

Mobile Dynamic Frequently Asked Questions (m-DFAQ) for Student and Learning Support

Most students are communicatively competent with SMS (short message service) texting. To the extent that SMS is text based and academic discourse is mainly text, it seems reasonable to exploit the communicative competence of SMS for teaching and learning. This paper discusses a project in which the communicative competence of SMS texting among students is being used to address some of the educational challenges, in particular the under prepared students, diversity, and large class sizes. Mindful of many unsubstantiated claims in literature about the revolutionary potential of ICT to improve the quality of education and many suggestions but few demonstrable examples, we did not want to add to the suggestion list. Thus, the objective of the paper is to demonstrate how an ICT application is being used to add value to student learning. The seamless integration of the SMS and the web interface coupled with communicative competencies and anonymity has had some impact on student learning. There are four ways by which learning has been impacted: firstly, exposure to other students' questions mirrored their own understandings/ misunderstandings; secondly, the anonymity created a feeling of a safe environment which empowered students to ask and respond to questions; thirdly, students were able to monitor their own growth/ development through observing their own changes in the way they asked questions; fourthly, the educator received feedback on where the students learning difficulties lay and was able to quickly respond to their learning needs.

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