The Language Testing Research Colloquium and The International Language Testing Association: Beginnings

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by Dan Douglas

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On the occasion of the 10th LTRC, held at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Lyle Bachman and Adrian Palmer, Co-chairs, wrote the following remembrance, which was originally published in the conference program.

A Short History of LTRC

by Lyle F. Bachman and Adrian S. Palmer

1988

Nearly ten years ago a relatively small group of applied linguists from several countries, with varied backgrounds and perspectives, braved the rigors of the New England winter and the vagaries of convention planning, which forced them to squeeze into a single hotel room for two days, in order to participate in a discussion of the issues and problems of language testing. For many who were at that first colloquium, it was both surprising and gratifying to find that there were others who shared their interest in this abstruse and relatively unpopular enterprise. Equally amazing was the discovery that not only did we share common professional interests, but we were in many other ways "kindred spirits". As Palmer, Groot and Trosper (1981) observed in their forward to the volume of papers that came out of that first colloquium, "the colloquium has enabled people with a common narrowly-defined interest to get to know each other and to develop the closeness and the lines of communication that allow each to profit more fully from the work of others" (p. vii). That observation is as true today as it was then. Indeed, it is this spirit of camaraderie, of personal closeness, based on mutual respect, that has nourished the spirited annual debates of professional issues and year-around communication among colleagues who are also friends that have become the hallmarks of the Language Testing Research Colloquium.

The past ten years have seen many developments in language testing, and the Colloquium, with its focus on research, has provided the sounding board for many of these. The use of confirmatory factor analysis as an approach to the construct validation of language tests was forged by the debate and collective effort among the participants at the first Colloquium. Research in oral testing has been a frequent topic at the Colloquium, and it is safe to say that many refinements in the measurement of oral ability have been influenced by discussions at colloquia. More recently, the applications

of item-response theory and multidimensional scaling to language testing research have provided fodder for the Colloquium's cannon, and have emerged all the stronger and more promising in the process. Not all of these developments have been chronicled, but the four published volumes that have come out of the Colloquium (Palmer, Groot , Trosper 1981, Jones, DesBrisay & Paribakht 1985, Stansfield 1986, and Bailey, Dale & Clifford 1987) provide an overview of the issues that have captivated the field over the past ten years.

The first Colloquium came at a time when John Oller's research into the nature of language ability was redefining our view of language testing and at the same time raising questions that would lead to the emergence of language testing as a subfield of applied linguistics in its own right, with its own research questions, and with a research methodology that would contribute to other areas of applied linguistics. It also came at a time when Mike Canale and Merrill Swain were formulating the ideas that would emerge in their seminal paper on teaching and testing communicative competence. As a result of these cross-currents, it is not surprising that the focal points that emerged from the first Colloquium were an interest in a broader view of language proficiency as communicative competence, and a determination to embark on a program of empirical research into the then relatively unknown realm of construct validation .
The Colloquium has had a variety of themes over the years, and in some years has had no particular theme, other than a focus on research. We felt it was timely, in this tenth year of our persistence, to return to the theme of the first colloquium: the validation of tests of communicative language ability. Timely, because although "communicative" as a buzz-word has lost a certain amount of cachet in language teaching, it appears that language testers are beginning to come to grips with what the characteristics of "communicative" tests are. Thus, language testing may offer one avenue for investigating the nature of both communicative language use and the very abilities that make such use possible. One question we may ask ourselves, then, is, "How far have we really come in the past ten years toward understanding the language abilities that we profess to measure?"

We might also look at technological developments as an indication of our emergence as a field. In 1979, technical sophistication focused primarily on research design and the analysis of results-- Clifford's examination of multitrait-multimethod correlations and Engelskirchen, Cottrell and Oller's principal components analysis were "state-of-the-art". In the past four or five years, we have seen the increasing application of technology to test design and administration, and we now have at our disposal not only a wider range of analytic tools, but more powerful ones as well. Appropriate questions to ponder in this regard are, "How much have these technical advances contributed to our understanding of the fundamental issues of language testing?" and "Are we simply probing the same

questions in greater detail, or are we asking new questions?"

While the tenth annual Colloquium is perhaps no more special than was the ninth or than will be the eleventh, we feel this is an occasion to celebrate the remarkable "staying power" of the Colloquium. As Stansfield (1986) noted in his introduction to the papers from the seventh Colloquium, we have no charter, no officers, no dues. Every year there are new faces and new perspectives, which add to the fabric of our collective identity. The Colloquium endures in spite of our resistance to becoming formally organized. It thrives because of our common interest in and commitment to the field of language testing, and because we truly enjoy our work, especially bashing heads once a year. And we have fun together. After all, some of our best friends are language testers.

Of course, LTRC did not spring into life *ex nihilo*. There were a number of meetings on the topic of language testing prior to 1979 that brought many of the same people together to share research and concerns, as Bernard Spolsky outlines in his essay below, written especially for this history.

The pre-history of LTRC and ILTA

by Bernard Spolsky

2015

When a number of years ago I was writing Measured Words (Spolsky, 1995), my wife would regularly tease me that I was spending my time studying a meeting I had not attended. After a while, I realized that I did not know enough about the background of the historic 1961 conference that led to the development of TOEFL (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1961), and I started to wonder what in fact was the state of language testing when I first entered the field in the mid-1960s. Not having yet found the unpublished mimeographed paper by Jack Carroll (1954) that would have filled me in (it was offered to the Georgetown Monograph Series but rejected), I started to look at the history of the field, going back as we all do to the biblical shibboleth test and to the Chinese Imperial Examinations.

Perhaps it is enough to start looking at the series of meetings that led to LTRC with the session at the Georgetown Roundtable chaired by Carroll (Carroll, 1953) which was followed some years later by the historic 1961 meeting. A broken series of meetings was led off by a session at the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs annual meeting (Wigglesworth, 1967), the first that I attended, followed by the major Michigan

meeting (Upshur & Fata, 1968). The next three were at Idlewild (Brière, 1969), Hasselt in Belgium, and at the TESOL Convention in 1973 (Palmer & Spolsky, 1975). Another meeting in 1973 was the Washington Language Testing Colloquium (its name suggests the LTRC) at the Georgetown Roundtable (Jones & Spolsky, 1975); by now, the usual suspects were active (Randall Jones, John Clark, Claudia Wilds, Peter Groot, Harry Gradman, John Oller, James Child, Alan Davies and I all gave papers). I suspect there were more meetings, sessions at TESOL where applied linguists still gathered, but have lost my copies of Spolsky (1978, 1979) which should help cover the gap until the closed meeting that Bachman and Palmer describe at the Boston 13th Annual TESOL Convention (27 February – 4 March) that accompanied a public session there.*

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*Note (by Dan Douglas): Leslie Palmer (1968), in a paper summarizing the meeting at the University of Michigan, said

> "....this has been an historic meeting. Never before has a group like this met to consider the problems involved in foreign language testing" (p. 177).

The chair and convener of the conference, Jack Upshur, said the following in the introduction to the conference proceedings (Upshur 1968):

> This volume is an accident. There were no preconceived notions about the nature of an audience receptive to information about foreign language testing nor, partly as a consequence, of what kinds of information would be most cordially received...this volume records what a group of people with varying interests chose to present about foreign language testing and the reactions which were made to their presentations...The conference, of which this is a record, was also an accident. The idea for the meeting grew out of private and public expressions of dissatisfaction by a number of people who are involved in test production and who depend upon test results - dissatisfaction with the quality and range of foreign language tests available, with the uses to which tests often are put, and with the ends they are made to serve.
>
> p. vii

The final phrases of the quote above seem very contemporary, for still today we grapple with dissatisfaction over the quality and range of language tests, the uses to which they are put, and the ends they are made to serve. This thought makes a good lead-in to the following account of the beginnings of LTRC and ILTA.

A Short History of LTRC and ILTA: Some Details

As Lyle and Buzz describe in their essay, the Language Testing Research Colloquium began rather modestly in a hotel room in Boston, Massachusetts, February 27-28, 1979. The participants, including authors and attendees were: Lyle Bachman, Kathleen Bailey, Michael Canale, Brendan Carroll, John Clark, Ray Clifford, Elinore Cottrell, Alan Davies, Alice Engelskirchen, Peter Groot, Deborah Hendricks-Sanchez, Frances Hinofotis, Donna Ilyin, Marianne Johnson, Randall Jones, Dale Lange, Pardee Lowe, Harold Madsen, John Oller, Adrian Palmer, Meredith Pike, Stephen Ross, George Scholz, Elana Shohamy, Randon Spurling, Charles Stansfield, Susan Stern, Douglas Stevenson, Merrill Swain, and Lela Vandenburg (Palmer, Groot, Trosper 1981: vii). Some of these are, sadly, no longer with us, but many of them have played significant roles in the development of what is now a profession and that they were present at the inaugural meeting augured well for the future of the fledgling colloquium. They were indeed a select group of applied linguists who shared an academic interest in the theory and practice of second language assessment, and it was for them, as Lyle and Buzz recall, “both surprising and gratifying to find that there were others who shared their interest in this abstruse and relatively unpopular enterprise.”

Participation

The colloquium participants were for the first several years a somewhat closed group, restricted to “active researchers,” and arrangements for subsequent meetings were mailed (as in "snail mail") to past participants rather than generally advertised. As Charlie Stansfield (1986) notes, the group was not formally constituted:

> The group has no office, no elected leadership, and does not publish a newsletter. Moreover, its members (if they can so be called) prefer its informal status and have consistently resisted the urge to convert this network of colleagues into an organization (p. 3).

The group did grow, however. New participants appeared at each subsequent colloquium, usually alerted to its existence by word of mouth or by direct invitation from the “core.” It became clear, though, even during the second colloquium, March 4-5, 1980, in San Francisco, that there was considerable interest among TESOL participants in the closed colloquium presentations, and there was discussion of the merits of opening the colloquium to more general participation. It was argued that closed participation “allowed us to present highly technical papers with little introduction and has allowed us to focus our discussion on a small number of issues. It has also allowed us to circulate papers in advance, freeing more colloquium time for discussion” (Palmer, Bachman, & Groot, undated). It was proposed that the closed sessions be continued for ensuing colloquia, but that a half-day panel discussion should be held on the second day of the TESOL Convention for a more general audience. According to the letter sent

to prospective participants, the 1982 colloquium was limited to 36 people, who had to be applied linguists, testers, and experienced in the field.

Planning

Buzz Palmer and Peter Groot were the planners of the first colloquium. Buzz and Lyle Bachman organized the second, and continued working with local organizers wherever the colloquium was held, organizing or co-organizing a total of eight LTRCs over the years. Since there was no organization or leadership *per se*, their advice on the type of venue needed, the shape of the program, and the ever-important social events was invaluable. Speaking of social events, it is not known when the first skits were performed at an LTRC banquet, but relatively early on it became a custom to have some sort of testing-related, often musical, nonsense during the banquet. In addition to Lyle and Buzz, who probably initiated the skit tradition, Ted Rodgers was a perennial writer/performer since at least 1982, as were Mike Canale, Andrew Cohen, and Charlie Stansfield, with their guitars. In San Francisco, for LTRC 1990, Ted wrote an entire operetta, “The Tale of the Wandering Mistrial," complete with songs that were performed by LTRC regulars such as Lyle Bachman, Kathi Bailey, J. D. Brown, John Clark, Buzz Palmer, John de Jong, John Lett, Elaine Wylie, Elana Shohamy, Andrew Cohen, Don Porter, and of course, Ted himself.* Another skit that has stuck in my memory was at the Vancouver LTRC in 2000. For the banquet on Friday, March 10, the program has the following entry: "Entertainment Produced and Directed by Ted Rodgers, aided and abetted by LFB, ASP and other co-conspirators." I recall a rather risqué song and dance number performed by Ted and Angela Hasselgreen, entitled "Top Down, Bottom Up." I also treasure the memory from the 2001 LTRC in St. Louis of Buzz Palmer, dressed in his silver motorcycling racing suit and helmet, playing the role of "Robo-Rater," providing nonsensical "machine" ratings of speaking proficiency in a mechanical voice. It may be that the skits were somewhat North America-centric and their humor not universally appreciated in an international forum; in any case, the skits eventually died a natural death and thus remain a perhaps odd memory among the old timers.

*Note: The complete script of the operetta is printed in an Epilogue to the published papers of the 1990 colloquium (Douglas & Chapelle 1993) as a tribute to Michael Canale, who had tragically died in 1989.

Name

The formal name of the colloquium as the *Language Testing Research Colloquium* does not seem to have been used until the 1982 meeting in Honolulu: 4th Annual Language Testing Research Colloquium. However, the name wasn't consistently used for a couple of years after that: the 1983 meeting in Ottawa appears to have been called the Fifth

Annual Language Testing Colloquium. The Houston meeting in 1984 was somewhat schizophrenic: The Sixth Annual Colloquium (Symposium) on Research in Language Testing. By the seventh annual meeting, 1985, at ETS in Princeton, however, the name seems to have solidified as the Language Testing Research Colloquium, and subsequent meetings stuck to that.

Venues

The first 14 LTRC meetings were held exclusively in the U.S. and Canada, usually in conjunction with the TESOL Convention. The first LTRC held outside mainland North America (with the exception of Honolulu in 1982) was in 1993, the only two-part colloquium ever held: Part One in Cambridge, UK, and Part Two in Arnhem, NL. This first non-North American meeting was held, perhaps not coincidentally, immediately after the founding of the International Language Testing Association at LTRC 14 in Vancouver, 1992. Since then it has been held in Finland, Japan, China, Australia, Spain, the U.K., Korea, and the Netherlands. Initially, the ILTA By-Laws stated that the colloquium had to be held in North America at least every third year, but in 2005 the By-laws were amended to allow the meeting to be held anywhere in the world in any given year. Partly as a result, LTRC will be held in succession in Palermo, Bogotá, and Auckland between 2016 and 2018.

Topics and Program

The first three LTRC meetings were devoted to the construct validation of oral proficiency tests and the nature of communicative competence. In addition to providing a platform for the presentation of participants' research studies, some time in each meeting was devoted to the joint planning of research projects and methods, specifically the multitrait-multimethod matrix and relevant statistical analyses as an approach to construct validation. The third colloquium, at the University of Michigan, 1981, hosted by Jack Upshur, was held concurrently with the IXth Conference on Applied Linguistics on the topic of language transfer and LTRC participants were invited to attend the plenary talks at the transfer conference, resulting in the only occasion that non-testing-specific paper topics appeared in an LTRC program alongside the construct-oriented papers. The papers at the fourth LTRC, in Honolulu, 1982, included construct and criterion related empirical validation studies and general or specific validation models, including domain specification. While there were still a number of papers specific to oral proficiency testing and construct validation, the range of topics was beginning to broaden to include the following:

> *Performance profiles and global proficiency ratings* (Pardee Lowe and Ray Clifford)

The interdependence of first and second language skills in writing (Michael Canale)

Validating the English Language Testing Service (Brendan Carroll)

Language testing and content predictability (Jack Upshur)

Linguistic and communicative assessment of bilingual children (Zoe Ann Hayes)

English language tests, school language use, and achievement in Spanish-speaking high school students (Mary McGroarty)

Oral proficiency testing of non-native speaking teaching assistants: issues in criterion-related validity (Kathi Bailey)

By LTRC 1983, in Ottawa, the mix of topics began to resemble the wider spread that we see at LTRC today (for a detailed analysis of LTRC paper topics, see Hamp-Lyons & Lynch 1999). It should be noted, too, that the colloquium was still quite small, both in the number of participants and the number of presentations. At the inaugural colloquium in 1979 there were about 30 people present and 15 presentations; in 1980 there were only 11 presentations, and similar numbers through 1984. LTRC 1985, in Princeton, NJ, seemed to be a break-through year, not only with 20 papers presented but also the first pre-colloquium workshop, conducted by Martha Stocking, of ETS, on the topic of Item Response Theory. The pre-colloquium workshops didn't become a regular part of LTRC, however, until 1994 in Washington, D.C. The earliest reference to Poster Sessions was also at LTRC 1994 in Washington, and Work-in-Progress Sessions first appear at LTRC 1996, in Tampere, Finland, although LTRC 1994 also featured Roundtable Discussion Sessions on such topics as *Testing Aptitude Testing: The MLAT; Comparing Language Qualifications in Different Languages: A Framework and Code of Practice; Language Competence in the Federal Government: An Articulation of Proficiency and Performance Assessment*; and *Research on the Properties of Alternative Assessment Procedures*. Finally, the first publishers' exhibit, now a standard part of LTRC, seems to have been at the 1993 meeting in Cambridge and Arnhem.

Plenaries vs. Concurrent Sessions

When LTRC began, all the presentations were at plenary sessions - everyone heard every paper and participated in the discussions. This was a highly popular and much-loved aspect of the early colloquia, and helped engender the "spirit of camaraderie, of personal closeness" that Lyle and Buzz refer to in their 10th anniversary essay. As the language profession matured and the number of highly qualified researchers grew worldwide, there was understandable pressure to increase the number of papers

accepted for LTRC. A tension developed between the desire to continue the intimacy afforded by the all-plenary sessions and the equally strong desire to widen participation to include more high quality papers. Long Beach 1995 appears to be the first LTRC at which concurrent paper sessions were scheduled, but the move was the target of complaints from many members. Though concurrent sessions were tried again in 2006 in Melbourne, the schedule was again not well received, and the next three LTRCs, Barcelona 2007, Hangzhou 2008, and Denver 2009, returned to all-plenary sessions. By LTRC 2010, Cambridge, however, concurrent/parallel sessions returned and have been a feature of LTRC programs since. Many still lament the loss of cooperation and amity that characterized the early LTRC meetings while at the same time taking pride in the resilience of the colloquium and the growth of the language testing profession around the world.

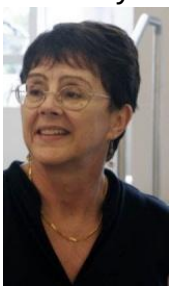
Publication of LTRC Papers

In addition to the all-plenary sessions at early LTRC meetings, another aspect of them was that presenters distributed their papers in advance of the colloquium. This allowed for participants to read them prior to the meeting and thus to present more cogent, well-considered critiques during the colloquium. This also meant also that the papers themselves were perhaps more carefully constructed than might be the case today, when many of them start out life as PowerPoint shows. This in turn meant that the papers were published, and publishable, more expeditiously than might be true today.

A number of LTRC proceedings have been published over the years, including papers from the very first 1979 meeting: Palmer, Groot and Trosper, Eds., 1981. Others include the papers from LTRC 1983 (Jones, DesBrisay, and Paribakht, Eds., 1985), LTRC 1985 (Stansfield, Ed., 1986), LTRC 1986 (Bailey, Dale, and Clifford, Eds. 1987), LTRC 1990 (Douglas and Chapelle, Eds., 1993), and LTRC 2005 (Fox, Wesche, Bayliss, Cheng, Turner, and Doe, Eds., 2007).

Charter, Officers and Dues: ILTA's Origin

Despite mild "resistance to becoming formally organized" prevalent in 1988, as reported by Lyle and Buzz, it was only two years later that discussions began regarding the possibility of formalizing LTRC and/or establishing an international association. Liz



Hamp-Lyons reports in a newsletter she sent out to LTRC regulars in May of 1990 (Hamp-Lyons 1990) that "several options" for the formalization of LTRC had been discussed in the past, including "...its assimilation as an interest group of TESOL...the possibility of LTRC becoming an interest group of AAAL...the proposal for an international language testing association...and the creation of a formal membership structure and

constitution for the present LTRC" (pp. 1-2). In that same newsletter, Charles Stansfield reported considerable interest in the possibility of an international association of language testers, as described below.

Charlie had led discussions concerning the formation of an international association of language testers earlier in the year at the 1990 LTRC in San Francisco. The program contains the following entry for Sunday, March 4:

> 4:30 - 5:30
> Business Meeting (important business: please be there!)

Charlie also led similar discussions that same year at the Regional English Language Center International Conference in Singapore and the AILA Conference in Seattle. There was, it seemed, a great deal of interest in forming an international organization, with the benefits seen as the following, according to a summary (Douglas 1990) of the ensuing discussions:

> Such an association would allow for more frequent contact among those interested in language testing.
>
> It would lead to possible gain in the professional stature of testers.
>
> It would make possible a newsletter and/or journal on language testing.*
>
> It might lead to the accreditation of language testing specialists.
>
> It would provide a structure to promote meetings at regional, national, and international levels.
>
> p. 1

*Note: This is a somewhat curious suggestion, since *Language Testing Update*, a newsletter devoted to the interests of language testers, had been published at Lancaster University since 1985, and the journal *Language Testing,* had been published since 1984. These were not, of course, official publications of the Association but it was clear that the new Association might want to have a newsletter and a journal. See discussion below concerning the eventual official links between ILTA and LTU and *Language Testing.*

The program for the 1991 colloquium in Princeton contains the following item:

> 4:00 - 6:00
> Meeting:

1. Becoming an organization?
2. Adopting testing standards?

This meeting resulted in putting LTRC on a more firm organizational footing, with a three person executive charged with organizing future LTRCs. The first "triumvirate" consisted of Grant Henning, Mari Wesche, and Elana Shohamy. Also at that watershed 1991 meeting, as Davidson (1991: 4) notes, "...a working committee was formed to draft the constitution of the International Language Testing Association (ILTA)." This historic committee was comprised of Charlie Stansfield (Chair), Lyle Bachman, John de Jong, Valmar Kokkota, Mike Milanovic, Don Porter, John Read, and Elana Shohamy. After going through a number of drafts, the constitution was circulated via the new "electronic bulletin board," LTEST-L (See Davidson 1991 for an announcement of the origin of LTEST-L). The relationship between LTRC and the new Association was the topic of some discussion. It seems that it had always been the assumption of the constitution drafting committee that LTRC would become the ILTA-LTRC, and since most people attending LTRC in the early years were ILTA members anyway, there would have been no benefit to keeping the two separate. The decision was made to examine the status of LTRC and its relationship with ILTA at the 1992 meeting in Vancouver. The link between LTRC and ILTA was not formalized until 1997, as described below.

ILTA is Born

ILTA formally began in 1992 at LTRC in Vancouver. As Charlie Stansfield and John de Jong announced in the Spring 1992 issue of *Language Testing Update*, "At a public meeting on February 28, 1992, the International Language Testing Association (ILTA) was born" (p. 2). A *public* meeting, because until the constitution was approved, there could be no official business meeting. Some 25 language testers were present, representing seven countries. They approved the Constitution and ILTA became a reality. The now-official meeting elected a slate of officers and Board of Directors to serve through August 1993. The first officers and Board were the following:

President	Charles Stansfield (USA)
Vice-President	Elana Shohamy (Israel)
Secretary/Treasurer	John de Jong (NL)
Board of Directors	Lyle Bachman (USA)
	Valmar Kokkota (Estonia)
	Michael Milanovic (UK)
	Donald Porter (USA)
	John Read (NZ)
	Bernard Spolsky (Israel)

A Nominating Committee was also elected, to nominate candidates to run for offices for terms starting in 1993: Lyle Bachman (Chair), Eduardo Cascallar, Gary Buck and Ari Huhta. In addition to the Nominating Committee, the new Constitution called for the creation of a Public Policy Committee and a By-laws Committee. The Board of Directors also established a Committee on Test Standards and an Awards and Honors Committee.

A call for readers of *Language Testing Update* to apply for membership in the new association and an application form were printed in the newsletter. Dues were set at US$35. Among the benefits of joining the organization were a subscription to *Language Testing Update,* a reduced rate on a subscription to *Language Testing,* reduced fees for language testing conferences, periodic Minibibs on language testing from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, and a copy of the ILTA Constitution. By October 1992, there were 100 members and by May, 1993, there were about 200 (for comparison, in November, 2015, there were 264 members).

Elections for the officers and Board members were conducted at the first post-organizational ILTA Business Meeting, held on August 8, 1993, between the LTRC and AILA meetings in Arnhem, NL. The new officers and Board were the following:

President	Charles Alderson
Vice-President	Bernard Spolsky
Secretary/Treasurer	Tim McNamara
Board	Carolyn Turner
	Elana Shohamy
	Don Porter
	Fred Davidson

The Autumn 1993 issue of *Language Testing Update* contains the original ILTA Constitution, By-laws, and a list of the first ILTA members.

A Good Beginning

Also in the Autumn 1993 LTU, outgoing founding President, Charlie Stansfield, reported on the current state of the new association. He noted that the ILTA officers and Board had accomplished a great deal in merely getting the organization up and running. Caroline Clapham and Dianne Wall, editors of *Language Testing Update,* published at Lancaster University in the U.K., offered to make LTU the official newsletter of the new Association, an offer which was gratefully accepted by the ILTA Board. Somewhat similarly, at the suggestion of Don Porter, then co-editor of *Language Testing* and a member of the ILTA Board*,* the Board approached Edward Arnold Publishing, who at

that time published the journal, about it becoming the official journal of ILTA; the publisher agreed and ILTA members subsequently received a 15% discount on subscriptions.

Charlie also listed some concerns, including the fact that ILTA was far from being financially independent and it was only through the generosity of the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), where Charlie worked, and the Netherlands National Institute for Educational Measurement (CITO), where John de Jong worked, that ILTA was able to pay for things like telephone, fax, postage, email, clerical assistance, space and general overhead costs. Charlie warned that "...we need to build the treasury so that we will be prepared for the day when we must become self-supporting" (p. 18). The issue of finance remains a concern today. Another problem in those early days was communication: email was still fairly new and some Board members either were not on email or did not check their messages very often (one member could be contacted only by phone and only after midnight, it seems...). Charlie called on members to spread ILTA news to colleagues by word of mouth who were not on email.

As for hopes for the future, Charlie asserted that

> ILTA will be known for what it does as an organization, rather than for the achievements of its members. I believe a basic focus of ILTA should be the improvement of language testing practice.
>
> (p. 18)

One way ILTA could focus on practice was the creation of a set of international standards for language tests, and Charlie set up a Task Force on Testing Standards, chaired by Fred Davidson. The Task Force collected information on existing standards for tests at various regional and national levels as a basis for ILTA's establishing its own set of standards (The *Report of the Task Force on Testing Standards* (Davidson et al. 1995) is available to ILTA members on the ILTA website). This task force report was the first step in the development of the current ILTA Guidelines for Practice, adopted in 2007 (see discussion below). Charlie also called for the development of a Code of Ethics for the testing profession. Such a Code was indeed developed and adopted in 2000 (see discussion below).

As noted earlier, since nearly every member of ILTA attended LTRC, it became the practice to hold the Annual ILTA Business Meeting during the colloquium. Thus, in 1996, ILTA President Lyle Bachman, in his report, published in *Language Testing Update*, stated as a personal priority the formalization of the link between LTRC and ILTA, and expressed the hope that "...within the next two years the conference will have become the ILTA Language Testing Research Colloquium" (p. 3). Indeed, the very next year, according to the Minutes of the 1997 Annual Business Meeting in Orlando, it was

agreed that "LTRC will be the ILTA research conference" (*LTU* issue 21, Spring 1997, p. 5). This relationship is now enshrined in the ILTA By-laws.

One further organizational note: In 2006, ILTA contracted with Prime Management Services, of Birmingham, Alabama, an association management company. Since then, Prime Management, in the person of Robert Ranieri, has provided full-time office services for ILTA, including email, telephone and fax coverage, clerical assistance, website maintenance, election supervision, and budgetary oversight, as well as assisting with LTRC advertising, booking of venues, registration, scheduling, and accounting.

ILTA Officers

Terms of office were initially for one year and the offices of Secretary and Treasurer were combined. Secretary/Treasurer Caroline Clapham reported in 1998 that it was becoming increasingly difficult to do both jobs, and in 1999 the two were separated. In her ILTA President's letter of 1999, Elana Shohamy pointed out how little can be achieved in one year. The following year, in his President's letter, Alan Davies noted Elana's lament and argued that "...it is worth considering the appointment of officers for periods longer than one year." It was proposed at LTRC 2001 that the terms should be extended to two years, and the By-laws were amended to that effect in 2005. Jim Purpura became the first ILTA President to serve a full two-year term, 2007-2008. The ILTA President's job thus became a six year commitment since she/he served two-year terms consecutively as Vice-President, President, and Immediate Past President. In 2013, the Immediate Past President's term was shortened to one year.

ILTA has from its earliest days had a regard for both regional balance and gender equity in the management of its affairs. In his valedictory Presidential message to the membership in 1993, Charlie Stansfield made a plea with regard to both regional and gender equity. He said, "If ILTA is to maintain its credibility as an international organization, no one region of the world must dominate its affairs." This concern for regional coverage of ILTA has carried through to the present day, when the Association has taken steps to encourage language-testing professionals in sub-Saharan Africa through its workshop award in Ghana and Namibia, and in South America, where LTRC 2017 will be held in Bogotá, Colombia. Charlie also reminded us of the need for the "proper balance between men and women in the management of the association." Again, efforts are made to this day to ensure that ILTA committees and working groups achieve equity between genders.

ILTA Publications

As noted above, *Language Testing Update*, published at Lancaster University since 1985, and edited at various times by Charles Alderson, Dianne Wall, Caroline Clapham, and Pauline Rea-Dickins, Jayanti Banerjee, became the official newsletter of the new International Language Testing Association in 1992. ILTA members received LTU as one of the benefits of membership and the newsletter provided an excellent service to ILTA for 12 more years. Each issue of LTU always began with news from ILTA, including minutes of the Annual Business Meeting, a message from the ILTA president, the results of ILTA elections and the winners of various ILTA awards. The newsletter also carried news from other language testing associations such as those in Europe, Japan, Israel, and Australia, as well as news of developments in language testing such as "Relating Language Examinations to the CEFR," "The Development of the Spoken Spanish Test," "The Portfolio Assessment Project: India," "A Language Policy for International Aviation," and "Responding to Diversity: Issues in Assessing Language Learners with Disabilities."

Language Testing Update ceased publication in 2004, much to the regret of its readership. The ILTA Board had been discussing the possibility of LTU moving to an online version, mainly for financial reasons (President's Report, LTU Issue 33, 2003).

When LTU came to an end, ILTA did what it could to formalize an online newsletter, even setting up a Publication Division, headed by Vivien Berry. Vivien and Liz Hamp-Lyons produced three online newsletters between May, 2005, and July, 2006, but the effort, though valiant, was not well-supported by the membership in the form of sending in news items, and the ILTA Newsletter was soon a thing of the past. Attempts have been made since to enhance communication among ILTA membership and leadership, such as, for example, through the ILTA website, but they have not achieved the richness and dependability that were hallmarks of *Language Testing Update.* An archive of LTU is available to ILTA members only, currently located at http://www.iltaonline.com/index.php/en/resources/2014-05-30-03-25-03/language-testing-updates. The LTU archive also includes a link to another LTU electronic archive, organized by Fred Davidson, which contains a number of issues missing from the ILTA archive.

One very successful publication endeavor has been the ILTA Language Testing Bibliography project, begun in 1999 by Caroline Clapham and Dianne Wall, and first published in *Language Testing Update* (Issue 25). The first edition of the bibliography covered the years 1990 to 1999 and listed entries by topic and by author. It was (and is), as the editors noted in their introduction to the first edition, an invaluable resource for the language testing community and one that has lasted to the present day. It was originally published only in print form, but was made accessible on the internet through the ILTA website relatively early on. The original editors produced a revised edition fairly soon after the first, having invited readers to send in corrections and additions. The second edition was edited by Annie Brown and Paul Jaquith, covering the years 1990 to 2009, and was placed on the ILTA website. The editors hoped to update the bibliography annually so as to keep it current, and that has been maintained through 2014. Annie Brown "retired" from the bibliography project in 2012, with heartfelt thanks from the ILTA membership, and Tineke Brunfaut has continued the updates since then. The ILTA Bibliography is accessible to ILTA members only, currently at http://www.iltaonline.com/index.php/en/resources/2014-05-30-03-25-03/ilta-publications. Annie and Paul also undertook to produce a bibliography of doctoral dissertations on language testing, the first one being published in 2008 and updated annually, the latest one having been updated by Tineke in February 2015, currently available at http://www.iltaonline.com/index.php/en/resources/l-t-diss-bibliography.

Another publication effort that bore valuable fruit was a series of videos of ILTA members giving short lectures on various aspects of language testing practice and theory. The project was headed up by Glenn Fulcher and Randy Thrasher in 1999, funded by ILTA and International Christian University in Japan. Many of the videos were made during the LTRC meeting in Tsukuba, Japan. Initially, 11 videos were produced:

Reliability	Alan Davies
Validity	Bernard Spolsky
Test Impact	Elana Shohamy
Test Specifications	Charles Alderson
Writing Test Items	Charles Stansfield
Pretesting	J. D. Brown
Statistics	Fred Davidson
Testing Listening	Gary Buck
Testing Speaking	Glenn Fulcher
Testing Reading	Caroline Clapham
Testing Writing	Liz Hamp-Lyons

The videos were originally accessible on Glenn Fulcher's Language Testing Information website, then at the University of Surrey, and are now available at Glenn's new Language Testing Resources site, currently at: http://languagetesting.info/video/main.html. There are now 20 videos.

A brief note about the ILTA Logo. The original logo was developed by Ken Martens Friesen, an intern in the Testing Division at the Center for Applied Linguistics, in 1992 and selected from several options by Charles Stansfield. It was in use on the ILTA website and stationery until 2015, when an online contest was held to design a new logo. Tony Green designed the logo that was chosen by the Board, and Kate Boyd, at Cambridge Michigan Language Assessments, edited the final version.

Finally, a note about the ILTA website itself. In his Presidential letter of 1995, Bernard Spolsky said "...we expect soon to add an ILTA World Wide Web site." Sometime in 1996, the website became a reality, under the webmastery of Glenn Fulcher at the University of Surrey, before his move to the University of Leicester. The present iltaonline.com came into existence in about 2005 when Janna Fox, ILTA Treasurer, obtained the domain name. Erik Voss and Dan Douglas redesigned the website in 2008, and an ILTA Website Task Force led by Erik, and including Meg Malone, Ruslan Suvorov, Tony Green, and Dan Douglas, redesigned it again in 2014. ILTAonline is currently located at: http://www.iltaonline.com/index.php/en/

ILTA Affiliates and Institutional Members

ILTA has had Institutional Members and Affiliated Organizations at least since the late 1990s. Institutional Members are a mix of university departments and programs and test development companies that wish to support ILTA financially, while ILTA Affiliates are regional and national language testing professional associations which support ILTA's goals and ethics. The By-Laws Committee began looking into ways of formalizing the affiliations in 1999, and as recently as 2010, John Read produced a working paper for the ILTA Board, outlining issues related to Institutional Membership and Affiliation. There is now a form for potential Affiliates to complete for review by the ILTA Board before affiliation is granted, and an application/renewal form for Institutional Membership. There are now 11 Institutional Members of ILTA, who pay annual dues (currently US$115) and are listed on the ILTA website, currently located at: http://www.iltaonline.com/index.php/en/organization/institutional-members. There are at present 12 ILTA Affiliates, also listed on the ILTA website, currently: http://www.iltaonline.com/index.php/en/organization/affiliated-organizations.

ILTA has also developed a working relationship with both the American Association for

Applied Linguistics (AAAL) and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Since the year 2000, ILTA has held a Joint Symposium with AAAL, usually on the first day of the AAAL conference, immediately after LTRC. The first AAAL/ILTA joint symposium was held in 2000 in Vancouver on the topic of "Interdisciplinary Interfaces with Language Testing". ILTA has also had a long association with TESOL, the first LTRC, of course, having been held at TESOL in Boston in 1979. Since at least 1995, ILTA has sponsored language testing presentations at TESOL Conventions, when Bernard Spolsky presented a testing paper in Long Beach. In 2011, a formal arrangement was negotiated to have an ILTA presentation be an annual part of the TESOL program, and in 2015, a reciprocal arrangement was negotiated for a TESOL speaker to appear on the ILTA program.

ILTA Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice

Establishing a set of International Standards or a Code of Practice for language testing had been one of the goals of ILTA since its beginning. In 1995, a working group, consisting of John Clark (Chair), Inn-Chull Choi, Caroline Clapham, Fred Davidson, Bonnie Pierce, Miyuki Sasaki, and Elaine Wylie was charged with producing a draft Code of Practice to be presented to the ABM in Orlando 1997. The Working Group determined early on that it would be best to rethink the enterprise and recommended that the project proceed in two stages, first a Code of Ethics (CoE) and then when that had been agreed, a Code of Practice (CoP).

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Code of Ethics. A draft CoE was presented to the ILTA ABM in Monterey 1998 and a new working group was appointed: Alan Davies (chair), Gary Buck, Fred Davidson, and Elana Shohamy. Draft 5 of the CoE was published in LTU 25, Summer 1999, for feedback, and presented to the ABM in Tsukuba, Japan, in July, 1999, for discussion.

At the ILTA ABM in 2000 Vancouver, a proposal from Brian Lynch, seconded by Caroline Clapham, for the adoption of the draft Code of Ethics, was voted on and approved. As stated in the introduction to the CoE:

> This Code of Ethics identifies 9 fundamental principles, each elaborated on by a series of annotations which generally clarify the nature of the principles; they prescribe what ILTA members ought to do or not do, or more generally how they ought to comport themselves or what they, or the profession, ought to aspire to; and they identify the difficulties and exceptions inherent in the application of the principles. The Annotations further elaborate the Code's sanctions, making clear that failure to uphold the Code may have serious penalties, such as withdrawal of ILTA membership on the advice of the ILTA Ethics Committee.

The ILTA Code of Ethics is available online, currently located at:

http://www.iltaonline.com/index.php/en/resources/ilta-code-of-ethics. Under the initial leadership of Lorena Llosa and Yasuyo Sawaki, the CoE has been translated into Chinese (both Simplified and Traditional Chinese), Korean, Japanese, Hebrew, Spanish and French, with a translation into Arabic forthcoming.

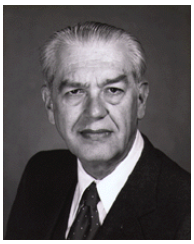
Code of Practice. At the ILTA ABM 2000, in Vancouver, Alan Davies reminded members that it had been the intention from early on that ILTA should develop a Code of Practice after first developing a Code of Ethics. As a way forward, the meeting agreed that the Japanese Language Testing Association (JLTA) should be invited to produce a draft Code of Practice which might be suitable for adoption more widely. Kenji Ohtomo chaired a committee in Japan, under the auspices of JLTA. An ILTA working group, chaired by Lyle Bachman, was also established, charged with considering the issue of practice globally, since if ILTA was to develop a Code of Practice it would need to be generally applicable.

In 2002, Lyle reported at the ABM that the focus in the past year had been on the development of the Japanese Code of Practice. The ILTA CoP Committee had studied the Japanese CoP and Lyle would pass on to a new Chair the views of the current group. There was concern expressed at the ABM in Reading 2003 that it might prove to be difficult to have a truly international code of practice and that it might be more viable for individual countries to develop their own.

However, Alan Davies, the new CoP Committee Chair, noted in his 2004 Report that the Japan Language Testing Association (JLTA) Code of Practice "...is comprehensive and, as far as I can see, open to use in countries other than Japan. Indeed, it is quite unclear to me what makes the JLTA Code of Good Testing Practice unique to Japan" (LTU 35, 2004: 20). Alan therefore proposed that the CoP committee be continued for a further year during which this JLTA document would be widely disseminated and discussed. If there was a favorable response, then a suitably amended version of the JLTA Code could be presented for adoption by ILTA at the 2005 meeting. Indeed, the ILTA Guidelines for Practice, as they were named, were presented as a draft at the 2005 ILTA meeting in Ottawa and then circulated among members for further consideration. They were finally adopted at the 2007 ILTA meeting in Barcelona with the proviso that they be reviewed and, if appropriate, revised in 2010.

The ILTA Guidelines for Practice are available online, currently located at:
http://www.iltaonline.com/index.php/en/resources/ilta-guidelines-for-practice

ILTA Awards



From its earliest days, ILTA has presented awards of various kinds, both as a way of recognizing excellence in the field of language testing and of drawing attention to and promoting professionalism. The first such award was made in May 1993, when John B. Carroll was made the first honorary member of ILTA to recognize his many contributions to the development of language testing as a discipline.

Since 1994, ILTA has offered an award for the Best Article published on language testing in a given year, initially known as the "ILTA Annual Award." The Awards Committee defined *best* as follows: "'Best' could mean the most original, the most potentially influential, the most carefully researched, the most interesting or the most persuasive." The first Best Article Award was presented in 1994 to Bonny Norton Pierce for her 1992 article, "Demystifying the TOEFL Reading Test" (*TESOL Quarterly* 26.4: 665-689). The Best Article Award has been given annually ever since.

In his 1998 President's letter, Tim McNamara mentioned the possibility of ILTA supporting the conduct of national workshops with a more practical focus to complement LTRC. In 1999, Elana Shohamy said in her President's letter: "We shall shortly be sending out calls for proposals for the establishment of local workshops and/or conferences which aim at providing training and guidance about language tests in various parts of the world. Such conferences and workshops will be supported by ILTA seed money." The first ILTA Workshop Awards were presented in that same year by a committee comprised of Alan Davies, Kenji Ohtomo, Tim McNamara and Elana Shohamy, who acted as chair. The first awards were of $2500 to each of three proposals: Jungok Bae for a Language Testing Workshop for revising and disseminating tests of Korean language and test methods for elementary school children; Christine Coombe, Beth Wines and Salah Troudi for sponsoring a two-day event: the 4th Annual Current Trends in English Language Testing (CTELT) Conference in Dubai, United Arab Emirates; and Rama Mathew for support to conduct workshops on language testing in India.

The Samuel Messick Award, funded by Educational Testing Service, was first given in 1999 (LTRC Tsukuba) in honor of the late Samuel J. Messick, a distinguished research scientist at ETS. The goal was provide a speaker "to deliver a major address at the joint annual meeting of the International Language Testing Association (ILTA) and the Language Testing Research Colloquium (LTRC)." The first

Messick speaker was Tim McNamara of the University of Melbourne, on “Validity in Language Testing: the Challenge of Sam Messick's Legacy.”

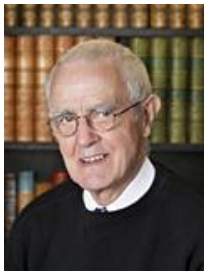
As a way of encouraging student participation in LTRC and ILTA, and to recognize excellence in student research, the Robert Lado Memorial Award for Best Presentation at the LTRC was established in 1995 after LTRC in Long Beach with funding from Buzz and Lyle. The first Lado award was made the following year, at LTRC 18 in Tampere, Finland. The recipients were Vivien Berry for “Ethical considerations when assessing oral proficiency in pairs,” and Tom Lumley and Annie Brown for “Interlocutor variability in specific-purpose language performance tests.”

In the ABM Minutes of 2000 (Vancouver), item 7.6 states:

> Members were informed of a suggestion to offer two new awards, one for "Distinguished Lifetime Achievement" and the other to the "Outstanding Young Person".

It later transpired that a young person’s award had already been set up by Educational Testing Service in the form of the Young Researcher’s Award, so the By-Laws Committee did not think it was appropriate for ILTA to have a similar award. However, the idea of a Lifetime Achievement Award moved forward, and in her President’s letter of 2001, Caroline Clapham noted that "Work has been continuing on amendments to the by-laws...The main areas that have been clarified in the draft amendments... [include]...an Award for Distinguished Lifetime Achievement.” She noted that Michael Milanovic of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES) had generously offered that UCLES would provide $500 a year for such an award.

The ILTA membership voted approval of the award at the ABM in 2002, as the



UCLES/ILTA Lifetime Achievement Award. The goal was “to acknowledge distinguished service and scholarship in the field of language testing.” Guidelines for the award were drawn up by a committee comprised of Carolyn Turner (Chair), Caroline Clapham, Michael Milanovic, and Yoshinori Watanabe. The Committee for the inaugural award was chaired by ILTA Vice President Antony Kunnan, with members Nick Saville (UCLES representative), Jayanti Banerjee (LTRC representative) and Merrill Swain (appointed). The first Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Professor Alan Davies of Edinburgh University at the 2003 LTRC banquet in Reading. The award has been presented since then to Lyle Bachman, Bernard Spolsky, John Clark, Charles Stansfield, Charles Alderson, Elana Shohamy, Carol Chapelle, Cyril Weir, and, in 2015, Tim McNamara. In 2013, the award was renamed the Cambridge/ILTA Distinguished Achievement Award (DAA).

The ILTA Student Travel Award is intended to support graduate students in attending and presenting at LTRC. Graduate students may apply for this award if their proposal to present at LTRC has been accepted. The first Student Travel Awards were given in 2005 (LTRC Ottawa) to Youngmi Yun (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), "Factors explaining EFL learners' performance in a timed-essay test: A structural equation modeling approach," and Ute Knoch (University of Auckland), "Individual feedback to enhance rater training: Does it work?"

Finally, the SAGE/ILTA award for Best Book on Language Testing was first announced in the July 2008 issue of the journal Language Testing. The award was to be offered every third year and books nominated for the award could be monographs or edited volumes. There were to be five judges of the award, drawn from the Editorial Board of Language Testing and the Executive Board of ILTA. An interview with the awardee was to be published in the LT journal together with a commissioned book review which offered a critical appreciation of the book[1]s contribution to the field. The award, which consisted of a plaque and US$600 dollars, would be made at the Language Testing Research Colloquium.

The first Sage/ILTA Best Book award was made in 2009 to Tim McNamara and Carsten Roever for Language Testing: The Social Dimension (2006, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing). The 2012 recipients of the SAGE/ILTA Award were Lyle Bachman and Adrian (Buzz) Palmer for Language Assessment in Practice: Developing Language Assessments and Justifying their Use in the Real World (2010, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press).

This brings to an end this account of the developmental years of our International Association of Language Testing. The rest, as they say, is history.

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All of the above added substantially to the historical accuracy of the document. Any remaining errors of fact or interpretation are all mine.

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