

## Evaluation Report of the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual EALTA Conference, Athens 2008

50 participants submitted a completed questionnaire to evaluate the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual EALTA conference, Athens 2008. Approximately 200 participants attended the conference.

### Part A

#### 1. Organization of the Conference

The majority of the participants rated the organization of the conference highly. Comments by the participants referred to the excellent facilities and helpful assistance from the conference staff. Some negative comments pointed out the lack of space for the poster presentations and difficulties with online registration.

1.Organisation of the Conference	
<b>very good</b>	<b>62.00%</b>
<b>good</b>	<b>34.00%</b>
not so good	2.00%
N/A	2.00%
poor	0.00%

#### 2. Cost of the Conference

Most of the participants regarded the cost of the conference as very reasonable or reasonable. Comments from the participants showed an appreciation of the low cost of the conference fee and that this should not be changed for future conferences. There were some suggestions, however, that there should have been some options provided for cheaper accommodation and that the hotel for this year's conference was not good value for money.

2.Cost of the Conference	
<b>very reasonable</b>	<b>58.00%</b>
<b>reasonable</b>	<b>38.00%</b>
expensive	4.00%
too expensive	0.00%

### 3. Location of the Conference

Participants were very enthusiastic about the location, “Athens is wonderful” “Great city – lots to do” etc. One participant had expressed an interest in organized tours for the participants.

3.Locality	
<b>very good</b>	<b>76.00%</b>
<b>good</b>	<b>24.00%</b>
not so good	0.00%
poor	0.00%

### 4. Conference Venue

Most of the participants rated the conference venue highly. One negative comment indicated that the main hall was not conducive to informal discussion. Another comment referred to the lack of space during coffee breaks.

4.Conference Venue	
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>40.00%</b>
<b>good</b>	<b>28.00%</b>
<b>very good</b>	<b>26.00%</b>
fair	4.00%
N/A	2.00%
poor	0.00%

## 5. Conference Website

The majority of participants rated the conference website highly. Comments included requests for easier access to information on pre-conference events. One participant objected to having photographs of speakers on the site.

5.Conference website	
<b>very good</b>	<b>42.00%</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>36.00%</b>
<b>good</b>	<b>16.00%</b>
fair	4.00%
N/A	2.00%
poor	0.00%

## 6. Online Registration and Payment Procedures

Few participants seemed to be dissatisfied with online registration and payment procedures. Comments varied from participants reporting that online registration was an easy process while four participants had experienced difficulties.

6.Online registration and payment procedures	
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>44.00%</b>
<b>very good</b>	<b>30.00%</b>
<b>good</b>	<b>18.00%</b>
fair	4.00%
poor	4.00%

## 7. & 8. Helpfulness, Efficiency and responsiveness of staff before and during the event

Most participants regarded highly the helpfulness and efficiency of staff before and during the conference.

<b>7.Helpfulness, efficiency and responsiveness of staff before the event</b>	
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>52.00%</b>
<b>very good</b>	<b>26.00%</b>
N/A	12.00%
good	4.00%
fair	4.00%
poor	2.00%

<b>8.Helpfulness, efficiency and responsiveness of staff during the event</b>	
<b>Excellent</b>	<b>70.00%</b>
<b>very good</b>	<b>14.00%</b>
<b>good</b>	<b>8.00%</b>
N/A	4.00%
fair	2.00%
poor	2.00%

### 9, 10, 11. Length of conference, length of presentations and number of presentations

Most participants were satisfied with the length of the conference and found the length of presentations to be appropriate, though there were some comments that there was not enough time for questions in certain presentations. Most participants also regarded the number of presentations as appropriate. One comment expressed a wish for more parallel sessions to widen the choice of topics presented.

<b>9.Length of Conference</b>	
<b>appropriate</b>	<b>90.00%</b>
quite short	6.00%
quite long	2.00%
N/A	2.00%
too long	0.00%
too short	0.00%

<b>10.Length of presentations</b>	
<b>appropriate</b>	<b>82.00%</b>
quite short	14.00%
quite long	2.00%
N/A	2.00%
too long	0.00%
too short	0.00%

<b>11.Number of presentations</b>	
<b>appropriate</b>	<b>84.00%</b>
too few	10.00%
too many	6.00%
much too few	0.00%
much too many	0.00%

## 12. Quality of Presentations

56% of the participants rated the quality of presentations as being mostly good. Positive comments included the appreciation of a variety of topics. Negative comments were linked to poor presentation skills, topics unrelated to the theme of the conference and topics promoting commercial interests.

12. Quality of presentations	
<b>mostly good</b>	<b>56.00%</b>
mixed	30.00%
good	10.00%
mostly poor	2.00%
N/A	2.00%
poor	0.00%

## 13. Opportunity for Participation and Discussion

Most participants indicated that there was enough opportunity for participation and discussion, though there were some comments about presentations not adhering to the time limit for the actual presentation. For these presentations participants complained there was no time for questions and discussion.

13. Opportunity for participation and discussion	
<b>appropriate</b>	<b>80.00%</b>
too little	14.00%
more than enough	4.00%
N/A	2.00%

## 14. Panel Discussion

The panel discussion was considered to be interesting with only positive comments on the quality of the presentations and excellent chair that pulled the whole conference theme together.

<b>14.Panel discussion</b>	
<b>very interesting</b>	<b>60.00%</b>
<b>interesting</b>	<b>20.00%</b>
N/A	18.00%
not interesting	2.00%
waste of time	0.00%

## 15. Posters

Participants regarded the poster presentations to be mostly good and good (38% and 32% respectively). Some comments indicated that the information on some posters was not clearly displayed, the space for posters was too cramped and that that some presentations did not provide handouts.

<b>15.Posters</b>	
<b>mostly good</b>	<b>38.00%</b>
<b>good</b>	<b>32.00%</b>
mixed	20.00%
N/A	10.00%
mostly poor	0.00%
poor	0.00%

## 16. Opportunity to Learn

The majority of the participants considered that the conference provided many opportunities to learn more about language testing and assessment. Comments indicated that participants look forward to reviewing some presentations on the website. Again there was a request for more handouts.

<b>16.Opportunity to learn</b>	
<b>quite a lot</b>	<b>56.00%</b>
<b>very much</b>	<b>36.00%</b>
not so much	4.00%
very little	4.00%

## 17. Annual General Meeting

A number of the participants who completed the questionnaire did not attend the annual general meeting. Those who did attend indicated that there was a pleasant atmosphere but that the duration was too long, taking into consideration that members had received points of discussion in advance.

<b>17.Annual General Meeting</b>	
<b>effective</b>	<b>48.00%</b>
N/A	44.00%
very effective	6.00%
ineffective	2.00%
very ineffective	0.00%



## Part B

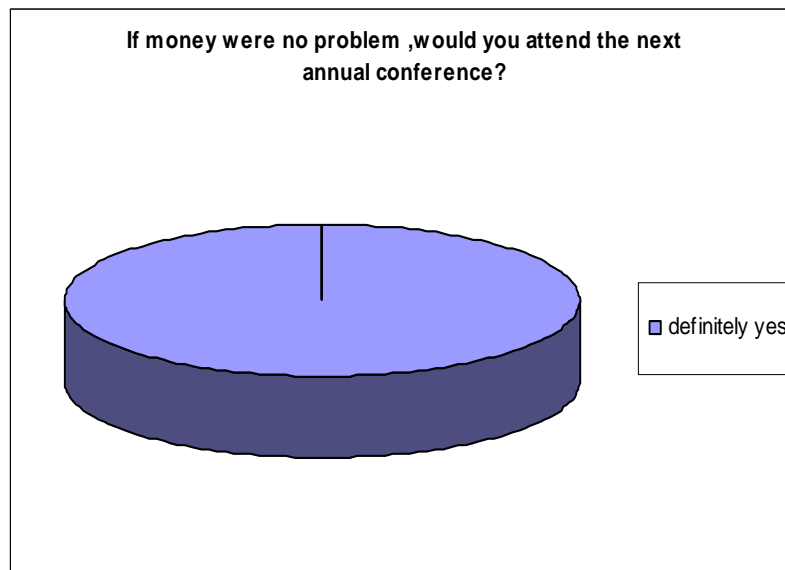
A. The following is an indication of what participants regarded as being the best aspects of the conference:

<b>A. What participants regarded as being the best aspects of the conference:</b>	
<b>Quality of presentations</b>	<b>32.00%</b>
<b>Locality</b>	<b>16.00%</b>
<b>Organization of conference</b>	<b>14.00%</b>
<b>Conference venue</b>	<b>8.00%</b>
<b>Cost</b>	<b>6.00%</b>

B. The following is an indication of what participants regarded as being the worst aspects of the conference:

<b>B. What participants regarded as being the worst aspects of the conference:</b>	
<b>No indication</b>	<b>56.00%</b>
<b>Length of presentations</b>	<b>8.00%</b>
<b>Conference venue, online registration ,quality of presentations</b>	<b>6.00%</b>

**C. The participants unanimously declared that they would attend the next annual conference if money were not a problem.**



**D...** There was a plethora of responses regarding what participants learnt from the conference. Most of the responses reflected the varied topics of the presentations but the general theme throughout the responses showed the appreciation of shared experiences in different contexts.

**E..** Suggestions for future conferences included ideas on content of presentations, for example, Communicative Language Testing, item writing, translation and interpreter assessment, assessment of candidates with special needs and genres in testing. Other suggestions focused on the organization of the conference e.g. organization of special events.

**F.** Examples of topics for pre-conference workshops vary between requests for theoretical aspects of testing e.g. Item Response Theory to more practical issues related to teacher training and assessing learning difficulties.

G. There were mixed reviews on parallel sessions. Some participants preferred the current format of having works in progress as parallel sessions. Others preferred concurrent sessions for SIG related presentations as suggested in the annual general meeting. Only one participant expressed an interest in having plenary sessions only.

<b>G. What is your opinion of parallel sessions</b>	
<b>appropriate number</b>	<b>50.00%</b>
N/A	24.00%
too few	20.00%
none needed	6.00%

**A profile of the participants indicates that:**

Six participants out of the fifty regarded themselves as assessment specialists only. Other participants indicated they had combined areas of responsibility e.g. assessment professionals and university /college teachers. Twenty seven participants out of the 50 did not indicate that they were assessment professionals.

<b>A Profile of the Participants</b>	
<b>Assessment professionals</b>	<b>44.00%</b>
<b>University/ college teachers</b>	<b>34.00%</b>
<b>Researchers</b>	<b>32.00%</b>
Teacher Educators	30.00%
Language Teachers	22.00%
Educational Administrators	14.00%
Graduate T.A-Supervisor trainer	2.00%
Evaluator	2.00%

## Conclusion

Overall the results of the questionnaire indicate many successful features of the conference. Individual comments, however, provided useful information for consideration of optimum conditions for the venue, quality of presentations and reasonably priced accommodations.

<b>Successful Features of the Conference</b>	
<b>Locality</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Organization</b>	<b>94.00%</b>
<b>Cost</b>	<b>92.00%</b>
<b>Conference venue</b>	<b>90.00%</b>
<b>Conference website</b>	<b>90.00%</b>
<b>Opportunity to learn</b>	<b>84.00%</b>
<b>Panel discussion</b>	<b>78.00%</b>
<b>Helpfulness ,efficiency and responsiveness of staff before the event</b>	<b>76.00%</b>
<b>Quality of presentations</b>	<b>64.00%</b>
<b>Opportunity for participation and discussion</b>	<b>62.00%</b>