SUSTAINABILITY FOR MOBILE LEARNING UNDER THE SOCIETAL AND CULTURAL CONDITION OF DELIMITATION, A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK WITH A PROPOSAL OF PRACTICAL TOOLS

Abstract

Mobile devices are a result and a contribution to blurring regulations and boundaries in mass communication, everyday life, learning and teaching. The concept of detraditionalization in the form of delimitation is an approach of sociology to explain the dramatic changes of the modern society into a kind of second modernity (Lash, Giddens, Beck 1994, Beck, Bons, Lau 2003, Beck, Lau 2004). A dominant societal and cultural feature of delimitation is provisionality (Kress 2010), which characterises also emerging new forms of learning and teaching to which mobile learning belongs. Provisionality urges also to understand sustainability not as a static definition with objectified procedures and tools. This provisional character of sustainability became already visible in hundreds of different definitions about which Scott (2002) reports for the discussion in education. To deal with this kind of semiotic arbitrariness the World Commission on Environment and Development defined already in its report from 1987 sustainability as development. Sustainability as a process can't repair the underlaying provisionality but deal systemically with it. Nevertheless sustainability as concept needs to be made concrete and unfolded within a theoretical frame. The theoretical fame, which I propose, stems from a ecology of cultural which see mobile devices as cultural products and learning as related processes. Mobile devices and mobile learning are depending of a mobile complex. To explore this mobile complex and the idea of sustainability of learning in this complex the London Mobile Learning Group proposes to analyse this complex by means of the triangular model of structuration. This triangular model is based on Giddens' view (1984) on the interrelation of agency, the human capacity of acting, within the societal and cultural structures. The London Mobile Learning Group (Pachler, Bachmair, Cook 2010, p. 25) widened it triangularly by cultural practices as a third depending category.

Although sustainability is a relational category, I see also as legitimate and necessary to enhance sustainability as maintenance of stability, to make innovative procedures operational, and to generalise implementation procedures. The intention of sustainability remains to maintain innovative processes, to reach stability to work within operational procedures, to generalise implementation beyond single cases of mobile learning procedures. How can be combined this practical requirement to sustainability with its relational and provisional character? The proposal of Scott (2002) and Wan, Nicholas (2012) is helpful to specify and realise sustainability of innovative mobile learning by and within conversational procedures. My intention is to contribute to sustainability in conversations by offering a set of tools.

The validity and reliability of the proposed tools can't be tested in general but in the concrete conversational procedures for example to prove a mobile scenario in a defined school context or in flexible structures of user generated context of internet sites, sites for explicit learning e.g. homework and chats in peer groups.

With a critical look on the proposed tools for operationalizing sustainability one could become suspicious: Why these and not others? Why so many? Why so restricted? Carefully tested or just inspirations? The proposed tools result from conversations within the London Mobile Learning Group and its research endeavor for a critical educational theory and practice of mobile learning. Seen within in the hermeneutic spiral now a new round of conversation can organize further conversation and deal critically accepting or refusing these tools as existing conversational results.

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