



Establishing a Mobile Learning Community: Challenges and Solutions

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Overview



Community of Practice Project



Mobile Learning Community



Challenges



Solutions



Conclusion



Community of Practice (CoP) Project

Fostering a mobile learning community:
the use of mobile technology in
studying subject knowledge through
English at tertiary education in Hong
Kong

Funded by HK UGC: promoting CoP

Project duration: Apr. 2013 - Jun. 2015



Project team

❖ **Principal coordinators:**

Dr MA Qing, Dr WANG Lixun

❖ **Co-coordinators:**

Prof LIM Cher Ping

Dr KONG Siu Cheung

Dr Alice CHOW

Ms Suzan Elizabeth STAMPER

The Hong Kong Institute of Education



Project aims

(1) To promote using mobile technologies in teaching and learning in the Institute

(2) To bind together individuals or small groups to form a larger community of mobile learning that integrates subject learning in English



Project phases

- Phase I:** A pilot study of the potential members of the mobile learning community
- Phase II:** Selecting and interviewing participants actively and creatively engaged in mobile learning
- Phase III:** Building up the mobile learning community
- Phase IV:** Consolidating the mobile learning community
- Phase V:** Sustaining students and colleagues' continuous participation in the mobile learning community

Major outcomes of the CoP

1. A collection of rich information from multiple sources for students' mobile learning:

- ❖ case study
- ❖ large-scale survey
- ❖ app reviews
- ❖ interviews

Major outcomes of the CoP

2. An understanding of the strengths and areas that need improvement regarding students' mobile learning

Strengths:

making good use of online resources/tools;
informal/formal learning;
collaborative learning

To be improved:

self-regulating behaviours;
lack of regular and concrete learning plans;
rarely monitor and evaluate

Major outcomes of the CoP

3. Establishment of a Mobile Learning Community (MLC) website

<http://corpus.ied.edu.hk/mlc>

- Student learning stories (texts, audios, and videos)
- App reviews
- Recommended apps or websites
- Guidance for mobile learning
- Discussion forums (student / teacher corner)
- Archives
- Useful links



- Home
- Listen & Read
- Watch
- Review of Apps
- Recommended Apps/Websites
- Guidance for Mobile Learning



Major outcomes of the CoP

4. Members conducted theme-based seminars or sharings for staff and students:

- **Using Edmodo in mass lectures** (Staff member: Prof. Lim Cher Ping)
- **Engaging students with mobile devices** (Staff member: Dr. Gary Wong)
- **Workshop on Edmodo** (Staff member: Dr. Gay Wong)
- **Evidence-based Student MALL experience** (Staff member: Dr. Angel Ma)
- **Using mobile technologies in EMI courses** (Staff member: Ms. Suzan Stamper)
- **Which technologies to use, where, when and how** (Guest speaker: Prof. Jozef Colpaert)
- **Student sharing of learning apps** (Student members: Amy Chan; Ringo Tse, Eric Lam and Rex Chu)



Major challenges of building a MLC

1. Recruiting members
2. Motivating members
3. Organizing sharing sessions
4. Making an impact on student learning
5. Making an impact on staff development
6. Evaluation of effectiveness
7. Sustainability

Challenge 1: Recruiting members

Solutions:

- ❖ Identifying proactive staff (critical mass)
- ❖ Identifying proactive students
- ❖ Interacting with other related projects
- ❖ Promoting the MLC via leaflets / emails
- ❖ Sending invitations (email/poster)
- ❖ Online registration form
- ❖ Hard copy registration form (after sharings)
- ❖ Snowballing through members

Challenge 2: Motivating members

Solutions:

- ❖ Organizing sharing sessions
- ❖ Showcasing staff's good practices
- ❖ Showcasing students' learning stories
- ❖ Providing useful resources online
- ❖ Providing learning tips
- ❖ Organizing competitions with prizes
- ❖ Continuous updates of MLC activities



Challenge 3: Organizing sharing sessions

1. Difficult to get members to conduct seminars/sharings

Solution: start with core members

2. Time clash:

Solution: organizing sharing sessions during lunch hours / HKIEd conference

3. Difficult to organize student sharing:

Solution: organizing sharing after a semester has finished / giving souvenirs



Challenge 4: Making an impact on student learning

Solutions:

1. Sharing of learning stories (reflection)
2. App reviews (critical thinking)
3. Discussion forum (problem solving)
4. Student sharing sessions (presentation of ideas)
5. Self evaluation (learning gains)



Impact on student learning: examples

- Increased metacognitive awareness
- Deep critical thinking ability
- Enhanced self-regulating and self-reflection capacity

“I think I have to have a more regular and frequent learning plan so that I can remember those I have learnt [via mobile devices/technologies]” - quote from interview data



Challenge 5: Making an impact on staff development

Solutions:

1. Staff sharing sessions (reflection)
2. Showcasing good practices (models)
3. Training workshops (practical skills)
4. Discussion forum (problem solving)
5. Self evaluation (reflective engagement in the MLC)



Impact on staff professional development: Examples

- Staff members obtained new knowledge and skills about mobile learning through attending community activities

Dr Wang Lixun: learned to use Edmodo and applied in his course

Dr Ruby Yang: learned to use Wikibook and applied in her course

Dr. Issa Ying; Ms. Zoe Xu: learned about mobile learning and started to use social media tools to teach English

...

Challenge 6: Evaluation of effectiveness

Solutions:

1. Evaluation of sharing sessions
2. Evaluation of MLC website
3. Self-evaluation by staff members
4. Self-evaluation by student members
5. Achievements of staff members
6. Achievements of student members
7. Annual evaluation by project team



Challenge 7: Sustainability

Solutions:

1. MLC website hosted on a permanent site
2. Key project members continue to maintain the MLC
3. Using social media sites such as Facebook to sustain member interaction
4. Self-sustaining functions: users **contributing** App reviews via MLC site, **contributing** learning stories/resources, and **discussing** mobile learning via discussion forum on MLC site, etc.



Conclusion

- **Community of Practice should be promoted in tertiary education**
- **Mobile learning is gaining momentum, and a Mobile Learning Community can greatly benefit both staff and students**
- **There are a number of challenges when establishing a MLC**
- **Through strategic planning, these challenges can be overcome**

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Thank You !

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