Top Ten Tips to Unleashing Your Inner mLearning Brilliance…or Learning Unplugged:

1. What is Mobile Learning? Really?
2. When is Mobile Learning (e-hem) appropriate?
3. Let's talk audience…
4. Standards, people! What are the Instructional Design Standards?
5. The Right Writing
6. It's all in the device
7. What's your app'titude? (web app vs. native app)
8. I'm no techie!
9. See with your eyes; touch with your hands
10. Sell me on it!

# Intro

Hi! This is us and we are you. Meaning, that we're on the mobile learning curve right alongside of you. Some of us are more savvy than others, but we're all in this together.

Take Jen, for instance. She is a skilled instructional designer who is eager to unleash her inner mLearning brilliance.

[Image of Jen with characteristics]



**Most used software:** Microsoft Word

**Wireless phone:** BlackBerry
**Apps downloaded:** 1

**Go-to creative concepts:**
Parodies, puzzles, TV-based game shows

**Builds Interactivity in training that is:**
• Click and reveal
• In-class role plays

**Her virtual self:** Hasen't added her profile pic in Outlook, IM, or My Site yet, but has a Facebook profile pic … of her kids.

**Training writing style:**
Still formal. She's working on **not** using formal language like "require, due to, regarding, inquire" in her writing.

Her learning audience is becoming more like Jesse.

[Image of Jesse with characteristics]



**Wireless phones:** iPhone 4GS Android
**Apps downloaded to iPhone:** 48
**To Android:** 35

**Most used software:** RMS

**Right now:** Using Phone app to "Check In" at Chipotle which just posted to Twitter and Facebook.

**Responds to creative concepts that are:**
"gamified," visual, status boosting, reality-tv like

**Interacts with content that is:**
- Swipe, Touch, Play
- Social
- Sharable

**His virtual self:** …
Has avatars, will travel. Changes them out—often--in one place to populate all his social media profiles,

**Learning style:**
Takes risks, exploratory, and must be quick. I also have to immediately get how this helps me or the company. And, it should look really good.

Jesse is on the opposite end of the spectrum. He's a heavy user of all things mobile. His attention is right where we want it; we just need to know how to capitalize on it.

So, where do you stand on the topic of mobile learning and unleashing your devices' teaching potential? Are you already quite brilliant? Have you ridden the wave with each new device? Or are you still trying to respond to a text from your 10-year-old, who is now in college? Maybe you're like us and find yourself somewhere safe in the middle. Jivy enough to know when the intro beats to your favorite song are coming from your ringtone…and when they're coming from the car radio.

When the term 'continuing education' was coined, it's doubtful they had any idea how fast the world of learning could change as we try to meet learners where they are most engaged. Well, we're sliding our brilliance level up a few notches and expanding on what we think we know about mobile learning. Here's 10 Tips that we, you…hmmm, all of us are learning.

- ## What is Mobile Learning? Really?

Jesse is having an awesome quarter to start the year.
His numbers are great, his CSATs are stellar…and
he's really on top of each new release.

To be honest, we're curious (and a little jealous) about
what he has that other reps might not have…or might not
be taking full advantage of.

This is what he shared with us on his break [full disclosure: we bought lunch]. He:
- Uses an Andriod phone (looooves it!)
- Scans QR codes provided at team meetings—launches info on all new devices
- Uses text-an-expert for any specific questions he has (gets him a personal reply)
- Is able to digest all he needs to know with these bite-size portions of info
- Rocks every new launch!!

Mobile Learning is learning
- Delivered to a portable device.
- Namely on a smartphone or tablet.
- Providing learners with timely, job-specific information
- Used while learners are "on-the-go."

- ## Let's talk audience…

| Jen: Can't imagine why anyone would want to take training on such a small screen. She prefers her desktop because the screen is much larger. | Jesse: "I don't have a laptop anymore. Like when I got my first apartment. My parents were surprised I didn't hang a rotary phone in my kitchen." |
|---|---|

So why does this type of learning work for our rock star rep Jesse but maybe not for everyone, all over, everywhere?!? This is what we know about people most adept at learning on-the-go, they:

- Are on-the-go (hang on, it gets more revealing).
- Use mobile technology frequently (think status updates, in-depth game analysis…oh, but

work stuff mostly).
- Share a common device type across their workgroup.
- Do not have ready access to a computer.

- ## When is Mobile Learning (e-hem) appropriate?

[Graphic: Graphic similar to hand with litmus strip]

Jesse seems to be in the right situation to take full advantage of mLearning, but is that the case with every Sprint employee? Good question!

A few good litmus tests—you know, those test strip thingies from chemistry class? (Yeah, we had to look it up, too.) —are those adapted from the "Five Moments of Need" by Conrad Gottfredson:
- When people are learning how to do something for the first time. (New)
- When people are expanding on what they've learned. (More)
- When they need to act upon what they have learned. (Apply)
- When problems arise, or things break or don't work the way they were intended. (Solve)
- When people need to learn a new way of doing something. (Change)
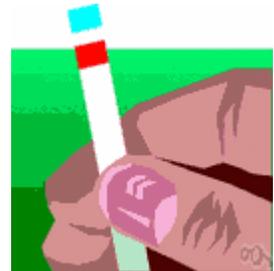
| Moment of Need | Possible Approaches |
|---|---|
| When learning for the first time | eLearning, blended learning, virtual classroom, self-study |
| When wanting to learn more | eLearning, blended learning, virtual classroom, self-study, mobile learning |
| When trying to remember and/or apply | Job aid (online or offline), manual, mobile performance support |
| When things change | Job aid (online or offline), documentation, mobile performance support, microblogging (Twitter, Yammer), wikis, IM |
| When something goes wrong | Help Desk, FAQ, mobile performance support, forums, microblogging (Twitter, Yammer), wikis, IM |

- ## Standards, people! What are the Instructional Design Standards?

| | |
|---|---|
| Jen: This is her strong suit, but she'd like help translating traditional design standards and practically applying them to mobile learning. | Jesse: "A chewed off system screen grab with highlights is not helpful to get up and running with 10 customers waiting not-so-patiently in line." |

There's a great book for kids called: The Magic School Bus Gets Programmed. The one where Ms. Frizzle's class rides the school bus inside a computer (cool!) by—get this—becoming a floppy disk! Yep, the book was written in 1999. Wow!

Well, the floppy disk did NOT span the test of time. (We could dig up a few… hundred…if you'd like to buy them.) But, amazingly, instructional design standards have.

For creating your mLearning product, consider the ADDIE model:

- Analysis
- Design
- Development
- Implementation
- Evaluation.

For creating your mLearning content, here are some best practices to consider:
- Create modules that are context independent.
- Create layered design—use links to other content to help advance the learner or "catch the learner up."
- Use WIIFM (*What's In It for Me?)*—not an introduction or list of objectives (create value for the user upfront).
- Provide a balance of content and interaction.
- Make the content compelling and include elements of collaboration.
- Provide tools/applications and not just content.

It may seem obvious, but keep in mind the smaller size of the device:
- Limit modules to one page/screen (nice, bite-size chucks).
- Keep lessons short—no more than three to ten minutes in length.
- Create valuable snippets of information that contain one concise piece of transferrable knowledge.

## • The Right Writing

| Jen: Needs to take her writing down a notch to a more personal level. Time for her to "ask" vs. "inquire" and "say" instead of "state." | Jesse: "If I have to come off the floor to take training, it had better get to the point." |
|---|---|

"And so, furthermore, and with great excitement, we announce…" ACK! Get to the point already! Which is, of course, the point to this section…

Writing for mobile is like writing for a 30 second Super Bowl spot. Long, institutional jargon will crash and burn on a multi-national level; witty and succinct will send your brand into the marketing stratosphere. Speaking of succinct, here are some tangible tips on writing for mobile:

### Content
- Write relevant content—decide what your most important point is.
- Put conclusions at the beginning.
- Use action words.

### Format
- Use lists instead of paragraphs. Lists are easier to scan than paragraphs.
- Limit list items to 7 words.
- Write short sentences.

- Include internal subheadings to make the text more scannable.
- Use links to take the user to the detail.
- Consider using one page and scrolling instead of having users click from page to page, especially for devices with swipe functionality.
- Keep images simple and clean—no busy backgrounds. The user should immediately recognize the image, unless your intent is for them to study the image to learn something.

- ## It's all in the device

[Graphic: Graphics of smartphone features & tablet features]

Two devices scream for mLearning to be launched from their able mobile platforms:
- Smartphones
- Tablets

Smartphones = telephone + PDA +camera +video + mass storage + MP3 player + Internet access + networking *(GRAPHIC)*

Well, how do I know if my phone is "smart?" Smartphones have an operating system such as Android, RIM, Windows, or iOS. They also have more advanced computing ability and connectivity than feature phones, sometimes referred to as Web-enabled phones.

Smartphones have a lot of great features that mesh well with what we're trying to accomplish through mobile learning, they:
- Allow mobile developers to create applications that take advantage of native capabilities of the device, including: touch gesturing, cameras, GPS, accelerometers, gyroscopes, barometers, magnetometers, dedicated gaming controls, proximity, and accelerated 2D and 3D graphics.
- Have mobile browsers that support HTML5 and CSS3.
- Play audio, video, and Flash movies.*
- Display and edit text documents.
- Access email, Web content, ePublications, and PDF files.
- Easy access to downloaded files on SD card.
- Native and Web apps (more on this later)

*Note: Adobe Flash has been a standard animation, application, and Web experience development tool for nearly a decade. Flash runs on all browsers and Android 2.2 and above devices. Apple, however, does not support Flash content on the iPhone or tablet devices.

The following types of content have been delivered successfully on a smartphone:
- Performance tools
- Reference materials
- Instantaneous feedback

## Tablets

Tablets are the most complete and functional system of all the portable devices, and most come Bluetooth, Wi-Fi-, and Ethernet enabled. In addition, tablets offer features such as touchscreen operation, handwriting recognition, and voice-to-text conversion as part of their operating systems.

Tablets = Bluetooth + Wi-Fi- + Ethernet + touchscreen + handwriting + voice-to-text + video
*(GRAPHIC)*

### *Instructional Uses of Tablets*
Tablets have many applications for mobile learning solutions. The larger form factor combines the best of online learning and mLearning in a single device. For example, tablets:
- Allow users to log on to the course website at home or while on the road.
- Download audio and video lectures and podcasts.
- Play animated, narrated slide presentations and some Flash-based content
- Deliver spoken-word and text-based assessments.
- Access email, Web content, ePublications, and PDF files.
- Send emails, IMs, and text messages.
- Create and edit course-related assignments using tablet versions of popular applications such as Microsoft's Word and Excel, or Apple's Pages and Numbers.

The following types of content have been delivered successfully on a tablet:
- Assessments and surveys
- Rich media (videos, podcasts, and animations)
- Social networking
- Gaming
- eBooks
- Native and Web apps (more on this later)

- ## What's your app'titude? (web app vs. native app)

| Jen: She finally figured out how to download an app to help her daughter learn the periodic table. | Jesse: "I could come up with a few apps to make device launches easier. There are some great recall games out there that they should take a look at." |
|---|---|

Learners like Jesse are likely to orchestrate their day through the use of apps. An app for the weather (wear a jacket), an app for finding gas (the station on $9^{th}$ is the cheapest), and an app for lunch (YELP says the Mongolian BBQ is great here). For your Android, there are roughly tens of thousands of apps ready for the download. For your iPhone, there are roughly…a whole bunch more than that.

According to the Global Intelligence Alliance (GIA):

- A native app as one that is specifically designed to run on a device's operating system and machine firmware, and typically needs to be adapted for different devices.

- A Web app, or browser application, is one in which all or some parts of the software are downloaded from the Web each time it is run. It can usually be accessed from all Web-capable mobile devices.

Both native and web apps can be downloaded to a device's Apps menu sporting a colorful icon, and then accessed with a single touch.

- ## I'm no techie…yet!

[Graphic: Maybe a card array of examples of each technology.]

How tech ready do you think you are? Are you reading this because you went out and raided the EWD or SWAC closet to stockpile the latest mobile devices in anticipation of going all-mobile, all-the-time? Or are you still wondering when we'll mention how to sync your work email with your BlackBerry calendar? Here are a few questions to consider how ready you are for mLearning:

- Do you own a smartphone? Do you have a strong OS preference?

- Have you downloaded any apps to your mobile device?

- Have you used any phone apps for learning?

- How often do you go to your phone *first* for a piece of information?

What about your fellow Sprint employees? How 'tech ready' do you think they are? Recent statistics show that 51% of the Employee plan phones are Android. However, i-Connect polls show:

- Out of 3k employees, 56% aren't ready to access training on their phone

- Out of almost 7k employees, 41% aren't planning on purchasing a tablet anytime soon

Yikes! We have a way to go before we can say we are part of a totally tech ready culture. But what about employees like Jesse? They are ready for mobile now. So, pressing onward in our quest for mLearning brilliance, what comes next for tech readiness?

Well, we need to start thinking differently about how the technology meshes with design. This comes before we get into the nitty-gritty of mobile development. Some key items:

- Be prepared to learn different technologies - technology curve is still in play to develop for mobile
- Be prepared to use a different set of analysis to determine if mobile is a good solution, and what audience it is good for.
- Be prepared to learn and execute different testing and deployment methods.
- Document what the user wants to experience by creating a Persona write up and interviews with your typical end-users.

Consider using wireframes to define what you want to develop, keeping in mind the previous points. Wireframing is a skeletal outline of your design – defining content, navigation and any user interaction. The benefit is a time-saver: you'll work out the bugs on usability before investing time in actual development. You can use pen and paper or many free wire framing applications.

A wireframe example of a web app for a Tablet, above.

Once you have a sound, engaging design, there are a few delivery standards to consider. The following technologies are the most promising and used methods:

- HTML5/CSS/JavaScript
- Java**
- Flash
- ePub format

Speaking of Java, it's one of the code bases used to build native applications. Such as Sprint University's XeroCast app.(And it has a groovy icon)



The Sprint University Android application is a simple portal that uses RSS to deliver content (video, audio, html, text) channels to you from multiple sources, covering a variety of subjects. Learners can subscribe to and browse podcasts and other Web-enabled content, organized by line of business, audiences, and other logical classifications. Several training events have been piloted, with more on the way.

- See with your eyes; touch with your hands

| Jen: Keeps her screens pretty clean. Simple graphics or screen shots to illustrate a series of steps. | Jesse: "I'd get more excited about taking legal training if it looked more like *World of Warcraft* instead of my third grade PowerPoint on Pompeii." |
|---|---|

If there's something we can all agree on, it's that mobile content is more appealing with good interface design. Content or applications visualized with graphics are preferred over content or applications that are solely textual in nature. Use the device's native navigation techniques makes for a short learning curve.

### Be Graphic
Well designed, highly graphical interfaces usually offer many practical benefits:
- Good graphic design communicates simplicity and engages the user.
- Rich visuals "tell" the user how to interact with the device.
- Bigger button graphics, links, and interactive areas allow fingers to select them.
- Statistical visualizations provide information that is more easily grasped than verbal or tabular descriptions of data.

### Gestural Navigation
Show the user how to interact. One way that mobile device interfaces have addressed small screen sizes is by supporting gestural interaction. For example, rather than dragging a scroll bar control feature, the user can scroll vertically or horizontally by swiping with a finger anywhere on the screen. The scrollbar control can be reduced to a minimally sized or temporarily visible position indicator because visual control graphics, such as up/down buttons and a scroll bar "thumb" feature, are no longer needed.
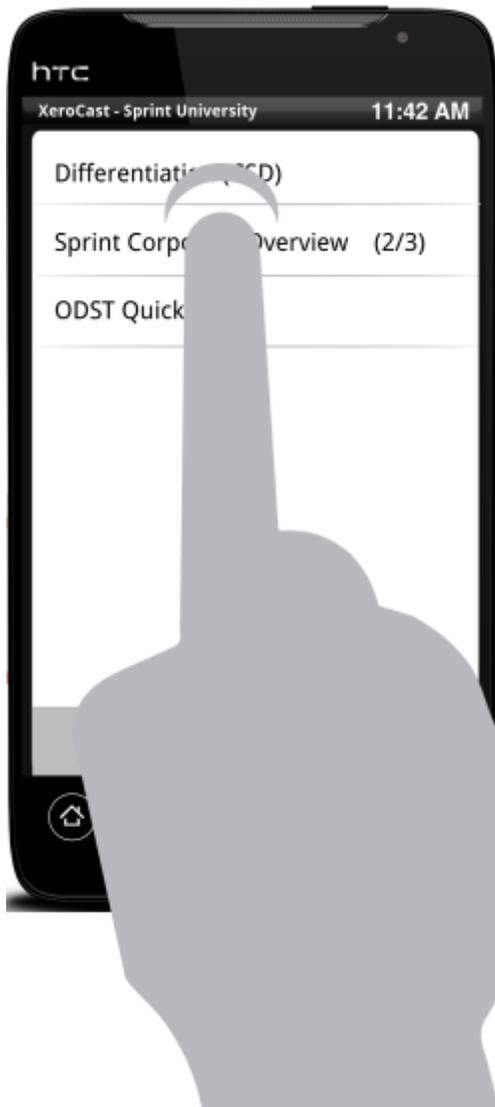
- Sell me on it!

| Jen:  Knows her kids would love for her to get a tablet or at least a phone with Angry Birds. | Jesse: "I could come up with a few apps to make device launches easier. There are some great recall games out there that they should take a look at." |
|---|---|

Two recent Sprint employee polls showed a large gap in our mobile culture. People aren't sold on the idea of training material coming to them on their mobile device and many aren't carrying much more than their cell phone, smart or otherwise.

It's time to engage each other in the mobile conversation. Learners like Jesse are relying on designers like Jen to consider the ways mobile learning has already been successful and find ways to match the just-in-time need for learning with in-your-hand content.

Our friend Jesse is rocking another new device launch. He just scanned a QR code from this morning's team meeting. The QR code links him to a Web App Quiz, testing how well he knows the features of three new devices. He shoots; he scores…and wins a virtual Golden Badge. He sends a challenge text to 3 of his coworkers: "Top this!" – a badge icon glowing in his message. "Just did." Eric texts back. He has the Golden Crown.

Back at her home office, Jen gets a quick text from her go-to Store manager contact. The Quiz her team developed is starting a competition among the reps. "Fantastic!" she texts back…on her new iPhone. Jen has arrived. And so have you!

The End.