Chapter 10

mClass Planet of the Apps: The Rise of Mobile Learning

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ABSTRACT

This chapter introduces how mobile devices can be used on a personal and macro level for professional development. The chapter also covers theories posited for practical applications from pedagogy and andragogy perspectives. There are multiple layers of considerations in terms of context, content, and collaboration factors to optimize mobile learning. There are more mobile devices in the world than people, and more than three quarters of the world’s population already has some type of mobile phone, making it the most wide-spread technology and most common electronic device in people’s hands. Un-tapping this ubiquitous technology creates a wide array of educational possibilities. Hence, a mobile first learning design is crucial in organizational leadership and professional development, to help bridge the gap between personal lives, schools, colleges, and the workplace. Furthering the concept of learning is everywhere as a natural segue for ownership of learning and engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Mobile technologies are challenging the role of teachers, students, workers and instructional designers. Mobile learning is offering micro-moments of learning in a multitude of multimodal stimulating means cultivating opportunities for transformation. People now have access to a wealth of multimodal information and stimuli, which can either be forces of distraction, tools of engagement or convert waiting times into productive learning opportunities. Mobile phones and tablet devices are devices of choice for consuming and producing content. Mainly because of ready-in-hand access, easy interfaces, quick start-up times as well as the availability of a plethora of applications (apps). However, policy and professional development offerings are still slow in aiding mobile learning to become fully adopted. The same is true for K – 12 teachers, who are already suffering from major time poverty, which makes it difficult to seek more professional development. Other industries and arenas can also benefit from mobile learning (m-learning). However, mobile learning can help to save time, energy and can help to put their

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students’ learning interest first while making them active participants rather than passive receivers. The same learning and productivity advantages are true in the workplace, but with additional adult learning theories needed. Of course, work has gone beyond the office or site of work, but mobile learning is still off to a slow start in terms of generating mlearning opportunities as well as adoption in formal space. Mobile devices are changing the way we work and offers a multitude of formal and informal mlearning opportunities.

Mobile technologies can be incorporated into formal and informal learning spaces as they extend the formal educational time, and bring to life a basic tenet that learning is everywhere. Furthermore, mobile technologies extend and blend formal and informal educational spaces in a manner that can help to engender authentic and autonomous learning habits. Through the multi-screen world that many people live, mobile learning can help for seamless movement between desktop and mobile device. The mobile phone can either be the main or supportive, just-in-time device. Still, learning designs need to be updated to accommodate this new extension of learning possibilities. Updates to or new learning designs can be adjusted or accommodated in innumerable ways from updating to mobile friendly Learning Management Systems or leveraging various mobile applications including social media or mobile learning in training programs. Additionally, mobile learning offers to overcome challenges or extend opportunities related to workplace training. And if not affected by the app-attack hype (Mentor, 2014), then delivering content on devices with different operating systems, catering to different worker’s schedules, or learning styles, as well as real time and asynchronous learning analytics. If the mobile learning is designed well, with a smooth user experience, workplace or educational organizations can benefit from individuals’ mobile engagement. Through push and pull, an adult or any learner can be offered a personal learning journey or agency. Some examples of push learning are reminders for bio-behavioral change or needs like quitting smoking, adherence to medication regimen, sending words of affirmation, or pushing one new word per day to learn. Push examples range from the receipt of MCAT, TOEFL or GRE offering one question per day to learn. Push examples range from the receipt of MCAT, TOEFL or GRE offering one question per day to learn.

Figure 1. Mobile learning