

# Creating and evaluating an interactive environment

Government of Antioquia State

Colombia



**Cambridge Assessment English has designed, delivered and evaluated English in the Park – two interactive language learning portals launched as part of the Education Parks initiative from the Government of Antioquia State in Colombia.**

The Government of Antioquia's ambitious Education Parks programme saw the creation of around 80 new educational institutions. These were designed to complement the existing education network by creating alternative learning spaces for a range of subjects, including languages.

As part of this, Cambridge English was asked to set up two interactive portals for English learning and assessment – named English in the Park – and to evaluate the portals' success as a means of improving English language teaching and learning across the state by creating a language-friendly environment in which to practise communicative language skills.

Two web-based portals were created, one for English language teachers, and the other for learners ranging from primary students to professionals, including young people no longer at school, and the wider

community. The portals provided access to free learning and teaching resources, including assessments, provided by Cambridge English and the British Council. The teacher portal also included access to professional development materials, including language tests designed to assess current English skills and measure progress over time. Both portals could be accessed from within an Education Park and remotely, by computer, tablet or mobile phone.

Evaluation was an important part of the Cambridge English brief, and was undertaken in two phases. First, an exemplar group of 100 teachers and 100 students undertook a competency test to establish their level of English. This was followed by the delivery of a qualitative online questionnaire designed to determine emotional and attitudinal changes towards English in the Park. Results showed that both students and teachers were satisfied with their experience and that their motivation to learn English had increased.

The evaluation study also found that both groups had used the portals to improve and consolidate their knowledge of English. As a result, teachers felt able to use English more extensively in the classroom and noted greater flexibility when planning lessons. Students also developed stronger speaking and listening skills, said they were more motivated to learn English, and that they had more confidence in the skills they were acquiring.

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