Competition:

UQUAPS 2016 "Pitching Research" Competition

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Faculty or Institute:	School:
UQ Humanities and Social Sciences	Education

Programme:	Load:	Level:
PhD	Full-time	7-9 months

Name:

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(A) Working Title:

Mobile learning and professional development pronunciation training for in-service teachers of English at Vietnamese provincial universities: A design-based research study

Word count: **1031 words**

(A) Working Title	Mobile learning and professional development pronunciation training for in-service teachers of English at Vietnamese provincial universities: A design-based research study
(B) Basic Research Question	How can mobile learning be used effectively to improve English pronunciation for teachers of English in Vietnamese provincial universities in the form of an online professional development course?
(C) Key paper(s)	Banks, K. (2014). Mobile learning in the last mile. Prospects, 44(1), 5-11. Cunningham, U. (2013). Teachability and learnability of English pronunciation features for Vietnamese-speaking learners. Teaching and Researching English Accents in Native and Non-native Speakers (pp. 3-14): Springer.
(D) Motivation / Puzzle	In 2008, Vietnamese government initiated Project 2020 to reform English training and invested heavily in improving language proficiency for 80,000 in-service teachers of English, resulting in the triple in the percentage of qualified teachers to 32% in 2015. The greatest challenge is to improve their oral skills despite limited language exposure, lack access to quality language schools and qualified teacher trainers as most of them reside outside big cities. Sending teacher trainers to small towns to deliver on-site training is costly and inefficient, so a sustainable solution to reduce travelling and organization costs and enhance training efficiency is sought after.
THREE	**Three** core aspects of any empirical research project i.e. the "IDioTs" guide
(E) Idea	To answer the research question, an online pronunciation course is designed for teachers of English at provincial universities in Vietnam. Pronunciation has been chosen because, despite its importance in creating intelligibility in communication, it has not been paid much attention in English teaching and assessment in Vietnam. Through a 2-3 iterative cycle of course designing - implementation - data collection and analysis - redesigning and re-implementation, this research aims to answer the following questions: - What are the professional development needs of Vietnamese teachers of English in provincial universities with a focus on pronunciation? - How can existing learning platforms, apps and resources be used for designing and implementing an online pronunciation course for those teachers on their mobile devices? - What principles need to be followed in order for mobile learning to be an effective way of providing online professional development activities? - How can aspects of course designing, teaching and learning languages using mobile learning be adjusted to create a scalable model for future education planning?
(F) Data	Approximately 30 teachers of English at Vietnamese provincial universities will participate in a 12-week online pronunciation course, and the 2-3 iteration means the total number of research participants are about 60-90, and both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected. Before the first course, the participants will answer a survey on their pronunciation training needs. Data from this survey and previous literature will be analyzed to build the training syllabus. A pre-test will also be used to test participants' intelligibility and confirm training needs. During the course, all the class rolls will be kept, and online sessions will be recorded after all the participants' approvals are sought. After each session, participants will write a short reflection on their learning, difficulties and suggestions. Learners' homework and assignment submissions will be archived.

	Their daily in-apps and web-based pronunciation practice are saved in form of screenshots and texts. All these will make up learning portfolios for individual learners. After the course, a post-test will be carried out, and a survey on learners' feedback and evaluation, technological challenges, design issues and teaching and learning principles will be done. All data collected during and after the course will be analyzed to identify the effective practice, remaining challenges, propose solutions and redesign the course before the whole process is restarted.
(G) Tools	Research methodology: Design-based research, characterized by the conceptualization and iterative implementation of intervention to generate and test designing, learning and teaching principles. Pedagogical approach: Mobile learning, which involves both learners' mobility and their use of mobile devices (smartphones, tablets, laptops,...). Technologies: Edmodo (or Schoology as a back-up) as a learning management system; Adobe Connect (alternatively Skype, Zoom) for online sessions delivery; Nearpod or Online PowerPoint presentations for slides; Google Docs, PiratePad, Kahoot or Padlet for learning activities and collaboration; ELSA Speak, Dragon Dictation or TalkTyper for daily pronunciation practice. Data storage: on mobile devices, USB and memory cards, cloud storage sites, laptop hard-drives and removable hard-drives, EndNote desktop and online libraries. Data analysis: SPSS
TWO	**Two** key questions
(H) What's New?	- This study uses design-based research, a modern methodological framework (initially proposed in the 1990s) which is particularly suitable for educational researches but has not been very popular among papers on mobile learning and language learning. - Mobile learning, though generally recognized as beneficial, still faces reluctance and doubt among language learners and teachers, and is mainly used as supplements to traditional learning and teaching. This study adopts it as the main pedagogical approach, and will shed light on fundamental principles on how to effectively design and implement mobile teaching and learning. - This study proposes an innovative way to deliver professional development and language training for in-service teachers of English in Vietnam and other developing countries with great potentials to impact their current practices.
(I) So What?	- The findings of this study can help language teachers and learners better use their mobile devices in teaching and learning to improve their intelligibility and communication efficacy. - Language learning material writers, software and apps developers and mobile device producers can have a source of reference in making their product more compatible, accessible and efficient and therefore more desirable. - Employers and policy makers can consider the feasibility and scalability of providing distant, online continuous professional development when making decisions regarding continuous staff training and support.
ONE	**One** bottom line
(J) Contribution?	This study contributes to the range of design-based researches in mobile learning, professional development and language training. It helps maximize the benefits of mobile learning in language teaching and learning. Also, it aids in enhancing language proficiency for Vietnamese teachers of English, and helps save travelling time and cut training costs.
	From my previous related studies, the intervention challenges may be the

(K) Other Considerations	Internet connection quality in Vietnam, learners' technological competence, and the device compatibility. These can be addressed by using wired Internet or Wi-Fi connection, providing initial technological training, and finding similar apps or ensuring access to iOS or Android devices for practice. Findings from this studies will be aimed for publication at top-ranked journals i.e. TESOL Quarterly (H-index: 69), Journal of Computer-assisted learning (H-index: 65), and leading conferences in mobile learning such as GLoCALL and ASCILITE.