



7th CBLA SIG Symposium Programme
'Language Assessment and Learning Differences'

Hosted by the Department of English Studies, University of Cyprus
 Venue: Room E010 (KENTRIKA), University of Cyprus, Kallipoleos 75, Nicosia

Saturday 19th November, 2015		
8.30-9.00	Registration	
9.00-10.00	Successful Inclusion of Learners with Dyslexia In Mainstream Foreign Language Classrooms Room: E010	Dr Joanna Nijakowska Łódź University, Poland
10.00 – 10.45	Assessment and Learning Difficulties in Higher Education: Institutional awareness and implementation Room: E010	Dr Mari Carmen Campoy-Cubillo Universitat Jaume I, Spain
10.45-11.45	Online Teaching & Testing Resources for EFL Teachers: Putting Theory into Practice Room: E010	Dr Jenny Liontou Hellenic Open University, Greece
11.45-12.00	Teacher Assessment Language Enhancement-TALE: An update Room: E010	Dr Dina Tsagari University of Cyprus
12.00 - 12.30 Coffee break		
Workshops 12.30 – 13.30		
Workshop 1	How to Approach Learning Difficulties through Formative Assessment Practices Room: E115	George Michaeloudes Department of English Studies, University of Cyprus
Workshop 2	Using Peer Assessment of Writing in Terms of a Dyslexia Assessment Policy Room: E116	Eleni Meletiadou Department of English Studies, University of Cyprus
13.30	CBLA SIG Meeting – Farewell	

Sponsors:



Dr Joanna Nijakowska
Łódź University, Poland

Presentation 1: Successful inclusion of learners with dyslexia in mainstream foreign language classrooms

In this paper I will address such issues as differentiated instruction, inclusive practices and accommodating the needs of foreign language learners with dyslexia in foreign language mainstream classrooms, with particular reference to EFL (English as a foreign language). I will begin with characterising the nature of specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) and the way dyslexia manifests itself in a foreign language study. Using example materials and tasks from the DysTEFL2 teacher training course I will then indicate areas of classroom activity in which differentiation can be implemented. This will be followed by sample techniques of classroom management, task design and teaching techniques that can enable language learners with dyslexia to fulfil their foreign language learning potential. The paper will also refer to the area of initial EFL teacher training and continuing professional development (CPD) with respect to applying the practices of inclusive education as well as foreign language teachers' attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, and concerns relating to implementing inclusive education principles in their teaching practice.

Bio

Dr Joanna Nijakowska is an Associate Professor in the Department of Pragmatics, at Łódź University, Poland. She is the author of the book *Dyslexia in the Foreign Language Classroom* and the co-author of the DysTEFL (Dyslexia for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) materials. She has published on dyslexia and effective classroom practices as well as foreign language teachers' professional needs, concerns and beliefs about dyslexia. She was an initiator and co-ordinator of the award winning DysTEFL and DysTEFL2 project co-financed by the European Commission.

Mari Carmen Campoy-Cubillo
Universitat Jaume I, Spain

Presentation 2: Assessment and Learning Difficulties in Higher Education: Institutional awareness and implementation

This presentation addresses current and future challenges to implement special needs assessment procedures in Higher Education and to this end, understanding the nature of learning and teaching is of paramount importance. According to Coe et al.'s report on teaching (2014) there are two issues that are relevant to improve students' attainment, and these are the teachers' content knowledge and the quality of the instruction. The former takes into account teachers' ability to understand the way in which students think about a particular subject and it also entails being able to identify possible misconceptions of that subject. The latter (quality of instruction) is complex in nature and values the ways in which teachers develop strategies that are effective in their own teaching context as well as the use of adequate assessment procedures (Tsagari & Spanoudis 2013).

Special needs challenges in Higher Education teaching and assessment cannot be developed and implemented adequately unless specific teacher training in this area is provided. To achieve this goal effectively, we also need to take an organization-wide approach to implementing an institutional approach that is flexible enough and that provides the necessary steps to foster a universal design that can be applied to all content areas (cf. Ribera et al. 2013 as an example). Successful elements of institutional awareness at all levels (from the teacher to the department to the faculty and the

institution as a whole) can be identified by comparing and contrasting (personal teacher-based) existing practices and by discussing the emerging research evidence supporting these experiences (Domagała-Zyśk 2013,2015; Nabiątek & Komar-Szulczyńska 2014, Nijakowska & Kormos 2016;).

Dr Mari Carmen Campoy Cubillo, PhD, is Senior Lecturer at the Department of English Studies, Universitat Jaume I, Spain. She is the editor of the international research journal *Language Value*. Her main research interests are in the areas of lexicography, language testing and the application of corpus linguistics to the teaching of foreign languages. She is a member of the *Consell Assessor de la Unitat de Suport Educatiu*, and a member of the European Association of Languages for Specific Purposes (AELFE) and the Spanish Applied Linguistics Association (AESLA).

Dr Jenny Liontou

Hellenic Open University, Greece

Presentation 3: Online Teaching & Testing Resources for EFL Teachers: Putting Theory into Practice

The Internet has significantly changed how we communicate with one another as well as how we access, share and facilitate information (Atkins, 1991; Yang, 2009). Providing materials for students to complete courses online has created a new era for teaching. Not only can students benefit from the use of technology but institutions and instructors can efficiently distribute materials and information (Stephenson, 2006). Motivated by the above literature, the aim of the presentation is to provide basic information on free online instruments while reflecting on their use for EFL teaching and assessment purposes. To this end, a variety of online resources that can be used to create a more dynamic learning environment and increase EFL learners' engagement and motivation will be demonstrated, while issues concerning assessment feedback and practical affordances provided by open online technologies will also be discussed. The presentation will conclude by highlighting the fact that online class components should not be designed *around the tools*, attempting to fit the online tools into a task-based EFL lesson, but rather *serve the learning objectives of the actual lesson* based on a blended teaching approach, in which face-to-face and online learning activities will be relevant to and complemented one another.

Dr Jenny Liontou works as an Adjunct Instructor at the Hellenic Open University and at the Faculty of English Studies, University of Athens. She holds a Ph.D. in *English Language and Linguistics* with specialization in EFL Testing & Assessment. She holds a B.A. in *English Language & Literature*, a M.A. in *Lexicography: Theory and Applications* and a M.Sc. in *Information Technology in Education*. She has worked as an EFL teacher in primary and secondary education, a freelance item writer, oral examiner and script rater for various international EFL examination boards and has published papers in the aforementioned fields.

Dr Dina Tsagari

University of Cyprus, Cyprus

Presentation 4: Teacher Assessment Language Enhancement/TALE: An update

This presentation will provide the audience with an update on 'Teachers' Assessment Literacy Enhancement (TALE)', a EU-funded project that aims at developing an efficient and sustainable language testing and assessment online training infrastructure primarily for English language teachers to

help them develop sufficient assessment literacy skills that cater also for the needs of students with learning difficulties.

Dr Dina Tsagari is Assistant Professor in Applied Linguistics/TEFL with specialization in Language Testing and Assessment. Dina is currently working at the Department of English Studies, University of Cyprus, Cyprus. She is a member of language teaching and assessment societies and has participated in various research projects in Greece, Cyprus, UK, USA and Hong Kong. She has published widely and presented in numerous conferences (ucy.academia.edu/DinaTsagari/CurriculumVitae). Her research interests include various aspects of language testing and assessment (teacher assessment literacy, test washback, classroom-based assessment), course and materials design, language teaching and learning, adult and distance education.

George Michaeloudes, PhD cand.

University of Cyprus

Workshop 1: How to Approach Learning Difficulties through Formative Assessment Practices

This workshop demonstrates how Formative Assessment (FA) strategies can be used for the identification and possible treatment of learning difficulties in the second/foreign language teaching and learning context. In this workshop, FA is defined as a process of assessing learning, modifying instruction according to information gathered through teachers', students' and their peers' activities, and promoting learning with the aim of improving learners' competence (Black & Wiliam, 2009). Learning difficulties may negatively affect the promotion of learning during the FA process. On the other hand, FA can be used for the identification of learning difficulties through various FA teachers' techniques during the lesson i.e. observation, questioning, formative feedback, 'self-' and 'peer-' assessment, sharing of learning objectives and success criteria and formative use of summative tests. Therefore, this workshop aims to provide an insight on how teachers and more specifically foreign/second language teachers can use FA techniques effectively, for the promotion of learning and language acquisition when dealing with learners with learning difficulties. Furthermore, explicit references to the identification and treatment of learning difficulties will be made and suggestions on how to adjust and improve instruction in this context will be provided.

George Michaeloudes is a primary school teacher with specialisation in teaching English (MSc in TESOL, University of Bristol). Currently, he is a PhD candidate in Linguistics at the Department of English studies, University of Cyprus. He has worked as a research and teaching assistant at the University of Cyprus. He has presented his work in various local and international conferences and published a number of articles in the field of classroom-based language assessment. He is a member of EALTA, AEA, CyLing and CyTEA. His research interests include, amongst others, formative assessment, classroom interaction and CLIL. University of Cyprus.

Eleni Meletiadou, PhD candidate

University of Cyprus

Workshop 2: Using peer assessment of writing to accommodate dyslexic students

There has recently been a growth in students with dyslexia attending universities (Connelly, Cambell, Mac Lean, and Barnes, 2006; Tsagari and Spanoudis, 2013) because more accurate identification and

effective support is provided from schools prior to entering higher education (Tzagari and Banerjee, 2015). However, academic support for these undergraduates once at university is patchy, and practice is not usually based on a reliable research corpus (Singleton, 1999). Students with dyslexia and their tutors believe that writing, not reading, is in fact their biggest problem at university (Hatcher, Snowling, & Griffiths, 2002). Writing is a complex skill involving a number of linguistic and nonlinguistic processes. This workshop aims to answer questions such as: a) Why should teachers and instructors use peer assessment (PA) of writing with dyslexic students? (b) How can they use PA to help their dyslexic students overcome some of the challenges they encounter in terms of writing? (c) What kind of problems may they face and how can they overcome them? Finally, this workshop will provide practical advice for school teachers and university instructors who would like to use PA of writing with their dyslexic students.

Eleni Meletiadou is a PhD candidate in Linguistics, Department of English Studies, University of Cyprus. She has taught at school education and university level. Her research interests include classroom-based language assessment, dyslexia, collaborative language learning and teacher training. Her work, which primarily focuses on assessment and writing, has been presented in national and international conferences. She has also published on peer assessment, process writing and washback.
