

## **Reviewer Commentary to Biddara and Dias' From Cognitive Landscapes to Digital Hyperscapes**

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## Reviewer Commentary: From cognitive landscapes to digital hyperscapes

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**Editor's Note:** *All correspondence between the authors and reviewers, until date of publication, has been blind.*

This contribution from the world of corporate education reveals the gap that separates non-academic learning (most frequently, training for specific tasks) from academic learning (preparing the higher-order-thinking skills of future professionals) is narrowing. However, the sweeping generalizations offered in the article should give us pause, as should the “straw man” the authors have set up: nobody today is concerned with pedagogy, only with engineering and technology. The authors’ abrupt and wholesale dismissal of course management systems, of the standards presently under development to facilitate portability and interoperability, and of attempts to find instructional designs adequate to the “styles” of present-day learners, is superficial, imprecise, and unfair. Although the authors confess that due to the complexity of the variables, no single learner-centered system can be totally effective, they propose one (*hyperspaces*: microworld-based, modular, with open-ended problem-solving, mind-mapping), without citing any examples or persuasive analysis of how it works. Likewise, merely listing the characteristics of learning styles identified by earlier investigators may bring us *closer* to finding practical solutions for creating effective learner-centered works, but in and of itself, it is neither original nor immediately useful.

The authors’ summary treatment of Koper’s investigations and subsequent studies in the area of educational modeling language (EML) ignores those serious attempts at integrating pedagogical models, learning and course environments. My University of Sao Paulo colleague, Cesar A. A. Nunes, has shown in his studies with learning objects that the diffusion of EML amongst projects around the world concerned with standardization and reusability, such as IMS, indicate a growing interest with pedagogical aspects, a phenomenon not acknowledged by the author.

As we move from being a community of professionals accustomed to “delivering” knowledge to just a few levels of learners, towards that of trying to create “learning opportunities” for many more levels and types of learners, it behooves us to be generous and encouraging to all those engaged in the process. Never before have so many individuals and institutions around the world been committed to the task of finding effective strategies for new forms of learning. Though surely some are closer to the goal than others are, all deserve a fair hearing and constructive criticism.

