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Mobile phone appropriation and pedagogical mediation by students in educational contexts

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Abstract

In the last few years there has been an increasing interest in exploring the use of mobile technologies to support learning. Mobile devices are particularly appropriate for supporting individual and collaborative learning. Drawing on the premise that knowledge has neither place nor appointed time, we focussed our study on the following questions:

- What impact will mobile technologies have on individual and collaborative learning?
- Could mobile technology help change the students' perception towards school and teaching?

To achieve the goals of this project we outlined the following objectives:

- Analysis of the students' mobile phone appropriation as learning tools
- Assessment of how the mobile phone mediates learning
- Studying the mobile technology implications in learning: creating learning strategies and monitoring within and outside the classroom

We carried out a study looking at how the mobile phone has been used in different learning settings as a learning tool within and outside a secondary school classroom, both in Portuguese and French languages. Drawing on study goals and the conditions for the implementation of this research, we opted for principally a qualitative research methodology, involving a range of data collection techniques (questionnaires, interviews, focus group, observations and diaries).

This study includes four case studies that examine the use of the mobile phone in the following contexts: i) as a repository of learning content; ii) as a production tool for writing and reading and exploring multimedia features (audio, video and image; iii) as an SMS-based learning scenario. The analysis of the four case studies focused on an understanding of two concepts: tool appropriation and tool mediation. In our study we pointed out how mobile phones were appropriated as a learning tool by students, and how they mediated (changed) the learning activities created to support it. The Activity Theory principles helped us to frame the analysis in our study. The Activity Theory was used in our analysis to help us to identify the socio-cultural factors that influenced the process of mobile phone appropriation and help to determine how mobile mediated activities introduced new possibilities. To achieve the objectives we have outlined a set of educational activities that were developed during the academic year and extra lessons that were supported by students who own mobile phones. Outcomes showed that students' competences (writing and reading) in French language had benefited from mobile phone use and students' engagement in learning Portuguese and French languages was enhanced. We noted an increase in students' motivation in both individual and collaborative learning.

Keywords

Mobile learning, appropriation, mediation

Presenter biography

Adelina Moura is currently enrolled at the University of Minho working towards a PhD in Education, focusing on Educational Technologies - Mobile Learning. She has a Master's degree in Education. She also has a specialised Diploma in School Management as well as a Bachelor of Education in Portuguese and French teaching, from the University of Minho, Portugal.