

Connecting Europeans through Language Learning and ICT

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Abstract

As Europeans, we are expected to be proficient in at least two languages of the EU and this is a challenge for all European citizens. Learning languages at school is a good start but sometimes it is not enough. In Spain there is a network of public institutions (*Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas – State-run Language Schools*) which promote a Life Long Learning Programme that allows many people from different walks of life to update their competences in foreign languages. Their aim is to help Spanish citizens communicate in different languages so that they can be more likely to move around the EU and even find better working conditions and environments.

Our *Escuelas Oficiales de Idiomas* are unique institutions within the European school system because they are specialized in language learning, they are affordable for most people and no special requirements are needed to enter. This is the perfect equation to reach people who want to keep on improving their education and move to other European countries as part of their workforce. Furthermore, we like to co-operate with other European institutions through Grundtvig Assistanceships, or Grundtvig Workshops.

Working and cooperating with other European Institution made us realize how important the use of ICT is not only to help our learners to improve their learning process but also to provide them with the possibility of getting in touch with other adults all over Europe who are also learning languages and are eager to cooperate and collaborate with other people in their same situation. That is the reason why we have been working in different partnerships since 2005, have implemented different ICT tools with our students which have turned out very successful experiences and we would like to show some of them: bilingual tandems, trilingual courses, debates in facebook and courses in which students have to fulfil tasks in different languages using synchronous and asynchronous tools such as skype, forums, chats or wikis.