



Assessing English in the 21st century

Special issue call for papers from *English in Australia*

Deadline for full manuscripts: 1 March 2018

The role, purpose and place of assessment, and the relationship between pedagogy, curriculum and assessment, have long been contentious in English teaching.

Analysis of assessment practices in recent years across a range of Anglophone countries reveals sustained engagement with issues of assessment. In her book *Testing English: Formative and summative approaches to assessment in English*, UK academic Bethan Marshall notes that assessment in English has been a perennial cause for debate, and asks 'why English teachers are so quarrelsome when it comes to assessing their subject' (Marshall, 2011, p.1). The answer, she argues, is because English teachers see their subject holistically, as art, and this sits at odds with traditional and standardised approaches to assessment.

Over the past year, in Australia English teachers, curriculum authorities and the mainstream media have turned particular attention to issues of assessment in subject English. This has been prompted not only by the increased attention to the results of high stakes national literacy testing and the resulting impacts on teachers' pedagogy (Frawley and McLean Davies, 2015), but also because of the intention to use machines to assess sustained written pieces as part of this testing regime (ACARA NRT, 2015). This development, driven by notions of consistency, parity and economics, reflects similar initiatives internationally to rationalise and standardise assessment in the language arts (Perelman, 2013, 2017; Phakiti et al, 2013). These global developments in notions of who or what can assess subject English raise anew debates about what constitutes valuable assessment in English and prompt the focus of this special issue of *English in Australia*.

Assessment has always been a topic for debate among practitioners and researchers of subject English, both in Australia and internationally. Early editions of *English in Australia*, and publications from the 1980s in particular, show that issues of assessment, the nexus between assessment and curriculum, and the balance between formative and summative assessment have long been sources of tension for English teachers (e.g. Johnston 1987; McGregor & Meiers, 1987, 1991; Stibbs, 1981; and *English in Australia*, 59, March, 1982). Indeed, the 1980s were the heyday of evaluating language development over time (e.g. Dixon & Stratta, 1981, 1982; Wilkinson et al, 1980) – an area of concern no longer at the centre of the assessment agenda with the growth and spread of standardised testing.

For this upcoming special themed edition of *English in Australia*, Editors Larissa McLean Davies (The University of Melbourne) and Wayne Sawyer (Western Sydney University), together with the *English in Australia* Editorial team, are calling for scholarly papers that explore contemporary issues of English and assessment. Areas of focus might include:

- Innovative and 'impactful' approaches to assessment in English
- Formative and non-graded assessment in English
- The nexus between curriculum and assessment
- High stakes national or state assessment practices and their impacts on student learning and teacher pedagogy
- Artificial intelligence and the assessment of writing

- Assessing literacy in subject English
- Assessment and changing perceptions of knowledge in subject English
- Assessment and the 'art' of English
- Development and evaluation of language growth over time

Full papers of between 4000 and 6000 words (including references) should be submitted to <https://english-in-australia.scholasticahq.com/> by 1 March 2018.

Guidelines for contributors and information about *English in Australia* can be found at <https://www.aate.org.au/journals/contribute-to-english-in-australia>

All manuscripts are subject to double blind peer review.

Questions about this CFP can be directed to the Special Edition Editors:

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