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eLearning Papers



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Editorial: Training and work - the role of ICT

The economic globalization and the development of a knowledge and information society in relation with the evolution of support technologies move deeply our societies. On one hand, these factors provoke the questioning on several social activities, and on the other hand they generate a new potential of actions, which are concretized in new practices. The recurring transformation of activities and employment prompt the development of new competences, organizational changes in companies and renewal of knowledge.

Consequently, lifelong learning becomes the essential method of permanent adaptation of qualifications both for individuals and organizations. More globally, education and learning are playing determinant roles as social integration factors.

Companies need to develop devices for flexible learning, but also integrated solutions, in order to consider all learning modes (formal, informal and non-formal) to respond to training needs.

In this context, the use of ICTs is an essential contribution to the learning environment. ICTs place individuals in the middle of the training process, but also develop real communities of learning and help to set up an innovative and enriched active pedagogy, based on a competence-based approach.

This new issue of eLearning Papers encompasses articles that approach the topic of "Training and work", presenting different reflections, innovative solutions and good practices on the use of ICTs in different contexts of learning and organizations.

Informal learning plays the leading role in the article about micro training courses. The authors De Vries and Brall describe how employees are invited to share their knowledge with others and to make inputs for their institution through micro training. The article lists the conditions required for the organization to optimize these sessions.

The article written by Bienzle relates practical experiences of the eHospital project: hospital patients who are restricted in their mobility can benefit from eLearning and virtual tools that enable social interaction and joint learning activities. Two key challenges are dealt with: creating new partnerships to enable the professional service provision and ensuring the financing mechanisms.

Dickenson, Pedler and Burgoyne present their approach to virtual action learning and propose a new practice of virtual 3D training using avatars, as in Second Life. The paper points out that the blended approach can benefit from the complementarity of the advantages of each method, but also remarks there is a need of a more complete research on the contribution of new technologies.

Hall and Hamburg state in the paper that the small and medium-sized companies have difficulties in maintaining and adapting their competences. The use of Web 2.0, coupled with the creation of communities of practice, opens participation opportunities and generates informal learning.

And finally the article by Cochard and Rogard provides an insight into the public qualifications of computer and internet Certificates (C2i) in higher education. The methods used for development and implementation of these certificates are explained in the article.

Enjoy the reading of this edition!



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“ Microtraining requires an organisational framework to effectively apply this method relative to the learning issue, the skills of the initiator and the employees and their daily working schedule. ”

Keywords

Informal learning,
accessibility, interactivity,
Microtraining, workplace
training, eLearning

Full text

[http://www.elearningeuropa.info/
files/media/media17532.pdf](http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media17532.pdf)

Microtraining as a support mechanism for informal learning

Most companies are confronted with fast changing learning demands and the need of new concepts. Companies very much overestimate and overinvest in formal training programs, while missing out the opportunities to foster more natural and informal learning processes. For informal learning to flourish it is crucial to develop flexible mechanisms which support this kind of learning, while avoiding the drawbacks that coincide with informality. The Microtraining method is being developed as a mechanism to support predominantly informal learning activities.

Microtraining should be understood as a learning arrangement of about 15 minutes for each learning occasion. Each session contains elements like an active start, demo or exercise, feedback or discussion and a shared view on how to proceed. Such an occasion can be face-to-face, online or in mixed modes depending on the circumstances and possibilities. The concept is based on a number of theoretical considerations of which Social Constructivism is an important element, next to the notions of 'Connectivism' and the 'Levels of Mastery'. Microtraining requires an organisational framework to effectively apply this method relative to the learning issue, the skills of the initiator and the employees and their daily working schedule.

In practice, it is shown that this framework helps to collectively develop solutions for workplace related learning with ample opportunities for information transfer. Microtraining supports informal learning close to the workplace, thereby increasing the learning capacity of the company.

The Microtraining concept is being developed in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci program of the European Union.



Holger Bienzle

die Berater®

“ New partnerships between education providers and healthcare institutions need to be formed. ”

Keywords

Accessibility, blended, informal learning, training, hospital, patient, eLearning, eInclusion, teaching tools, long-term patients

Full text

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media17535.pdf>

Enhancing patients' employability through informal eLearning while at hospital

Access to lifelong learning provisions for all citizens and enhancement of their employability are central aims of European policies in education and training. eHospital, a European pilot project seeks to bring learning opportunities to people who do not normally have the chance to learn: adult patients who are forced to spend a longer period of time in hospitals.

eHospital has demonstrated that blended learning can be an adequate means to overcome patients' isolation and ease their way back to normal life and employment.

In this article the intervention framework of the project is presented and two of the seven eLearning pilots with directly employment-related learning topics are described in more detail.

Four main results of the pilot project eHospital are highlighted:

- The eLearning offers provided by eHospital were very much appreciated by the patients and hospital staff involved. This demonstrates the need for further initiatives which help to ease the transition between hospital and employment.
- New technologies have a considerable potential for enabling patients to use the time in hospital for maintaining or restoring their employability: Hospital patients are restricted in their mobility and are forced to adhere to a rather rigid hospital routine. They can therefore profit from being independent on the time-space arrangements of conventional face-to-face learning. Also, social interaction and joint learning activities with peers become possible with the help of virtual tools.
- Specific educational strategies need to be developed for patient learners. Only blended learning can be a successful eLearning strategy in a hospital context. The personal relationship between patient learner and tutor is crucial.
- And, at last, the provision of eLearning for hospital patients poses considerable organisational challenges: New partnerships between education providers and healthcare institutions need to be formed. Different - public and private - mechanisms to fund learning in hospitals need to be developed in times of increasing financial pressures in the health sector and in education and training.



Mollie
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“ VAL emerges as a variety
of action learning in its own
right with its own strengths
and weaknesses. ”

Keywords

Collaborative, blended,
virtual action learning (VAL),
action learning, f2f AL

Full text

[http://www.elearningeuropa.info/
files/media/media17538.pdf](http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media17538.pdf)

Virtual action learning: What's going on?

Whilst there is extensive and growing literature in online and networked learning (e.g. McConnell, 2000) and in research and practice on face-to-face (f2f) action learning (AL) (Pedler et al, 2005), there appears to be very little reported or anecdotal evidence of the virtual variety. Yet with the development of communication technologies such as groupware, videoconferencing and the internet changing working and learning practices, virtual action learning (VAL) might have been seen to be flourishing as the natural successor to AL.

This paper presents the findings of on-going research at Henley Business School which aimed to explore current practice and identify the critical enabling factors for this emerging form of action learning.

At the start of the inquiry, October 2006, existing technologies for VAL seemed very limited in what they could deliver and suggested a simple six-form model of potential sorts of VAL. In less than 2 years, there have been considerable advances both in technological developments and in the levels of usage. What was cumbersome is becoming more accessible, more user-friendly yet sophisticated and is increasingly offering viable alternatives to f2f collaboration.

However, despite these technological advances, with more examples of VAL practice going on than we thought, simple technologies such as email and audio-conferencing are proving successful.

VAL emerges as a variety of action learning in its own right with its own strengths and weaknesses. The practitioners of the various approaches to VAL frequently assert different potential benefits from this way of doing AL. Just as VAL should not necessarily be measured against f2f AL, so one must caution against making assumptions that any one form is necessarily better than any other, even where communication possibilities appear to be restricted. Opinion is divided on whether VAL is a substitute for f2f AL or whether it has advantages that may lead it to being preferred over f2f AL. These arguments await further research and exploration.



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“ Communities of practice
(CoPs) can also become a
powerful way for SMEs to
innovate and develop new
capabilities. ”

Keywords

Small and medium-sized
enterprises, SMEs,
eLearning 2.0, Web 2.0,
community, strategy, informal
learning, skills, COP

Full text

[http://www.elearningeuropa.info/
files/media/media17541.pdf](http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media17541.pdf)

Informal learning and the use of Web 2.0 within SME training strategies

Small and medium sized companies (SMEs) have particular needs in facing the challenges of their daily operations; about 10% of them quote lack of skills as a barrier to growth, highlighting the link between training and sustainability. In order to keep their competencies updated, staff from SMEs need access to appropriate educational opportunities and new technologies, particularly eLearning, which by using Web 2.0 applications enhance knowledge sharing, cultural interchange and networking.

Learning by using Web 2.0 (eLearning 2.0) is based on tools that combine ease of creation of content with web delivery. In eLearning 2.0 the driver is the worker, as the content can be created by the users, individually or together. Using the familiar tools of Web 2.0 (such as wikis, social networking, bookmarks, blogs, etc) everyone can be a learner-teacher, as the barriers to ICT based training are removed. With its clear focus on community, eLearning 2.0 is ideal for SMEs, as it supports natural informal learning by simplifying the tasks involved in working and learning in groups.

Communities of practice (CoPs) can also become a powerful way for SMEs to innovate and develop new capabilities, as they consist of voluntary members who share similar challenges, interact regularly, can learn from and with each other and would like to improve their ability to address the challenges they face.

In this paper we first summarise the current training needs and learning methods used in SMEs, outlining the features of Web 2.0 that may be utilised to fulfil these needs. Then we discuss if Communities of Practice are a suitable environment for informal learning within SMEs. Finally we offer an example of how informal learning and CoPs can efficiently improve skills within SMEs.



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“ The cultural revolution that represents the qualification at university level and its generalization in "traditional" curricula will be a main theme of this presentation.”

Keywords

Competence, qualification, educational policy, training, assessment, computer, internet

Full text

EN:

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media17676.pdf>

FR:

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media17677.pdf>

Need for the qualification of IT competences - the computer and internet Certificates (C2i)

To answer the need for qualifying the acquired ICTs, the French Ministry for Education developed public qualifications from primary to higher education. In Higher education, computer and internet Certificates (C2i) have been created at Bachelor's level.

The "C2i level 1" certifies operational competences, especially the ICT abilities in communication and collaborative working. At Master's level, the "C2i level 2" certificates assess the competence identified by sectoral branches for the domain aimed by the programme.

The methods used for development and implementation of these certificates are explained in this article, with a complete presentation of competence identified for the C2i level 1 and the C2i level 2 in the sector of "law". The introduction of qualification of ICT competence in higher education joins in the will that all the students do have this transverse certified competence, both for their successful study and for their future vocational integration.

The cultural revolution that represents the qualification at university level and its generalization in "traditional" curricula will be a main theme of this presentation.

The full article is available in English and French.