

Blended Learning: Towards the Best Mix for SMEs

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Abstract. Experience has shown that instructor-led trainings have some advantages that cannot easily be overcome by technology enhanced learning. Direct interaction with an instructor and among the group is often perceived as motivating and more personal. For small groups, in-class trainings can be more cost effective. On-line learning often requires a considerable amount of self-management and progress-monitoring from the learners. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are very sensitive to these issues. As customized in-house solutions that are used by global players (e.g., corporate LCMS or learning portal, content tailored to specific needs of company) are usually not feasible, SME rely on what training providers offer, i.e., instructor led training. The first part of the workshop will look at the prerequisites for Blended Learning in SMEs and insights in an e-learning provider's perspective. The second session will aim to develop guidelines and recommendations for Blended Learning in SMEs. The Invited Talk will provide the experience of an e-learning provider who mainly targets customers or learners in SMEs. Two practice reports describe the experiences with blended learning in a research project in a corporate setting and an implementation project in an institution of higher education. In synthesis, this workshop aims to assess the state-of-the-art of Blended-Learning in SMEs and to identify research gaps and opportunities. The state-of-the-art will take the form of best-practice reports, guidelines and heuristics. This will serve as important input for practitioners such as training providers and course designers. Discussion is encouraged throughout the workshop. At the same time we also anticipate that the synopsis of evidence will identify a major lack of convincing concepts and data for Blended Learning in SME that will inform and encourage further research.