CALEB INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (CIJDS)

VOL. 6, NO. 2, November 2023
https://doi.org/10.26772/cijds-2023-06-02-10

DEVELOPMENT OF A LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR PHYTON PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE

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Abstract

An Electronic Learning System is an educational platform that takes place over the Internet. Due to its convenience and flexibility, learning through an Electronic Learning Management System (LMS) results in effective learning experiences. The purpose of this research is to design and develop a LMS for programming education.

Collaborative, microlearning and scaffolding programming learning approach were incorporated into the design and development of the learning management system for programming language. The software was developed using waterfall model, and evaluated by analyzing user's feedback. The tools used in building the learning management system are visual studio code, Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML), cascading style sheet, javascript, python, django, Django rest framework, Jason, ajax, git, tinyMCE. The evaluation of the newly implemented online learning platform based on user feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Users appreciated the platform's intuitive interface, which allowed for easy navigation and quick access to resources. The clear and concise instructions provided were also highly commended, as they helped to ensure that users understood the system's various features and capabilities. Users also noted the platform's support for various types of learning content, including text, audio, video, and interactive materials, which helped to create a more engaging and dynamic learning experience. Furthermore, the platform's effective tools for monitoring student progress and managing course completion were praised for their efficiency and ease of use. The platform's support for collaborative learning was also highly valued, with users citing the ability to work together and exchange ideas as a valuable aspect of the platform. In conclusion, the newly implemented online learning platform is a valuable tool that can significantly enhance the learning experience of students. The positive feedback from users suggests that the platform's support for micro-learning and collaborative learning can effectively promote engagement, collaboration, and successful learning outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of designing and implementing effective online learning platforms that support the needs of both students and instructors.

Keywords: Collaborative Programming, learning Management System, Microlearning, Scaffolding

ISSN 978-978-53693-8-9

1.0 Introduction

E-learning is the use of electronic media for a variety of learning purposes that range from add-on functions in conventional classrooms to full substitution for face-to-face meetings by online encounters (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005). It involves taking a course online using a modem, wireless, or cable connection to access academic course material from a computer, phone, or handheld device (Governors State University, 2008). E-learning is distance education through remote resources (Marquès, 2006; Elearning portal, 2009; Cassidy, 2016)

The learning content in the e-learning environment is presented or distributed to the learner through e-learning tools or learning objects enabled by the LMS. These tools can be roughly divided into two groups - tools for synchronous and tools for asynchronous learning. Tools for asynchronous learning can be used for self-paced learning and include reading materials, audio and video, forums, wikis etc. The synchronous tools where both the instructor and learner are present at the same time include virtual classrooms, webinars, video conferencing and similar methods.

E-learning has evolved since it started in education. It might seem a simple process of delivering learning materials and examining the proficiency and knowledge by electronic means but the development and flexibility of Information Technology enable many different approaches and development of new methods regarding the process of learning helped by the technology and we can consider that it is still evolving. Some of the established approaches and trends of E-learning include but are not limited to: Firstly, blended learning which has to do with combining two or more teaching methods such as web-based technologies, pedagogical approaches, instructional technologies and job tasks, it combine traditional learning with E-Learning (Friesen, 2012; Kovaleski, 2004; Bersin, 2004). Secondly, Gamification is the process of augmenting e-learning facilities by incorporating gaming elements, which engages people independently and communally in the commerce and education sectors, it designs the player's experience, this enhance skill building (Hamari et al., 2014; Prensky, 2001). Thirdly, Micro learning where the learning time is relatively short and measurable, the content is small and simple, the curriculum is in parts of modules and episodes, the process is concomitant and iterative, the medium is e-medium or traditional, the learning method is for classroom or corporate, the procedure is defined as microlearning (Hug, 2005). Fourtly, Personalised learning rather than relying completely on service providers and expecting to improve the service; it offers an opportunity for students to partake completely and become co-producers in choosing the content and structuring the learning instructions (Leadbeater, 2005). Lastly, Continuous learning can be identified as the continuous pursuit of knowledge and expertise for own or vocational purposes. This trend can be defined as the extension of educational facilities beyond the orthodox school ages and to aid education as a tool to improve the eminence of life (Sharma, 2004).

An Electronic Learning System is an educational platform that takes place over the Internet. Due to its convenience and flexibility, learning through an Electronic Learning Management System results in effective learning experiences and results. LMS is defined as a set of networks and tools integrated together to support online learning. It

allows students to view multimedia lectures, communicate with their teachers and each other in learning communities, download course materials, take online quizzes and submit homework and classwork assignments (Goyal & Purohit, 2011; Pandey & Pandey, 2009). They also complement most, if not, all industries, given the current climate of rapidly-changing industries, dispersed workforces, and reliance on online systems.

However, learning computer programming is known to be difficult, both for the teachers and learners, even when using conventional methods of learning. Novice programmers suffer from a wide range of difficulties including, but not limited to, understanding language syntax, debugging, understanding their problems, writing an algorithm for the problem, and even implementing the solution to the problem. According to Robins et. al. (2003), it will take about ten years of experience to turn a novice into an expert programmer.

Pair programming, Collaborative programming and Scaffolding are very good approaches to learning computer programming. Pair programming is a practice in which two programmers work together to collaborate on the same design, algorithm, code or test. Collaborative programming aims to improve learners' programming skills through writing code and refining programs with peers (Lu et al., 2017; Wang & Hwang, 2017; ; Beck & Chizhik, 2013). Scaffolding is a practice where one learns by osmosis i.e. knowledge is passed from a more knowledgeable peer. Scaffolding was proposed on the basis of the zone of proximal development, which is defined as the distance between the actual developmental level and the potential development level (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood et al., 1976; Yu & Hu, 2017). Traditionally, scaffolding should be fade-out when learners do not need it anymore (Lajoie, 2005). In fade-in scaffolding, scaffolding is gradually introduced, which is aligned with the theories of productive failure proposed by Kapur (2008). Kapur and Bielaczyc (2012) proposed that productive failure includes two phases, namely the exploration phase without scaffolding and the consolidation phase with scaffolding. Productive failure is characterised as scaffolding transitioning from low to high. Kapur (2016) believes that solving problems without scaffolding is a productive exercise and initial failures contribute to future learning. However, some students have difficulties with pair or collaborative programming and scaffolding will fade out over time. Many students are not willing to collaborate with peers during collaborative programming (Wei et al., 2021), and experienced coders demonstrate less enthusiasm for collaborative programming (Bowman et al., 2020). This research aims to design and develop a LMS for programming education.

Existing systems prove that pair/collaborative programming and scaffolding are very good approaches to learning computer programming. Existing e-learning systems also prove that blended learning, gamification, micro-learning, personalised learning and continuous learning are very good approaches. The design and development of an e-learning system by learning management system that makes programming education easier will involve the use of two or more of these existing approaches.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Review of Existing Systems

Rabiman et al (2020), developed an LMS-based E-learning system with the Hannafin and Pack approach models. The E-learning system uses Microteaching and Microlearning for vocational education. The developed LMS was tested on small and large groups to see the user's responses. The LMS is equipped with discussion and video conferencing to make it dynamic. Educators can monitor how active their students are during learning and manage students' assignments. They validated the system and the results showed that the feasibility level was 79.18% and 80.71% for media and material experts. Their students' responses in assessing the LMS are positive and stable in small and limited group testing. In this case, students have very good interest and satisfaction.

Muhardi et al (2020), designed and developed a web-based learning management system using the waterfall model, the LMS is used as a medium of dissemination of subject matter, distribution of assignments, and as a student discussion forum. They concluded that the teaching and learning process in the Learning Management System built allows students to have their own materials or materials that can be downloaded directly through the website. Also, the level of interaction between the teachers and students is online. It thus created a communication media where students and teachers can interact with each other through the LMS.

Samala et al (2021), conducted a study that focused on identifying students' perspectives on online learning using e-learning in algorithms and programming courses in higher education, especially in the Department of Electronic Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Negeri Padang. The study used a quantitative research approach and an online survey was conducted using Google Forms, data were collected from 238 students. The study found that the student's overall perception of the teaching or learning process of algorithms and programming using e-learning was quite positive (76.71%). Technical issues were the most important, followed by teachers' lack of skills, teaching style, and digital learning materials inadequately adapted to the online environment (69.87%). The difficulty is that students cannot interact with the lecturers or communicate with them well. However, students said they were ready for online learning (79.77%). They concluded from the study that there are students who disagree or find it difficult to interact with instructors and peers when doing it online. This is because in online learning it is impossible to perform direct interactions and Internet outages also affect the smoothness of the online learning process. They also found that students feel burdened by assignments that do not fit their share or by having too many instructors in online learning. Another finding is that some students need help understanding e-learning material. This certainly concerns the faculty's ability to select media and present materials in the teaching process. Lecturers should be able to choose the right medium for their students while paying attention to trends in student learning styles. Materials are presented in audiovisual materials, augmented reality (AR) technology, or educational games (gamification) to make them more interesting and easier for learners to understand.

Hanshaw & Hanson (2019), used Microlearning and Social learning to improve teachers' instructional design skills. They collected data from 51 professionals responsible for instructional design at their workplace. The respondents reported that this method was a viable way to develop practical skills immediately applicable in the workplace. The study provided research-based evidence of the potential for Interaction Design that provides engaging learning experiences using a combination of Microlearning and Social learning on mobile devices. The instructional design provided in the study has the potential to match the needs of the current generation of workplace learners and instructional designers/trainers for use in continuous professional development. Combining the tools of Microlearning and Social learning allows instructional designers to build meaningful learning experiences that engage learners in ways they report as useful.

Lanqin Zheng et al (2022), did an exploratory study on fade-in versus fade-out scaffolding for novice programmers in online collaborative programming settings. A total of 90 undergraduate students participated in the exploratory study and were assigned 15 fade-in groups and 15 fade-out groups. All of the participants completed the same programming task. The study reveals that fade-in scaffolding can significantly improve collaborative knowledge building, programming skills, metacognitive behaviours, emotions, and collective efficacy.

3.0 Materials and Methods

3.1 Learning Management System Approaches

Firstly, this research is incorporating Pair and Collaborative learning as the primary approach. Collaborative programming is a critical component of the implementation approach as it has been shown to improve learners' programming skills through writing code and refining programs with peers (Lu et al., 2017). Several studies have demonstrated the benefits of collaborative programming, including improving programming performance (Wang & Hwang, 2017), building computational thinking competence (Denner et al., 2014), improving problem-solving abilities, and developing a higher level of confidence (Beck & Chizhik, 2013). We believe that learners can learn a lot from each other by sharing ideas, discussing concepts and working together on assignments.

However, some learners may be unwilling to collaborate for various reasons. To cater for such learners, we have included Personalized Learning, which allows learners to have individualized learning experiences. This approach leverages the use of learning analytics and adaptive learning technologies to provide customized learning content to each learner based on their individual needs, interests and learning pace.

Another approach adopted is Micro-learning, which involves breaking down complex topics into smaller, more manageable chunks that are easier to digest. Micro-learning is particularly effective in helping learners retain information better and for longer periods of time.

Finally, Scaffolding will be used to support learners as they progress through the course. Scaffolding provides learners with the necessary support and guidance they need to complete a task or solve a problem. This approach gradually removes the support as the learner gains more understanding of the subject matter, ultimately leading to a self-sufficient learner who can apply their knowledge to solve real-world problems. Implementation Approach in this study combines the benefits of Pair and Collaborative learning with Personalized Learning, Micro-learning and Scaffolding to provide a holistic learning experience that caters to the diverse learning needs of our learners.
The E-learning system was implemented using the Waterfall Model which is a Software Development Life Cycle Model. The waterfall model is a software development process in which the development of the product is completed sequentially through a series of distinct phases as shown in figure 1. Each phase must be completed before the next phase can begin. The success of any e-learning platform largely depends on the approach adopted for its implementation. In this study, a multifaceted approach was adopted to ensure that learners derive maximum benefits from the platform. The approaches are pair and collaborative learning, personalized learning, micro-learning, scaffolding. Also, the elements of the LMS design include the database, the user interface, development tools, server, security, integration and maintenance. The development tools used in building the learning management system are visual studio code, Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML), cascading style sheet, javascript, python, django, Django rest framework, Jason, ajax, git, tinyMCE

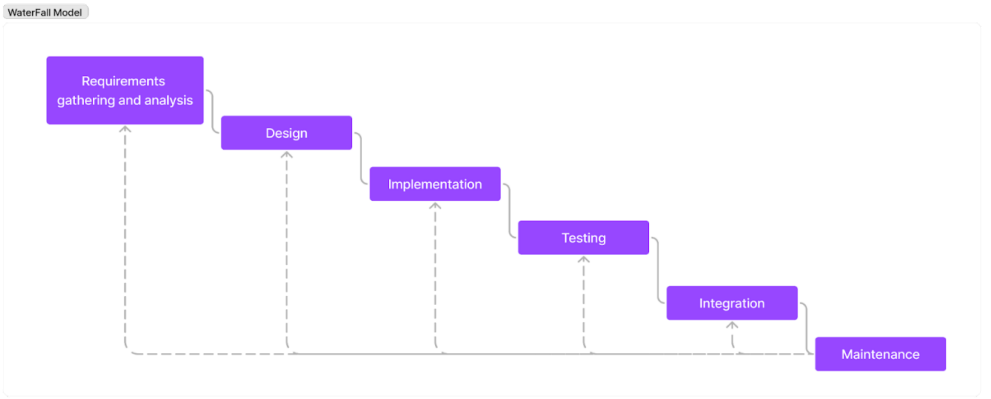

Figure 1: Waterfall Model
Winston & Royce (1970)

An Entity Relationship Diagram (ERD), is a graphical representation of the entities, relationships, and attributes within a database. In the context of this study, the entities included in the ERD are depicted on Figure 2, One of the entity in the system represents either the students who will be taking programming courses or the instructors who will be creating the courses. The student and instructor stands as users, Student is the primary

entity in the system, representing the individual users who will be taking one or more programming courses and interacting with the LMS. Attributes of a student include their name, email address, and enrollment status. Instructor is the secondary entity in the system, representing the tutors who will be creating one or more programming courses and updating the LMS. Attributes of an instructor include their name, email address, and courses. Course is a programming course offered by the LMS, a course can have one or more lessons, with attributes such as the course title, description, and instructor. Lesson is a unit of instruction within a course, a lesson can have one or more problems or quizzes, with attributes such as the lesson title, duration and/or exercise. Enrollment is a relationship between a student and a course, representing a student enrolled in a particular course, it associates a student to a course. This relationship would have attributes such as the enrollment date and the student's current progress in the course. Student lesson completion is relationship between a student and a lesson, representing the fact that a student has completed a particular lesson. This relationship would have an attribute indicating the date and time at which the lesson was completed. Quizzes/Problems is a table that contains problems created by instructors, to be answered by students. The table would have attributes such as the problem ID, the problem statement, and creator. Students can choose to solve the problems alone or collaborate with somebody.

The data flow diagram of the learning management system (LMS) is depicted in Figure 3
Students and instructor’s login details are saved in the database as users, students enroll for courses while tutors create courses.

 ISSN 978-978-53693-8-9

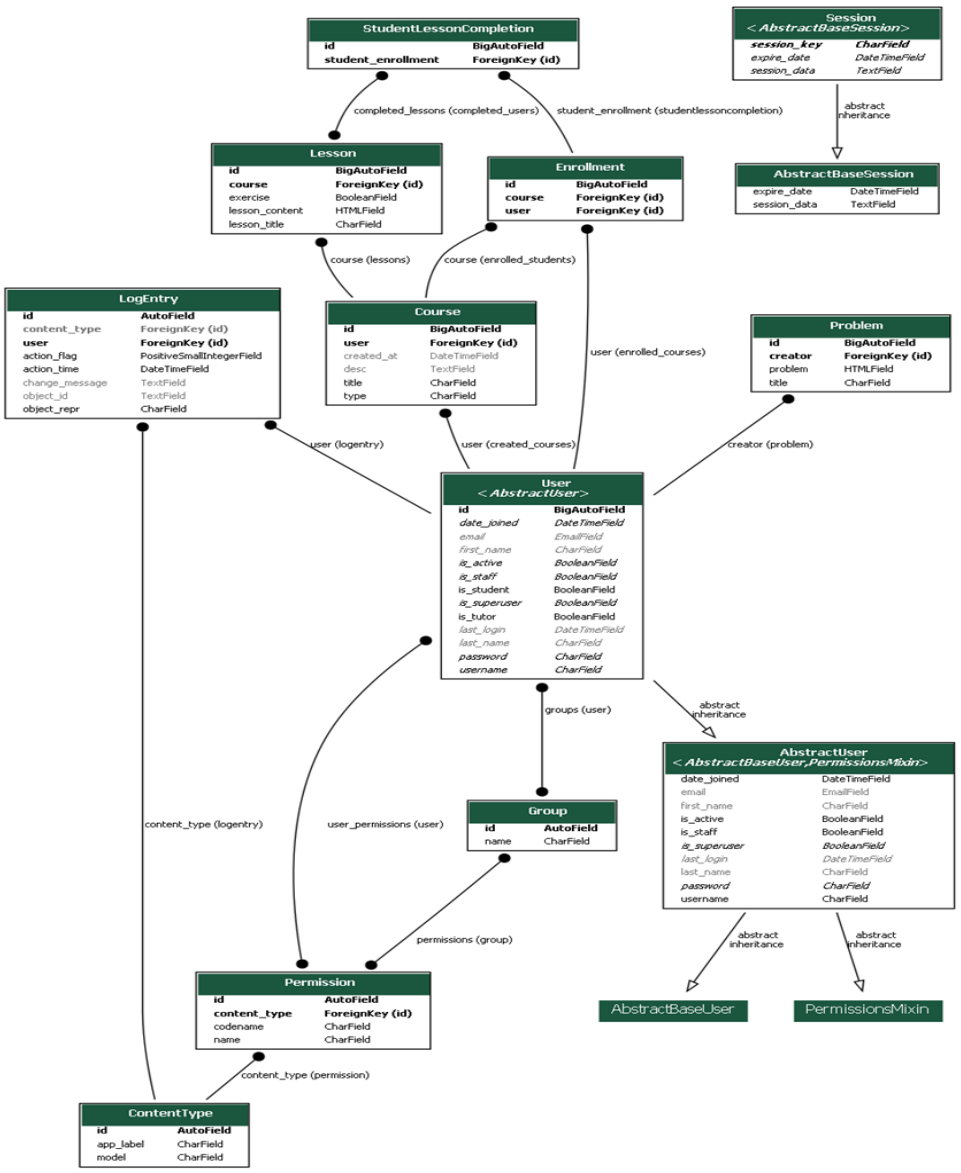

Figure 2: Entity Relationship Diagram

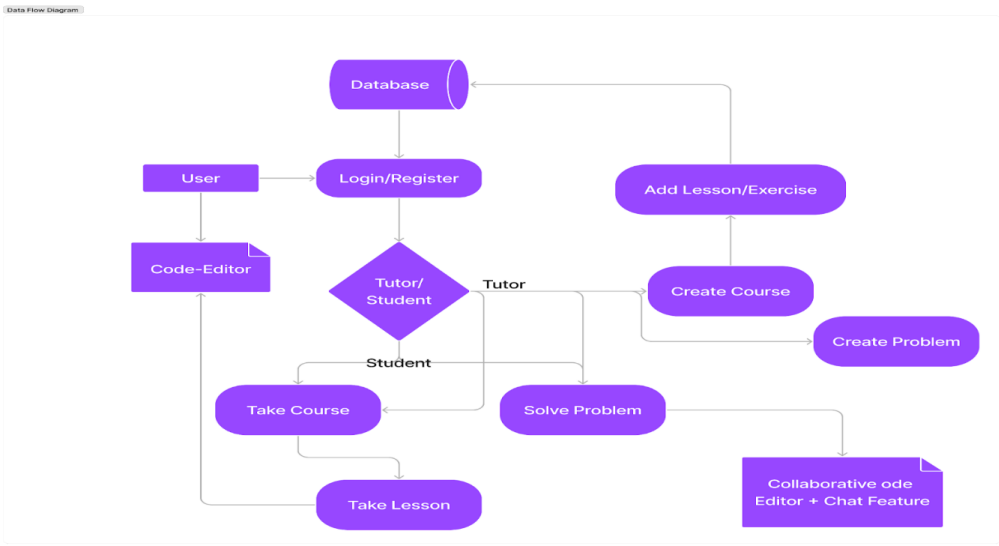

Figure 3: Data Flow Diagram

4.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDING

4.1 System Implementation

4.1.1 Landing Page

The Landing Page is designed with a simple and user-friendly interface that allows users to easily navigate to the different sections of the LMS. Users can choose to either login or register, and depending on their choice, they are directed to either the login page or the registration page. Users can checkout the catalogues, see different programming problems and even try out the code editor, the top half and bottom half are depicted on Figures 4 and 5 respectively.

4.1.2 Code Editor Page

On the code editor page, users are presented with an editor that can handle Python, JavaScript, and HTML/CSS code. They can write and test their code on the spot, with the ability to run it and see the output. The editor provides a simple and intuitive interface to make coding tasks easier for users, it is shown on figures 6 and 7.

ISSN 978-978-53693-8-9

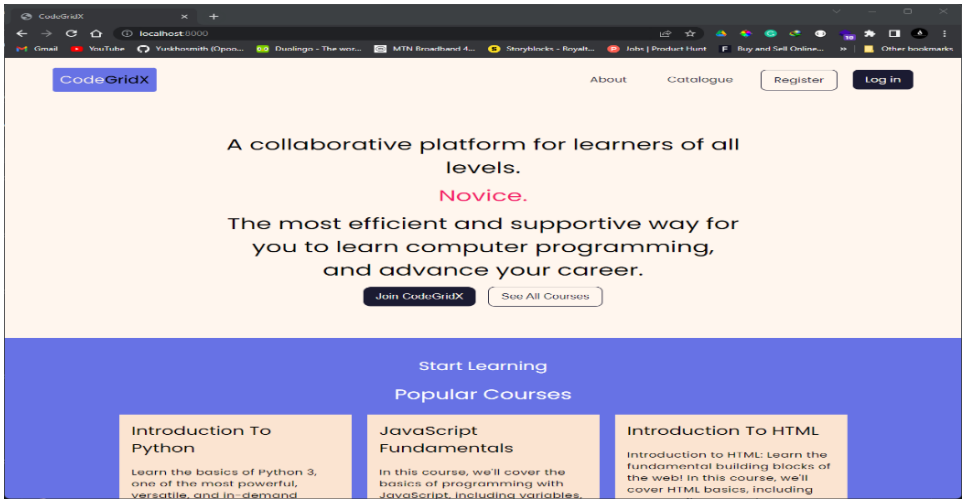

Figure 4: Landing Page (Top Half)

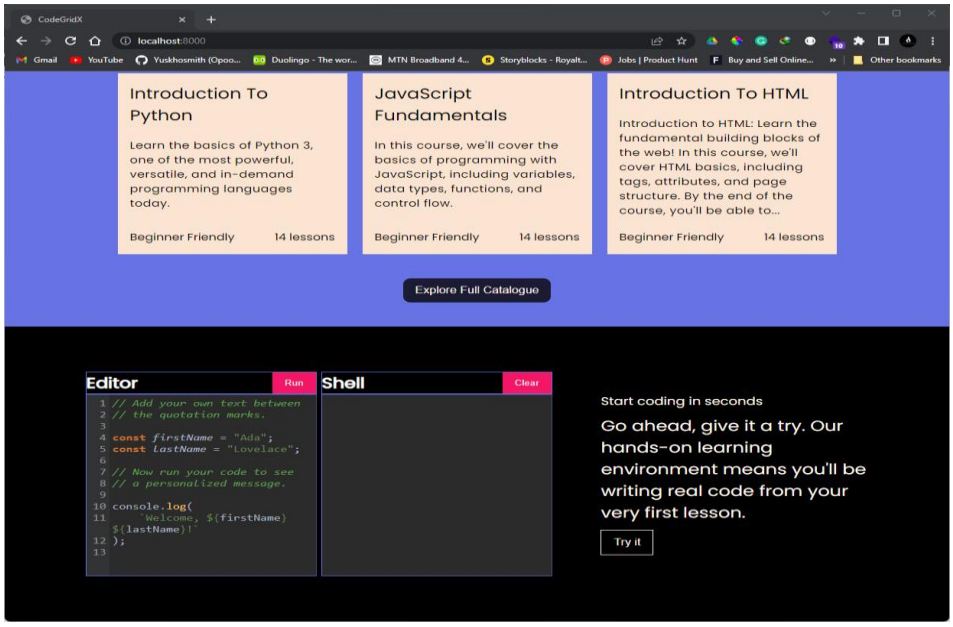

Figure 5: Landing Page (Bottom Half)

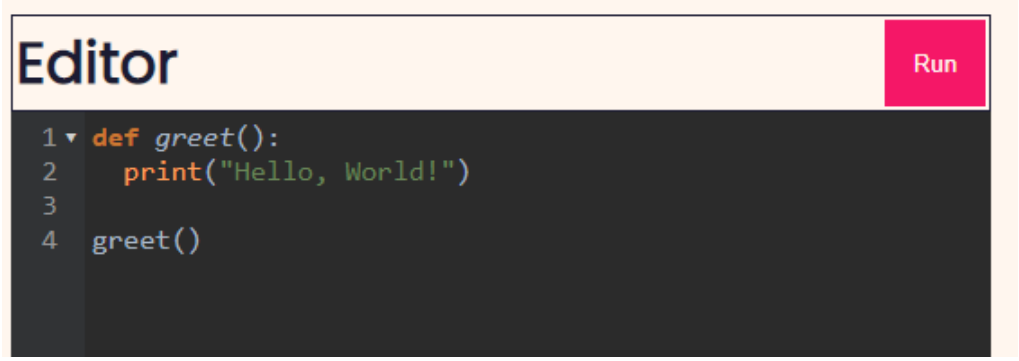

Figure 6: Editor with executable code

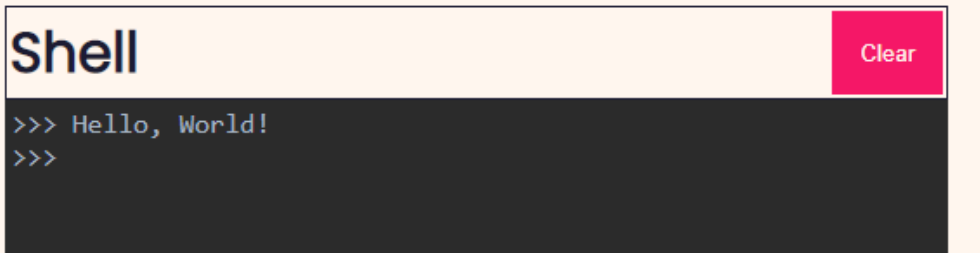

Figure 7: Shell with executed code output

4.2.6 Activities After Logging In

The following activities can be performed by the users only after they log in. These activities are on the index page and as well as the navigation bar. The activities are divide into two categories because we have two types of users i.e. the students and the tutors. The activities that can be performed by the students are:

i. Start a New Course
ii. Continue Learning
iii. Enrolled Courses Page
iv. Course Catalogue
v. Problems Catalogue
vi. Solve Problems
vii. Collaborate to Solve Problems
viii. Logout

The activities that can be performed by the tutors are:

i. Create New Courses
ii. Created Courses Page
iii. Course Catalogue
iv. Problems Catalogue
v. Solve Problems
vi. Collaborate to Solve Problems
vii. Create Problems
viii. Add Lesson to Course
ix. Add Exercise to Course

x. Logout

4.2.6.11 Collaborate Page

Just like the Solve Problem Page the Collaborate Page shows the problem as well as an editor to help them solve the problem and a terminal to execute their code. It has an extra feature that allows users to chat on how they want to solve the problem and also allows them to code on the same editor, this is shown on figure 8.

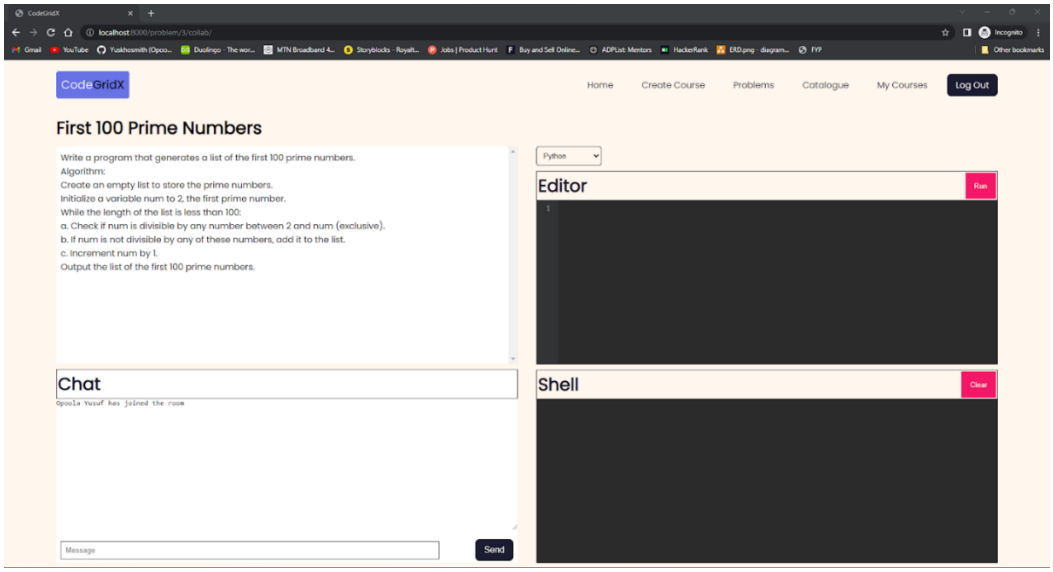

Figure 8: Collaborate Page

4.3 System Evaluation

This study evaluated the performance and effectiveness of the learning management system against a set of pre-defined criteria such as user-friendliness, reliability, efficiency, scalability, security, usability and maintainability. This was done by gathering feedback from users based on their assess to the system's overall quality and user satisfaction.

4.3.1 User Experience

Users confirmed that the LMS developed is truly impressive, and there are several aspects that stand out as particularly praiseworthy. First and foremost, the user interface is remarkably intuitive and user-friendly, making it easy for both instructors and students to navigate and understand the system. The clear instructions and explanations for how to use the LMS are also greatly appreciated, as they help to ensure that everyone is able to make the most of its many features and capabilities.

Users had also noted the ability to create and manage courses, which enables instructors to add and organize course content in a simple and streamlined way. The support for different types of learning content, such as text, audio, video, and interactive materials, was also highly commended, as it allows for a more engaging and dynamic learning experience.

According to users feedback, the LMS offers a variety of effective tools for assessing student progress, including quizzes, tests, and other forms of assessment. Users response is very positive on this, 90.3% agreed that the developed LMS supports effective teaching of programming. Also 67.7% of the users agreed that LMS for programming is more effective than classroom teaching of programming, 25.8% agreed that it is equally effective, while 6.5% agreed that it is less effective, These are depicted on figures 9 and 10 respectively. This feature helps to ensure that students stay on track and reach their learning objectives. Additionally, users praised the LMS for its support of collaborative learning through collaborative coding, discussion boards, and other communication tools, which allow students to work together and exchange ideas.

They also expressed satisfaction with the LMS's features for managing enrollment and course completion. These features are described as highly efficient and effective, enabling users to easily monitor student progress and ensure successful course completion. Overall, users commended the LMS as a highly impressive system that reflects careful consideration and development efforts, with the potential to effectively support student learning and achievement.

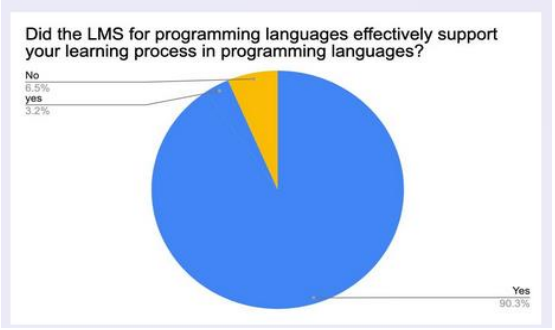

Figure: 9: User's evaluation of Effectiveness of LMS for Python Programming

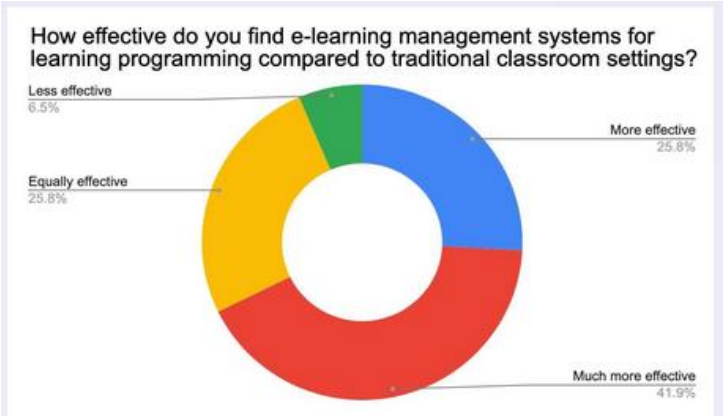

Figure: 10: User's Evaluation of Preference for Traditional Teaching or LMS for Python Programming

 ISSN 978-978-53693-8-9

5.0 Conclusion

The design and development of the Learning Management System for Programming Education utilized various effective learning techniques such as Collaborative & Pair Learning, Scaffolding, Micro Learning, Personalized Learning, and Continuous Learning. The resulting application provides a user-friendly interface for effective learning and collaboration among peers. The application was evaluated by a small group of users, who gave highly positive feedback, indicating its potential for widespread adoption in programming education. The research also demonstrated the effective integration of collaborative coding into the learning process of computer programming in a Learning Management System, making it easier for students to learn with their peers. Moving forward, there is a need to explore the potential of incorporating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the Learning Management System for Programming Education to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency in facilitating learning.

5.1 Recommendations

Programming is a form of knowledge whose acquisition is eased by constant practicing. This system will aid this using it's robust features which include availability of a reliable code editor, prompt course wares, lecture videos, and collaboration medium. The process of constant engagement of the students will aid mastering of the skill. Evaluated user's feed back on the LMS for python programming language also affirmed this.

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