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The L120 Mobile Project

Valérie Demouy, Annie Eardley, Agnes Kukulska-Hulme and Rhodri Thomas



Introduction

- Languages at the Open University
 - Distance learning
 - Tutor supported
- L120 and Blended learning
 - Printed material
 - DVD-ROMs
 - Asynchronous online activities
 - Online and Face-to-face tutorials
 - Assessments (oral & written)



The project

- 2 groups of 35 students
 - Group 1 : iPods or MP3 players (listening)
 - Group 2 : mobile phones and Learnosity (interactive speaking activities)
- Over 6 weeks
 - 6 online questionnaires
 - audio feedback on activities for group 2

Objectives & Outcomes



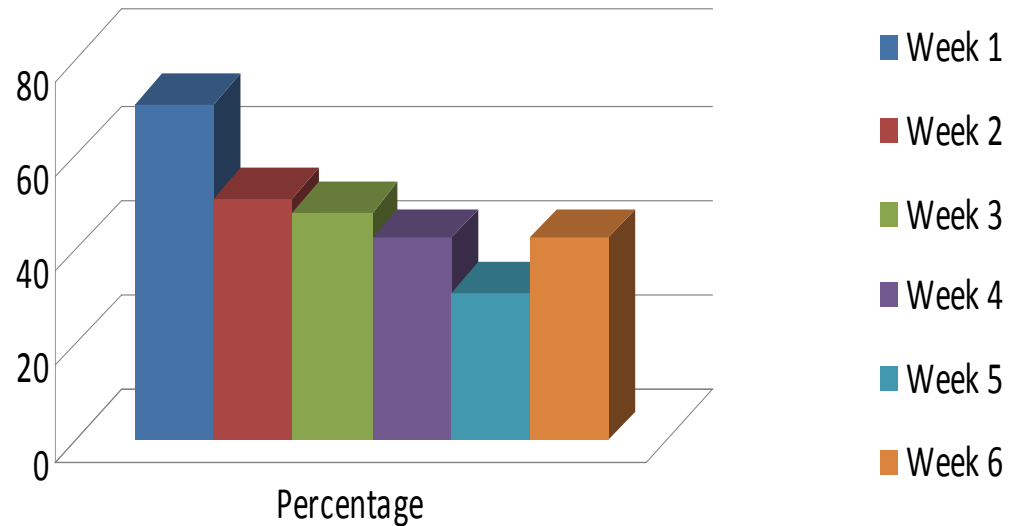
- What are the contexts in which students engage in 'mobile' activities?
- How often do students engage in mobile activities and how long do they spend on them?
- What aspect or what type of activities do they find most or less beneficial and why?
- to evaluate the benefits of providing our students with mobile listening and speaking activities
- to understand better how to integrate interactive activities with mobile technologies into our courses
- to integrate mobile speaking activities (if appropriate) in the design of new courses

Group 1



- **Type of activity**
 - a variety of audio clips
 - no question or activity linked
 - reinforcement
- **Participation**

Participation rate - Group 1 (from questionnaires)

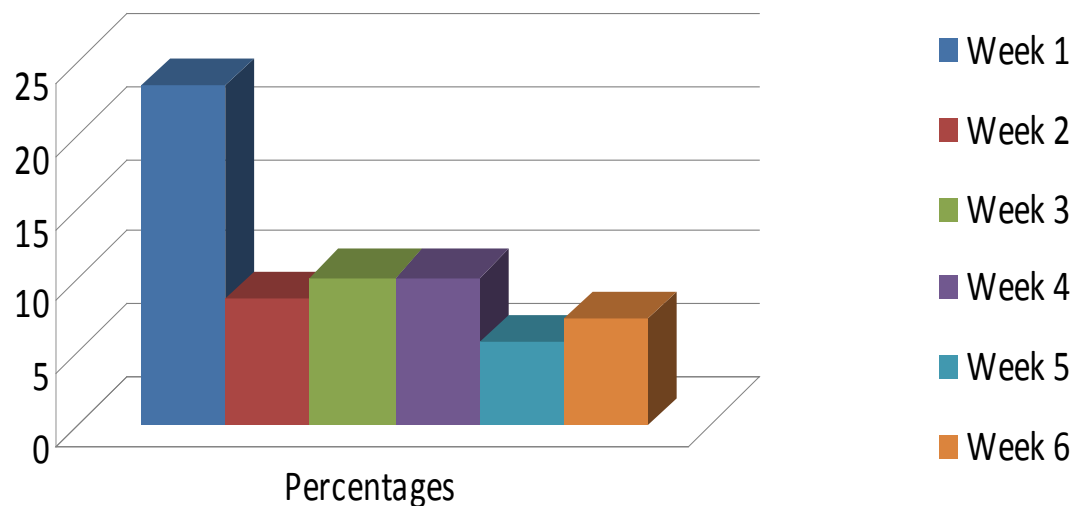


Group 2



- Type of activities listening, oral presentations, pronunciation or grammar drills and dialogues
- Example
- Participation

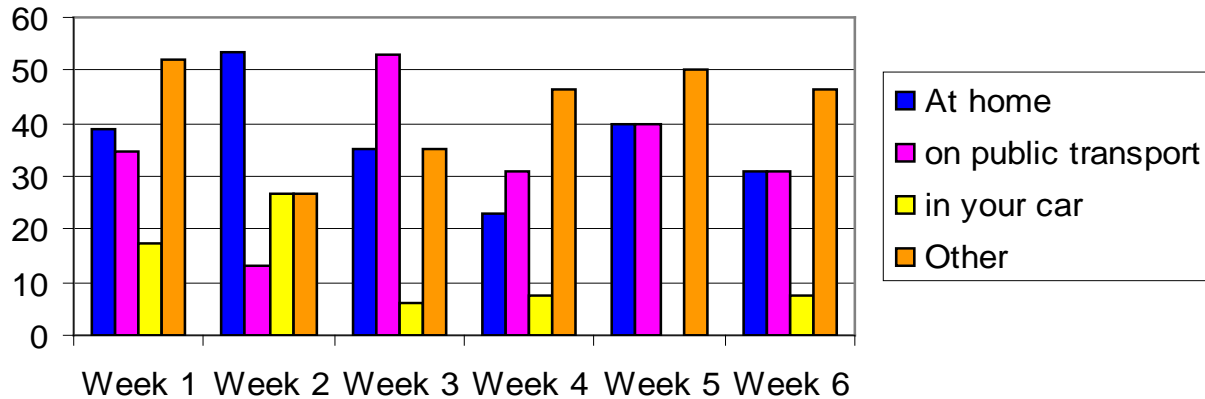
Participation rate - Group 2 (from questionnaires)



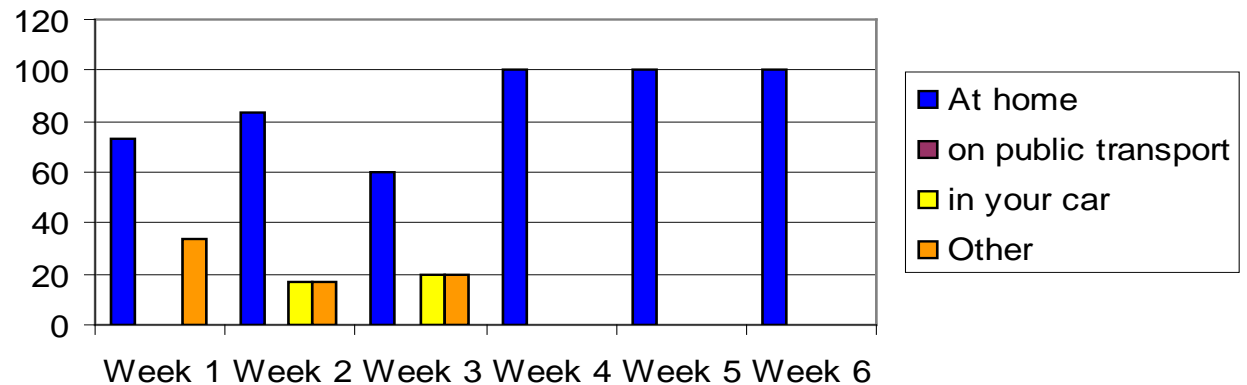


So where
did they
do it?

Group 1
Where did you listen to L120 audio clips using your device? (Tick all that apply)



Group 2
Where did you do the L120 speaking activities using your device?

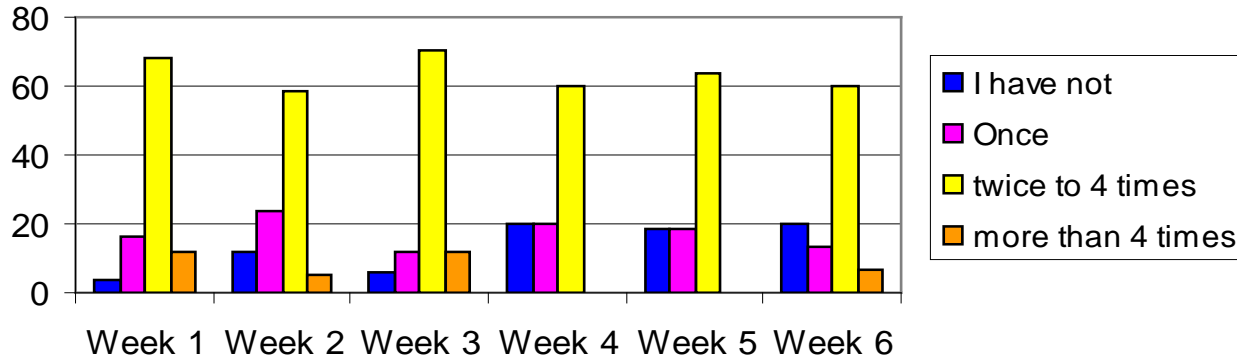




How often and for how long?

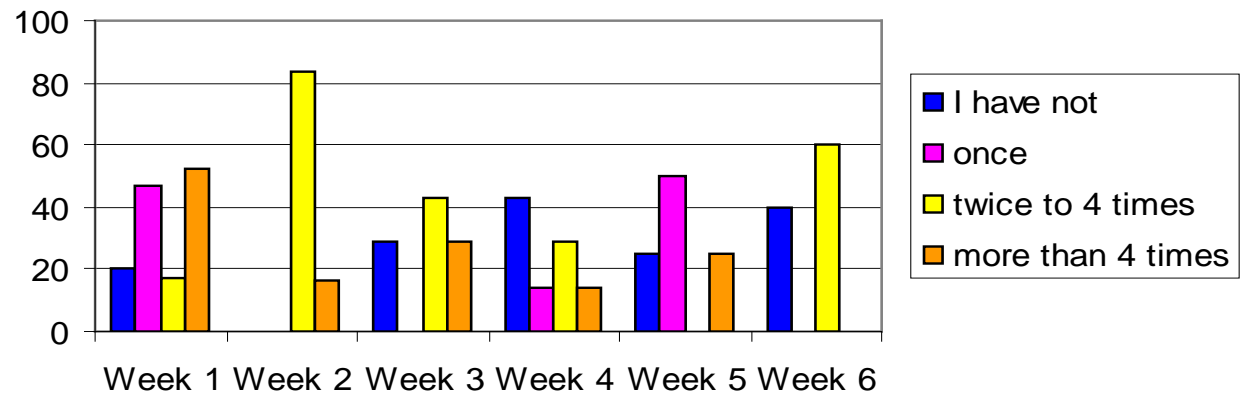
Group 1

How often have you used your device to listen to L120 audio clips?



Group 2

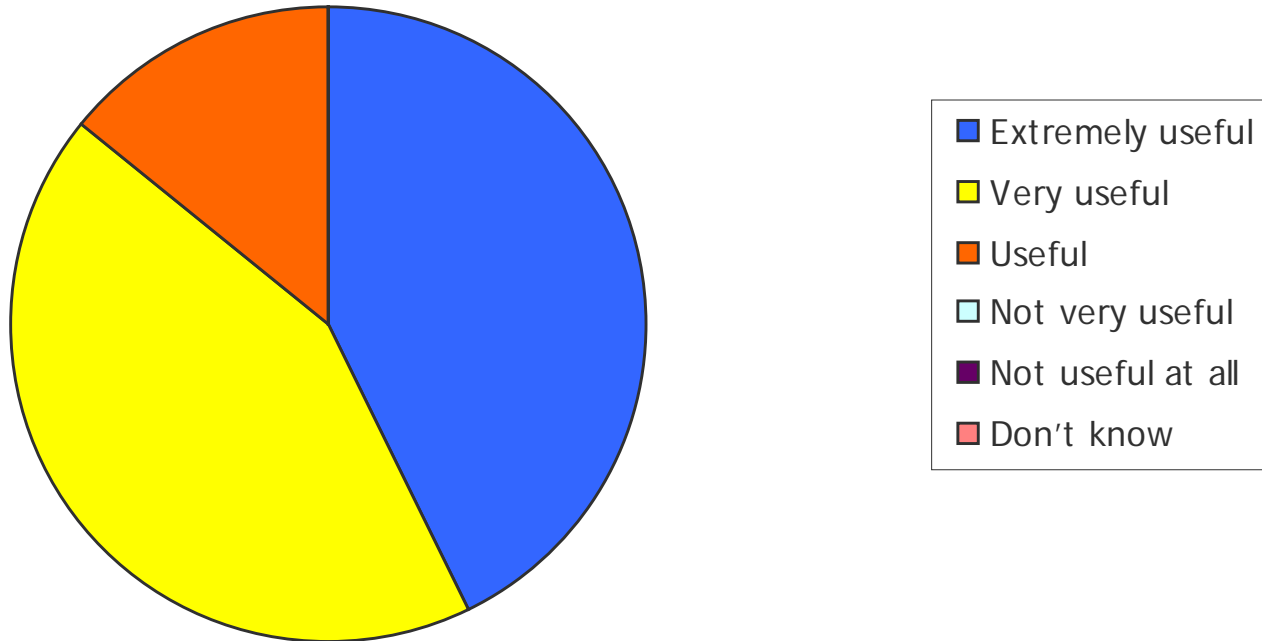
How often have you used your device to do the speaking activities?



So did Group 1 find it useful?



In relation with your studies on L120, how do you rate the usefulness of listening to L120 audio clips on mobile devices?

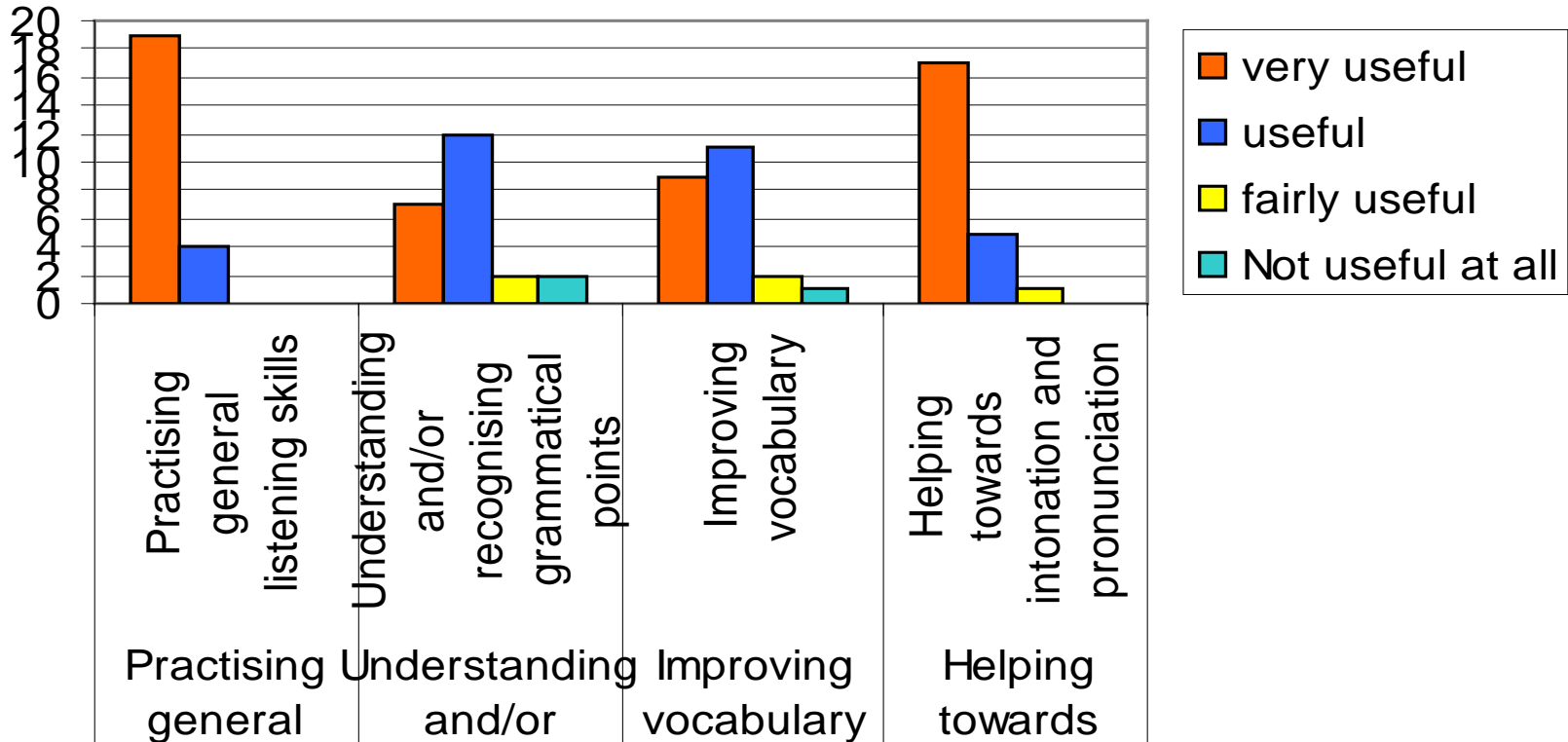


Extremely useful: 42.9% - Very useful: 42.9% - Useful: 14.3%

Which aspect did Group 1 find most useful?



In listening to the audio clips on your device, which aspect did you find most useful? Group 1 week 1



What did Group 2 like?



- Additional practice on pronunciation and grammar provided prompts/answers were short and it did not rely too much on memory
- The challenge (being stretched) & the 'authentic' aspect
- The potential to complement the DVD-ROM or the other course materials

What did Group 2 not like?

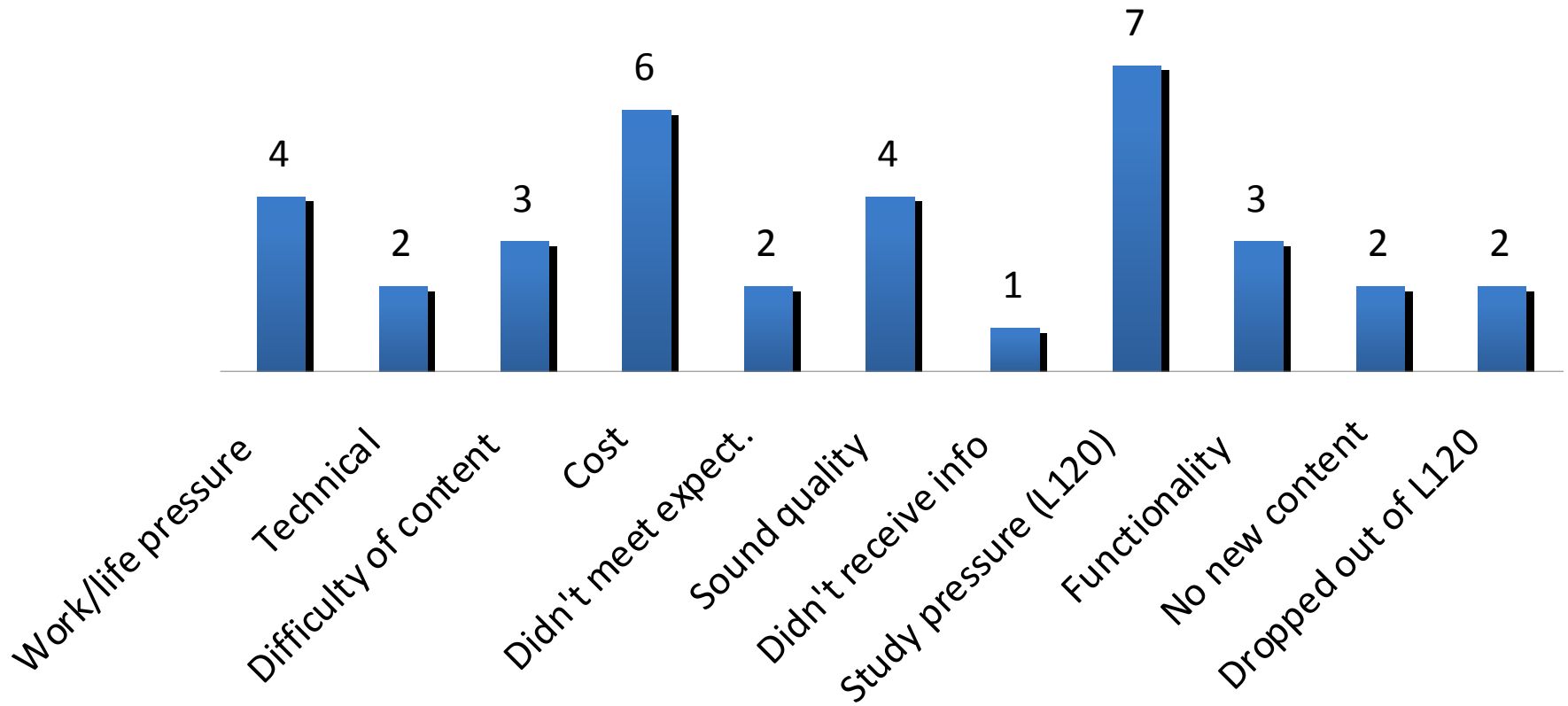


- Lack of sample/model answers in the review mode
- Issues around sound quality and functionality
- The high level of difficulty:
 - relying too much on memory
 - relying too much on course material content
 - hard to understand

Reasons for dropping out



Reasons for dropping out



Possible practical applications



- Encouraging the use of iPods and MP3 players for listening practise
- Standalone repetition activities (pronunciation/intonation)
- follow-up activities (complementing other medium such as DVD-ROM) focusing on practising grammar or oral skills in general such as grammar drills, dialogues and short oral presentations
- Approaching listening differently (developing memory and comprehension as well as immediate response)



Lessons learned

- Don't assume that even basic technology is easy to master
- Don't forget that the sound quality so important in listening and speaking skills might be an issue on mobile phones
- Match content with the medium and its functionality (including its limitations)
- Educate the students to the potential of approaching listening and speaking skills in a less supported way. (lack of visual can help with listening skills)



Contacts

- Valérie Demouy (Lecturer in French - Department of Languages) v.e.demouy@open.ac.uk
- Annie Eardley (Senior Lecturer - Department of Languages) a.f.eardley@open.ac.uk
- Agnes Kukulska-Hulme (Professor of Learning Technology and Communication – Institute of Educational Technology) a.m.kukulska-hulme@open.ac.uk
- Rhodri Thomas (Senior Project Manager - Learning Innovation Office) rhodri.thomas@open.ac.uk