

The 8th Annual EALTA Conference, Siena 2011 – Evaluation Report

The feedback questionnaire 2011 followed the format and content from previous conferences. It was distributed during the conference and participants were reminded to fill it in before leaving. The rate of return was somewhat higher than before (n=84). This is very positive, since responses and comments provide valuable feedback to the organizers, as well as substantial information for future conferences.

The results are reported by providing response numbers for each question and alternative given. The original questionnaire form is also used to summarize and exemplify some of the most frequent comments and some of the suggestions given.

The overall impression is that the vast majority of the participants were positive or very positive to the different aspects of the conference. Comments given – some of which are quoted at the end of this report – were constructive and very useful for further planning of EALTA activities.

A. Please, evaluate the quality of each of the following aspects of the conference by circling one of the assessment options:

1. Organisation:

very good **69** | good **14** | not so good **0** | poor **0**

- Everything ran to time, notices were short and to the point, reception very friendly, the hospitality was superb.
- Everything went smoothly and time was kept very well.

2. Cost:

very reasonable **47** | reasonable **33** | expensive **3** | too expensive **0**

- One of the great things about the EALTA conference is that it is affordable for everybody (the conference costs, that is; of course, other things like accommodation and transport may be expensive but the conference itself is very affordable!) Well done! Let's try to keep it that way!

3. Locality:

very good **71** | good **10** | not so good **2** | poor **0**

- What a delightful city Siena is and everybody made us so welcome!
- I doubt it can get any better.
- It was a little bit hard to find the university.

4. Length of conference:

too long 1 | quite long 11 | appropriate 67 | quite short 1 | too short 0

- Just right!

- Some concepts and topic began to be similar or repetitive towards the end.

5. Length of presentations:

too long 0 | quite long 0 | appropriate 73 | quite short 4 | too short 2

- The regular presentations have an appropriate length. The time slots for the work in progress are too short.

6. Number of presentations:

much too many 3 | too many 7 | appropriate 58 | too few 9 | much too few 1

- Maybe get more in by 2 parallels but the single sessions are good as they band everyone + give common talking points

7. Quality of presentations:

good 18 | mostly good 42 | mixed 21 | mostly poor 0 | poor 0

- Good mixture between experienced and younger professional in the field.

- Some presentation were good – brilliant!

- Sometimes there seemed to be no findings, or they were not presented because time ran out.

- So much statistics, so little language!

8. Opportunity for participation and discussion:

More than enough 6 | appropriate 69 | too little 6

- In some cases in the parallel sessions, "work in progress", more time would have been needed for questions from the audience.

- The excellent time keeping meant that there was always time for questions.

9. Keynote papers

good 43 | mostly good 29 | mixed 8 | mostly poor 1 | poor 0

- Important to spread out like this year (and they stuck to the ethics in LTA). Good!

- Too many keynote speakers and too few opportunities for EALTA members to present their work.

10. Posters

good 22 | mostly good 25 | mixed 10 | mostly poor 1 | poor 0

- More than one hour might be an idea, especially if there isn't a lot of space.
- Put them up in a central position; display them for a longer time.
- It would be good if the posters were displayed during the whole conference; this would give opportunities to read posters carefully and to contact one another at any time during the conference.

11. Opportunity to learn

very much 26 | quite a lot 40 | not so much 11 | very little 0

- I feel my knowledge of the area has been really enhanced.
- To learn things you need to absorb them; this was like watching.
- The theme was less central than I'd hoped for.

12. Annual General Meeting:

very effective 15 | effective 19 | ineffective 2 | very ineffective 0

- Did not attend.
- Try not to take precious presentation time for the AGM: it is a business meeting and would preferably then be held outside the conference hours (compare to AERA meetings).
- Effective but no so enriching.

B. Please, read again the above mentioned 12 aspects of the conference and evaluate:

a. Which of the above aspects (1 to 12) was the best of the conference? (circle its number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	
33	3	15	2	1	2	13
	3	7	0	11	0	

b. Which of the above aspects (1 to 12) was the worst of the conference? (circle its number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	
0	3	0	2	1	8	5
	4	1	5	6	2	

C. If money were no problem, would you attend the next annual conference?

definitely yes 43 | probably yes 28 | probably not 4 | definitely not 0

D. What in particular did you learn at this conference?

- *It's a good opportunity to meet colleagues in the profession and establish contacts. The parallel sessions are very interesting.*
- *Test construction in other countries, and assessment in other countries.*
- *Different approaches to assessment.*
- *That the experiences with CBLA are the same in many countries.*
- *How little I know.*
- *Ethicality in testing from a number of aspects and approaches.*
- *A deeper understanding of the relationship between values (ethical, political) and the technicalities of assessment.*
- *LT is not just about technical aspects. We also need to consider SLA and human aspects to create good tests.*

E. What would you like to suggest for the next annual meeting and conference?

- *More practice, didactic examples.*
- *More parallel session; more papers about assessment in classroom.*
- *Pure marketing presentations by influential members do not contribute much insight.*
- *The first day is too long; It should finish before 6 pm; it's difficult to concentrate for so long after 2.30pm.*
- *Too much to list! But I guess lots about assessing writing.*
- *Fairness can we interpreted in many ways - there seems to be opinions on whether the concept at validity covers fairness + many other things.*
- *I attended the workshop, so I was particularly interested in standard setting; I was happy to participate in this useful and kindly presented workshop and to find other presentations dedicated to the topic.*
- *To have more space and time for posters.*

F. Do you have any suggestions for (a) topic(s) of a pre- och post-conference workshop?

- *Test construction.*
- *Validity issues at all levels.*
- *Everything about adult immigrants and L2.*
- *School based assessment - language testing at university level - CLIL assessment.*
- *Formative types of assessment; Assessment for learning.*
- *Writing item for young learners; approaches to testing young learners.*
- *Certificates tests for young learners.*
- *Test equating.*
- *Statistics; IRT.*
- *More focus on: the construction of language tests: Task types? Which ones for which skills? Why? Guidelines for teachers with concrete examples ...*

G . What is your opinion of parallel sessions?

None needed **0** | too many **3** | appropriate number **49** | too few **16**

No needed

- Parallel sessions are optimal in number. However, it's disturbing when people move between the sessions.

- Not enough time. If more parallel sessions there should also be more time.

Too few

- In this way we could attend talks more relevant to our interests and we'd get a wider variety of speakers.

- If there are so many good papers turned down, more parallel sessions would bring the possibility of choice.

- Possibility to have more presentations.

- More opportunity for thematic division.

- I would suggest a second work in progress session but not more.

F. Please indicate whether you are:

language teacher **16** | teacher educator **2** | assessment professional **8** | university/college teacher **6** | researcher **3** | educational administrator **6** | other **4** | mixed **30**