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Eight paradoxes in the implementation process of e-learning in higher education

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Abstract

The new information and communication technologies affect currently most spheres of life, including higher education environments. Their effects are most likely to grow in the future. However, many predictions in the last few years as to the sweeping impact of the new technologies on restructuring the learning / teaching practices at universities and their high-profit prospects have not been materialized; and several large ventures of e-learning undertaken by the corporate world, new for-profit organizations and some leading universities failed to yield the expected results. This article examines eight inherent paradoxes in the implementation of the new technologies in various higher education settings worldwide. The paradoxes relate to the differential infrastructure and readiness of different types of higher education institutions to utilize the technologies' potential; the extent to which the 'old' distance education technologies and the new technologies replace teaching / learning practices in classrooms; the role of real problems, barriers and obstacles in applying new technologies; the impact of the new technologies on different student clienteles; information acquisition vs knowledge construction in higher education; cost considerations; the human capacity to

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adapt to new learning styles in the face of rapid development of the technologies; and the organizational cultures of the academic and corporate worlds. Understanding these inherent paradoxes is essential for policy-makers at institutional and national levels of higher education systems in the process of planning a macro-level comprehensive strategy for the efficient and effective applications of the new information and communication technologies. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)