



Archimedes

Problem Based learning for SMEs

Newsletter August 2015

How Problem Based Learning (PBL) and ICT can support learning in European SMEs

We have completed our research on learning in SMEs throughout Europe. The research was conducted with over 330 SMEs throughout Europe and examined the current learning approaches in SMEs, the common problems they face and how learning addresses these and the use of ICT for learning.

It found that SMEs are widely in favour of on the job training. Informal learning was seen to be very successful in these companies, however there are a number of cases where it has been unsuccessful, companies felt that these issues could be reduced by aligning the learning to company challenges and developing a learning culture. Culture was an aspect that was discussed widely in the focus groups and fostering self motivation in employees is seen as key.

The problems identified in SMEs were in line with past research studies however in focus groups it was found that there were more generic problems such as getting employees to take initiative and how to find the knowledge to act on problems was seen as a major issue.

ICT was widely used for learning purposes in SMEs. In particular Internet, videos and open educational resources.

This research has major implications for the development of a Problem Base Learning (PBL) framework for SMEs. It should focus on developing a culture of learning and assisting SMEs to identify the relevant knowledge to their problems. It should also leverage off of existing learning practices such as on the job training and ICT resources such as video and internet resources.

Further information is available at:
<http://www.archimedes2014.eu/doc/reports/European%20report%20on%20SMEs.pdf>

Organisational Problem based learning handbook

As a result of our research a PBL framework and handbook was developed for the delivery of problem based learning in an organisational context.

The purpose of this handbook is to help SMEs understand Problem Based Learning (PBL) and how it can be used in their companies. The handbook is supported by an ICT platform and learning material which is being developed between September 2015 and January 2016. The handbook explains the concept of PBL and how to develop a learning culture favorable to PBL as well as a guide on how to adopt it in your organisation. It contains practical information. The handbook will be supported by an ICT platform and video based learning material as well as case studies.

For the full handbook please see
<http://www.archimedes2014.eu/doc/reports/Problem%20based%20learning%20Handbook%20Final.pdf>

Events/Activities

Archimedes will present '*Supporting problem based learning in SMEs through IT facilitated mentoring*' at

Forum for Innovation Brokerage and B2B events
15th and 16th October 2015
TIB, Romexpo, Pavilion C2, Bul Marasti, no. 65-67,
Bucharest

Archimedes will *host an information stand* at

Tech Ecosystems Dialogue 2015
27th October 2015
Frankfurt am Main Goethe University - Campus Westend

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