Professional Development Workshop - Minding the Gaps: Helping Students Increase Their Understanding of Textual Cohesion

Brisbane: Monday 17 September 2012 3.30-6 pm ILSC Brisbane, Level 1, 232 Adelaide Street. Melbourne: Tuesday 18 September 20.12 3.30-6pm, Monash College Conference Room, Level 3, 222 Bourke Street

When using authentic academic texts, students’ may have difficulties in understanding unmarked or unstated relationships between two sentences, ideas, or paragraphs. Such relationships can take the form of simple inferences the author expects the reader to grasp or inferences based on the rhetorical or discourse level features of the text. The ability to recognize and grasp such relationships, contributes greatly to an understanding of the overall coherence and cohesion of texts.

In this workshop, techniques for creating tasks that help students build their skill in understanding textual cohesion will be demonstrated. Participants will gain skills at identifying inferences embedded in texts, and writing tasks designed to increase students’ skill in bridging textual inferences. The workshop will end with a discussion on how improving students’ reading skills in this area can assist in developing their writing skills.

Item Writing workshop – TOEFL iBT® speaking section
Sydney: Saturday 22 September 2012 9-3pm, NEAS office, 3/189 Miller St, North Sydney

The TOEFL® program is seeking qualified English-language professionals in Australia to be item writers for the program. Test developer Phal Vaughter will lead a one day seminar on creating Writing items for the TOEFL test. Participants will practice preparing test items using pre-selected source material, and there will be discussion of how this item type can be customized for classroom use. Compensation will be provided for any useable test item material produced by you during this session. Interested participants who complete the seminar will be considered for ongoing involvement in TOEFL item writing.

Educational Testing Service (ETS) Workshop Presenters

Phal Vaughter
Phal Vaughter is an Assessment Specialist at ETS in Princeton, New Jersey. She has more than 15 years experience teaching EAP courses in the USA, and helped develop a full-time program of English-language study for international students wishing to matriculate at an arts and design institute. She has taught English in Russia and China, holds an MA in Education with a concentration in TESOL, and was twice awarded fellowships for study of the Chinese language.

Cynthia Newman
Cynthia Newman has been an Assessment Specialist at ETS in Princeton, New Jersey, for the past 7 years. Prior to that, she taught for over 20 years in university intensive English courses in the United Arab Emirates and the United States. She holds an MA in TESOL/Applied Linguistics and the Cambridge DTEFLA (now DELTA). Her current areas of interest include constructed response assessments and inter-rater reliability in oral proficiency scoring.

More information

All workshops are free to attend but registration is required for catering purposes. For an application form for any of the three sessions, please email Katie Cook kcook@etsglobal.org. Registrations close on Monday 10 September 2012.