



Press Release, 13th November 2006

***Aula Virtual de Español* – The Virtual Classroom at the Instituto Cervantes**

The Instituto Cervantes, founded by the Spanish government in 1991, is not only the largest global institution engaged in teaching Spanish but also plays a key role in disseminating the cultures of Spanish-speaking countries. The ***Aula Virtual de Español*** (AVE) virtual learning platform was set up just a few years ago, drawing on modern technologies to provide a flexible, communicative and cost-effective way of learning Spanish.

Aula Virtual de Español exploits the Internet's technical potential to create a virtual space capable of simulating a lively learning environment. The platform architecture incorporates cutting-edge communication tools with a broad range of methods, encouraging creative learning in a process integrating the user with other learners and providing close tutor contact. The learning programme not only comprises texts and simulated situations, but also audio and video units. Communicative exercises, usually with a tutor or in small groups, are carried out via a chat site, mail or voicemail.

The ***Aula Virtual de Español*** provides an excellent *blended learning* platform. The expert interlinking of face-to-face and online learning phases offers the benefits of e-learning's effectiveness and flexibility plus the social aspects of face-to-face communication. The AVE, though, can also be used either for classic online learning in a course or, alternatively to blended learning, solely as an access to resources to support individual progress in learning Spanish. With these various possibilities on offer, courses can be easily customised to meet individual learning needs – a flexibility greatly appreciated by learners in full-time employment.

The ***Aula Virtual de Español*** platform was developed by the Instituto Cervantes Technology and Language Projects Department together with the ***Centro Virtual Cervantes (CVC)***. In the meantime, the web portal, initiated in 1997, has become one of the key Internet reference sites for the Spanish language and culture. The cvc.cervantes.es portal has over 80,000 websites on Spanish and the culture of the Spanish-speaking countries, with sites ranging from databases and virtual libraries to online exhibitions, teaching materials, fora – including ones for translators and linguists – and collections of links.

A ***Demonstration Session*** to present the ***Aula Virtual de Español*** is scheduled for Thursday, **30 November**, from **11.45 am - 1.15 pm** in Room **DES09** at the Online Educa Berlin 2006. We look forward to welcoming you at our stand. If you have any further questions, please contact Ana Sanvisens on (030) 25 76 18 -31 or at ana.sanvisens@cervantes.de.

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