

**European Linguistic Standard for Professionals in Tourism: SLEST 2.0<sup>1</sup>**

**Project No: 2013-1-ES1-LEO05-66445**

## **Special newsletter July 2014 regarding eXe-Learning**

**Observations which I (*Sarah Iles*, ECBM London) made whilst carrying out the task**

**with remarks from *Michael Schlicht* (project coordinator, UET)**

- This was a very ambitious task with a large volume of exercises to transfer and high expectations of quality. I have done the best I can within the constraints (time and tools available).

I can only agree and confirm the same for the other languages

- It took some time to become “fit” in eXeLearning. The meeting in Athens was not a conducive forum to become familiar with the intricacies of the programme. This required the additional support of an IT specialist, once I returned home, who was able to give me dedicated tuition in how to use the software properly.

We definitely underestimated the time it would take to become familiar with eXelearning, especially if one would like to do a good job

- Time constraints: I needed dedicated time out of my full time role, the additional support of a colleague, IT expertise and support; in addition a meeting with the team in Malaga was necessary and vital in order to carry out and complete the task.

Also this was the same for the German and the Italian partner, who prepared the respective eXelearning versions; they also had to add a trip to Malaga in order to get the necessary support of the promoter.

- It took a large amount of time to correct, up-date and work out the answers for the

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<sup>1</sup> With the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union. This project has been funded with the support of the European Commission. This product reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained here.

exercises. The time between the kick off meeting and Athens was too long, and in hindsight, I think it would have been a better use of time to have scheduled the Athens meeting earlier to allow more time to work with eXeLearning before the deadline at the end of August. For me it made better sense to do the corrections etc whilst creating the eXeLearning exercises.

Again the same for the other partners; at the start of the project the complexness of eXelearning has been surely undervalued.

- Volume of exercises to be up-loaded onto eXeLearning was immense. The priority was to get the exercises transferred into eXeLearning. As a result, there was no time to be more creative with the exercises – such as finding appropriate photos, or including learning hints with the exercises.

The intention of the whole group was and is to do the best job possible for the target groups, which includes not only appropriate exercises, but also a number of them which permits to exert the target language in the best of ways. As we see this project also as a work in progress, we will see to it to improve layout aspects like including photos.

- I have tried to be consistent with the formatting, look and design of the exercises to ensure uniformity. However, there are obviously going to be differences in the design across the different languages because there has been no discussion about this between the partners and we have all worked independently on the task. Thus design decisions have been left to the judgement and taste of each partner.

This should not be much of a problem, because the main thing is to show uniformity INSIDE one language, and this can be guaranteed. Again, we should have included at least another transnational meeting to discuss all these points, but we have also to fight with financial restraints (I would like to remember that there have been cuts in funding right from the start).

- There are some weaknesses with the software and it has its limitations. The lack of sophistication of the software means that the exercises are very “samy” and it is not possible to create a lot of variation. It was not always easy to format the exercises perfectly – e.g. the alignment etc. This task ideally requires a specialist in computer programming in order to make the package look professional.

Again this is a problem of restrictions in funding, because there was no money for buying software, and we had to look for “free” software, which causes the described problems (by the way: “samy” to me is not a real restriction, as we have at least 6-7 different types of exercises, which has also the effect that the learner recognises the types of exercise and gets familiar with them.

- I have created the exercises as a package, rather than creating individual files. In discussion with Romano, in Malaga, we agreed that this was the most logical way to work, otherwise it would have meant creating separate, individual packages containing 1 exercise only. To do this seemed to make little sense.

- Where ever possible the aim has been to make the exercises user-friendly and engaging, accessible and easily understood.

This is exactly how it should be!

- We maybe need to re-think how to classify the exercises in terms of the levels. While I was creating the package, it seemed to make more sense to enable students to measure their level by the outcome of the exercise, rather than choosing a level to work to... Therefore I have not specified the different levels of the exercises – either medium or simple. Also the exercises belong together as a holistic task. The idea of creating separate levels, although good in principle, doesn't readily lend itself logically to the flow of the exercises. This was an aspect which I also discussed with Romano. However, it would not be difficult to allocate a level to each of the exercises if this is required.

Good point – I think we should follow this advice.

- This should certainly be seen as an on-going “work in progress” with improvements and updates to be made during the testing process. What has been achieved to date should not be seen as the ultimate final version.

I fully agree!

#### **Number of exercises created:**

•Travel Agent:	37
•Tour Guide:	26
•Hotel Reception:	64
•Waiter:	35
•General Exercises:	45
• <u>Total:</u>	<u>207</u>

#### **Time spent:**

- 110 hours (over 21 days)
- plus Denise's time: 28 hours (over 4 Days)
- plus time with IT expert and additional trip to Malaga to meet with project specialist for extra support with the task.