

Mobile Learning Implementation Challenges

When implementing a mobile learning curriculum,

it is important to remember that mobile devices are simply a tool to facilitate learning. Mobile devices do not substitute a teacher's knowledge, but rather, complement the teacher's knowledge and existing curriculum. Although mobile learning allows educational opportunities to be more widespread, it is not without its challenges.

As mentioned in previous sections, there are many steps to take with regard to planning and designing a mobile learning curriculum. Each of these steps presents various challenges to the actual implementation of a mobile learning program. For instance, if a teacher wants to incorporate mobile learning into his or her teaching/learning space, he or she must first have knowledge on how to use a mobile device. Not all teachers are technology savvy or use mobile phones in their daily lives. In those cases, teachers must receive basic training on how to use the device. However, even if a teacher has a mobile phone for personal use, he or she may not be aware of the learning options a mobile phone contains. To actually implement a mobile learning curriculum, he or she needs to understand how mobile

phones can be used for learning and also how they might correlate with the elements of an already designed curriculum for a traditional teaching/learning space setting. Indeed, many teachers must be shown the ways in which mobile devices can encourage and enforce learning. It is essential that teachers know the proper questions to ask via SMS to enforce learning, and in the case of smartphones, various applications that can be downloaded to phones to aid in facilitating learning.

Additionally, teachers need to be aware of the limitations of their potential mobile learning program. It is imperative that they understand who is providing the mobile phones and what type of mobile phones are being provided. If the mobile phones are being provided through the government, then there may be certain government requirements with regard to mobile learning or learning curriculums in general. Indeed, teachers must ask themselves questions such as "can their teaching/learning space afford smartphones or should this mobile learning curriculum be designed for basic mobile devices?". They must assess how many of their students currently have mobile phones and decide whether or not a BYOD program would be useful. Because each student may have a

different type of phone, it is difficult to design and implement a mobile learning program due to the fact that "students may have different devices with different processing platforms, and learning materials may be in various file formats that aren't supported by all devices".³⁷

However, before addressing the issues that individual teachers face when implementing a mobile learning curriculum, first one must look at the funding aspect of a mobile learning curriculum. Although many argue that mobile learning curriculums are less expensive long term, their initial costs are great. Every student must have a mobile device, and often, to cut costs, students are allowed to bring their own mobile devices. It is important for the government, the school system, and potential mobile learning sponsors to understand the educational value of a mobile learning program, instead of seeing it as an added distraction in the teaching/learning space. It is especially imperative that teachers understand the educational value of a mobile learning program, so that it is properly incorporated into the

traditional teaching/learning space curriculum. Some teachers may find it difficult to incorporate a mobile learning program into the teaching/learning space, therefore, it is critical to follow a mobile learning program that corresponds and enforces the traditional curriculum.

Even though mobile phones can help support traditional classroom learning, it is necessary that teachers control what actions students perform on the devices. Indeed, mobile devices can be used for sinister activity, such as bullying other students.³⁸ Moreover, mobile phones with internet capabilities can propose additional safety risks to students. For example, potentially dangerous people can contact students on various social media websites on their mobile devices. Some students may put confidential information on their mobile devices, and if these devices are stolen or lost, this information could be in the hands of the wrong people. Because mobile phones, especially smartphones, can be quite fragile, students must be taught how to properly care for their devices. Depending on the

³⁷Chanchary, F., & Islam, S. (n.d.). *Mobile learning in saudiarabia-prospects and challenges*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Computer Science, Najran University, Najran, Saudi Arabia. Retrieved from <http://www.nauss.edu.sa/acit/PDFs/f2535.pdf>

³⁸Dunn, J. (2012, 10 24). 10 big (but never discussed) problems with mobile learning. *Tennessee Board of Regents: Emerging Technologies & Mobilization*. Retrieved from <http://emergingtech.tbr.edu/10-big-never-discussed-problems-mobile-learning>

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type of phone, the cost of replacing these phones can be expensive.

Teachers must not only focus on their own personal limitations on the devices and the limitations of students, but the limitations of the devices themselves. One must take a lot into consideration when designing a mobile learning curriculum. For instance, mobile phones have limited battery life as well as limited memory. It is important for either the teaching/learning

space or students' homes to have electricity so that their mobile devices might be charged. Additionally, the limited screen size and awkward text input could present some issues regarding the design and implementation of the mobile learning curriculum.³⁹ Because technology is constantly being replaced by even newer

ISSUES TEACHERS MAY FACE WHEN IMPLEMENTING A MOBILE LEARNING CURRICULUM

Government/Societal Readiness	Both the government and the society need to be accepting and knowledgeable of the learning capabilities of mobile devices.
Teacher/Student Readiness	Both teachers and students must be knowledgeable and accepting of the learning capabilities of mobile devices, instead of seeing the devices as distractions.
Technological Knowledge:	Teachers and students may not be familiar with the device.
Learning Capabilities:	Teachers may not know the learning capabilities of a mobile device
Corresponds with Curriculum:	Teachers may have a difficult time finding a mobile learning program that corresponds with the teaching/learning space curriculum.
Cost:	Cost of devices as well as cost of data plan.

ISSUES WITH THE DEVICE

Battery Life:	Mobile devices have a limited battery life and eventually need to be recharged.
Limited Memory:	
Screen Size:	The small screen size limits the capabilities of the device.
Awkward Text Input:	Depending on the device, can have limited SMS capabilities
Theft or Loss of the Device:	Devices can be stolen.
Safety:	Students can compromise their safety, especially with mobile phones with internet capabilities, if they correspond with random people on social media websites. Additionally, if mobile phones are stolen, confidential information can be in the hands of the wrong people.
Fragility:	Devices can be broken from mishandling
Ownership:	Students might be more willing to handle the devices carefully when they can own them.
Compatibility:	In teaching/learning spaces that have multiple types of mobile devices, it is difficult to implement a mobile learning program that is compatible with all platforms.

³⁹Elias, T. (2011). 71. universal instructional design principles for mobile learning. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 12(2), Retrieved from <http://www.irrod.org/index.php/irrod/article/view/965/1675>