

7 reasons why mlearning doesn't work

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"In the past the enjoyment of the few has come at the expense of drudgery of the masses." Csikszentmihaly 1975

Introduction

I was reminded recently that the cacophony of personal technologies has become very stressful for many. I was sitting down with my personal devices, wondering which ones I should carry around with me. I have an Apple PowerBook G4, my Kodak L753 Camera, my iMate SP3 Phone, my Apple iPod Mini 4GB and my Maxtor 200GB Hard Drive.....exhausting isn't it. Add to this the next connectedness...I am simultaneously connected by Wireless 802.11G, ADSL2+, Bluetooth, GPRS, Infra Red, USB2, my headphones and good old fashioned Broadcast TV tuner.

And these are just the gadgets I use most days. They are all potential Mobile Learning devices and they all have compelling features and irritating limitations.

At this point I turn to my "mobile psychoanalytical service" represented by my copy of the works of the great Hungarian-American academic Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi of the Drucker School at Claremont in Los Angeles. I contemplate the role of *Flow* in this noisy orchestra of mobile devices.

Sometimes I think there is a conspiracy to make no one device adequate, just to make me buy more devices. I am sure there is some Zen Master Marketing Guru in the mountains of Japan secretly conspiring against me, never allowing me to have just one device that enables *Flow*. (Csikszentmihalyi M, 2004)

Is this experience just *Adult Play* or am I trying for *Flow*...a process of human evolution to make everything move together in harmony with out denial of equitable access to anyone? (Csikszentmihalyi M, 2004)

Without *flow* or at least network relationship management that is educationally contextual then mlearning is discordant, immaterial and destined to the backwaters of educational methodologies. There are seven reasons I can see why this is so.

The 7 reasons

Mlearning as a concept alone is doomed to failure because as a learning model it appears:

- To be Technology Driven:** Mlearning alone is a Technology driven concept
- Not cogniscent of Market Usage:** We know too little about what mobile devices are used for
- Yet to adopt discoveries in Cyberspsychology:** We know too little about Flow and Learning relationships/Networks or the Transactional Analysis of Mobile Relationships
- Not to change Entrenched Institutionalised Education Models:** cultures of Education and Communications reflect government control measures
- To rely on nascent consumer Technology:** Mobile devices are inherently dissatisfying by never quite meeting every promised need for the consumer.

To be short on Standards to overcome Cultural Differences: while standards are slow to emerge Governments are rapidly regulating and limiting the use of Mobile Communications technology

To lack a Mobigogy (Refer attachment): teaching and learning models are needed

Into this setting we can introduce the notion that *Flow* comes from action rather than consumption - as does learning. Learning is not about “Publishing and Distribution” or even “Examination and Institution”. True learning is integral to *Flow*, indeed a foundational action in the evolution of humans. At Archer College we know we cannot control one’s experience of *flow*, as that is for individuals to manage for themselves. But we are seeking to address the educational context in which the networks that support mobile devices are managed.

A key finding began for me while developing Learning Models for Monster.com in 2000. We made a discovery through market research that Learning and Work were less connected in people’s minds than you would imagine. Since that time we have reviewed, refined and are now researching the real impact of applying a new Educational management methodology that is culturally relevant and a genuine paradigm shift in the meaning of Educational Institution.

Since the dawn of the web, people in their millions have been learning online. Since the advent of Google as a popular search engine and populist governor of learning behaviour, learning behaviours themselves have changed significantly. It is reasonable to suggest that the Institutionalised Education community has had trouble keeping up.

The educational community is, quite reasonably Aesop’s tortoise, and the marketers of consumer-based mobile technologies are the hare. In order to ensure we are still running at the finish however we must stay within sight of the hare. That does not mean immediately trying to behave like hares as we extend the analogy, but that is what many of us do. Instead we must build sound new methods.

Learning Relationship Management

Our models for elearning must be constructed in the science of human learning behaviour and that is slow to change. Manuel Castells (2001) has described how new global, urban networks will likely emerge, beyond the current geo-political institutions. The traditional independence of the education community from the constraints of national borders is being mirrored by the behaviour of consumers, including consumers of education services.

We have proposed the model called Learning Relationship Management or LRM.

It is a 7 layer model for learning and development, primarily in a vocational context which relies on but is independent of technology. At its core is a respect for the Learning rights of the individual learners. It is right for their situation to be recognised, their skills and knowledge to be recognised and the right for learners to grow through an extension of their situation rather than a requirement for them to respond to institutional requirements.

The Learning Relationship management (LRMTM) model integrates contemporary philosophies of perpetual learning, learning communities and active personal support in pursuit of ongoing professional and personal development. This complex interplay of learning elements means that participants are able to choose their own “mode” of learning suited to the course content and their personal training needs.

On all levels the LRMTM model is specifically designed to resolve any sense of isolation and dislocation that learners have expressed regarding the use of more traditional e-learning platforms. It recognises the importance of ensuring that any integration of the Internet with learning (i.e. e-learning) incorporates a sense of ‘place’ and community for learners and instructors.

Members of the learning communities participate in regular communication including surveys, quizzes, career counselling, development plans, news and utilities all

embedded in a consistent model. The community has access through the Archer College website to a constant stream of news via blogging and podcasting techniques.

The Archer College LRM™ model promotes training delivery that is more convenient, cheaper and more value laden than that of traditional learning institutions. It is also socially inclusive, providing access to people unable to access a traditional learning institution with a low cost entry point and the use of technology in delivery.

All age-groups and learning levels from high school to management to retirement are catered for, including those learners re-entering the workforce, just starting their career or looking for a career change. The LRM™ model encourages lifelong learning, meeting people where they are.

Note: The Learning Relationship Management (LRM™) model is developed more fully in papers available from Archer College.

We can take the seven layers of the LRM Model and describe the Mobile Technologies that are used in the model.

LRM Level	Mobile Technologies Used	Benefits
<i>Qualification</i>	Verification PDF Doc distribution	Verify your Qualifications and Skills profile while on the move.
<i>Assessment</i>	Certification Reminders SMS quizzes	Never miss re- licensing again. Ensure Compliance with professional requirements
<i>Simulations and Games</i>	Seminar Reminders Video Recording and Publishing Podcasts	Listening to master Class podcasts in the car.
<i>Classroom</i>	Event reminders Outlook Integration Review Missed Lectures	The mobile phone and its Internet Facilities as a seat in a Classroom
<i>Self paced</i>	Quizzes E Purchase	SMS quizzes for self -assessment. Purchase of Courses and in some cases delivery of courses
<i>Resource Review</i>	Standards and Documents available on the job...Mobile email Mobile Chat	Immediate publishing of Standards, best practice models
<i>Communities of Practice</i>	Moblog	Journaling events as they happen and

At Archer College we have recently engaged with a very large Canadian corporation for the management of their education programs. All the services are delivered in a 100 locations across Canada and served from Adelaide in Australia. The network technologies upon which mobile devices rely already exist and service models over those networks are maturing.

However many, if not most Governments, frightened by the notion so eloquently explained by Maffesoli 1996, that their power is diminishing in significance, are attempting to increase regulation or reduce liability in respect of internet based trade of communications.

Their response is to grab back power and control of these communication networks, in some places as a totalitarian act. We will see if they have any possibility of success. The same response may limit the role of educators in delivering teaching and learning services over mobile devices.

They may be too late. The recent emergence of Podcasting as a publishing medium for Audio files is the latest move in the market driven process first pioneered by Peer to Peer networking models such as Napster.

Archer College's Non-profit NGO derivative called Learndog is pioneering the use of this technology for recognition of skills among young learners. Learndog has been capturing music and audio-textual outcomes of out-of-school activities in vocational education and publishing them over Itunes. Collaborative Learning is there peer reviewed across the world using Podcast techniques to iPod and similar Mp3 playing devices.

Although there are many audio standards in use, MP3 is by far the most pervasive and we expect Mp4 to become the standard of choice for Video.

But where are the models to overlay these technologies in a Learning Framework.

Siemans suggests that this phenomenon is a new "ism" in his paper published this year (Siemans 2005) I think it is helpful to explain the new network age as an extension to behaviourism, and constructivism. I wonder however if we are giving the technology too much credit. Our ongoing review of real behaviours with our students will tell us more. I suspect that there is no new "ism". There is merely an evolution in the construction of learning. We may need a "mobigogy" for the connected.

The institutional attachments such as registration, attendance, examination, provision of testamurs and compliance with educational technologies are peripheral to the learning relationships. The key to learning has always been relationships. There is nothing new about that. Just their location is different.

In this model we have placed technology at its correct level. We use the latest technologies to enhance services and provide options. Staff at Archer College are neither Ludites, Troglodites or Geeks. They are all training as educational counsellors and vocational teachers and are expected to provide both of these services to their clients. They are the masters of the technologies and the correct and properly managed situational use. This process reduces costs and enables the delivery of Vocational Education that is specifically relevant, contextual and up to half the price of the Government-sponsored provision.

Yes you can use mobile devices in learning. But they are mostly designed for use as consumer products, not education mediation devices. But as a learning in our model you are not a captive of them.

Siemens, George 2005 Connectivism: □ A Learning Theory for the Digital Age (article)
www.itdl.org/Journal/Jan_05/article01.htm

Maffesoli, Michel 1996 Time of the Tribes, Sage Publications, London

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihalyi 1975 Beyond Boredom and Anxiety, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco

Steiner, Claude M. 1997 CYBER-PSYCHOLOGY, Love, Power and Redemption In the Age of Information Machines Claude Steiner www.emotional-literacy.com/cyber.htm

Appendix

Mobigogy

Mobigogy, as delivered by Archer College in 2005, is a new learning model that attempts to integrate pedagogy and andragogy into a personalised learning philosophy for the digital age. While other learning theories are constructed from a belief in a linear, chronological change in an individual's learning preferences, mobigogy identifies learning preferences in terms of how learning is gained rather than what and from whom.

Mobigogy recognises the networked individual as the central element of all learning methods. Education by way of personalised learning is a result of living and working, an exercisable democratic right. It occurs continuously and dynamically and so requires instructional design rules that gather individual learning experiences and actuates them through learner-selected learning communities.

Pedagogy	Andragogy	Mobigogy
compulsory	voluntary	continuous
teacher-centred	learner-orientated	learner-directed
minimal control by the learner	education as freedom	education as democracy
training for life	assimilation of learning with life experience	life experience is learning
encourages convergent thinking	encourages divergent thinking	enables network thinking
rote learning	active learning	dynamic learning
dependency on educator's learning	learning and teaching roles are blurred	supported in learning communities
imparting of information	opens vistas for continuing learning and peer learning uncertainty about the outcome, whatever the curriculum content	seeking knowledge from shared life events acknowledging living as learning object oriented recognition

Information in this table on Pedagogy and Andragogy comes from:
http://www.trainer.org.uk/members/theory/process/pedagogy_andragogy.htm)

Information in this table on Mobigogy comes from a draft paper, "New learning paradigms" by Janet McMillan, Senior Instructor, Archer College.