

e-Friendly Personalized Learning

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Abstract

This paper presents a learning framework that fits the digital age – an e-Friendly PLE. The learning framework is based on the theory of connectivism which asserts that knowledge and the learning of knowledge is distributive and is not located in any given place but rather consists of the network of connections formed from experiences and interactions with a knowing community, thus, the newly empowered learner is thinking and interacting in new ways. The framework's approach to learning is based on conversation and interaction, on sharing, creation and participation, on learning not as a separate activity, but rather as embedded in meaningful activities such as games or workflows. It sees learning as an active, personal inquiry, interpretation, and construction of meaning from prior knowledge and experience with one's actual environment.

Keywords: *e-Friendly PLE, connectivism, e-learning*

1. Introduction

Human knowledge has been growing exponentially because of advanced computer and telecommunications technology. Information has become accessible to anyone who wants it through the Internet. People have been exposed to various forms of media and technological tools, multi-sensorial stimulation, multitasking, instant processes (one-click access to information), instant products, and a barrage of information from various sources, hence, they can easily navigate information on their own. Today's learners prefer activities where they can interact, express themselves, and get immediate feedbacks. Educators thus face the challenge of ensuring that learners value self-direction, adaptability, critical thinking, collaboration, and lifelong learning – to fill the gap between the knowledge, skills and attitudes of students and the needs of society.

This paper presents a learning framework that fits the digital age – an e-Friendly PLE. The framework recognizes that learning and knowledge is developed in a non-sequential, repetitive process of connecting with a diverse mix of opinions and making decisions by articulating, reflecting, and evaluating the connections and options one sees in his environment. The framework outlines a new e-learning technology including e-portfolios and personal learning environments.

This learning framework is based on the two important concepts: (1) the theory of connectivism

(constructivism in a connected environment) which asserts that knowledge and the learning of knowledge is distributive and is not located in any given place but rather consists of the network of connections formed from experiences and interactions with a knowing community and (2) the newly empowered learner, the member of the net generation, who is thinking and interacting in new ways. The framework's approach to learning is based on conversation and interaction, on sharing, creation and participation, on learning not as a separate activity, but rather as embedded in meaningful activities such as games or work flows. It sees learning as an active, personal inquiry, interpretation, and construction of meaning from prior knowledge and experience with one's actual environment.

2. Background

A knowledge-based economy relies primarily on the use of ideas rather than physical abilities and on the application of technology rather than the transformation of raw materials or the exploitation of cheap labor. Knowledge is being developed and applied in new ways. The global knowledge economy is transforming the demands of the labor market in economies throughout the world. It is also placing new demands on citizens, who need more skills and knowledge to be able to function in their day to day lives ^[1, 2].

Equipping people to deal with these demands requires a new model of education and training, a model of lifelong learning. A lifelong learning framework encompasses learning throughout the life cycle, from early childhood to retirement. It encompasses formal learning (schools, training institutions, universities), non-formal learning (on-the-job and household training), and informal learning (skills learned from family members or people in the community). It allows people to access learning opportunities as they need them rather than because they have reached a certain age.

Lifelong learning is crucial to preparing workers to compete in the global economy. However, it is important for other reasons as well. By improving people's ability to function as members of their communities, education and training increase social cohesion, reduce crime, and improve income distribution. Developing countries and transition economies risk being further marginalized in a competitive global knowledge economy because their education and training systems are not equipping learners with the skills they need. To respond to the problem, policymakers need to make crucial changes.

Table 1. Traditional and Lifelong Learning Models

TRADITIONAL LEARNING MODEL	LIFELONG LEARNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher is the source of knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators are guides to sources of knowledge.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners receive knowledge from the teacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People learn by doing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners work by themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People learn in groups and from each other.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tests are given to prevent progress until students have completely mastered a set of skills and to ration access to further learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment is used to guide learning strategies and identify pathways for future learning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All learners do the same thing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators develop individualized learning plans.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers receive initial training plus ad hoc in-service training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators are lifelong learners. Initial training and on-going professional development are linked.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Good" learners are identified and permitted to continue their education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People have access to learning opportunities over a lifetime.

They need to replace the information-based, teacher-directed rote

learning provided within a formal education system governed by directives with a new type of learning

that emphasizes creating, applying, analyzing, and synthesizing knowledge and engaging in collaborative learning throughout the lifespan.

Peter Kline in his book 'The Everyday Genius' says, "Learning is most effective when it is fun" ^[3].

Nathaniel Branden has done a lot of work on the value of self esteem to inspire students to achieve more ^[4]. Building self esteem creates a good emotion which automates the learning process and makes students self motivated.

To enhance learning, we can recycle and revisit knowledge. Recycling means providing knowledge from several perspectives in a variety of activities and resources. Revisiting means coming back to the knowledge several times to refresh, reinforce and renew it ^[5].

Tony Stockwell author of Accelerated Learning in Theory and Practice and The Learning Revolution says, "To learn anything fast and effectively, you have to see it, hear it and feel it" ^[6].

Student centered learning focuses on the needs of students rather than those of others involved in the educational process, such as teachers and administrators. Student-centered learning, that is, putting students first, is in contrast to existing teacher-centered lecturing. Student-centered learning is focused on the student's needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles with the teacher as a learning facilitator or coach. This teaching method acknowledges student voice as central to the learning experience for every learner. Teacher-centered learning has the teacher at its centre in an active role and students in a passive, receptive role. Student-centered learning requires students to be active, responsible participants in their own learning ^[7].

3. The e-Friendly PLE

3.1 What is e-Friendly PLE?

The e-Friendly Personalized Learning Environment (ePLE) is a learning approach based on the two important concepts: (1) the theory of connectivism (constructivism in a connected environment) which asserts that knowledge and the learning of knowledge is distributive and is not located in any given place but rather consists of the network of connections formed from experience and interactions with a knowing community and (2) the newly empowered learner, the member of the net generation, who is thinking and interacting in new ways.

The e-Friendly PLE approach to learning is based on conversation and interaction, on sharing, creation and participation, on learning not as a separate activity, but rather as embedded in meaningful activities such as games or workflows.

The e-Friendly PLE has the following advantages: learning activities are student-centered; old knowledge are linked with new ones; interactive learning activities; students progress are constantly monitored; a feedback system for students to raise questions, problems, and suggestions.

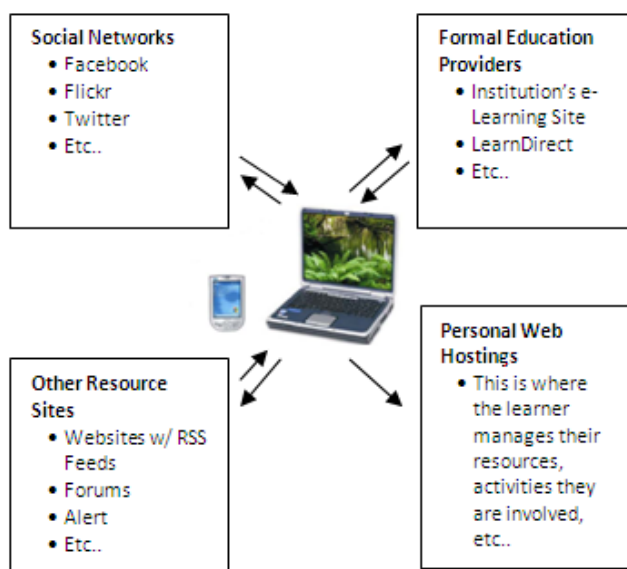


Figure 1. e-Friendly PLE Model

The e-Friendly PLE connects to a number of remote services, social networks, formal education providers, personal web hosting, and other

The e-Friendly PLE both publishes and aggregates. Access to learning becomes access to resources and services offered by these remote services. This allows the learner not only to consume but to produce learning resources. Learning therefore evolves from being a transfer of content and knowledge to the production of content and knowledge.

The e-Friendly PLE is an answer when an online learning ceases to be like a medium and become more like a platform. This could give the learner greater control over their learning experience (managing their resources, the work they have produced, the activities they participate in) and would constitute their own personal learning environment, which they could use to interact with institutional systems to access content, assessment, libraries and the like. The contents that is organized, structured, and produced by publishers are not only consumed by students but used (not read) and in turn produced rather than by teachers that is more likely to resemble a language or a conversation rather than a book or a manual. The management of learning is turned over from institution to a learner.

4. Conclusion

The e-Friendly Personalized Learning Environment (ePLE) is a learning approach which asserts that knowledge and the learning of knowledge is distributive and is not located in any given place but rather consists of the network of connections formed from experience and interactions with a knowing community and the newly empowered learner is thinking and interacting in new ways.

The e-Friendly PLE is embedded in meaningful activities and is advantageous to learners since the learners can learn in any place and time most convenient to him/her. It is remarkably convenient and easy to use since it connects to a number of remote services, social networks, formal education providers, personal web hosting and other resource sites.

Learners can easily access the e-Friendly PLE and learn things on their own pace. Educators assess and

evaluate students performance through the e-portfolios of the learners. Hence, learning and teaching becomes more easy and convenient to both the students and the teachers.

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