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Learning via Mobile Platforms: The Possibilities and Pitfalls

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Abstract: Advancing personalized learning has been named as one of the twenty grand challenges for the 21st century by the National Academy of Engineering. One method of personalizing the learning environment is to allow people to learn anytime, anywhere by using their mobile phone as a learning platform. But is learning in a distracted environment via mobile phones effective? In this talk, I present a study designed to evaluate this question. Using a customized web-application, I evaluated 40 participants ability to learn American Sign Language vocabulary words via mobile platforms and conventional computing platforms. Over the course of two weeks, participants learned 80 distinct vocabulary words and were evaluated on both receptive and generative language skills. The results of this study show that mobile platforms can support learning and suggest that further personalization is needed to help maximize its impact. In light of these results, this talk concludes with a discussion of future applications aimed at supporting personalized learning in different domains.

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