

# A Personal Learning Environment for Spanish Language Learning

Stacy Brewer, Stevi Budd, Kim Duclos

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# Overview

- What is a Personal Learning Environment (PLE)?
- How is a PLE used for learning?
- Theoretical framework
- Why did we use a persona?
- Learning goals & objectives
- Instructional strategies
- PLE in NetVibes
- Demonstration of PLE
- Summary

# What is a PLE?

- Personal Learning Environment
- Where can I find a PLE?
- PLE vs. LMS

*“The heart of the concept of the PLE is that it is a tool that allows a learner (or anyone) to engage in a distributed environment consisting of a network of people, services and resources. It is not just Web 2.0, but it is certainly Web 2.0 in the sense that it is (in the broadcast sense possible) to a read-write application”*

*~ Stephen Downes, 2006*

# How PLEs Are Used For Learning

- The learner at the wheel
- Informal and lifelong learning
- An experience with no boundaries
- A tool for all environments

# PLE Theoretical Framework

- Based on Constructivist epistemology

## Adult Learning Theory

- Autonomous and self-directed
- Build on experiences
- Defined goals and objectives
- Relevancy

# PLE Theoretical Framework

- Based on Constructivist epistemology

## Connectivism

- Begins with individual
- Diversity of opinions
- Connecting information nodes and sources
- Learning resides in non-human appliances
- Want to learn more than currently known
- Connections to facilitate learning
- Ability to see connections
- Currency and accuracy of knowledge
- Decision-making is itself learning process

# Why Did We Use a Persona?

- A persona is...
  - Developer tool to focus on target user
  - Fully developed profile of a “person”
  - aka...user profile
- How it applies to our project...
  - PLE is by definition “personal” intended for use by one specific person
  - Provided organization and focus for project

# Meet Lindsay Flowers

- 27-years old
- Lives in Los Angeles
- Owns a bookstore/coffee shop in a diverse, urban part of L.A.
- Learning Spanish would help her both personally and professionally
- Experienced with e-learning
- No time/money for formal f-2-f classes, tutors or expensive language programs
- Technologically-savvy, familiar with Web 2.0
- Active and kinetic learner
- Wants control of her learning environment
- Uses laptop to learn when she can



# Learning Goals

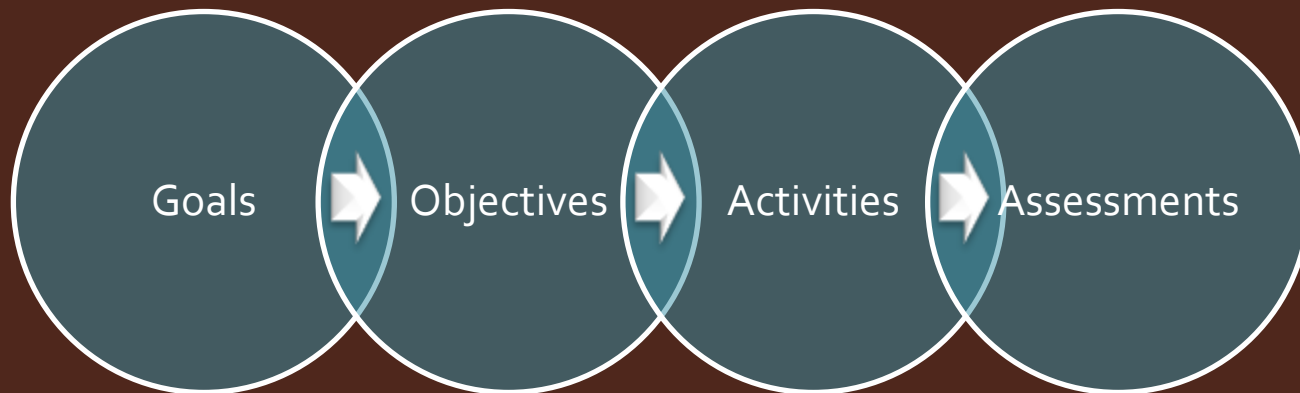
- Learn Spanish in order to:
  - Better communicate with customers
  - Grow the business to include more programs geared toward Hispanics
  - Volunteer more effectively in local literacy programs
  - Communicate with locals while on vacation in Spanish-speaking countries

# Learning Objectives

- To be able to read and speak basic Spanish greetings, questions, and general vocabulary.
- To be able to read and speak basic Spanish words and phrases used in a typical business/commerce transaction.
- To be able to read and speak basic Spanish words and phrases related to a bookstore and coffee shop environment.
- To be able to loosely read and translate general Hispanic media (such as newspapers, flyers, web sites).
- To be able to read and speak basic Spanish travel-related words, phrases and questions.
- To develop a basic understanding of the cultures and heritage of Hispanic countries.

# Instructional Strategies

- Learning activities chosen that fulfill requirements of specific real-life scenarios & experiences
- Learning goals, objectives, activities & assessments (self-tests) all map to each other



- Resources for additional exploration
- Can expand or change as learning goals and needs change

# PLE in NetVibes

- What is NetVibes?
- Why NetVibes was chosen
  - Ease of use
  - Flexibility
  - One stop shopping
  - Quick and easy collaboration

# PLE: <http://www.netvibes.com/spanishple>

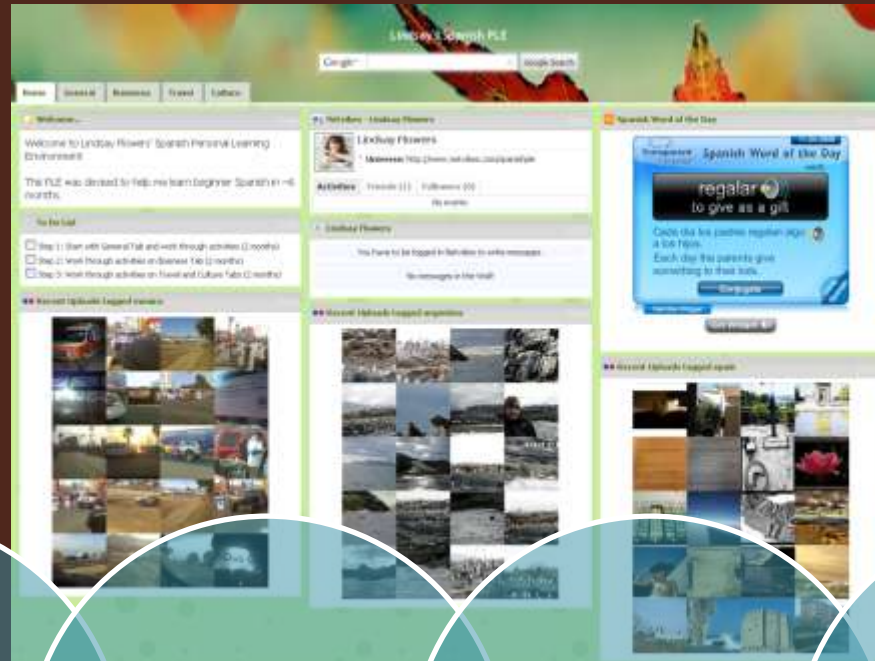
The image shows a screenshot of a Netvibes dashboard titled "Lindsay's Spanish PLE". At the top, there is a Google search bar and navigation tabs for "Home", "General", "Business", "Travel", and "Culture".

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Welcome...:** A message stating, "Welcome to Lindsay Flowers' Spanish Personal Learning Environment. This PLE was devised to help me learn beginner Spanish in ~16 months."
- To Do List:** A list of tasks with checkboxes:
  - Step 1: Start with General Tab and work through activities (2 months)
  - Step 2: Work through activities on Business Tab (2 months)
  - Step 3: Work through activities on Travel and Culture Tabs (2 months)
- Recent Uploads tagged mexico:** A grid of 16 small images showing various scenes from Mexico, including cars, buildings, and landscapes.
- Recent Uploads tagged argentina:** A grid of 16 small images showing various scenes from Argentina, including landscapes, buildings, and people.
- Recent Uploads tagged spain:** A grid of 16 small images showing various scenes from Spain, including buildings, landscapes, and people.

On the right side of the dashboard, there is a "Spanish Word of the Day" widget. It displays the word "regalar" (to give as a gift) and includes a definition in Spanish: "Cada día los padres regalan algo a los hijos. Each day the parents give something to their kids." Below the widget is a "Get Widget" button.

# PLE Learning Categories



General

Business

Travel

Culture

# PLE Demonstration

<http://www.netvibes.com/spanishple>

This screenshot shows the main interface of the Lindsay's Spanish PLE. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs for 'Home', 'General', 'Business', 'Travel', and 'Culture'. Below this is a 'Welcome...' section with a brief introduction to the PLE's purpose. To the right, there is a 'Spanish Word of the Day' widget featuring the word 'regalar' (to give as a gift) with a definition and a 'Get the Widget' button. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'Activities' with a 'To Do List' (Step 1: Start with General Tab, Step 2: Work through activities on Business Tab, Step 3: Work through activities on Travel and Culture Tabs), 'Recent Uploads tagged spanish', and 'Recent Uploads tagged argentina'. Each of these sections contains a grid of small image thumbnails.

This image displays a stack of overlapping screenshots from the Lindsay's Spanish PLE, illustrating different content areas. The top-most screenshot shows the 'Spanish Word of the Day' widget with the word 'regalar' and its definition. Below it, another screenshot shows a 'To Do List' with three steps for navigating the PLE. Further down, there are screenshots of 'Recent Uploads' sections, specifically one tagged 'spanish' and another tagged 'argentina', both showing grids of image thumbnails. The stack of screenshots is arranged to show a progression of content from the top-level navigation and word of the day down to specific user-generated content.

# What We Learned...

“Never regard study as a duty, but as the enviable opportunity to learn to know the liberating influence of beauty in the realm of the spirit for your own personal joy and to the profit of the community to which your later work belongs.” ~ *Albert Einstein*