

On-Demand Classroom Education for IT Professionals

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In an October of 2009 itSM Solutions published an article from Kepner Tregoe asking the question Is The Training Room Defunct? The article focused on the fact that in-class training was dying a rapid death in many organizations, not out of any ill will but primarily out of economic necessity and directives to minimize an employees' time off the job. With that in mind, education coordinators have been seeking new ways to deliver "just in time" education solutions that will help workers solve problems, learn new skills, prepare for examinations and receive support services on-demand. On-Demand Classroom Education Networks may deliver what coordinators are looking for.

A few months ago my dishwasher broke down and I needed to get a new one. In order to save myself a few bucks I decided to do the installation myself. The only problem was I never installed a dishwasher before. Since the dishes were piling up (with 12 kids you can imagine what a mess that was) I needed to get a quick education on dishwasher installation that I could be apply immediately. I pulled out my iPad, performed a quick search on Google and a few seconds later I found a You Tube video describing how to install a dishwasher. I ran into a few snags but was able to get some quick answers via a social networking group I found. An hour later the dishwasher was up and running. As a result of that experience, You Tube has become my on-demand classroom learning network for learning those just in time home repair skills.

On-Demand Classroom Education

How many times have you heard e-learning pundits describe the classroom as a thing of the past – that is, traditional instructor led training programs do not align with the scheduling and budgetary needs of today's mobile workforce. While that may be true, what about the value that classroom delivers in the context of shared experiences and extending ones professional development network? How does one make up for that?

One approach that is gaining traction is on-demand blended learning training This approach combines the best of e-learning with online mentoring communities, instructor led review sessions or a combination of both. This approach provides a solution that fits into the mobile students training and travel budget without losing the practical insight offered by an in-class facilitator or mentor or ones desire to add other students to their professional development network.

The classroom (self-paced or group) is evolving to a place where knowledge is first learned online and then applied in a group setting involving case studies, simulations and problem solving exercises. This new classroom format will also enable students to stay connected to the in-class facilitator or mentor and other students through the power of professional social networks (Linkedin etc.).

On-Demand Classroom Education Networks for IT Professionals

In the rapidly changing world of information technology, IT professionals are under daily pressure to keep their skills current or to quickly learn new ones to increase the value they deliver to the corporation that employ them. Due to current economic conditions and workload pressures, sitting a classroom is becoming much less of an option for the IT professionals. Like my You Tube example, IT professional's now need on-demand education solutions that deliver instructor tutorials, support materials and expert support services direct to a Smartphone, Tablet or PC. These on-demand solutions will enable IT professionals to see the steps, hear the explanations and perform tasks on a real time basis.

These on-demand blended learning networks will also enable IT professionals stay connected to in-class facilitators / mentors and other students that can provide any assistance one might need when implementing these newly learned concepts in a production environment.

Examples of on-demand education networks for IT professionals include:

You Tube (www.youtube.com)

itSM Solutions (www.itmsolutions.com)

Career Academy (www.careeracademy.com)

New Horizons (www.newhorizons.com/content/index.aspx)

Summary

On-demand blended learning training solutions are quickly becoming preferred way workers learn how to solve problems, acquire new skills, prepare for examinations or receive real-time support services. In today's rapidly changing world its also becoming the new way for one to quickly acquire the practical knowledge necessary for one to move up in the IT world.

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