

ASSESSMENT OF THE FEEDBACK

PROVIDED BY THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE EALTA VOSS CONFERENCE

Sauli Takala

As at the first EALTA conference, participants were asked to provide feedback with a questionnaire. The questionnaire was included in the conference folder and participants were reminded several times to fill it in. Altogether 42 questionnaires were returned, some of them by email. While a better rate of return would have been desirable, it is sufficient to get an overall view of the event and of the participants' suggestions for future action. The fact that the number of returned questionnaires is smaller than expected is probably due to the fact that some participants had to leave before the concluding sessions. In order to maximise the number of feedback responses the future conference organisers are well advised (i) to remind of the feedback in the introductory session, (ii) remind of it at regular intervals during their conference, (iii) perhaps allow a short time period for filling in the form, and (iv) to have a box in which the completed forms can be placed.

The EALTA conference had attracted a wide range of participants: of those who filled in the questionnaire, the majority were assessment professionals/university/college teachers/researchers but teachers, teacher educators and educational administrators were also well represented.

The questionnaire was essentially the same as the one provided for assessing the first conference but its format was revised slightly to make responding easier. The fixed-choice format is complemented by an opportunity to give reasons for the answer or to elaborate it. Some questions required the respondents to write their answers in the boxes provided for answering. The participants often did elaborate their answers and quite a few wrote at some length in the boxes.

The fixed-choice answers were tallied and the results are presented in a table in Appendix 1. The main points are briefly discussed. Some of the free answers, which seemed representative, are also quoted. All of them are listed in Appendix 2.

Most of the answers are easy to summarise:

1. The participants were very pleased with the organisation of the Voss conference. Three respondents expressed their satisfaction in writing in the margin:

- “Congratulations on everybody!”
- “Thank you for a good conference!”
- “Very good conference.”

There were some concrete suggestions for improvement, and it is worth exploring whether they can be accommodated in the future conferences.

2. The cost of taking part was, not unexpectedly, a source of some criticism (15 out of 42 were critical of the costs) although the efforts by the organisers to keep the costs down were appreciated. Those who were critical did not elaborate their answers.

- “Reasonable – being in Norway.”
- “Having full board was a very good idea in a country as expensive as Norway!”

3. The locality of the conference was considered very good or good by almost everybody. The only minor drawback had been the distance and the not so easy access.

- “All the people commented on the good influence of the beautiful surroundings. It couldn't have a better location. No distractions like shopping/bars.”
- “Lovely place, great hotel – just a little isolated and inconvenient to get to.”
- There was another major/minor(?) source of criticism: “Beer too expensive.”

4. **Almost all found the length of the conference to be appropriate.** There were only a few comments.
 - “Half a day + 1 day + half a day would be better.”
 - ” In order to cover so much I assume you cannot do with less time but one night less would be of great help for a lot of us.”
5. **The length of the presentations was also found to be appropriate.**
 - “Good choice, good quality.”
 - “Guidelines for presenters on presentations and preparations might be an advantage.”
 - “ In a number of occasions, too short. Mainly Felly’s presentation was particularly interesting and we would have benefited from some extra time.”
 - “The poster by G. Nold should have been given a 30-minute slot. So should the one by Neil Jones. Some other presentations (without data & results) should have been shorter or given as a poster.”
 - “Even relatively disciplined presenters!”
6. **The participants were also satisfied with the number of presentations.**
 - “I really like the large number of presentations. I prefer to have short introductions into projects & research, than long (usually boring) elaborate presentations. With many short presentations you also get the opportunity to learn what the work of the other participants consists of, so that you also can define very quickly with who you’d prefer to speak a little more in breaks.”
 - “A very nice range!”
7. **The ratings of the quality of the presentations ranged from mixed to very good.**
 - “Presenters should be urged to rehearse their presentations in order to keep within their time limits. By rushing, important information is lost.”
 - “I think people should be “discouraged” from “reading” their presentations.”
 - “Often extremely good!”
 - “Unified theme (CEF) leads to focused discussion – good. It also limits discussion – bad.”
 - “Many presentations left no time for discussion. I really was disappointed in this. Even though the information we received was very clear about length of pres. And the time to be left over for discussion, many presenters used all their time just for presenting. Would it be an idea to limit the number of ppt-sheets to approx. 10? This “forces” a presenter to speak shorter, maybe.”
 - “(Mixed) Better than the usual mixed bag though.”
 - “Most part of the presentation did not reflect the topic of the conference. I thought we were speaking about professionalism and ethical problems in language testing. Which criteria were adopted to choose the presentations?”
 - “It’s a delicate balance between choice of presentations and plenary sessions, so impossible to please everyone all the time. Most of the presentations were excellent, though.”
8. **The ratings concerning the opportunity for participation and discussion were much higher than after the first conference.** The organisers had studied the feedback and taken measures to remedy the source of criticism. There is, however, still some need to improve the opportunities for interaction.
 - “Maybe small discussion groups (mixed) would be a good idea in between the presentations.”

- “Little but I think it’s inevitable with this format.”
- “More time between presentations needed. However, there was lot of opportunities in coffee & lunch/evening to meet people & talk.”
- “Sometimes not enough time.”
- “It would have been helpful/useful for me to have an abstract of each presentation in advance. Eg. like the abstract we had to submit for the presentation. Fortunately, the long breaks offered time to discuss things.”
- “Due to the time constraint, there wasn’t much time for discussion.”
- “Roundtable discussions would be nice. It is usually the same people that answer questions. In a small group people dare to speak sooner.”
- “It does seem to be the same people asking questions after each presentation. Is everybody else too shy or deferential to take part?”

9. On the whole the panel discussion was viewed favourably but the shortness of time was criticised.

- “Panel questions were interesting, but the panel members used too much time presenting their questions – consequently there was far too little time for discussion. So stricter time watching is necessary!”
- “Too varied and (therefore) too short.”
- “More time devoted to it in future. Maybe done at the beginning so that the conference has “themes”.
- “Not a discussion, just individual mini-presentations.”

10. The ratings of the posters ranged from mixed to very good.

- “Too much text, too little print in most. Instruction on poster making might be a good idea.”
- “Not all poster presenters had material to take away.”
- “I found several among the most interesting parts of the conference.”
- “Maybe a session for presenting each of the posters (5 minutes maximum).”

11. One of the main goals of EALTA received good support as the participants generally felt that they had learned quite a lot or very much during the conference. Only two respondents said “not so much”. Only six respondents commented on their answers and they are all quoted below.

- “More an opportunity of exchanging ideas, procedures.”
- “Abstracts should have been included in the program. Bulletin board in the hall with announcements re program changes and room to put up messages for other participants.”
- “Abstracts in advance helps one to focus on the presentation and/or to make a choice to attend (or not) a presentation.”
- “Not such much about the topic of the conference.”
- “Learned most at the pre-conference seminar and new knowledge was useful to understand more of the technical aspects of the conference talks.”
- “I am new to testing bit didn’t feel that very much of the conference was over my head – apart from the stats.”

12. The Annual General Meeting also received positive ratings.

13. When asked to single out the best aspect of the conference the participants named most commonly the quality of the presentations, organisation and the opportunity to learn. This is very encouraging feedback to EALTA.

14. When asked to indicate the worst aspect of the conference, **cost and opportunity for participation and discussion** stood out.
15. The majority were **in favour of having a limited number of parallel sessions** although a fairly large minority did not find them appropriate.
- “2-3 is a good choice, more air, more discussion.”
 - “No need of parallel sessions with a group this size.”
 - “At a conference this size, one of the most positive things is that you don’t need to split up in parallel sessions, and accordingly can present themes that connect and everybody can participate.”
 - “They work well but more time is needed to go to the various rooms.”
 - “You have the opportunity to choose and attend the topic you are interested in. Thus parallel sessions are useful.”
 - ”There shouldn’t be any because someone who is well known will draw all the participants.”

On the basis of the answers I would recommend 2-3 parallel session with the proviso that there is sufficient time for moving to another session and that the time for presentations is strictly co-ordinated and controlled.

16. The participants were asked to say **what in particular they had learned** at the Voss conference. Many kinds of learning were mentioned and they are listed in full below. The conference had obviously been useful in addressing the learning needs of individuals with different backgrounds. Perhaps the new insights can be summarised by quoting statements which indicated that there is hope for language testing in Europe and that EALTA is making a big contribution in promoting this positive development..
- “About the state of the art of CEFR in Europe.”
 - “What others do, where to turn with specific questions.”
 - “About projects around the world. About “same” difficulties shared by other countries.”
 - “About the complexities of calibrating the national and CEFR assessment systems. About interesting research on testing and test development.”
 - “About “asset” languages – a new concept to me.”
 - “Update on recent developments & projects in certain countries. Learned about new research.”
 - “The complexity of the issue of testing and assessment & various aspects it can be approached.”
 - “I was esp interested in the projects being carried out in different countries.”
 - “Assessment should not be limited to “can dos”. Advantages/disadvantages of test/learner centred standard setting methods.”
 - “The combination between ELP and CEFR.”
 - “CEF task-orientation. Test-evaluation techniques.”
 - “New ideas & methods to carry out empirical investigations.”
 - “I am a newcomer in the Assessment Dept. I learned a lot on the whole.”
 - “Meeting with people involved in language testing. Learning (in general) about many aspects in the field of language testing.”
 - “That testing and assessing is a broad field.”
 - “To be aware of the dangers and to show respect.”
 - “As a curriculum developer I worried more about the connection between the curriculum and assessment in a European perspective.”

- “Many struggle with the same troubles.”
- “The European item bank. Examples of how tests are being related to the CEFR. Standard setting using test-centered/examinee-centered models. CEFR levels and language acquisition research. Work on ALTE standards.”
- “I got to know more interesting colleagues – stimulating!”
- “That there is a whole bunch of people out there we can cooperate with on quite a lot of aspects.”
- “That professional testing + assessment is extremely complex for non-expert testers who may have extensive teaching experience. But that if you don’t make the effort to find out more about this complex aspect and apply what you discover, an important part of the learning/teaching process will remain on shaky foundations.”
- “There is a lot going on in Europe in the field of language testing – interesting to see and hear where people focus.”
- “Too much to list. There was much to provoke thought, on and off the programme. I learned (or relearned) that testers are often very far removed from the realities of language learning. Only rarely did the test-takers become flesh.”
- “That there is hope for language testing in Europe.”
- “Language testing in Europe is slowly making progress and EALTA is a big help in this.”

The participants were also asked to make suggestions for the next annual meeting and conference. They range from procedural hints to topics to be covered and the maintenance of the positive atmosphere. The organising committee for the Cracow conference will certainly benefit from these suggestions.

- “Perhaps more thematic (type of schools/countries) research methods/skills/age groups, etc.
- “Keep the balance of professionalism and friendliness – good humour.
- “Very clear guidelines to presenters about timing & more time between each “slot” to allow for questions/discussion. No panel discussion.”
- “The Norwegian touch during the dinner was very good. Well done!!”
- “More panel discussions, on several issues that appear to be members’ current concerns.”
- “Focus on assessment of young learners.”
- “Quality on assessment and testing. Accreditation of certificates issued for foreign languages other than the mother tongue, being based on the specifications of CEFR.”
- “More about assessment of learning of mother tongue and the new target language immigrants have to learn.”
- “Please, “force” presenters to manage their time. Maybe you could ask them to formulate 1 or 2 questions they’d like to discuss with the audience (like some presenters did).”
- “I would be grateful for a longer list of alternative hotels and/or guesthouses. I couldn’t afford Fleischers but felt uncomfortable sharing a room in the hostel. When I walked around Voss I saw there were several hotels that were more affordable than Fleischers but they weren’t on the Internet so I couldn’t book them.”
- “CEFR”
- “Classroom testing. Linking to the CEF.”
- “To continue with having pre-conference workshops.”
- “To respect the topic of the conference. More time for panel discussion.”
- “I’d like to suggest that the presentations should be adequate to the main topic of the conference.”
- “Organise roundtables around certain subjects/focuses.”
- “To make sure EALTA doesn’t lose what currently makes it special – the individualism, the relaxed but busy programme, the range of subjects covered.”

- “A special session for young researchers where they can present their studies and get feedback on the study design, methodology, data analysis and reporting.”
- “As the theme is “Bridging the gap between theory and practice” several themes would be useful to address: a) testing specialists – language teachers (large-scale testing – classroom testing), b) good practice in testing/assessment - actual practices; c) appropriate ethical standards of testing – actual questionable practices, d) appreciation of what (statistical) methods require from the data (theory) – inappropriate use of (especially advanced) methods in practice. Perhaps these could be parallel sessions and perhaps some persons could be approached/encouraged to invite a group of presenters (in addition to submissions received).”

A good indicator of the success of the Voss conference are the answers to the question whether the participants **would attend the next annual conference** if money were no problem. No one was resolved to miss the next conference. Twenty-four said “definitely yes”, 9 “probably yes”. The large number of missing answers (9) may be due to the fact that question is not very clearly singled out in the layout.

To summarise: EALTA has now organised two successful conferences and by any account this is a good start for a new association. The participants’ comments after the inaugural conference were very useful and the feedback at Voss showed that some of the problems encountered were addressed quite successfully. If the organisers of the third conference manage to be equally responsive to the comments on the Voss conference, the Cracow conference - with its interesting and important topic - will be an event not to miss. Most of the respondents did indicate their interest in going to Cracow.

APPENDIX 1. Tally of participants' fixed-choice answers.

Organisation	Very good	Good	Not so good	Poor	Missing data
	36	6	0	0	0
Cost	Very reasonable	Reasonable	Expensive	Too expensive	
	4	21	9	6	2
Locality	Very good	Good	Not so good		
	28	12	2	0	0
Length of conference	Too long	Quite long	Appropriate	Quite short	
	0	3	39	0	0
Length of presentations	Too long	Quite long	Appropriate	Quite short	
	0	0	40	1	0
Number of presentations	Much too many	Too many	Appropriate	Too few	
	0	3	38	1	0
Quality of presentations	Good	Mostly good	Mixed	Mostly poor	
	7	15	20	0	0
Opportunity for participation and discussion	Too much	Much	Appropriate	Little	
	0	5	27	9	
Panel discussion	Very interesting	Interesting	Not interesting	Waste of time	
	11	17	1	0	13
Posters	Good	Mostly good	Mixed	Mostly poor	
	8	15	15	0	4
Opportunity to learn	Very much	Quite a lot	Not so much	Very little	
	13	26	2	0	1
Annual General Meeting	Very effective	Effective	Ineffective	Very ineffective	
	15	16	0	0	11
Which was the best aspect of the conference?	Quality of presentations	Organisation	Opportunity to learn	Locality	12
	12	8	6	2	12
Which was the worst aspect of the conference?	Cost	Opportunity for participation and discussion	Length of presentations	Quality of presentations	
	9	5	2	2	22
Parallel sessions?	No	Yes, as was	2-3 sessions	Some	
	8	16	4	1	12
Role (several roles could be indicated)	Language teacher	Teacher educator	Assessment professional	University/college teacher	Educational administrator/other
	9	5	17	15	12

APPENDIX 2. Participants' comments

Organisation: Any other comments?

- There should have been more information available and visible at the hotels in Bergen and Voss.
- I think, if possible, there should be a wider variety of talks simultaneously to choose from.
- Wonderful food.
- Certificates of Attendance not available (only on request). Could have been in the conference bag.
- Excellent dinner! Good food, NO speeches. Excellent local music, not too loud – great!
- Thank you for including long breaks. This gives the possibility to speak to many people and also to do the rest nicely according to plan.
- The dinner was very lively because of the music/dances etc. Next year more countries should participate in these activities (homework)
- My only (big) quibble is that Internet access was very expensive and extremely limited (only 1 PC and slow for that). I really think that nowadays professionals wish to be in contact with base, and as more and more people have laptops with wireless capabilities, this kind of access should be free of charge.
- Very efficient and helpful.

Cost: Any other comments?

- Reasonable – being in Norway.
- The “country” is expensive, not the hotel. It was worth it though.
- (Too expensive) but I had funding which made it possible.
- The conference fee was very reasonable. The hostel was quite expensive if compared to what it offered.
- Reasonable in comparison to average Norwegian prices. Expensive (very?) I think, though, for people coming from institutions with low budgets.
- Taking into account the prices in Norway – not too bad at all.
- Its is reasonable seeing that Norway is an expensive country.
- I wasn't paying, nor really aware of prices, though the hotel seemed a little lavish.
- Having full board was a very good idea in a country as expensive as Norway!

Locality: Any other comments?

- Maybe a town (like Bergen) could have offered more attraction for free time but at the same time a quieter location “helps” concentration. A difficult one!
- Beautiful.
- But difficult to reach. Voss is a nice place/locality but I'll put this down as the “worse” of the conference because of the length of journeys.
- Impressive
- All the people commented on the good influence of the beautiful surroundings. It couldn't have a better location. No distractions like shopping/bars.
- Lovely place, great hotel – just a little isolated and inconvenient to get to.
- Beer too expensive.

Length of conference: Any other comments?

- Half a day + 1 day + half a day would be better.
- In order to cover so much I assume you cannot do with less time but one night less would be of great help for a lot of us.
- People not keeping to time left little time for questions.
- It's a pity that not all people could stay the whole length of the conference- Two days' programme?

Length of presentations: Any other comments?

- Good choice, good quality.
- Guidelines for presenters on presentations and preparations might be an advantage.
- In a number of occasions, too short. Mainly Felly's presentation was particularly interesting and we would have benefited from some extra time,

- Some were quite long but the majority appropriate. Some were quickly presented & slides changed quickly.
- The poster by G. Nold should have been given a 30-minute slot. So should the one by Neil Jones. Some other presentations (without data & results) should have been shorter or given as a poster.
- Presenters should restrict their talks more.
- People not keeping to time left little time for discussion.
- The length of the presentations was appropriate but in some cases there was not enough time for questions and/or comments.
- People should be told to shorten their presentations beforehand so they fit in half an hour.
- Appropriate, however, presenters should restrict their talks more.
- For me it was difficult to follow some of the presentations on a high theoretical level – but I think I have learned a lot.
- Even relatively disciplined presenters!

Number of presentations: Any other comments?

- The 10 minutes were too many otherwise appropriate.
- I really like the large number of presentations. I prefer to have short introductions into projects & research, than long (usually boring) elaborate presentations. With many short presentations you also get the opportunity to learn what the work of the other participants consists of, so that you also can define very quickly with who you'd prefer to speak a little more in breaks.
- Perhaps an idea could be re-shuffling the presentations one part of the day – one specific subject.
- Some of the presentations could have been much longer, some of the presenters tried to push too much information in a short time!
- A very nice range!

Quality of presentations: Any other comments?

- Presenters should be urged to rehearse their presentations in order to keep within their time limits. By rushing, important information is lost.
- I think people should be “discouraged” from “reading” their presentations.
- Timing sometimes a problem (by the presenters themselves).
- Often extremely good!
- Unified theme (CEF) leads to focused discussion – good. It also limits discussion – bad.
- Many presentations left no time for discussion. I really was disappointed in this. Even though the information we received was very clear about length of pres. And the time to be left over for discussion, many presenters used all their time just for presenting. Would it be an idea to limit the number of ppt-sheets to approx. 10? This “forces” a presenter to speak shorter, maybe.
- (Mixed) Better than the usual mixed bag though.
- Most part of the presentation did not reflect the topic of the conference. I thought we were speaking about professionalism and ethical problems in language testing. Which criteria were adopted to choose the presentations?
- It's a delicate balance between choice of presentations and plenary sessions, so impossible to please everyone all the time. Most of the presentations were excellent, though.

Opportunity for participation and discussion: Any other comments?

- Maybe small discussion groups (mixed) would be a good idea in between the presentations.
- Little but I think it's inevitable with this format.
- More time between presentations needed. However, there was lot of opportunities in coffee & lunch/evening to meet people & talk.
- Sometimes not enough time.
- It would have been helpful/useful for me to have an abstract of each presentation in advance. Eg. like the abstract we had to submit for the presentation. Fortunately, the long breaks offered time to discuss things.
- Due to the time constraint, there wasn't much time for discussion.
- Roundtable discussions would be nice. It is usually the same people that answer questions. In a small group people dare to speak sooner.

- It does seem to be the same people asking questions after each presentation. Is everybody else too shy or deferential to take part?

Panel discussion: Any other comments?

- Panel questions were interesting, but the panel members used too much time presenting their questions – consequently there was far too little time for discussion. So stricter time watching is necessary!
- Too varied and (therefore) too short.
- More time devoted to it in future. Maybe done at the beginning so that the conference has “themes”.
- Not a discussion . just individual mini-presentations.
- Not enough time after the panel.
- Since I could not put down the most important points, I am very keen to find ALL the visuals. Powerpoint at least, on the net.
- Questions could have been distributed at least one day before the presentations. This was more a series of presentations than a panel discussion. At a real panel discussion, panellists discuss common subjects: here, each of the experts was focusing on personal concerns. But almost all the presentations were highly interesting (enough for the Cracow conference!)
- Give it more time.
- Very interesting. HOWEVER! Such a pity: 5 very interesting statements, but only 45 minutes! In which 30 min was used for presenting the statements. Next time less statements, or maybe separate discussion groups for each statement? Also: handouts in advance with the statements would have been useful!
- I did not have time to stay that long.
- Interesting, but too short and too little focused. Needs to be improved OR not included.
- Very interesting, but some of the presentations had nothing to do with the panel topic. There is a need of coordination – TOO SHORT TIME! No discussion about topics that are on the LIST.
- Very interesting but too little time for discussion!
- Interesting but much (for my poor head!) at the end of 2,5 days of listening. Another place in the programme?
- Might be better at the beginning because 1) people are less tired, 2) they could focus the other discussions. TOO SHORT IT WAS!
- Interesting but was this really a panel DISCUSSION? The topics seemed rather wide-spread to me ...
- Too short! Not much time for real discussion following the introductions. Is the forum too large?

Posters: Any other comments?

- Too much text, too little print in most. Instruction on poster making might be a good idea.
- Some had too much information to absorb.
- Not all poster presenters had material to take away.
- I found several among the most interesting parts of the conference.
- Should you give more extensive guidelines? Most presenters try to put too much information on the posters in too small print. They should only include some challenging information that incites talk and discussions.
- Maybe a session for presenting each of the posters (5 minutes maximum).
- It would be good to have a session where each poster is very briefly presented.

Opportunity to learn: Any other comments?

- More an opportunity of exchanging ideas, procedures.
- Abstracts should have been included in the program. Bulletin board in the hall with announcements re program changes and room to put up messages for other participants.
- Abstracts in advance helps one to focus on the presentation and/or to make a choice to attend (or not) a presentation.
- Not such much about the topic of the conference.
- Learned most at the pre-conference seminar and new knowledge was useful to understand more of the technical aspects of the conference talks.
- I am new to testing bit didn't feel that very much of the conference was over my head – apart from the stats.

Annual General Meeting: Any other comments?

- Good!
- Very well prepared!
- Did I miss the election of the committee? (Not that I was hoping for any changes, rather I feared they may have been pressure for change.)

What in particular did you learn at this conference?

- About the state of the art of CEFR in Europe.
- What others do, where to turn with specific questions.
- About projects around the world. About “same” difficulties shared by other countries.
- About the complexities of calibrating the national and CEFR assessment systems. About interesting research on testing and test development.
- About “asset” languages – a new concept to me.
- Update on recent developments & projects in certain countries. Learned about new research.
- The complexity of the issue of testing and assessment & various aspects it can be approached.
- I was esp interested in the projects being carried out in different countries.
- Assessment should not be limited to “can dos”. Advantages/disadvantages of test/learner centred standard setting methods.
- The combination between ELP and CEFR.
- CEF task-orientation. Test-evaluation techniques.
- New ideas & methods to carry out empirical investigations.
- I am a newcomer in the Assessment Dept. I learned a lot on the whole.
- Meeting with people involved in language testing. Learning (in general) about many aspects in the field of language testing.
- That testing and assessing is a broad field.
- To be aware of the dangers and to show respect.
- As a curriculum developer I worried more about the connection between the curriculum and assessment in a European perspective.
- Many struggle with the same troubles.
- The European item bank. Examples of how tests are being related to the CEFR. Standard setting using test-centered/examinee-centered models. CEFR levels and language acquisition research. Work on ALTE standards.
- I got to know more interesting colleagues – stimulating!
- That there is a whole bunch of people out there we can cooperate with on quite a lot of aspects.
- That professional testing + assessment is extremely complex for non-expert testers who may have extensive teaching experience. Bu that if you don’t make the effort to find out more about this complex aspect and apply what you discover, an important part of the learning/teaching process will remain on shaky foundations.
- There is a lot going on in Europe in the field of language testing – interesting to see and hear where people focus.
- Too much to list. There was much to provoke thought, on and off the programme. I learned (or relearned) that testers are often very far removed from the realities of language learning. Only rarely did the test-takers become flesh.
- That there is hope for language testing in Europe.
- Language testing in Europe is slowly making progress and EALTA is a big help in this.

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

- Perhaps more thematic (type of schools/countries) research methods/skills/age groups, etc.
- Keep the balance of professionalism and friendliness – good humour.
- Very clear guidelines to presenters about timing & more time between each “slot” to allow for questions/discussion. No panel discussion.
- The Norwegian touch during the dinner was very good. Well done!!
- More panel discussions, on several issues that appear to be members’ current concerns.
- Focus on assessment of young learners.

- Quality on assessment and testing. Accreditation of certificates issued for foreign languages other than the mother tongue, being based on the specifications of CEFR.
- More about assessment of learning of mother tongue and the new target language immigrants have to learn.
- Please, “force” presenters to manage their time. Maybe you could ask them to formulate 1 or 2 questions they’d like to discuss with the audience (like some presenters did).
- I would be grateful for a longer list of alternative hotels and/or guesthouses. I couldn’t afford Fleischers but felt uncomfortable sharing a room in the hostel. When I walked around Voss I saw there were several hotels that were more affordable than Fleischers but there weren’t on the Internet so I couldn’t book them.
- CEFR
- Classroom testing. Linking to the CEF.
- To continue with having pre-conference workshops.
- To respect the topic of the conference. More time for panel discussion.
- I’d like to suggest that the presentations should be adequate to the main topic of the conference.
- Organise roundtables around certain subjects/focuses.
- To make sure EALTA doesn’t lose what currently makes it special – the individualism, the relaxed but busy programme, the range of subjects covered.
- A special session for young researchers where they can present their studies and get feedback on the study design, methodology, data analysis and reporting.
- As the theme is “Bridging the gap between theory and practice” several to-be.-bridged gaps would be useful to address: a) testing specialists – language teachers (large-scale testing – classroom testing), b) good practice in testing/assessment - actual practices; c) appropriate ethical standards of testing – actual (questionable) practices, d) appreciation of what (statistical) methods require from the data (= theory) – inappropriate use of (especially advanced) methods in practice. Perhaps these could be parallel sessions and perhaps some persons could be approached/encouraged to invite a group of presenters (in addition to submissions received) to discuss these gaps. Alternatively there could be a longish panel discussion in the early part of the conference initiate the discussion.