

Case study from Elena Lambrianou

- 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?*

As a state high school teacher I used the Microsoft Teams to conduct my lessons on a daily basis.

*What was the status of the assessment?*

Particularly challenging was assessing students' oral skills. As a means of assessing students' oral performance prior to the pandemic I held open discussions in class on topics which had been studied in advance and after relevant vocabulary had been taught. However, it was extremely difficult to hold an open discussion online because of frequent bad internet connections and students being distracted by various factors as they were in different settings.

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

While a student was expressing her thoughts on a particular topic her baby brother started crying and the other students online started laughing and lost focus. As her mum was not at home, I advised her to take the baby in her arms to calm him down, which is what happened. Then we continued the discussion with the baby in the picture.

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

it is important to encourage self-learning from an early age through various sources with the teacher having an advisory role, offering suggestions so that students become more responsible for their own learning.

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

Teachers had to prepare various projects, mainly writing ones, on the basis of which students would be assessed, because tests based on textbook material could not be conducted in a fully controlled environment.

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

At the moment in Cyprus, with a very high rate of vaccination, very few students or staff have caught the virus. Schools therefore operate as they used to before the pandemic. In the event that some students are unable to attend due to the virus they link up on Teams and watch the lesson.