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ONLINE LEARNING: LESSONS FROM 2020 AND TEACHING IN 2021

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On February 17, 2021 an online panel discussion “Online learning: lessons from 2020 and teaching in 2021” organised by Skyes University (a division of Skyeng online school) brought together teachers from several continents to discuss how teaching and learning have been changing since 2020. Europe was represented by **Dr. Ron Morrain** from the University Duisburg-Essen (Germany) where he is responsible for planning, implementation, and assessment of staff training programs. Dr. Morrain is the founder of the Language Learning Centers Europe (Germany), and also works as Educational Consultant and Instructional Coach for Syntax Solutions (the Netherlands). Dr. Morrain is a frequent guest speaker at international conferences on topics of EFL instruction methodologies like Task-based Learning and Project-based Learning. **Antoine Marcq**, originally from Belgium, is the co-founder of the teacher platform Resource Education and the English language center English Connection (St. Petersburg, Russia). He specialises in developing advanced communication skills and language fluency materials for learners and teachers. His mission is to provide teachers with the materials and training to excel in their field.

The region of South-East Asia was represented by **Heather Hansen**, who is the Founder of Singapore-based communication consulting and training firm Global Speech Academy. She is a TEDx speaker and author/co-author of four books. Her next book *UNMUTED* will be published in early 2022. Heather works to UNMUTE leaders and organizations worldwide by encouraging them to be more conscious, confident and connected communicators, more details about Ms. Hansen’s work can be found at www.globalspeechacademy.com

South America was represented by **André Hedlund**, who is a Chevening Alumnus, MSc Psychology of Education - University of Bristol, Educational Consultant, Speaker, and Guest Lecturer on Bilingualism and Cognition in Postgraduate courses. He currently works as an Edify Bilingual Program Mentor and as a member of BRAZ-TESOL’s Mind, Brain, and Education SIG. The discussion was moderated by Alexey Konobeev, PhD, who works as Academic director at Skyeng and Skyes University, as well as the editor-in-chief at Titul Publishers.

The participants brought together experiences from their parts of the world and discussed a broad range of issues in online education. The questions discussed included what makes online learning effective for learners and for teachers, and whether we really need much technology to be effective teachers. Although the opinions differed in details, the general consensus was that the most important aspect of effective lessons is to have a good teacher and good content, while technology is of secondary importance. Andre Hedlund presented the 4 pillars model of online learning, while Dr. Morrain expanded on the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, which outlines how content (what is being taught) and pedagogy (how the teacher imparts that content) must form the foundation for any effective edtech integration. The next part of the panel discussion was dedicated to the future of online learning. An important aspect of online learning is how CPD (Continuous professional development) has been taking on new forms in the era of distant learning in different industries and professional areas. Antoine Marcq spoke about the changes in the work of private language education providers, Heather Hanssen described changes in corporate training programmes, Andre Hedlund shared experiences of state and private schools and Ron Morrain told about changes in the work of state educational institutions, including universities in the countries he works in.

The full video recording of the panel discussion is available at <https://youtu.be/ZIJB6ikeh28>. This panel discussion is the first in a series of discussions, workshops and webinars that Skyes University is organising in 2021 to provide an open forum for discussing new trends in digital learning at university and school level.