

[Home](#)[Topics](#)[Index](#)[Authors](#)[Journals](#)[Conferences](#)[Organizations](#)[News](#)[Reviewers](#)[Editors](#)[About us](#)[Contact](#)

| | |
|---|-------|
| Topics Overview | (259) |
| Strategy | (24) |
| Quality | (7) |
| Pedagogy | (76) |
| Technology | (46) |
| Human Computer Interaction | (37) |
| Organisation | (10) |
| Support Structures in HE | (4) |
| Corporate Educational Organisation | (6) |
| Resource Management | (9) |
| Competence Development | (15) |
| Culture | (31) |

Overview › Organisation › **Corporate Educational Organisation**

[Macpherson, Allan](#); [Homan, Gill](#); [Wilkinson, Krystal](#) (2005)

The implementation and use of e-learning in the corporate university

Journal of Workplace Learning, Vol. 17, pp. 33–48

[Google this publication](#) · [ScholarGoogle this publication](#) · Export to: [BibTeX](#), [Endnote/RIS](#)

Related Topics: [Learning Culture](#)

Review by: [Schönwald, Ingrid](#) (2005-02-24)

This paper assesses the adoption of e-learning in corporate universities (CU) and explores the challenges of its current use, based on a literature review and case studies among three corporate universities in the UK.

Referring to the work of Fresina (1993) the authors differentiate three purposes of CUs: (1) reinforcing and perpetuating the corporate culture and competitiveness, (2) managing and implementing change, and (3) driving and shaping the future strategy of the organisation. Walton (1999) classifies three generation of corporate universities: First-generation universities focus on the adoption of organisational culture and values mainly through classroom-based activities. Second-generation universities typically offer a wider range of activities on different levels within the organisation. Third-generation universities are characterised by process rather than place, adopting the structure of a virtual organisation. Walton considers the third generation to have the potential as an intellectual engine of the organisation, developing the human capital of all employees by focusing on developing innovation and driving strategic change.

The authors state that most of the literature on corporate e-learning concentrates on the benefits, such as cost advantages and flexibility in deliver of learning. However they criticise that the issue of flexibility is only addressed in an organisational or financial dimension but not in a pedagogic dimension addressing the variety in individual learning styles. They address several drawbacks of current implementation policies which are characterized by a high enthusiasm for technology: bias in the balance of quality versus cost, lack of a supportive and interactive context of learning, and low learner acceptance and trainer acceptance.

In the case studies the authors analyse the approaches of three UK-based CUs, focusing on the strategic drivers, integration strategies, pedagogical structures and issues in the e-learning adoption process. The drivers for e-

learning were rather different in the three cases, aiming at cost issues, strategic review of the training function, or implementation of the vision of a learning culture. Regarding the integration of e-learning in the overall training approach all CU used a blended approach. Interestingly in two of the three universities technological restriction, such as low bandwidth was seen as a main limiting factor to the use of e-learning. Another pivotal barrier was seen in cultural issues, such as a low motivation to learn in general, and lack of positive role-models of senior managers. The authors suggest that many of the announced visions of e-learning are misinterpreted in practice, e. g. by limiting the idea of a “learner focused” environment to providing standardized online-learning programmes from which the employees can choose.

The authors’ overall assessment of the current practices of e-learning in corporate universities is sceptical: “Currently, there is little evidence that e-learning is providing anything more than open and on-time access to a largely generic curriculum.” The authors conclude that if corporate universities want to use e-learning to achieve the strategic goals expected, they need to extend the efficiency and flexibility agenda with pedagogical and cultural considerations.

I was fairly surprised to find this paper published in 2005 as it presents issues that I thought were teething troubles of eLearning which are already passed meanwhile. It would be interesting to compare the findings of this study with other case studies on the adoption of eLearning in other corporate universities to assess its validity in a broader context.

Link to this page: <http://www.elearning-reviews.org/publications/277/>

© SCIL & Contributors