

BILC Conference 2022

Study Group 2 Report:

'Building the case against the pressure for continuous online language learning.'

Membership

Study Group 2 (SG2) was facilitated by Angela Logue (Italy), and attended/supported by the following delegates: Scott Manuel (Sweden), Dugald Sturges (Germany), Ana Carina Lagares Overgaa (Spain), Dr Chris Loreck (Germany), Stefanka Geneva (Bulgaria), Order Bostanci (Turkey), Gilberto Petrine (Italy), Robbie Breen (Italy) and Matt Sharp (UK)

Context

SG2 members were drawn to the subject as a highly topical and contentious question which SG2 members identified was set in the following context:

- Emerging from the 'forcing function' of Covid 19 on partner nation training processes but also set in wider national and international sociological context of the Information Age.
- Widespread organisational investment both ongoing and accelerated in response to Covid 19 to increase remote access & some associated increase in skills and organisational desire to gain return on the associated investment.
- A number of excellent presentations to the Conference, which prompted recognition that whilst the question under consideration was topical, there was also an enduring consideration - how technology can both support and detract from learning. Furthermore, SG2 members recognised that the position is not as binary as the question might suggest and language learning professionals can and should position themselves to offer professional advice in support of evidence-based decision making. SG2 members reflections on pre, during & post pandemic experiences.

Effects & Impacts

SG2 members drew out a range of effects against which to consider both positive and negative impacts. It was generally accepted that this resulted in a **degree** of benefit/shortfall against elements that language learning professionals know either aid or hinder learning outcomes sought. These effects and impacts Angela Logue <angelalogue72@gmail.com>span learner centric, tutor centric and capability centric pros and cons including but not limited to

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- Degree of interaction (Tutor)
- Degree of interaction (Other learners and learner agents)
- Degree of learning support
- Degree of technical ability
- Degree of flexibility and customisation
- Degree of suitability at scale
- Degree of learner convenience & accessibility
- Degree of organisational assurance and standardisation
- Degree of motivation, stimulation
- Degree of immersion
- Degree of transferability
- Degree and extent of resource availability
- Degree of augmentation

Recommendations:

SG2 offered the following recommendations:

- ***Aim for objectivity in reflection.*** When considering pre-pandemic status weigh whether there were ever 'perfect' students/teachers/requirements/courses/assessments?
- ***Speak truth to power.*** Tell 'the Boss' the truth but do point to the bigger picture. If describing the day-to-day problems to senior leaders is like taking a picture of all the piles of detritus at a mountain's base camp, then perhaps specifying the optimum outcomes is like looking at a picture from the summit!
- ***Use management tools.*** Review change management models and revisit desired outcomes. Revisit methods and media analysis noting that C19 reactivity offers opportunity for proactive planning.
- ***Seek out stakeholder views.*** Establish if there are any change to the end user risk appetite when weighing any faster/cheaper/better dynamics.
- ***Switch on 'longer range radar'.*** A matter of appropriate professional interest would be to reflect with colleagues on the state and use of language learning technology in 2012 and project to language learning technology in 2032.
- ***Look after the team.*** Run student and staff technical skills audit and support plan. There is plenty of room for sensitivity a culture of real inclusivity includes supporting technical skill. Consider intergenerational issues and opportunities as Generation X teachers and learners may be teaching and learning alongside Generation Z.
- ***Seek a clear linkage to any national and departmental language capability strategy.*** Take the opportunity to capture a systematic and wholistic approach that appear as specified 'ends' with associated ways and means of any Defence Departmental Strategy.