

ABSTRACT
PARALLEL WORKING SESSION

TEACHING & LEARNING

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New Perspectives on Learning: from e-learning to m-learning

In the past decade, rapid advances in information technology and easy access to the Internet are changing the way people around the world work, play, learn and do business. In education, the unique characteristics of the World Wide Web (e.g., use of hypermedia, connectivity, interactivity and flexibility), which are compatible with those in interactive, collaborative, and student-centered learning, are causing a paradigm shift toward Web-centric teaching and learning. Likewise, the application of learning Management systems, Web services and mobile technology is transforming many learning support services. The ubiquity of digital media and communication devices, the emergence of tools/services that promote sharing and collaboration, and advances in digital gaming and simulation technology, also enable learning modes that are not possible using traditional means.

Since 2007 the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) has been offering flexible e-learning programs with network technologies that enable learners to share and build knowledge together. Courses in these programs involve real-time online lectures and tutorials, and have a range of integrated components such as interactive learning activities, online course materials, videotaped seminars, discussion boards, an E-Library and reference resources. The bilingual e-learning platform is specially designed to incorporate various types learning support to enhance interactivity.

The University has also capitalized on the growth of wireless communications and the use of mobile devices for learning and training. In the OUHK's Nursing program, students use Pocket PCs during their clinical placements, and mobile learning, incorporating specially designed online components, replaces print-based learning. This facilitates a productive form of just-in-time learning and assessment. Back on campus, technology allows students to gain further hands-on practice through interactions with virtual patients and simulations in a state-of-the-art multimedia nursing laboratory.

This paper examines the effective use of technology in the delivery of learner-based instruction and the development of blended learning environments that include problem-based instruction, hands-on practice, multimedia learning materials and collaborative discussion. It also identifies strategies for developing more holistic teaching-learning environments and alternative forms of assessing learning outcomes.