



UNIVERSITAT  
POLITÈCNICA  
DE VALÈNCIA

**Ricardo Casañ Pitarch**

Associate Professor

Director, Master's Degree in Languages and Technology

Department of Applied Linguistics

Polytechnic University of Valencia, Spain

**Book Review: Clothier, P. (2026). *Mastering Mobile Learning Design: A Practical Guide*.  
Routledge**

The widespread presence of mobile devices, especially smartphones, has profoundly transformed the way people access information, communicate, work, and learn over the last two decades. By enabling instant and remote access to information and services, these devices have reshaped many aspects of everyday life, including education. In this context, Clothier emphasizes the omnipresence of smartphones, noting that most people carry them throughout the day and that mobile learning can reach learners who may not own a computer but do have a phone. His book, *Mastering Mobile Learning Design: A Practical Guide*, offers a contemporary, highly practical contribution to the field of education. The volume is intended for instructional designers, educators, trainers, learning managers, and professionals interested in developing effective mobile learning experiences.

The book provides a clear, accessible, and application-oriented guide to designing learning experiences specifically for mobile devices, with particular attention to smartphones. Rather than understanding mobile learning as a simplified or reduced version of e-learning, Clothier argues that it requires its own design logic, based on context, brevity, relevance, usability, and the realities of learners' fragmented attention. The book is structured into eight sections and twenty-nine chapters that cover the main dimensions of the design, development, delivery, and evaluation of mobile learning. It begins with the foundations of mobile learning, moves through content design, engagement strategies, performance support, curriculum design, app usability, personalization, and concludes with emerging technologies and the role of generative artificial intelligence. The chapters are generally

brief but highly concise, making the book easy to read and quick to find information. Furthermore, one particularly interesting feature of the book is that each chapter ends with a list of practical key points and a short “Using AI” section, which offers prompts that readers can use with an LLM to further explore the chapters or apply them to the users’ educational contexts.

The first section establishes the conceptual and practical foundations of the book. Clothier emphasizes that good learning design begins with empathy for the learner and with a clear understanding of their time, needs, context, and expectations. This principle becomes especially important in mobile learning, where learners often access content during brief moments, in distracting environments, and on devices constantly connected to other competing sources of attention. The author therefore insists that mobile learning should not be conceived as desktop e-learning transferred to a smaller screen. Instead, mobile learning should be designed with the smartphone’s characteristics in mind from the beginning, such as a small screen, frequent distractions, or touch-based navigation.

The second section develops the fundamentals of mobile learning design. One of its central ideas is that context drives design. Clothier examines the differences between traditional e-learning and mobile learning by considering factors such as available time, learner posture, device use, distractions, input methods, and the physical environment in which learning takes place. This explanation is particularly useful because it translates abstract design principles into concrete decisions (i.e., content should be shorter, easier to scan, visually clear, accessible without audio when necessary, and simple to navigate through touch-based interaction). The book also presents different types of mobile learning, including microlearning, video content, interactive scenarios, simulations, chat-based learning, performance support, job aids, knowledge bases, location-based content, augmented reality, games, social learning, coaching, and user-generated content. These typologies help readers understand mobile learning as a broad ecosystem of resources and activities that can support both learning and performance. Furthermore, a particularly relevant chapter in this section is devoted to mobile learning objectives (Chapter 5). Clothier explains the need to identify learning gaps and to formulate clear, action-oriented objectives compatible with mobile contexts. He uses traditional instructional design concepts adapted to mobile learning contexts, including Bloom’s taxonomy. This information is especially valuable because it connects mobile learning to fundamental pedagogical frameworks.

The third section is one of the most practical parts of the book, as it focuses on designing effective mobile content. Clothier discusses mobile design priorities, the creation of mobile content, the design of text for small screens, graphics, video, templates, performance support, and the adaptation of existing materials. A central idea throughout these chapters is that mobile learning requires clarity and concise design. Designers must decide what is essential, reduce unnecessary information, and create content that can be understood quickly. Chapters 9, 10, and 11, on text, graphics, and video, are particularly useful for practitioners, as they address common design problems such as readability, visual hierarchy,

cognitive load, captions, screen size, and the need to make content understandable even in less-than-ideal conditions. Chapter 13, on mobile performance support, is also significant, as it reinforces the idea that mobile devices are especially powerful when they help learners solve real problems at the moment of need.

The fourth section addresses engagement and motivation. Clothier explores how to capture and maintain learners' attention through questions, storytelling, games, gamification, and social learning. The discussion of storytelling in chapter 17 is relevant because it presents narrative as a way to create emotional connection, contextualise knowledge, and make learning memorable. Chapter 18 on games and gamification is also useful because it distinguishes between the use of game elements and the design of fully game-based learning experiences. The author highlights the motivational potential of challenges, feedback, progress, rewards, and competition, while keeping the focus on learning outcomes rather than superficial engagement. Similarly, Chapter 19 on social learning emphasizes the importance of peer interaction, collaboration, and shared knowledge in mobile environments.

The fifth section deals with delivery and evaluation. Clothier discusses how mobile learning can be delivered effectively, how mobile curricula can be designed, and how learning can be evaluated. This section is important because it moves beyond the design of individual resources and considers the broader learning experience. Mobile learning is presented as part of a larger instructional ecosystem, which may include formal training, informal learning, reinforcement, assessment, and performance support. Chapter 22, on evaluation, is especially relevant for professionals who need to demonstrate effectiveness, since it reminds readers that mobile learning should be measured in terms of usability, engagement, application, and learning outcomes, rather than only in terms of completion or access.

The sixth section addresses the design of mobile learning apps. It examines the creation of mobile learning apps, usability, and personalization. The chapters in this section extend the book's scope by examining the relationship between content and platform. The author explains that even strong learning content can fail if the application through which it is delivered is difficult to use, poorly organized, or insufficiently responsive to learner needs. The discussion of personalization in Chapter 25 is particularly relevant in the current educational technology context, where learners increasingly expect digital experiences to adapt to their preferences, progress, and goals. Features such as progress tracking, bookmarks, favorites, notes, recommendations, and adaptive learning paths are presented as ways of making mobile learning more relevant and learner-centered.

The final section looks toward the future of mobile learning, with special attention to emerging technologies and generative AI. Clothier discusses artificial intelligence, machine learning, augmented reality, extended reality, adaptive systems, big data, voice assistants, microlearning, and user-generated content. The way the book treats generative AI is particularly timely. Rather than presenting AI as a replacement for instructional designers, Clothier frames it as a creative and productive assistant that can support research, ideation,

writing, quiz design, personalization, feedback, and content adaptation. Chapter 28, on designing content with generative AI, includes practical guidance on prompting, emphasizing the need to define audience, tone, purpose, length, format, and context. This is one of the most innovative contributions of the book, since it connects mobile learning design with the rapidly expanding role of AI-assisted educational development.

The book closes with a brief final chapter that synthesizes the main principles developed throughout the volume. Clothier returns to the idea that mobile learning should be understood as a form of design that responds to the specific contexts in which learners use their smartphones. He highlights the need to consider where, when, and how people use their devices, to respect learners' time and attention, to design with clarity for small screens, to promote active engagement, and to treat performance support as a meaningful form of learning. This conclusion reinforces the practical orientation of the book and its central message: "Mobile learning succeeds when it's practical, relevant, and deeply connected to the learner's real context" (p. 320).

In conclusion, *Mastering Mobile Learning Design: A Practical Guide* makes a valuable contribution to the field of instructional design and educational technology. It is especially useful for professionals who need practical guidance, offering a solid conceptual framework for understanding mobile learning as a different mode of learning. In a time when smartphones have become one of the most common tools for accessing information, communication, and training, Clothier reminds us that effective mobile learning is about designing learning experiences that fit learners' lives, contexts, attention, and needs. For this reason, this book is highly recommended for educators, instructional designers, learning technologists, and researchers interested in the future and present of mobile learning.

## **Disclosure Statement**

Artificial intelligence tools were used to support language editing and stylistic refinement of this book review. The author reviewed, revised, and approved the final version of the manuscript and takes full responsibility for its content.

## **References**

Clothier, P. (2026). *Mastering Mobile Learning Design: A Practical Guide*. Routledge.