Mobiles in the workplace

The 21st century workplace is changing rapidly.
Global compet t on for advanced knowledge and
skills development coupled with societal changes
are creat ng new demands in the workplace.
In response, business pract ces and processes
are rapidly evolving leading to changes in the
places and t mes of work, increasing workloads,
and greater workforce mobility. Furthermore,
mobiles have penetrated the business world
opening the door to new approaches for
workforce development, across various contexts
and career paths. This art cle examines mobiles
for enriching work-based learning pract ces
and support ng performance for those already
employed in the business sector. The next sect on
introduces the use of mobiles before progressing
to a discussion on informal learning in the
workplace. The lat er sect ons focus on work-
based mobile learning approaches with selected
case studies, af ordances and constraints, and
recommendat ons for pract ce.

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In the evolving workplace, employees are expected
to acquire knowledge and develop skills to
perform their jobs well and sustain a compet t ve
advantage. However, budget and t me constraints,
a mobile labour market, and work-life balance
demands are creat ng challenges for the delivery
of tradit onal work-based educat on and training.
These limitat ons have given rise to mobiles as
the vehicles for workforce development across
dif erent locat ons and t mes.

Best Case: Official Career Course of yoDefense of Defense

The US Department of Defense converted an eLearning course for mobile delivery for active duty military, civilians, and contractors. With the original eLearning course, learners were often challenged to complete the compulsory training requirements while dealing with distra

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A Brit sh career company implemented semant c people tagging with 60 geographically

Creating and sharing in work-based mobile learning

When employees create and share work-based mobile learning resources, it promotes peer-to-peer learning, active knowledge construction, and skills and vocational identity development within a learning community. Whether it be creating and sharing a video, audio recording, or other job-related resource, it's a bottom-up and learner-centred approach. As the next case discusses (Box 5.4), creating and sharing work-based mobile learning resources can empower and engage

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Bridging informal and formal work-based mobile learning

Mobiles can bridge the gap between informal learning experiences and work-based mobile learning, formal education and training for a blended approach. This allows for differentiation but also personalization of the employee's learning, either individually or collaboratively.

Individually, an employee may reflect on informal learning experiences in relation to their work-based formal learning, using an e-portfolio, blog, or other mobile modes. Managers can mentor an employee at a distance to provide timely support and feedback on their informal learning experiences for decision-making and PD. Mobile mentoring may also have cost implications related to reducing the need for face-to-face meetings and increasing the number of employees a manager could mentor.

Collaboratively, employees can engage in social learning using their mobiles where they interact and share work experiences building on their previous formal work-based mobile learning. The case from the developing country of Peru illustrates bridging informal and formal work-based mobile learning (Box 5.5).

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The workplace provides a learning environment with competing affordances and constraints for work-based mobile learning, generated from perceived needs of the business organization and also individual employees. As outlined in Table 5.1, the potential affordances of WBML enable learner participation while the potential constraints impede the effectiveness of work-based mobile learning.

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Potential Affordances	Potential Constraints
Learning & skills development in businesses where access to computers may be limited	Workplace cultures that are reluctant to change learning practices & adopt mobiles for workforce development
Flexibility, convenience, & learner control over time for learning whether it be in the office, field, or other locations	Lack of educators & trainers with the knowledge & skills to support & facilitate WBML
Potential to increase multi-generational learner motivation, engagement, & performance from WBML opportunities	Lack of managerial support due to the blurring of mobile device boundaries for personal and work use
Facilitation of employee learning for those who are difficult to access due to the changing nature of work, roles, & decreasing opportunities for face-to-face education & training	Challenges with selection & costs in the provision of employees' mobile devices & content in their work settings

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Twenty doctors working in clinics with limited access to HIV/AIDS teaching resources part cipated in WBML. Their previously ident f ed PD challenges included lack of access to training, training not meet ng regional needs, limitat ons in the development of health personnel competencies, and high turnover rates of trained healthcare workers.

A formal HIV/AIDs educat on program was developed and delivered via supplied smartphones incorporat ng 3D learning scenarios simulat ng interact ve clinical cases. Portable and inexpensive solar chargers facilitated wireless connect on to download materials and Internet access.
A mobile plat orm supported the learning events, tracked doctor's progress, and provided
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Conclusion and Recommendations

There is no one-size-fits-all work-based mobile learning approach. As examined in this article, work-based mobile learning provides a multifaceted learning approach for knowledge acquisition, skills development, and performance support for effective and efficient workforce development across different contexts and career trajectories. Therefore, the following recommendations should be considered when implementing work-based mobile learning for enhancing rich learning experiences and promoting best practices:

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wp-content/uploads/2014/06/In-Focus-2014-Report-Mobile-Learning-in-the-