

SLEST (European Linguistic Standard for Professionals in Tourism) 2.0
Project No: 2013-1-ES1-LEO05-66445

Report piloting UK¹

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INTRODUCTION

ECBM is one of the partner organisations in the SLEST 2.0 European Linguistic Standard for Tourism Project. Partners were requested to recruit groups and individuals to pilot the on-line language materials from February to May 2015. The piloting was to include a combination of tutored and independent learners to test the materials in English. This report gives the findings of the piloting.

COMPOSITION OF GROUPS

ECBM recruited 3 groups and 12 independent learners for piloting. 3 groups were tutored in the London premises and 1 group of non-tutored learners off-site. In total there were 48 tutored students and 12 non-tutored students. A total of 60 students participated in the piloting (Annex 1).

The piloting took place over a duration of 10 weeks, commencing at the beginning of February 2015 and finishing at the end of May 2015.

The following professions were chosen:

	ENGLISH
Hotel Receptionist	19
Tour Guide	9
Travel Agent	11
Waiter	21
TOTAL	60

METHODOLOGY

Each of the tutored groups were given a total of 10 one hour dedicated tutored sessions in their Professional Development Programme at the College (Annex 2). Four tutors delivered the sessions with 4 staff support in attendance for administrative and technical help. Sessions included a range of language activities to support learning as planned on the Scheme of Work (Annex 3). Students were asked to select one profession of their choice.

In the absence of electronic assessment and tracking in the SLEST software, students were given a self-assessment sheet (see Annex 4) to track their performance. The tracking sheet was used to:

- keep a record of completed units and exercises
- record hours spent using the e-learning materials
- give feedback on software
- give feedback on any other issues including language
- support overall evaluation at the end of the course

The course evaluation feedback (Annex 5) and self-assessment sheets were used for data collection and subsequent data analysis.

Following the piloting, ECBM will revise the English learning materials to reflect the College student feedback in conjunction with that of the project partners.

QUESTIONNAIRE

SLEST 2.0 PROJECT (EUROPEAN LINGUISTIC STANDARD FOR PROFESSIONALS IN TOURISM) COURSE EVALUATION

NAME:							
ORGANISATION:							
CONTACT DETAILS: ADDRESS EMAIL / TELEPHONE							
PROFESSION/STUDENT:							
DATE:							
PLEASE TICK AS APPROPRIATE							
INDEPENDENT LEARNER				GUIDED LEARNING (WITH TUTOR SUPPORT)			
TIME TAKEN TO COMPLETE COURSE	15 hours or under		16-25 hours		26-35 hours		Over 35 hours

Thank you for taking part in the piloting of SLEST 2.0 Project. In order to assess the learning materials and make any necessary changes prior to the formal launch, we shall be grateful if you could let us have your views. Please could you complete the following evaluation and feedback form and hand in to your tutor or return directly to us (as applicable).

LEARNING MATERIALS			
		Scale of 1 to 10 (Low to high)	Comments/suggestions for improvement
1	How would you rate access to the learning materials via the SLEST website?		
2	How user-friendly would you rate the learning materials?		
3	Are the materials structured in a way that was easy to follow?		
4	Do you think that there are enough variety of exercises?		
5	Do the scenarios closely reflect typical situations you would come across in your profession?		
6	Does the language content closely reflect typical situations you would come across in your profession?		
7	How much do you think your language levels have improved?		
8	Would you recommend these materials to a colleague in the industry?		

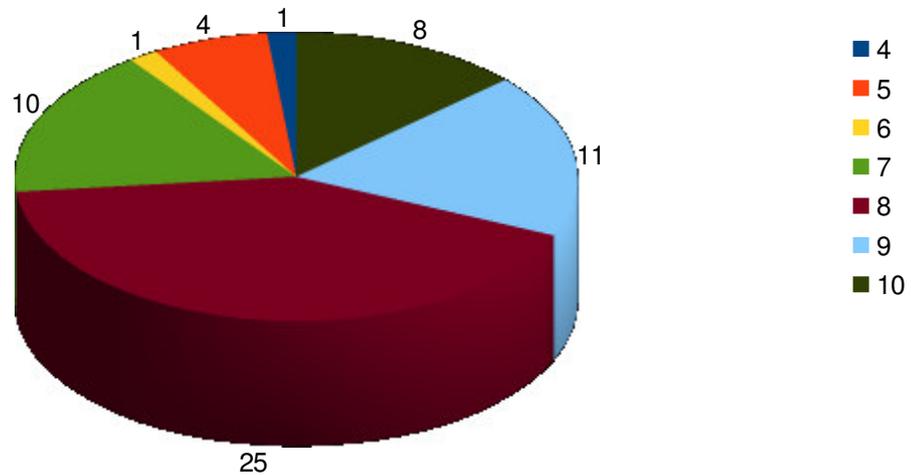
Any other general comments about your experience

FINDINGS A: COURSE EVALUATION for all LEARNERS

Statistical analysis:

Question 1

How would you rate access to the learning materials via the SLEST website?

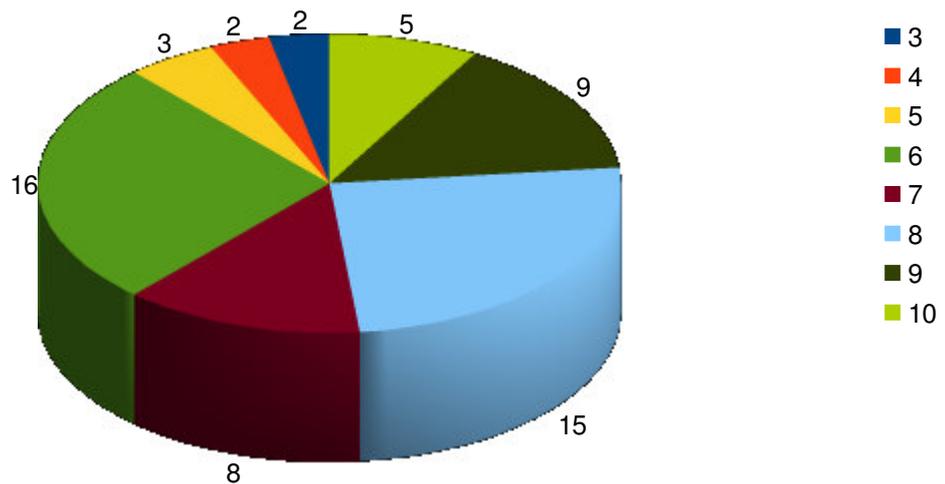


Ø 7,87

91,7% of students scored 6 and over and considered that access to the SLEST website was good.
8,3 % of students scored 4 or 5 and considered that access to the SLEST website was satisfactory.

Question 2

How user-friendly would you rate the learning materials?

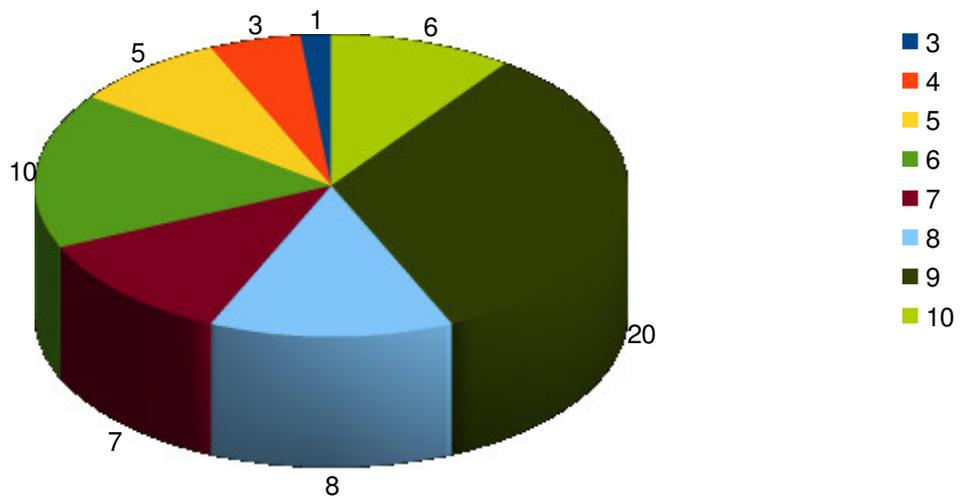


Ø 7,39

88.4% of students scored 6 and over and considered the SLEST learning materials to be user-friendly.
11.6% of students scored between 3 and 5 and considered the learning materials to be less user-friendly.

Question 3

Are the materials structured in a way that was easy to follow?



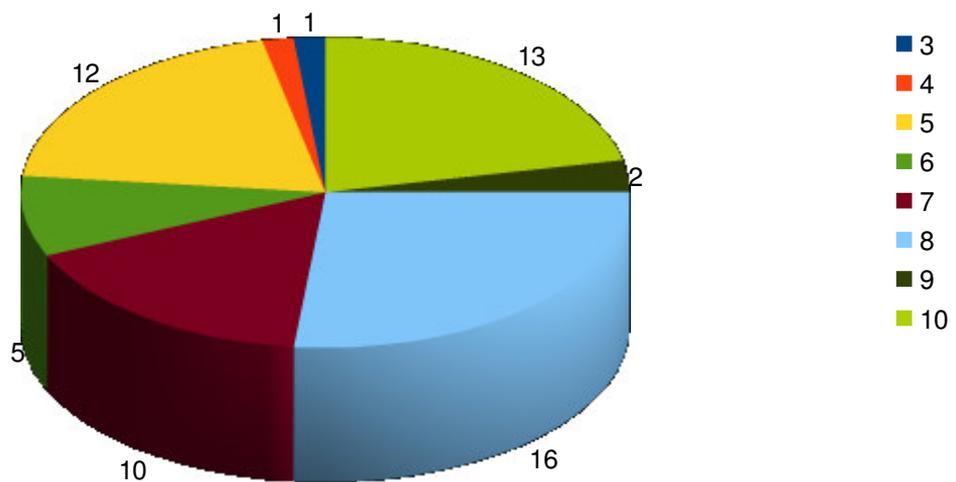
Ø 8,1

91% of students scored 6 and over and considered that the SLEST learning materials were structured in a way that was easy to follow.

9% of students scored between 3 and 5 and considered the SLEST learning materials structured in a way that was less easy to follow.

Question 4

Do you think that there are enough variety of exercises?



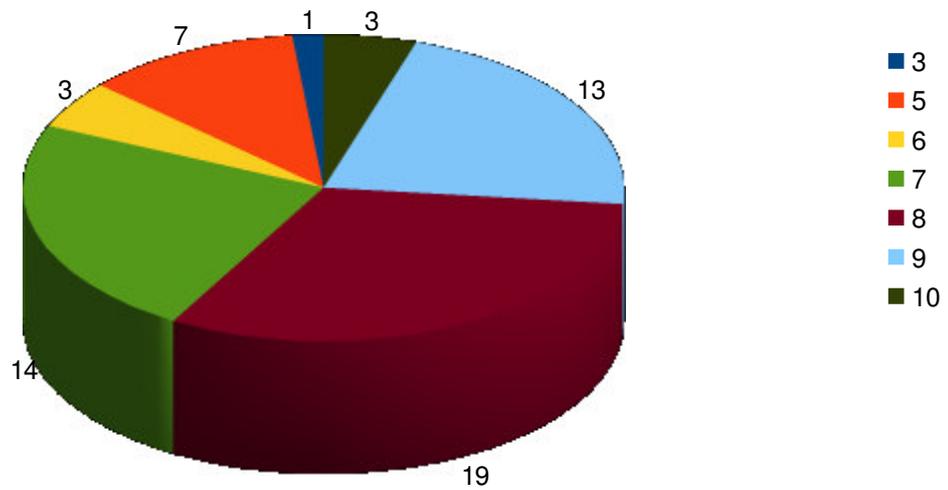
Ø 7,35

77% of students scored 6 and over and considered that there was enough variety of exercises.

23% of students scored between 3 and 5 and considered that there was less variety of exercises.

Question 5

Do the scenarios reflect typical situations you would come across in your profession?

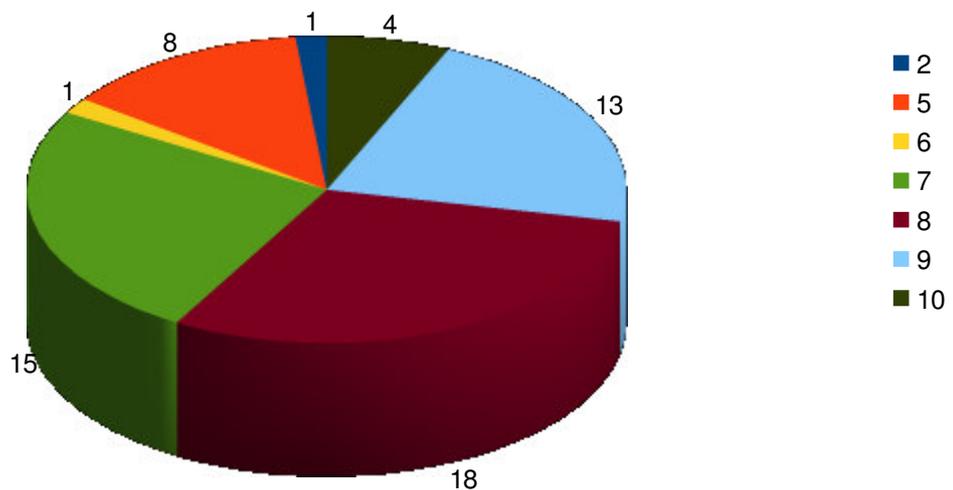


Ø 7,45

86.7% of students scored 6 and over and considered that the *scenarios* closely reflected typical situations in their chosen profession.
 13.3% of students scored between 3 and 5 and considered that the *scenarios* less reflected typical situations in their chosen profession.

Question 6

Does the language content reflect typical situations you would come across?

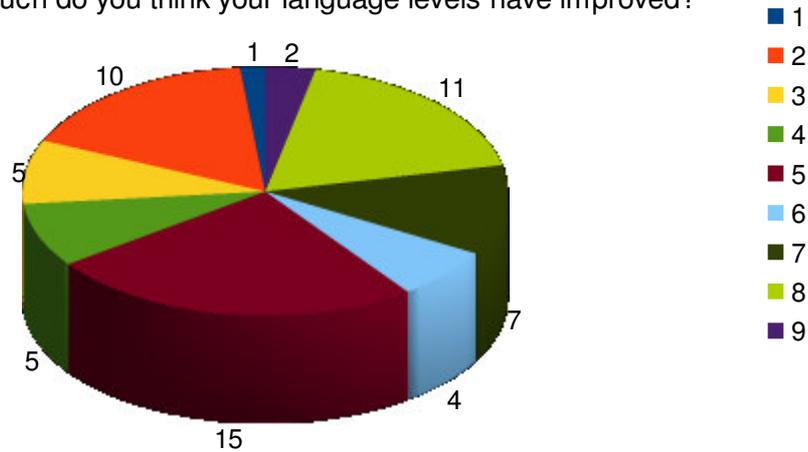


Ø 7,4

85% of students scored 6 and over and considered that the *language content* closely reflected typical situations that they would come across in the chosen profession.
 15% of students scored between 2 and 5 and considered that the *language content* less closely reflected typical situations that they would come across in the chosen profession.

Question 7

How much do you think your language levels have improved?



Ø 5,0

33,4% of students scored over 7 and considered that their language levels had improved.

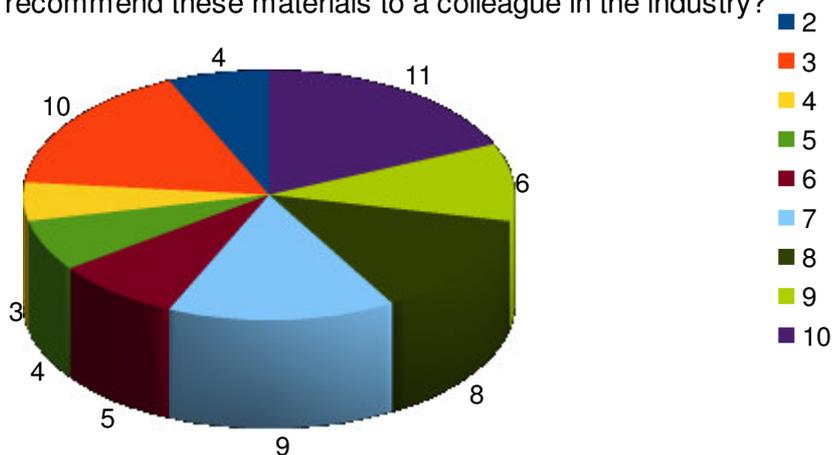
40% of students scored between 4 and 6 and considered that there had been less improvement to their language levels.

26,6% of students scored between 1 and 3 and considered that there had much less improvement to their language levels.

There was a greater spread of results for this question which can be explained by differences in language proficiency of students at the commencement of the course (many students started from an EFR-Level B2 or even C2!).

Question 8

Would you recommend these materials to a colleague in the industry?



Ø 6,4

57% of students scored over 7 and said that they would recommend the materials to a colleague in the industry.

20% of students scored between 4 and 6 and said were less likely to recommend the materials to a colleague in the industry.

23% of students scored between 2 and 3 and said that they were much less likely to recommend the materials to a colleague in the industry.

Findings B: Issues identified from Student Feedback

Comprehensive feedback was collected from the self-assessment and tracking sheets. The feedback was wide ranging including general comments about the difficulty of exercises to issues with software or language. Given the volume of feedback, it is not possible to give all the detail in this report and the main issues are set out below. A summary of comments can be found in Annex 6 to this report, however, the following general observations are recorded below:

- The level of language was appropriate and became more difficult as the exercises went on, however this depends on the starting point of each individual learner.
- Vocabulary was repeated in different units. This was helpful for consolidation and learning.
- The feedback and explanations at the end of the exercises were useful.
- The names of the exercises should be consistent in the Unit overview and the exercises themselves.
- The story which ran through the units was appreciated and enjoyed.
- There could be a Hyperlink to the actual Handbook. The Handbook could be better organised; for example: maybe with a table for better overview with Hyperlinks on
 - Exercises to exercises
 - Type of exercise to explanation of type
 - Level to explanation of level
- It would be helpful if there were an overall score at the end of each exercise and unit in order to track progress.

There were also some common recurring issues related to software, formatting and language specifically which are highlighted below:

- The size/number of gaps give away the answers in some exercises, making the task too

easy, or not challenging enough. This is due to the lack of sophistication in the software.

- With some of the dialogues, the choice of words for the gap-filling exercises was too big and long.
- There is no ability for the student to save their results because it is not possible to save your work as you go along, or to stop and resume where you left off. However, the advantage for the tutor is that the materials are easily accessible to be used as part of a class and downloaded at any time, by anyone.
- Some answers were ambiguous or could have had more than one answer, but the system didn't allow for this.

ECBM Student Feedback

Name	Comment
Bianca R.	It`s really helpful to repeat and improve your English skills. Although some tasks are a bit confusing, most of them are set at a good level.
Silas V.	I think it was quite good to improve the English skills.
Tamara H.	It was really helpful and interesting. It will help me now in some special situations.
Cristopher U.	You did a great job! The website is good but it needs a bit of over watching from the exercises. Thanks for working on this project.
Lucy- Janine H.	Good opportunity for independent learning.
Mareike J.	The most exercises were easy, not many were difficult and I learned a lot.
Marina N.	The idea of this project is very good, but it needs some re-work.
Tanja L.	You can also do the exercises with the mobile phone too.
Melissa W.	Good teachers
Bianca S.	-good information about the themes -friendly people
Katharina S.	-It is a really good experience -really good teacher
Sarah S.	It was good that we could work on our own.
Simone L.	-good for learning phrases
Svenja S.	-general structure is good
Eva G	I liked the continuous story
Saskia Z	I enjoyed doing the tasks. To sum it up, it is a very good and helpful programme if you want to improve your vocabulary or work abroad.
Jan L	Excellent preparation for a foreign work placement

RECOMMENDATIONS

In response to the recurring issues related to software, formatting and language we suggest the following recommendations:

Only a few of the exercises have additional feedback notes or hints. It would be useful if every exercise could have feedback or explanations. This information can be added to each exercise in time.

A general introduction to the exercises was missing. As the exercises will be used as a self-learning tool, more guidance is necessary for independent learners to explain how to use the materials, the learning aims and objectives. In addition, and in line with learner feedback, the names of the exercises should be consistent in the Unit overview and the exercises on the platform.

A majority of learners would like an electronic form of tracking, completion and progress. It would enhance the learner experience if there were a way of tracking and monitoring learning progress built into the software.

Some exercises need adjusting so that only one answer is possible. This will avoid confusion and eliminate ambiguity.

It is clear from the feedback that the software does not allow for accurate formatting of some of the tasks – especially gap-filling exercises, thus making some activities ineffective. For the future, it would be advisable to investigate alternative, more sophisticated software.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion we can report that overall the piloting process was very positive. The benefits were twofold: firstly it provided a means of testing the materials for errors and secondly it enabled a critical analysis of the usability of the on-line system and quality of the language-learning experience. From this evaluation, the necessary improvements and adjustments can be made.

The students who piloted the materials entered into the spirit of the programme and demonstrated a desire to improve their language competence and to provide helpful and objective feedback about the learning materials.

It is clear that these language exercises are just the start of a longer “work in progress” which will continue after the project has officially ended. Over time, the exercises will be tweaked, improved and added to. As they stand, however, they form an excellent basis upon which further activities and learning programmes can be developed, as well as providing an effective learning support for language learners in the field of Travel and Tourism

There was no noticeable difference in the results of the tutored learners and the independent learners. This outcome demonstrates that the materials could be used equally effectively as part of a blended learning course, or as stand-alone materials for individual language learners to download and use independently. A variety of media devices were used to carry out the exercises including laptops, PCs, tablets and mobile phones. Student feedback shows that the exercises were compatible on all devices.

It is worth mentioning that some of the exercises highlight cultural differences which could cause some confusion for the learner depending on their own cultural background and training. As a result, it is possible that more than one answer is possible. However, the exercises have been designed to meet the needs of the culture of the language being studied.

Based on our findings the piloting was successful. Accessibility and use of the materials was good, but there are some inherent problems, as stated, with software which are beyond our control. Thorough analysis has enabled us to move forward and develop the materials on order to produce a high quality learning resource.