The changing shape of language education, consequences of Covid for learners and teachers: correlating the voices of language learners and teachers

Peter Brown, Eaquals

The current project team

Peter Brown, Italy (Eaquals)

Pille Põiklik, Estonia (ECML Governing Board)

Bernd Rüschoff, Germany (AILA)

Christine Lechner, Austria (ECML ARC project)

Richard Rossner, France (Eaquals)

Frank Heyworth, Switzerland

The phases of the initiative

INITIAL SURVEY: LANGUAGE EDUCATION DURING COVID - FEBRUARY 2021 ✓

WEBINAR ON SURVEY FINDINGS - APRIL 2021 ✓

TWO VIRTUAL THINK TANKS - MAY AND SEPTEMBER 2021 ✓

21 CASE STUDIES OF PRACTICE EXAMPLES – JUNE-NOVEMBER 2021 ✓

COLLOQUIUM TO REVIEW THE FIRST YEAR OF THE INITIATIVE - DECEMBER 2021 ✓

LEARNERS' VOICES PROJECT WEBINAR - MAY 2022 ✓

COLLECTING LEARNERS' VOICES SURVEY - MAY-JUNE 2022 ✓

ANALYSIS OF LEARNERS' AND TEACHERS' VIEWS - JUNE-SEPTEMBER 2022 ✓

ENLARGED ECML BUREAU MEETING - OCTOBER 2022 ✓

COLLOQUIUM TO REVIEW THE SECOND YEAR OF THE INITIATIVE - DECEMBER 2022 ✓

PUBLICATION ON RESULTS OF THE INITIATIVE - EARLY 2023

EUROPEAN UNION

CENTRE EUROPEEN POUR LES LANGUES VIVANTES

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Initial Rationale and Objectives

- **Could we find valid answers to these questions?**

  For teachers - what are the burning issues brought about by your Covid experiences? Has anything changed since and if so, what? Can you build on your experiences during Covid? Do you have pointers for the future?

  For learners – specifically for the <u>secondary school age range</u> – what helped or hindered you? What worked well and should be maintained? What didn't and should be discarded in your view? Do you have pointers for the future?
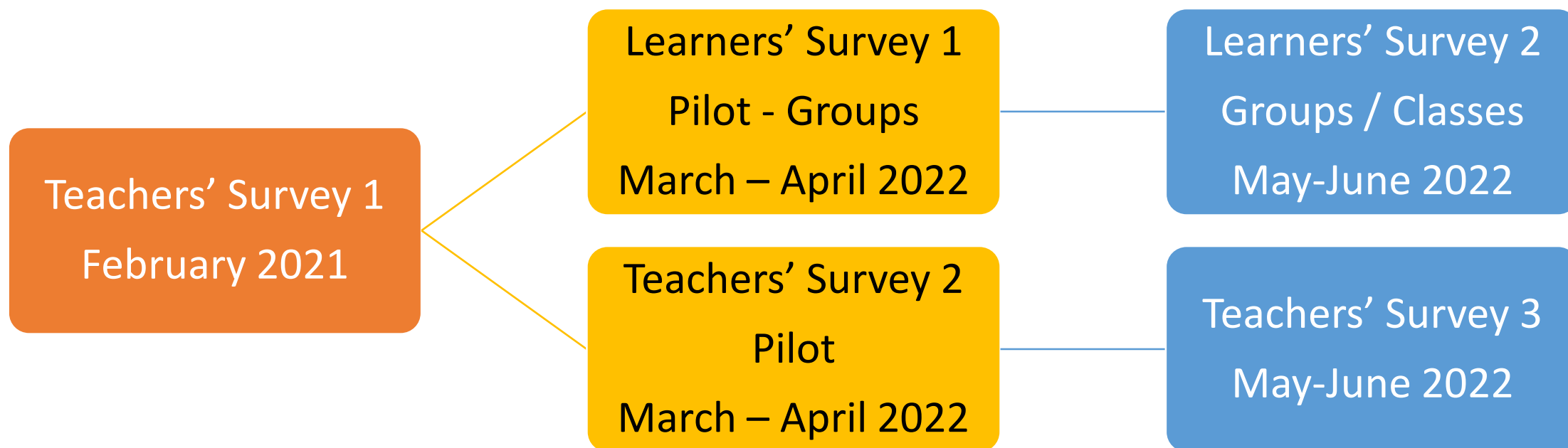
Approaches and Methodologies

1. Five inter-related **surveys** – real-time, retrospective, prospective
2. Specifically **language learning environments**, pan-European, cross-sectoral
3. Longitudinal (over three, month-long periods in 2021 – 2022)
4. Underpinned by analytical methodology from outset (including critical discourse and corpus analysis of open text items)
5. Pedagogical and didactic washback
6. Space for all respondents to prioritise, agree, dissent, express opinions
7. Our guiding principle: **«Let the learners & teachers speak for themselves»**
8. Identifying the **transversal** - similar responses across ages, sectors, …?
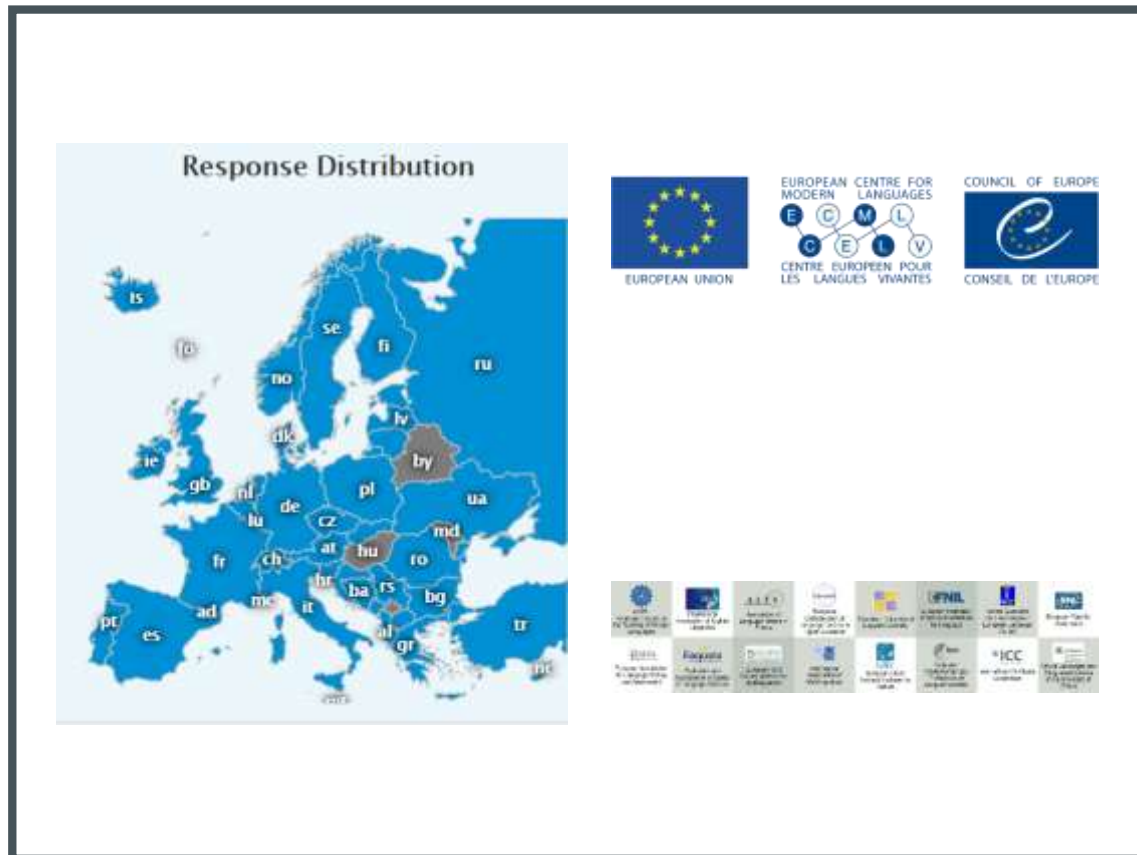9. **Deriving strategic responses** from data, comments, semantic tags, frequency

Five longitudinal surveys
three snapshot months

Teachers' Survey 1

February 2021

Learners' Survey 1

Pilot - Groups

March – April 2022

Teachers' Survey 2

Pilot

March – April 2022

Learners' Survey 2

Groups / Classes

May-June 2022

Teachers' Survey 3

May-June 2022

Language education in the covid pandemic
Response distribution for surveys

Overall (5 surveys)

- **> 40 countries**

- **c 3,200 respondents (T=1,800 | L=1,400)**

- **> 6,500 comments – open text**
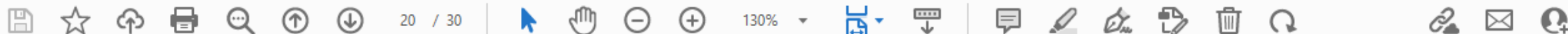
05/04/2022	121101110	We NOW appreciate face-to-face lessons more as most of us need the teacher's EYE and social interaction in general to boost motivation. Another thing that most of us realized was that even though distance learning was very difficult at times, most of us say that independent studying skills have improved a lot.
05/04/2022	121100755	Remote learning is easier as it doesn't take as much energy. You can wake up right before school, you don't have to go anywhere. It's definitely more convenient. However, you also feel lonely sometimes.
05/04/2022	121083497	We wouldn't like to work from home all the time
05/02/2022	121047223	Most of us prefer learning in class face-to-face for many reasons. First, with remote learning, we don't feel as motivated and don't work as hard as in face-to-face lessons. We do better when we are in normal lessons. While studying online, we had to do a lot of homework tasks, but our grades were lower than usual. Our physical and mental health was damaged. Our vision became worse because of looking all day at the computer screen. Studying with other students motivates us much more than remote learning. We like talking with other people face-to-face and working in pairs. We like discussing things in groups. Also, it's easier to communicate with the teacher. If we do not do tests well enough, it is easier to consult the teacher and analyze our mistakes, after which we can rewrite tests and get better grades, which was not always possible while learning online. Often access to technology and/or the way the technology worked was a real challenge. When the teacher told us to do work on a new app, it was a challenge to understand how it worked. Some people didn't know how to turn on their cameras, so we needed to wait for them. Sometimes the Internet connection was poor or even stopped working or there was some problem with the computer, and we couldn't attend classes. In general, there were problems with all the apps we used. At school, technology isn't a problem. Even if it does not work properly, the teacher can write on the board and easily communicate with the students. Finally, when learning at home, we were easily distracted by people around us and by what was going on at home, for example, we could eat during an online lesson. We would have a full meal and weren't paying attention to the teacher. Besides, during class time, we could do other things which were more interesting. For instance, we would be on our phones chatting with friends, scrolling through Instagram, Facebook or TikTok.
04/28/2022	120997667	following our disussion, we reach the conclusion that we definitely prefer face to face lessons in the context of a private language school.
04/28/2022	120987886	Remote learning was a real challenge but we managed to deal with it, to learn new skills but we hope we won't have to experience it again even if we understood that something can help.
		We all agree that it is much better learning at school and that during remote learning we were easily distracted by other people and things around us. The interaction with our classmates and our teachers is very important for us and this aspect is very difficult in an online

121819029 X	We also liked that we could eat in between online classes.
122081240 Timings	You could sleep until late.
122076509 Timings	A lot of free time
122075848 Timings	we could went sleep late
122075816 Timings	We could spent more time with our families
122075788 Timings	Start with school a bit later in the morning
122058521 Timing	free time

<div style="margin-bottom:5px;">European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe</div>

122036827 Timing	They were able to sleep in and eat whatever they wanted whenever they wanted.
122089940 Teachers	The teachers provided us with necessary materials for learning.

Keyword		FullCorp		Q1/Q3		Q2/Q4		Q7/Q8		Q10	
				negative		positive		opinion		comments	
Learn*		328		67	20,4%	72	21,9%	118	34,7%	71	21,6%
Teach*		202		74	35,6%	63	31,2%	50	24,7	15	7,4%
Like* Enjoy* good	75,2%	237		46	19,4%	97	40,9%	58	24,5%	36	15,2%
24,8%	Didn't not like* Dislike* bad		78	68	87,2%	1		8		3	
Help/ful good		147		49	33,3%	58	39,5%	28	19,1%	12	8,2%
Time timetable		178		55	30,9%	72	40,4%	37	20,8%	14	7,9%
Work* *ing *load		206		79	38,3%	49	23,8%	56	27,2%	22	10,7%
Lesson*		125		38	30,4%	47	37,6%	24	19,2%	16	12,8%
Act* ive/ty		100		40	40,0%	38	38,0%	15	15,0%	7	7,0%
Task*		78		42	53,8%	23	29,5%	10	12,8%	3	3,8%

Learners' Voices | Data | Please see Report
Q.4: Which language learning activities, tasks and exercises helped you to learn and would be helpful in the future? Ranked

1. **Video** (clips rather than films)

2. **A mix** of teaching approaches and activities

3. **Language games** (age related)

4. **Collaborative learning**, working in groups (level & age related)

5. **Useful exercises** - often with detailed examples

6. **Applications –** specific or relevant to language learning (Kahoot was most often mentioned)

7. **Skills work** – exemplified

8. **Autonomous vs collaborative learning** approaches, benefits, enjoyment of this

9. **Flexibility – note deriving items from data**
   1. Flexibility of teaching approaches
   2. Flexibility of times (most quoted: it was vital to be in class together with, perhaps, one day a week remote from home).

Learners' Voices | Data | Please see Report

The key issues

1. **The learners want to be and learn in school** rather than remotely. This point-of-view received almost unanimous support from secondary school language learners. It was mentioned repeatedly: irrespective of the question, the issue was raised nevertheless.

2. **The impact on learners' wellbeing (note: also a key issue for teachers)**

   About two thirds of the learners reported suffering from some form of social discomfort and stress arising from one or more factors, such as the socially distanced classroom, distance delivery, the wearing of masks, timetabling restrictions leading to lack of time, isolation, and resulting demotivation; whilst a quarter of all respondents reported more severe forms including some statements that were deemed potentially clinically relevant by a doctor.

   These findings need to be compared to data for the entire population in order to fully estimate the extent and gravity of these events.

Outcomes: deriving items from the data

- Some **questions we did not ask** but which arose from the text data

- For example, '**flexibility**' used in many replies – but in differing meanings by respondents:

  Learner responses – timetabling, content, activity types, autonomous vs group work, …

  Teacher responses – allowing teachers to go 'off programme', modifying teaching, training, …

  Contingency planning – for common 'what if …?' and 'how to…?' scenarios

  Curriculum and content planning – how to modify in light of above, what to cut / keep, …

  System and structural responses – timetabling, technological support, training, …

  + Scope, Efficiency & Efficacy – deploying resources, for given learner outcomes, …

  + Sustainability – determing timescales, …

  + Monitor, Manage, and Adapt – for stop and check. Milestones, …

Outcomes
Policy Guidelines: helping decision takers

Policy guidelines – derived from data in surveys, under 4 main headings – with rationale, points for reflection and desiderata, examples, white space for feedback, local contexts, etc.

Forming input for discussion in our workshops.

Language teaching and learning - what proved useful and should be kept

Supporting language learners – what helped or hindered? What worked well

Supporting language teachers – what we learned, what has changed

Developing future educational literacy – preparing, training for the future

Outcomes
strategic relevance for the ECML

Note from the Covid survey team

The multiple outcomes from the surveys also feed into the on-going ECML programmes

They are relevant to both RELANG and SMC, and above all to the ECML Summer Academy with its emphasis on teacher education.

Next steps

Workshops – Guidelines: proof of concept

Helping shape the draft Guidelines

Guidelines to aid decision-takers & policy makers

Moving towards new responsive 'Educational Literacy'

Report conclusions to ECML

Publish

'La chance ne sourit qu'aux esprits bien préparés'

'Fortune favours only the well-prepared mind'

The burning issue

Louis Pasteur