



VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Moodle at UWTSD



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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to reflect and analyse how virtual learning environment can develop our knowledges and how effective can be virtual learning. Another component of this report is to find positive aspects and negative factors that can affect learning. Therefore, I made a questionnaire to investigate the efficiency of Moodle to my university. I gave my questionnaire to ten of my colleagues to answer it and I will analyse the results by creating three charts for a better understanding. For this report I will use primary and secondary data. Primary data is the questionnaire that I made and the results from it. The secondary data is the research made in google scholar, Moodle library and e-books. Forward I will describe step by step the importance of VLE in my University.

The importance of Virtual Learning Environment

According with Dillenbourg, Schneider and Synteta (2002), Virtual Learning Environment is a “designed information space” that have an educational purpose for those who are unable to attend the classes to a specific institution for a specific reason (Dillenbourg et al, 2002).

Thanks to new technology’s nowadays is possible to educate people from distance without the need to attend every classes when they supposed to. This method of education is included in almost every educational institution in the United Kingdom. That type of education started in 2000 in university’s and now almost all universities have an institutional virtual learning environment such as Moodle and Blackboard.

VLEs had a big importance for the educators and for the learners. For educators was more efficiently to explain some ideas to their students using the power point slides, charts, graphics etc. For the students as well was a good impact because they can access their lessons anytime, they want and there they have all they need for improving the knowledges. The benefits for the students are enormous because first they do not waist time to attend classes, second they have all the information they need for every module, third they have access to online library without the need to pay for an e-book, e-journal or articles. Another benefit is that they have a student e-mail where they receive updates and useful information for their education. They can chat anytime with their educators for asking help when they need.

VLEs is focused on learning and teaching and is a usually a piece of software. Using a VLEs students reduce the face-to-face contact with their teachers, reducing the need of the paper based materials by accessing Moodle, they are encouraged to reflect more on their work-based learning (www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk 2004).

There are so many challenges to receive education via online learning like time management. Being an employer, self-employer or just staying at home taking care of your kids you are busy all the time and if you decided to apply for a degree you need to manage your time at work, at home and to find enough time and for your studies. Self-motivation is another challenge through your education. Being a student after so many years is difficult because you are the only person responsible for that and you need to have a good reason why to study and not give up on the middle of the way. Another challenge is that students are dependents of internet and technology. In case if they have an issue whit the network connection that can affect directly their learning. They need to possess a modern device that will allow him to access Moodle.

Primary research (Questionnaire).

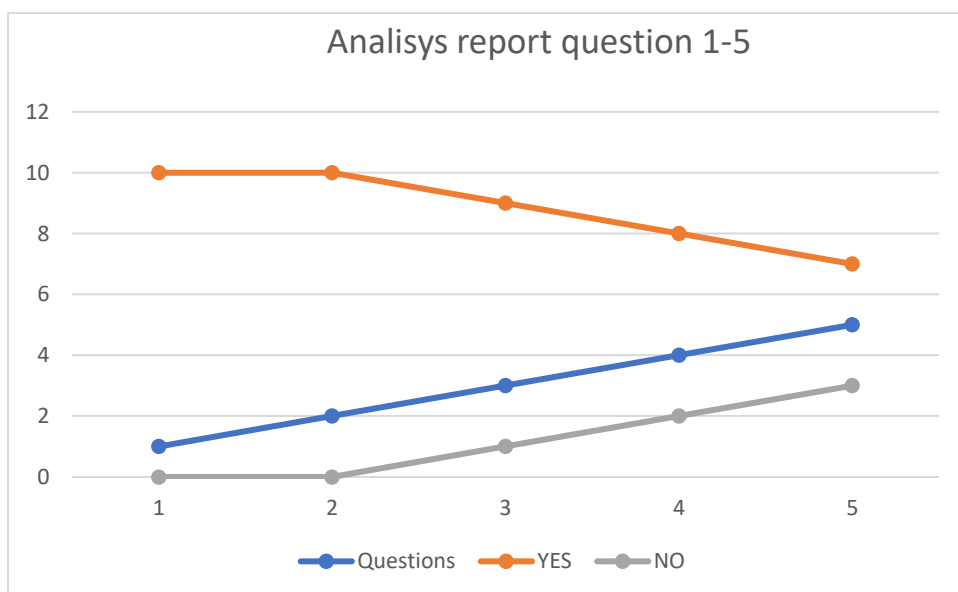
At my university as a VLE I use Moodle. In the beginning was a big challenge because was something new for me and because lack of digital skills. Therefore, I started to study digital skills and research methods and I gained more knowledges about it.

Moodle contains all the modules that I study, library, student hall, student services, attendance, timetable, student mail and other useful sections. My experience in Moodle I can say that was ok because is easy to access it from both my devices (mobile phone and laptop) and I can find easily what I need. The most unpleasant thing is that not always I understand the information from e-books and e-journals because sometimes I find it difficult and here, I make a reference to academic writing, terms and words that I can not understand. Avery good thing with Moodle is that there you have all the apps you need for your learning as MC Word, MC Excel, One Drive, Outlook, Power Point, One Note etc. All

this apps are useful and helped me to achieve more knowledges for my future employment. They can be accessed anywhere and anytime you need.

For proving the efficiency of Moodle, like my primary research, I did a questionnaire and I give it to ten of my colleagues to answer. In this questionnaire I have created fifteen questions about Moodle, and I have created three different charts for explaining how my classmates estimate the efficiency of our VLE.

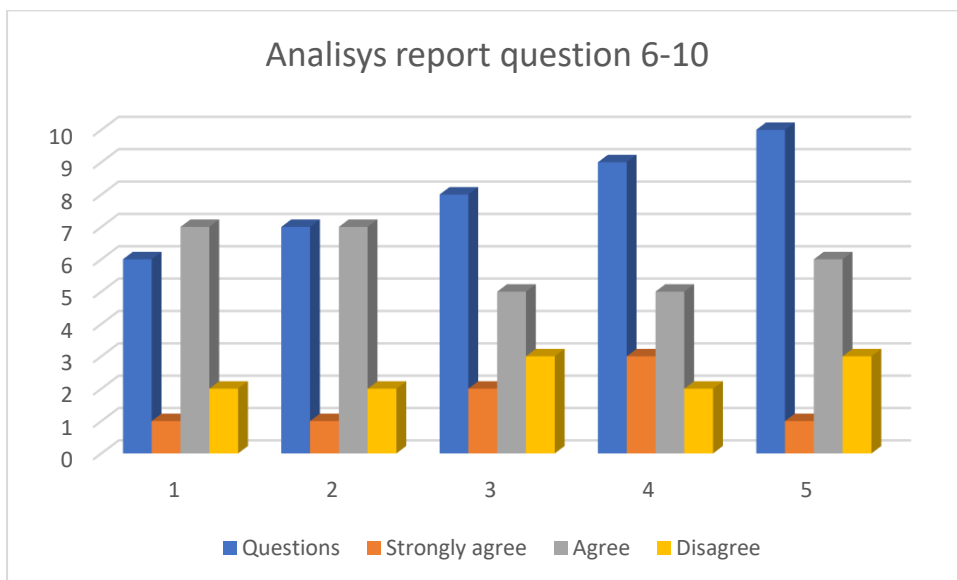
Questions	YES	NO
01	10	0
02	10	0
03	9	1
04	8	2
05	7	3



By analysing the first chart, Moodle respond to all the needs of my colleagues and they said that for them is easy to find the information needed. One of them said that the information from Moodle is difficult to understand and others two are not satisfied with this kind of learning maybe because of their lack of knowledges in digital skills. Just three of them want to make some changes in this virtual space of learning and if the university will give them the chance to listening their ideas this could increase the efficiency of Moodle. In conclusion, most of the students find Moodle an efficient model of learning.

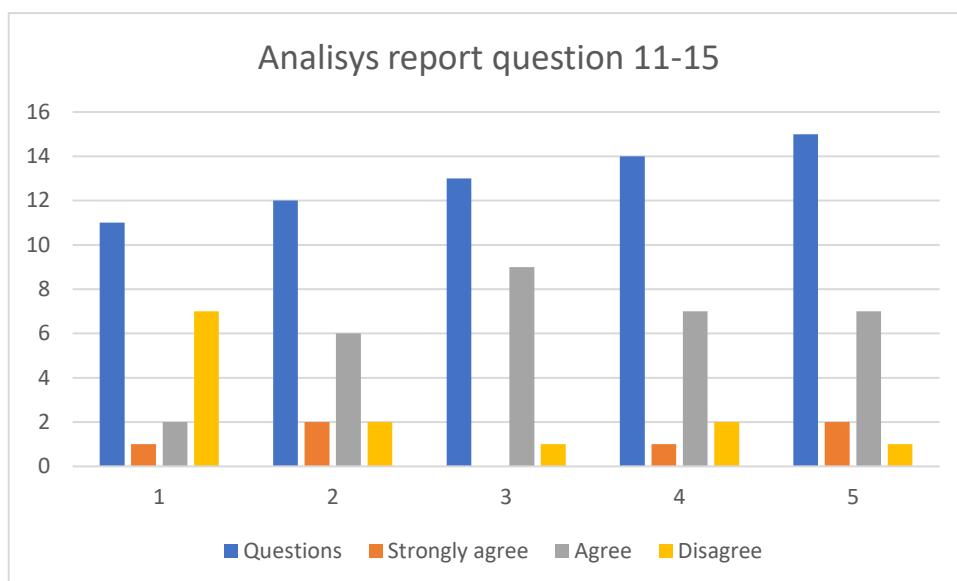
The second chart that I have created is about the tools and the apps that helps students to study efficiently. In the next five questions I will analyse the results of this questions.

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
06	1	7	2
07	1	7	2
08	2	5	3
09	3	5	2
10	1	6	3



From this chart we can see that 80% of the students use Moodle for their assessments, finding the information and the support they need to achieve a proper task. 20% of the students find difficult to access Moodle library to find the information for the assessment, this can happen because you should formulate a correct question when you do researches. A wrong question could affect the results of your research. Again 70% of students agree that Power Point slides is a good way of learning, giving the main ideas for a proper theme ant visually you can learn simple and efficient information. Another efficient tool of learning are the videos where you can find interesting things and examples that facilitate to collect more useful data. Whit this idea agrees 80% of my colleagues. Therefore, 70% of the students agree that VLEs is an efficient method of education and 30% disagree this point of view. The third chart will reveal how frequently students are accessing Moodle and about technological part of this online education.

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
11	1	2	7
12	2	6	2
13	0	9	1
14	1	7	2
15	2	7	1



From this chart I can see that students do not access their Moodle account daily, just 30% of them said that they do that event if 80% said that is easy to access it from their devices. 90% of my colleagues are appreciating the new updates made before the start of the second term of studies. 80% of them consider the Microsoft Office apps useful for their assessments and their learning. In conclusion, 90% of students are happy to recommend this method of education to their friends and from here I can say that Moodle a very efficient model of education for both parties, educators and students.

For analysing the data from this chart, it was used MC Excel as a basic tool. MC Excel is the most appropriate tool for analysing data. MC Excel give users the ability to handle data stored in columns and rows, fields and records (Myers et al,1994).

In MC Excel you can create different types of charts, including bar charts, line charts and column charts. For a better explanation of primary data from my questionnaire I have created three charts by using MC Excel. the advantage of MC Excel is time saving because here you find tools that include sorting, auto-filtering, custom-filtering, targeted data identification and corresponding record selection and consolidating data from multiple worksheets. These are core skills for exploratory data analyses.

Lesson drawn from this research and the skills gained.

First lesson from this research was how to create a questionnaire as a primary data and how to collect quantitative data and qualitative data. I have learned how to make a correct question and to the point. Another thing that I have learned was how to analyse data and what tools I need for that, referring to MC Excel. I have created charts for the first time, I never did that before and at the beginning was difficult to understand all the steps I need to do. Also was my first time when I have worked with MC Excel, I did not know how effective this tool for my assessment is and now I have gained more knowledges for the future assessments.

Therefore, doing this assessment I have learned a lot of new things and useful information from primary data (Questionnaire) and secondary data. This experience will be useful for my future employment because I have gained knowledges about collecting data, using programs as MC Excel, MC Word, MC Office. I have developed my analysing skills, research skills, writing and tipping skills.

Skills for professional practice

Technical skills are the competences and knowledges needed to complete a specific task (www.thebalancecareers.com 2019).

Technical skills are related with IT skills. Some examples of technical skills are data analysing, technical writing, typing, research, Microsoft office, software, analytical skills etc.

The most important skill that I use in my assessment is data analysing. Analytical skills refer to the ability to collect and to analyse data. For achieving data, I have created the questionnaire as a primary data and after I did researches about VLEs as a secondary data. For analysing all the data, I have collected, I have used the Microsoft Excel to create the chart and to analyse easier the information from it. In analysing the charts first, I was observing and interpreting data, after I was making decision based on the factors and options available. As a result, I could define the effectiveness of Moodle in our education. Analytical skills include critical thinking, communication, creativity and research, decoding information.

Therefore, I have achieved more knowledges about IT skills, how to find the information needed, how to work in MC Excel, how to create a chart and how to analyse the information, how to structure a report and academic writing. I have, also, improved my typing skills and knowledge's about Microsoft Word, how to make a cover page, content page, references etc.

Software tools is a assembly of computer programs that are used by developers to maintain, to create or to support other applications and programs(www.goodfirms.co, 2020).

The software tools I used in assessment are Microsoft Office, Microsoft word and Microsoft Excel.

Microsoft Excel is a software programme that makes part of Microsoft Office that include cell-based calculation, pivot tables and graphing tools. MC Excel is used to sort and organise a large amount of data. In my case I have used MC Excel for creating the charts and to analyse easier the amount of data from my questionnaire. There I have calculated the answers by including the number of people who answered with yes or no into the cell based and I could to analyse the results.

Microsoft Word is a word processor that allows you to create document, reports, letters and resumes in a qualitative and professional way using features as spell check, grammar check, text and font formatting, page layout and more. Using Mc Word my report I could to check my spelling and grammatical errors and I could to write in an academic way my report.

Conclusion

In conclusion VLEs has an important role in education especially for those who are unable to attend classes and even for those who attend but need to study more by themselves. Moodle is a very good learning environment that offer to the students all the information and support they need for achieving knowledges. This report helped me to gain more knowledges about software tools and to develop my technical skills.

References

1. Dillenbourg, P., Schneider, D. and Synteta, P., 2002. Virtual learning environments. In *3rd Hellenic Conference" Information & Communication Technologies in Education"* (pp. 3-18). Kastaniotis Editions, Greece.
2. Myers, B.A., Goldstein, J. and Goldberg, M.A., 1994, April. Creating charts by demonstration. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 106-111). ACM.
3. www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk Virtual learning environments (VLE), 2019.
4. www.thebalancecareers.com , Alison Doyle: Important technical skills with examples,2019.
5. www.goodfirms.com , What is a software tool, 2020.

Research questionnaire.

Virtual Learning Environment – Moodle at University of Wales Trinity Saint Davis.

Thanks to this questionnaire I will write my report considering my colleges answers. The purpose of this survey is to find how effective is the virtual learning environment and how this can change learning styles.

Group 1: Health and social care.

My colleges need to give an answer from the following:

First 1-5 questions with Yes or NO.

The next questions 6-15 with: Strongly Agree, Agree or Disagree

Student Name: **Maria Curagau**

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Yes	No
1. Does Moodle respond to your needs?					
2. It is easy to find what you need on Moodle?					
3. It is easy to understand the information from Moodle?					
4. Are you satisfied with VLE?					
5. Do you want some changes on Moodle?					
6. Do you use e-books and e-journals for					

your assessments?					
7. It is easy to access library on Moodle.					
8. Did you find useful the Power Point slides for your learning?					
9. Did you find useful all the videos included in every lesson?					
10. Do you find effective VLE?					
11. Do you access Moodle every day and check your e-mails?					
12. It is easy to access Moodle from your devise?					
13. Do you like the new updates on Moodle?					
14. Are you happy with the apps from Microsoft Office?					
15. Do you recommend to your friends to use this type of education?					