

EALTA's first summer school, entitled *Good Practice in Language Testing and Assessment: an Educational Perspective*, took place, as planned, from 28th June to 2<sup>nd</sup> July, in at the Norwegian Study Centre, University of York, UK. The school was attended by fifteen EALTA members from nine different countries representing the three constituencies our Association aims at serving: teachers, teacher trainers and testers. The programme for the week can be consulted on the web, together with this summary of the questionnaires filled by participants and some photos.

The programme, the sessions, the organisation and the venue can be considered a success, as they were all rated very highly by all participants. EALTA is extremely grateful for the generosity of the tutors and the coordinators, who were enthusiastic about the project from the very beginning, and to Dianne Wall who kindly accepted the invitation to chair an evening session.

Special thanks should go to the Norwegian Study Centre in York and to Angela Hasselgreen, its director, who were instrumental in the running of the school and in making sure everything went so smoothly.

Following suggestions from the participants, EALTA is studying the possibilities of organizing future summer schools, which will be advertised in due course.

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1. What is your view of the theme of the Summer School (*Good Practice in Language Testing and Assessment – An Educational Perspective*)?

Comments by participants refer to the relevance of the theme and go from “good” to “very useful and interesting”, to “perfect”. The following quote from a participant summarizes other responses to this first question “An apt choice at a moment when educators seem to be re-assessing their own views of learning and assessment.”

2. What is your opinion of the content of the programme?

The content of the programme is perceived as balanced, useful, appropriate and well structured. The programme is considered “broad enough-intense, useful”, and “a good mix of general and specific topics, presented in a “pedagogical order”. Some participants would have liked additional “non” compulsory sessions on specific issues.

### 3. How do you assess the quality of the training in general?

The opinions on the quality of the training go from “good” to “perfect” and “superb”. Participants valued very highly the tutors’ enthusiasm, commitment and professionalism.

### 4. Was the organization of the training appropriate?

The organization of the training was also perceived very positively, in terms of “duration, timing and location”, providing a good “mix of theory and practice”, although one participant would have liked a longer lunch break to be able to have a “cooked meal”!

### 5. Was the training useful for you?

Participants considered the training very useful making comments such as “it will inform my current practice with immediate effect”, or “an eye opener on many things to consider”, and valued discussions and hands-on materials.

### 6. What did you find particularly useful for you personally?

Amongst the topics found most useful by participants, three emerge in particular: information about testing in other countries, test development and interpretation of statistical analysis.

### 7. What did you find less useful for you personally?

Responses on the question of what was less useful reflect the variety of constituencies represented in the school. For some it was classroom assessment, for others statistical analyses, for others item writing, and for others the introduction to the CEFR. However, some participants also said that “Nothing in education and learning is less useful” and that “everything was of use”.

### 8. How much do you think you learned during the Summer School?

The general feeling is that the EALTA summer school was not only useful but necessary, and has been a rich source of learning. The participants are enthusiastic and would like it to be continued. “I have learned a lot, but I still want to learn more. So, I’m looking forward to a 2<sup>nd</sup> summer school”, “Much more than I had expected!” are comments that capture the participants’ opinions.

### 9. Did you have sufficient opportunity to discuss and participate?

The time for discussion during the school was very much appreciated by participants. They enjoyed the time they had to discuss with other participants and with the tutors, although one said “yes, but when one is so intellectually stimulated the time never seems enough and the questions just keep coming”

## 10. Did the trainers address the questions or problems you took up?

The tutors/trainers are very highly valued, not only because of their expertise but also because they willingly addressed the issues that concerned the participants, both academic and otherwise.

## 11. How did you find the atmosphere during the Summer School?

The atmosphere during the school was perceived as “great”, “excellent” and “cooperative”, as well as “motivating and challenging” and “relaxing and engaging”. The participants valued the fact that they felt part of the group; “Convivial, felt part of a group, of a community of language testing researchers”

## 12. How did you find the venue?

Responses concerning the venue and accommodation ranged from adequate to very good, the close proximity to York and entertainment being appreciated. With soaring temperatures during the first two days, some participants felt it was “too warm”.

## 13. Was the cost reasonable?

Very reasonable cost was considered another asset of the school. Some participants “would have been prepared to pay more” and considered it “excellent value for money”. Generally the participants thought that it was very reasonable and felt grateful to EALTA for that.

## 14. What, in particular, did you like about the Summer School?

The following quotes summarize the responses to this question

- a. chance to meet a lot of interesting people, learn about their work, new perspectives”;
- b. “it’s been technical without neglecting ethical, educational, political and more general perspectives”;
- c. “Tutors, sessions, participants and the opportunity to exchange opinions and knowledge”.

## 15. Do you think the Summer School activity should be continued?

All participants expect the summer school idea to be continued, and some specify that it should become an annual EALTA event, possible themes as well as venues were suggested and will be discussed in due course.