

## **EDITORIAL**

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### **Dear IJLTR family and reader**

Another October has just arrived and this means another Special Issue of *IJLTR*. I am honoured to reach you with the announcement of an important topic in TESOL as the theme of 2021 Special Issue: *Online Teacher Education and Professional Development in TESOL*. *IJLTR* family is very proud of and grateful to Professor Jack Richards, who has so generously edited another Special Issue of *IJLTR* (he also kindly edited our first Special Issue in 2016 on *Teacher Education*).

When we were planning this Special Issue a few years ago, face to face teacher education and professional development (PD) was the norm and the dominant mode across the world, with online opportunities sporadically available in certain contexts, esp. in tech-savvy places with access to proper technological resources. This implied that many teachers (and teacher educators) in less resourced countries had very little or no experience of online teacher education and PD as the second paper in this volume highlights. A health crisis (COVID-19 pandemic) changed the world order about two years ago, the century's worst disaster which continues to claim lives throughout the world. Indeed, very few people can be found worldwide not affected in one way or another by this sad event; however, one of the blessings afforded to educational systems in general and to language education in particular has been the forced employment of whatever limited resources available for online and distance education. Despite numerous challenges of implementing face-to-screen classes for governments, schools and universities, teachers, students and even parents, we have all learned (or are learning) to cope with a new delivery system. Consequently, online language education which was once regarded as a luxurious commodity and limited to certain contexts has now become a necessity for all educational centres (and teacher and students within these places).

Along the same lines, second language teacher education has evidenced great changes in its modes of delivery, and increasingly more workshops and training sessions are being delivered online. Such modes of professional development are generally being welcomed by teachers who can at their convenience and with no additional costs take part in numerous developmental activities. Although online PD has proved to be a blessing in many respects, whether the effects on teacher learning and effectiveness will be comparable to its traditional counterparts is what we need to wait and see as the research continues in this area.

These and similar issues are discussed in the seven papers that make up this Special Issue. In his *Introduction*, Jack Richards considers the meaning and benefits of professional development in TESOL as well as the current issues in online teacher education and PD. He then provides a comprehensive and evaluative account of the papers that comprise this issue of *IJLTR*. The papers come from various contexts like Iran, Turkey, Norway, Singapore, the USA, Canada, and the UK. Rather than leaking these papers in the *Editorial*, I invite readers to read with enthusiasm the informative *Introduction* paper by the guest-editor to learn what the current issues are in online TESOL teacher education and PD as well as getting an idea of how the collection of papers edited contribute to the field. Like *IJLTR*'s past regular issues, there are two book reviews by reviewers from the UK, and Iran and Greece (Vincent Greenier, and Mohammad Salehi and Eirene Katsarou) who have reviewed *Language Learning Environments: Spatial Perspectives on SLA* and *Perspectives on Language Assessment Literacy: Challenges for Improved Student Learning*, respectively.

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Inviting you to have your pick of this seminal issue, I am looking forward to receiving further quality contributions to *IJLTR*'s future issues, noting that the deadline for submission to our 2022 Special Issue (to be edited by Prof. Michael Byram and Dr. Petra Rauschert) is approaching. More information about this issue and how to submit can be found at: <http://ijltr.urmia.ac.ir/journal/about>

**Karim Sadeghi**

**Founding editor-in-chief**

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