The eSlide Project

Virtual Microscope for Teaching Microfossil Identification

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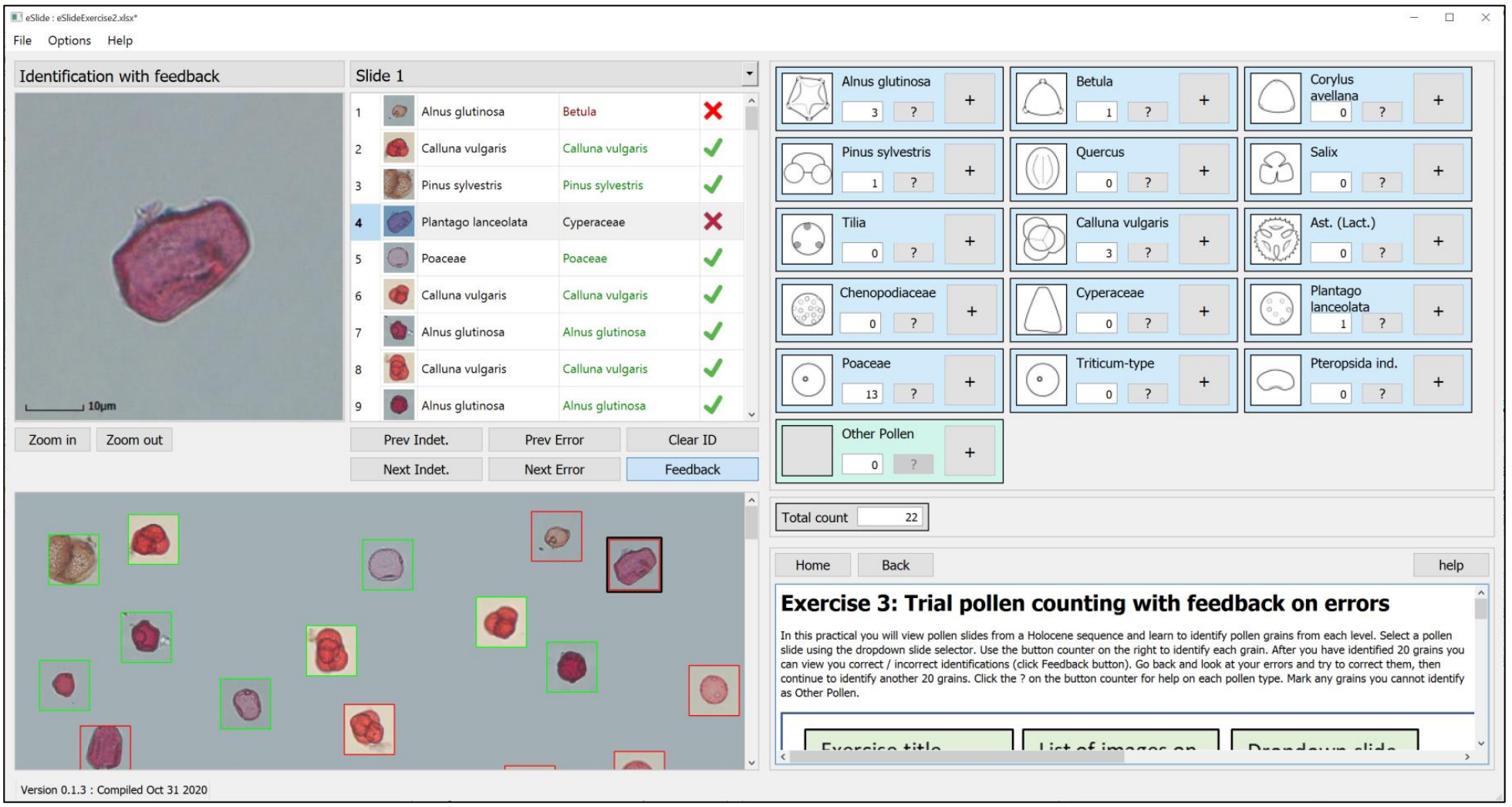
The eSlide project comprises software and image datasets for training students in the basics of microfossil identification without the need for sample preparation or microscopy facilities. It is particularly relevant for undergraduate teaching in the current coronavirus crisis where in-person practical teaching may not be possible.

eSlide software runs natively on Windows or macOS or in a web browser on desktops, notebooks or tablets for easy deployment. It provides a controlled learning environment where students can examine type images or perform counts using simulated slides of instructor-defined composition.



Help and feedback can be adjusted to suit various levels of knowledge and experience, from introductory classes through to preliminary training of dissertation or research students. Practical exercises are defined using a simple Excel spreadsheet template. HTML files can be included to display customized help and guide students through formative or summative exercises.

Image datasets: The eSlide project currently has an extensive image dataset of common UK pollen types. Image datasets of diatoms and other microfossil groups are in progress.

Status: We are currently testing eSlide with our 2nd year undergraduates. We aim to have a finished version with pollen and diatom images ready by Feb 2021.

More information is available at https://www.staff.ncl.ac.uk/stephen.juggins/eSlide/index.html.
A beta online version of the software is available at https://www.staff.ncl.ac.uk/stephen.juggins/eSlide/eSlide.html.
Please get in touch with us if you are interested in using eSlide in your own teaching. Comments, feedback and contributions to improve the software and expand the image datasets are very welcome.