

A REPORT OF THE IMPACT OF THE VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (VLE)

A small research of students experiences in their virtual classes

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1. Introduction

In this report I am going to write about the impact of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David London Campus and the consequences it has on the students. The VLE is a technological system that allows and improves the connection between the teachers and students.

The platform used in our university is "Moodle" in which we have our virtual classes, assessments, projects, presentation and even a virtual library where you have the access to all the information related to your degree.

In order to develop this report, I took as the primary source of information a questionnaire created by me in Microsoft Form that my colleagues answered. The questions were related to their feelings towards this topic that affect all of us. In the same source I asked for some possible solutions taking in account the situation we are in.

The global pandemic (Covid-19) has led to a situation in which many students have to start or finish their classes through a screen. This has resulted in the raise of the technological field inside the global market, as well as the lack of social interaction and generating some problems with interpersonal relationships. Fields such as professional and educational socializing are struggling.

2. Background

Online studies are, in this new era and under the situation we are all living around the world, the best and only way to educate our minds. That is not the only point of view, we can understand that after centuries assisting teaching lessons it is hard for some of us to get through this method.

Nowadays, there are a lot of ways to study, in the case you have not enough time or that there are any circumstances that do not allow you to move. Each way can be adjusted and modify taking in account the individual's necessities. There are from the classical face to face lessons, to semi-online degrees reaching the other side, the online method. As well you have to take in account your personal preferences.

The main characteristics of the online lessons are the use of the technology, the freedom of organization of your own time and the availability of having everything in an online system. These lessons are really similar to the traditional ones due to the compulsory assistance in both of them.

One of the advantages that you can get is the time management. Thanks to this many older people retake their studies or start to study just for the main reason that now they can organize their time. Other advantage and the main one for me and the one I like the most is

the facility for breaking the geographical barrier, giving the opportunity to study to everyone no matter their location.

As everything this coin has two faces, the good one and the bad one. From the negative point of view, we should observe that at the same time you reduce the social interaction the communication is reduced and discourage at the same time, over all of this, it is necessary an active interaction of a teacher or tutor. All of this can reduce the principles that in theory we could have acquired attending class.

Online classes give to the advantage of organizing time the way you want to, but at the same time a great responsibility. This is because if you do not take care of this responsibilities you step back.

We should take into account that the ability to focus is not going to be the same, the number of distractions is going to be really high, this is because you are not in a specific place designed to study and the comfort that this place would give you to focus.

All of this leads at the same time that we need to consider the actual global situation, that is the pandemic we are all suffering. This has reduced the possibilities to study, now we are all required to take online lessons for our health and wellbeing, as well as the one of our beloved.

3. Aims and Objectives

The aim of this report is to achieve a result based on the primary information, that is the one I got from the answers of my questionnaire, and the secondary information, that is the one I researched, learned and understood of the impact of the VLE.

Analysing the information from the results of the questionnaire I am going to plot some graphics that are going to be helpful for the understanding of the thought of the students about this topic.

At the same time, reach to a personal conclusion of my own opinion of the situation in which we are and how this affects our learning process.

4. Method

First of all, I had to investigate the questionnaires and how to develop them, researching in this way the necessary information for this project. And where I can make the questionnaire.

Due to this, I did an exhaustive investigation about the meaning, how it affects, how to manage and the differences between the face to face, semi-online and online lessons. So, I can get a better point of view of this last one.

After finishing the necessary investigation, I did the questionnaire on the Forms Office, writing specific questions to fulfil this report. The questionnaire was presented and sent via email to all my colleagues, from which I just got seven answers to it.

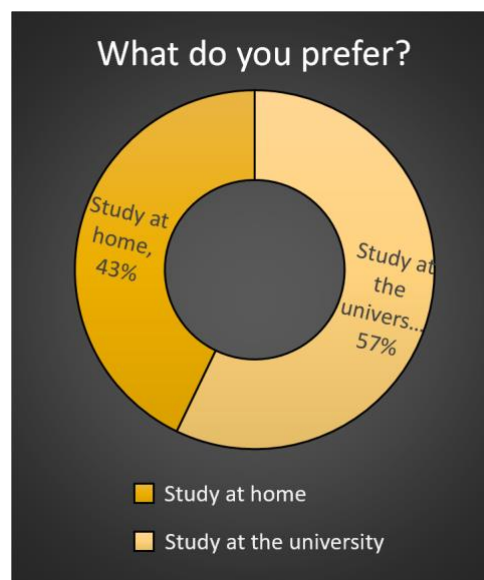
With the answer to the survey, I had to represent some graphics, in which it clearly showed the topic of it, how it influences and it's results. All of this was done in Microsoft Excel.

Based on their answers I could get an idea about their opinions of the VLE. And at the same time develop a report about this topic in Microsoft Word, not only with my opinion, but as well with the internet information.

5. Results (200)

The answers of the questionnaire were variable. A student specified that prefers the classes: *"Smaller groups"* _ Alberto Vidal Perpignan, the online classes are too big, and because of this it is not really easy to pay attention when there are so many the ones who have dudes.

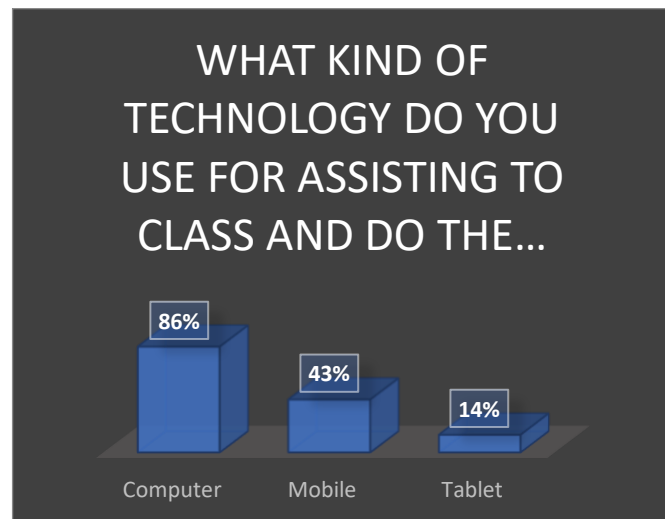
First, I wanted to know and understand what the students prefer, so my first question was:



As we can see in this graph the decision to study at home or in the university is almost the same. Because certainly to study from home gives you the possibility to save time and

money on trips to the university. On the other hand, going to the campus gives a specific space to study and learn.

After understanding this and taking in account the situation we are living in, all the lessons are online. I wanted to ask which technological system they use to attend class. These were their answers:



What I got from this was that many of them used more than one device to listen to the lessons and perform the assessments of the degree. But the most used is the computer. Something that the UWTSD was clear at the beginning was that we had the necessity to buy a computer for the classes and projects.

6. Discussion

Once I could get the answers from the questionnaire, I took care of the graphics and understood a little bit the opinion of each of them.

I chose to write some basic questions and some more specific ones, always trying not to make them too long or complicated so they finished it completely and do not leave it halfway.

The purpose of the simple questions was to place myself in context about the person who was answering, the gender and the age of the students. This helped me understand the way they are and think.

The answers I got showed me that the degree was mainly attended by people older than 25 years old. Verifying my theory that for older people it is easier to study online. This is the

result of a better time management and helping them to complete the rest of their daily activities and responsibilities.

After this I decided to go deeper on the topic and ask them more specific questions. For example: "What could be implemented in the University of Wales Trinity Saint David so that the online teaching methods will be better". The objective of this question was mainly to know their opinions, one of them answered: *"Clearer communication, more involvement"* _Alexandra Hudakova (1/04/2021) <https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPage.aspx?lang=en-GB&origin=OfficeDotCom&route=Start#Analysis=true&FormId=-REPTm4EBUWcuNshUjEeIeZufFK8zydKkPfLDVXTqOZUOUJDTUNTTEsxM1cxTEVNSE1WT1RZQkdMTS4u> .

This response gave me a lot to think about. Certainly, that is what happened in the online classes, the students do not pay attention or listen. There is no interaction between the teacher's lesson. Something that makes the class more interesting and dynamic. This makes some of the lessons really boring and hard to listen to. The student gets distracted really fast in these situations.

One of the consequences of this is the focus problems that are born from it, if they were not there from before. The students have a great risk of reducing their performance and their marks will get lower.

There is an article about the problems to focus on, in which it is described briefly how they are, the reason for them and some ways to fix these problems. The subtitle of the Spanish article is "La falta de atención puede corregirse con una serie de técnicas que estimulan el cerebro y enseñan a concentrarse" _Azucena Garcia (06/09/2006). That translated is: "The lack of focus could be corrected with a series of techniques that stimulate the brain and teach you how to focus". In this article the doctor explains at the same time what methods we can use to improve this academic performance.

There was an article written by García Aretio, L. (Barcelona 2001) <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/3314/331453132001.pdf> , that was titled in Spanish: "La educación a distancia: de la teoría a la práctica" that translated would be: "The distance education: from theory to practice". Where the writer explained his point of view and develops the article giving examples and explaining that it is really different to listen to it and speak about it, than the feeling of living it.

What I noticed was that almost all the students use their phones for attending class. This showed that they do not take their time to organize and prepare a peaceful place where they can pay attention.

7. Conclusion

In my opinion I would take the face-to-face lessons. I am really sure that this is the best way to pay attention properly and to understand in a better way, much better than through a screen.

I think that the simple obligation of having to attend class obliges you to organize in a better way all your day. And that leads to taking care of a bit more of the studies.