

Second Language Learning and Teaching

Achilleas Kostoulas *Editor*

# Challenging Boundaries in Language Education

 Springer

# **Second Language Learning and Teaching**

## **Series Editor**

Mirosław Pawlak, Faculty of Pedagogy and Fine Arts, Adam Mickiewicz University, Kalisz, Poland

The series brings together volumes dealing with different aspects of learning and teaching second and foreign languages. The titles included are both monographs and edited collections focusing on a variety of topics ranging from the processes underlying second language acquisition, through various aspects of language learning in instructed and non-instructed settings, to different facets of the teaching process, including syllabus choice, materials design, classroom practices and evaluation. The publications reflect state-of-the-art developments in those areas, they adopt a wide range of theoretical perspectives and follow diverse research paradigms. The intended audience are all those who are interested in naturalistic and classroom second language acquisition, including researchers, methodologists, curriculum and materials designers, teachers and undergraduate and graduate students undertaking empirical investigations of how second languages are learnt and taught.

More information about this series at <http://www.springer.com/series/10129>

Achilleas Kostoulas  
Editor

# Challenging Boundaries in Language Education

 Springer

*Editor*  
Achilleas Kostoulas  
The University of Manchester  
Manchester, UK

ISSN 2193-7648                      ISSN 2193-7656 (electronic)  
Second Language Learning and Teaching  
ISBN 978-3-030-17056-1              ISBN 978-3-030-17057-8 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-17057-8>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2019936295

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2019

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG  
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

*To David, Nicole and Thomas*

# Contents

<b>Conceptualizing and Problematizing Boundaries in Language Education</b> . . . . .	1
Achilleas Kostoulas	
<b>Part I Rethinking Language Education Theory</b>	
<b>A Journey Through the Landscapes of Language Education</b> . . . . .	15
Janez Skela	
<b>Repositioning Language Education Theory</b> . . . . .	33
Achilleas Kostoulas	
<b>An Ecological Perspective for Critical Action in Applied Linguistics</b> . . . . .	51
Juup Stelma and Richard Fay	
<b>Space and Time for Understanding(s): The Recursive Cycle of Language Education and Classroom Enquiry</b> . . . . .	71
Anna Costantino	
<b>Part II Reshaping Language Education Practice</b>	
<b>Challenging Curricular Boundaries and Identities Through CLIL: An E-learning Professional Development Program for CLIL Teachers</b> . . . . .	89
Katerina Vourdanou	
<b>Beyond the Garrison: Global Education and Teaching (Canadian) Literature in the EFL Classroom</b> . . . . .	107
Jürgen Wehrmann	
<b>Building a Model Engine for Language Learning with Tertiary Engineering Students</b> . . . . .	121
Dietmar Tatzl	

<b>Across Languages and Cultures: Modelling Teaching and Learning with Intercomprehension</b> .....	141
Claudia Mewald	
<b>Part III Redefining Language Teachers and Learners</b>	
<b>Thinking Outside the Box: The Impact of Globalization on English Language Teachers in Austria</b> .....	165
Alia Moser and Petra Kletzenbauer	
<b>Third-Age University Teachers in Language Education: Navigating the Boundaries of Work-Life Balance and Retirement</b> .....	183
Sonja Babić and Kyle Talbot	
<b>Study Abroad: L2 Self-efficacy and Engagement in Intercultural Interactions</b> .....	199
Gianna Hessel	
<b>Schools as Linguistic Space: Multilingual Realities at Schools in Vienna and Brno</b> .....	211
Lena Schwarzl, Eva Vetter and Miroslav Janik	
<b>Beyond Conventional Borders of Second Language Teachers' Education: A Digital, Interdisciplinary, and Critical Postgraduate Curriculum</b> .....	229
Roula Kitsiou, Maria Papadopoulou, George Androulakis, Roula Tsokalidou and Eleni Skourtou	
<b>Boundaries Crossed, and New Frontiers: Ongoing Theoretical, Empirical, and Pedagogical Issues in Language Education</b> .....	247
Achilleas Kostoulas	
<b>Index</b> .....	257



# Beyond Conventional Borders of Second Language Teachers' Education: A Digital, Interdisciplinary, and Critical Postgraduate Curriculum



Roula Kitsiou, Maria Papadopoulou, George Androulakis, Roula Tsokalidou and Eleni Skourtou

**Abstract** In this chapter we present and discuss aspects of the “Language Education for Refugees and Migrants (LRM)” Master’s program, which was launched by the Hellenic Open University in 2016. We focus on key elements of the curriculum design, such as digitality, criticality, interdisciplinarity, creativity, collaborative learning and a practice-oriented conceptualization. Our emphasis is on critical language teaching, digital and critical literacy skills that students are encouraged to develop through online collaboration that supports learning across age, race, culture, gender, ability and geography. Based on the pilot implementation of the program between October 2016 and February 2018, we present and discuss examples of activities and students’ responses to them. In addition, we reflect on and critically approach the challenges the LRM community had to face in order to facilitate the development of a new academic culture among all the agents involved in this endeavor. We conclude by reflecting on how open and distance higher education can play a major role in expanding the physical boundaries of communities who work with and for refugees in cross-disciplinary encounters that build on and go beyond the conventional perspectives of language education, and in facilitating refugees’ and migrant students’ access to higher education.

---

R. Kitsiou (✉)  
Hellenic Open University, Patras, Greece  
e-mail: [roulakit@gmail.com](mailto:roulakit@gmail.com)

M. Papadopoulou · G. Androulakis  
University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece  
e-mail: [mariapap@uth.gr](mailto:mariapap@uth.gr)

G. Androulakis  
e-mail: [androulakis@uth.gr](mailto:androulakis@uth.gr)

R. Tsokalidou  
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece  
e-mail: [tsokalid@nured.auth.gr](mailto:tsokalid@nured.auth.gr)

E. Skourtou  
University of the Aegean, Mytilene, Greece  
e-mail: [skourtoue@gmail.com](mailto:skourtoue@gmail.com)

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2019  
A. Kostoulas (ed.), *Challenging Boundaries in Language Education*,  
Second Language Learning and Teaching,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-17057-8\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-17057-8_14)

229

## 1 Introduction

Greece, as a “transit” country until early 2015 for the vast majority of refugees who wished to enter Europe and relocate in northern countries, has now turned into an encampment country, because of restrictions imposed in intra-European mobility in 2015 (Apostolidou & Androulakis, 2017). New pressing requirements have emerged that call for responding to fluid needs of the refugee population, planning the provision of mid-term solutions and the design of strategies for the integration of adults and children with a refugee background in the Greek society (Apostolidou & Androulakis, 2017). Outside the Greek context, the rapid changes in the 21st century, in which multilingualism is the norm, have raised new challenges regarding the tasks and roles of language teachers (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016). Involvement in continuing professional development emerges as a necessity for 21st century language teachers, so that they can be effective and reflective practitioners (OECD, 2018). To that end, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) brings new opportunities for innovation in education.

This chapter presents and discusses decisions, challenges and implications of designing and implementing a second language teacher education curriculum within the context of a distance learning postgraduate program. The main objective of this endeavor was to address the issues for second language educators who wish to respond to the needs of populations with a refugee or migrant background, taking into account the current sociopolitical context in Greece and Europe. Examining ways to merge language teaching with other curricular aims, the language educator is perceived as a “whole teacher,” who promotes all aspects of teachers’ development, including attitudes, knowledge, and practice. This perspective applies principles of linguistic and social justice, to extend conventional understandings of what language educators require in order to work effectively with, and for, refugee and migrant students. The cross-disciplinary structure of this program puts forward an alternative to programs organized along disciplinary fields. More specifically, participating students in LRM become members of a community of practice that is not restricted only to language educators, but also brings together other professionals who work in this field.

## 2 The Need for LRM in Times of Amplified Migration: Sociopolitical & Institutional Context

The need for the new postgraduate program “Language Education for Refugees and Migrants (LRM)” has arisen as a crucial response to the current sociopolitical conditions influencing second language education and taking into account the complex sociolinguistic realities of refugees currently residing in Greece.

## 2.1 *The Institutional Context: HOU's Strategic Framework*

The Hellenic Open University (HOU) is the only Greek State University that provides distance education at both an undergraduate and a postgraduate level. During 2015–2017, a new policy was developed that resulted into the collaborative course development project (for more details, see Kalantzi, Sideris, Spyropoulou, & Androulakis, 2016), including the LRM postgraduate program, which started on the 1st October 2016. For the needs of this project, an interdisciplinary team was formed, the Digital Course Development Team (DCDT) that consists of three sub-teams: (a) the subject-matter experts' team, (b) the instructional designers' team, and (c) the digital integration team. The DCDT, working in collaboration with teams of academics, the Academic Supervision Teams of each program, have been responsible for designing and delivering the masters' curricula, syllabi and educational material. The authors of this paper have collaborated for two years in order to design and deliver the new postgraduate program of LRM, having various and multiple roles.<sup>1</sup> This project has been recently awarded with the E-xcellence Associates in Quality Label Award 2018-2021 by the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities.

Another important initiative of the Hellenic Open University focusing on refugee population, was project PRESS—Provision for Refugee Education Support Scheme (2016–2017). PRESS aimed to address the educational and integration needs of refugees currently residing in Greece through research-led educational interventions. More specifically, the first phase of the project included interdisciplinary (anthropological and sociolinguistic) ethnographic fieldwork that informed the following phases relating to educational interventions and raising awareness of the local societies in Greece (see <http://press-project.eap.gr/>). PRESS was related to LRM's design in many aspects, such as providing the team with: (a) data concerning educators' training needs or target-groups' specific language and communicative needs; (b) educational material to be included in students' essays or to be used by them in practice; or (c) research reports and scientific papers to be used as study material in various LRM modules.

---

<sup>1</sup>George Androulakis, Vice President of Academic Affairs and International Affairs (2015–2017) conceptualized the collaborative course development project and created the DCDT.

Members of the Academic Supervision Team of LRM: (a) Roula Tsokalidou, director of LRM and Supervisor of the modules LRM51, LRM53, and LRM60; (b) Maria Papadopoulou, Supervisor of LRM50, LRM55, and LRM61; and (c) Eleni Skourtou, Supervisor of LRM52, LRM54, and LRM62.

Members of the DCDT: (a) Roula Kitsiou, a tutor for LRM52 Critical Pedagogy at the time of writing, LRM subject-matter expert (academic content developer); (b) Natalia Spyropoulou, instructional designer; and (c) Ioannis Kalemis, expert for digital integration.

## 2.2 *The LRM Curriculum as an Educational Policy Decision for Language Educators at an Institutional Level*

We had to problematize important aspects of LRM during its conception and design, and then transform them into curricular decisions through reflective discussions (see Androulakis & Kitsiou, 2017). As a result, the following key assumptions among others informed our curricular decisions on multiple levels, as seen below.

**The (trans-)national agenda for refugee education** seems to be shaped by the local context and type of emergency and countries have adopted a range of strategies to integrate refugee children into their education system. Schools often suffer from a scarcity of qualified teachers, which could affect the quality of the education provided (UNHCR, 2016). Therefore, bringing together actors who deal with refugee education in different countries in the context of an international postgraduate program aimed at creating spaces of collaboration and sharing experiences that may immediately shed light on different policies, decisions, changes in the target-groups' needs or the host countries conditions and policies.

**The Greek sociopolitical context** does not seem to be ready to deal with the integration of refugees on all levels of civic life. Towards this end, language educators can play an active and crucial role in preparing, sensitizing or even transforming local communities. For example, refugee children have encountered great resistance entering Greek regular classes in many local contexts. School and university agents, as well as teachers' unions have intervened in many cases in order to raise mainstream parents' awareness and empathy (see, for example, articles in one of the most popular Greek sites for educational issues: [alfavita.gr](http://alfavita.gr), 2016–2017 (in Greek)). In this context, critical pedagogy principles and a practice-based orientation of the postgraduate program have emerged as crucial decisions to respond to the current unfriendly "schoolscape."

**Language educators' readiness, skills and adaptability** within new conditions emerge as necessary preconditions in order to successfully respond to the current challenges of the regular classroom. Integrating refugee students in the classroom raises new challenges for teachers on different levels of classroom management (e.g., concerning schooling norms, literacy levels, post-traumatic experiences). In-service teachers report a great need for specialized training in order to address the current classroom contexts; they tend to rely mostly on intuitive knowledge that has been built up over time through interactions with students in a range of learning contexts, and through the apprenticeship of observation, that is, their own experiences as learners (e.g., Borg, 2004; Miller, Windle, & Yazdanpanah, 2014).

**Undergraduate teacher education** in the Greek context often fails to prepare language teachers appropriately in order to respond to the changing needs of this superdiverse group of learners within or/and outside the classroom. In common with other European countries (see Schwarzl et al., this volume), national curricula implement monolingual practices and orientations towards teaching language(s) (Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011). The teaching material doesn't apply to the multicultural and multilingual changing ethnoscape (Androulakis & Kitsiou, 2017).

In addition, there is a tendency to omit ideological elements from classroom discourse, not visibly addressing education and especially second language teaching as an ideological matter (see Kostoulas, 2018). Therefore, the inclusion of critical pedagogy in module LRM52 as part of teachers' professional development was a decision intended to help participating students recognize ideological aspects of educational decisions and matters and develop their critical language awareness. In the same direction, LRM60 (Introduction to Arabic Language and Culture) was included in LRM as a means to raise students' intercultural awareness and help them develop personal experiences related to translanguaging practices as well as to languages of different status, familiarity and functionality/importance for their teaching practice. More specifically, facing the challenges of trying to learn basic Arabic was considered as a main process of developing their empathy and gaining knowledge about linguistic and cultural features of a language many of their newly arrived students use coming from Arabic-speaking countries.

**Refugee students' educational needs**, specific current living conditions and future plans are quite fluid. There is limited research on different refugee-groups' needs for the Greek context but also at a European level, whereas some groups, such as refugee women, are especially underrepresented. A few current research data (e.g., Provision for Refugee Education Support Scheme (PRESS)) reveal the great fluidity of refugees' self-reported needs, and Greek emerges as a language of secondary preference for addressing short- and not long-term needs due to plans of relocation. According to Daskalaki, Tsioli, and Androulakis (2017, p. 30), the migration and mobility experience becomes identical to the process of learning languages for these groups, and their choices seem to target "high status languages," such as English and German, that appear to be considered as important resources towards "a better life." With regard to refugees' expectations, stability and high qualifications of educators are important prerequisites for their learning choices, and other refugees report their need for learning through innovative, flexible and/or intensive teaching methods including digital applications, self-expression, informal activities, such as football, music, drawing, etc. (Daskalaki et al., 2017). Given this context, language educators working in these multilingual settings need to question monolingual mindsets and also explore new modes of language teaching and learning. Towards this end, module LRM55 refers to the development of digital educational material and to raising students' awareness concerning technologies useful for target-groups with a refugee or a migrant background, recognizing the importance of digitality in relation to mobility and to the rapid evolution of the technoscapes that affects languaging.

**The European agenda for future education** includes digitality as a main characteristic of modern learning environments. Digitality is an important part of refugees' everyday life and more generally an important aspect of modern life (see Apostolidou & Androulakis, 2017; Daskalaki et al., 2017). Promoting digital capabilities in context, appropriating digital contexts, digital wellbeing, and digital communication rights are crucial issues for individuals and communities who are especially on the move. Digital learning and digital capabilities (see the Digital Capability Framework in <https://www.jisc.ac.uk>) call for more technology-informed and digitally integrated learning environments. Digital learning environments have

a potential for more inclusive approaches in terms of time, space and learning styles. Through this perspective, offering LRM through the digital platform of the only Greek institution that offers certified distance learning programs must be pointed out as an important contribution of HOU's academic landscape.

To summarize, the lack of research data about refugee target groups as well as the need for specialized training for second language educators who deal with migrant populations, led us to render LRM accessible to international students choosing English as a working language, so as to promote their transnational cooperation in the context of a community of practice. We also gave LRM a cross-disciplinary character involving language teachers, linguists, as well as other professionals who work with refugees and migrants. The distance mode of the offered program was considered as a crucial element that may allow for mobility of information, good practices, shared experiences, and concerns of people who work on the same field around the world. Taking into account the Greek sociopolitical context in relation to the transnational agenda for refugee education, as well as the superdiverse classroom that poses new questions for students, teachers, parents, local societies, and educational policy actors, LRM has proposed a curriculum that takes advantage of and applies the qualities of digitality, criticality, interdisciplinarity and connectivity in order to prepare educators for providing quality education to refugees and migrants, through supporting a pragmatic ethos around issues of educational policy and human rights.

### 3 Designing LRM: Structure, Principles, Content

The LRM curriculum consists of nine modules, the Practicum, and the MA thesis, as shown in Table 1.

We adopted Fraser and Bosanquet's (2006) framework to define "curriculum," and employed emergent design strategies as the course unfolded (see Thompson & MacDonald, 2005). The course's modules focus on the integration of language, culture, and codes of power as part of the development of formal, informal and non-formal, on-line and off-line educational programs. The curriculum design processes draw on a constructivist perspective, which valorizes and includes the voices of students, community, and teachers. The LRM modules were designed to provide participating teachers with a strong grounding in theoretical literature as well as appropriate classroom methodology, course design and an introduction to the key research tools employing the "whole teacher framework" towards professional development (see Chen & McCray, 2012).

Students are offered the opportunity to engage in practice-oriented research (see Marshall, 2010; see also Constantino, this volume) from the first module, working individually or collaboratively on micro-research tasks with target groups of a refugee or migrant background. They are guided to gradually connect practice to theory and/or apply theory to practice, reflect and further develop their understanding of both theoretical and practical considerations in the field of language learning and teaching drawing from the principles of critical pedagogy (see Freire, 1968/2018),

**Table 1** LRM structure

Semester	Course component
1st	LRM50 Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition (10 ECTS) LRM51 Migration, Multilingualism and Intercultural Communication (10 ECTS) LRM52 Critical Pedagogy (10 ECTS)
Pilot implementation: LRM50-LRM52 offered during 1st semester 2016–2017	
2nd	LRM53 Language Teaching for Adult Refugees and Migrants (10 ECTS) LRM54 Language Teaching for Children with Refugee or Migrant Background (10 ECTS) LRM55 Design and Development of Educational Material and Digital Media (10 ECTS)
Pilot implementation: LRM50-LRM55 offered during 2nd semester 2016–2017	
3rd	LRM60 Introduction to Arabic Language and Culture (10 ECTS) LRM61 Human Rights and International Law for Refugees and Migrants (10 ECTS) LRM 62 Research Methodology in multilingual contexts (10 ECTS)
Pilot implementation: LRM50-LRM62 offered during 1st semester 2017–2018	
4th	LRM63 Practicum (20 ECTS) LRM64 MA Thesis (10 ECTS)
Pilot implementation: All modules offered during 2nd semester 2017–2018	

and translanguaging as process and pedagogy, and as a practical theory of language promoting creativity and valorizing multilingualism as a set of creative language practices (see Tsokalidou, 2017; Wei, 2018). More specifically, deep engagement with the world of practice is encouraged through visits to schools, refugee camps or other institutions related to formal and informal learning of refugees and migrants in different sites of Greece and other countries. For example, one of the final essays of the first semester modules requires a collaborative three-stage educational intervention in a refugee camp in order to implement a critical language teaching activity. This data-driven intervention starts by obtaining access to a camp, which the students later visit, in order to collect data through observation, interviews or discussions. In the second stage, students collaboratively design a critical language activity based on their data. The activity culminates in the implementation of the activity, group reflection, and the submission of a final report.

Focusing on one of the most innovative elements of LRM content, the module on Human Rights and International Law for Refugees and Migrants (LRM61), presupposes a critical pedagogy lens and a quite challenging cross-disciplinary cooperation of an applied linguist, a sociolinguist and a specialized lawyer. The module raises issues such as the right to education, legal rights related to terms such as “refugee,” “asylum seeker,” “migrant,” “immigrant,” or regulations about European family reunification, all of which are critical aspects of refugees and migrants’ rights that language educators and other practitioners should have in mind when designing meaningful interventions for their students. The need to know terminology and basic legislation principles concerning refugees and migrants’ rights seems to emerge as



an everyday need in the field (see Examples 1 & 2, which are extracts from students' posts in forum discussions). In this context, students employing a critically informed legal lens are encouraged to review, de-/re-construct their stereotypes and ideas concerning conventional notions of "age," "gender," "language" in relation to descent, etc.

Example 1: Expectations from LRM61

It is a promising new module and so useful for our work. Colleagues, relatives or other people keep asking me things concerning my refugee kids and their rights but I am not aware of basic legislation and terminology. So I really expect to get the right knowledge to be able to reply to all relevant queries and also help refugees and migrants get their rights. Refugee Rights are Human Rights after all.

Example 2: The need for LRM61: Experiences from the field

I read with an alerting eye this week's study material. I must say that it wasn't entirely unknown territory - and I'm referring here to the legal specificities. Working with refugees the past summer, it happened to come across some documents, either for translation/explanation or discussion, documents regarding appeals for asylum and family reunification.

Module LRM60, which introduces students to Arabic language and culture, is another innovative element of LRM, encouraging language educators' get involved in one of the most common languages introduced in schools due to the recent refugee influx. LRM60 was designed in such a manner that students become aware of the intrinsic complexities and numerous varieties of Arabic, features that help them overcome simplistic stereotypes regarding the Arabic-speaking world. Future plans for enhancing the structure and flexibility of the program include offering a greater variety of introductory courses in common languages used by migrant populations in Greece, such as Albanian, Farsi and Urdu. The emphasis here is on developing greater knowledge and skills in relation to the new linguistically complex realities in schools (see, e.g., Moser & Kletzenbauer, this volume; Schwartzl et al., this volume) and society, and on carrying out reflexive teaching practice.

The LRM program has incorporated flexible semester modules, and participation of academic tutors throughout the educational process and the development of the learning material, new pedagogical and technical education solutions that improve the educational environment based on a student-centered approach. It also integrates digital and interactive material, e-content (see Spyropoulou, Kalantzi, Sideris, & Androulakis, 2017), and adopts and explores new ways of student support through the integration of synchronous communication between academic tutors and students, including mentoring, and new ways of communication and interaction. Some examples can be seen in LRM tutors' initiatives and good practices during timetabled Tutor-Student Sessions (TSS), as well as their practices in support of the students' academic literacy development (Makri et al., 2017). Various resources, from articles and book chapters to audiovisual elements, and weekly activities have been used to cover the contents of each week's topics. The multimodal design of the educational material aims to respond to the various learning styles and needs of the students.

More specifically, the digital and interactive educational activities consist of closed-ended and open-ended online tasks, which demand the use of forums and the usage



of online tools of the learning platform, activities with audiovisual educational material and wikis, while in all activities tutors guide and give feedback to students. A translanguaging framework has been applied in various processes of content delivery. For example, in forum discussions and during TSSs, students are encouraged to use all of their available linguistic resources for communicating their thoughts, while in LRM60 (Introduction to Arabic Language and Culture) the Arabic language has been used in a written and an audio mode in extratextual components (e.g., in unit and activities titles).

Innovative practices have been extended to the assessment of LRM. More specifically, in LRM, final exams, which are the most common assessment procedure in Greek Higher Education, have been replaced by a final essay, which often requires field research, that students need to submit and present by the end of the semester, while assessment is realized throughout the semester through various formative processes (Short essay: 25%, Weekly evaluation activities: 30%, final essay: 45%). These assessment practices, which are highly unusual in Greek tertiary institutions, are in line with the slow movement in higher education from an emphasis on final examinations towards the use of more diverse, and more continuous, forms of assessment (see, e.g., Heywood, 2000). Tutors' feedback techniques vary from individual to group feedback depending on the type of activity (e.g., text assignment or forum discussion). Tutors-students communication through formal and informal Skype meetings, e-mails and in other spaces within the Moodle platform, includes "sustainable" feedback (see Askew & Lodge, 2000), that is, feedback that is performed as "appreciating," not as "telling." Employing a curriculum perspective, which is broader than an assessment view, feedback can be perceived as an attribute of the curriculum that locates it as a central feature of student engagement, as a key curriculum space for communicating, for knowing, for judging and for acting (see Barnett & Coate, 2005). For instance, Example 3, a student's comment during a synchronous online TSS, where all participants commented on each other's work posing questions and/or further problematizing certain topics, illustrates students' attitudes towards the feedback processes:

Example 3: Student comment about feedback

(I liked most) The feedback of the short essay and the interaction we had during presentations. I encountered interesting ideas and perspectives and I had stimuli for further thinking. I found my colleagues' work quite creative.

#### **4 Pilot Implementation: Motives, Challenges, Boundaries, and Potential of the LRM Community**

A total of 277 students enrolled in the program during its pilot implementation between October 2016 and February 2018. Most of them were highly motivated teachers of various languages (mostly English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Greek) working in different levels of education, but there were also sociologists,

social workers, psychologists, etc. who had already been working with refugees and migrants in different settings, some of whom had also been involved in activism. In addition, there were pre-service graduates who had not experienced aspects of migration but were interested in getting involved in refugee studies and mostly in refugee education due to concerns about the current condition in Greece. Students come from different areas in Greece or from other countries (Albania, England, France, Germany, Norway, Palestine, Spain, Sweden, Syria etc.). Some of them have experienced migration in their lives or they are currently migrants (for example, one of the students comes from Syria, enrolled in LRM while residing in Greece and has now relocated in Sweden due to family reunification), with important experiences to share in the digital spaces of the LRM community, as reported in Example 4:

Example 4: Motives for enrolling in LRM

Being myself a child of migrants in Australia I deeply believe that education for migrants and refugees should be carefully organized and offered to them by a teacher with studies and experience on this topic. Teachers should become acquainted with their language and their culture.

In the introductory posts in the LRM forums, the students reported diverse motives for enrolling in the program. Many practitioners who were already working in the field of language education, were keen to gain more professional insights into second language teaching in order to help their students. Others, especially early graduate students who aim at working in this field, reported an appreciation for English—the program’s working language—which they viewed as beneficial for their professional development. Other professionals reported an interest in the curricular areas of the program, such as human rights (LRM61), developing digital educational material (LRM55), or introduction to Arabic language and culture (LRM60), as well as the innovative nature of the curriculum, and particularly its political perspective on education, its interdisciplinary nature and its approach upon language(s) (“it touches upon current issues on a pretty innovative way”). For other students, their motivation stemmed from concerns about the refugee crisis in Greece and a desire to better serve the educational rights of refugees who “are here to stay.” Finally, many participants reported a desire to experience open and distance education and acquire subject- and context-based digital literacy skills.

During the pilot semesters of the program, students responded creatively and got highly engaged especially in activities that call for applying their creativity and “thinking out of the box” (e.g., creating altered Arabic letters in LRM60, see Examples 5–7; Fig. 1); discussing about current influential personalities and issues of their sociopolitical realities (e.g., speeches by Donald Trump, the far-right Greek politician Nikolaos Michaloliakos, and Malala Yousafzai) or modern cultural artefacts (such as manipulation in political discourse in the *House of the Cards* series) through a critical discourse analysis perspective. For example, in LRM52, participants are encouraged to reflect on political discourse, issues and techniques of propaganda and their pedagogical implications approaching language form as a unit of analysis, as part of a system of exercising, resisting or sharing power on discourse.

Forum discussion evaluation activity: Altered Arabic letters

Example 5: The rare AlifBehTeh plant - *Beginneriensis Arabicus* (Fig. 1, left)

- Post 1 Dear all,/ have you ever heard of the fragile and rare AlifBehTeh plant (*Beginneriensis Arabicus*) that grows somewhere and everywhere? Well this is the only drawing ever done to it by botanologists
- Post 2 Hahaha, +1 (for its rarity...)
- Post 3 +1. I can even smell its aroma. P.S I hope it has one, ha ha!
- Post 4 +1 Fruitful imagination!!! Why not? (...)

Example 6: Thousand and One Nights perception of Arabic Letters (Fig. 1, center)

- Post 1 Hello everyone!/ Inspired from Thousand and One Nights, here is my own perception of Alif (the spout of the lamp), Baa (pendant) and Taa (magic carpet with Aladdin and Jasmin) letters!/I really enjoyed all of your amazing creations!

Example 7: The odyssey of refugees through the Mediterranean Sea (Fig. 1, right)

- Post 1 (...) As I was looking through my daughter’s box with art materials (...), I came across this small painting that we did together 8 years ago when she was in the first grade of primary school!/It totally reminded me of the odyssey that so many refugees have experienced the last years and their passage to “freedom” through the Mediterranean Sea.../ *Alif* symbolizes the waves of the sea that sometimes were calm and assisting thus getting people safely on an island symbolized by *theth* (in white). Unfortunately, other times there was a *tragic ending* with people of all ages being lost in the sea, represented with *beh.* (in black)

In some cases, students’ negative attitudes towards collaboration restrained them from choosing to participate in collaborative activities. “I am not a team-person,” was one of the most common arguments put forward by students. Ethical issues were also encountered, such as how to support a team’s decision with which a member does not morally agree due to different ideological standpoints. In addition, practical issues arose, such as concerns about how teamwork would be effective in a distance mode and difficulty in finding common time spaces for interacting with team members. Students seem to be unaware of collaborative learning benefits and they initially resist. Usually students in Greece do not receive training in working together. The fact though that the outcomes, products, artworks etc. of the collaborative activities



**Fig. 1** Students’ altered Arabic letters drawings (shared in the LRM forum)

were shared in a forum so that every member of the class had access, activated at a second phase other students with initial reservations to participate in following forum discussions in a more motivated way. Based on other students' reports, there were groups that got excited with collaborative activities, got highly motivated and had the chance to feel that they started belonging to the LRM community (e.g., "I would like to dedicate the following song to all of you," see Examples 8 and 9).

Example 8: Student's comment after participating in a collaborative activity

I would like to say that it was *my first collaborative activity* in this *online community of practice* and I found it *different, innovative and intriguing*. It gave us the opportunity to *overcome the distance's hurdle* in order to interact, learn, and share ideas, *responsibilities, and diverse understandings*. (...)

Example 9: Applying digital literacy skills to approach historical facts

- Post 1 Dear tutor and colleagues, / I've created a *history line of the Arab-Israeli war's* background (WOW! *sweated!*). Many unknown facts, many controversial issues-some facts "haunt" Middle East politics to present day./ Have a nice "ride," and *looking forward to discuss with!* (...)
- Post 2 I particularly enjoyed your history line. /I cannot but *agree with you on the complexity* of the war's background and the *effort* it has taken to get a grip of it.
- Post 3 (...) I would like to *congratulate* you for your history line! Very thorough presentation and very interesting pictures and links! You *set the standard high* for the rest of us.
- Post 4 Dear (...)/Hello,/ I would like to *dedicate the following song to all of you*. I find it goes well with our learning material of the week./ "Dance me to the end of Love" by Leonard Cohen/ Remember it is not a love song after all!/ My thoughts on the Arab-Israeli War (...)
- Post 5 *What a great song...*and definitely not a love song...Good choice!!
- Post 6 *A alternative version of the song –subjectivities*. (...), although I love the L. Cohen singing of it...
- Post 7 I appreciated the way you present data of the war *according to your perspective*. / *I can see now the beauty of this exercise* since it *opens a door to subjectivity* regarding who is the rightful owner of the land but also your *aesthetics* in preparing this history line (...)
- Post 8 Thank you, dear (...), for your kind words. Your timeline is also in detail and it *seems that you have searched for more truth in additional sources*. Indeed, so many facts are unknown to us and, *unless you study on your own*, you can never learn the real situation neither in our History books nor in the media who shape the public opinion according to the dominant will and interests. / *I still remember the day that haunted me* for years (the student shares a bomb explosion she experienced as a nine-year-old child and how her mother helped her realise that the truth has two sides trying to explain her the Lebanese bombers' attack on the Embassy of Israel.)
- Post 9 Dear (...) / *I thank you for sharing such a personal experience!* :-)

In the previous two examples (focus mostly on the emphasized parts of the extracts) some of the most important characteristics that emerge as part of the students digital learning are: (a) collaborative learning within the platform or in other digital spaces; (b) taking initiatives for organizing the activity's content and team strategies to respond to the activity; (c) giving peer-group (individual and group) feedback

(agreeing, disagreeing, respecting, building on others' perspectives); (d) expanding and applying digital literacy skills; (e) group reflection and enjoying interaction; (f) investing identities in learning, sharing personal stories/experiences, sharing feelings and resources (sharing music, humor and encouragement practices); (g) getting motivated to create personal learning paths, towards autonomous learning; and (h) expanding academic literacy skills ("it seems that you have searched for more truth in additional sources").

Based on the pilot implementation of the program, we had to respond to many challenges, and overcome difficulties. More specifically, we had to adapt pedagogic approaches and assessment to digital spaces of learning. Interacting and working digitally required staff training in open and distance learning, seminars on the institution's regulations, interdisciplinary team encounters, and adaptation of existing good practices and material that were already available by the institution. Another important aspect was the lack of support for innovation and new approaches in order to link curriculum development to institutional strategies. In many cases there was resistance to change and difficulty to motivate staff get out of their comfort zones and get involved in staff engagement activities, training and support. In addition, there was often restricted understanding of the roles needed to deliver and support online learning, on the behalf of academics or tutors working in conventional universities and had no previous experience with distance learning.

On the other hand, LRM has led to the creation of an online community of language educators who can use this network for professional support, guidance and inspiration (see also Trust, Krutka, & Carpente, 2016), as well as in order to share good practices, data, information and ideas concerning the quality educational future of refugees and migrants across various countries and beyond the borders of physical spaces. Another way LRM has addressed this challenge, was promoting a community-based approach of language teaching (see Calhoun, 2010) by facilitating refugees', asylum-seekers', and migrants' access to tertiary education providing them with full grants. This inclusive network could lead to more sustainable educational interventions and curricula for second language teaching acquiring a more holistic picture of the trajectories of refugees and migrants in immediate ways of sharing information and data.

The sense of belonging to a team with common vision and concerns seems to be very important, especially due to the absence of extended research data and limited knowledge of how refugees' multiliteracies may replace conventional literacies and therefore may require new starting points for dealing with conventionally "illiterate" students, or digitally high literate second language students. In addition, a growing community of specialized tutors in distance learning practices that have been co-creating a new culture of initiatives, creativity in action, reflection in action and cooperation beyond competition and individuality, may also transfer good practices to conventional academic spaces for the benefit of students in the context of new learning and teaching methods that involve blended learning.

## **5 Expanding the Language Education Scenery: Redesigning Second Language Teachers' Education in the Digital Age**

Language, communication and literacies as theoretical constructs are currently challenged due to the complex interconnected processes of globalization, migration, digitization, and “mediatization” (see Androutsopoulos, 2014). Creative ICT use (O’Mara & Harris, 2014) changes the media- and lingua-scape, and conventional literacies seem to be questioned in the context of multiple literacies with an emphasis on digital literacies. Digital pedagogy, using electronic elements, is changing the experience of education and poses new questions for curriculum designers, teachers, tutors, academics and practitioners, about how the most basic architecture of our interactions with and through machines can inspire new (digital or analog) pedagogies (Stommel, 2014). Designing LRM in an open and distance learning environment required getting out of our comfort zones, experiencing new ways of interacting and collaborating, and expanding our resources so as to reimagine second language educators’ training building on the available resources of the digital context.

Taking into account that the web is a space of politics, a social space, a professional space, a space of community towards reinforcing our pedagogical creativity, we may perceive, following Stommel (2013), collaboration and a distributed notion of expertise as crucial elements for reconsidering teaching and learning within digital humanities. The asynchronous online community creates the primary grounds of many current distance education courses and forms the basis for the creation of online learning communities that can overcome barriers of time and place (Gray & Smyth, 2012). Open and distance higher education increasingly plays a major role in networking and expanding the physical boundaries of communities who work with and for refugees, as well as in facilitating refugee and migrant students’ access into higher education, so that they have the chance to co-shape/co-construct an education that is more relevant and meaningful for their lives. Open and distance learning can play a mediating role by providing “accesses” to disadvantaged, refugee and migrant, language learners. In this context, LRM has integrated students and tutors who come from and live in many different physical places and work in different time zones. In addition, what is more important, LRM facilitates teaching- or studying-on-the-move. This has offered tutors and students, who (constantly) relocate: (a) more complex embodied spatiotemporal and sociopolitical experiences relating to time or spatial borders’ crossing; and (b) more opportunities to act and have an impact on local communities within which they reside in more immediate ways.

With the intention to offer new opportunities of human connectivity and learning alternatives to second language teachers and the communities they work with, we may start reconsidering critical approaches to contextualize digital pedagogy. Towards this end, the emergent critical digital pedagogy framework (Stommel, 2013, 2014), has a great role to play. This framework, inventing and creating new methods of resistance and humanization on screen and beyond screen, since it centers its practice on community and collaboration, remains open to diverse, international

voices. Thus, it requires invention to reimagine the ways that communication and collaboration happen across cultural and political boundaries and within inclusive, open and networked educational environments that engage students and teachers as full agents of their own learning (Waddell & Clariza, 2018). We need to systematically further evaluate and study students' and all actors' participation in LRM so as to have some important data about how this applies in the case of LRM.

Gazing into the future, the LRM community of practice intends to bring together in- and pre-service language teachers, as well as professionals who are involved in refugee studies across geographical spaces and proposes an alternative way to approach languages as (trans-)linguaging and second language education as an arena to struggle for human rights. Creating a digital network of professionals who can share informed practice and current research data may eventually influence educational policies transnationally employing bottom-up approaches. Teacher education is a key parameter in serving refugees' and migrants' need to make their faces visible and their voices recognizable accelerating the processes of integration and social mobility. Towards this end we ought to dare try alternatives and go beyond conventional borders of thinking about language education taking action and promoting "critically educated hope," so that schools become transformative places of hope and possibility (see Smyth, Down, & McInerney, 2014).

**Acknowledgements** We would like to thank our LRM students, whose contribution to the whole endeavor, their comments, feedback, and input have been most valuable for reflecting on our curricular decisions and reviewing LRM's content and processes.

## References

- Androutopoulos, J. (2014). Mediatization and sociolinguistic change. Key concepts, research traditions, open issues. In J. Androutopoulos (Ed.), *Mediatization and sociolinguistic change* (pp. 3–48). Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter.
- Androulakis, G., & Kitsiou, R. (2017). Designing an international distance postgraduate programme for language educators as a critical reaction to the needs of refugees and migrants. Position Paper presented at the *9th International Conference on Computer Supported Education, CSEDU 2017*, pp. 21–23 April 2017, Porto, Portugal.
- Apostolidou, A., & Androulakis, G. (2017). Designing distance learning courses for adult refugees in a transit country (Greece). Paper presented at the *EADTU Annual Conference 2017*, 25–27 October 2017, Milton Keynes, UK.
- Askew, S., & Lodge, C. (2000). Gifts, ping-pong and loops—Linking feedback and learning. In S. Askew (Ed.), *Feedback for learning* (pp. 1–17). London: Routledge.
- Barnett, R., & Coate, K. (2005). *Engaging the curriculum in higher education*. Maidenhead: SRHE/Open University Press.
- Borg, M. (2004). Key concepts in ELT: The apprenticeship of observation. *ELT Journal*, 58(3), 274–276.
- Calhoun, N. (2010). UNHCR and community development: A weak link in the chain of refugee protection? *New Issues in Refugee Research*, 191, 1–19.
- Chen, J.-Q., & McCray, J. (2012). A conceptual framework for teacher professional development: The whole teacher approach. *NHSA Dialog: A Research-to-Practice Journal for the Early Childhood Field*, 15(1), 8–23.



- Daskalaki, E., Tsioli, S., & Androulakis, G. (2017). Project PRESS: Ethnographic approaches of refugee education in Greece. In *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference in Open & Distance Learning* (pp. 19–33). Athens: Hellenic Open University.
- Fraser, S., & Bosanquet, A. (2006). The curriculum? That's just a unit outline, isn't it? *Studies in Higher Education*, 31, 269–284.
- Freire, P. (1968/2018). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (50th anniversary ed.; M. Bergman Ramos, Trans.). New York: Continuum.
- Gkaintartzi, A., & Tsokalidou, R. (2011). “She is a very good child but she doesn't speak”: The invisibility of children's bilingualism and teacher ideology. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(2), 588–601.
- Gray, C., & Smyth, K. (2012). Collaboration creation: Lessons learned from establishing an online professional community. *The Electronic Journal of E-Learning*, 10(1), 60–75.
- Heywood, J. (2000). *Assessment in higher education*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Kalantzi, R., Sideris, D., Spyropoulou N., & Androulakis G., (2016). Changing the gear: Adopting inter-institutional collaborative course development as the policy for distance higher education in Greece. In *Proceedings of the Online, Open and Flexible Higher Education conference* (pp. 61–68), 19–21 October, EADTU.
- Kostoulas, A. (2018). *A language school as a complex system: Complex systems theory in English language teaching*. Berlin: Peter Lang.
- Kubanyiova, M., & Crookes, G. (2016). Re-envisioning the roles, tasks, and contributions of language teachers in the multilingual era of language education research and practice. *The Modern Language Journal*, 100(1), 117–132.
- Makri, A., Papadopoulou, M., Tsokalidou, R., Skourtu, E., Arvaniti, E., Gkaintartzi, A., ... & Kitsiou, R. (2017). Tutor practices in new HOU programmes. Stories from the trenches: The case of LRM (Language Education for Refugees and Migrants). In *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference in Open & Distance Learning* (pp. 70–80). Athens: Hellenic Open University.
- Marshall, E. A. (2010). Practice-oriented research. In A. J. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of case study research* (pp. 722–723). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Miller, J., Windle, J. A., & Yazdanpanah, L. K. (2014). Planning lessons for refugee-background students: Challenges and strategies. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, 9(1), 38–48.
- O'Mara, B., & Harris, A. (2014). Intercultural crossings in a digital age: ICT pathways with migrant and refugee-background youth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 19(3), 639–658.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2018). *The future of education and skills. Education 2030. The future we want*. Paris: Author. Retrieved from: [http://www.oecd.org/education/2030/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20\(05.04.2018\).pdf](http://www.oecd.org/education/2030/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20(05.04.2018).pdf).
- Smyth, J., Down, B., & McInerney, P. (2014). *The socially just school*. Cham: Springer.
- Spyropoulou N., Kalantzi, R., Sideris D., & Androulakis, G. (2017). Adoption of exclusively e-content in distance higher education: The student experience. In *Proceedings of ICERI2017 Conference*, 6163–6170. November 16–18, 2017, Seville, Spain.
- Stommel, J. (2013). Decoding digital pedagogy, pt. 2: (Un)Mapping the terrain. *Hybrid Pedagogy*. Retrieved from: <http://hybridpedagogy.org/decoding-digital-pedagogy-pt-2-unmapping-the-terrain/>.
- Stommel, J. (2014). Critical digital pedagogy: A definition. *Hybrid Pedagogy*. Retrieved from: <http://hybridpedagogy.org/critical-digital-pedagogy-definition/>.
- Thompson, T. L., & MacDonald, C. J. (2005). Community building, emergent design and expecting the unexpected: Creating a quality elearning experience. *Internet and Higher Education*, 8(3), 233–249.
- Trust, T., Krutka, D. G., & Carpenter, J. P. (2016). “Together we are better”: Professional learning networks for teachers. *Computers & Education*, 102, 15–34.
- Tsokalidou/Τσοκαλίδου, R./P. (2017). *SiDaYes! / Beyond bilingualism to translanguaging / Πρα από τη διγλωσσία προς τη διαγλωσσικότητα*. Athens/Aθήνα: Gutenberg.



- United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). (2016). *Education for refugees*. Retrieved from: <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Education%2020160810.pdf>.
- Waddell, M., & Clariza, E. (2018). Critical digital pedagogy and cultural sensitivity in the library classroom. Infographics and digital storytelling. *Association of College and Research Libraries*, 79(5). Retrieved from: <https://crln.acrl.org/index.php/crlnews/article/view/16963/18695>.
- Wei, L. (2018). Translanguaging as a practical theory of language. *Applied Linguistics*, 39(1), 9–30.