

# Highlights of a term as chair of the ERS School: a pleasure to serve



P.L. Haslam

Chair of the ERS School,  
2005-2008

My 3-year term of office as Chair of the European Respiratory Society (ERS) School began in September 2005, when the School had just completed a 4-year period of major reorganisation and growth. Rapid growth has continued, thanks to all the members of the School, who have truly met the challenge they were set to establish education as a major pillar of the ERS.

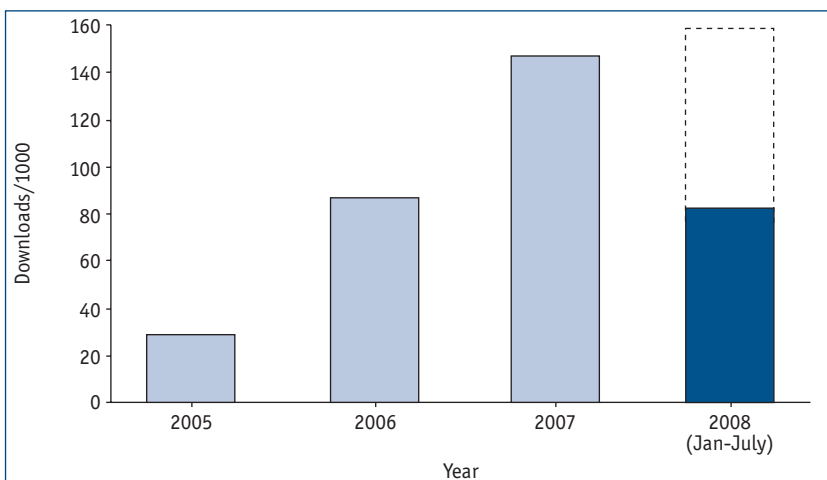
*Breathe* was only 1 year old in September 2005, and was still on trial under the editorship of the School Chair. A special highlight of my first year was to receive an overwhelming vote of support from the ERS members who led the society to approve *Breathe* as an official ERS journal in 2006. Anita Simonds was then elected as Chief Editor and as Director for *Breathe* on the School Committee in September 2006. *Breathe* is now so familiar that it is difficult to believe the journal is only 4 years old this month. Happy birthday *Breathe*! Congratulations to Anita and the editorial management team, editorial board, contributors and reviewers for the tremendous job they are doing as is evident from the striking growth downloads of articles on the website (figure 1).

Another special highlight in 2005 was the start of the "HERMES" initiative, established by the School to improve Harmonisation of Education and training in Respiratory Medicine for European Specialists. This initiative has

provided some of the most important new educational achievements for the Society during my term of office. The first HERMES Task Force started work in September 2005 to develop a European Core Syllabus and Curriculum for Training in Adult Respiratory Medicine. In the first year, a European Consensus Core Syllabus was produced listing knowledge-based core competencies that all practicing specialists should possess. This first document was published in *Breathe* in September 2006 [1]. The second document has now also been completed and is published in this issue of *Breathe* (in part in print and in full online) [2]. It provides European Curriculum Recommendations advising how all the attributes necessary for specialist clinical practice can best be taught, learned and assessed. The European Syllabus has already proved of great worth as a key point of reference at national and European level. Its value for the ERS School and for the society is also enormous. It is the blueprint that has enabled us to restructure the ERS online Learning Resources into clearly defined educational tracks (figure 2). It is also the blueprint for the new European Examination in Adult Respiratory Medicine, introduced this year, another special highlight (figure 3). For their major contribution, we thank the Task Force, the expert national respondents, ERS members, trainees, the dedicated support team, FERS and other partner organisations that also participated. In particular, I thank Professor Robert Loddenkemper, the Chair of the HERMES Task Force, with whom it was my privilege to serve as co-chair, Tania Séverin the educational manager of the ERS, and all the members of the Task Force working group who made the work so enjoyable and productive, and demonstrated teamwork at its best.

During 2007 and 2008, other new projects have also begun as part of the HERMES initiative. These aim to harmonise education and training in other branches of respiratory medicine and the allied professions more effectively. A Paediatric HERMES Task Force started work in

**Figure 1**  
Downloads of *Breathe* articles.

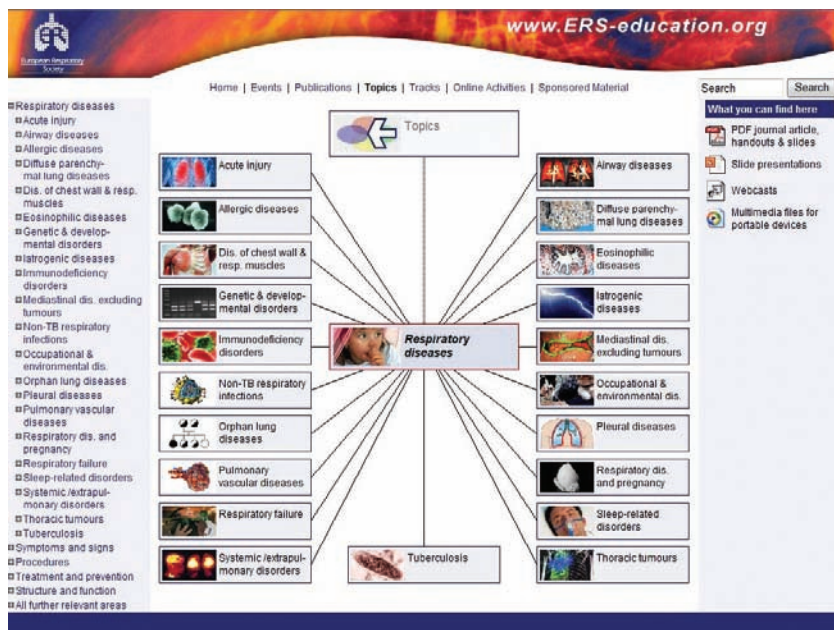


September 2007 and has already produced a draft European Syllabus for training in Paediatric Respiratory Medicine. A full curriculum will follow. This year, the ERS Allied Professionals Assembly has also launched two projects under the HERMES initiative. One Task Force has already commenced work to produce a European Spirometry "Driving Licence". The other is being developed to produce a European Syllabus for Training in Respiratory Physiotherapy.

Syllabi for education and training in different branches of respiratory medicine and the allied professions will be of considerable benefit to the School in the future. They will assist in introducing European examinations in all these fields. They are also helping to detect gaps in the School's educational resources so that courses and online material can be provided to fill such gaps. Fields where evidence-based guidelines are still needed can also be identified to assist in planning the production of future guidelines. These developing areas will undoubtedly become future highlights.

Other educational activities have also begun during the past 3 years. One important development is the participation of the School in the EU GRACE Network of Excellence from 2006 to 2011. GRACE is employing Genomics to study the problem of Resistance to Antibiotics with the aim of Combating community acquired infection in Europe. The ERS is a partner in the education work package. It is organising postgraduate courses relating to GRACE at each annual Congress, as well as external Workshops. The success of these courses has confirmed that the ERS can play a valuable role in EU projects by disseminating knowledge. Other noteworthy developments include the introduction of new interactive educational workshops for researchers at each annual Congress, the production of an updated ERS School Strategy Document for 2007-2012, the introduction of education vouchers that can be exchanged for all School activities (figure 4), and the establishment of the Annual Education Awards and the Jean-Claude Yernault Lecture as a memorial in honour of the founder of the ERS School.

In addition to these new developments, the School continues its long-established work, organising postgraduate courses and seminars at each annual Congress and other educational courses throughout each year. More than 2,000 participants attend these courses every year and the high evaluation scores are another highlight. I thank the ERS School Director of Postgraduate



Courses, Paolo Palange and the present and past Directors of External Activities, Gilbert Massard and James Paton, for the considerable success they have achieved and for the invaluable support they have given me during my term of office.

Finally, one last highlight is the tremendous work that has produced the most extensive online learning resources available in the field. The ERS has been told that this is a "jewel in the crown", and those who have made this possible certainly deserve this accolade. Much credit is due to the team at ERS headquarters, especially Jean-Luc Eiselé, who had the vision to launch the website and drive forward its development, and

**Figure 2**  
The new ERS e-learning resources website is organised into clearly defined educational tracks.

The advertisement features a blue background with a yellow pencil pointing upwards. The text reads: "New this year - HERMES European examination in adult respiratory medicine". Below this, it says "HERMES Harmonised Education in Respiratory Medicine for European Specialists". At the bottom, it states "Saturday, October 4, 2008 ERS Annual Congress, Berlin".

**Figure 3**  
The European Examination in Adult Respiratory Medicine, introduced this year.

Study with the experts

# Education Voucher

European Respiratory Society

ERS School Courses – ERS PG Courses – ERS Online Courses  
ERS European examination – Breathe subscriptions  
Any other product offered by the School

**Figure 4**  
The new education vouchers.

Pascal Kurosinski who now manages the Learning Resources site. Special thanks must also go to the present ERS School Director of Learning Resources, Johannes Wildhaber and to his predecessors. A major achievement of Mina Gaga, who completed her term of office in September 2007, was to develop the Online Live School Courses, which led the School to

introduce the "ERS Live" platform. This platform has now become of much wider benefit to the society, enabling committees to communicate online, and considerably reducing costs and the carbon footprint. With the challenge of climate change, the School is proud to be green in practice as well as in its publication and brand image!

Of all the highlights over my term of office, my greatest personal pleasure has been to work with so many professional, highly motivated colleagues. I especially thank all those who have participated in the School committee and in the associated activities, our many partner organisations, Tania Séverin and her staff, Maaïke Mayor and Lucy Templeman, for their fantastic work in the education department of the ERS, and most importantly the ERS Executive and the members of the ERS for their support in these educational developments. It has been a great privilege and pleasure to serve as Chair of the School and I wish my successor Paolo Palange, the School and the society continuing major success!

**References**

1. Loddenkemper R, Séverin T, Eiselé J-L, et al. HERMES: a European core syllabus in respiratory medicine. *Breathe* 2006; 3: 59–70.
2. Loddenkemper R, Haslam PL, Séverin T, et al. European Curriculum Recommendations for Training in Adult Respiratory Medicine: 2nd report of the ERS HERMES Task Force. *Breathe* 2008; 5: 80–93.

## Ask the Expert - Respiratory Oncology



In the next issue of *Breathe*, to be published in December, Professor Johan Vansteenkiste will be answering readers questions on the subject of respiratory oncology. Professor Vansteenkiste works in the Respiratory Oncology and Clinical Trial Unit of the Pulmonary Department at the University Hospital Gasthuisberg in Leuven, Belgium. Professor Vansteenkiste cannot enter into direct correspondence with readers or answer questions about specific cases. Those questions with wider relevance to common problems are most likely to be selected.

Professor Vansteenkiste is also secretary of the ERS Clinical Assembly, and is on the organising committee of the upcoming ERS School course "State of the art for nonsmall cell lung cancer", to be held in Leuven on November 27–29. For further information please go to [www.ersnet.org/580lung-cancer.htm](http://www.ersnet.org/580lung-cancer.htm) Please send your questions to [breathe@ersj.org.uk](mailto:breathe@ersj.org.uk) by Friday, October 31.

Answers from Professor Monika Gappa, on the subject of assessing lung function in children, can be found on page 77 of the current issue. Many thanks to all those who submitted questions, and apologies to those whose questions were not answered directly: for reasons of space, those questions thought to be of most use to a wide audience were selected.