



ALTE course in Assessing Writing in the Digital Age

Course outline

ALTE is running a week-long course in Cambridge, UK, in March 2021. The course will be run by **Dr Sathena Chan** from the Centre for Research in English Language Learning and Assessment (CRELLA), University of Bedfordshire, and **Dr Jing Xu** from Cambridge Assessment English.

Dates: 1st – 5th March 2021

Location: [Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, CB2 8EA, Cambridge, UK](#)

Description

This course aims to equip participants with fundamental knowledge of developing and validating writing assessment in a digital learning environment. We start with an overview of the past, present and future of writing assessment and a brief introduction of the socio-cognitive framework of language test validation. With regards to theoretical models of writing, we will consider how digitalisation may have changed the construct of writing or the way people communicate in daily life. Additionally, we will discuss varying construct definitions of writing assessment for different purposes. The remainder of the course will focus on the integration of cutting-edge technologies into writing assessment. We will introduce the principles of task design, item writing and rating scale development for computer-based writing assessment. We will also discuss the use of process-tracking technologies and automated scoring tools to gather evidence about learners' writing proficiency and to provide effective learning-oriented feedback. In particular, we will showcase a state-of-the-art automated writing assessment tool empowered by machine learning technology and discuss its application in the teaching of writing.

Throughout the course, participants will work in small groups to experience the cycle of developing and validating writing assessments with a range of technological resources. They will have opportunities to share their work during the course and receive feedback from peers and the facilitators. By the end of the course, participants will have developed an understanding of the main principles behind the assessment of writing and will have a raised awareness of different technologies and how they affect diverse aspects of writing test design and validation. Participants are expected to have a professional interest in language testing in general and the assessment of writing in particular, though they are not expected to have a profound knowledge of the subject area.

Tuition fee:

€950: non-members/non-institutional affiliates

€850: ALTE members and institutional affiliates

All prices include course materials, lunch and coffee breaks. Participants should arrange for their travel arrangements and accommodation.

Facilitators' biodata

Dr Sathena Chan

Sathena is a Senior Lecturer in Language Assessment at the Centre for Research in English Language Learning and Assessment (CRELLA), University of Bedfordshire. She holds a PhD in Language Testing. She has conducted high-profile testing projects for major English language testing providers in the UK and worldwide for over 10 years. Her recent book publications include *Defining Integrated Reading-into-Writing Constructs: Evidence at the B2-C1 Interface* (English Profile Studies volume 8, 2018), *Research and Practice in Assessing Academic Reading: The Case of IELTS* (co-authored with Cyril J Weir, Studies in Language Testing volume 51, 2019), and a chapter of *Lessons and Legacy: A Tribute to Cyril J Weir 1950–2018* (co-authored with Nicola Latimer, Studies in Language Testing volume 50, 2020). Her work can also be seen in peer-reviewed journals including *Assessing Writing, System* and *Language Testing in Asia*. She was the guest editor of a special issue of *Assessing Writing* on the comparability of paper-based and computer-based writing assessments published in 2017. She regularly delivers workshops, webinars, and courses on a range of topics in language testing for universities and professional bodies such as European Association for Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA). She is currently the Convenor of the Testing, Evaluation and Assessment SIG in the British Association for Applied Linguistics.

Dr Jing Xu

Jing is a Principal Research Manager at Cambridge Assessment English, which he joined in 2015. He began his career as an English language teacher and before moving to the UK worked as the Program Assistant for the Oral English Certification Test at Iowa State University (USA) and a research intern at Educational Testing Service (USA). Jing obtained his PhD in Applied Linguistics and Technology from Iowa State University and his research focuses on technology-enhanced language assessment and learning. Jing has published research widely in refereed journals including *Language Testing, Language Assessment Quarterly* and *CALICO*, as well as in many edited volumes. He is a recipient of the Jacqueline Ross TOEFL Dissertation Award and a co-recipient of the Best Article Award presented by the International Language Testing Association. Jing currently serves as an Editorial Advisory Board member for the *Language Assessment Quarterly* journal and the Treasurer for the Testing, Evaluation and Assessment SIG in the British Association for Applied Linguistics.