

Conference Report XLV FAAPI Conference 2021: Language Testing and Assessment.

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Conference Report
XLV FAAPI Conference 2021: First Latin American Conference on
Language Testing and Assessment
Virtual Edition
September 17th – 19th - 2021

By Sabrina Costa¹

“*How shallow is the soul of the Minister for exams?*”² is the question Brian Patten posed in his poem “*Minister for Exams*” and that Claudia Ferradas read during the opening ceremony of the XLV FAAPI Conference 2021 to encourage the audience to rethink and reconsider the role of language testing and assessment, which was the central topic of this event.

This three-day conference was organized by FAAPI (Federación Argentina de Asociaciones de Profesores de Inglés) in collaboration with LAALTA (The Latin American Association for Language Testing and Assessment) and began on September 17, on the teachers’ day and FAAPI’s 50th anniversary.

Amidst the pandemic, new challenges had to be met and creativity played a central role in this digital “*Brave New World*”³. As Gisela Laurent, President of FAAPI expressed: “*Este año, debido al contexto de pandemia que nos atraviesa, nos convocó a ser creativos para así poder dar respuesta a las necesidades del contexto actual. Encontrando oportunidades donde solo parecían haber dificultades*”. The work of the innovative minds that made this conference possible resulted in a splendid virtual platform consisting of a majestic hall which enabled participants to “walk around” and go into the different rooms in order to enjoy the talks by distinguished experts like Gabriel Díaz Maggioli, Sarah Rogerson, Sarah Hillyard, Evelina Galaczi, Leonor Corradi and Constant Leung among others. Undoubtedly, they were all a source of inspiration who transmitted their knowledge and motivated the audience to reflect upon new perspectives. As well as these keynote speakers, there were several other presenters

¹ Sabrina Costa was one of the winners of APRIR’s Free Pass.

² From ‘The Minister for Exams’ in Selected Poems (London: Penguin, 2007)

³ From the title of Aldous Huxley's 1932 novel Brave New World, although coined by William Shakespeare in 1610 in "The Tempest," act 5, scene 1: How beauteous mankind is!

at the concurrent sessions who shared their findings providing valuable insight into the theme of assessment and evaluation.

Apart from having the opportunity to attend formal plenaries, semi plenaries and concurrent sessions, participants were also able to explore more casual contexts. Either having a look at the publishers' stand, joining in the coffee talk or enjoying the exciting plays by *The Performers*.

Beyond a doubt, it was an academic event without precedents. The first virtual edition of a conference which will definitely go on enriching our practices as educators. And become, as Claudia Ferradas mentioned when reflecting upon the poem the "*Minister for Exams*", "*educators who formatively assess students, not setting limits to imagination but feeding it*".