

The Pros and Cons of Mobile Learning in Elementary Classrooms

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Mobile learning (m-learning), is currently a popular topic across the nation and even the world. M-learning is the ability to obtain or deliver educational content anytime and anywhere through computing devices such as laptops, iPads, iPod Touches, smartphones, portable media players, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), netbooks, handheld gaming devices, tablets, etc. Any technology devices that connect to wireless or mobile phone networks can access Web-based public or private services can be used to obtain educational content through m-learning (Hloden, 2010). After acquiring the accurate definition of m-learning, professional educators need to decide if it can be beneficial to the K-12 education curriculum in our nation.

Mobile learning is currently divided into two methods which are one-to-one computing and Bring Your Own Device (BYOD). One-to-one computing refers to each child and teacher having their own wireless mobile device with connectivity. This method of m-learning can be a very costly expense for districts. BYOD refers to teachers and students bringing their personally owned wireless mobile devices with connectivity. This method of m-learning would not cost the district any funding to purchase mobile devices or to replace out dated technical devices, because the parents are granting their children with the mobile devices. With that being said, other concerns are left to be questioned before implementing BYOD. Districts really need to investigate all the advantages and disadvantages of each method before deciding which method of m-learning is best for their schools.

M-learning should be familiar territory in many ways. Educators have already discovered the value of e-learning, which had extended education beyond the classroom. M-learning takes what we already know to the next level. It works and reaches places other learning cannot (Hloden, 2010). It is being used in many universities around the world. Some districts throughout the nation are piloting m-learning in schools. Due to this technique becoming so popular, they have created a

cloud-based adaptive learning system to store all your content and allows you to use different devices. Adaptive Learning and Assessment System (ALAS) is designed for both personal computers and wireless mobile devices; not many are designed for both. ALAS also supports formative adaptive evaluations with scaffolds which provide individual intervention that is real-time individualized feedback to teachers and learners (Nedungadi, Raman, 2012). With this cloud-based adaptive learning system, all students and educators will have their content saved and available to them even if they do not have the mobile device with them. This is especially great in lower grades where the students at younger ages are not as responsible as older students. They can access their content through another device with connectivity. With that being said, should we be implementing m-learning in our elementary classrooms as well? Clifford states, "merging education with technology devices is the logical next step for education, because it is what this generation is highly reliant on these days." Instead of fighting to keep their technology devices out of the schools, just put the intriguing devices to work as a resource in and out of the classroom. Education must move with the times and since most students already own cell phones, it's a resource that many educators are arguing should be used in the classrooms (Clifford, 2012). C & R market research found that more students own a cell phone at younger ages: with 22% owning a cell phone at ages 6-9, 60% of teens ages 10-14, and 84% of teens ages 15-18 (Clifford, 2012). Students already know how to use the technology; it is up to the teachers to add the academic value to these tools. Embracing technology early allows better implementation and quicker development of learning tools (Clifford, 2012).

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Research question:

What are the effects of "Mobile Learning" in elementary classrooms?

or

Can "Mobile Learning" be effective in elementary classrooms?