M-LEARNING AND SHORT MESSAGING SERVICE

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Abstract

Mobile communication is a part of normal daily interaction for young people, in particular students. Mobile technologies have transformed the delivery of education. They lead to new types of education systems that are not restricted to traditional education providers. Mobile learning is the most effective and efficient strategy in teaching-learning process. Through mobile learning, students learn new things; it increases their interest and creativity. SMS usage in education can be classified into three categories namely, direct teaching, teaching related activities, and contact and communication. Direct teaching consists of interactions, learning activities and tasks for consolidation, suggestions for revision. Instruction, tips, forum, motivation, course management and content are the types of SMS.

Keywords: *M-learning, Mobiles in Education, Impact, Benefit, SMS, SMS uses in higher education, Types of SMS*

Introduction

Learning communities may be thought of as collections of learners who work together toward mutual goals. Through technology, they can enter into dialogues and problem solving activities with other learners in different locations. In a cognitive apprenticeship situation, a learner has the opportunity to observe a human model operating within a real and relevant situation. Then the learner has the opportunity to try the technique in a similar situation. Part of the process requires the learner to plan, reflect upon, and articulate her actions, during the process. The learner receives gradually less support from the mentor as she gains competence and confidence until; finally, the learner is able to work independently.

Meaning of M-Learning

The term M-Learning, or "mobile learning", has different meanings for different communities. Although related to e-learning and distance education, it is distinct in its focus on learning across contexts and learning with mobile devices.

Definition of Mobile Learning

Any sort of learning that happens when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that happens when the learner takes the advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies. In other words mobile learning decreases limitation of learning location with the mobility of general portable devices.

The Term M-Learning Covers

The term covers learning with portable technologies including but not limited to handheld computers, MP 3 players, note books and mobile phones. M-learning focuses on the mobility of the learner, interacting with portable technologies, and learning that reflects a focus on how society and its institutions accommodate and support an increasingly mobile population. There is also a new direction in mobile learning that adds mobility of the instructor and includes creation of learning materials "on the spot, in the field" using predominately smart phone with special software such as AHD Cloud Notes, Audacity, etc. Using mobile tools for creating learning aids and materials becomes an important part of informal learning.

Mobile Learning

The term 'Mobile Learning' covers the personalized, connected, and interactive use of mobile phones, PDAs, handheld computers, and other devices that draw on the same set of functionalities in classrooms, collaborative learning, fieldwork, counseling and guidance. It implies personal, spontaneous, opportunistic, informal, pervasive, situated, private, context-aware, bite-sized, and portable learning. It draws on the theory and practice of pedagogies used in technology enhanced learning and others used in the classroom and the community.

Mobiles in Education

Mobiles provide several technologies for educational use such as electronic book readers, annotation tools, applications for creation and composition, and social networking tools. Mobile learning is relevant for teaching, learning, research, and creative inquiry. Mobile devices are supporting corporate training for mobile workers and are enhancing medical education, teacher training, music composition, nurse training and numerous other disciplines. Countless applications are available for self-study, reference, drill and practice, fieldwork and research in hundreds of disciplines.

Culture Heritage Organizations and Museums

Culture heritage organizations and museums are also turning to mobiles to educate and connect with audiences. Mobile learning through the use of wireless mobile technology allows anyone to access information and learning materials from anywhere at any time. Hence, learners are empowered and have control of when and

from which location they want to learn. They do not have to learn what is prescribed to them.

Characteristic of Mobile Devices

Mobile devices and technologies are pervasive and ubiquitous and alter the nature of learning, the ways that learning can be delivered and the balance between training and performance support. This means that mobile is not merely the timeless concept of learning; rather, mobile learning is emerging as an entirely new and distinct concept alongside the mobile workforce and the connected society. Mobile devices create:

- New forms of knowledge;
- New forms of art and performance;
- New forms of commerce and economic activity
- New ways of accessing them

Need

The need to organize and navigate through bite-sized pieces of mobile learning content also impacts on these notions of knowledge and learning and perhaps individual learners may create their own ontologies on-the-fly as they navigate through a personalized learning journey.

Impact of Mobile Learning

One can also focus on the nature of mobility in order to explore the nature of mobile learning. For each learner, the nature of mobility has a variety of connotations and these have affect mobile education. It may mean learning whilst traveling, driving, sitting, or walking; it may be hands-free learning or eyes-free learning. These interpretations impact on the implementation and hence the definition of mobile learning.

Benefits of Mobile Learning

Everyone has the right to learn and to access learning materials and information to improve his/her quality of life regardless of location, status, and culture. Wireless mobile technologies can be used   for formal and informal learning also where the learners can access additional and personalized learning materials from the Internet or from the host organization. Workers on the job can use the mobile technology to access the training materials and information when they need it for just-in-time training. Educators and trainers are empowered since they can access learning resources, plan and deliver, lessons and communicate with learners, from anywhere and at anytime. A major benefit of using wireless mobile technology is to reach people who live in remote locations where there are no schools , no teachers, or libraries. Mobile technology can be used to deliver instruction and information to these remote regions. This benefits

communities in remote places since students and workers need not leave their families and jobs to go to a different location to learn or to access information.

Enhancing Quality Life

Business owners, agriculture workers, and other working sectors can access information to increase productivity and improve the quality of their products. People living in remote communities can access health information to improve their health, thus enhance their quality of life. Wireless mobile technology reduces the need for travel, and helps maintain a cleaner environment. Mobile learning radically transforms societal notions of discourse and knowledge, and is responsible for new forms of art, employment, language, commerce, deprivation, crime and learning. With increased popular access to information and knowledge, anywhere, anytime, the role of education, perhaps especially formal education, is challenged, and the relationships between education, society, and technology are now more dynamic than ever.

Short Messaging Service

Short Message service is a text messaging service component of phone, web, or mobile communication systems, using standardized communications protocols that allow the exchange of short messages upto 160 characters between fixed line or mobile phone devices via Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM). The term SMS is used as a synonym for all types of short text messaging, as well as the user activity itself. SMS text messaging is the most widely used data application in the world. In 2010, 6.1 trillion SMS text messages were sent. This translates into 193000 SMS per second. Micro blogging is a relatively new Web 2.0 technology that is gaining in popularity and very similar in characteristics to Instant Messaging (IM) and SMS. It can be considered a blend of blogging, text messaging and social networking all put together. Sites like Twitter, Jaiku, and Pownce allow users to setup accounts and post short text messages and Web links. Twitter is by far the most popular micro blogging site.

SMS uses in Higher Education

SMS usage in education can be classified into three categories:
1. Direct teaching
2. Teacher-related activities
3. Contact and communication

Direct Teaching

- Interactions: asking questions   or sharing views/ information, 9tutor to students, students to tutor, students to students) – before/during /after class
- Learning activities(e.g., quiz questions, instructions, mini theoretical input)
- Tasks for consolidation, suggestions for revision

Teacher-Related Activities

- personalized support
- motivational messages sent to students
- feedback on lectures, ideas or projects
- alert to check email or to visit web pages.

Contact and Communication

- timely information
- reminders of key dates, homework, preparation, deadlines
- cancelled /rescheduled classes – or change of room or late arrival etc.
- update on marking, assignments, available for collection, etc.
- overdue library books
- contacting students
- late/missing students
- off-site students (e.g.,on placement,at workplace, distance learning)

Types of SMS

Instruction

This type of SMS is to provide the basic instruction to the students about the type of content. It helps the learners to guess what type of content is being delivered at present. This information guides the students properly.

Forum

To facilitate the discussion among the students, a forum has been created. It has been integrated with the SMS gateway. Whenever some students have doubts or ideas, they send an SMS to the forum. The SMS is routed to the forum. Those who read the SMS may give their answers. The purpose of this SMS is to motivate the students to participate in the forum. Some questions in the form of quiz are often posted to the students and they are requested to discuss them and answer them. Thus, this SMS is aimed to create some type of interaction

Tips

This type of SMS is to provide hints/ strategies on how to do well in their studies, revise or focus attention.

Motivation

This type of SMS is to motivate learners to persevere in the learning process.

Course Management

This type of SMS is delivered to provide timely announcements/reminders related to tutorials / assessments.

Content

This type of SMS is used for sending the content material. The content is sent by using various formats; viz, text, voice mail, pictures, figures, assessment, etc. In text form

also, the content is provided as meanings of words, making many words from the given letters, filling the correct letter to create a meaningful word, finding similar words for various situations, etc. This provides a plethora of opportunities for learning vocabulary. In providing vocabulary, preference was given to the words frequently used by practicing teachers in the classroom.

Conclusion

Wireless networked mobile devices can shape culturally sensitive learning experiences and the means to cope with the growing amount of information in the world. By using a mobile device, the learner consult a webpage, access audio/video tutorials, send a query via text message to a friend, or phone an expert for practice or guidance. Over the past ten years,mobile learning also have grown from a minor research interest to a set of significant projects in school, workplaces, museums, cities, rural areas around the world. The M-learning community is still fragmented with different national perspectives, differences between academia, and industry, and between the school, higher education and lifr-long sectors.

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