

Mobile learning – methodologies for the study of informal learning with mobile devices



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DREAM

Mobile learning – things to consider

- The *learner* is mobile!
- Need for research on devices with *less* advanced functionalities
- Everyday use exploited for mobile learning?
- Methodologies for study of use....



Mobile research

- Emphasis on social structures and linguistic patterns, giftgiving and relationship maintenance
- Mobile phones overlooked in educational research
- Important communication device → potential learning tool?
- "What can you learn from a cell phone? Almost anything." (Prensky: 2005) → designing it right
- What are the affordances of mobile phones?

Affordances of mobile phones

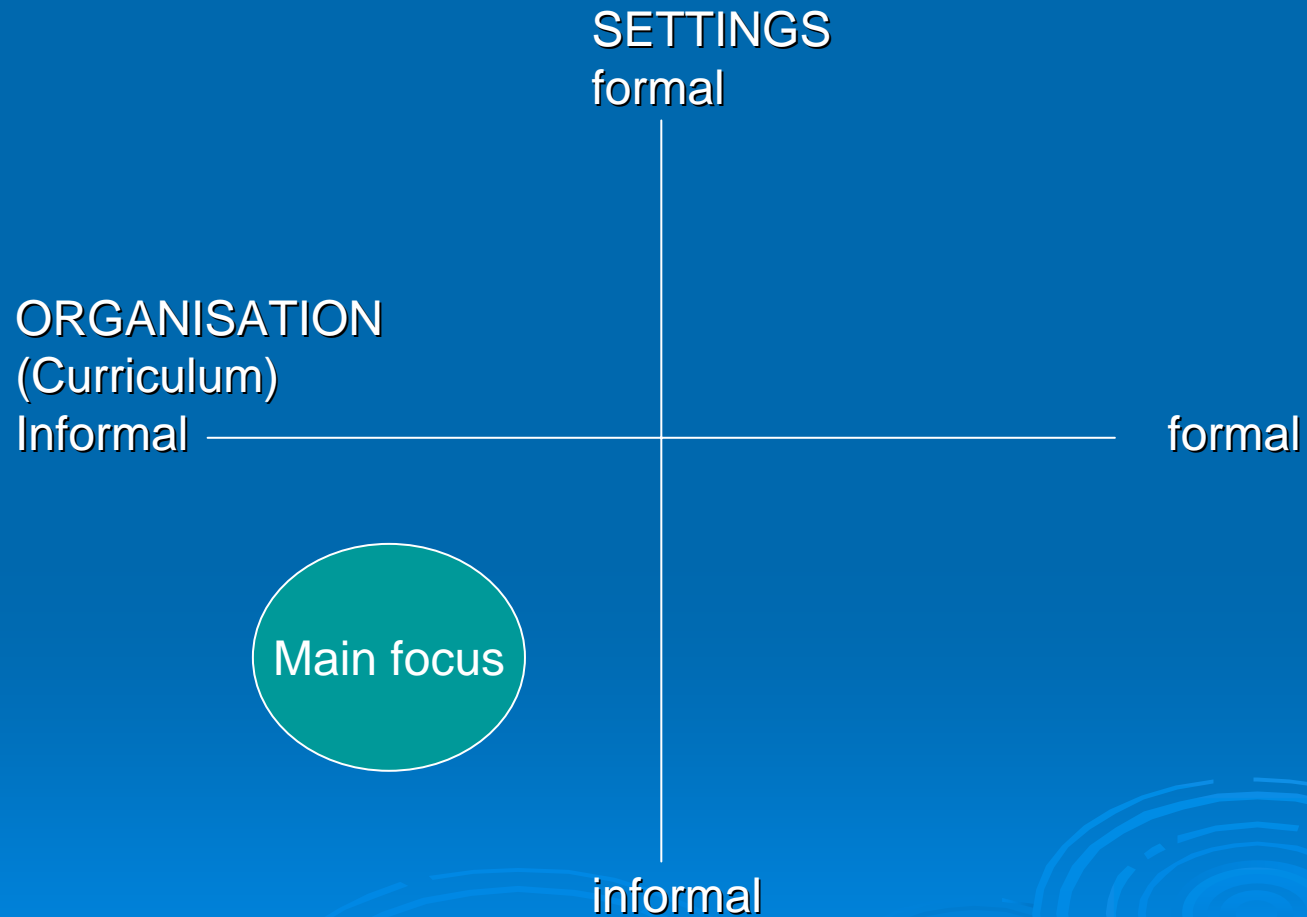
Technological affordances:	Spatiotemporal affordances:	Social affordances:
Talking	Context independency	Sharing communication
Writing	Context dependency	Sharing the mobile phone as an artefact
Taking pictures	Mobility	Collaboration
Playing games	Asynchronous communication	Keeping in touch
Personalise phone with ring tones/covers/pictures	Synchronous communication	Organising relationships

Research questions

PhD project *Mobile learning*, DREAM, 2004-2007:

- How can the use of mobile phones facilitate informal learning processes?
- Is there a potential for mobile phones to be used as a platform for e.g. SMS-services, educational games, or e-learning software?

Learning spaces



Source: *Literature Review in Informal Learning with Technology Outside School*, Nesta Futurelab, 2004

Mobile media and informal learning

”...anyone who has an interest in how children learn with digital technologies needs to look beyond institutional contexts to consider the implications of children’s use of computers, mobile phones, digital television and so on as part of their informal day-to-day lives.”
(Nesta Futurelab, 2004)

- Looking at mobile phone use as situated and informal learning (Lave & Wenger 1991, Eraut 2000) → learning potential in all social practice?
- The issue of assessing knowledge → looking at learning as discourse production/communication....
- What methodologies should be put into use to study this?

Research design

Interviews:

- Ethnographic interviews about young people's everyday life in school and leisure time: what goes on? What are the needs?
- Targeted interviews about mobile phone use: what is the actual use?

Observation

- Participant observation in the classroom: what is the framework for potential mobile learning projects?

Text message logging:

- Computer logs of SMS and MMS: how do young people communicate via text/pictures? What content are they interested in?

Moblogs:

- Creating mobile weblogs: personal diaries, 'informal approach', creates community, learning by production

Adaptive methodologies in mobile research

Traditional ethnographic tools:

- Observations in various settings
- Contextual interviews
- Video documentation

Using the mobile phone itself for gathering data:

- Media diaries by SMS and MMS
- Interviews via SMS
- Audio & video recording by mobile phone: Experience Clip (Isamurso *et al* 2004)
- Moblogs
- SMS/MMS used for school presentations

Considerations

- What do we need to know about mobile media use to facilitate learning with mobile devices?
- How do we study it?

Ethnographic approaches:

- Preliminary research: current use of medium
- Ethnography informing design processes
- Ethnography suitable to contextualise usability testing
- Seeing the field as a Living Lab
- Triangulation in methodology/theory
- Individual users, individual use

Contact

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dream

The logo for 'dream' features the word in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letter 'o' is replaced by a stylized blue circular graphic consisting of concentric rings and a central dot, resembling a ripple or a signal. Below the 'o' are three small, dark blue circles of varying sizes, arranged in a descending line.