

An Exploratory Study: Mobile Learning as a Means of Promoting Sustainable Learning in the Saudi General Educational Schools via an Activity Theory Lens

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Abstract : Sustainable learning is an emerging concept that aims at enhancing sustainability literacy and competency in educational contexts. Mobile learning is one of the means increasingly used in sustainable development education nowadays. Studies which have explored this issue in the Saudi educational context so far are rare. Therefore, the current study attempted to explore the current situation of the usage of mobile learning in the Saudi elementary and secondary schools as a means of promoting sustainable learning. It also focused on how mobile learning has been implemented in those schools to promote sustainable learning and what factors have contributed to the success/failure of the implementation of mobile learning and possible ways to improve the current practice. An interpretive approach was followed in this study to gain a thorough understanding of the explored issue in the Saudi educational context using the activity theory as a lens to do so. A qualitative case study methodology in which semi-structured interviews, documents analysis and nominal group were used to gather the data for this study. Two hundred and twenty-nine participants representing several main stakeholders in the educational system took part in this study. Those included six general education schools, head teachers, teachers, students' parents, educational supervisors, one curriculum designer and academic curriculum specialists. Through the lens of activity theory, the results of the study showed that there were contradictions in the current practice between the elements of the activity system and within each of its elements. Furthermore, several sociocultural factors have influenced both the division of labour and the community's members. These have acted as obstacles which have impeded the usage of mobile learning to promote sustainable learning in this context. It was found that shifting from the current practice to sustainable learning via the usage of mobile learning requires appropriate interrelationship between the different elements of the activity system. The study finally offers a number of recommendations to improve on the current practices and suggests areas for further studies.

Keywords : activity theory, mobile learning, sustainability competency, sustainability literacy, sustainable learning

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