Engaging Students in Higher Education Through Mobile Learning – Lessons Learnt at SMU

Mission (Im)possible?

• SMU aspires to ... produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy.
• SMU is committed to an interactive, participative and technologically-enabled learning experience.
• Towards this end, it will provide a rewarding and challenging environment for faculty, staff and students to kindle and sustain a passion for excellence.

3rd Masterplan for ICT in Education: 4 Goals

• Strengthen competencies for self-directed learning.
• Tailor learning experiences according to the way that each student learns best.
• Encourage students to go deeper and advance their learning.
• Enable students to learn anywhere.
Engaging Students in Higher Education Through Mobile Learning
– Lessons Learnt at SMU

The SMU Experience

• Focus on interactivity in the classroom
• Deliberate small classes
• Group study rooms
• Seminar style teaching
• Promote self-learning
• Be different

Example 1: Knowledge Management Course

• **Course Name:** Creating, Managing and Protecting Knowledge in Organisations
• **Elective:** Undergraduate students (20 – 25 age group)
• **Course:** One-third delivered in e-learning format
• **Collaboration:** Centre for Teaching & Learning
Engaging Students in Higher Education Through Mobile Learning  
– Lessons Learnt at SMU

Did They Enjoy It?


Opportunities


Engaging Generation CX through Mobile Learning Technologies

- Increasingly, young learners generate their own context (Context: CX)
- John Cook (London Mobile Learning Group) defines a ‘mobile learner generated context’ as
  - Being conducted by a learner or learners
  - Who are using mobile devices
  - To communicate or individually reflecting ‘on the move’
  - And who, in the course of a dialogue with another person or interaction with multimedia resources, raise questions that create a context
  - When an answer to this context-based question is generated this can give rise to knowledge (http://www.londonmobilelearning.net)
Engaging Students in Higher Education Through Mobile Learning – Lessons Learnt at SMU

Example 2: SMS-Enabled Treasure Hunt in Chinese Business Course

Info Handout
- Group leaders receive one question from the instructor which requires them to reply to the latter with a short message (1-5 words max) via SMS.
- If they SMS the correct answer to the instructor, group leader will receive the next question etc.
- Each correct question will earn the group points (1 for qu 1, 2 for qu 2, 3 for qu 3, 4 for qu 4 etc.)
- Students are required to move from one location to another in order to get the correct answer.
- They must also snap photos at location and send it to a Flickr photo-sharing website as evidence.

Students’ Reactions
- “This was really an interactive lesson … we had to get to venues based on clues and smses, answering questions while equipped with just a phone. In this way we can interact and learn about places that bear significance to the course while having an enjoyable time”.
- “I love this scavenger hunt because it allows us to go out and explore those places we did not think of. A suggestion would be to give a smart phone to every team. Using a free application such as Whatsapp would allow us to monitor the message quickly and cut down costs”.

Example 3: Creation of a Wiki

A Wiki is a set of collaboratively created and edited web pages. In higher education, wikis help students to acquire knowledge, exchange ideas, gain new insights and disseminate knowledge.

By creating content-rich web pages in groups which is accessible for the general public, students gain a sense of ownership and accountability for their own learning.

https://wiki.smu.edu.sg/MBGT304/Main_Page
Engaging Students in Higher Education Through Mobile Learning – Lessons Learnt at SMU
### Engaging Students in Higher Education Through Mobile Learning – Lessons Learnt at SMU

#### Gen Y Uses Multiple Media …

- Social history of Hainanese coffee shops in Singapore with recorded live interview, photos and text ([http://sites.google.com/site/hainancoffeeshop/](http://sites.google.com/site/hainancoffeeshop/)).
- Social history of Chinese street names qua visual blog ([http://theroadstories.blogspot.com/](http://theroadstories.blogspot.com/)).

#### Why Wikis Make Pedagogical Sense

- “One good thing was that it forced us to go through the entire process of research, analysis of data and then publication. The wiki forced us to articulate clearly our most relevant findings only - short and sharp. To me, this is an important skill that was honed through the wiki. Bosses in the workplace do not have time to read a lengthy report. What then is the difference between typing on a wiki and typing an academic essay? The wiki has the added element of being public. This forced our group to ensure that our writings were of a minimum standard in terms of relevance and clarity.”

#### In Wired Singapore Classrooms, Cultures Clash Over Web 2.0

Headline of The Chronicle of Higher Education 7/9/2010

Students are reluctant to edit things that others have posted!

“Few students seemed to freely post to blogs or twitter, electing instead to communicate using Facebook accounts with the privacy set so that only close friends could see them”

(Michael Netzley, A/P for Corporate Communications Practice, SMU).
Pedagogical Benefits of Wikis

Include evolutionary knowledge sharing and creation, progressive problem-solving and exploration of diverse ideas. Critical reflection, avoidance of premature judgment and engagement in the analysis of the work of their peers are other advantages.

Example 4: Podcasting

A podcast is recorded audio, video or screen capture. Podcasts can be downloaded via RSS to a computer. They can be played on a computer or an MP3 player (e.g. an iPod). To subscribe to a podcast, users need internet access and a computer.

By creating content-rich web pages in groups which is accessible for the general public, students gain a sense of ownership and accountability for their own learning.

Podcasting Is Ideal For …

• Distance (mobile) learning;
• Facilitating self-paced learning;
• Allowing faculty to offer advanced and or highly motivated learners extra content;
• Helping students with reading and/or other disabilities;
• Featuring guest speakers from remote locations and
• Reusing guest speakers’ talks in other sections / classes.
Engaging Students in Higher Education Through Mobile Learning – Lessons Learnt at SMU

Example 5: Twitter

• A tweet is a short message with up to 140 characters sent on Twitter, a microblogging service (http://twitter.com/).

• Twitter enters the classroom
  MediaCorp, Channel 8, 6 March 2011

• How does microblogging enhance learning?

Tweeting in OBHR211 Knowledge Management

Student’s Comment:

“Personally, I love the idea of tweeting in class as I think it has helped create a safe environment for introverted students to participate in the class discussion. However, in order to promote greater sense of community and to avoid a week of quiet period, bringing discussions done on twitter outside of the 3 hours class context would be necessary. Twitter could also be used as a platform to make class announcements which would provide greater flexibility to both students and instructor”.

Conclusions

• Mobile learning tools
  – supplement blended learning approaches and help students to create meaningful, contextual learning outcomes in relation to pedagogical objectives
  – enable students to engage in meaningful, collaborative learning and to tackle existing competency gaps either individually or in a team with the help of their peers
  – support assurance of learning as they appeal to Gen Y’s technological know how and learning culture
Engaging Students in Higher Education Through Mobile Learning – Lessons Learnt at SMU

Challenges Ahead

• How to acquire the required competencies to create mobile learning resources?
• How to ensure “some fun” (e.g., through course-related online games)?
• How to monitor students’ performance and to grade the outcomes of mobile learning outcomes fairly?
• How to find the time to provide valuable feedback?
• How to obtain funding and adequate technical support?

Most important: Determine pedagogical underpinnings of mobile learning initiatives!