ALTE
Association of Language Testers in Europe

47th ALTE Meeting and Conference

47ma Conferenza ALTE

The Concept of Quality in Language Assessment

Il Concetto di Qualità nella Valutazione Linguistica

11th – 13th November 2015 | *11 – 13 novembre 2015*

Hosted by CVCL (Centro per la Valutazione e le Certificazioni Linguistiche), Università per Stranieri di Perugia

CVCL CENTRO VALUTAZIONE CERTIFICAZIONI LINGUISTICHE
Università per Stranieri Perugia

Università per Stranieri di Perugia

Programme | *Programma*

Messaggio di benvenuto

A nome della Università per Stranieri di Perugia e del CVCL (Centro per la Valutazione e le Certificazioni Linguistiche) abbiamo il piacere di darvi il benvenuto alla 47ma Conferenza ALTE in Perugia, Italia, 11–13 novembre 2015.

Il concetto di qualità e come poterla garantire nei vari settori ai quali può essere applicata sta divenendo sempre più pressante ed importante all'interno della società odierna. L'uso che viene fatto dei test linguistici ed il loro impatto a livello sociale ed educativo richiedono oggi, a chi si occupa in modo professionale di questo specifico settore, l'applicazione di standard a garanzia della qualità dei test ed evidenze della loro corretta applicazione. L'associazione Europea ALTE ha garantito un importante contributo in questo campo elaborando uno specifico Sistema di Controllo della Qualità che è stato poi adottato ed applicato dai Membri dell'Associazione. Nel corso della conferenza verranno discussi problemi, implicazioni e conseguenze relativamente all'applicazione di standard di settore al processo di produzione di test linguistici.

Ci auguriamo che, nel corso dei prossimi giorni, questo argomento possa stimolare presentazioni, workshop e discussioni.

Vorremmo ringraziare tutti coloro che hanno contribuito alla organizzazione di questo evento: il CVCL, l'Università per Stranieri e la Segreteria ALTE.

A tutti Voi l'augurio di partecipare ad un convegno interessante e di trascorrere un piacevole soggiorno a Perugia!

IL DIRETTORE DEL CENTRO
d.lgs.39/1993
(prof.ssa Giuliana Grego Bolli)

Giuliana Grego Bolli
Professore di Glottologia e Linguistica e Direttore del CVCL | Professor of Glottology and Linguistics and Director of CVCL

Welcome message

On behalf of the University for Foreigners of Perugia and CVCL (Centre for Language Assessment and Certification) we have the pleasure of welcoming you to the 47th ALTE Meeting and Conference in Perugia, Italy, 11th–13th November 2015.

The concept of quality and how it can be assured in different domains is becoming more and more important in contemporary society. An understanding of the use of language tests and their social and educational impact helps professional people in this area to apply standards that guarantee tests of quality and fitness for purpose. ALTE has given an important contribution in this field through the elaboration of its Quality Management System and its application among its Members. The conference will discuss issues and implications related to the application of standards to the testing process.

We look forward to stimulating presentations, workshops and discussions on this topic over the next few days.

We would like to thank all those who have assisted in the organisation of this event: CVCL, the University for Foreigners of Perugia and the ALTE Secretariat.

We wish you an interesting conference and a pleasant stay in Perugia!

Nick Saville
ALTE Manager | ALTE Manager

ALTE 47th Meeting & Conference, Perugia, November 2015

Wednesday 11th November, 2015

All sessions will take place at Pallazzo Gallenga, Piazza Fortebraccio, Perugia, Italy.

Time	Session	Room
8.45-9.00	*Registration*	**First floor, Palazzo Gallenga**
9.00-11.15	**Standing Committee Meeting** (elected members of committee only)	**Sala del Consiglio**
11.00-11.15	*Coffee*	**Sala Goldoni**
11.15-13.15	**Standing Committee Meeting continues**	**Sala del Consiglio**
13.15-14.30	*Lunch*	**Sala Goldoni**
14.30-16.00	**Executive Committee Meeting** (elected members of committee only)	**Sala del Consiglio**
16.00-16.15	*Coffee*	**Sala Goldoni**
16.15-18.00	**Executive Committee Meeting continues**	**Sala del Consiglio**

ALTE 47ᵗʰ Meeting & Conference, Perugia, November 2015

Thursday 12ᵗʰ November, 2015

All sessions will take place at Pallazzo Gallenga, Piazza Fortebraccio, Perugia, Italy.

Time	Session	Room
8.30-9.00	*Registration*	**First floor, Palazzo Gallenga**
9.00-9.30	**Official Opening**	**Aula Magna**
9.30-11.00	**Parallel SIGs**	
	QMS Working Group (any ALTE delegate)	**Aula V**
	Teacher Training SIG (any ALTE delegate)	**Aula VI**
	LSP SIG (any ALTE delegate)	**Aula VII**
11.00-11.30	*Coffee*	**Sala Goldoni**
11.30-13.00	**Parallel SIGs**	
	YAL SIG (any ALTE delegate)	**Aula V**
	CEFR SIG (any ALTE delegate)	**Aula VI**
	LAMI SIG (any ALTE delegate)	**Aula VII**
	Special Requirements and Circumstances SIG (any ALTE delegate)	**Aula VIII**
13.00-14.00	*Lunch*	**Sala Goldoni**
14.00-15.30	**Parallel Workshops**	
	Workshop 1 jMetrik: Free software for measurement in language testing *Dominique Casanova, La Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de région Paris-Île-de-France (CCI Paris Île-de-France)*	**Aula V**
	Workshop 2 Qualitative methods of exam validation *Cathy Taylor, Trinity College London*	**Aula VI**
15.30-16.00	*Coffee*	**Sala Goldoni**
16.00-17.30	**Workshops continue**	
17.40-19.00	*Guided Tour of the Historic Centre of Perugia*	**Pick up at Palazzo Gallenga**
19.30	*Gala Dinner*	**Palazzo Gallenga**

ALTE 47th Meeting & Conference, Perugia, November 2015

Friday 13th November, 2015

The Concept of Quality in Language Assessment

All sessions will take place in Aula Magna at Pallazzo Gallenga, Piazza Fortebraccio, Perugia, Italy.

Time	Session	
8.30-9.00	*Registration*	
9.00-9.30	**Opening Addresses:** *Prof Giovanni Paciullo, Rector of University for Foreigners of Perugia*	
	SESSION 1: QUALITY IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES	
9.30-9.50	**Opening Plenary:** What is quality and why does it matter? *Dr Nick Saville, ALTE Manager*	
9.50-10.30	**Panel 1: Why does quality matter?** Moderator: *Prof Giuliana Grego Bolli, CVCL*	**Quality in health care**, *Sergio García García, Hospital Clinic of Barcelona, Spain* **Quality in aviation**, *Neil Bullock, Swiss Federal Office of Civil Aviation* **Quality in education**, *Gisella Langé, MIUR*
10.30-11.00	*Coffee*	
	SESSION 2: QUALITY IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION	
11.00-11.20	**Plenary:** Quality in language education and the role of the ECML, *Sarah Breslin, ECML*	
	SESSION 3: QUALITY IN LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT	
11.20-11.40	**Plenary:** Raising standards in language assessment: the ALTE QMS and the Q-mark *Dr Michaela Perlmann-Balme, Chair of the Standing Committee*	
11.40-12.20	**Panel 2: How did the ALTE QMS help your examinations improve?** Moderator: *Dr Michaela Perlmann-Balme, Chair of the Standing Committee*	Administration and logistics *Julia Todorinova, Sofia University* Training of raters, *Prof Giuliana Grego Bolli, CVCL* Test analysis, *Henk Kuijper, ALTE Auditor* Results of ALTE Q-mark impact study *Vincent Folny, CIEP*
12.20-12.45	**Discussion and Questions**	
12.45-13.00	**Closure**	
13.00-14.00	*Lunch*	
14.00- 15.30	**Parallel Workshops**	
	Workshop 1 jMetrik: Free software for measurement in language testing *Dominique Casanova, La Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de région Paris-Île-de-France (CCI Paris Île-de-France)*	
	Workshop 2 Qualitative methods of exam validation, *Cathy Taylor, Trinity College London*	
15.30-16.00	*Coffee*	
16.00-17.30	**Workshops continue**	

Abstracts/Biographies

Dominique Casanova, La Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de région Paris-Île-de-France (CCI Paris Île-de-France), France

Workshop abstract: jMetrik: Free software for measurement in language testing

Psychometric software has long been commercialised, and specialised programmes require a bit of programming to handle item analyses. Since the late 2000s, different free programmes have been made available, notably through R packages. Nevertheless, they are still not accessible to people without programming skills and their documentation is usually very technical.

jMetrik is a free and open source computer programme for psychometric analysis, implementing classical and Item Response Theory (IRT) methods, developed by J. Patrick Meyer (University of Virginia). It focuses on established psychometric procedures that are commonly employed in operational testing programmes. Its Graphical User Interface makes it a user-friendly tool to conduct item analyses without having to enter any code.

jMetrik is well documented thanks to the textbook *Applied Measurement with jMetrik* which provides a useful introduction to psychometric methods and step-by-step instruction on how to implement it in jMetrik.

This workshop will give an overview of jMetrik methods for item analyses in the context of language testing, based on a sample of data. jMetrik can be downloaded at **http://www.jmetrik.com/**. jMetrik has been used in the Centre de langue française since late 2014.

Biodata

Dominique Casanova is responsible for psychometrics and IT development at La Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de région Paris-Île-de-France (CCI Paris Île-de-France). An Engineer in Computer Science and Applied Mathematics, he has been involved in the development of the quality management system of Test d'Evaluation de Français (TEF) since 2005. He co-authored various articles concerning aspects of TEF which are available (in French) at **http://www.francais.cci-paris-idf.fr/articles/** and is co-chair of the ALTE Quality Management System Group.

Cathy Taylor, Trinity College London, UK

Workshop abstract: Qualitative methods of exam validation

'Validity is the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores for proposed uses of tests' (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association and National Council on Measurement in Education, 2014:11). Since the 1990s our understanding of validity has broadened to view the concept as an 'argument', encompassing all aspects of a test. As testers it is our responsibility to prove that our tests represent the claims we make about them.

This workshop will open with an overview of validity and key issues for testers, followed by a demonstration of O'Sullivan's (2011) re-conceptualisation of Weir's socio-cognitive framework for small scale, qualitative research. This framework considers the test taker, test and scoring systems, which allows researchers to investigate a wide range of validity issues from different angles. Participants will practise using the framework on a Trinity College London Graded Examination in Spoken English (GESE) (speaking and listening) exam.

The final section of the workshop will be a discussion of other qualitative validation methods.

Biodata

Cathy Taylor has worked in language teaching and testing for over 20 years. At various times she has taught English in SE Asia and Europe, been a Director of Studies and teacher trainer. Since 2005, she has worked at Trinity College London as Head of Test Production, English language, and is currently Head of examiner training and standardisation.

Dr Nick Saville, ALTE Manager, UK

Plenary abstract: What is quality and why does it matter?

High quality is not contentious. Everybody agrees that it is a good thing – whether it relates to a car, a new pair of shoes or the service we get at the restaurant. But what is quality and how can we recognise it when selecting a product or service to meet our needs?

In education, this question can only be answered effectively if the service provider explains clearly what they do and can demonstrate that it is "fit for purpose". This would apply to the work of a ministry, a school, a university department or an examination provider.

To illustrate this, the speaker will outline the convergence between quality and validity in language assessment. He will argue that quality management (QM) provides the basis for guaranteeing the consistency of the processes that underpin a validity argument and provides tools for linking theoretical concerns with the practical realities of setting up assessment systems.

Biodata

Nick Saville is a member of the Cambridge English Senior Management Team and is responsible for directing the work of the Research and Thought Leadership Group. He holds a PhD from the University of Bedfordshire in language test impact, and degrees in Linguistics and in TEFL from the University of Reading.

Nick is the elected Manager of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) and has close involvement with European initiatives, including the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). A long-term research interest is the implementation of quality management systems (QMS) into assessment.

He is a member of the Cambridge University team responsible for setting up the University's Institute for Automated Language Teaching and Assessment. The latter involves the building of large learner corpora and the application of computational linguistics and machine learning in developing automated tutoring and assessment systems.

He was a founding associate editor of the journal Language Assessment Quarterly and is the joint editor of both the English Profile Studies and Studies in Language Testing (SiLT) series. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees for The International Research Foundation for English Language Education (TIRF).

Panel 1: Why does quality matter?

Sergio García García, Hospital Clinic of Barcelona, Spain

Panel abstract: Quality in health care

None would question the importance of quality in health care, but how is this quality assured in the practice? Quality in health care is closely linked to the concept of safety. There exist many international and national regulations that outline and monitor the design and implementation of quality assurance mechanisms. The World Health Organization, among other institutions, issues quality reports and provide guidelines and recommendations to ensure an appropriate medical care. National and local governments regulate health care providers and services, basing their legislation on international standardization normatives, such as ISO, which ensures their health systems will not only adhere to high quality standards but also hold the highest international quality certificates.

Neurosurgery is a challenging discipline where there is no detail considered too trivial to be taken into account. This presentation will briefly show how quality and safety influence our daily medical practice, in an effort to help patients cope in the best possible way with the threatening disease they are facing.

Biodata

Sergio García García studied medicine at the University of Valladolid (Spain). As part of his medical training, he attended several medical exchange programs and clinical fellowships in Lithuania, Mexico and Tunisia. He was also president of the Intern Students Academy, a university organization conducting lectures, research programs and emergency training for other young doctors. Currently, Sergio is finishing his specialization working as a neurosurgeon at Hospital Clinic of Barcelona, and is engaged in several research projects in neurooncology, neurotrauma and the implementation of new technologies.

Neil Bullock, Swiss Federal Office of Civil Aviation, Switzerland

Panel abstract: Quality in aviation

We all expect quality from the services we use. In the aviation world the idea of quality is synonymous with safety. Safety is therefore the driver of quality assurance. But how does managing safety provide this de facto insurance of quality?

This short talk will show how the principles of identifying hazards and managing the risks involved in the world of aviation has led to the evolution of Safety Management and Compliance Monitoring concepts. Using the example of how a language proficiency testing system for pilots was developed, I will show how such concepts are defined and put into practice to ensure both quality and safety.

Biodata

Neil Bullock worked for over 20 years in Air Traffic Control and Airside Operations in the UK. Based near Lausanne in Switzerland, he now works as an independent English teacher and test development specialist in the aviation world. Having recently completed a 2nd MA, in Applied Linguistics with Birmingham University, Neil is also involved in rater training, test development and exam administration on behalf of the Swiss Federal Office of Civil Aviation as well as an aviation English teacher and English Language Proficiency for Aeronautical Communication (ELPAC) examiner for the air traffic control organisation, Skyguide. He is currently TEA SIG co-ordinator for the English Teachers Association of Switzerland, committee member of the IATEFL TEASIG and an active member of ALTE and the International Civil Aviation English Association.

Gisella Langé, Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca (MIUR), Italy

Panel abstract: Quality in education

Touching on the current debate concerning quality in world organizations (OECD, UNESCO, etc.,), I will explore two strands. In the first I will analyze European Union policies and strategic objectives for education: competence-based approaches, standard setting and benchmarking, innovative methodologies, student-centered activities. The aim throughout is to promote citizenship and common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education.

In the second strand I will focus on the importance of frameworks/tools of reference that help in defining "content" (materials, curriculum, learning outcomes, etc.,), "environment", and "processes" that involve learners, teachers and administrators. Research briefs, international comparisons, country examples, self-reflection sheets, etc. are tools which can be used in implementing quality policy levers. I will also consider key implementation areas as suggested in the study *Assuring Quality in Education: Policies and Approaches to School Evaluation in Europe* recently published by Eurydice.

To conclude, I will emphasize the importance of favouring supervision and support by administrators assisting, guiding and supporting headteachers and teachers in enhancing the quality of experiences in their schools.

Biodata

Gisella Langé is a Foreign Languages Inspector with the Italian Ministry of Education, advising on internationalisation and foreign languages. A researcher, writer and consultant on issues relating to Foreign Language teaching, curriculum development and intercultural education, she has vast experience of working on culture and language learning solutions and web-based teacher training. An expert within the European Commission and the Council of Europe, thematic groups, studies and projects she has been involved with include language policies, early language learning and bilingual education. She is currently involved in national groups and committees organized by the Ministry of Education on primary teacher training, national guidelines and CLIL.

Sarah Breslin, European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe (ECML), Austria

Plenary abstract: Quality in language education and the role of the ECML

In this presentation Sarah will outline the Council of Europe's definition of 'quality education' and demonstrate how this concept shapes and guides all aspects of the work of the ECML, a Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe, based in Graz, Austria.

Sarah will exemplify quality language education at macro level through the centre's vision, values and programme rationale (past, present and future), at meso level through the centre's structure and systems, its evaluation scheme and its approaches to partnership working, and at micro level with examples of individual projects, resources and other services in the field of language education, such as ECML Training and Consultancy provided by the centre to member states.

Biodata

Sarah Breslin is Executive Director of the ECML. A passionate linguist with a thorough understanding of policy and practice in language education, Sarah began her career as an EFL teacher and has held various teaching and management positions in different sectors and countries (further and higher education, qualification awarding bodies and government bodies supporting schools). Before taking up the post as Executive Director of the ECML, Sarah was Director of SCILT, Scotland's National Centre for Languages, and of the Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools.

Dr Michaela Perlmann-Balme, Goethe-Institut, Germany

Plenary abstract: Raising standards in language assessment:
the ALTE QMS and the Q-mark

Quality standards have gained importance in many areas. Since the mid-1990s ALTE has devoted a lot of resources to raising quality in language examinations in Europe. It has formulated 17 standards and implemented a comprehensive quality management system.

This presentation will describe the concept and practicalities of managing this system. It will discuss achievements as well as challenges.

Biodata

Michaela Perlmann-Balme holds a PhD from Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU) and has taught German as a foreign language at the University of Otago, New Zealand. She is currently the representative of Goethe-Institut for ALTE and the Chair of the Standing Committee. She was responsible for the German tests in the European Survey on Language Competences (SurveyLang), which investigated foreign language achievements of learners in schools around Europe, and has coordinated the development of the German test for migrants Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer.

Panel 2: How did the ALTE QMS help your examination improve?

Julia Todorinova, Sofia University, Bulgaria

Panel abstract: Administration and logistics

The presentation covers the main focus points which should be accounted for in relation to administration and logistics of examinations. This includes: selection of examination centres; administration of examinations; registering for the examination; entry procedures and requirements for candidates; exam administration guidelines; procedures for the conduct of the examination; guarantee of confidentiality and secrecy of examination materials; communication with examination centres (administrative matters and training, post-examination arrangements, provisions on results and certificates, quality control of service); inspection systems; monitoring procedures; special circumstances (arrangements for candidates with special needs) and dealing with malpractice (cheating, plagiarism, wrong person, etc). The presentation describes how ALTE minimum standards pertaining to this area together with the two conducted ALTE audits assisted us to successfully address the requirements and ensure that our candidates and other stakeholders receive a high quality of service.

Biodata

Julia Todorinova is a Senior Lecturer at Sofia University, in the Department for Language Teaching. She is now Head of the Test Centre responsible for the development, administration and validation of the Standardized Test in Bulgarian as a Foreign Language. She was involved in European funded projects related to testing Bulgarian as a second language, and distance learning in higher education. She has been the representative of Sofia University for ALTE since 2007. She is a member of the ALTE Standing and Executive Committees, Chair of the Quality Management System Working Group and an ALTE Auditor. Her main area of interest is language testing, particularly in relation to test fairness.

Prof Giuliana Grego Bolli, Centro per la Valutazione e le Certificazioni Linguistiche (CVCL), Italy

Panel abstract: How the ALTE QMS helped the CELI examinations improve in relation to the Training of raters

The presentation will briefly report how the application of the ALTE QMS procedures, in terms of inter and intra rater analysis, has been extremely useful in the training of the raters of the writing component making them aware of their behaviour, leniency or harshness through different sessions and providing the opportunity for discussion and further training, improving their performances.

Biodata

Prof Giuliana Grego Bolli is currently Director of The Centre for Language Assessment and Certification at the University for Foreigners of Perugia. She is particularly interested in issues related to the concept of quality in Language Testing and its application to the testing process. She is interested also in the use of language tests in the immigration context. Prof Grego Bolli has lectured for many years on various aspect of language testing and on the CELI (Language Certificates in Italian) testing system she contributed to elaborate in the 1990s on behalf of the university. She has taught Language Testing at Perugia since the first decade of this century. She is author and co-author of more than forty publications in the area of language assessment.

Henk Kuijper, ALTE Auditor, The Netherlands

Panel abstract: Test analysis

In 2001, the initiative was taken to develop an ALTE Quality Management System (QMS). This initiative led to many questions, vivid discussions and even fears. One of the main issues for ALTE Members was the fact that data analysis was not well developed in many of the ALTE Member's examinations. In 2007, the first audits were executed and since then all Members as well as new Members have been audited for at least one of their examinations. I will give a short reflection on the influence of the QMS on the quality of test analysis eight years after the first round of auditing the ALTE examinations started.

Biodata

Henk Kuijper is an ALTE Auditor. Until 2013 he was senior consultant at CITO. He was involved in projects for language testing development for Dutch as a second language and Dutch as a mother tongue in adult and vocational education and in international consultancy projects for language testing. In ALTE he participated in the development of the ALTE QMS. He also was a member of the ALTE Standing Committee for Quality Management, the ALTE Executive Committee and the ALTE LAMI SIG.

Vincent Folny, Centre international d'études pédagogiques (CIEP), France

Panel abstract: Results of the ALTE Q-mark impact study

The ALTE Quality Management System (QMS) was implemented during the last two decades and ALTE Q-mark was one of the outcomes of that policy. As the ALTE Q-mark aims to promote and develop the quality of language exams in Europe, and has audited a large number of exams with great effort from ALTE Members, it is time to investigate the way the Q-mark and the QMS are impacting European language exams. In 2014, CIEP, and its Cellule Qualité et Expertises (CQE), built a first impact study. A questionnaire was designed and ALTE Members were invited to complete this questionnaire. Methodology of this impact study, and its results and interpretation, will be discussed during the roundtable. Outcomes from this study can raise awareness of the most common European language exams' strengths and weaknesses, the different challenges for small and large organisations, and what further steps can be taken in the future to maintain or enhance quality.

Biodata

Vincent Folny has been working at Centre international d'études pédagogiques (CIEP) for nine years, the benchmark public operator for the Ministry of National Education, which is dedicated to the promotion and the certification of the French language. At CIEP, he is the pedagogical supervisor of the Cellule Qualité et Expertise (CQE) within the Evaluation and Certifications Department (DEC). He is in charge of monitoring and supervising CIEP's test quality. He also takes part in the establishment of language tests in Europe and worldwide. Vincent Folny takes part in ALTE association meetings, in which he has been a member of several committees for many years.

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ALTE Association of Language Testers in Europe

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