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Abstract

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ABSTRACT

From online to blended learning: critical factors for successful re-engineering

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- *e-learning, blended learning, community of practice, re-engineering*

Despite European and National policy agendas to modernise HE and to incorporate information communications technology into the provision of a more flexible and personalised higher education, in reality this is a long way from being widely adopted into mainstream teaching. This is in part because within institutions of higher education online learning and blended learning are frequently viewed as two separate domains and two separate business streams.

This paper presents a reflective essay based on the experiences and observations of its authors and students who have all been engaged over the last few years in online learning environments. Such reflections are considered in the context of technology transfer and the potential to enhance on-campus curriculum. In addition specific strategies are presented for structuring and supporting effective blended learning in a broad range of settings and for a diverse range of national and international learners. It would seem that online learning can initially appear impersonal and alienating but can move on to be exhilarating and transformational with the emergence of a strong community of practice.

By understanding and appreciating the nature of the online experience of the learners and the tutors we have been able to identify critical factors for successful re-engineering of traditional campus based delivery modes towards a more blended mode.