

Individual support of employees during organizational changes



AGECIS

Employees need to learn new skills to adapt to organizational changes.

Knowledge Transfer Project:
AGECIS: Adapting Games to Enterprise Culture and Individual Styles

Partners
Utrecht University
Opensa organisatie adviseurs

Budget
200.000 euro

Key Publications
I. Puerta Melguizo, M.C., Dignum, F. & Dignum, V. (in press). *Learning for Organizational Change*. In ELSIN 2010: European Learning Styles Information Network.

II. Puerta Melguizo, M.C., Dignum, F. & Dignum, V. (in press). *Coping with Learning Styles during Organizational Changes*. In ECCE 2010: European Conference on Cognitive Ergonomics

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Organizations often undergo changes. Significant changes occur, for example, when an organization decides to become more result oriented instead of process oriented. To succeed, organizational changes need to evolve through phases. A system that guides employees' during these phases, as a function of their learning style, could increase change success.

Organizational changes occur in phases from the analysis of the current problems to the creation and implementation of solutions. For organizational changes to succeed, adaptation and employees' collaboration are needed often implying to learn new skills and perform new tasks. Furthermore, people with different learning styles seem to adapt better to these different phases. However, the connection between these phases and learning styles still needs to be properly studied. Our main goal is to develop an adaptive system that fits learning styles and helps employees to learn new behavioral skills and participate properly during organizational changes.

Understanding the relations between learning styles and organizational changes

To explore the relations between learning style and organizational phase, we performed an experiment in which the learning style of participants was measured with the Learning Style Inventory (LSI) of Kolb (2007). Next to it, participants performed tasks that characteristically belong to the different organization change phases. Although a preliminary study, results seem to indicate that different learning

“Using learning styles to support employees improves organizational changes”

styles perform better in different phases and consequently, an adaptive system able to help the different learning styles during the different phases of change appropriately will be a useful tool for organizational change.

Different learning styles perform better in different phases for organizational change

The relevance of this research project is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically this research helps to understand the connection between the organizational lifecycles and learning styles; a relationship established by Kolb's group and frequently accepted in organizations but scarcely researched. Our results support the relations between learning styles and phases for organizational change. We need however to perform more experiments using larger samples as well as with participants that belong to different career populations in order to have a reliable representation of all four learning styles. In practice, the development of an adaptive system for learning skills and procedures, and not only for learning content, will help organizations in the process of adapting successfully to changes. This is an innovative application that will also help to understand the utility of adaptive systems used inside organizations.