

2020 **BILC Professional Seminar**

Language Training in Times of Crises:

Challenges and Opportunities

19-23 October 2020

Presentations Day 2

Moderator: Birgitte Grande



Bureau for International Language Co-ordination
www.natobilc.org



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Language Training in Times of Crisis: A Paradigm Shift at the Military Academy (MILAC) at ETH Zurich

Mr. Sanson Schweizer

Insights of language training before and during the pandemic, and a few challenges the Military Academy had to face when classroom teaching was suspended, and they had to switch to digital learning, using the technical means they had available.



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Online Training and Testing – Challenges under COVID 19 Austrian Armed Forces Experiences

Mr. Andreas Prutsch, Austria

The technical challenges experienced and the lessons learned by the Language Institute after the pandemic hit, and teaching and testing had to go online. While Covid-19 is getting worse, teachers are now better prepared. Five possible future teaching-scenarios presented.



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Implementing Blended Learning in the English Language Course for Bundeswehr General Staff Candidates to Meet the Challenge of the COVID-19 Crisis

Mr. Michael Barnett, Germany

The practical implementation of blended learning for General Staff candidates, where the original plan had to be changed into a combination of a 2-wk residential phase and a 2-wk home study phase. It would seem that when students are highly proficient (L3+/L4), a wide range of language learning activities are available.



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Learning during lockdown

Mr. Benjamin C. Pim, Italy

How the Air Force Language School replaced in-house teaching by creating an online course consisting of a combination of one-to-one lessons and small-group lessons, plus a new online course for young NCOs and one for young cadets. The importance of empowering students, making language instruction feel 'real' by using authentic materials, and keeping courses dynamic and flexible.



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The Australian Experience of Online Language Learning

LTC Pinghan Chua, Australia

The challenges of delivering online language courses during the strictest Covid lockdown in the world, and the lessons learned. Emphasized the importance of partnerships such as BILC; the importance of being prepared; and the importance of showing flexibility, using a wide variety of online learning tools.



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Round 1

Mr. Sanson Schweizer

Do you only use CEFR B2 level tests in MILAC? If you do, have you considered testing in accordance with STANAG 6001?



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Round 1

Mr. Andreas Prutsch

Have you tried to find out why students of French were more likely to discontinue their language studies?



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Round 1

Mr. Michael Barnett

Teaching highly proficient students, what are your views on what the balance should be between teaching general English proficiency and English for specific purposes in the military language classroom?



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Round 1

Mr. Benjamin C. Pim

Could you tell us a bit more about your training courses for teachers – how to ease the transition from the classroom environment to teaching language courses online?



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Round 1

LTC Pinghan Chua

Partnerships in language learning and training are usually steered towards study trips. How are you redesigning those partnerships to prevent them from weakening due to the lack of traveling?



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Round 2

A question for all Tuesday presenters

During the pandemic, a lot of effort has been put into preparing material for distance learning, and rightly so. Courses need to continue and students need to continue learning. However, I would like to know how you have dealt with the administration of high-stakes testing when everyone is at home? Oral tests can be conceivably given over a platform, like Zoom or BBB, but what about the other skills?



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Round 3

Mr. Andreas Prutsch

You mentioned that you have used the CISCO Secured Video Conference System for testing. I would like to hear more about your experience with testing speaking online, and whether you agree with LTC Sakaryali from Turkey, who suggested that online testing of speaking might not have full validity and reliability, since some aspects which normally are present during face-to-face speaking are missing.



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Round 3

LTC Pinghan Chua

Have you designed self-paced courses? If so, could you extend and tell us more about the process and the course design itself?



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Round 4

A question for all Tuesday presenters

In your opinion, what is the optimal number of students in an online (distance learning) foreign language class to maintain quality learning?



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Thank you to the panel, and to all the BILCers
who had questions for them.

