Chapter 6
QRienteering:
Mobilising the M-Learner with Affordable Learning Games for Campus Inductions

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter presents a case study on the use of Quick Response (QR) technologies in learning. It examines how these technologies can be applied to create an affordable learning game, which provides learners with a more active and student-led collaborative approach to campus inductions, whilst also familiarising them with the use of mobile technologies within a learning environment. The study focuses upon the design principles and development of the mobile based game itself and learner response to the effectiveness and validity of the game in enhancing the campus induction process.

OVERALL DESCRIPTION

Introduction

Given the current economic climate and its resulting impact on intensifying operational pressures within educational institutions (IE, 2009; EUA, 2011), a general concern has arisen as to whether educational practitioners can 'afford' to develop and deliver new methods of technology enhanced learning. Are the increasing pressures on teaching, which can include: funding cutbacks, longer class contact time,

reduced practitioner development time, to name but a few, hindering any potential desire or progress in embracing and utilising games based technologies for teaching? (Williamson, 2009: p25).

Affordable Games

Three main factors are considered when determining the affordability of introducing a new form of technology driven learning: Development Time: Financial Cost & Technical Skill. These raise the following questions:

- Can practitioners afford the time, or do they possess the technical expertise, to develop and deliver technology driven teaching activities?
- Can the educational establishments financially afford or possess the infrastructure to accommodate emerging technology driven learning at an institutional level?
- Can learners be expected to successfully embrace technology enhanced learning, if they do not possess the technical knowledge and skills, or have access to technology to do so?

In an attempt to address these factors, it was decided to determine whether it was possible to develop and implement a new type of mobile games based learning. The purpose of the game would be to determine if its design could be easily replicated and implemented by practitioners and easily accessed by learners within a campus based educational environment.

Pilot Focus

The focus of this pilot was to introduce mobile learning opportunities, via a mobile based learning game, at the outset of the learner's academic journey. Its purpose was to highlight how mobile phone technology could be utilised for educational purposes and determine if mobile learning could deliver an active and collaborative experience for learners during the induction process.

Why QRienteering and What Does it Mean?

For lack of a better word, I have coined the term '*QRienteering*'; a portmanteau of QR (Quick Response) technology and Orienteering, to describe the mobile learning game for this particular pilot study. The game would adopt the sporting principles of Orienteering, whilst utilising QR code technology as an integral component of the games design.

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