

New Things to Consider for Campus Learning Spaces in a Mobile and BYOD Era

Synopsis:

A mobile device empowers users with so many functionalities such as connection to the internet anywhere and anytime, and the abilities to engage in sophisticated communications and obtain rich information on-the-spot. Nowadays, the great majority of our students readily bring along their own smart devices to the university (BYOD). These facts have given us the motivation to rethink our teaching and learning environment such that teachers and students can readily use the technology effectively for teaching and learning purposes and thus gain benefits that might not have been possible before.

Hong Kong can be perhaps one of the first places in the world to explore the role of this BYOD phenomenon in education because of the wide-spread ownership of high-end mobile devices by students. Network infrastructure is also by and large well established in the campus. Apart from relying on campus wifi, many students readily use their own 3G/4G data services to connect to the web as such services are becoming affordable. In the presentation, there will be discussion of the many areas related to the preparation of modern day BYOD-friendly learning environment. Considerations of course involve library spaces changes but they are also about rethinking of nearly all other spaces in the campus, including classrooms, open spaces, and even virtual learning spaces that serve to extend teaching and learning out of the boundaries of time and space of a normal university campus and curriculum.

I will illustrate my points with some of the work accomplished in the Mobile Learning @ CUHK (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) project which began in 2009. In particular, we will demonstrate strategies (e.g. ebooks and student response system) that can turn mobile devices into effective teaching and learning tools both inside and outside the classroom and the effort we paid to diffuse them.