

MOBILE PEDAGOGY IS PEDAGOGY OF THE XXI CENTURY

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Nowadays, pedagogy, or the art and science of teaching, is combined with the term mobile, which refers to learners and language learning being mobile, moving between places, linking classroom learning with work, home, play and other spaces and embracing varied cultural contexts, communication goals and people. The word 'mobile' in this context is not simply synonymous with a mobile phone.

Mobile pedagogy for ELT sets out a philosophy and proposes a framework to help guide teacher-thinking when designing learning for their 'mobile' learners in and beyond the classroom. Mobile pedagogy is an unusual term since it is more common to talk about mobile learning. The use of mobile devices, which is often accompanied by learner mobility across diverse contexts and settings, puts a spotlight on learners and their experiences, but in so doing it may obscure the vital role played by teachers.

The approach to mobile pedagogy for English language teaching is based on the belief that teachers and learners are active participants in making and shaping language learning.

'Language learning' is the development of interpersonal communication resources which are multimodal, but among which language is the primary resource. Language resources comprise knowledge of the language system (phonology, lexis, grammar and discourse) and language use (the exploitation of the system in order to communicate meaningfully in context). Active participation in language teaching and learning implies that learners take responsibility for their own learning and that teachers play their part in enabling this. This has long been the philosophy of good English language teaching. Mobile technologies enable the implementation of this philosophy in ways that were previously impossible. Students now carry with them powerful devices with which they can:

- create and share multimodal texts;
- communicate spontaneously with people anywhere in the world;
- capture language use outside the classroom;
- analyse their own language production and learning needs;
- construct artefacts and share them with others;
- provide evidence of progress gathered across a range of settings, in a variety of media.

English language teachers have always aimed to make learning relevant to their learners' lives and language needs. Mobile learning facilitates this by strengthening connections between people, and between the places where language is learned and used. Mobile learning takes advantage of powerful features on mobile phones and other devices that make it easy for users to create simple content (photos, videos, texts, recordings) and to share them with others. It can also make use of device features that detect a user's location and their movements.

Four spheres of pedagogical framework:

Teacher wisdom

Device features
Learner mobilities
Language dynamics

So, pedagogical framework is intended to help teachers think about how any new language learning activities they might design for their mobile learners will be different from activities they may have planned or designed before.

There are also four important ‘connecting concepts’ [1] that link the four spheres described above:

<i>Connecting concepts</i>	<i>Key questions</i>
Outcomes	<i>How does the activity lead to improved language proficiency and other outcomes?</i>
Inquiry	<i>How does the activity relate to ever changing contexts of language use?</i>
Rehearsal	<i>How does the activity make the most of circumstances and resources to enable more practice?</i>
Reflection	<i>How does the activity design ensure reflection on learning?</i>

Ways to implement mobile pedagogy

- incorporate tasks relating to learners’ communicative needs within and beyond the classroom;
- expose learners to language as a dynamic system;
- integrate the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing;
- provide learners with timely feedback and scaffolding;
- give opportunities for learners to interact socially, negotiate meaning and produce varied and creative communication with peers and with English language users beyond the classroom across boundaries of time and place;
- enable learners to rehearse speech and writing, which can be particularly challenging in a classroom setting;
- encourage learners to develop skills in ‘learning how to learn’ and attend mindfully to the learning process;
- allow learners choices in what and how to learn;
- contribute to learners’ sense of progress and achievement.

Teachers already know many of the ingredients that can spell success for language learning and this naturally leads to consideration of how language teaching might be enhanced by the careful use of mobile devices. Hence, mobile pedagogy proposes a new frame of reference designed to stimulate thinking around key aspects of mobile-enabled language learning activities for students. One of the key aspects of successful mobile learning of English that the framework highlights is the use of activities which exploit a dynamic language and technology environment while drawing on the distinctive capabilities of teachers and learners.

References

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2. Menezes, V (2011) ‘Affordances for Language Learning Beyond the Classroom’, in Benson, P and Reinders, H (eds) *Beyond the Language Classroom. The Theory and Practice of Informal Language Learning and Teaching*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 59–71.