

An Efficacy of Personal Learning Environment (PLE) Tools among Digital Immigrants and Digital Natives in English Classes

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Abstract

Today's learning takes place very much in a modish way with the emergence of new technologies. PLE is an approach/new technology and new ways of working with its tools compared to traditional learning which will have an effect on how people work, share, collaborate, feel and how they manage their lives on their own as self-directed learning. A personal learning environment (PLE) is a solution for keeping up with the rapid pace of knowledge change. Personal Learning Environments are systems that help learners take control of and manage their own learning. This includes providing support for learners to set their own learning goals and manage their own content and learning process, thereby achieving their learning goals. A personal learning environment (PLE) involves both formal and informal learning experiences. The pressures for a PLE are based on the idea that learning will take place in different contexts and situations and will not be provided by a single learning provider. This paper tries to underpin a better understanding of the underlying concepts of both approaches and, on the other hand, emphasize the consequences and challenges of PLE and its rising usage for learning.

Keywords: PLE, Learning Process, Learning Environment, Millennial Generations, Modish

Introduction

Technology can be used to bring together novices and experts. Each learner is unique and will have unique learning experiences. What motivates learning, what triggers curiosity, and what tools might enhance learning will be different for different learners. This makes the design of a Personal Learning Environment that serves as an aid to each possible learner, a challenge.

Definition

Personal learning environments (PLE) enable more active interaction by engaging learners through several methods rather than adhering to the structured norm that is given by educators. It also increases motivation as it is what specifically interests the learner.

Benefits of a PLE

The following lists are the main benefits of PLEs,

- helps with creating learning environments that are tailored to the learners
- focuses on encouraging innovation
- emphasizes the value of the learning process more than the finished product

Personal Learning Environment

Digital and non-digital building blocks can be individually combined by learners in their own **personal learning environment** (PLEs). Personal Learning Environment is central to learning in the future. The paper will start by looking at the changing face of education and go on to consider the different ways the so called 'net generation' is using technology for learning.

More of an approach or strategy than a specific learning platform, a PLE is created by learners in the process of **designing and organizing their own learning**, as opposed to following pre-arranged learning paths. In this way, PLEs are distinctly learner-centred and foster **autonomous learning**.

PLEs are by no means isolated; they are interconnected in a digital ecosystem of media, tools and services. Instead of asking learners to navigate within one monolithic environment, PLEs act as a gateway to an open and connected learning experience. This approach marks a shift towards a model of learning in which learners draw connections from a pool of digital and non-digital building blocks, aggregating, mixing and combining them into unique constellations as part of learning.

While emphasizing the active role of a learner, the PLE approach implies that **learning is not located in a specific time and place, but is an ongoing, ubiquitous and multi-episodic process**. As PLEs allow the collocation of diverse learning activities, tools, and resources, contexts permeate and learning becomes connected.



PLEs challenge some dominant paradigms in education and in the traditional understanding of borders, be it in view of learning places, educational roles or institutional policies. A number of institutions are looking at the potential of PLE type applications for Continuing Professional Development.

Implementing PLEs

Implementing personal learning environments (PLEs) in educational settings is a challenging and complex process. Teachers as the main agents of change in their classroom settings need support in designing and implementing these new learning environments and integrating them into the educational process. we propose a model to implement Web 2.0 PLEs in educational settings based on the conceived objectives of PLEs, namely

- (i) Enhancing the students’ control in educational process and
- (ii) Supporting and empowering students to build and deploy their PLEs.

In recent years, the concept of personal learning environments (PLEs) has attracted the attention of researchers and practitioners in the educational technology domain. Attwell (2007b) says:

Important concepts in PLEs include the integration of both formal and informal learning episodes into a single experience, the use of social networks that can cross institutional boundaries and the use of networking protocols (Peer-to-Peer, web services, syndication) to connect a range of resources and systems within a personally-managed space.

Implementing the PLE concept in educational settings is a complex process that consists of several challenges. Firstly, it requires redefining the commonly accepted roles of teachers and students in the educational settings. The traditional procedures of teaching assume students as not sufficiently knowledgeable individuals to take full control over their learning.

Different Types of Knowledge

When thinking about knowledge development in a richer way, it may be useful to distinguish between different types of knowledge. Lundvall and Johnson (1994) identify four different kinds of knowledge, each requiring different types of mastery:

know-what,
know-why,
know-how, and
know-who.

Know-what refers to knowledge about ‘facts’: it can be considered as equivalent to what is normally called information. It is related to the knowledge ‘corpus’ that each category of experts must possess.

Know-why refers to scientific knowledge, influencing technological development and the pace and characteristics of its applications in industries of every kind. Also in this case, knowledge production and reproduction take place within organized processes, such as university teaching, scientific research, specialized personnel recruiting, and so on.inter-organizational

Know-how refers to skills - that is, the capabilities to do something in different contexts (e.g. judging the market prospects for a new product, operating a machine-tool, etc.). Of course knowhow is typically a kind of knowledge developed at the individual level, but its importance is also evident if one considers the division of labour and degree of co-operation taking place within organizations and even at the inter-organizational level (for instance, the formation of industrial networks or clusters is largely due to the need for firms to be able to share and combine elements of know-how).

Know-who is another kind of knowledge which is becoming increasingly important, referring to a mix of different kinds of skills, especially social skills, allowing the access and use of knowledge possessed by someone else

Each kind of knowledge is characterized by different channels through which learning takes place and can be supported in different ways using technologies. The easiest cases are those of know-what and know-why, which can be obtained through the typical channels of knowledge acquisition (watching videos, accessing databases), while the other two categories are rooted primarily in practical experience. In terms of technology enhanced learning, these forms of knowledge have been more problematic insofar as they require access to informal social channels for learning.

Web 1 was largely implemented as a push technology - to allow access to information on a dispersed basis, Web2.0 is a two way process, allowing the internet to be used for creating and sharing information and knowledge, rather than merely accessing external artefacts.

Implications for Teaching and Learning

The concept of the PLE marks a fundamental change (people and media) in teaching and learning. In an environment where information is easy to find and needs only to be located, there is a greater premium on skills that support fast and accurate access to information and on the ability to assess that information. In this regard, teaching is less a matter of data transmission and more a collaborative exercise in collection, orchestration, remixing, and integration of data into knowledge building. The goal for the student shifts from a need to collect information to a need to draw connections from it—to acquire it, disseminate it, and collaborate in its use. Furthermore, the use of PLEs may herald a greater emphasis on the role that metacognition plays in learning, enabling students to actively consider and reflect upon specific tools and resources that lead to a deeper engagement with content to facilitate their learning.

PLE is very supportive of learning systems including adult learning, informal learning, lifelong learning and workplace learning. Moreover, the concept could be extended to support learning organizations that see knowledge as the most significant resource to remain current and competitive.

Web 2 0 Technology

The term Web 2.0 is associated with web applications that facilitate participatory information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web. A Web

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2.0 site allows users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as creators of user-generated content in a virtual community, in contrast to websites where users are limited to the passive viewing of content that was created for them. Examples of Web 2.0 include social networking sites, blogs, wikis, video sharing sites, hosted services and web applications.

PLE Tools

The Tools below help the teacher and learner in language learning

Such as

Blog

Wikis

Podcasts

Web quests

SMS

YouTube

E-mails

IPads

Skype

E-forums

Virtual Classroom etc.,

Conclusion

Personal Learning environments are not an application but rather a new approach to the use of new technologies for learning. There remain many issues to be resolved. But, at the end of the day, the argument for the use of Personal Learning environments is not technical but rather is philosophical, ethical and pedagogic. PLEs provide learners with their own spaces under their own control to develop and share their ideas. Moreover, PLEs can provide a more holistic learning environments, bringing together sources and contexts for learning hitherto separate. Students learn how to take responsibility for their own learning. Critically, PLEs can bridge the walled gardens of educational institutions with the world outside. Learners can develop skills or literacy necessary for using new technologies in a rapidly changing society.

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