**Assessing writing: How, when and why**

**David Bradshaw, Saturday 10:45 – 11:45 ROOM 16**

**(CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT)**

How do we assess our students’ writing? Can it be treated as a simple language exercise, or should we focus on the communicative aspect of the written text? In this talk we will explore different issues surrounding the assessment of our students’ writing and suggest approaches which will help them to develop their writing skills.

The session begins with an overview of some of the theories about the assessment of writing, and some of the approaches adopted, leading to a discussion of **what** we assess when faced with a piece of student writing – focus on grammar and / or vocabulary, other aspects to bear in mind, for example, the text type, intended reader and reasons for writing.

Then we move on to consider **when** we should assess a piece of writing. Here the focus is on writing as process as opposed to writing as product and how drafting and revision can be included in the writing process. **How** the text should be assessed at the different stages of the writing process will also be considered here, with different approaches being suggested for different stages.

**Who** assesses the text is also a key point to consider, and the use of peer revision will be examined briefly as will the role of the teacher and that of the examiner.

Finally, the underlying advantages for the student of assessing their work are examined, with an emphasis on the role of assessment in the improvement of the student’s work, and the importance of ‘noticing’ in the assessment process.

The handouts for the session will be available on the day, but they are also available accompanying this note. I hope to see you at the Convention for *Assessing writing: How, when and why* (with *what* and *who* thrown in at no extra cost)!

David Bradshaw has been working for Cambridge English Language Assessment for eighteen years as a Speaking Examiner and as Team Leader. He currently works as Assessment Services Manager for Spain and Portugal. He has given presentations in various conferences in Spain and around Europe and has published articles on classroom management issues and motivation.