

Cell Phones 1



Mobile Assisted Language Learning

(MALL) describes an approach to language learning that is enhanced through use of a mobile device.

MALL a subset of both Mobile Learning (m-learning) and Computer-assisted language learning (CALL).

MALL is involved with the use of the mobile technologies, such as mobiles phones, MP3 /MP4 players, PDAs and palmtop computers, to support students' language learning.

With MALL students are able to access language learning materials, and to communicate with their teachers and peers, at anytime, anywhere.

History: Let's recap what has happened in the last decades:

1980s

- telephones were used to provide distant language learners with feedback and assistance.

1990s

- Instructors at Brigham Young University-Hawaii taught a distance education English course from Hawaii to Tonga via telephone and computer (Green, Collier, & Evans, 2001)

2000s

- teleconferencing was used to teach an English conversation course to students in South Korea.
- Stanford University learning lab used integrated mobile phones in a Spanish learning program in 2001 (Brown, 2001).
- Thornton and Houser (2002; 2003; 2005) developed several innovative projects using mobile phones to teach English at a Japanese university. They also developed a course management system, Poodle, to facilitate deploying language learning material to mobile phones.
- City College, Southampton developed a web based "media board" (similar to a web-board but supporting Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS) as well as Short Message Service (SMS) and supplied learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) with mobile phones with inbuilt cameras and voice recording facilities (JISC, 2005).
- University of Wisconsin-Madison, developed several foreign language courses which have used wireless handheld computers for various classroom activities (Samuels, 2003).
- Duke University provided all incoming freshmen with free iPods equipped with voice recorders. Amongst the pilot courses utilizing the players were several language courses, which utilized both their listening and recording capabilities (Belanger, 2005).



- United Kingdom's Open University used voice recorders and mini-camcorders to record interviews with other students and locals and to create audiovisual tours in distance-learning German and Spanish course (Kukulska-Hulme, 2005). The Open University also recently used mobile phones for language learning
- A project in Ireland used MALL for Irish Language learning and assessment
- The Le@rning Federation (TLF) used MALL for Indonesian Language learning across three states

Today, due to the growth of wireless and emerging technologies, MALL is available through numerous devices including mobile phones, iPods, tablet PCs, hand-held computers, PDAs, MP3 players, Smartphones and more. MALL designers have begun to move away from merely copying the traditions of standard non-mobile language learning and are implementing techniques that maximize the benefits of these new devices.

The increasing number of possible delivery tools has spawned a wide-range of mobile language learning programs, from very-short tutorials to full courses.

The number of people capable of producing MALL content is also on the rise, due largely to a combination of increased popularity, demand and the advent of content generation tools that simplify the programming process through the use of templates and macros.

MALL currently serves not only as a primary source of language education for students but also supports the retention and utilization of newly-acquired language skills—however they were acquired. Through mobile participation in short exercises and tasks, learners are able to keep their linguistic talents sharp while reducing the risk of degradation of valuable knowledge, skills and abilities **the demand for it will only increase**—along with the demand for second language acquisition and learning flexibility. Predicted growth is reinforced by the overall decrease in free time. With people working longer hours, the time necessary for formal, traditional classroom-based or even standard online courses will decrease. MALL will be an ideal solution to busy students and professionals seeking to acquire one or more new languages.

Pros & Cons (average devices)

What mobile devices **lack in capability** (regarding sound and video quality and screen size) they make up for in portability. In the future, however, we can expect mobile devices to deliver better quality than is currently available among most mobile devices. It is expected that designers will capitalize on this increase in quality—designing MALL programs that employ student-focused, media-rich, flexible and collaborative learning strategies. Additionally, **changes in the cost and availability of wireless service**—a luxury to most in the not-too-distant past—will make MALL available to a far wider and diverse audience