

Abstract

Competence development in a work context can be seen as the process by which individuals develop the specific expertise needed for skilled performance in organisations. Competence development occurs informally as an integral part of everyday work practices, but can also be deliberately supported through structured learning interventions (e.g. courses, manuals, forums) which may or may not utilise information technology.

The overall research objective of this thesis is to inform the design of information systems that support competence development in a work context. On the basis of theoretical investigations, interpretive case studies, exploratory design work, and action research based evaluations, this thesis investigates the design space of competence development systems for project management. The theory used in this work is a cultural perspective on learning that includes situated learning theory.

The need for research on competence development systems for project management can be argued at three levels of specificity. First, a contemporary interest in competence, information technology, and projects, serves as an intersecting background understanding of organisations and the option to improve project management practices through competence development systems. Second, a call for more and improved information systems research on competence development systems. Third, a need for research to operationalise situated learning theory into design frameworks.

Important results from this research are two design concepts and three prototypes which have focused on group activities in face-to-face settings, as well as theoretical and empirical insights. The main contribution of this thesis is a design theory for systems that support the development of project management competence.

Keywords: Competence development systems, design, learning interventions, situated learning, organisational learning, project management

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