

Developing an Online Learning Environment for Learners, Teachers and Parents

Steve Evans

British Council Madrid Young Learners (Spain)

steve.evans@britishcouncil.es

Abstract

At the turn of the century, we decided to set up an intranet for teachers in our large English as a foreign language centre to allow for the sharing of resources and knowledge between teachers. Initially using a repurposed PC with Microsoft server software and connected to our local area network, this was to be the start of a long journey along which an increasingly complex web platform was developed for a growing user base. After various iterations, we are now on the point of rolling out a major new development across Spain and Portugal for our web portal, allowing for a collaborative and connectivist approach to online support for learners.

Initially serving a group of approximately 70 teachers, the e-platform now caters for 45,000 active users delivering a wide range of pedagogical and administrative features. Teachers assess students via an online reports module, students have access to a range of self-study materials and parents can support their children's learning and register for courses online.

In this session we will look at how the platform has developed from humble beginnings, what developments worked well and which less so. We examine a parallel project in social media with students which came about as a result of research into multiple intelligences among young learners in different age groups [1]. We will also look at how teachers' own initiatives informed the project's development, and explain the nature of our current planned changes for web portal v2.0, and discuss possible future directions for the project.

References

- [1] Research project into learner support and multiple intelligences, Evans 2006.