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**Department of Teacher Education,**

**University of Turku**

**Finland**



# **Practices, policies and tensions in classroom-based assessment**

**Dina Tsagari**

**Pavlos Pavlou**

**University of Cyprus**

# Overview

- **Literature**
- **Purpose of the study**
- **Results**
- **Recommendations**

## **Classroom Assessment:**

**‘process of obtaining information which is used to make educational decision about students, and to judge instructional effectiveness and curricular adequacy’**

**American Federation of Teachers, National Council on Measurement in Education , American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education & National Education Association**

**<http://www.unl.edu/buros/bimm/html/article3.html>**

## Teachers should be skilled in:

- **choosing and developing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions.**
- **administering, scoring and interpreting the results of both externally-produced and teacher-produced assessment methods.**
- **using assessment results when making decisions about individual students, planning teaching, developing curriculum, and institutional improvement.**
- **developing, using and evaluating valid student grading procedures which use student assessments.**
- **communicating assessment results to students, educational decision makers and other concerned stakeholders.**

*'Standards for Teacher Competence in Educational Assessment of Students' 1990,*  
American Federation of Teachers, National Council on Measurement in Education ,  
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education & National Education Association

<http://www.unl.edu/buros/bimm/html/article3.html>

# Literature review

- **Studies have yielded contradictory results depicting teachers**
- **heavy users of tests (Gullickson, 1984)**
- **showing preference for informal assessment methods (Brindley, 1989; Mavrommattis, 1997; Stiggins and Conklin, 1992).**

# Literature review

- **Studies depict teachers as ‘assessment illiterate’, e.g.**

## **Teachers**

- **had superficial knowledge of test use, esp. in interpreting standardized tests (Goslin, 1967; Gullickson, 1984)**
- **reported using a variety of assessment methods but their most frequently used formats corresponded to those used by formal external examinations (Rogers, 1991; Wilson, 1998; 2000).**
- **did very little reflection on what was being assessed and were unaware of the assessment work of their colleagues (Black and Wiliam, 1998; Harlen & Deakin-Crick, 2002; 2003).**
- **had little knowledge of assessment frameworks and adapted whatever assessment activities were in their disposal to suit their own teaching contexts (Breen et al., 1997; Arkoudis and O’Loughlin, 2004; Davison 2004).**

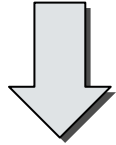
# Literature review

- **Teachers' assessment practices vary according to teachers' experience, their views of the role of assessment in the curriculum, collegial expectations and external reporting demands (McCallum et al, 1995; Breen et al, 1997).**

## Literature review

- **Studies also highlight the tensions between administrative and educational purposes for the use of assessment instruments and state-mandated assessment policies on teacher assessment (Rogers, 1991; Breen et al., 1997; Wilson, 1998; 2000; Arkoudis and O'Loughlin, 2004; Davison 2004).**

## Conclusions of the literature review

- The role of the EFL teacher in classroom-based assessment has received little attention in the research literature, e.g.
  - What are the purposes of classroom-based assessment?
  - What assessment methods do teachers use for classroom-based purposes?
  - How do they choose and develop their assessment methods?
  - How do they use them in the classroom?
  - Are teachers sufficiently trained in classroom assessment?
- 
- These issues remain largely unproblematized and unresearched

# **Aims of the study:**

**To investigate the**

- a) purposes**
- b) methods**
- c) procedures**
- d) training needs**

**of EFL teachers' classroom assessment in state schools Cyprus**

# Types of data

- ***Survey questionnaires***
  - a. Biographical Information***
  - b. Purposes of LTA***
  - c. Methods of LTA***
  - d. Procedures of LTA***
  - e. Training in LTA***

# Types of data

- *Survey questionnaire*
- *Test Samples*

## A. Biographical information

<i>Gender</i>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>10%</b>

## A. Biographical information

<i>Types of schools</i>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>
<b>Primary Schools</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Junior High Schools</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Senior High Schools</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>Technical &amp; Vocational Schools</b>	<b>7%</b>

## A. Biographical information

<i>Age range</i>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>
<b>21-30</b>	<b>14 %</b>
<b>31-40</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>41-50</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>51+</b>	<b>22%</b>

## A. Biographical information

<b><i>Teaching experience (years)</i></b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>
<b>0-1</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>2-5</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>6-10</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>11+</b>	<b>70%</b>

## A. Biographical information

<i>Professional Qualifications</i>	Teachers (n=191)
BA	100%
MA	37%
Other	10%

## *Test samples*

<b>Tests</b>	<b>262</b>
<b>Sections</b>	<b>696</b>
<b>Tasks</b>	<b>1513</b>
<b>Teachers</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Schools</b>	<b>45</b>

## B. Purposes of LTA

1. *Do you assess your students' language skills at your school?*

**Yes**      **100%**

**No**        **-**

## B. Purposes of LTA

<b>2. Why do you assess your students?</b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>
<b>Student-centred purposes</b>	
b. To obtain information about my students' progress	<b>88%</b>
d. To motivate my students to learn	<b>66%</b>
e. To make my students work harder	<b>54%</b>
f. To prepare my students for external tests	<b>50%</b>
<b>Instruction-based purposes</b>	
c. To plan my teaching	<b>69%</b>
<b>Administration-based purposes</b>	
g. To determine students' final grades	<b>61%</b>
a. To place students at appropriate levels	<b>44%</b>
h. To provide information to central administration (e.g. school, Ministry)	<b>24%</b>

## B. Purposes of LTA

<b><i>3. What kind of tests do you use?</i></b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>	<b>Tests (n=262)</b>
<b>b. Progress tests</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>72.2%</b>
<b>c. Achievement tests</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>a. Mini-quizzes</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>
<b>d. Diagnostic tests</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>e. Placement tests</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>

## **C. Methods of LTA**

- **Teacher-oriented assessment methods**  
(methods designed and administered by the teachers)

## C. Methods of LTA - Reading

*Do you assess reading in your tests?*

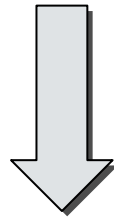
**Yes                      92%**

**No                         8%**

## C. Methods of LTA - Reading

<b><i>6.1 What types of tasks do you use in your tests when you test reading?</i></b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>	<b>Test tasks (n=278)</b>
<b>True-false items</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Matching items</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
<b>Short answer questions</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>48.2%</b>
<b>Multiple-choice items</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>21.2%</b>
<b>Sentence completion items</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>0.35%</b>
<b>Fill in forms</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>0.35%</b>
<b>Jumbled sentences</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cloze</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Information transfer</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Visual representation</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>-</b>

- Integrating Reading + Vocabulary + Writing = 41% tests



- English paper of the School leaving exam (university admission)

## C. Methods of LTA – Reading/Writing

<b><i>Follow-up writing tasks</i></b>	<b>Test tasks (n=42)</b>
<b>Summary writing</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Extended follow-up writing</b>	<b>74%</b>

## C. Methods of LTA – Reading/Vocabulary

<b><i>Vocabulary task types</i></b>	<b>Test tasks (n=160)</b>
<b>Find words in text</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>Match words from text with definitions</b>	<b>29.3%</b>
<b>Find opposites of words in text</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Explain the meaning of underlined words in text</b>	<b>5.6%</b>
<b>Fill in discrete sentences with words from text</b>	<b>8.7%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>8.4%</b>

## C. Methods of LTA - Reading

<i>6.8 Do you use other methods to test your students' language skills?</i>	Teachers (n=191)
<b>Reading</b>	
Ask oral questions based on text	76%
Reading aloud	44%

## C. Methods of LTA - Writing

*Do you assess writing in your tests?*

**Yes 97%**

**No 2%**

**No answer 2%**

## C. Methods of LTA - Writing

<i>6.2 What types of tasks do you use in your tests when you test writing?</i>	Teachers (n=191)	Test tasks (n=62)
True-false items	80%	-
Matching items	77%	-
Joining sentences	57%	-
Multiple-choice items (to identify grammar errors)	53%	-
Editing a piece of writing	53%	-
Writing short paragraph	83%	27.5%
Writing composition/essay	81%	72.5%

- Task environment (audience, purpose, word limit...)
- Task types (limited)
- Marking criteria (rare)

## C. Methods of LTA - Listening

*Do you assess listening in your tests?*

**Yes**                      **93%**

**No**                         **7%**

## C. Methods of LTA – Listening

<b><i>6.3 What types of tasks do you use in your tests when you test listening?</i></b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>	<b>Test tasks (n=6)</b>
<b>Short answer questions</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>True/False</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Multiple-choice</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Order jumbled pictures</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Retelling a story</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Taking notes</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Following directions</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Filling in forms</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Dictation</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Summary writing</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>2</b>

## C. Methods of LTA - Speaking

*Do you assess speaking in your tests?*

**Yes 84%**

**No 15%**

**No answer 1%**

## C. Methods of LTA – Speaking

<b><i>6.4 What types of tasks do you use in your tests when you test speaking?</i></b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>	<b>Test tasks (n=0)</b>
<b>Oral descriptions (event/object/photo)</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Oral directions</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Sentence response cues</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>-</b>

## C. Methods of LTA - Speaking

<i>6.8 Do you use other methods to test your students' language skills?</i>	Teachers (n=191)
<b>Speaking</b>	
Interviews	62%
Oral discussion with each student	59%
Oral presentations	53%
Oral reading	39%
Role plays	35%
Group discussions	35%
Public speaking	29%
Info gap activities	28%

## C. Methods of LTA - Grammar

*Do you assess grammar in your tests?*

**Yes** **97%**

**No** **2%**

**No answer** **1%**

## C. Methods of LTA – Grammar

<b><i>6.5 What types of tasks do you use in your tests when you test grammar?</i></b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>	<b>Test tasks (n=504)</b>
<b>True/False</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Sentence Completion</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Sentence Transformations</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>13.5%</b>
<b>Multiple-choice</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Cloze</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Identify grammar errors</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
<b>Re-writing sentences</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
<b>Editing a piece of writing</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
<b>Put words of a sentence in order</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18%</b>

## C. Methods of LTA - Vocabulary

*Do you assess your students' vocabulary skills?*

**Yes 98%**

**No 1%**

**No answer 1%**

## C. Methods of LTA – Vocabulary

<b><i>6.6 What types of tasks do you use in your tests when you test vocabulary?</i></b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>	<b>Test tasks (n=504)</b>
<b>True/False</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>
<b>Sentence Completion</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>Crosswords</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
<b>Cloze</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>
<b>Multiple-choice</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Matching</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>
<b>Derivatives</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>21.3%</b>
<b>Synonyms/Antonyms</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
<b>Labeling</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
<b>Translation from L1 to L2</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10%</b>

## C. Methods of LTA – Language Functions

*Do you assess language functions in your tests?*

**Yes 83%**

**No 15%**

**No answer 2%**

## C. Methods of LTA – Language Functions

<b><i>6.7 What types of tasks do you use in your tests when you test language functions?</i></b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>	<b>Test tasks (n=0)</b>
<b>Multiple choice</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Responding to situations</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Matching</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Filling in gapped dialogues</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Discourse chains</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>-</b>

## Content of teacher-made tests

Language areas	Teachers (n=191)	Test Tasks (n=1513)
Vocabulary	98%	41%
Grammar	97%	33.3%
Writing	97%	7%
Reading	92%	18.3%
Listening	92%	0.4%
Speaking	84%	-
Functions	83%	-

## C. Methods of LTA

- **Teacher-oriented assessment methods**  
(methods designed and administered by the teachers)
- **Student-oriented assessment methods**  
(methods that directly involve students' participation in the assessment process)

## C. Methods of LTA

<b>6.8 Do you use other methods to test your students' language skills?</b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>				
	<b>Diaries/ Journals</b>	<b>Peer- assessment</b>	<b>Self- assessment</b>	<b>Portfolios</b>	<b>Projects</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Writing</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>Listening</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Speaking</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Grammar</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Functions</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>-</b>

# Other interesting characteristics of teacher-made tests

- **Parallel versions (59%)**
- **Odd scoring (tasks & test papers)**
- **Errors in aggregating final scores**
- **(Parts of the) tests comprised photocopied samples of external test papers & test booklets**
- **Handwritten (15%)**

## D. Procedures of LTA – Sources of test items

<b><i>7. Which of the following represents your primary source for test questions/items?</i></b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>
<b>a. Items developed by myself</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>c. Items from published textbook materials</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>b. Items prepared together with other teachers</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>d. Items found on the Internet</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>e. Items from external exam papers</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>f. Items from test booklets (textbooks)</b>	<b>22%</b>

# External Test papers

<b><i>Language areas</i></b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Writing</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Listening</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Grammar</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Speaking</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Functions</b>	<b>-</b>

## D. Procedures of LTA - Feedback

<b><i>8. When you give feedback to your students after a test, how do you do so?</i></b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>
<b>a. Verbal feedback</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>c. Written comments</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>e. Total test score</b>	<b>62%</b>
<b>d. Conference with student</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>b. Checklist</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>f. A letter grade</b>	<b>28%</b>

## D. Procedures of LTA - Feedback

<b><i>9. When you give final evaluation feedback to your students, how do you do so?</i></b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>
<b>c. Total test score</b>	<b>61%</b>
<b>b. Written comments</b>	<b>61%</b>
<b>d. A letter grade</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>a. Checklist</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>2%</b>

## D. Procedures of LTA - Stakeholders

<b><i>10. Who will see the test results?</i></b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>
<b>a. Students</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>b. Parents</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>c. Head teachers</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>d. Inspectors</b>	<b>26%</b>

## E. Training in LTA

<i>a. During your pre-service or in-service teacher training, have you learned something about testing and assessment (theory and practice)?</i>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>72%</b>

## E. Training in LTA

<b><i>b. Types of training</i></b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>
<b>Completed a full course on testing and assessment</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Completed a course in which testing and assessment were topics</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Completed a workshop on testing and assessment</b>	<b>39%</b>

## E. Training in LTA

<b><i>c. Who organised your training in LTA?</i></b>	<b>Teachers (n=191)</b>
<b>Pedagogical Institute</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>University Department</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>School Advisors/Inspectors</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>External Examination Boards</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Teacher's Associations (e.g. CyTEA...)</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Publishers</b>	<b>4%</b>

## **E. Teachers' training needs in LTA**

- **classroom-focused LTA**
- **purposes of LTA**
- **content and concepts of LTA**
- **the use of the CEFR as the basis of test design**

## E.1 Training of teachers in classroom-focused LTA

<b><i>1.1 Please specify if you need training in the following domains</i></b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>g) Using the European Language Portfolio, an adaptation of it or some other portfolio type</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>a) Preparing classroom tests</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>d) Using self/peer-assessment</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>c) Giving feedback to students based on information from tests / assessment</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>f) Using informal, continuous, non-test type of assessment</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>b) Using ready-made tests from textbook packages</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>e) Using diary/journal assessment</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>11%</b>

## E.2 Training of teachers in purposes of LTA

<b><i>2.1 Please specify if you need training in the following domains</i></b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>c) To place students onto courses, programmes, etc</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>a) To give grades</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>b) To find out what needs to be taught / learnt</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>d) To award final reports (at school)</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>24%</b>

## E.3 Training of teachers in content and concepts of LTA

<b><i>3.1 Please specify if you need training in the following domains:</i></b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>e) Testing aspects of culture</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>f) Establishing reliability of tests / assessment</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>g) Establishing validity of tests / assessment</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>h) Using statistics to study the quality of LTA</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>d) Testing integrated language skills</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>a) Testing receptive skills (reading / listening)</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>b) Testing productive skills (speaking / writing)</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>c) Testing grammar &amp; vocabulary</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>f) Testing language functions</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>7%</b>

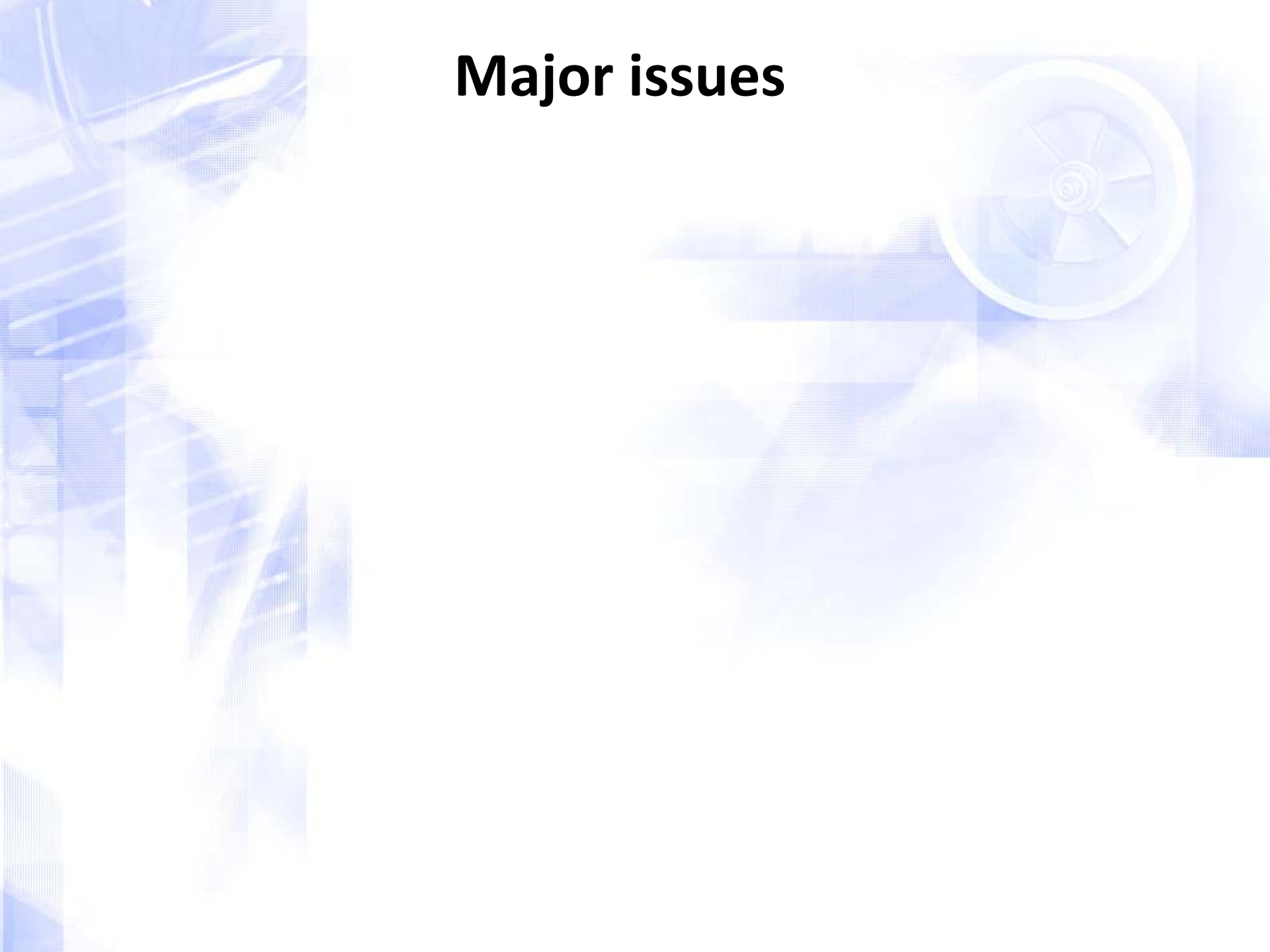
## E.4 Training of teachers in other LTA activities

<b><i>4.2 Please specify if you need training in the following domain:</i></b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Using the Common European Framework as the basis for your tests or assessment practices</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>7%</b>

## Overall - Teacher training in LTA

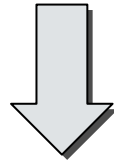
<i>Areas of training in LTA</i>	Teachers (n=191)	
	Positive	Negative
d) use of the CEFR	81%	7%
c) content and concepts of LTA	45%	21%
b) purposes of LTA	44%	26%
a) classroom-focused LTA	43%	22%

# Major issues



# Purposes of classroom-based assessment

- are diverse and give rise to different teacher positioning in assessment
- tensions arise: need for summative and formative assessment data



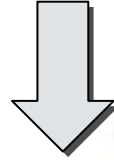
- create imbalance in the range of assessment opportunities that teachers provide for their learners

# Practices and procedures of classroom-based assessment

## Teachers

- **rely on the paper and pencil format to more informal, student-oriented approaches to assessment**
- **do not seem to vary their testing methods very much**
- **are not always efficient in scoring or setting their test papers**
- **do not easily share their assessments among them**
- **report using a variety of feedback mechanisms (?)**
- **favour external examination, textbook and test booklet formats**
- **test a limited range of language skills**

# Practices and procedures of classroom-based assessment



## Classroom-based

- is operationalised as the testing of part of students' linguistic knowledge by presenting students with a series of summative mini-achievement tests
- places emphasis on language 'product' rather than 'process'
- is limited to assessment of learning rather than assessment as learning

# **Training in classroom-based assessment**

## **Teachers**

- **are not sufficiently competent in classroom assessment**
- **teacher education programmes do not provide adequate training in classroom assessment**

# Recommendations

- **Clear assessment guidelines and specifications – Ministry Education/Pedagogical Institute**
- **Pre-/in-service LTA training courses: regular/relevant**
- **Teacher assessment teams**
- **Collaborative assessment projects**
- **Assessment training booklets**
- **Self-access materials**
- **Technology (internet, online tutorials)**
- **Teacher publications and presentations in LTA**
- **Formal LTA courses in University programmes**

# Further research

- **Follow-up questionnaires**
- **Classroom observations/recordings (discourse analysis)**
- **Assessment documents**
- **Follow-up interviews with teachers, school advisors/inspectors, parents and students**
- **CBA research projects in other contexts**

**To give feedback or for further details please  
contact:**

**Dina Tsagari**

**[tsagaric@otenet.gr](mailto:tsagaric@otenet.gr)**

**Pavlos Pavlou**

**[ppavlou@ucy.ac.cy](mailto:ppavlou@ucy.ac.cy)**

**Thank you!**