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DSR Assessment 2 Individual Report

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INTRODUCTION

This report will cover a topic that has affected many of us so far, virtual learning. Firstly, it will explain the virtual learning importance, the impact it has had on students and the learning experience. Subsequently, it will explain what Qualitative data is and why I chose this method to interview my classmates. With the help of Microsoft Excel, I made a table structured in two columns (question and answer) where I insert the answers previously made to my classmates about the impact of the Virtual Learning Environment. I will conclude this report with my own reflection on the experience I had this term on online learning and a summary of all my classmates' answers on the same subject.

Virtual Learning Environment

Virtual learning environments (VLE) are a relatively new subject of educational theory and experience (Weller, 2007). Principally, a well-maintained VLE can enable students of the entire learning types to access the best viable education, in a way that they may not be able to do so in a lecture-based setting that is mostly geared toward auditory learners (i.e. those who learn best by listening (Williams and Fardon, 2005; Vigentini, 2009). If a VLE's tools do not meet the needs of students, both in terms of format (text files, audio files, images, etc.) and content, the VLE is essentially made worthless because it does not enhance the students' learning experience. It should ideally provide only enough material (for co-located students rather than distance learners)

to enable students to reinforce their work in lectures and achieve a wider and deeper understanding of the subject (Ofsted, 2009), hopefully through a variety of presentational styles (such as video or audio).

The quality of a student's experience in the classroom or lecture hall is determined by how well the instructional style matches their own learning style. Digital environments face the same challenges, necessitating a diverse set of tools to accommodate the entire learning types. Many higher education organizations are becoming extremely divided and deficient in continuity or unity (Whitworth, 2005), and VLEs are seen to help solve challenges brought on by the national rise in the number of students attending university and the increased workload this entails for lecturers and support workers (Richardson, 2001). However, if the online services are too extensive, students can stop attending lectures (Bromage, 2003), opting instead to access lecture materials online and complete their studies from the comfort of their own homes (Boyle et al., 2008). As a result, there are three categories of VLE: those with many information (which deter students from attending lectures), those with insufficient information (which renders the VLE completely useless), and those with only adequate information to encourage students to reinforce their work in lectures and achieve a broader understanding of the topic (Ofsted, 2009).

Impact of Virtual Learning

Due to increasing anxiety about the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, a growing number of universities around the world have either delayed or cancelled all campus events such as seminars, conventions, intra- and inter-university athletics, and other activities, starting in March 2020. Universities shifted quickly from face-to-face to online instruction with a variety of classes and programmers (Sahu 2020). On the one side, before the epidemic, the ability of new technology to improve student learning had been well known. The advancement of emerging technology along increasingly personalized, remote, adaptive, and data-driven lines has sparked a lot of interest in recent years. Blended instruction, which combines the advantages of face-to-face and online instruction, is increasingly being adopted by universities (Dziuban et al. 2018), and digital innovations are obviously central to the development of higher education across the world (Henderson et al. 2017). Faculty recruitment, as well as student involvement and connection, have been described as critical to the transition's progress (Barr and Miller 2013). While the use of already-familiar apps like WhatsApp proved useful for remote learning during the early stages of the pandemic (mid-March), research has revealed the need for more effective post-emergency activities (Wargadinata et al. 2020). However, several faculty members encountered unexpected obstacles as a result of Covid-19's abrupt appearance, including a lack of online-teaching expertise, a lack of time to prepare distance-learning classes, and finding out how to use resources from instructional technology departments (Bao 2020). As a result, students and teachers had difficulties learning and teaching at home. The literature identifies flaws such as the inadequacy of online-teaching infrastructures, teachers' lack of familiarity with emerging technology, the knowledge deficit, the diverse home climate, and so on (Ali 2020). Additionally, while learning at home, students face a variety of distractions. For example, not all can find suitable spaces for home schooling, and studying can be hampered by inadequate hardware and insecure networks (Zhang et al. 2020).

Qualitative Data

Data that approximates and characterizes is known as qualitative data. It is possible to observe and report qualitative evidence. The essence of this data form is non-numerical. Observations, one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and other approaches are used to gather this kind of

information. In mathematics, qualitative data is also known as categorical data, which is data that can be organized categorically depending on a thing's or phenomenon's characteristics and properties. Qualitative evidence is critical for assessing the occurrence of specific traits or characteristics. It helps statisticians and researchers to create criteria that can be used to observe larger data sets. Qualitative data collection approaches are mostly concerned with extracting knowledge, logic, and motives, and as a result, they are more in-depth in terms of analysis.

I have chosen the qualitative research method because of its personal approach; one-on-one interviews are one of the most widely used data collection tools in qualitative study. In a one-to-one basis, the interviewer or analyst gathers data from the interviewee. The interview can be unstructured and casual – conversational. The interviewer lets the rhythm of the conversation decide the questions to be answered, so most open-ended questions are asked randomly.

Survey

Question: Do you like Moodle? If yes what do you like?	Answer
Person n1	Yes, I like Moodle because you don't have to keep any book in your room, but you got everything on your Moodle profile online. Is a space saver.
Person n2	Yes, I like the PDF, all information, Microsoft Word free, library free books/article.
Person n3	Yes, I like because is a good research platform.
Person n4	Yes, I like how they explain the topics through power point slides.
Person n5	Yes, the possibility to review the lessons and look for articles in the library.
Person n6	Yes, I like how is structured.
Person n7	Yes, I like how they explain the topics through power point slides.

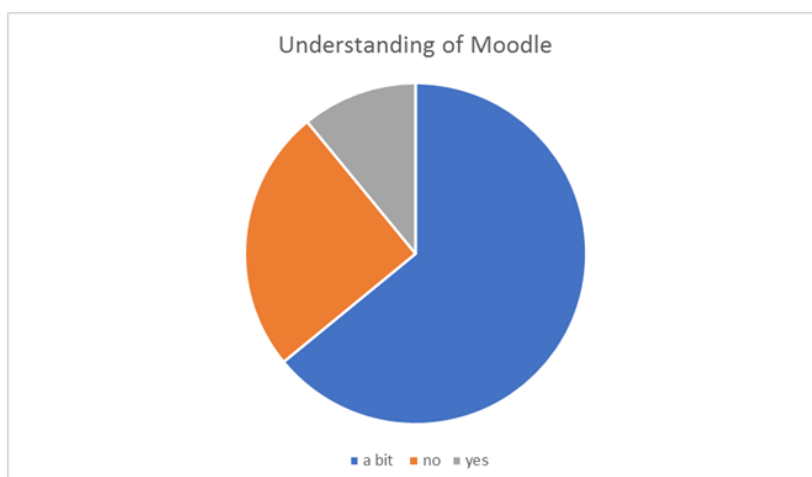
Theme

From this question I gathered that 7 out of 7 people like Moodle especially the way topics are explained through power point slides.

Question: Is Moodle easy to use? Why / why not?	Answer
Person n1	A little bit, because some information is put all together and is not quick to find what you are looking for.
Person n2	Yes, in the beginning not but now yes because I got used.
Person n3	Not at all because there is a bit of confusion when you must look something because of the organization of the files where you can find other courses files that you don't need it.
Person n4	Yes, because everything is pretty much clear and handy.
Person n5	Yes, I didn't find any problems.
Person n6	No, it's very confused for me.
Person n7	It wasn't easy for me at first, but now I've got the hang of it and use it a lot.

Theme

I noticed conflicting answers in this question. Some of my classmates had difficulty using Moodle at first, but then they got used to it and continued to use it. Others had a really hard time understanding how it worked, especially with the organization and arrangement of topics. Only a few answered that it was easy to use.



Question: Do you think Moodle is a good online platform? Why?	Answer
Person n1	Yes, because you can find loads of resource all in one and you can study from the lectures and check the slide whenever you want.
Person n2	Yes, because is easy and quick to use.
Person n3	No, I prefer other research platforms.
Person n4	No, there are other better platforms.
Person n5	Yes, because you can find whatever you have done in your class online again, if you want to have a look back to it in case you didn't understand.
Person n6	Yes, to be honest if we are talking about students this is the best platform for academic learning.
Person n7	Yes, because I can review the previews lessons whenever, wherever.

Theme:

Most students in this question answered that Moodle is a good research platform. One of the key points of this positive response was the fact that you can go on Moodle and review at any time the topics previously discussed in class. Some students prefer other research platforms.

Question: What do you think Moodle is missing compared to the others?	Answer
Person n1	I don't think Moodle is missing anything compared to the others because I can find whatever I need.
Person n2	Is missing a bit of organization about files that you might need for your course.
Person n3	I think is the best platform for academic learning.
Person n4	It is missing synthetic and quick answers.
Person n5	I don't know since Scholar works kind of differently.
Person n6	I don't think Moodle is missing anything, I like it and I confidante to use.
Person n7	I think it lacks a better organization of topics.

Theme:

Some students think that Moodle is an effective research platform and therefore they don't miss anything compared to others. only a few answered that the organization and set up of Moodle is not very clear compared to others and should be handled differently.

Question: Do you think Moodle could be improved? How?	Answer
Person n1	Yes, they can improve the system speed, because sometimes is slow to download files and topics.
Person n2	Yes, they can insert quick answers.
Person n3	No, I think Moodle is good like this and I wouldn't improve anything.
Person n4	Yes, it can be organized better in some sections. They could create a group for each course, so you can see only what you need to.
Person n5	Yes, I think Moodle could improve the modern interface, more minimal design with the possibility to personalize your own folders.
Person n6	Yes, I think Moodle could improve the library by including more articles.
Person n7	No, I think is fine like this.

Theme:

Five out of seven students said they would change certain aspects of Moodle, like the library because there aren't enough books, the system's speed, and document uploading. Only two of them wouldn't change anything from Moodle.

Conclusion

I think that in life a person never stops learning and that is why, since I did not finish my studies when I was younger, I chose to start one now that I am 28 years old and I need to learn about new subjects that can help me grow at work and in my personal life. This term I have learnt many things that I do not know, but above all I have had an experience that I have never had before, which is to follow the lessons through the use of a PC and the Internet. Virtual learning for me has had as many positive aspects as it has negative ones. The possibility of doing lessons online allows you to create your own comfort zone and follow the lesson as you see fit, it eliminates the loss of time in getting to the college and reduces the possibility of contact with other people. The negative effects that I found in this experience are very important because I saw in many of my classmates the loss of attention during the lesson, less involvement and more absenteeism. The fact of the lack of connection from the students or teachers, sometimes caused some misunderstandings. In spite of the disadvantages I can say that it was a good experience and I would do it again, but anyway I prefer to go to college to attend classes regularly and thus have the possibility to know and interact in a more natural way with my classmates and teachers.

Thanks to the use of qualitative data, I have been able to see the different opinions of my classmates regarding the use of Moodle. I can say that most of them are happy to use this online platform, but they found various learning difficulties which they later overcame thanks to the teachers' support and ability to adapt to a situation like this where you have to understand things through a screen.

Reference

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