Mobile Learning- An Innovative Practice in Higher Education

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Abstract: *Mobile Learning (M-learning) has become a very important factor in higher education. Mobile devices such as Laptops, Tablets or Smart Phones have become very popular and common in the institutions of higher education. Therefore, the aim of this abstract is to survey whether students of higher education are well equipped for mobile learning; to discover whether and how often these students use mobile devices for education, and for their college studies in particular; and to find out student's opinion on M-learning.*

Keywords: Mobile learning, Smart phone, Mobile computing device, Higher education, Students, Internet, Social media

I. INTRODUCTION

Almost everybody has a mobile device of some sort or another, be it a laptop, a tablet, or a smart phone. The latter two are often carried around by their own used anywhere and anytime. The use of smart phones and tablets for social interactions is very popular amongst students. They will read books, have conversations, check email, and post to Facebook while having a cup of tea or traveling. The mobility and connectivity of these devices allows for use in a variety of places. Such popularity cannot be ignored. Higher education faculty should not only be familiar with the sorts of activities that work well using mobile devices, but also aware of the strengths and weaknesses of mobile learning.

In higher education states that students are driving the adoption of mobile computing devices, such as cell phones, smart phones, and tablet computers. In Higher Education mobile devices are important to their academic success and use their devices for academic activities. The increased ubiquity of mobile computing devices on college campuses has the potential to create new options for higher education students and the exploration of mobility and social media as an instructional strategy. Mobile computing devices can provide educational opportunities for students to access course content, as well as interact with instructors and student colleagues wherever they are located.

The purpose of this paper was to explore how higher education teaching and learning were affected by the integration of mobile computing devices. As mobile devices continue to grow as part of the higher education landscape, mobile computing devices present both opportunities and challenges to higher education institutions. The goal of our article to present in-depth perspectives of instructors and students about their experiences of implementing mobile computing devices. However, this present paper will focus only on student's experiences and perceptions mobile computing devices brought to learning and the roles social media played.

II. FOUNDATIONS OF MOBILE LEARNING

Technically still in its infancy in higher education, learning with mobile computing devices has been described and defined in a variety of ways stated that mobile learning "combines individualized learning with anytime and anywhere learning" Additional researchers have defined mobile learning as learning mobile devices our interest was focused on how mobile computing devices impacted learning with coursework, mobile computing devices Learning that is both formal and informal.

2.1 Applications of Mobile Learning:-

Learning Delivered and Supported by Mobile Computing Devices

Mobile computing devices have included technologies that are transportable, such as cell phones and smart phones, and these may include tablet computers, laptop computers, and net books.

Mobile learning should focus on the actual mobility of the device. That is, mobile learning should be "restricted to learning on devices which a lady can carry in her handbag or a gentleman can carry in his pocket. This is the essence of mobile learning accessing information and knowledge anywhere, anytime from devices that Learners are used to "carrying everywhere with them" as friendly and personal.

Learning is Formal and Informal

Mobile learning is both formal and informal. Formal learning, by design, is where learners are engaging with materials developed by a teacher to be used during a program of instruction in an educational environment, highly structured, institutionally sponsored, and generally recognized in terms of a certificate or a credit upon completion.

Informal learning is often defined as learning that results "from daily work-related, family or leisure activities "It is often intentional but unstructured and contextualized. This type of learning is sometimes "unanticipated, unorganized, and often unacknowledged, even by the learner such as reading, using the Internet, visiting community resources, such as libraries, museums, and zoos, and on-the-job learning are usually considered informal learning activities, though there is no conclusive definition of informal learning. During any of these activities, learners can use and access their mobile computing devices to collect information to be used in their formal learning environment. Mobile computing devices can be used as the bridge between formal and informal learning opportunities.

Learning is Context Aware and Authentic

Mobile learning, content can be more contexts aware, authentic, and situated in the surroundings be more context aware, authentic, and situated in the surroundings where the learning is more meaningful to the learner. Learners can personalize the way they interact with the course content. They can also customize "the transfer and access of information in order to build on their skills and knowledge to meet their own educational goals based on their needs and abilities. Mobile computing devices also allow for learning to be situated and context aware in which learning takes place in meaningful surroundings — most likely outside the classroom and in the student's surroundings or environment at a time appropriate for the learner.

Fostering Collaborative Learning

Mobile devices provide learners opportunities to collaborate, discuss content with classmates and instructors, and create new meaning and understanding. Furthermore, social media provides for collaborative and engaging opportunities for students. Mobile use computing devices in one project-based course created a sense of connectivity with students, instructors and their clients by allowing forth constant and immediate connection to the Internet to blog about work progress, share photos and communicate using instant messaging or text messaging. This social media tool allowed for students to collaborate and share with each other in learning. Implemented effectively, mobile computing devices can support this collaborative, constructivist approach to learning.

Social Media

Higher education students and faculty members typically use the term social media inter-changeably with Web social media tools – allow learners to create video / audio, take photographs. Media to identify the location of other social networking sites for communication with classmates and their instructor. In essence, by using the applications available on mobile devices as well as social media tools a personalized, authentic learning experience can be creative.

Accessing Information Quickly

One advantage mobile computing devices afforded students in their learning was the ability to access information quickly. Because of the convenience of constant connectivity — specifically the connectivity to the Internet — students felt that the devices allowed them to retrieve course content quickly, stating, "You can go to any source you want to

within seconds." The student held up his iPhone as if to remind me that the mobile device was always easily accessible and within reach. Therefore, capitalizing on the immediate access to information that the mobile devices offered.

Furthermore, students at the University College spoke positively about accessing course content such a discussion boards, course readings, and video clips they needed to watch for class on their mobile device. In addition to accessing content, they used their devices to upload and post content to their course sites. Students also noted other positives, including the immediacy of having instructors provide course documents to the students. By quickly emailing important course documents to the students instead of passing the documents out during a face-to-face class, students felt that this was a more "quick and efficient" use of time and allowed students to have the document "right in front of us," allowing for course discussion or explanation to begin immediately. Overall, the students found using mobile devices more convenient.

Communication

Another advantage that stemmed from the constant connectivity available to students was the ability to communicate with fellow classmates and the instruct communication made available through the mobile device was key in the success of the instruction and allowed them to be fully productive Learning occurred informally from small group collaboration while students were gathering information around campus. Students found themselves communicating more because of the mobile devices. They interacted with each other through applications, such as with Skype or video conferencing tools as well as engaged either through text messaging, the social networking tool Twitter, or the course website. One college student shared this explanation about communicating with the mobile device.

Variety of Ways to Learn

Students interacted with course content in a variety of ways using mobile computing devices. This included recording video or voice memos to be uploaded to the course site and then discussed by the entire class. The students at colleges also used these tools as they created their virtual history sites. Learners were able to communicate and collaborate about course content by using mobile computing devices to text message and email. Students also felt they had opportunities for reinforcement of the course material when using their mobile devices. For example, students were able to participate in polls using the devices as well as answer questions anonymously and then discuss the responses at length during the class session.

III. CONCLUSION

Mobile computing devices and the use of social media allow student interaction with content. In Higher Education mobile devices are important to their academic success and use their devices for academic activities. The increased ubiquity of mobile computing devices on college campuses has the potential to create new options for higher education students and the exploration of mobility and social media as an instructional strategy. Mobile computing devices can provide educational opportunities for students to access course content, as well as interact with instructors and student colleagues wherever they are located.

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