

LTRC 2009: Pre-conference Survey Results

Attendance at LTRC 2009

1. How likely are you to attend LTRC 2009?

| Response | N (%) |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Definitely | 39 (26%) |
| Probably | 57 (38%) |
| Maybe | 36 (26%) |
| Probably not | 12 (8%) |
| Definitely not | 4 (3%) |

Open-ended responses (N=19)

Common open-ended responses cited paper acceptance and budget issues as the main factors affecting attendance.

Selected open-ended responses:

- “Depends on getting abstract accepted either for LTRC or AAAL - otherwise no funding and no release time from teaching.”
- “Depends on if I get a paper accepted”
- “Pending budget approval for this fiscal year”
- “I live in Europe and the dates don't [coincide] with my teaching dates. Will see what I can do, though”

2. What factors will you consider when deciding whether you will attend LTRC 2009? (Check all that apply)

| Factor | N (%) |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Location | 53 (37%) |
| Cost | 78 (55%) |
| Time of year | 60 (42%) |
| Paper acceptance | 81 (57%) |
| Program | 33 (23%) |
| Ability to attend AAAL after LTRC | 26 (18%) |

Open-ended responses (N=18)

Common open-ended responses again cited paper acceptance and budget issues as the main factors affecting attendance. Some respondents were concerned with attending the conference in relation to their teaching schedules and academic duties.

Selected open-ended responses:

- “As above: my university will not provide funding or release time if I don't have a paper accepted.”
- “The scheduling link with AAAL is nice for many but for possibly an equal number, the prospect of being away from job/classroom for an extended period during term time makes attendance at both difficult. “
- “Pending budget approval. [Acceptance] of paper always helps in this direction.”

3. How likely are you to attend at least one day of AAAL following LTRC?

| Response | N (%) |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Definitely | 38 (26%) |
| Probably | 49 (33%) |
| Maybe | 29 (20%) |
| Probably not | 20 (13%) |
| Definitely not | 13 (9%) |

Open-ended comments (N=10)

Several respondents commented that their attendance at AAAL depends on whether or not they are able to attend LTRC.

Selected open-ended responses:

- “[I]t is better to attend two conferences at a time.”
- “Difficult to be absent from work (university professor) too long.”
- Assuming I am available to attend LTRC, I will definitely attend AAAL.

Pre-conference Workshops

1. The following pre-conference workshops are tentatively scheduled for LTRC. Please indicate your level of interest in these workshop topics.

| | Very interested | Somewhat interested | Not very interested |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Listening comprehension | 31 (27%) | 49 (43%) | 34 (30%) |
| Standard setting | 67 (51%) | 48 (37%) | 16 (12%) |
| Hierarchical linear modeling | 39 (34%) | 33 (29%) | 42 (37%) |

Open-ended comments (N=19)

Several respondents indicated their interest in technical and quantitative workshops. A few responses noted that they would like more information, such as a detailed agenda, before deciding whether or not to attend a workshop.

Selected open-ended responses:

- “I’m interested in more technical topics such as test statistics, software use, etc.”
- “I have done standard setting, so I’d want to see a detailed agenda before deciding.”
- “The hierarchical linear modeling needs to be example focused, so people can actually perform the technique after the conference is over.”
- “Would need more information to make a decision, but none of these look very appealing”

2. Which workshop would you be most likely to attend?

| Workshop | N (%) |
|--|---------------------------|
| Listening comprehension | 15 (11%) |
| Standard setting | 53 (38%) |
| HLM | 33 (23%) |
| I am not likely to attend any workshop | 40 (28%) |

3. Would you be more likely to attend a one-day or two-day workshop?

| Workshop | N (%) |
|--|-------------|
| One-day | 58 (41%) |
| Two-day | 22 (16%) |
| Either | 28 (20%) |
| I am not likely to attend any workshop | 33 (23%) |

4. What other workshop topics would you like to see offered at LTRC?

This was an open-ended question. A total of 48 respondents answered the question. Common responses included interest in workshops about computer-based testing, test development, item-response theory, SEM, and statistical analysis.

Selected open-ended responses:

- “Qualitative methodology workshops for lang testing: verbal protocols, using NVivo etc Workshops for those teaching language assessment”
- “1. [M]easuring gain & issues surrounding it 2. latent curve analysis 3. Baysean applications in testing (Mislevy’s stuff) 4. Multidimensional IRT “
- “Perhaps a short session on generalizability theory and its applications to language testing.”
- “something on computer-based testing - options, constraints of various platforms, automated scoring”
- “multivariate generalizability theory two-parameter and three-parameter logistic IRT”

Conference Program

1. Thinking about the LAST time you attended LTRC, how would you rate the quality of the following aspects of the program?

| | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good | Excellent | Not applicable |
|---|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Pre-conference workshop(s) | 0 (0%) | 5 (4%) | 16 (13%) | 26 (21%) | 15 (12%) | 61 (50%) |
| Plenary/keynote addresses (including Messick lecture) | 5 (4%) | 10 (8%) | 27 (22%) | 34 (28%) | 27 (22%) | 19 (16%) |
| Quality of paper presentations | 0 (0%) | 8 (7%) | 39 (32%) | 39 (32%) | 18 (15%) | 20 (16%) |
| Topics of paper presentations | 0 (0%) | 8 (7%) | 42 (34%) | 39 (32%) | 15 (12%) | 20 (16%) |
| Poster sessions | 1 (1%) | 12 (10%) | 41 (33%) | 36 (30%) | 9 (7%) | 24 (20%) |
| Work-in-progress sessions | 2 (2%) | 9 (7%) | 40 (33%) | 34 (28%) | 6 (5%) | 31 (25%) |
| Balance between sessions and networking/socializing opportunities | 8 (7%) | 18 (15%) | 35 (28%) | 32 (26%) | 11 (9%) | 20 (16%) |

Open-ended comments (N=27)

Common topics discussed in the responses included the quality of papers and the pacing and balance of conference activities. Several comments gave specific suggestions for the work-in-progress and poster sessions (see selected open-ended responses).

Selected open-ended responses:

- “A fine balance between conceptual and data-driven research work is needed [...]”
- “[...] Also, the WIPs should not be the last thing on the program as in Hangzhou. They need to be embedded in the program and protected. Almost no one attended the last session. Again, the presenters must have been disappointed [...]”
- “Since the number of paper presentations is limited, I don't like to see the same names appearing many times as the first author.”
- “The balance between sessions and networking/socializing is difficult, because the organizers want to allow as many presentations as possible. It's a tough call[.]”
- “I think the above is about the best any organizing committee can achieve given that paper selections are made on the basis of abstracts, which can sometimes mislead, and given the diverse interests of the entire LTRC community, which need to be addressed somehow in any program.”
- Those doing Posters and WIPS need more direction than last time as what to expect...room, poster board, process, etc. WIPS session needs structure, like in Barcelona... a leader, timing (e.g., beginning/end to each session approx 15 min., then move to another table). People have worked hard on their presentations and the sessions need to be set up so they can share and receive feedback in an efficient manner.

2. The following changes to the LTRC program have been suggested at various times. Please indicate your opinion on these changes.

| | Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neutral/not sure | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| LTRC should consider having parallel paper sessions | 41 (31%) | 27 (20%) | 22 (16%) | 28 (21%) | 16 (12%) |
| Presenters should be limited to a single paper | 12 (9%) | 21 (16%) | 16 (12%) | 37 (28%) | 47 (35%) |

3. Are there other modifications to the LTRC program that you would suggest, based on your experience at previous conferences?

39 respondents answered this open-ended question. Many respondents expressed their opinion, either in favor of or against, plenary sessions.

Selected open-ended responses:

- “ILTA member meetings can have more to offer.”
- “All workshops should have an outline available before registration so that participants know what the specific focus of the workshop will be.”
- “More firm timekeeping.”
- “a more organized plan for works-in-progress sessions”
- “Perhaps have parallel sessions for early career academics, and keep the single paper sessions for the ‘heavy hitters’?”
- “I don't like large conferences like AAAL that have parallel sessions. It seems like all the sessions I want to go to conflict with other sessions I want to go to. I like the format at LTRC where there are only single sessions at a time.”
- “1. Longer business meeting 2. Better book exhibits (this needs management) with time in the program breaks to look at it”
- “Parallel paper sessions will give a chance to other excellent projects to be discussed and would give a variety to what a person can attend/choose from”
- “I don't like large conferences [...] that have parallel sessions. It seems like all the sessions I want to go to conflict with other sessions I want to go to. I like the format at LTRC where there are only single sessions at a time.”

4. What do you like best about attending LTRC?

Of the 68 respondents who answered this question, many mentioned the chance LTRC provides to network and socialize with colleagues. The “small and high quality” nature of the conference was also mentioned by several respondents.

Selected open-ended responses:

- “Get to know much about what is going on in the field in a short period of time.”
- “Getting good feedback from people who focus much of their attention on language testing. Also enjoy seeing new ideas and cutting edge presentations.”

- “topics, workshop, no parallel sessions, so everyone shares the same 'experience' and easy to get to know people. Compared to applied linguistics, methodology of studies is generally good.”
- “Making new friends and meeting old friends. Get updated about recent research work in language testing and get stimulating ideas of language testing.”
- “The mix of papers and networking.”
- “The opportunity to catch up on advances in research as well the opportunity to meet up with colleagues that I wouldn't otherwise see.”

5. What do you like least about attending LTRC?

58 respondents commented on this question. Several comments mentioned issues specific to LTRC 2008. One of the most common complaints was the pacing of the conference. Some respondents dislike schedules that do not allow sufficient time for discussing and/or networking.

Selected open-ended responses:

- “When there are so many sessions crammed in each day that everyone is mentally exhausted by the last sessions, and there's no time to get together with people informally, to network, or to relax.”
- “The schedule was fully packed, and i was exhausted”
- “When the schedule is too packed. It's better to have time to appreciate and discuss the content, than to cram the program, and have marathon days.”
- “Some symposia have been less interesting, and more time-consuming, than other activities.”
- “1.The feeling of a "private club" 2. The way students are treated: there should not be a feeling of parading one's students nor should there be a segregation of students, they are researchers in their own right: I felt this way as a student and I see it now as a professor when I attend LTRC.”

Fun Stuff

1. Please indicate how likely you would be to attend the following events:

| | Very likely | Somewhat likely | Not likely |
|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Banquet—offsite | 62 (50%) | 40 (32%) | 24 (19%) |
| Banquet in hotel | 50 (63%) | 31 (25%) | 15 (12%) |
| Beer tasting | 40 (32%) | 33 (26%) | 54 (43%) |
| Line dancing | 21 (17%) | 34 (28%) | 69 (56%) |

Open-ended comments (N=12)

Selected open-ended responses:

- “What is line dancing?”
- “What about hiking or a sporting event!”
- “Leave at least one or two nights without planned activities, please. For most Westerners, we don't need or want heavy regimentation, no matter how great the activities are. The only exception would be if LTRC were being held in the middle of nowhere, with no restaurants or bars nearby to go off and explore on our own. (Melbourne had the mix about right, I think.)”

2. What is the most money you would be willing to spend to attend the LTRC banquet?

| \$ | N (%) |
|-------------|-----------------|
| \$25 | 38 (31%) |
| \$50 | 67 (54%) |
| \$75 | 20 (16%) |

Open-ended comments (N=18)

Many comments noted that the price is secondary; they value the banquet because it gives them a chance to socialize with colleagues. Those able to pay more often said they favored a less expensive banquet if that would allow more people to attend.

Selected open-ended responses:

- “the most important is to see people and not to spend money”
- “\$75 could be ok to me, depends on where the organisers choose to go... the important thing is that people socialize and have fun, more than the fanciness of the banquet. So no high (financial or 'geographical') thresholds”
- “I can usually afford to pay, but I think it's important to make it affordable for people on tighter budgets, so as many of the participants as possible can attend.”

3. How willing would you be to take a chartered bus to the banquet?

| Response | N (%) |
|---|-----------------|
| I'd go to the banquet if I had to go 50 miles by mule team. | 26 (21%) |
| I'd probably go if the menu looked good. | 23 (18%) |
| I might go but I'd prefer a closer location. | 68 (54%) |
| No thanks, I'll eat at Applebee's instead. | 10 (8%) |

4. Please rank order the following factors in terms of their importance in deciding whether or not to attend the banquet:

| | Most Important | In the middle | Least important |
|----------|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Price | 57 (52%) | 32 (29%) | 21 (19%) |
| Location | 28 (26%) | 43 (41%) | 35 (33%) |
| Menu | 27 (24%) | 38 (34%) | 48 (43%) |

Open-ended comments (N=22)

Several respondents mentioned dietary concerns and requested multiple options for banquet entrees. Two respondents mentioned that they'd like to go somewhere related to the location of the conference.

Selected open-ended responses:

- “Hard to do this because the banquet is an important part of LTRC. Brings the group together with food, awards, speeches, etc. so my ratings aren't really reliable.”
- “I have dietary restrictions, so having more than one choice helps.”
- “We are resigned to bad food. Would like to go somewhere 'special'. Needs to be reasonable price beer and wine.”

5. Should we order LTRC 2009 t-shirts?

| Response | N (%) |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Yes | 55 (46%) |
| No | 37 (31%) |
| Only for Lyle and Antony | 28 (23%) |

Open-ended comments (N=24)

Selected open-ended responses:

- “As long as they're in bad taste.”
- “But I think Sara and Meg's should be EXTRA special. :-)”

Information about Survey Respondents

1. What is your primary employment?

| Employment | N (%) |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Academic /university faculty | 86 (67%) |
| Employee | 11 (9%) |
| Government employee | 6 (5%) |
| Graduate student | 25 (20%) |

2. How many times have you attended LTRC in the past five years?

| # of times attended | N (%) |
|---------------------|----------|
| 0 | 33 (25%) |
| 1 | 27 (20%) |
| 2 | 28 (21%) |
| 3 | 23 (17%) |
| 4 | 12 (9%) |
| 5 | 10 (8%) |

3. (Approximately) how many times have you attended LTRC in the past 30 years?

| LTRCs attended | N |
|----------------|----|
| 0 | 11 |
| 1-3 | 34 |
| 4-9 | 30 |
| 10-15 | 16 |
| 16-20 | 6 |
| 21-25 | 1 |
| 26-30 | 0 |

What part of the world do you live in?

| | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| North America | 66 (49%) |
| Central/South America | 1 (1%) |
| Europe | 27 (20%) |
| Asia | 29 (22%) |
| Africa | 0 (0%) |
| Middle East | 3 (2%) |
| Oceania | 9 (7%) |