



14th Annual Cambridge English Spring Seminar 24 – 25 March 2018

Workshop Descriptions

Workshops on Writing for Level B2 Cambridge English: First and First for Schools (A)

Workshop 1 – Teaching writing as process

Traditionally, writing has been taught with a focus on the product: a well-organised text, grammatically accurate and lexically appropriate that would achieve its intended communicative goal. Supplementary books on developing writing skills typically provided models of standard genres (narratives, instructions, letters of complaint etc) for learners to emulate. In the real world, however, writing usually involves a recursive process of drafting, checking and proofreading, and redrafting. Time constraints would appear to leave little scope for this kind of process approach in exam situations, but putting process writing at the heart of exam preparation classes can enable students to develop greater confidence in their ability to plan and to polish written text, even in an exam context. In this workshop, we will compare and contrast product and process approaches to teaching writing, and explore the hidden potential for examinees of viewing writing as process.

Workshop 2 – Serious Fun: Textual Intervention

Textual intervention is an approach to reading that employs creative writing as a strategy, inviting students to put themselves in the writer's shoes and to play creatively with any decisions or choices that the writer has made. Learners are 'given permission' to change titles and openings; to provide alternative endings; to add prequels, sequels and interludes; to change the gender or identity of the narrator; to redistribute speech roles; to change direct speech to indirect or vice versa; to add narrative comments; to take a decisive moment in a text and change the way it develops. In short, nothing is sacred – anything and everything that the writer has done is subject to modification. Rob Pope, Professor of English at Oxford Brookes University, in his 1995 book called *Textual Intervention*, describes this approach as 'serious fun'. Aimed at university teachers and students, Pope's book has had a lasting influence on teachers using literature in the English language classroom. In this workshop we will look in more detail at Pope's proposals, try out some examples – and have some serious fun!

Workshop 3 – Writing on screens: a hybrid genre

Writing continues to be a key component of language assessment and it remains a real-world skill. But most of the writing that we and our students do these days is no longer on paper, but on screens of various sizes. In fact, students are probably writing now far more than they ever did in the past; but new technologies have generated new genres and new styles of writing, presenting a challenge to teachers of 'digital natives' who more likely to be texting, blogging and posting on social media than to be writing letters, reports and postcards. Writing online and on smartphones has rapidly developed its own registers and conventions, producing a non-standard language that looks like written-down speech or creates new reduced forms that often find their way back into the spoken language. In this workshop we will look at examples of writing on screens and at practical ways of sensitising students to levels of appropriateness in different contexts.