

ENLTA / EALTA survey on language assessment

Need for training:

Which were the activities or areas of testing where the perceived need was the greatest in different parts of Europe?

In the following we report to what extent the respondents from different regions of Europe perceived to have the same needs for training at the level of specific assessment activities. The results are presented in terms of a grouping which divides Europe into eight geographical areas:

- 1 = Northern Europe (Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark)
- 2 = Baltic region (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania)
- 3 = Western Europe (Ireland, UK, France, Belgium, Netherlands)
- 4 = Central Europe (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Poland, Czech rep., Slovakia.)
- 5 = South-Eastern Europe (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia, Greece, Turkey)
- 6 = Eastern Europe (Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan)
- 7 = Southern Europe (Portugal, Spain, Malta, Italy, Andorra)

Table 1 and 2 below summarise the findings. Both tables present the ten assessment activities per region for which the highest number of respondents reported need for further training. No attempt is made here to distinguish basic and more advanced training, rather they are treated together (for a breakdown by region of those who needed basic vs. advanced training, see the section ‘Charts & descriptions, activity by activity’ elsewhere in this website).

Because of the fact that it was possible for the respondents to answer only some of the questions in the survey questionnaire and leave others unanswered, it is not straightforward to estimate the proportion of respondents who reported a need for further training in the assessment activities listed in the questionnaire. For that reason, two sets of results are presented here.

Table 1 is based on the percentages of respondents from each region who responded to at least one question in Part 1 of the questionnaire. These respondents thus had a chance to express their need for training; if they left an activity unanswered the interpretation may be that they did not want training in that particular activity, otherwise they would have responded to it. However, because the above is an assumption only and may underestimate the number / proportion of respondents who needed further training, another set of results is also presented. (Table 1 also reports the results for non-European respondents, just out of curiosity.)

Table 2 is based on the percentages calculated from the number of respondents who actually answered to the particular activity and stated whether they needed no training, basic training or

more advance training in the activity described. The resulting percentages are thus higher than those in Table 1. It is difficult to say which ones are more accurate and thus it is useful to look at both tables together (and also compare the figures with the findings presented in Part 1 of the EALTA survey report by Hasselgren et al. (2004). Note that further details on the respondents' need for training is found in this website under 'Charts & descriptions, activity by activity' for the training needs.

Table 3 gives the exact percentages for all assessment activities that are reported for only the top ten activities in Table 2 (Table 3 is thus based on the same calculation of proportions as Table 2).

To give an example on how to read the information in the tables, the first entry in Table 1 indicates that 70% of the Northern European (Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Icelandic) respondents who accessed the Teachers' Questionnaire stated that they would like to receive either basic or advanced training in the use of the European Language Portfolio or any other type of portfolio. The second entry in the first row indicates that 63% of them needed training in using self and peer assessment. Sometimes, if the percentage of respondents was exactly the same for two or more activities, the cells in the table have been merged to indicate that the activities presented share the same rank.

Which are the activities in which the need for training appears to be the most frequent?

Certain trends emerge from Table 1 and 2. Firstly, when we look at the magnitude of the figures, those in Table 1 are lower than in Table 2, simply because they were calculated differently (see above). Typically, the percentages are 15 – 20 units higher in Table 2. Whichever table we look at, it is evident that the demand for education in these selected assessment activities is high, often over 80 or 90%.

Secondly, it can be seen that respondents from certain regions reported a need for training more often than respondents from other regions. As already established elsewhere in this report, the lower level of need for training by the Western European teachers in our survey also manifests itself clearly in this analysis of the needs. Even the most 'popular' topics for training receive 50% (or 70%, depending on the table) ratings. In contrast, teachers from the Baltic countries showed very high level of 'interest' in the top ten activities. The other regions do not differ very clearly from each other when we look at the percentages in the two tables (in particular, in Table 2).

Thirdly, we can see which particular activities are singled out, in each region, as the main targets for training. **In which activities did the respondents (who were mainly teachers) want training? How much variation was there across Europe?**

It is clear from both Tables that there is a great demand for training in the use of **portfolio** type of assessment. It is the number one activity in four or five of the seven European regions, and appears in the top ten list for all the other regions, too, except for non-European respondents. Several other classroom-focused assessment activities also appear on the list, such as use of **self and peer assessment, continuous, non-test type of assessment, and interpretation of test results**, in particular. Giving feedback and making one's own tests can also be seen among the top ten activities but less often.

The second clear cluster of activities where teachers feel the need for more training are the concepts and tools for studying and establishing the quality of tests and assessments: **reliability, validity, and the use of statistics**. In most cases, the percentage of teachers who would like to get more training in these matters is only slightly lower than the percentage of those who need training in the classroom-related activities.

Of the purposes and content of assessment, **integrated testing and testing receptive and productive skills** were also among the high-ranking activities.

Of the activities associated with external test and examinations, **defining criteria** in particular but also writing and reviewing items appeared on the list a few times. It is mentioned elsewhere in this report that it is not altogether clear how the respondents have interpreted the meaning of ‘defining criteria’; it may be that part of the interest in receiving training in this activity may be that it can often be an activity in which the teachers are engaged anyway, outside the context of external testing

