Chapter 11
Responsive Open Learning Environment in a Higher Education Institution: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT
We have started to hear more and more about responsive open learning environments (ROLEs). They are the next generation of personal learning environments (PLEs). PLEs are based on the basic aggregation of existing content and services mainly using Web 2.0 technologies. ROLEs are mutating lifelong learning by introducing a new infrastructure to a world while dealing with existing learning management systems, institutions, and technologies, and these systems have test-beds. In this chapter, the authors describe first experiences utilizing ROLEs at Istanbul Technical University in Istanbul. The results of the study showed the readiness of the technology for large-scale trials and the benefits for the students leading to new insights in the design of ROLEs for more informal learning situations.

Responsive open learning environments (ROLEs) are identified with their openness for new configurations, contents and users, and their responsiveness to learners' activities in respect to learning goals. In the context of the research project ROLE, a technological-pedagogical infrastructure is developed to enable the creation of individual open responsive learning environments. The ROLE project aims to enable learners to assemble and reassemble their own learning environments which become advanced Personal Learning Environments (PLE). Typically, higher education institutions are early adopters of new learning technologies, even they are not concentrating on mass individualization of learning as ROLE does. While taking into account the limitations of the presented scenarios we were able to demonstrate two main findings in this paper. The techno-pedagogical infrastructure is ready to serve highly populated learning test-beds with psycho-pedagogical meaningful learning widget bundles. This is a basic requirement to distinguish ROLE approaches from simple Web 2.0 content aggregation environments calling themselves PLEs. The second finding demonstrated the usefulness of the psycho-pedagogical infrastructure in different cultural settings. The ROLE project offers the unique opportunity to try out sets of learning bundles in a similar learning scenario, but with a different population of learners.

We give importance to the application of the pedagogy inside of the course and analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of classroom assessment and formative assessment. Black and William (1998b: 139-148) define assessment broadly to ‘include all activities that teachers and students undertake to get information that can be used diagnostically to alter teaching and learning’. Classroom assessments can include a wide range of options from recording anecdotal notes while observing a student to administering standardized tests. The options can be roughly divided into two categories; formative assessments and summative assessments. Black (1998, as cited by Brookhart, 1999) stated, “When the cook tastes the soup, that’s formative assessment; when the customer tastes the soup, that’s summative assessment”.

Formative assessments are assessments, reviews, and observations in a classroom. Weston, Mc Alpine, and Bordonaro, (1995: 29-46.) stated that ‘The purpose of formative evaluation is to validate or ensure that the goals of the
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