

Listening to the student voice: How are students really using mobile technologies for learning?

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Modern students are communicating and interacting with mobile technologies in ways that were unknown to generations before them. Rarely seen without a mobile device glued to their hands, students of today have unique and specific expectations about connectivity and accessibility of information. Mobile learning has many facets (Sharples, Taylor, Vavoula, 2005; Traxler 2002) and is not just about using mobile devices. But mobile devices are a most important conduit for learning that may result in astounding changes in the ways students learn.

The value of integrating mobile technologies within learning environments has been demonstrated extensively in the literature (Manga & Lu, 2013). As a result, higher education institutions are beginning to consider the need for improved mobile functionality within the design of learning environments (e.g. Klapdoor, 2012; New Mexico State University, 2012; The University of Melbourne, 2012). There are many experiments in progress, but full scale evaluations of the effectiveness of mobile learning in Higher Education are lacking (Wishart & Green, 2010).

The University of Southern Queensland, in partnership with the Australian National University and the University of South Australia is working on a project to develop a Mobile Learning Evaluation Framework. The aim of this project is to provide higher education institutions with resources to effectively implement mobile learning initiatives. Educational institutions are attempting to provide mobile learning to students with little understanding of what might be effective. One of the first steps is to gain insight into how learners who are familiar with mobile technologies in other contexts have integrated them into their learning. Understanding how students have reflexively integrated mobile technologies into their learning habits and routines will help institutions to understand which mobile learning initiatives are relevant to students and how they are effective for their learning.

The project team collaborated with USQ's student services department to develop a video that brings to life the current mobile learning activities and needs experienced by students. Five students from USQ were approached to share their views on camera. Each student was asked to respond to questions about how they use their mobile devices for study, what they would like to be able to achieve on their devices, what the benefits of these devices are for study, what challenges they foresee, and what they would like to see available through an app.

The poster will consist of short video snippets in MP4 format of the responses to these questions in an interactive presentation, accompanied by speech bubbles that highlight key responses. The responses to these

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questions present strong evidence about the extent to which students are independently using mobile technologies to support their learning. The importance of adequate infrastructural and educational support for students wanting to use mobile technologies for their studies is also abundantly clear. The poster will also include recommendations for higher education institutions to consider including when designing online learning environments for mobile accessibility.

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