

Reading 2

Skills:

- Main idea and details

Getting started: Is it really necessary to mix technology and education?

ENOVA

a. In 2013, the Mexican learning and innovation network, Enova, was recognized with a Tech Award. The awards are given annually by The Tech Museum of Innovation in the USA. Enova delivers education to people in Mexico who don't have any other access to computers. The non-profit network was founded by Jorge Camil Starr along with two of his oldest friends. When they were growing up, they travelled around Mexico to go surfing and saw the potential that was being wasted in small towns with no infrastructure.

Jorge later explained how doing his degree in economics around the time that the Internet was developing led to the idea of taking quality education to these low-income towns via technology.

b. Enova's first task was to look at the failure of the existing systems. Computers had been used in community development for twenty years in Mexico, but the success rate of these projects was poor. Jorge realised that the systems had to be simplified. Enova took two important decisions. The first was that each educational centre would be run by only one person with full responsibility. The second was in the way they would deliver educational content - using video games.

Almost all of Enova's academic material has been designed as games. The children were motivated to learn because the games were fun to play. But to the surprise of Enova, they found that the children's mothers also wanted to play the games as well. Enova had discovered a way to bring education to adults too.

c. Jorge is keen to emphasize that Enova doesn't assume it's successful just because people go to their centres - the impact of the educational programmes is carefully measured. Enova follows the students who graduate and those who drop out. Students who abandon their studies are asked why, and the information is used to try and improve the programmes.



Enova also measures students' success on the external government exams, which gives an independent assessment of its impact. Although there are still about 80 million people in Mexico without computer access, there are now 70 Enova centres reaching over 350,000 people.

* Taken from Keynote upper-intermediate. Natural Geographic Learning.

Answer the following questions:

1. Read the article about Enova. Match the headings (1-3) with the paragraphs (A-C).

- 1** An innovative approach
- 2** Award-winning social enterprise
- 3** Making sure it works

2. Read the article again. Find this information:

- 1** the organization that gave the Tech Award
- 2** the country Enova works in
- 3** the founders of Enova
- 4** Jorge Camil Starr's area of study
- 5** the first thing Enova did
- 6** two things Enova decided to do
- 7** an unexpected consequence of teaching the children
- 8** three ways Enova measure its success rates

What do you think?

Should students have computers with them during their classes? Brainstorm ideas (pros/cons).