

Chapter 5.17

E-Learning at the Polytechnic University of Valencia: A Bet for Quality

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2000, the Open Polytechnic University has been working at e-learning methods as a commitment to introduction of Communication Technologies into training process. The development of grade and postgraduate subjects was a specific way of putting it into practice. The figures support our work; 200 courses have been developed at the moment and more than 10,000 students are using our e-learning platform. The future looks brilliant for e-learning when the development course process is a quality procedure and the contents are designed for online training purposes. Teachers must consider the online training materials differently from other training materials as there are distinct and specific pedagogical aspects to bear

in mind; this is the reason why they follow the pedagogical modules structure designed by the Open Polytechnic University. On the other hand, teachers from the Polytechnic University of Valencia can take advice from the Open Polytechnic University in order to apply new technologies to their courses. The Open Polytechnic University offers training to teachers in e-learning and give them resources to improve their skills in order to teach their subjects by means of an e-learning platform. The courses development process at the Open Polytechnic University is a process called “stages and experts,” because several expert agents are involved. They work together in a multidisciplinary model that gives quality to the courses—a quality that is proven by the Open Polytechnic University stamp. All this process is

based on our own author tool, e-learning platform, and pedagogical methodology.

INTRODUCTION

In the last six years, the Polytechnic University of Valencia has been betting for providing its academic staff with a technical and pedagogical structure that brings the use of new Technologies closer to the learning process. For this purpose, in the year 2000, the project Open Polytechnic University (UPA) was started, offering UPV teachers the possibility of creating and managing different formative on-line products through an e-learning platform, as well as being able to technologically support presential education, by incorporating IT to education.

UPA Methodology

First of all, an autonomous integrated service was created, with a unified corporative image for all courses to be taught in the UPV through the UPA e-learning platform. Therefore, all courses were created with the same author's tool, in html code, and were taught through the UPV e-learning platform.

This generated the definition and setting-up of a structured working system, whose basis comes from the definition of a methodology characteristic of an on-line system.

Since every e-learning process entails a multidisciplinary task, an accurate planning was to carry it out. Thus, a working pattern called "Phases and Experts", distinguished by ensuring quality by means of an accurate care throughout the whole process and the participation of the different expert agents involved.

In this way, the UPA model service was not limited to the use of the author's tool and the platform, but its own pedagogic methodology was created, adapted to the specific characteristics of a means like Internet. Such methodology is applied to the creation of all the formative products managed by UPA.

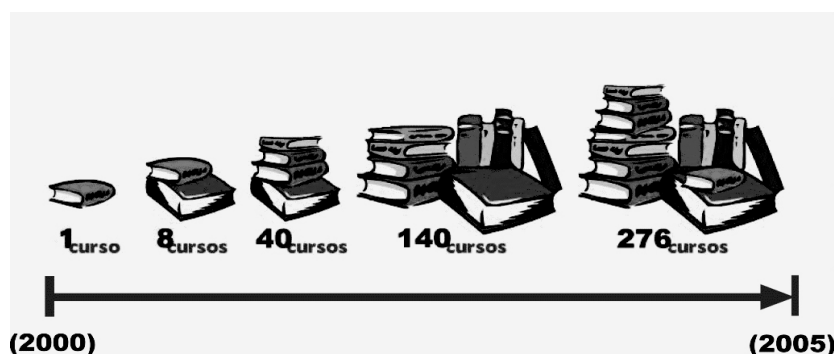
HISTORICAL DATA

UPA has consolidated as a service increasingly used by the teaching community in the Polytechnic University of Valencia. Since the year 2000, a total of 276 courses have been given. Please see Figure 1.

Nowadays, 24 departments in the UPV and two institutes have used the UPA platform to carry out their e-learning courses.

The exploitation of these 276 courses throughout the five years of life of UPA has resulted in a total of 17.779 registrations. To the evolution of the increase of created courses corresponds an increase of the students using the UPA platform.

Figure 1. Evolution of developed courses



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