Summary

From Bricks and Mortar to Virtual Universities. The Implementation of E-Learning in Flemish Universities: An Analysis of Determinants of Success from Multiple Perspectives

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The educational use of technology is the subject of this dissertation. It deals in particular with the use of Internet applications as a medium or a tool for education. The study is focused on the adoption and diffusion of e-learning in higher education, and on universities in Flanders and Brussels in particular. The author verified if, in general, e-learning has found its way to teachers and students. And, if yes, why? or If no, why not? The primary research interests are bundled in the following two questions:

- (1) What conditions on micro (students & educators), meso (university) and macro (government) influence the success of e-learning at Flemish universities?
- (2) Which e-learning modalities are actually implemented in different Flemish universities?

The study applies a multi-level and multi-actor approach. The author studied the integration of e-learning on the micro actor level, but incorporated factors from the micro, meso and macro levels in the research design, keeping in mind the top-down and bottom-up (change) processes. Multivariate analysis techniques are deployed to gain insight into both the factors and their interrelationships. This approach enabled the author to construct a theoretical framework with determinants for the success or failure of e-learning in university settings. By doing this, Katie Goeman fills in to a certain extent the existing theoretical and practical gaps, possibly of interest to different groups of persons involved with technology for education. Among them 1) researchers in the grey area between Communication Sciences, Computer Science and Educational Sciences who are interested in the reasons why universities, teachers and learners act the way they do when confronted with technology innovations; 2) designers and developers of educational resources to be used in an e-learning project or environment and 3) meso and macro government bodies who have to plan current and future e-learning philosophies and policies.

Author information

Katie Goeman obtained a Master in Communication Sciences (1998), a Teacher's Degree (1999) and a Bachelor in Educational Sciences (2000) at the Free University of Brussels (VUB, Belgium). After one year of practical experience in the development of electronic learning materials and user studies, she started working as a teaching assistant and researcher for the Department of Communication Sciences at the same university. She is responsible for different exercises, both at the undergraduate and master level, and assists students with a special interest in the complex relationship of education-technology. She carried out research projects involving the exploration and investigation of ICT applications for educational purposes. These studies include implementation issues for online teaching and learning in higher education and evaluations of e-learning initiatives. She has spoken at different international conferences and published in several journals.