

IMPACT OF WRITING ASSESSMENT ON NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

Speaker: Kyle Perkins, *Southern Illinois University*
Introducer/Recorder: Bonnie Braendlin, *The Florida State University*

Kyle Perkins began by discussing the impact that writing assessment and research in writing assessment have had on the institutions whose faculty researchers share their findings with one another. His major focus was on the effects on non-native speakers of large-scale systematic testing of writing. A major problem, Perkins said, is that too often indirect (objective) testing is used to assess writing. On an objective test, a student's "intent to communicate" and his or her "communicate competence" cannot be accurately measured. Consequently, non-native speakers may do well on an objective exam, but have great difficulty composing essays in courses like Freshman English. Perkins argued for writing assessment by essay examinations that are holistically graded by human beings, not machines. Subsequent discussion centered on problems of holistic grading of non-native speakers' essays and ways to help non-native speakers in composition.