

Best Practices in Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL):

Slide 2

Good day everybody, my name is Aga Palalas and I'd like to welcome you to the webinar on best practices in mobile-assisted language learning. At the end of this webinar you should be able to identify best practices for mobile-assisted language learning, parts design, delivery, outcomes, and learning experience.

Enjoy your learning.

Slide 3

I'd like to start with a snapshot of benefits that are unique to mobile-assisted language learning.

Compared to other computer-assisted language learning methods and tools, mobile learning offers the capability of taking learning outside of the classroom – of taking it into the real-world environment, thus augmenting in-class learning with real-world practice. Thanks to communication tools, multimedia supports and the portability of mobile devices, students can practice in relevant environments and they can practice all four language skills with the support of multimedia that is convenient and accessible. Access to language resources, to supports and scaffolds when necessary, as well as to tutors, mentors, and speakers of the language, and to other learners – is another very essential capability of mobile-assisted language learning. Bite-sized e-learning resources being delivered through the mobile devices to students is one of the most important components of spaced-learning: where students are learning over time and in smaller chunks. This is extremely helpful for language learners who can access, for example, short five [or] ten minute podcasts at a convenient time and return to them whenever they are ready. What I consider one of the most vital aspects of mobile-assisted language learning is the situated language practice: when students are able to practice the authentic language embedded in real language situations. Be careful to balance the combination of in-class practice with the real-world practice, as well as the individual learning with collaborative learning activities.

Slide 4

Other key benefits of mobile-assisted language learning would include the possibilities to build in:

- Interactivity, creativity, fun, engagement into the mobile learning tasks and activities – enhancing student's motivation by context-inspired authentic content and challenges,
- The possibilities to rehearse and practice in a less threatening environment: where students, for example, get to record their speech samples as many times as they need before they send it to their experts for evaluation,

- The benefit of being able to create learning activities that are student-centred,
- Access to tools that will let students capture data, and record the learning processes, as well as record, exchange and listen to speech samples as well as written language samples – helping with language comprehension, meaning making and expression,
- The variety of language assessment tools and games that are available for mobile devices,
- As well as, all sorts of group language activities and scaffolds for such that can be communicated through mobile devices that students have in their pockets.

Slide 5

Some of the most popular mobile-assisted language tools would include:

- Email
- Web browser
- Audio/ video player
- Voice recorders
- Camera (for photo, video recording and editing)
- Note-taking tools
- SMS and texting capabilities
- As well as GPS and other location aware capabilities of our mobile devices.

Slide 6

How would students use those mobile tools?

For example, an audio/ video player could be used for language podcasts, listening to audio books, watching *YouTube* videos for the sake of practice. Voice recorders can help students rehearse and record multiple examples of their own speech and other people's speech; record student radio, for example, as part of a class activities; create mini-stories or longer stories either individually or as a part of a group; and record speech samples for feedback and exchange them. Similarly, with a camera, students can capture communicative situations and then analyze them and work with them. They can also create their own mini-stories for evaluation and be creative with role-playing (for example, stand-up comedy episodes.)

Slide 7

Here are some examples of mobile apps that I encourage you to visit after the webinar. These would include tools that are used, quite often, in mobile-assisted

language learning practice and these are tools for feedback collection, polling student - response systems, vocabulary acquisition and learning support, speaking, listening and pronunciation support, as well as those tools that help with the integrated language practice.

Slide 8

Now that I've given you a brief overview of MALL practices, I'd like to share with you a few findings from my research studies that focused in the area. The study I'm referring to resulted in a set of MALL guidelines and recommendations how to implement them. A new theoretical perspective also emerged from the study findings. I refer to it as ecological constructivism. Ecological constructivism was derived from Social Constructivism, Sociocultural Theory, Ecological Linguistics, Contextual and situated learning approaches.

This theoretical framework emphasizes active learning around real-life problems with language learning tasks and activities incorporating interaction that was often embedded in real-world language situations.

Slide 9

Viewed through the ecological constructivism lens, mobile-assisted language learning practice is based on communication and [the] interactivity of learners in social context - the activity that's embedded in real-life language situations and the learning that's mediated by the mobile tool that the learners are using, as well as mediated by the interactivity with the context and affordances that are available in the environment in which students are completing the language tasks and activities. Such affordance would be, for example, signals, sounds, behaviours, pointers to various types of information that's accessible to learners in the environment and helps learners with labelling, with understanding, meaning negotiation, comprehension and other activities involved in language practice.

Slide 10

Following these theoretical principles, a set of mobile-assisted language learning MALL tasks was created, including a collaborative multimedia dictionary, a bank of idioms, a student radio (where students recorded interviews with professionals and experts in various areas), a scavenger hunt that focused on vocabulary building, and some other mobile-assisted language learning tasks that could be completed only with the help of mobile devices where students could collaborate on both in-class and out-of-class activities.

Slide 11

These eight language tasks were all interconnected and related to each other and they focused on authentic communication challenges in real-world situations. They were both individual and collaborative and there was expert guidance incorporated in the whole set of tasks. The interactions included interaction with peers, experts, as well as native speakers of the English language. A big portion of the tasks focused on the creation and co-creation of language artifacts. Those would be peer and expert evaluated, as well as self-evaluated in some cases, using mobile

technologies and features like liking, ranking and rating of the various speech samples. Although the focus of all the tasks was listening skills, all four language skills were incorporated using the multimedia capabilities of mobile tools.

Slide 12

One of the main outcomes of my research on MALL would be the guidelines for design and development of MALL tasks and activities. According to these guidelines, I recommend the inclusion of the following elements in your mobile-assisted language learning design and activities:

- Individual and collaborative tasks
- Learner-generated linguistic artifacts
- Game-like real-life communicative tasks
- Expert facilitation and guidance whenever needed and possible
- A rich feedback mechanism that would include both delayed and immediate feedback
- Focus on authentic language practice.

Slide 13

You would also want to incorporate self-paced individual language activities, integrate all four language skills practice and give access to linguistic resources that are task related, such as relevant vocabulary, dictionaries, pronunciation of the words, and very clear task direction, explanation and examples, and modeling of language utterances. Finally, support of out-of-class learning with in-class f2f, if possible, or at a distance practice and instruction – a blend of both individual and collaborative, in-class and out-of-class situations, if possible a blend of all these language situations, language instructions, and language practice.

Slide 14

You can visit my dissertation and other publications for more detailed discussion of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) best practices including the essential elements of MALL practice as well as design and recommendations on how to incorporate all the various components I mentioned into your design of mobile learning.

Slide 15

Let me summarize the best practices of mobile-assisted language learning with these few key words:

- When designing for mobile learning, make sure that students can replay and re-listen to the language content

- They can record their own artifacts
- They can rehearse as many times as they need to
- Repeat as many times as it takes for them to feel comfortable and to learn,
- Redo their practice using their mobile devices
- So that they can remember
- So they can reflect both on the learning content, and the learning methodology and strategies

Plan your mobile learning activities in such a way that students have opportunities to utilize the unique features of mobile technologies, as well as the mobility of the students across the various contexts and locations.

Slide 16

Make sure that students have opportunities to communicate using the language that they are studying; that they get involved in collaborative activities; that they often connect either f2f or at a distance using mobile devices; that they co-create linguistic artifacts and construct knowledge together; that they acquire their language skills through interactions with other. It's also very important that the learning experience is contextualized in real-life language practice whenever possible.

Slide 17

I hope you enjoyed this webinar on mobile-assisted language learning and you picked up a few ideas that you're going to incorporate into your practice. Have a wonderful day. Bye, bye.