



Testing
& Evaluation
Assessment

IATEFL 57th International
Conference & Exhibition

Pre-Conference Event: Brighton, 15 April 2024

Item writing: from theory to practice

Session	Time	Session title	Speakers
	10:00 – 10:10	Opening	
1	10:10 – 11:15	Workshop 1 – Item writing for productive skills	Kathrin Eberharter
	11:15 – 11:35	COMFORT BREAK	
2	11:35 – 12:30	Workshop 1 (continued)	Kathrin Eberharter
	12:30 – 13:45	LUNCH BREAK	
	13:45 – 13:50	Opening to afternoon sessions	
3	13:50 – 14:45	Workshop 2 – Item writing for receptive skills	Michael Fields
	14:45 – 15:05	COMFORT BREAK	
4	15:05 – 16:00	Workshop 2 (continued)	Michael Fields
	16:00 – 16:10	MINI BREAK	
5	16:10 – 16:50	Networking	Mina Patel
6	16:50 – 17:00	Closure	

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Item writing: from theory to practice

Workshop 1: Item writing for productive skills

Abstract

Crafting effective tasks for assessing your students' speaking and writing abilities can be a challenge. This workshop will aim at providing invaluable insights and practical tools to improve your assessment methods. To do so, it will focus on three key areas. First, we will explore how to precisely define the specific language skills we intend to assess, ensuring our assessments are authentic and aligned with learning objectives. Next, I will share some of the proven principles of prompt design that you may find helpful to apply to your own assessment context. Finally, we will look at strategies for measuring the success of assessment tasks which will be useful to improve your task development skills in the future. Each workshop section combines theory with hands-on activities, providing opportunities for practical exercises and discussions.

Kathrin Eberharter



Kathrin is currently a senior lecturer at the University of Innsbruck, where she guides pre-service teachers in the principles of best practice for language testing and assessment. She earned an Austrian teaching degree and completed her MA and PhD at Lancaster University, specializing in language testing. Her primary research interests centre on evaluating L2 writing and speaking, with a dedicated focus on task development, writing processes, rating scale design, and rater cognition and training.

Workshop 2: Item writing for receptive skills

Abstract

This hands-on, practical workshop will address writing and editing selected response items (true/false, multiple choice, matching and gap fill) for use with reading and listening tests. We'll begin with a review of good item writing practice, drawing on strategies used in large-scale assessment design that can easily be adapted to classroom item writing. We'll look some well-crafted items, and then you will have a chance to edit and repair some faulty items. Following this you'll write some listening and reading items based on authentic materials. Finally, we will share our work and compare notes. This workshop is suitable for classroom teachers and test writers at all levels. By the end of this session, you should be able to write better items, write with more confidence, and identify common errors in your own and others' test items. Participants are encouraged to bring any listening or reading test they are currently working on for development and improvement.

Michael Fields



Michael Fields is an assistant professor at the University of Delaware's English Language Institute (USA), and the chair of the assessment committee. He earned an MA in Applied Linguistics from Leicester University, specialising in language assessment. He is a writer and editor for Cambridge exams and has contributed to standards setting for the TOEFL test.

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