Overview - Mobile Learning for Education
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Lecture Transcript

My name is Mohamed Ally and I'm a Professor at Athabasca University in Canada. Welcome to the Mobiles for Development course. Some of you will be completing the mobile learning module which will cover mobile learning in education. The objectives which you will cover in mobile learning module later in the course are:

- Define mobile learning
- Describe policies for mobile learning
- Identify mobile learning technologies
- Describe the benefits of mobile learning
- Describe mobile learning initiatives around the world
- Describe recent research in mobile learning
- Describe strategies for implementing successful mobile learning
- Describe the role of the teacher for successful mobile learning
- Describe the future of education with mobile learning
- Describe your role as a teacher in the evolving nature of education in a mobile world

So here's a nice short definition of mobile learning. It's learning using information and communication technologies in mobile contexts. This is an international definition that will stand in the future because it's very general; because technology will change in the future.

So the question is why mobile learning? Many countries, many organizations are getting into mobile learning. So why mobile learning:

- Students can learn when they are alert [which means they can learn any time of the day, different students have different peak times for learning, so with mobile technology they can use technology to access learning materials anywhere anytime]
- Students can learn from anywhere and at anytime
- Encourage lifelong learning [which means anyone regardless of age can access mobile learning materials using the technology]
- Reach learners in remote locations [learners who do not have access to schools or libraries, they can use the mobile technologies to access information and access course materials]

- Students learn in context [they learn in their own environment which means they can apply what they learn right away. Different cultures have different values, different environments, so they can actually apply what they learn in their own environments]
- Educate the special needs [people who are disabled for example have limited mobility, they can use a mobile technology in their own community to access information and learning materials]
- Educate females [some females stay in their community to take care of families, other responsibilities, they can use the technology to access learning materials from their communities so they don't have to leave the community to go to major cities]
- Engage "lost" youth [these are the young students who drop out of schools, either they are bored with schools and they are not motivated to continue, but they use mobile technology, so why not get them to use the technology to learn, to access information, and to interact with each other]
- Educate the displaced due to natural and human disasters [we have many natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, etc.] When people are displaced, they can continue to learn if they have mobile technology, which means they can access learning materials from anywhere. Also we have many human disasters, for example wars, and when people are displaced because of wars they can access learning materials using mobile technology.

So these are some very important reasons why we need to use mobile learning in education. In terms of accessing education mobile learning improves access:

- For new generations of students [because new generations of students are very comfortable using mobile technology and they expect learning materials to be delivered on mobile technology. So we have to make sure we prepare our courses for delivery on mobile technology]
- There is increasing use of open education resources [where resources are available for free or at minimum cost so that people can access with their mobile devices].
- With the technology, students can talk to each other in peer-to-peer tutoring, so they can help each other if they have problems, and again they use the technology to communicate with each other.
- Also digitization of information and learning materials – what we are seeing today is materials are becoming electronic, so it's moving away from print to electronic, and who knows, eventually all learning materials will be electronic, so if you have your courses for delivery on electronic mobile device then students can access learning materials using mobile technology

So yes, we need to have policies for mobile learning, so that we give access to everyone, make sure that everyone can download learning materials under mobile technology, so it's very important to set policies.

We need to conduct research on mobile learning. Mobile learning is a pretty new field and there is limited research conducted, so we need to conduct more research on mobile learning and we need to get teachers involved in the research.

We need to implement successful mobile learning. Whatever we develop and implement we have to make sure it's successful, and this is one way to make sure that we motivate others to accept mobile learning. So it's very important to implement successful mobile learning.

There are many mobile initiatives around the world. Countries are giving students tablets so they can use their tablet computers in the schools, so that they can access the internet, they can access course materials while they're in school, or while they're at home, or while they're travelling.

So what's the future of education with mobile learning? What will education look like if everyone has a mobile device? We have to make sure as educators that our courses are online, our courses are available for students to access using their mobile technology.

Here are some things you should consider as you complete the module on Mobile Learning in Education:

- Are we ready for "Education in the pocket"? [In other sectors of society for example, the banking sector, people can use a mobile device to do their banking, so we call that "banking in your pocket". Are we ready to deliver education in the pocket?
- Teachers must be involved in developing and promoting mobile learning.
- Because of the flexibility, mobile learning can be used to educate all age groups. [It doesn't matter what age a person is they can actually use the mobile device to access the information, the learning materials, anywhere, any time.
- We need more research on mobile learning to allow teachers to implement mobile learning successfully. [Mobile learning is new so if we have research results available on best practices, we can share these with teachers so that they can implement mobile learning.
- The teacher must be involved in mobile learning and the learning should be learner – centered [in order for it to be successful. Because the teacher will be involved with the students when they learn with the technology. The teacher will become a facilitator, a tutor, for the students.
- Access to open education resources using mobile and ubiquitous technologies will revolutionize education and change the world. [I think teachers and educators have a major role to play so that we can have education for all, around the world.]