

Appendix E: *Students see the future of learning.* An article about the wpeau.ca site

Students see the future of learning

TOBIAS ROMANIUK
POST STAFF

Athabasca University and Portage College have come together in a research project aimed at bringing the classroom to the student via a mobile learning project.

The project uses the fully web-enabled capabilities of the Apple iPhone to teach English as a second language students in easily digestible snippets, no matter where they are.

Students at Portage College last week were given a taste of the project as part of a real-world research project by the Athabasca University staff, who were looking for feedback on their program. Each student was handed an iPhone and a list of instructions, plus a survey to fill out at the end of the test.

Portage student Albert Sauve was impressed by his introduction to mobile learning and the iPhone, and said he

could see himself using mobile learning if it was available.

"I could do my homework on it," he said.

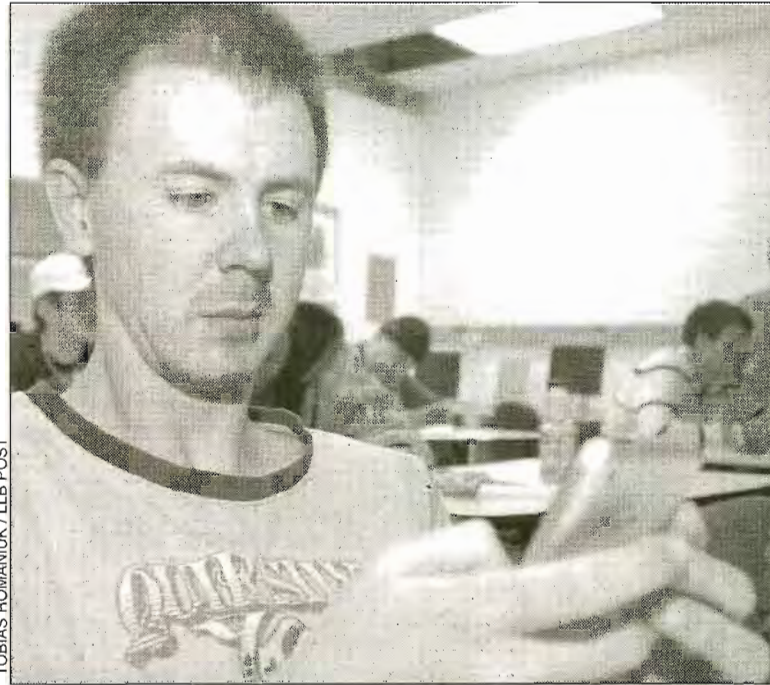
Using a combination of Wi-Fi and web access over cell phone signals, ESL students can use any cell phone to access the Athabasca University website and download practical, workplace-focused language lessons.

The program makes use of practical phrases encountered in the workforce, and is designed to be used on the job.

"The student can learn anytime, anywhere," said Tony Tin, manager of the mobile learning project.

The interactive website allows users to download audio and video clips demonstrating the use of English, and takes advantage of the web-browser capabilities of the iPhone.

Tin said Athabasca is the first school to develop mobile



TOBIAS ROMANIUK / LLB POST

Portage College student Albert Sauve tries out mobile learning.

learning, and he sees huge potential for schooling through cell phones.

While at its core the program is just a website, it is the small-bites design of the learning

modules on the site that make it beneficial to students, who can learn in 15-minute snippets through the day, said Tin.

The portable learning device that masquerades as a phone

also opens up the possibilities for collaborative learning, said Tin, adding that students can cluster and share knowledge without the bulk of desktop computers and wires.

"They can do a lot of collaborative learning," he said, adding it opens the potentials of learning.

With this project, said Tin, Athabasca University is seeing a shift from e-learning, which relies on computers, to mobile learning, which requires only a web-enabled cell phone.

The shift allows the student to choose where and how they want to learn, he said.

"You dictate where and what to learn."

The pilot project is sponsored by telecommunications company Rogers, said Tin, adding the project began with purely text based, simple cell phones, and has since evolved to take advantage of the latest cell phone technology.