BYOD in Education

Technology is transforming the way learning is consumed and delivered. A 2013 survey (2) of about 500 colleges, universities and K-12 school districts in the United States and United Kingdom found that more than 85 percent of these institutions permitted some form of BYOD (Bring Your Own Device). As devices continue to proliferate, students are now learning “anywhere, anytime and anyhow”, clearly expecting courseware to be seamlessly accessible on the devices of their choice.

Mobility of education is therefore hygiene. When the philanthropic arm of a global education company conducted a survey three years ago, they found that 73 percent of students preferred digital textbooks to paper, and a whopping 86 percent believed that tablets helped them learn better.

For educational institutions, for whom maximizing learning outcomes is a top priority, there couldn’t be a more persuasive argument in favor of mobility. It is therefore imperative that schools and colleges embrace mobile technologies to support a spectrum of learning and teaching activities.

The challenge of churn

A mobile enabled learning platform can deliver significant benefits at every stage of the learning lifecycle. It frees both students and teachers of the traditional constraints of time and space. Students can learn on the go, and yet access their peer and academic network any time they need to collaborate or consult. They can connect with faculty with a single click on their smartphones, and take quizzes or assessment tests whenever it is convenient. On the flip side, students who do not have such options are forced to learn within a conventional construct, which offers far fewer opportunities for collaborative learning and engagement. Since low levels of engagement is one of the biggest reasons for student dropout, it follows that mobilizing education will result in higher student retention.

About the authors

Arvind Thothadri
Vice President – New Initiatives
A post graduate from IIM, Lucknow with about 20 years’ experience, Arvind, has spent the last 10 years in leadership roles advocating technology in Learning, Training and Assessment with customers across the globe.

Mohan Kannegal
Head - Learning Solutions Group
Co-founder of MeritTrac Services, India’s largest assessment company that develops and delivers over 2 million online and paper assessments each year, Mohan drives development and innovation on EduNxt Learning Ecosystem.
Choosing the Right Platform

Clearly, mobility has the potential to make a deep impact on engagement and learning outcomes, but the actual result will depend on the capability of the learning management platform. Hence the learning platform should not only be mobile-compatible, but also offer access to its full array of tools, multi-media content and analytics. Moreover, the mobile learning platform should be designed with a strong focus on user experience.

EduNxt, from Manipal Global Education, is a proven learning management platform with evolved mobile enablement. Unlike many platforms, which offer little besides mobile alerts, EduNxt has a rich feature set that supports multiple activities; students can access multimedia course content, collaborate with peers and teaching staff on their mobiles and tablets. They can also take online tests and assessments on mobile.

EduNxt enables a range of thoughtful and sophisticated engagement activities through mobile and tablet. A virtual leaderboard showcases the top ten students in the class, ranked based on a matrix of parameters. The Q&A platform is intuitive and easy to use and allows students to resolve problems collaboratively.

One of the most powerful features of EduNxt is its offline ability that allows learners to complete a quiz even in the absence of connectivity. Once the learner is back on a network, the quiz responses are automatically uploaded online and evaluated.

EduNxt is among the very few platforms to allow *QTI & SCORM content to play on mobile phones and tablets. Content can be tracked and analyzed. Faculty can monitor a student's usage of mobile content, and students can resume activity from where they left off.

The EduNxt platform delivers Byte Sized Learning, to enable working professionals to learn on the go and in between meetings.

A good learning platform also provides teachers with visibility into student activity, pre-class preparation, academic progress, test scores and more on their mobile devices, anytime, anywhere.

A 24/7 helpdesk allows students to log issues and get immediate responses. Administrative staff can also leverage the platform's mobility to send out notifications. Reminders and notifications for tests, assignment submission deadlines or new discussion threads are most effective when delivered on a mobile device that learners have constant access to.
120,000+ App Downloads: Testament to EduNxt’s Success

Sikkim Manipal University is the largest privately owned distance education provider in India. In 2015, more than 120,000 learners have downloaded the EduNxt iOS or Android app on their mobiles and tablets. There has been a noticeable increase in the number of students taking quizzes to assess exam readiness ever since they were launched on the mobile app. Further endorsement, as well as evidence of engagement, comes in the form of an impressive 3.93 (average) rating out of 5, given by approximately 3,000 students on the Android App Store.

Importantly, these app downloads have translated into better learning outcomes and higher graduation rates. In the case of Sikkim Manipal University, we have seen that engagement on the platform’s online and mobile channels correlates strongly with a decrease in student dropout.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EduNxt Engagement Levels</th>
<th>% Dropout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top 25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom 25%</td>
<td>38%</td>
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</tbody>
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Conclusion

Maximizing learning outcomes for students is one of the biggest goals of educational institutions – a goal, which is closely linked to student engagement. In an age where bringing your own device is the norm, students expect learning also to be available at all times, in all places, and on all the devices of their choice. Hence a mobile enabled learning platform is no longer merely nice to have, but an absolute necessity. The EduNxt learning management platform packs rich mobile functionality to deliver a seamless, omnichannel experience to students to improve both learning outcomes and engagement.

*SCORM is the de facto industry standard for e-learning interoperability. Specifically, SCORM governs how online learning content and Learning Management Systems (LMSs) communicate with each other. If an LMS is SCORM conformant, it can play any content that is SCORM conformant, and any SCORM conformant content can play in any SCORM conformant LMS. It enables tracking of content within a Learning Management system. The LMS uses this tracking data for providing Analytics on performance.
The IMS Question and Test Interoperability specification (QTI) defines a standard format for the representation of assessment content and results, supporting the exchange of this material between authoring and delivery systems, repositories and other learning management systems. It allows assessment materials to be authored and delivered on multiple systems interchangeably. It is, therefore, designed to facilitate interoperability.

References:

1. [http://www.slideshare.net/ellucian/the-mobileimperativeinfographic-32551071](http://www.slideshare.net/ellucian/the-mobileimperativeinfographic-32551071)