



## Mobile learning for teacher's professional development

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### Abstract

Mobile devices are becoming ubiquitous. Mobile learning has many different definitions and is known by many different names. Mobile learning is considered to be the ability to use mobile devices to support teaching and learning. The nature of teacher's workplace contexts suggests that mobile learning would be a most appropriate way for teacher professional learning to occur. Mobile technologies can improve teacher training and can also help in teacher professional development.

**Keywords:** mobile learning, mobile technology, teacher education, teacher professional learning, MOOC, digital resources.

### Introduction

Mobile devices are becoming ubiquitous. This ubiquity and ease of access suggests that their use for mobile learning would be valuable for both students and teachers. In general, information and communication technologies (ICT) have the potential to enhance teachers' professional learning by optimising opportunities for access to current educational information and experiences as well as providing opportunities for teachers to analyse, and collaboratively reflect on, their own practice.

### What is mobile learning?

Mobile learning has many different definitions and is known by many different names, like M-Learning, U-Learning, personalized learning, learning while mobile, ubiquitous learning, anytime / anywhere learning, and handheld learning. The term "Mobile Learning" or "M-Learning", has different meanings for different peoples or communities, that refer to a part or subset of E-Learning, educational technology and distance education, that focuses on learning across contexts and learning with mobile devices. M-Learning is often described as occupying a sub-space within the E-Learning space, which is in turn a sub-part of digital learning.

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". In other words, with the use of mobile devices, learners can learn anywhere and at any time. Mobile learning is considered to be the ability to use mobile devices to support teaching and learning.

'Mobile learning' is certainly not merely the conjunction of 'mobile' and 'learning'; it has always implicitly meant 'mobile E-Learning'. It is the 'mobile' aspect of mobile learning that makes it stand apart from other types of learning, specifically designing learning experiences that exploit the opportunities that 'mobility' can offer us. 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 can accommodate and support an increasingly mobile population. This is because mobile devices have features and functionality for supporting learners. For example, podcasts of lectures can be made available for downloading. Learners are to expect to engage with these learning resources whilst away from the traditional learning spaces.

Taylor, and Vavoula (2005) describe the features of mobile learning as follows: it is learning that takes place "on the move", that occurs in a variety of places and times, and that capitalizes on the ubiquitous nature of mobile technologies.

### Why mobile learning for teacher's professional development?

In many countries, the slow adoption of ICT and such technologies by teachers has been noted with concern by governments and employing authorities. One possible reason for such slow adoption is that teachers' work environments inhibit connectedness; they are literally and physically disconnected. They operate in environments where opportunities to learn occur in diverse and isolated places at unpredictable times. Unlike other professionals, teachers are itinerant. They do not tend to be located in one place for the working day, but move between classrooms, playgrounds and

staffrooms. The nature of their workplace contexts suggests that mobile learning would be a most appropriate way for teacher professional learning to occur.

Teacher can use technologies for their own professional growth. Teachers are slow adopters of technology and while teachers are mobile workers, especially in secondary school. There are certain teachers who have never actually activated their email account and never even sent (an email) message. Some teacher see mobile phones as (personal) communication devices that's very different from teaching devices. Studies have found that how rarely teachers considered their own professional learning needs. In one of the study it was found that teachers did not use their PDAs (Personal Digital Assistant) to aid reflection and professional learning.

Mobile learning enables teacher's to interact with people both beyond and within one's own school; provides access to expertise over a range of areas readily available in an online learning environment; and builds personal and professional support networks. It capitalizes on the ubiquitous nature of mobile technologies and their ease of use in a variety of locations.

How Mobile Technology Can Be Used In Teacher Training?

Mobile technologies can be used in teacher training:

**Communication:** Mobile devices can be used in conjunction with wireless broadband and video-call services like Skype to facilitate communication between teachers and mentors.

**Self-assessment:** Video cameras can be used to record lessons, allowing teachers to reflect on their teaching practice and identify specific areas for improvement.

**Innovation:** Mobile technologies can be used in teacher education programs to challenge teachers to think creatively about mobile learning and develop the confidence to try new ideas.

**How teacher's personal use of mobile devices can help in professional development?**

- 1. Audio and Video Recording:** Teacher can use mobile phones to video and audio record and photograph students role play / activities in his/her classes. One of the purpose of using device in the classroom is to reflect on what had occurred and indicate how engaged the students had been and the second reason of use was to celebrate the work that students had completed.
- 2. Contact students:** Some teachers use mobile phones to contact students and parents. (e.g. Remind App.)
- 3. Use of digital videos:** Teachers can use digital video in their classes and start experimenting with digital home videos and quickly see the potential of the tool for their teaching and learning.
- 4. Sharing and dissemination of good practice:** Certain skilled teachers share and disseminate their own expertise and practice they observe outside their own classroom. Teacher can use mobile technology to capture performance of students outside the classroom e.g. Music, Physical

Education, Sports, etc. and these captured performance can be used by teachers to illustrate their discussion with other colleagues as a part of collaborative professional development.

- 5. Teach learn lead:** This is basically a social media site like Facebook for teachers where the teachers from various schools meet and interact. The teachers who share a common subject can discuss the different issues related to the subject and they can learn how to make lesson plan from experienced teachers. The app is used for the creation of polls where the teachers learn from one another and also indulges in fun discussion about their students.
- 6. Staff development:** Teacher training college can use video clips to show pupil teachers demonstration of lessons, microteaching, how to do role play. The captured episodes can be easily shared and served as stimuli for professional discussion for teachers.
- 7. Mobile phone dictionary:** can be prepared so that tribal language speakers will be able to access their mother tongue. While those who are new to the tribal language will be assisted in working with communication in tribal areas.
- 8. Lecture captured scheme:** Under RUSA (Rashtriya Uchatar Siksha Abhiyan) while going for NAAC the teachers is supposed to make video clips of his/her lectures which is called LCS. Certain Lecture capture tools are available (e.g. Cam Studio), which can be used for recording Lecture. Mobile technology can be very well use to make LCS, so as can be used in future.
- 9. MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course):** Newly introduced and probably the hottest topic in higher education and teacher professional Development, right now and was identified as being "at the forefront" of discussions about new modes of delivering education. E. g SWAYAM platform is an IT based platform developed and made functional by ministry of HRD of Government of India for the purpose of offering online courses on the MOOC pattern, Swayam App available on Android, iOS and Windows Platform, which can be downloaded in mobile and extensively used for professional development of teachers at all levels.
- 10. Open educational resources (OER):** The teachers can use OER for their professional development. India embraced OER by the year 2007, with support from government and external funding agencies. OER's developed by government of India, its ministries or various departments/ organisations/ boards falls under ministry MHRD, either one can access its websites or download its Mobile Apps for easy access, some of the Mobile Apps are:
  - National digital library of india**  
Ministry of Human Resource Development under its National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology has initiated the National Digital Library of India (NDL India) pilot project to

develop a framework of virtual repository of learning resources with a single-window search facility. NDL India is designed to hold content of any language and provides interface support for leading vernacular languages.

- **IGNOU e-Content:** 'IGNOU-e-Content' Mobile App is an Official Mobile App of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi. This app is an ICT initiative of IGNOU to provide Digital Learning Environment to IGNOU learners and extending Technology Enhanced Learner Support Services to them. The aim of this initiative is to disseminate the digitised course material to IGNOU Learners.
- **E-Pathshala:** The digital India campaign has promoted extensive use of ICTs in the teaching learning process. The e-Pathshala, a joint initiative of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Govt. of India and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has been developed for showcasing and disseminating all educational e-resources including textbooks, audio, video, periodicals, and a variety of other digital resources.

### Conclusions

Mobile devices are becoming ubiquitous. This ubiquity and ease of access can be used in the term of Mobile Learning and which in turn help both teachers and students. Mobile Learning means different for different people. Mobile Learning means the ability to use mobile devices to support teaching and learning.

Mobile Learning is often described as occupying a sub-space within the e-learning space, which in-turn a sub-space of digital learning. Mobile technologies can improve professional development and teacher training in areas like communication, self-assessment and innovation.

Although teachers have mobile phone but they don't think about it as a mobile learning device and they don't have another (purpose built) mobile device. When it actually starts to occur more in classes it could be a trigger for using more and more professional learning.

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