

# 7 GOOD REASONS

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- 5 **All vacancy ads are hosted in our most popular website www.sundaytimes.lk for one full week free of charge.**
- 6 **Get a good exposure for your vacancy ads island wide as well as world wide because of our efficient circulation system locally as well as international.**
- 7 **You can go to any of your newspaper agents in your town and place your vacancy ad without coming to head office.**

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Head Office

011 2 479 524, 2 479 527, 2 479 528, 2 479 536

Email : amarg@wije.lk, employment@wije.lk

# ST APPOINTMENTS

MAKING OPPORTUNITIES KNOCK ON YOUR DOOR

## Testing time for teachers

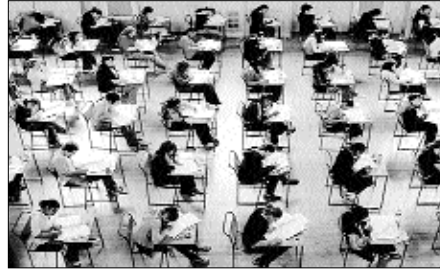
This year two of the most popular exams from Cambridge Esol undergo a change in format. But while teachers and students need to prepare for these developments, John Hughes has advised on how to stay focused on practical language goals.

Revisions to Cambridge Esol's two most popular exams, the Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) and First Certificate in English (FCE), come into effect in December. The total time for the exams will be shorter and tasks have been standardised across both exams, making them easier for those taking tests.

A cursory glance at the new exams might leave you wondering why such change has taken six years to implement. But exam boards have to establish that a change in the English language is now globally accepted and permanent. For example, we are only now starting to see writing emails as a standard task in all exams.

Then there are developments in the methodology and practice of language teaching. Changes in classroom practice have to be held up as standard before affecting the format of the exam. The exam also needs to match the many varied needs of the students and requirements of employers and universities.

While content changes proceed at their own pace, exam boards are making more rapid



progress developing online versions of established tests. The computer-based Business Language Testing System, for example, finds the candidate's level by adjusting the choice of question based on the answer given previously.

Examiners are also testing ways of having the computer "grade" a piece of student writing (though this remains questionable). The Test of English for International Communication now examines candidates' speaking and writing levels via the internet.

In the future most of the Cambridge Esol exams will be taken online at recognised centres. As more students take exams in this way, there will be increasing pressure on schools and teachers to offer exam practice using computers. Students will need to feel comfortable with the screen-based format and the mechanics of the test.

At the day-to-day level of the classroom, teachers would be wise to adjust any

classroom practice for a new or revised exam at the same dignified pace as the exam boards.

Clearly you still need to tell students what new tasks there are and which ones are missing. Yet many of the actual skills we teach remain the same whether it's for a new-styled question or because the exam is being taken online. For example, on a reading exam the students still ought to read through the whole text before answering any questions.

You should continue to use pair work to role-play the tasks on a speaking paper. Also, demonstrate strategies to students on how to plan an essay before writing it and explain that students should use the skill of prediction when reading questions before listening to a recording.

What is important to remember as you adapt to the latest alterations is that you are still teaching language. It's too easy for exam cours-

es to suffer from tunnel vision so that we train students in the finer points of the exam rather than in the language. Too much emphasis on exam skills can fail the student whose level is still too low or who also needs English for real life.

So the challenge for the exam teacher is to address the inherent tensions between the requirements of the exam and of the classroom. One key way of achieving this is to try and marry the content of an exam with authenticity. For example, with an exam that asks students to email a fictional character, in class use the same task but allow students the chance to write to a real colleague or friend in English.

If, for the speaking exam, students are to compare photographs, then you might want to practise with two similar photographs from recent news stories. Easy access to radio programmes with podcasts allows you to keep your listening topical and authentic. If you enjoy using readings from the internet, it's a simple task to design them to reflect the format of the exam comprehension questions. Working in this way can help you keep the main goal in sight while not losing focus on what the classroom is really for. guardianweekly.co.uk

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- Providing IT Support & Trouble shooting to all users of the Organization.
- General Hardware, software & Network maintenance & trouble shooting.

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Seethawake Industrial Park, Avissawella.

Direct: Hunting: 0115-579230

(Call for WALK - IN Interview on 28th By Appointment) - Ms.Anjalee.

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