

M- LEARNING: PARADIGM SHIFT IN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

'Knowledge is the food for man because in absence of knowledge man cannot grow his food

"Education is the pond of knowledge"

To lay the ground for delivering 21st Century Skills to students, schools must first go beyond simply teaching students to "reproduce" what they are taught. Some might ask: how will it be possible to do so while still covering the syllabus? The solution is to re-focus the curriculum by emphasizing a focused set of knowledge and concepts that can then be taught in much greater depth. Around the world, most students today are still taught using the "Transmission" model of education. Teachers transmit factual knowledge to groups of pupils via lectures, utilizing textbooks and other sources for reference. The problem with this is that while students can memorize information, they don't get much – or often any – scope to apply the knowledge. To be impressed into young minds, knowledge must be applied to new contexts, communicated in complex ways and used to solve problems.

Things are changing around us very dramatically, very quickly. The world is becoming more interconnected, the environment is becoming less stable, and technology is continuously altering our relationship to information. Changing global conditions demand that we rethink what, but even more important, how and where we learn. In response to the challenges we face in the digital age, schools are starting to do education differently.

Mobile learning, or "M-Learning", offers modern ways to support learning process through mobile devices, such as handheld and tablet computers, MP3 players, smart phones and mobile phones. Present paper attempts to highlight the importance of mobile learning for education purposes. It examines what impact mobile devices have had on teaching and learning practices and goes on to look at the opportunities presented by the use of digital media on mobile devices. The main purpose of this paper is to describe the current state of mobile learning, benefits, challenges, and its barriers to support teaching and learning.

The schools that are taking this seriously are still in the minority. But across the world there is a growing global movement towards achieving the vision of 21st century education.

Keywords: *Mobile learning, 21st century, school education*

INTRODUCTION

Our education system is under pressure to use innovative methodologies and integrate new information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching and learning process to teach in 21st century. With emerging new technologies, the teaching profession is evolving from an emphasis on teacher centered; lecture based instruction to student centred; interactive learning environment. With the process of globalization occurring at a fast pace and availability of information in nanoseconds through e media, the world has shrunk. For a century and a half, M-learning or mobile learning evolved with technology to blaze new paths in education and is expanding the reach of the classroom. Mobile learning represents a way to address a number of our educational problems.

What is M-Learning?

The learning process can be defined as “...making connections, indentifying patterns, organizing previously unrelated bits of knowledge behavior, activities into new (for the learner) patterned wholes”. The term M-learning stands for mobile learning, which means learning with the aid of handheld technology like mobile phones, laptops and any other similar portable devices which are handy.

Mobile learning is viewed as “an activity that allows productive when consuming information, mediated through a compact digital portable device that the individual carries on a regular basis, has reliable connectivity, and fits in a pocket or purse” (Guild, 2007). One definition of mobile learning is, "any sort of learning that happens when the learner is not at a fixed, predetermined location, or learning that happens when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies" (*MOBilearn*, 2003). In other words, with the use of mobile devices, learners can learn anywhere and at any time (Crescente and Lee, 2011). Mobile learning is considered to be the ability to use mobile devices to support teaching and learning.

Mobile learning through the use of wireless mobile technology allows anyone to access information and learning materials from anywhere and anytime. As a result, learners have control of when they want to learn and from which location they want to learn. Also, all humans have the right to access materials and information to improve their quality of life regardless of where they live, their status, and their culture.

Salient features of M-Learning

- **Provides easy access:** Mobile learning provides easy access to learning anywhere anytime, making it more convenient to learners. Learners have the advantage of spending their time spent on traveling, between meetings or during weekends focusing on the subject they want to learn.
- **Facilitates Collaborative Learning:** M-Learning encourages collaborative learning, allowing learners at different locations to get in touch with their peers or others teams to discuss and learn. Social learning is a happening trend which creates a sense of competition and cooperation, which will lock the learners' attention towards the course.
- **Boosts Learner engagement:** Training at the workplace mostly consists of verbal and desktop communication, but adapting mobile learning can bring several opportunities to engage the learner on a digital and social level outside of the work. This new dimension will erase the sense of boredom in learners' mind about the course.
- **Encourages Self-paced Learning:** No two learners are the same. Each one has his or her own way of understanding the content to learn. With mobile learning, learners are now able to learn in their own style, at their own pace. In a classroom scenario, occasionally, there will be a few learners who wouldn't have understood the concepts clearly but hesitate to ask for a re-explanation. In mobile learning, nobody knows or cares how many times you revisit the course, which gives you the freedom to do it until you have understood it all.

- **Address all learning styles:** Mobile learning can fit different learning styles as it allows learners to do the following:
 - Reading
 - Learning through videos
 - Listening to podcasts (Audio)
 - Research on the Internet

Mobile learning is convenient as it is accessible virtually from anywhere, which provides access to all different materials available. M-Learning also brings strong portability by replacing books and a note with small RAM's filled with tailored learning contents.

- **Record:** learner may use the portable device to capture, preserve, note, memories or create information.
- **Reinterpret:** learner can share new portable device to discover or enhance existing data so that it is transformed into new information.
- **Relate:** learner can share new information, recourses and can communicate directly with other learners, e.g. linking mobile devices through Bluetooth or sending files from one to another through SMS or MMS.
- **Reprint:** learner can reprint his information and circulation it to the persons who need it.

Advantages of M-Learning

- Young people of today are extremely competent in the use of mobile devices. They regard them as friendly, personal possessions, even fashion statements, in a way that no other technology is viewed.
- M-Learning can be used anywhere, anytime including school, colleges, offices, homes, etc.
- Increases efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- Mobiles are fairly lightweight, hence can be accessed wherever student learning is taking place.
- Access to lessons, video clips and audio libraries from anywhere, anytime and also provide high definition voice calls.
- Allows the students groups to distribute, aggregate and share information with ease resulting in more successful collaboration.
- Motivates the students with multimedia facilities.
- Enhances and complements traditional teaching styles.
- Improves participation, learning, retention and student performance.
- Paves way for personality development.
- It is the work of the field of mobile learning to harness for education and training the vast availability of mobile devices. It is known that every institution in every country owns a mobile phone. They use their mobile phones constantly, in every walk of life-except their education.

Disadvantages of M-Learning

Some still question the premise of m-learning and remain wedded to the traditional classroom as the right way to teach. Others worry that the ability to move at one's own pace may be a recipe to underachieve for students who lack motivation.

- Screen size is the most frequently cited disadvantage for mobile learning. This is a permanent problem that the mobile learning industry has to address and overcome.
- Battery life is another frequently listed problem for mobile learning. But it will be solved by further developments in wireless technologies
- Data input is another frequently mentioned problem for mobile learning. Young people of today are very adept at sending SMS messages at great speed, but the input of an easy-type answer to be sent to a tutor for correction will always be a problem. Multiple-choice questions, however, pose no problems for mobile learning.
- The adoption of m-learning is concerned over content created for traditional media not working on the new devices, the lack of a standard for mobile delivery.

Recommendations for M-learning:

Educators and education officials at every level should move forward with the development of online based curriculum and the digital content to support it.

- Policy makers at every level should review accreditation rules, teacher licensing requirements, copyright law and other laws and regulations and modify or eliminate rules that may unintentionally limit the effectiveness and use of digital technologies in the class room.
- Teacher training, certification, and professional development programs should include significant instruction in the use of technology as an educational tool, including the incorporation of mobile learning into the classroom, and the benefits of mobile communications in academic exploration.
- Public policy makers should redouble efforts to deliver both wired and wireless broadband connectivity to achieve the goal of advanced wireless service to 98 percent of people by 2020. Achieving this goal will open the door to the highest quality online learning to almost ever Indian and help to eliminate disparities in educational opportunity among urban, suburban and rural students.
- Policy makers should support the spread of advanced wireless communication and enable it to achieve its fullest potential by enacting measures to allocate additional spectrum for wireless services and to enable wireless providers to maximize the efficiency of their spectrum holdings.

CONCLUSION:

Mobile technologies are having a profound global impact on business, education, and culture. As an e-learning professional one must consider the learning possibilities made available by mobile devices. The e-learning strategy may not require it now, or even soon, but M-learning is quickly becoming a reality that business, government, and education cannot ignore.

A major benefit of using wireless and mobile technology is to reach people who live in remote locations where there are no schools, teachers, or libraries. Mobile technology can be used to deliver instruction to these remote regions without having people leave their geographic areas.

With the advance of technology, including a mobile communication revolution that will spread advanced broadband into new areas, world class learning can and should happen everywhere. Every school district, no matter how small or limited its resources, will be better able to give its students access to the coursework they need to dream big, achieve their college dreams, and build the future they want.

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