



The ITC Archives: Interviews with the Early Leaders of the ITC



JACQUES GREGOIRE

As explained in the cover e-mail, the ITC Council would appreciate your providing detailed answers to the following questions:

1. During what year did you become involved with the ITC, how did this affiliation occur (e.g. were you asked to join the ITC, were you a representative of another organization, or did you elect to become involved), and what was the nature of your initial work on the ITC?

“I became involved in ITC in 1994, being elected as Secretary during the General meeting organized in Madrid (Spain). It was a solicited application, supported by Ron Hambleton.”

2. What were your initial impressions of the ITC, including its organizational structure, missions, and personnel?

“It was a difficult time for ITC. The relationship between the President, John Keats, and several council members were rather difficult. It was also (fortunately) a turning point, old members leaving and new ones arriving with new ideas and projects, the most important being the “Guidelines for test adaptation”.

3. Who were some of the key leaders in the ITC at that time and what were their roles?

“The key leaders were Ron Hambleton and Tom Oakland. The first one launched the “Guidelines for test adaptation” project, and the second one organized the first ITC conference in Oxford. These new activities were important after a period where ITC was only focused on the regulation of psychological test distribution and use across the world (with little success).”

4. Every organization and association goes through growing pains. During your first few years on the Council, what were some of the impediments that you felt limited the ITC’s work and needed to be changed?

“The main impediment was the president, John Keats, who was elected mainly by members of the Commonwealth countries opposed to the influence of American members. The oldest members, including the president, were in the Council to have an international status, but they had no goal, no vision. My first impression of ITC was: “this organization is dying if these guys continue to run ITC” ... “



5. What prominent changes have you seen in the ITC between when you first were a member and now?

“New members arrived with new ideas and they wanted to transform ITC in a modern organization. Among these new members, I would mention Dave Bartram and Barbara Byrne. Dave continued in the way opened by Ron, developing several guidelines adapted in several languages with an international impact. Barbara strongly improved the financial management of ITC. The members paid their dues or were excluded. The money collected was used to support meaningful projects.”

6. Where has the ITC done well? What do you think the ITC’s biggest accomplishment has been over the years?

“Since 1994, the main ITC accomplishments were (1) the development of several influential guidelines used throughout the world, (2) the organization of the ITC conferences, well attended by researchers and professionals for the quality of the contributions in the field of test, testing and measurement.”

7. Where has the ITC possibly made “wrong steps” or mistakes?

“I do not see important mistakes the last twenty years. The organization and the location of some conferences were not appropriate. It was the case for the Williamsburg conference, which was unsuccessful. We also started some projects without a strong leadership and a good analysis of the goal and the conditions for success: the ITC website on psychometric testing concepts, the ITC handbook on test and testing...”

8. What do you perceive to be current challenges facing the ITC and what role should the ITC play in this regard?

“A new generation of Council members is now in charge. They can rely on the work done by previous Council members, but they should also have new goals and activities to reach these goals. The domain of test and testing strongly evolved the last 10 years because of Internet and the globalization of economy. The problems ITC was dealing with in the past are different today.”

9. What do you believe should the ITC be focusing on right now and who are the key stakeholders that should be involved?

“I see two important problems that ITC should address. The first one, testing through the Internet, was already addressed by ITC thanks to Dave Bartram, but the situation evolves so quickly that new actions should be launched. The second problem is test and testing in developing countries. There is now a huge gap between these countries and industrial countries.”



10. If there was one thing you could change with regards to the ITC, what would it be?

“There is a lot to do, but few people in the field! This problem is not new, but seems more important today. Council members and other ITC members should be more involved and more active in ITC projects.”

11. What structural or organizational changes to the ITC should be considered to further its effectiveness?

“The contact between members, and especially Council members, should be closer. Without regular contacts, members tend to forget ITC for several months and are focused on their everyday life.”

12. To what extent did you find it difficult to dedicate your time to the work of the ITC?

“For an academic, it is not easy to dedicate time to ITC. Impact factor and university ranking changed the rules. Today, an academic has to be focused on publications in journals with high impact factor. It is the key for his/her promotion. And the universities are more and more focused on ranking, and value mainly the activities that could increase their ranking (publications, quality of education...). Being involved in an international association as ITC is no longer considered important for an academic carrier, nor for the ranking of a university. A lot of academics see such an involvement only as an opportunity to meet colleagues and develop their scientific and political network. Therefore, they do not consider spending much time to participate to the projects and activities.”

13. How would you compare the first ITC conference you ever attended with the one hosted in San Sebastian in 2014?

“The Oxford conference was much smaller (around 100 participants) and the quality of the contributions was not always what we could expect in such an international conference. The San Sebastian conference was very well attended by colleagues coming from all over the world. The quality of the contributions was high. Researchers and professionals take part of ITC conferences because they know they will have an overview of the current trends in their field.”

14. Among your various contributions, what do you believe may be your lasting legacy?

“The organization of the 5th ITC conference in Brussels in 2006, following the Winchester conference, contributed to set up the main characteristics of the ITC conferences. “

18th May, 2015