

A Review of Obstacles to Successful e-Learning Deployment in SMEs

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Abstract

E-Learning as an advanced form of learning supported by various technological principles and tools became a point of interest of both academicians and practitioners several years ago. Current literature contains mostly successful stories of its utilization in the business environment highlighting processes and decisions which should be done and make. Rarely are mentioned negative experiences related processes and decision that should not be realized. Hence, it is difficult to fully and explicitly define related bottlenecks or pitfalls. The aim of this paper is to assemble particular fragments and provide readers with a summary of general barriers of e-Learning implementation in small and medium-sized organizations together with recommendations how these barriers can be overcome. Therefore, this position paper provides basic literature overview of conditions and barriers to successful e-Learning implementation in the business settings. The investigation of published case studies reveals that there are several barriers, which need to be taken into the consideration to support fruitful usage of e-Learning technologies in the workplace. Furthermore, suggestions of potential activities that may contribute to coping with these barriers are depicted.

Keywords: small and medium-sized enterprises, e-Learning, employee education, workplace.

Introduction

E-learning as a modern approach to teaching and education of various types of students attracted the attention of specialists several years ago. The first studies can be traced back to 1990's (Mikulecký and Mikulecká, 1999). Consequently, e-Learning technologies and principles were more or less successfully introduced in several areas such as tourism (Čech and Bureš, 2009) or the business environment (Černá and Poullová, 2008; Mohelská, 2009). Their significance was emphasized by the European Union (EU), which set a goal to make the European Union "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy in the world" by "developing e-Learning for all its citizens" at the Lisbon summit in 2000 (Cedefop, 2001). Clarke (2008) defines e-Learning as "learning through and being supported by the use of information technology". In the business setting, the importance of sharing information using information technology can be observed in concepts such as Human Resources Management, Knowledge Management, or Organizational Development. All of them formalize access to knowledge and expertise, encourage high performance and innovation and support customer value (Bureš and Čech, 2007). The holistic approach to e-Learning makes this viewpoint even broader. In his framework Khan (2012) differentiates eight basic pillars of e-Learning – pedagogy, technology, interface design, evaluation, management, resource support, ethics, and institutional issues (see Figure 1). The objective of this paper is to review available papers focusing on these perspectives of e-Learning implementation in the business environment, to investigate the main conditions of successful e-Learning implementation, to identify main barriers, and to deduce proposals to overcome these barriers.

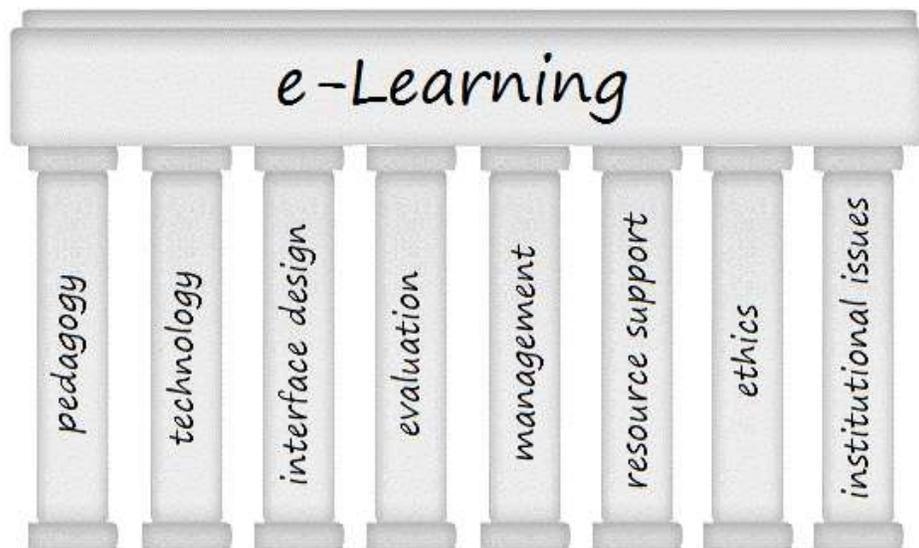


Fig 1. A framework for e-Learning

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