Chapter 4
Pathways of Divergence, Convergence, and Adaptation to Persistent Learning

James R. Ford
Department of Defense, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter proposes to examine how rapid change occurring in all sectors of our society as they relate to education paradigms must be addressed to embrace new avenues of learning and new charters for educational change.

INTRODUCTION

Due to the ever-evolving nature and complexity of the global society, the need for lifelong and self-managed learning has become prominent in all walks of life. In my intercontinental travel experiences, nothing I have seen and experienced is more pervasive than the proliferation of mobile technology in urban and remote locales alike. I recently spent nearly two weeks in Maputo, Moçambique, with family, and had the opportunity to observe daily life of the Mozambican culture. No different from any other developed country, mobile technology was ingrained in the daily lives of the Mozambicans as a necessary tool to communicate, live and learn just like in the United States.

This experience validated many of the findings I uncovered in earlier research in the United States regarding the use of mobile computing devices and how people *(particularly high school students)* used them to learn—or not. What I actually observed in Maputo was a diverse socioeconomic strata of people using these

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powerful technology devices to converse with others and freely share information as they desire. More importantly, while there—I realized that I needed to use my mobile device technology to engage and immerse me in the culture. Mobile device tools allowed me to be a persistent learner of all new experiences I came into contact with. My mobile device also supported informal learning by providing me with relevant information. With my mobile device I was able to informally learn at the point of need using web searches of terms related to the local language and culture. As a result I was able to expand knowledge of my surroundings, thereby furthering my personal persistent learning endeavors.

Contemporary technologies, such as smart phones for example, provide users from all walks of life with instant communications applications to access content, collaborate and learn informally. They may also be adopted to support traditional learning environments, to support progressive and learner-centric learning settings. Access to mobile technologies and the internet are now a natural appendage to an individual's persistent lifelong learning pursuits. Modern mobile computing technology is indeed *the one* intervention tool that has served as a framework to help learners develop independent learning skills and be in control of charting and navigating their own persistent learning goals and knowledge gathering (Shih, Chen, Chang, & Kao, 2010).

Undoubtedly, there are many pathways for learners to take in harnessing the ever-emerging and converging capabilities of micro and nanotechnology devices. The research and development within the past decade alone have radically advanced the passé notion of fixed computing to mobile computing in a manner that is revolutionary (Moran, Hawkes, & El Gayar, 2010). This is especially considerable when taking into account cross-platform and hybrid personal use configurations that enable learners or users to access learning and collaborate within learning communities at anytime or anyplace. Technology's confluence with contemporary learning strategies and other personalized learning considerations is appreciably encouraging in helping learners adapt, mature, grow, and exploit learning and associated capabilities and opportunities in 21st Century lifelong learning and living environments.

Divergence: Deviating From the Norm Is Plausible and Acceptable

Rapid change occurring in all sectors of society, as it relates to persistent learning, is fueling contemporary educational technology's compounding impact on living and learning (education) paradigms. Any examination of this phenomenon must embrace the variable, connective, and adaptive nature and pathways of learning and charters to produce real and disruptive educational change. Moran, Hawkes, and Gayar (2010) actually support this ideal in their defining the integration of