

# The Mobile Phone as an Educational Resource in the Classroom: Implications for Educational Practice

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**Abstract:** This article aims to answer several questions that seem to me of vital interest and that are closely linked to the educational world and its progress using technological support. First of all, we will discuss how and when the mobile phone appears as an educational resource, and how it influences the classroom. On the other hand, I will discuss the various positive effects of the use of smart devices in the teaching-learning process, as well as their limitations. Finally, reference will be made to an example of an educational project based on m-learning, which will show how this type of tool is a very effective pedagogical resource in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Mobile, Education, M -learning, new technologies.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The world is in continuous change, and this is why in such a valuable and important space for the development of the person as the school is, this must be contemplated.

The school, as one of the most important educational and social agents for the individual, must embrace those innovative aspects that are gradually becoming essential in today's society. If it were not in this way, we would be facing an outdated system with little effectiveness, since what is the school for if not to form the individual in an integral way, adapting him/her to the world in which he/she lives and providing him/her with the necessary skills to face it.

The Organic Law 8/2013, of December 9, for the improvement of educational quality, alludes in its content to numerous quotes in which it claims the importance of an adaptation by the school, to the new educational context that is presented, in which new technologies are an important part of the educational curriculum.

Faced with an indisputable reality in our society, such as the massive use of cell phones in our lives, education has had to adapt to the new circumstances and make it a powerful and effective resource in the classroom.

The origin of mobile education is located at the end of the 90s, so we are talking about a relatively recent period, but one that has had a decisive impact on what education will be in the present and future (Moreno Guerrero, 2011). That is why, at this time, it is essential to integrate and adapt this device into the curriculum as a valuable educational resource. We cannot train our students effectively without innovating and updating our educational model, as we would be facing an unfeasible option that would lead students towards a meaningless path, towards a content that does not correspond to reality.

It is true that teachers have a wide range of tools to use in the development of their classes, but they must have something absolutely vital for the dynamics of these, and that is motivation. Camilloni (2007) states that "it does not seem that there

is a perfect format that ensures that teaching will be successful and that all students will learn what the teacher wants to teach them" (p. 7), but it is essential to try to achieve it that students feel interest in what they are going to learn, and if we use attractive means that capture their attention and make their learning process dynamic, we will be on the right track.

The Organic Law 8/2013, of December 9, 2013, for the improvement of educational quality, actively defends a change in the way of teaching, explaining that "Information and Communication Technologies will be a fundamental piece to produce the methodological change that leads to achieve the objective of improving the quality of education" (LOMCE, 2013, p.8).

The inclusion of the cell phone in the classroom is therefore a great contribution to progress, thus promoting the disappearance of teaching routines that lead to daily boredom in the classroom that some students have (Maggiolini, 2013). Teachers must therefore avoid a reluctant attitude towards change and innovation, and opt for a dynamic and interactive teaching model that employs teaching strategies connected to the current world. Only in this way will students understand the usefulness of education as a transmitter of the information they need to face the reality they are living.

## II. M-LEARNING

### A. Concept

Technological advances have changed the way we live, and therefore, the way we learn. They offer us immense tools to guide our teaching and serve as educational support, providing us with numerous activities and experiences that allow us to learn new things. It is in this reality that M. Learning could be situated.

e-ISEA (2009) defines Mobile Learning as the intersection of mobile computing and e-learning with the aim of providing the subject with a learning experience regardless of time and space. It involves the use of devices such as cell phones, PDAs, among others, which allow the user to perform different actions quickly and easily.

There are other perspectives to define this concept such as the one proposed by O'Malley, C., et al. (2005), which defines it as "...any type of learning that occurs when the learner is not in a fixed and predetermined location; or learning that occurs when the learner takes advantage of the learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies" (p. 9). As we can see, this definition provides another important aspect of m-learning, namely the space in which this learning takes place.

This is why we could summarize this term by saying that it consists of a new way of projecting education, combining e-Learning and current smart devices.

### B. Advantages

After having delved into the concept of M. Learning, it is easy to know that one of its most fundamental advantages is that it allows learning to extend outside the classroom, making it possible at any time and in any place. It is a feedback space where everyone can receive and provide information, which is a great enrichment of the learning process (SCOPE0, 2011).

Marquez and Lautero (s.f) explain that the presence of M.- Learning in the educational process is very important since it allows in the classroom an autonomous learning of the students, in which the subject takes the main role being the teacher a guide or orientor of the apprehension of the curriculum. It aims above all "to involve the student in their learning process through the use of mobile devices" (Marquez and Lautero, s.f. , p.2) and therefore, implementing M-Learning is a huge advantage, because if the student's attention is captured and motivated by using interesting resources for them, learning makes sense.

### C. Limitations

After several studies conducted by researchers in this field, it has been appreciated that the mobile phenomenon can be welcomed as a powerful educational resource, but certain limitations must be known that make us not only dispense with it alone, but complement it with other educational strategies.

Bravino and Margaria (2014) indicate that although there are more advantages than disadvantages of this new method, M.Learning presents certain cases of distraction, use of devices for non-academic use, high connection cost, limitation of work due to battery capacity and memory, and reduced screen.

Cabrero (2006) also points out other important risks when using a methodology of this nature:

- Additional training on the part of the teacher
- It unconditionally requires basic competencies in terms of technology on the part of the learner and the educator,
- It requires the students to carry out autonomous work.
- If it is given in large groups, it may decrease productivity.

### III. MOBILE AS A PEDAGOGICAL RESOURCE

Several authors defend the need for digital literacy in educational centers, since society demands more and more people with updated and developed knowledge about technology (Gómez and Monje, 2013). It is a reality that technological knowledge is essential for the daily life of people, society is advancing and education must provide skills and knowledge to cope with this progress.

Pedagogy, a science whose *raison d'être* is education, must contemplate this fact and offer help and guidance to teachers and students so that these two areas (education and technology) go hand in hand and facilitate learning.

At present, educational centers welcome this type of education in very different ways. On some occasions they show a favorable attitude to change, but on others there is a major problem, and that is skepticism on the part of the teaching staff towards this type of educational model. Another aspect that does not favor the development of this model is the lack of preparation and training that teachers have for this topic and for the use of resources of this type (Ismail and Azman, 2013).

As education professionals, we consider it vitally important that in any case, there is always an attitude of willingness to change and improve, and that is why if we are facing a reality that requires training and a different dynamic to what was previously required, we cannot look the other way. Education professionals, as well as all professionals in different fields, need a permanent training, and that is why they must present minimum competences in terms of technological education.

### VI. EDUMOVIL PROJECT

After having developed the implications of the emergence of cell phones and other intelligent devices in education, as well as their positive effects and some of the limitations they present, we consider it interesting to exemplify a project closely related to this topic called Edumovil.

The Edumovil project is a proposal initiated in Mexico and organized by the Universidad Tecnológica de Mixteca (Mexico), whose main objective is to reveal the positive aspects of incorporating mobile technology in education (Geronimo and Rocha, 2007). This project, as I will explain below, is committed to innovation as the best weapon to combat demotivation in students, proposing attractive participation dynamics that have mobile technology as the main axis.

This project complies with all the characteristics of M.Learning, making Mathematics, Spanish and History classes more dynamic through technology, in which the dynamics include group classroom activities, since one of the main principles of this method is also the interaction of classmates and cooperative learning.

The conclusions drawn from this project are that Edumóvil serves as a resource or support for the teacher to capture the student's attention by working on topics of interest in an alternative way. One of the advantages that the teacher has with it is to be able to work in a global way on topics in which the teacher has noticed a certain lack of knowledge on the part of the students.

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