Now that we know a little bit of what MLearning is, how could we get started?

Think about how you will do it
Nicky Hockly of the Consultants-E has an excellent checklist of pedagogical considerations before getting started on the whole area of MLearning. Here is a taster:
in the classroom --- on the move
Are you going to get your learners to use handheld devices regularly *in the classroom* (e.g. to access dictionaries, to research on the web, to take polls…)?
Or are you going to encourage your learners to use their own handheld devices *outside* the classroom for independent study (e.g. to play games, to listen to podcasts, to learn vocabulary…) on the move and in their spare time? Or both?
It may be easiest to start by simply recommending a number of good apps to your learners for their own informal learning. Make this optional - encourage only those students *interested* enough to try this out. Get them to report back regularly to the class. The enthusiasm may spread to other learners. Or not. ...

You can find the rest of these considerations here (http://www.emoderationskills.com/?p=120). In this blogpost I'd like to develop this first one a bit further, and look at how you and your learners could get started with on the move MLearning.

Find out what your learners have
First it may be worthwhile to ask students to bring to class one day any mobile devices they have (e.g. netbook, smartphone, tablet... see my last blog post for more). At the beginning of class, tell them to *take these out and turn them on* (already an uncommon instruction for mobile devices in the classroom). Ask the students to work in small groups and do the following:

- tell them to list, in English, the features of their mobile devices (e.g. mine can take photos, mine has a GPS, I can record my voice on mine...)

- feedback on these as a whole group, writing up the features on the board.

- ask groups to look at these features and suggest ways that they could use these to help them gain access to English or practise their English; each group makes a list of three suggestions

- feedback on the suggestions on the board and ask students to choose one or two and try them this week.

You may have your own ideas to add to their suggestions above, and during the rest of this series of posts we will look at various ways of extending English outside the classroom using mobile devices.

Find out what your learners like

Another useful activity could be to find out what kind of study habits your students have already and what they enjoy doing and start from there. At the end of this blog post you will find a worksheet for your students on how to elaborate their own personal study plan (PSP). This includes a list of possible study activities which includes many that can be done using a mobile device. There are also detailed teaching notes for this activity.

A very simple way of starting mlearning...

There is yet another way that you can get your learners to get their technological devices to help them learn English. A colleague of mine at Macmillan explained it to me earlier this year, and I thought it was so simple and elegant! I'll keep you in suspense though for a little bit longer, and make it the subject of my next blog entry...