



IATEFL BESIG/TEASIG Pre-Conference Event

Friday, April 10, 2015, 10:00 – 17:00

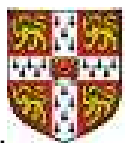
at the IATEFL Annual Conference, Manchester UK

Testing more than just English – What do we need to know and how can we test in the best way for our purposes?

Testing is becoming an increasingly important area of language teaching, including the teaching of specialised English. It is often assumed that teachers of Business English, for example, automatically know how to set, score and run tests, but this is in fact not always the case. The joint PCE offered by BESIG and TEASIG will focus on testing in workplace and professional contexts, covering general principles of test setting and constructing tests for different purposes, and issues of testing knowledge, skills and intercultural competence.

The PCE presenters will address the following questions: What do teachers need to know about testing in order to set valid and reliable tests? Are teachers always the best test-setters and testers? What is the main purpose of tests? How can tests be useful and valid? How can we test more than just language and should we do this? What the differences may exist between oral and written tests? The PCE will end with a panel discussion where delegates will have the opportunity to ask questions, make comments and deal with any open questions. The speakers are international experts who will share their expertise and experience with BESIG and TEASIG members.

Cambridge English are generously sponsoring the event.



CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH

Language Assessment

Part of the University of Cambridge

10:00 Opening – Judith Mader, TEASIG Coordinator, Cornelia Kreis-Meyer and Judith Waldner, BESIG Joint Coordinators

10:15 – 11:00



Barry O'Sullivan, British Council

Explaining Validity!

The British Council is a major international organization with a presence in over 100 countries and over 70 language teaching centres across the world employing approximately 2,000 teachers in total. As can be expected, these teachers deal with assessment related matters on a near daily basis, most often with little or no formal, up-to-date training in the area. In order to deal with this situation, the British Council decided in 2012 to devise a practical solution. The resulting project, called the Language Assessment Literacy Project was based on a major needs analysis carried out across the organization and aimed to present teachers and other staff with a range of materials from the basic level to quite complex and advanced levels. The most basic level called for a series of animated films focusing on assessment related concepts, and it is on this subject that I will focus.

This talk presents the story of a short animated film. The film forms part of a the series referred to above and attempts to describe the concept of validity. I will tell the story of how the script came about, how it was drafted and revised based on multiple feedback and then how it was animated. The whole process tells us a lot about how language testers need to carefully consider audience when making statements about our tests and was, for me, a really useful learning experience. How successful was the result? Decide for yourself when you view the animation towards the end of the talk.

Barry O'Sullivan is the Senior Advisor for English Language Assessment at the British Council and responsible for assessment research and development. He also acts as an advisor to governments and international institutions on assessment. He is currently most closely associated with the British Council's English language testing service, Aptis, though is also working on a series of other assessment-related projects. Barry previously worked at the University of Roehampton, where he was the Director of the Centre for Language Assessment Research, and at the University of Reading, where he held a similar position. He has taught in Ireland, Peru and Japan and worked on assessment projects in numerous countries worldwide. Barry has also published several books on assessment and numerous papers and has presented at conferences and seminars around the world.

11:00 – 11:30

Coffee break

11:30 – 12:30



Ivana Vidaković, Cambridge English Language

Assessment

Language ability and content knowledge in an ESP classroom: Two sides of the coin?

In an academic or work environment, the ability to communicate on study- or work-related matters is vital. This requires specific-purpose language ability which combines content knowledge and language ability. Teasing out language ability from content knowledge is a delicate and sometimes impossible task in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) assessment and teaching. The key questions which arise are:

- What effect does content knowledge have on linguistic performance?
- What roles do content knowledge and language ability play in an ESP test?
- How much does an ESP teacher need to know about the subject content?

Many studies reveal that content knowledge has a facilitating effect on reading, listening, speaking and writing performance in a foreign language (L2). However, this effect may not always be consistent - test takers with a certain academic background may not always do better on a text/task from their field than test takers from a different discipline. The effect of content knowledge on linguistic performance varies with language proficiency which makes it important to see how content knowledge and language ability interact. How specific an ESP test is will determine the roles of content knowledge and language ability, and how much content knowledge is necessary to pass. All this will be discussed through a critical examination of Cambridge English ESP tests. The presentation will also address some of the key challenges in ESP teaching – overcoming the teacher's lack of content knowledge and bridging the gap between English language ability and specific-purpose language ability – when the ESP teacher is 'just' an ELT professional.

Dr. Ivana Vidaković is a member of the Research & Validation group in Cambridge English Language Assessment. She holds a Master's and Doctorate degrees in applied linguistics and second language acquisition from the University of Cambridge (UK). Her current research interests include assessment of English for Specific Purposes and reading comprehension, learner corpus analysis and the impact of English language examinations on various stakeholders.

12:30 – 13:30

Lunch

13:30 – 14:30



**Rudi Camerer, elc: European Language
Competence, Frankfurt, Germany**

Testing intercultural competence in English: Basic questions and suggested answers

The testing of intercultural competence has long been regarded as the field of psychometric tests, which claim to analyse an individual's personality by specifying and quantifying personality traits with the help of self-answer questionnaires. The underlying assumption is that what is analysed and described as a candidate's personality can be treated as an indicator of that same person's practical performance in intercultural encounters, something which raises basic questions concerning their construct and predictive validity. Against this background, the workshop firstly examines the shortcomings of personality-based tests of intercultural competence. Secondly, based on relevant parts of the CEFR, a practicable construct of intercultural communicative competence is suggested. Special attention is paid to the concept of politeness in intercultural encounters and the role of English as a lingua franca (ELF). Thirdly, a basic outline of a criterion-based test of intercultural competence in English is provided.

*Rudi Camerer has worked in the field of language testing and now directs a language and intercultural consultancy, elc-European Language Competence, Frankfurt/M. & Saarbrücken, Germany. He is the author of a number of publications on the teaching and testing of intercultural competence and, with Judith Mader, co-authored *Intercultural Competence in Business English* (Cornelsen 2012).*

14:30 – 15:30



JoAnn Salvisberg; Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts School of Business, Switzerland

Mission Possible: Polishing Presentations to Sparkle and Shine

The ability to present information memorably is an essential skill in all professional contexts. Yet students require more than mere razzle dazzle techniques to successfully deliver their business presentations. In this plenary we will address the key elements of delivering polished, memorable messages and how these can be assessed appropriately. The focus will be on incorporating not only the appropriate techniques and language gambits, but three typically challenging aspects for EFL learners -- difficult sounds, word stress and silent letters. Assessing recordings of current business college students' giving presentations will afford participants the opportunity to hone their own skills in evaluating a range of presentation techniques, special language gambits, and oral proficiency.

JoAnn Salvisberg is a lecturer at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, School of Business. She has been involved in TESOL since 1990, primarily teaching adult learners, and began doing teacher training in 2001. In addition to the CTEFLA, she completed the M.Ed. in ELT in 2001, and Ph.D. in TEFL and Social Psychology in Education in 2007 with a primary research focus on communicative skills assessment in the EFL classroom. President of the English Teachers Association, Switzerland (ETAS) since 2014, she has also formerly served ETAS in different roles over the past twenty years, including Teacher Development Chair, Research SIG Coordinator, and Regional Coordinator (Bern-Neuchâtel). Furthermore, she has also held positions in other English teacher associations including IATEFL BESIG Editor, and IATEFL Publications Committee. Within the field of ELT she is particularly curious about English for specific purposes (ESP), oral skills assessment (OSA), and utilizing technology to enhance the educational process.

15:30 – 16:00

Coffee break

16:00 – 17:00

Panel discussion and Close