



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION
FOR LANGUAGE TESTING
AND ASSESSMENT

EALTA's second summer school, with the theme *Good Practice in Language Testing and Assessment: A Psychometric Perspective*, took place between 2nd and 10th August 2012, at the Department of Education and Special Education, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. The summer school was attended by twenty-five EALTA members from fourteen different countries representing different, partly overlapping, membership categories: those planning and conducting psychometric analyses of large-scale language tests, those interpreting and using the results of different analyses, teachers of methodology, and PhD students. The programme for the week can be consulted on the EALTA website, together with the Powerpoint presentations used by the tutors, a short list of selected references, this summary of the questionnaires completed by participants, and some photos.

EALTA is very grateful for the generosity of the tutors, Professors Norman Verhelst, Jan-Eric Gustafsson and John de Jong, and of the organizers, who all contributed to making the Summer School a successful and appreciated event. Special thanks go to the Department of Education and Special Education at the University of Gothenburg for hosting the Summer School.

On the last day of the Summer School the participants were asked to answer a short questionnaire consisting of 16 questions, the majority of which included four-point Likert scales. There were also four open-ended questions, and the participants were encouraged to comment on any aspect they found relevant.

The results of the questionnaire will be presented with data from the Likert scales, a selection of quotations in connection with some of the questions, and with a few concluding remarks.

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Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions about the 2nd EALTA Summer School, by indicating your opinion on the Likert scales and by commenting briefly in your own words. You can answer anonymously. Your responses will be treated confidentially, but we may quote some of them and delete, if appropriate, any reference, which may reveal the identity of the respondent. Your answers will be very valuable for the assessment of the 2nd Summer School as well as for our planning ahead.

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

Excellent — — — — *Very poor* ($m = 3.83$)
 19 4 0 0

- *Good choice!*
- *Very interesting topic. Very much needed for people who come from a language teaching background.*

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

Excellent $\frac{\quad}{7}$ $\frac{\quad}{13}$ $\frac{\quad}{2}$ $\frac{\quad}{1}$ **Very poor** ($m = 3.13$)

- *I think it would have been better to stay with CTT and IRT and include more hands-on activities and focus on the participants' working context, and exclude the standard setting sessions. Standard setting would deserve a stand-alone Summer School week.*
- *I can categorize the last 5 days in two: **1:** IRT, which is far too advanced for myself, but I still picked the general idea and how and where to use it; **2:** Standard Setting, which I am more interested and involved in. I really benefitted from the Standard Setting sessions.*

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

Excellent $\frac{\quad}{7}$ $\frac{\quad}{12}$ $\frac{\quad}{2}$ $\frac{\quad}{1}$ **Very poor** ($m = 3.14$)

- *Good in general!*
- *Could have been better with more interaction and a more applied perspective.*

4. Was the organization of the training appropriate?

Yes, definitely $\frac{\quad}{17}$ $\frac{\quad}{4}$ $\frac{\quad}{2}$ $\frac{\quad}{0}$ **No, definitely not** ($m = 3.65$)

- *Excellent!*
- *More hands-on work would have been good.*

5. Was the training useful for you?

Yes, definitely $\frac{\quad}{10}$ $\frac{\quad}{8}$ $\frac{\quad}{5}$ $\frac{\quad}{0}$ **No, definitely not** ($m = 3.22$)

- *Yes, definitely!*
- *I think I will have some trouble transferring the theory into practice of daily work. However, it was good to hear this once again and understand some more of it.*

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

- *IRT and OPLM! Rasch*
- *CMT*
- *Standard setting (especially first half)*
- *Getting to know people; Discussions with colleagues*

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

- *IRT formulae*
- *Standard setting (second half)*

- CMT; simple SPSS
- The lecture format

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

Very much $\frac{\quad}{6}$ $\frac{\quad}{12}$ $\frac{\quad}{4}$ $\frac{\quad}{1}$ **Very little** ($m = 3.00$)

- I have learned a lot. I am going back with some luggage of inspirational ideas.
- Quite a lot, but I think it also depends on your previous training.
- Maybe not very much, but my knowledge will improve when I get home and start reading the literature.
- I think I would have learned much more had it been a bit more simple and contextualized. Less is more...

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

Yes, definitely $\frac{\quad}{13}$ $\frac{\quad}{6}$ $\frac{\quad}{4}$ $\frac{\quad}{0}$ **No, definitely not** ($m = 3.39$)

- After the sessions / during the breaks.
- In the sense that we could ask questions. However, the sessions could have been much more task based.
- Better if also time for discussions in small groups.

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

Yes, definitely $\frac{\quad}{13}$ $\frac{\quad}{7}$ $\frac{\quad}{0}$ $\frac{\quad}{0}$ **No, definitely not** ($m = 3.65$)

- Yes, definitely!
- Very little was said about what is good practice in language testing from a psychometrics perspective. Everything was focused on models.

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

Excellent $\frac{\quad}{22}$ $\frac{\quad}{1}$ $\frac{\quad}{0}$ $\frac{\quad}{0}$ **Very poor** ($m = 3.96$)

- Very good atmosphere among all participants.
- I am glad that I have come!
- Very nice group of people and we were looked after really well! Thank you so much!

12. How did you find the venue?

Excellent $\frac{\quad}{21}$ $\frac{\quad}{2}$ $\frac{\quad}{0}$ $\frac{\quad}{0}$ **Very poor** ($m = 3.91$)

- A lovely city, a nice and convenient room.
- What a beautiful building + city. Thank!
- Very good facilities.

13. Was the cost reasonable?

Yes, definitely — — — — No, definitely not ($m = 3.87$)
20 3 0 0

- Made it possible and affordable for those who pay for themselves to participate.
- Definitely reasonable.

14. What, in particular, will you remember from the 2012 Summer School?

- A great experience and excellent opportunity for professional development and networking.
- Having met such nice people who have similar aspirations and problems of the field.
- Trying to figure out what IRT is about and how I could use it in my everyday work.
- The discussion on the principles of IRT and its consequences/restrictions.
- Trust your own honesty, don't be afraid of formulae, keep studying! You get as much from any course as you put in!
- The good organisation, the good atmosphere in the course between participants, teachers and organisers; And the city!
- Snacks and fruit; definitely! The organization of the course was very good, with the breaks, starting and ending times, technical output was all very satisfying!
- Lovely atmosphere; the hospitality of the organizers; Styrösö Skäret! ☺

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

Yes, definitely — — — — No, definitely not ($m = 4.0$)
24 0 0 0

- Yes, definitely! It is a very good idea, and it has a lot of potential.
- It is a very good way to understand more of the theory and talk about it with others.
- PLEASE! ☺
- Maybe every year!
- Would most welcome to attend a 3rd summer school, especially with some further training on SPSS

16. Do you have any suggestions for the future (theme, organization, programme, dates, length.....)?

- Item Writing (how to create valid and reliable test tasks/items; various test tasks/techniques suited to use of English; Testing Reading and Listening at HIGH levels.
- Step-by-step work on item analyses; Use of SPSS; June or first week of August.
- Item / test analysis for small numbers, e.g. classrooms
- Ethical implications in tests for immigrants; impact/washback; validity
- Factor analysis; Path analysis where we learn how to do it; how to use Amos

- *More psychometrics but a lower level; More on standard setting; perhaps we could go through a whole circle of standard setting ourselves?*
- *The participants had quite different levels of proficiency at stats models and knowledge of mathematics. A more detailed intro about what the speakers will be expecting from the audience could have been useful.*
- *Training could be based more on case studies and in general practical application of the notions and theories.*
- *More discussions/work in small groups. Deliver the list of literature in advance.*
- *“How to bring theory into practice” (I missed the good practices a bit; length (pretty) good.*
- *More of CEFR and Standard Setting (more detailed)*
- *Same length and organization; August is a good time*
- *Summer School every year; More hands-on training after a theoretical model has been presented; Ask participants to have done some basic reading prior to course.*

Many thanks!

- *And even more thanks to you for organizing this!*
- *Thank you once more for an excellent organization, well-thought distribution between three knowledgeable trainers.*
- *Gudrun and Marianne: you were great! You did a very good job. I really hope to see you in the near future. Looking forward to getting together in the next EALTA event!*
 - *Thank you so much for the way you have organized the course!*
- *Thank you very much for your kindness and willingness! Everything perfectly organized!*
 - *Thanks a lot for this lovely organization!*

Concluding remarks

The 2nd EALTA Summer School was rated very highly, with a mean value of 3.56 on the four-point Likert scale questions (range: 3.0-4.0), and received many positive comments by the participants, regarding content and organization as well as atmosphere and venue. There were also suggestions on possible improvements: more hands-on work would have been appreciated by some of the participants, as would suggested readings ahead of the course. In some cases, participants considered the level of difficulty higher than expected, in spite of a short self-assessment material included in the application form.

EALTA is very grateful for the large number of constructive suggestions given by the participants regarding both content and form of future Summer Schools, which can hopefully be offered to the wide membership of the association.