

(European Linguistic Standard for Professionals in Tourism) SLEST2.0¹
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Guidelines for SLEST 2.0 e-learning courses

(for internal use)

Author: Michael Schlicht (co-ordinator)
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General information:

- in every country the piloting should include between 30 and 50 people
- the general piloting period is between January 1st and May 15th
- according to the application we should dedicate about 80 hours per country (UK and DE 40) for the tutoring during the piloting (which means roughly 3 hours per student with 30 students)
- other learners should be included in the piloting as control group (ONLY self-study, not tutor-supported)
- **to be discussed**: how to organise the piloting in the single countries (proposal: in order to increase the number of hours to be dedicated to the single student we could create a group of 15 students who do pure self-study, and another group of 15 who are followed by a tutor)
- **to be discussed**: duration of single piloting (example for tutor-supported student: 5 hours tutoring – 35 hours self-study / duration 6 to 8 weeks)
- the learner should choose between DE, EN, ES, and IT; as alternative the single country partner can also offer of his own accord the language they prefer to offer in the piloting

General rules:

- every participant should run a kind of „diary“ of his/her learning activities, especially regarding the time dedicated to the single activities (self-study / writing of e-mails / contacts with tutor etc.). This should include ALL activities connected to the piloting
- the same goes for the tutor
- the tutors should indicate to the students which e-learning tasks they have to carry out
- the tutors should prepare learning materials (for mails, telephone calls, Skype contacts, chat) to be treated during piloting; a list about this should be distributed/ published to the students. Example: week 1: e-mail topic A / week 2: Skype talk topic B
- the topics treated during the tutoring should be linked directly to the e-learning tasks given
- every partner should dedicate one/two hour/s per week (between January and May) for consultation (learners can call in order to get advice)
- all tutoring activities (mail, Skype conversation, telephone call) should be accompanied by a protokoll (see draft at the end of this document), including the putting in evidence of errors made by the students and their correction

Tutor-supported e-learning can/ should include:

1. writing (and correction) of e-mails under the supervision of a tutor
2. chat
3. Skype contacts
4. telephone calls
5. consulting (on the phone) during given hours during the week

Services offered by partner organisations in the future

- a) virtual classroom lessons (one-to-one = Skype)
- b) face-to-face lessons (also as „crash/intensive-course“ during a weekend)
- c) registered lessons (on video, also for MP 3 or 4)
- d) regular consultation hours
- e) all tutoring activities described above

Theoretical notes

All experts (and also the students: see outcome of survey below!) agree that language learning ONLY with the internet (pure self-study) is nearly useless and hardly ever leads to acceptable results. In almost all cases the student quits after a short time or follows the course (or whatever activity) in such intervals that at the end no result is discernable. It seems to be essential that the student can consult an expert in order to get information, explanations, advice.

However, what seems to be (especially for people working) the best solution is to unite self-study periods with tutor-supported phases, the so called **blended learning**: a mixture from face-to-face lessons, e-learning and online-teaching (virtual classroom); without personal contacts with a teacher/tutor serious language study is not possible.

Biggest problems with e-learning including virtual classroom due to experience with big Italian company:

- technical problems (microphones / headphones work badly or not at all – e.g. too loud or contrary, background noises). Since normally there is no technician available, it can take a long time or be even impossible that the problem is solved in a short time.
- malfunctioning of video camera / badly set
- especially older students (S) can not cope well with the technology (but also with the positioning of the video camera, etc.)
- S do not know (exactly) how the program / single buttons function
- S do not „arrive“ on time
- only one S can have his microphone open, otherwise noise in the headphones etc. This prevents spontaneous speech, each participant has to wait for the OK of the teacher; often "tangle" (eg, S does not switch on his microphone speaking or forgets to turn it off after speaking)

- S nearly always feels PURE e-learning as a stopgap, since no direct interaction with other learners and teachers is possible; this applies also to a large extent, when a virtual classroom is included (for the reasons mentioned above)
- without the continuous presence / supervision of a teacher, it is for most S (and especially for those who are in the process of language acquisition at an

early stage; up to B1) obviously very difficult to gain the necessary motivation, consistency and discipline to apply themselves in meaningful, autonomous learning.

- According to experience, the results are (and this usually after a very short time!) frustration, discomfort and lack of motivation, which usually leads to the ceasing of the learning activity, which is then generally rarely taken up again

Answers from learners regarding difficulties encountered during an e-learning course (adults – big national company)

- reconciling work commitments with the course
- lack of adequate time
- a higher frequency of the various language learning commitments (twice a week, for example) forces the learner to devote more attention to the course
- technical deficiency of audio video systems
- it was not always easy to reconcile the demands of work and lessons
- the distribution of an initial schedule (which were the periods of the exchange of e-mail, virtual classrooms, phone calls) allowed me to organize my time well
- better do it for a shorter period of time but more concentrated (e.g. three months with a meeting a week)
- a classical structure of the course would be very fruitful for me
- I'd rather attend for a shorter duration but face-to-face
- The course was useful to recover fluency in a language (German) of which I have high mastery. I imagine that a language course in a similar manner may be insufficient for beginners or intermediate level. I would have preferred that the meetings were even shorter, but more frequent.
- the only useful form of the course is face-to-face. Online you can do grammar exercises, but this activity can not replace the interaction with the teacher
- the modulation of a 90-minute lesson every two weeks is useful to keep the language skills acquired but not enough for it to progress. Taking into account that the amount of homework executable by an average worker is limited, you can think of a higher frequency of classroom work.
- to attend the e-learning (virtual) course has intimidated me because, after many years in which I have only spoken English, it was necessary to become familiar with the vocabulary and rules of the most basic grammar. Finally, I believe that phone calls and virtual classrooms are very useful only at higher levels because they allow you to put your knowledge into practice and then to increase them.
- regarding the part of the course that provides interaction with the teacher (virtual classroom) the main difficulties are due to the lack of functionality of the IT infrastructure that supports the system. With regard to study online autonomously (without interaction with the teacher), the main shortcoming is due to the fact that the course provides in principle to apply logic to learning "intuitive" (providing users with no explanations and grammar rules)
- in my way of seeing it face-to-face lessons are fundamental especially on a low and medium level

UET

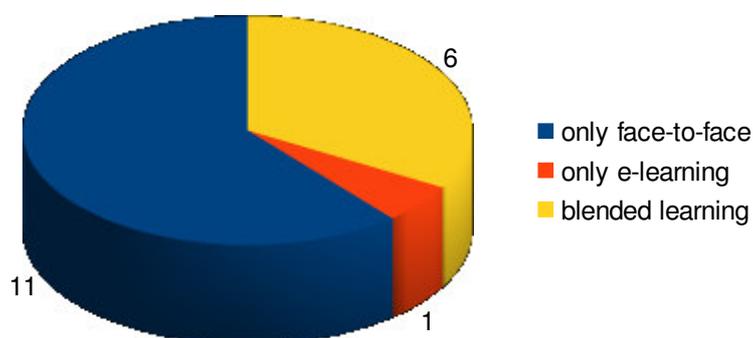
Survey about an e-learning language course

Level of knowledge of your first foreign language (according to the Common European Framework of References for Languages, CEF)

A1	<input type="checkbox"/>
A2	<input type="checkbox"/>
B1	6
B2	6
C1	6

In your opinion, what kind of language course would you prefer?

A language course by e-learning course only (including the virtual classroom ²)	1
A language course plus additional tutor support (including the virtual classroom)	0
A “face-to-face” language course (in the traditional way)	11
A combination of face-to-face and e-learning (i.e. blended learning)	6
It's all the same to me	0

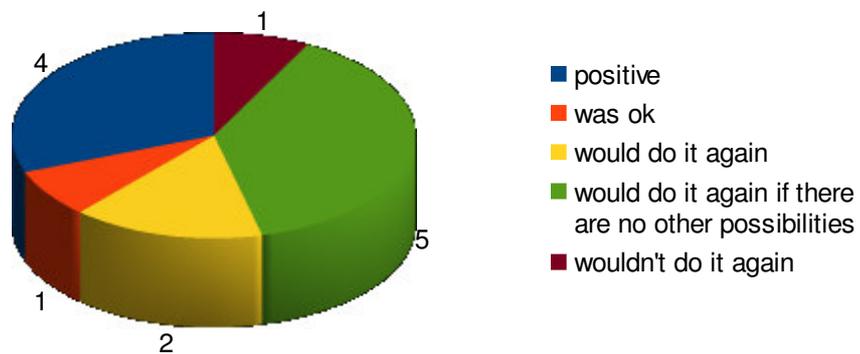


²

“virtual classroom” = the teacher/ tutor is connected with the learner by internet

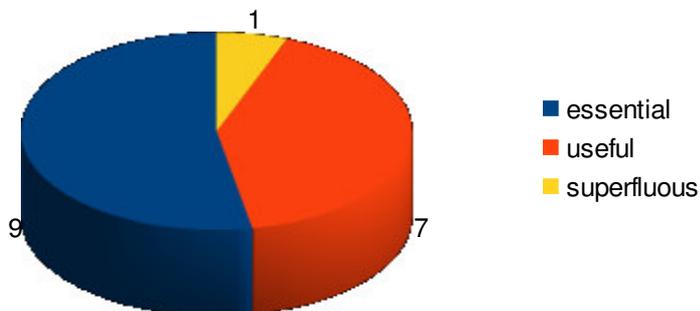
Which of the following statements match your experience with the e-learning course:

it was a positive experience	4
it was OK	1
it was a negative experience	0
I would do it again	2
I would do it again only if there were no other possibilities	5
I wouldn't do it again	1



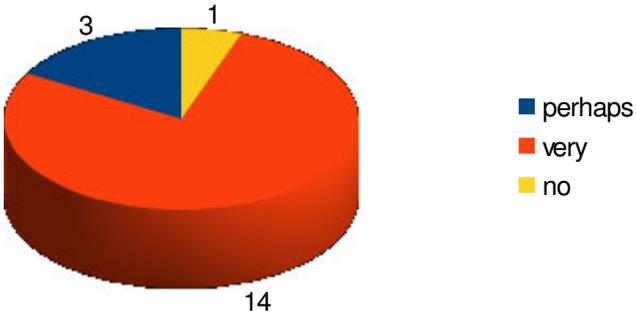
Do you think that when learning a foreign language by e-learning, additional exercises like writing e-mails, making telephone calls and “chat” via the computer (incl. virtual classroom) are:

essential	9
useful but not essential	7
superfluous	1



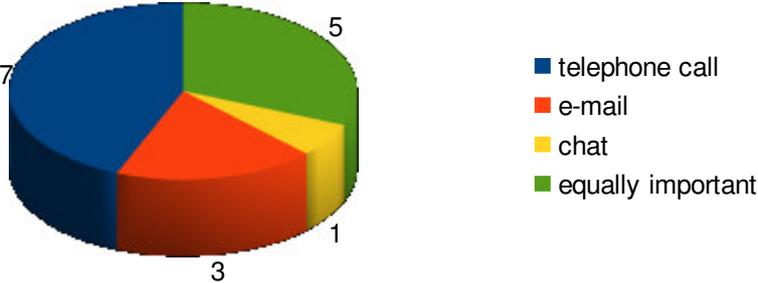
Would it be desirable if traditional teaching (face-to-face) formed part of the course in addition to the e-learning exercises :

very	14
perhaps	3
no	1



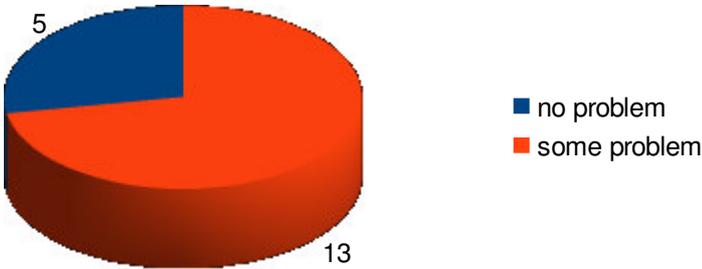
Please put the following exercises in order of importance from 1 a 3:

e-mail	1	2	3
telephone call	2	1	1
chat	3	3	2
	<hr/>		
	1	7	3
all three are equally important	5		



Did you have any difficulties during the e-learning course?

no problem	5
some problem	13



What kind of problem did you encounter?

problems to connect work with the language course (the lessons took place during working hours)	11
lessons, telephone calls and e-mails too spread out in time	3
technical problems	3
number and frequency of lessons (few and too spread out in time)	3

