

Case study from Androula Athanasiou

- A. *Please write briefly about a memorable language assessment experience, either particularly challenging or especially successful, as an example of your practice during the pandemic:*

What is the national context? What kind of institution? Who were the language learners?

Higher education public institution, in Cyprus. Undergraduate students studying a variety of disciplines. All 1st year undergraduate students and also some 2nd and 4th year students (not from all disciplines).

What was the status of the assessment?

Mid-term and final exams

Please write a brief description – the ‘story’ - of what you did/what happened that made this an especially memorable experience:

Initially, we were concerned about the online nature of the exams, and about students being able to cheat. Some instructors created their exams in Moodle quiz, in which a variety of materials (e.g., reading passages, videos, listening, images) could be included and activities could be carried out (e.g., multiple choice questions, matching, gap filling, short answers and longer answers) and in which items can be shuffled and different items can be assigned to certain groups of students. However, in my case, I preferred including open ended questions, in the form of a Word document, which required taking a critical stance, on reading passages and on topics covered in class. Moreover, I included longer pieces of writing, through which I could assess students' ability in the language in many areas, such as content, structure, vocabulary, grammar. I then also started using Moodle quiz, which was easier in terms of marking, but not creating the exam. After two years of experimenting, I can say that a combination of the two types could be used as long as we can ensure that students do not receive any help during the exams.

What lessons might there be in your experience for language teaching in general beyond the pandemic?

I must admit that the online mode could be useful, after all as long as we use it to serve our purpose and as long as we assess what we want to assess.

- B. *In your context, how have teachers and other colleagues coped with modified assessment practices during the pandemic?*

Initially, there existed great confusion as to what and how to assess. After much experimentation though, each colleague has chosen the mode of assessment that serves their teaching purpose best.

- C. *The pandemic has now lasted almost two years and is not over yet. How is it affecting your professional practice at present?*

After two years, we are still experimenting with a variety of teaching models (fully online, hybrid and/or blended) and we are still trying to figure out what works best. There still some confusion as to how and what to assess and this is affecting teaching and learning of course. I believe that we still need more time before we decide which practice is best. Although we must admit that technology has come to stay and perhaps we should adapt our teaching accordingly.