

WORKSHOP 2

ASSESSING WRITING: Designing better rubrics, building better rating communities

by

Emma Bruce : City University of Hong Kong

Liz Hamp-Lyons : Editor of the journal Assessing Writing

Number of participants: min 10 and max 30

Overview

As performance assessments play a greater role in language testing, especially in the contexts of classroom-based assessment and learning-oriented assessment, the role of rubrics for assessing writing and providing feedback grows too. This workshop aims to:

- (1) provide participants with a clear understanding of what rubrics can and can't do, and the tools necessary for creating their own rubrics for their own contexts;
- (2) introduce participants to effective processes for training raters to assess writing based on rubrics designed for their own context;
- (3) demonstrate qualitative and simple quantitative quality assurance procedures evaluating the validity of the rubric and the reliability of the ratings.

Intended learning outcomes

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Understand the difference between a rubric and a rating scale;
- Identify different types of rubrics and their applications for different purposes in assessing writing;
- Critique a range of rubrics, given contextual information;
- Understand the essential factors involved in rubric choices;
- Design a contextually-appropriate rubric;
- Apply simple quality assurance techniques to evaluate the rubric;
- Understand the importance of data-driven rubric and scales;
- Implement effective rater training procedures in their own contexts;
- Apply simple quality assurance measures to ensure the effectiveness of on-going rater training.

Contents and methods

Discussion topics

- Rationale for performance assessments
- Components and terminology of a performance assessment
- Rating scales and rubrics for assessing writing
- Validity and reliability – quality assurance
- Fairness in design and in score uses

Activities

- Critiquing rubrics for purpose and context
- Applying procedures for selecting or developing scales / rubrics;
- Participating in the creation of a rubric for a shared context/ purpose;
- Working with others to create a rubric /scale, and critique it;
- Reading, discussing, ranking and scoring written performances
- Matching exemplars to descriptors
- Participating in and leading mock rater training sessions
- Analyzing rater statistics

Background knowledge/pre-workshop activities

Participants should have the required background and prior knowledge:

- Experience in teaching English as a foreign/second language, or language development coursework
- Strong interest in using performance assessments for judging and reporting written performance
- Some familiarity/experience with performance-based assessment of writing or speaking
- Participants are encouraged to bring at least one example of a rubric/rating scale they have used, and 4-10 sample written and scored performance responding to a writing task within their own context.

Pre-workshop reading

Bruce, E. & L. Hamp-Lyons. (2015). Opposing tensions of local and international standards for EAP writing programmes: Who are we assessing for? *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 18, 64-77.

Hamp-Lyons, L. (2003). Writing teachers as assessors of writing. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Exploring the dynamics of second language writing* (pp. 162-189). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hamp-Lyons, L. (2007). Worrying about rating. (Editorial). *Assessing Writing*, 12, 1-9.

Knoch, U. (2011). Rating scales for diagnostic assessment of writing: What should they look like and where should the criteria come from? *Assessing Writing* 16, 81-96.

Weigle, S. C. (2012). Assessment of writing. *The Encyclopaedia of Applied Linguistics*. Pub.

Wiley. Available from

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0056/full>

Workshop facilitators:

Emma Bruce runs the Assessment programme at the English Language Centre of City University of Hong Kong. In this role she oversees the development and implementation of new assessments, the quality assurance of on-going assessment practices, and the day-to-day operations involved in the delivery of fair assessments and exams in a large university language centre. Emma's main

research interest is in integrated writing assessment for EAP and she is currently pursuing her PhD studies.



Liz Hamp-Lyons is the Editor of the journal *Assessing Writing*, and edited the first-ever collection of research in second language writing assessment, titled *Assessing Second Language Writing in Academic Contexts*, which included five chapters based on her PhD. She has been researching writing assessment, working to develop and validate writing assessments, and training raters to assess writing since 1984.