should be involved in workshops, seminars and conferences that would keep its researchers up to date with developments in their areas of expertise. Skills and knowledge acquired from such conferences are of great importance to the professional growth of the researchers and are critical in the implementation of research projects.