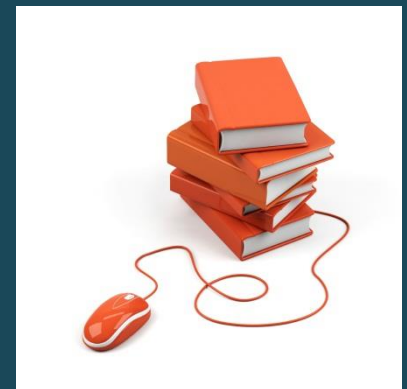# *Information and Communication Technologies in Education*

Learning Management Systems Evaluation in Higher Education

K. Vassilakis / M. Kalogiannakis

LMS: Evaluation in Higher Education

- LMS reviewing

- Evaluation attributes

- Project for LMS evaluation

- LMS transition - issues

commons.wikimedia.org

LMS reviewing

- <u>LMS evolution</u> imposes needs for <u>continuous evaluation</u>, consideration of <u>alternatives</u>, and appraisal of the resources and <u>opportunities</u> currently available.

- LMS installations are <u>already many years old</u> (although maybe upgraded) but <u>teaching and learning context</u> are <u>changing continuously</u>.

- An LMS is not just a <u>course website</u>:
  - *It plays a <u>vital role</u> in serving the <u>instructional mission</u> of an institution and supports dynamical its <u>strategic goals</u>.*

- So, there is a continuous need for:

  > *regularly evaluating institution's LMS to be sure that it is supporting effectively the academic mission and strategic goals.*

- Additionally, institutions would like to ensure that they are using the best tools possible to support teaching and learning.

LMS evaluation in Higher Education – why?

- Higher Education (HE) needs <u>more flexibility</u> and <u>control</u> over eLearning tools:
  - *to enable faculties, programmes, courses, or instructors to select and deploy the most appropriate environments <u>suited to their pedagogy</u>.*

- New theories related to technology cause pedagogical changes.
  - *HE institutions might find themselves <u>adapting to pedagogical changes</u> more frequently than in the past.*

- Growing needs for <u>new integrations</u>, new <u>product extensions</u>, new devices (mobiles/tablets) <u>new services,</u> etc.

- An effective evaluation process can <u>spark interest</u> in a broader selection of new tools (*discussion boards, conferencing, e-portfolios, wikis, online quizzing etc.)*

LMS evaluation in HE – why?

- Evaluation is a necessary precursor to any objective measure of performance improvement.

- The market space for LMS is changing rather often and sometimes radically (*a market continuously in transition*).

- Emersion of new technologies (*i.e. new applications, new services…*)

- Potentially more effective systems are available at similar or lesser cost (*need to explore for alternatives*)

- Current LMS rather fails to meet institution's emerging needs.

- End of LMS's provider support cycle (*or just reach end-of-life*)

- Provider lock-in (*institution is dependent on a provider*).

- To determine stakeholders' satisfaction with current LMS.

Flash Activity

Αναφερθείτε σε κριτήρια που αφορούν στην αποτίμηση της λειτουργίας ενός LMS.

Evaluation attributes

- Institute's teaching policy (blended, distance etc.)

- Interoperability (adherence to standards),

- Flexibility (degrees of adaptability),

- Effectiveness (learning outcomes)

- Usability (ease of use)

- Running costs,

- Support and training,

- Scalability (follow institution's growing),

- Sustainability (life cycle),

- Technological affordance,

- Integration with other systems,

- Accessibility for students with disabilities.

Project: LMS evaluation in HE – how?

- The project is typically led by a <u>task force</u> (committee), a combination of:
  - *faculty members,*
  - *IT specialists,*
  - *librarians,*
  - *instructional designers and technologists,*
  - *administrative leadership,*
  - *administrative staff, and*
  - *students.*

http://www.pminsight.org.uk

- The task force should draw an effective <u>project plan</u> that:
  - *undertakes several <u>investigative and exploratory tasks,</u>*
  - *should <u>identify stakeholders</u> and establishes communication plans (surveys, interviews, etc.),*
  - *should draw <u>plans</u> for an effective <u>project management</u>.*

Project: LMS evaluation in HE – what?

- Collection and analysis of data from surveys regarding <u>current LMS satisfaction</u>.

  - *Stakeholders should be also queried about their <u>interests</u> and growing and changing <u>needs</u>.*

- To evaluate the LMS candidates, the task force <u>constructs various tools</u>:

  - *rubrics, matrices of desirable features, or rosters of strategic and tactical priorities, RFIs, RFQs, RFPs (Request for Information/Quotation/Proposal).*

- <u>Vendors</u> might be asked to send information about their products

  - *and possibly to stage <u>demonstrations</u> of them.*

Also,

- <u>test classes</u> may be set up to run (experimentally) new LMS choices (*pilot running*).

- After <u>results analysis</u>, the task force should present its <u>findings</u> to the institution's decision makers.

LMS transition - issues

- Not all faculty members have a <u>positive attitude</u> to the notion of an LMS transition.

  - *Some initial <u>negativity</u> and the need for <u>extra assistance</u> in the early stages of such a transition are to be expected.*

- Integration with existing systems.

  - *Administrative applications (student information and authentication systems) and numerous ancillary applications (such as SIS, conferencing, e-portfolios, lecture capture, etc.), might have <u>to be reintegrated</u>.*

- The evaluation itself could <u>be costly.</u>

  - *If an upgraded or different system is chosen, bridge funding during the transition can be a <u>considerable expense,</u> if the institution hosts and pays for a time.*

LMS transition - issues

- Course <u>migration</u> is not always easy.

  - *The transition phase can also be disruptive to the instructional process, as corrections and adjustments are often necessary for newly converted courses.*

- <u>Training the staff.</u>

  - *Adequate training for technical support staff, instructors and learner would be needed.*

- Adequacy of <u>existing infrastructure.</u>

  - *Maybe extra funds is required for hardware or outsourcing.*

- Technical support.

- <u>Time consuming</u> process.

  - *Whole process (initial decision–transition) may take up to 3 years!*