# Going for gold: a moblogging case study

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This paper introduces a research project that explores the integration of Web2 and wireless mobile devices in tertiary education. It discusses the results of the first mobile learning trial undertaken as part of the research. The paper argues that wireless mobile devices can be used to intentionally create disruptive learning environments that facilitate a social constructivist approach to teaching and learning.

**Keywords:** mobile, blogging, social constructivism

## Overview

The use of Wireless Mobile Devices (WMDs) as part of the teaching and learning environment requires changes in pedagogy and integration into the teaching and learning processes. The researcher is an Academic Advisor at the Centre for Teaching & Learning Innovation at Unitec (CTLI), and is investigating innovative ways of integrating wireless technologies into teaching and learning at Unitec to support diverse learning styles.

The research project involves a series of reflective action research trials using WMDs to harness the potential of current and emerging social constructivist e-learning tools (e.g. Moodle, Blogs, Wikis, PodCasting etc…). The first trial began in February 2007, with Diploma Landscape Design students implementing the use of Blogs, online image sharing, eportfolios and RSS aggregation to create a collaborative team-based project design for the Ellerslie International Flower Show (November 2007). With research funding made available in July 2007, we were able to provide students with Nokia N80 smartphones to post to their blogs and upload photos and videos to their online eportfolios via 3G or WiFi networks. This provided students with a flexible collaborative and context-sensitive mobile learning environment with which to document their Flower show projects. This has proven very useful, as much of the project involves sourcing materials, ideas and plants from a wide variety of locations that are off campus, and beyond the formal learning environment. It is this flexibility and context-awareness in which mobile wireless devices enhance learning. The project is investigating implications for learner support, and pedagogical changes that these disruptive technologies introduce.

Disruptive technologies are those technologies that challenge established systems and thinking, requiring change and are thus viewed by many as a threat to the status quo. Disruptive technologies democratise education environments challenging the established power relations between teachers and students. Mishra et al (2007) argue that "appropriate use of technology in teaching requires the thoughtful integration of content, pedagogy, and technology".

The introduction of WMDs in education requires changes in pedagogical strategies, content (reformatted for small screens and lower data bandwidths), and contexts

(beyond the face-to-face classroom environment). In a social constructivist view of learning, creating a student centred, self-directed learning environment is seen as necessary for deep learning to occur. Hence it is postulated herein that WMDs are disruptive technologies that are useful in challenging established pedagogies, providing a catalyst to move tertiary education towards social constructivism.

Mishra, P., Koehler, M. J., & Zhao, Y. (Eds.). (2007). *Faculty development by design: Integrating technology in higher education*. Charlotte: Information Age Publishing.