



EDITORIAL

The links between teaching, assessment and testing, and their impact on learning, have always raised a particular interest for language educators. Different contexts present different challenges and it is rewarding – indeed, it is necessary – to learn from research studies of how these links fare under widely variable circumstances. In this special issue of *Research Papers in Language Teaching and Learning* we are particularly happy – and, indeed, honoured – to host an extended discussion of a great variety of concerns in the area of language testing and assessment. The focus here is on the language teaching and learning contexts of two countries of the Expanding Circle with a great interest and a significant tradition in assessment and testing practices, i.e., Greece and Cyprus.

There are many reasons why this special issue is unique. For one, it offers a comprehensive overview of the state of the art in language assessment and testing in Europe and in Greece. It assembles a number of research accounts that will help readers appreciate different aspects of the current situation regarding high-stakes examinations in Greece. What is more, there are papers on central concerns for language teachers interested in assessment and testing practices, such as the role of the teacher, the function of courseware, the status, reactions to and beliefs about high-stakes examinations, and classroom-based assessment practices in the state and private domain. Of particular interest are a series of innovative proposals in the form of case studies that touch upon alternative assessment, self-assessment, peer-assessment and ICT-enhanced assessment – all written by language teachers who have practised them.

It is also important to mention that all this information is accessible freely on the web.

I would personally like to thank the guest editors of this special issue, Dr Dina Tzagari and Dr Spiros Papageorgiou, two of the most prominent Greek colleagues specialising in language assessment and testing today, for their professionalism and painstaking diligence in supervising the production of this issue from start to finish. It has proved to be a demanding but rewarding experience for everyone involved. I am confident that this volume will be a reference point for researchers and educators for many years to come.

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Editor-in-Chief