

Business Skills Laboratory in Action: Combining a Practice Enterprise Model and an ERP-Simulation to a Comprehensive Business Learning Environment

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Abstract : Business education has been criticized for being too theoretical and distant from business life. Different types of experiential learning environments ranging from manual role-play to computer simulations and enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems have been used to introduce the realistic and practical experience into business learning. Each of these learning environments approaches business learning from a different perspective. The implementations tend to be individual exercises supplementing the traditional courses. We suggest combining them into a business skills laboratory resembling an actual workplace. In this paper, we present a concrete implementation of an ERP-supported business learning environment that is used throughout the first year undergraduate business curriculum. We validate the implementation by evaluating the learning outcomes through the different domains of Bloom's taxonomy. We use the role-play oriented practice enterprise model as a comparison group. Our findings indicate that using the ERP simulation improves the poor and average students' lower-level cognitive learning. On the affective domain, the ERP-simulation appears to enhance motivation to learn as well as perceived acquisition of practical hands-on skills.

Keywords : business simulations, experiential learning, ERP systems, learning environments

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