

I Meeting GIELE. Executive Report

The first meeting of the Spanish special interest group in language testing and assessment, called GIELE (Grupo de Interés en la Evaluación de Lenguas en España), took place on October 21st, 2017 in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

134 professionals involved in language testing and assessment registered for the event. These professionals work in many different adult language education sectors across Spain, including regional and central governments, university language centres, private and public language education and testing institutions, etc.

The one-day event (see programme attached) commenced with an introduction given by the two organisers, Neus Figueras and Cristina Rodriguez, in which they highlighted the need they had perceived in their encounters with different language testing bodies in Spain for an organisation that could bring language testers across Spain into contact and disseminate the research and good practice that was taking place in many institutions.

This introduction was followed by a presentation by the keynote speaker, Dr. Dianne Wall, who discussed the factors affecting long-term test impact. The presentation included worksheets to encourage self-reflection and discussion, and was followed by a 15-minute question and answer session.

The rest of the morning was followed by two plenary sessions with a short pause in between. The plenary format, with no parallel sessions, was chosen as a way of stimulating discussion among the participants and creating a sense of belonging to the network, which was one of the objectives of this meeting. The first of these plenary sessions consisted of four presentations on the theme of construction of language tests, and described the work being carried out in item writing, rating scale construction and familiarity activities with the CEFR in very different contexts in Spain.

The second plenary session of presentations dealt with initiatives and proposals in language testing. Two of the speakers presented a website with resources to improve assessment literacy, and another described an online platform for students created for self-assessment. The third speaker presented the CEFR Extended Set of Illustrative Descriptors to the audience and described its possible impact and implications for language testing.

After a buffet lunch, the afternoon consisted of a series of practical workshops which addressed the concerns that were raised in a survey previously carried out by the organisers. The four workshops addressed: rater training, test trialling, statistics for language testing, and standards in language tests. Participants were asked to choose two of the workshops when registering, and the workshops were repeated in two different sessions in order to enable maximum attendance.

After the workshops, there was a final plenary discussion session in which the organisers, Neus Figueras and Cristina Rodriguez, proposed a preliminary version of statutes for the SIG group, and participants discussed the future direction of the group, providing suggestions on areas in which more work could be done. The next venue for the meeting, Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, was announced, and a preliminary coordinating

committee was constituted to carry out the work of establishing this Spanish SIG in language testing as an organisation that can contribute to the spread of good practice in language testing in Spain.