

LANGUAGE LEARNING IN A MOBILE ERA: A STUDY IN A PORTUGUESE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

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Abstract

Over the last decade, technological developments and the use of ICT have played a significant role in changing how faculty and students perceive learning. The expansion of mobile and wireless technologies and their pervasiveness have turned mobile devices into valuable teaching/learning tools, appealing both to students and institutions.

Mobile devices and apps are reshaping the way people learn and have had a widespread impact in different areas, including language learning. Focusing on the use of mobile learning to promote language learning within a tourism course, this paper documents a project involving the use of mobile devices and the student response system Socrative in a German course being held at the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo, Portugal.

After establishing a theoretical framework, based on recent research on how higher education institutions are incorporating technology, and more specifically mobile devices, into their tourism and language courses, the author not only describes the project and its implementation, but also presents preliminary findings based on students' perceptions and test results.

Aiming at understanding the role mobile devices and student response systems can play in promoting students' long-term content retention and motivation, these findings suggest that mobile initiatives can play an important role in improving their results and engagement, also providing faculty with valuable insights on students' progress and learning styles.

Keywords: mobile learning; gamification; Mobile Assisted Language Learning; Student-Response Systems