



# ALTE Conference - Sofia, Bulgaria

- Round Table, 10 November 2006

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Codes of Practice  
in Language Testing –  
reviewing current issues and  
responding to future challenges



# Antony Kunnan

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- the generic background – human **expectations** about standards of quality
- creating an 'ethical milieu': **differing approaches** to codes of ethics/ practice
- **tensions**: general principles or guidelines for practice? legally enforced or advisory?
- the importance of **training**, e.g. vignettes / illustrative examples



## The ALTE 'talk-show'

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- one **example** of how it can work
- a **dynamic system**: the ALTE CoP + min. standards + auditing + ...
- the **balancing act**: acknowledging diversity, applying standards
- **auditor/auditee interaction**: awareness-raising, (e)valuation, support, mutual respect



# Laura Muresan

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- the EAQUALS experience – **another example** in a different but related context
- underlying **principles from QMS**: client satisfaction, process, results
- **practical aspects**: documentation, sources of evidence, inspection scheme
- **generalisability + generativeness**
- **communication** with/to stakeholders



# Tim Oates

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- a **sociological/philosophical** perspective
- wider **political/legislative/economic** context – the complexity of reality
- the **impact(s)** of codes and standards – positive, neutral or negative?
- CoPs as **instruments of control** – with complex and dynamic systems
- a ‘health warning’ – the need for ‘wisdom’



## Some key issues that emerge..

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- Theoretical foundations (why?)
- Development and implementation (how?)
- Enforcement (who?)
- Contexts and jurisdiction (where?)
- Social dimensions (what?)



# Theoretical foundations

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- What is (or should be) our overarching goal in developing, implementing and upholding Codes of Ethics/Practice?
- Where do we get our model(s) from? Are there other possible sources we haven't thought of, or which may emerge in future?



# Development /implementation

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- Who should be involved in developing CoPs? How wide should the consultation be to mitigate against the code reflecting a particular 'agenda'?
- How can views of different stakeholders be reconciled? Do they need to be?



# Enforcement

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- To what extent should standards be enforced?
- Who is best qualified to monitor standards?
- What action should be taken if standards are not being met?



# Contexts and jurisdiction

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- How broad or diverse a context can be covered by a Code of Ethics/Practice?
- Is it something which can have an international scope and relate to all language testers and testing organisations worldwide?
- Could it be implemented and enforced in all language testing contexts?



# Social dimensions

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- How can we prevent the proliferation of CoPs?
- How can we prevent their misuse?
- How can we address misconceptions, e.g. high/low-stakes



# Future directions?

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- How can we continue to raise awareness of ethical and quality management issues among language test producers and users?



## Future directions (cont.)?

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- What new ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge for language testers?
- What sorts of new codes might be needed?
- What is the role for ALTE in this?