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Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Digital Skills and Research Methods (BMSW4003)

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ABSTRACT

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is applied today in many sectors and it can be key in the formation. It is used to deliver educational material and to improve communication. This essay gathers the information through a survey carried out to 10 students (HE Skills in the Workplace) of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. The questionnaire examines the experience that the students have had using university's Moodle to accomplish the assignments; it analyses if the students find this space useful, as a guide/tool and how often they use it; if they consider that the platform could be improved; or if the content is not enough good or expected. Given the moment that we are in (covid19), the study shows a great use of Moodle and how it was considerably influenced students.

INTRODUCTION

A VLE is a digital platform designed to facilitate learning, and communication between students and teachers. It is a complementary tool that well used, it can be of great value. It is an order space where students can find important information and share it with other classmates. They can receive feedback about their assignments, and they can find guides to carry them out successfully. On this platform the students can find material such as YouTube videos, blogs, news, reports, or any materials offered by teachers to improve their knowledge. Also, this tool significantly facilitates the students' life; they can deliver their assignments without having to directly contact with the teacher and make sure that their assignments were received on time. A VLE is an educational platform with communication and training tools that help to learn or better understand the subject, so to speak. This essay shows a study carried out on students of the second term in Certificate in High School in Skills for the Workplace, which provide us with their point of view and the influence or impact that Moodle has had on this term, conducted all online due Covid19. The following survey shows the behaviour of different students on Moodle. I will analyse their answers to see if it has been useful, easy to use and if they are satisfied with the platform.

BACKGROUND

What is VLE?

It is a system to deliver educational material through the network. In this platform, we can find the different tools necessary for learning (communication tools between teachers and students, student monitoring, information for assignments, online support for students and teachers, etc.). Students can access this platform on and off-campus, this means that students can be in contact with their readers every day and access educational material 24/7. This type of training is usually used as a complement to full-time studies, but it is also a useful tool for those who study online, part-time/evening shift or has missed a class. There you will be able to find the information processed each week.

Teachers can upload on this platform different resources for students, images, videos, blogs, news, questionnaires, online tests, etc., any type of material that they find useful so that students can access this information and complete their assignments. Students can also receive feedback on their work directly and more privately. Some of the best-known platforms are the following:

- Moodle
- Blackboard
- Docebo
- Schoology
- Sakai
- Chamilo
- Open edX

Why use a VLE?

As we have said before a VLE is a complementary tool for education, and it is important today because almost everything is based on technology. During normal classes, Moodle is also used by the teacher he can give the lessons and the students have direct access from their computer (if they carry it or the school provides one). This way, if they have an individual task at class, it will be much easier for them to send it to the teacher. The teacher can see the task immediately and send quick feedback to the student. Another advantage of this is that the teacher can see it directly, there will be no confusion of name or student number. And the most important thing for me is that it can be accessed from home, if for some reason the student misses a lesson, they can always see it or review it in Moodle, giving them a little help so as not to be left behind.

Besides, it is a platform where the teachers can upload content as photos, videos, links to other web pages, etc. This is useful for students because this content will be related to their subjects or their assignments. It will give them an idea of what kind of information to look for and where to look for it.

METHODOLOGY

There are different types of methods for obtaining primary information, personal interviews, telephone questionnaire, etc. In this case, I have used an online questionnaire, designed with different types of questions to obtain the necessary data. The questionnaire has been sent to the students, and everything has been done anonymously and directly. This data has not been shared anywhere and is for personal use only. Once the analysis has been carried out, the questionnaire will be eliminated, as well as its answers.

What is a questionnaire?

A questionnaire is one of the most used methods to obtain information. This is composed of different types of questions (open, closed) and multiple-choice answers, which must be answered by a target audience. These types of methods are often used for statistical studies.

Open questions are those that participants can detail their answer. They can write in their own words what they think about that topic, giving us quality information. These types of questions are more difficult to analyse since the answers are longer.

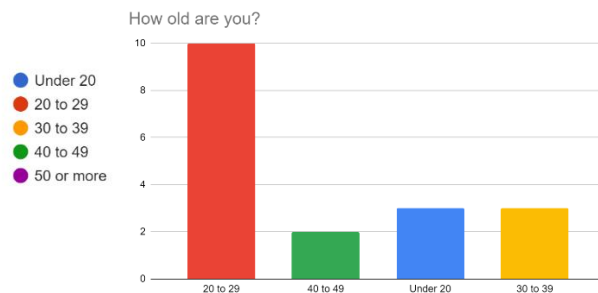
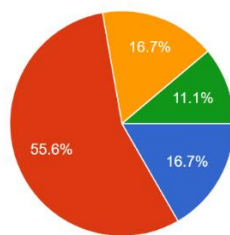
Closed questions are those that do not give the participant the option to write their answer, they must choose between the options provided. The questions can only give two options (yes, no; man, woman, etc.) or they can show a drop-down list (sometimes multiple choice). Another option is those questions that measure a degree of agreement or satisfaction (agree, strongly agree, etc.). These questions are easy to analyse and can often be reusable. The disadvantage is that you cannot really know what the participant thinks or feels.

It is one of the cheapest and fastest methods to get information, many times the interviewer does not even have to be present. Surveys are used to collect data on opinions, tastes, behaviours, beliefs, etc. It is easy to use and to give/send to the participants. The questionnaires can be completed by phone, online, email or post, or face to face.

RESULTS

These are the results of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David student surveys. Below are the questions asked and their answers represented graphically.

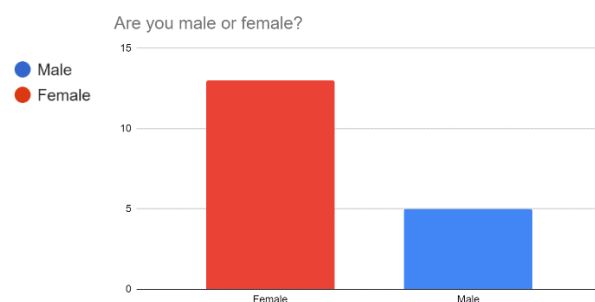
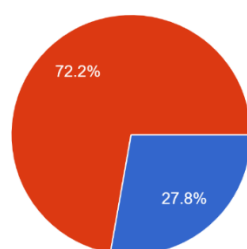
How old are you?
18 responses



How old are you?	Under 20	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 or more
	3	10	3	2	0

Of the 18 students asked, we can see that more than half (10 of 18) are between 20 to 29 years old. In the ranges below 20 and between 30 to 39 are tied at 3 students each (16.7%). Only 2 students (11%) of those surveyed are between 40 to 49. While no student is over 50 years old.

Are you male or female?
18 responses

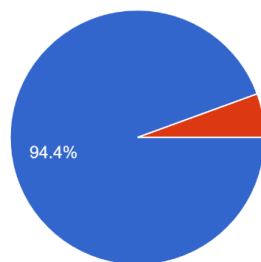


Are you male or female?	Male	Female
	5	13

Of the 18 students, 78.2% are women (13 of 18), and 27.8% are men (5 of 18).

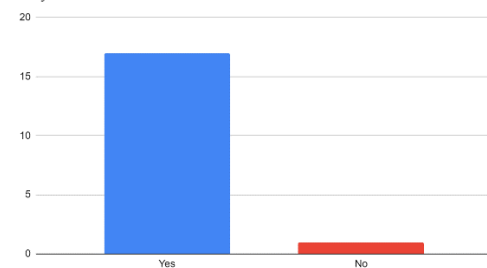
Do you find Moodle useful?

18 responses



Do you find Moodle useful?

● Yes
● No

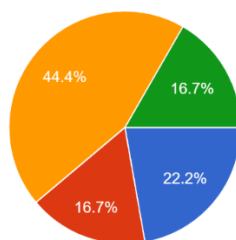


Do you find Moodle useful?	Yes	No
	17	1

Of all the students surveyed, only one does not find the Moodle platform useful to complement their studies.

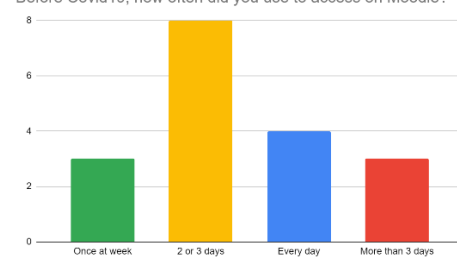
Before Covid19, how often did you use to access on Moodle?

18 responses



Before Covid19, how often did you use to access on Moodle?

● Every day
● More than 3 days
● 2 or 3 days
● Once at week

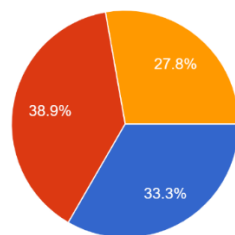


Before Covid19, how often did you use to access on Moodle?	Every day	More than 3 days	2 or 3 days	Once a week
	4	3	8	3

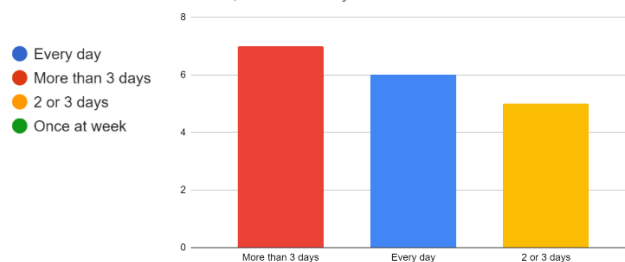
Before covid19, only 4 students (22.2%) used Moodle every day. And almost half (8 of 18) used it 2 or 3 days a week. Of the 18 respondents, 3 (16.7%) used it more than three days a week, and another 3 (16.7%) only once a week.

And now, how often do you access on Moodle?

18 responses



And now, how often do you access on Moodle?

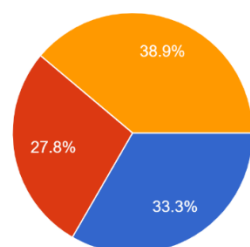


And now, how often do you access on Moodle?	Every day	More than 3 days	2 or 3 days	Once at week
	6	7	5	0

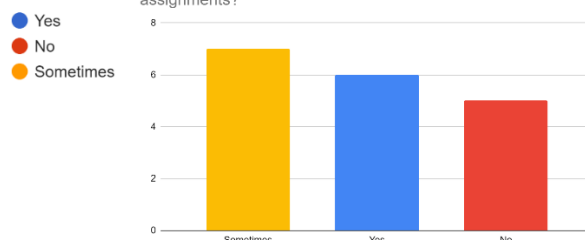
As we can see after covid19 none of the students uses it only once a week. While in the previous question, 44.4% of them used it 2 or 3 times a week, now this figure has been reduced by almost 20% (27.8 %). We can also see how the value in daily use has increased to 33.3% and now almost 40% use it more than 3 times a week.

During this time, was the online library helpful for your assignments?

18 responses



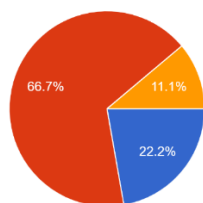
During this time, was the online library helpful for your assignments?



During this time, was the online library helpful for your assignments?	Yes	No	Sometimes
	6	5	7

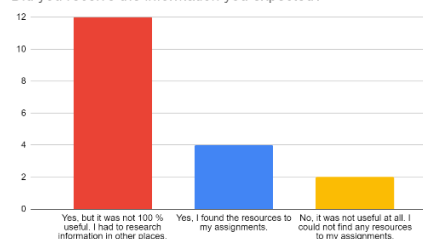
With the two previous questions, I wanted to compare how necessary Moodle has been in this quarantine, that we have had to attend classes online. In this question, I wanted to know if the student found this tool useful during this term. Of all the students, 33.3% have considered this tool necessary to carry out the assignments. 38.9% only found it useful a few times. And 27.8% think it has not been useful.

Did you receive the information you expected?
18 responses



- Yes, I found the resources to my assignments.
- Yes, but it was not 100 % useful. I had to research information in other places.
- No, it was not useful at all. I could not find any resources to my assignments.

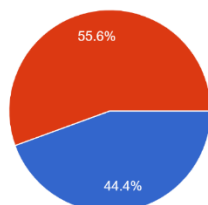
Did you receive the information you expected?



Did you receive the information you expected?	Yes, I found the resources to my assignments.	Yes, but it was not 100 % useful. I had to research information in other places.	No, it was not useful at all. I could not find any resources to my assignments.
	4	12	2

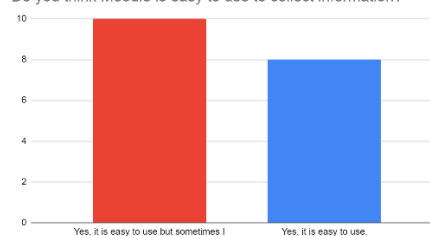
I asked the students if they had received the expected information in Moodle and if the content was necessary to carry out the assignments. More than half (66.7%) think it was useful but that they still had to look for more information on other websites. 22% believe that everything they needed for assignments was in Moodle, and only 11.1% could not use any of the information provided.

Do you think Moodle is easy to use to collect information?
18 responses



- Yes, it is easy to use.
- Yes, it is easy to use but sometimes I have difficulties to find information.
- No, it is not easy. I cannot find the information, and this slows down my assignment.

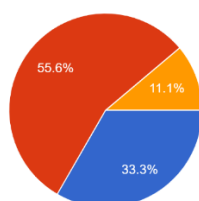
Do you think Moodle is easy to use to collect information?



Do you think Moodle is easy to use to collect information?	Yes, it is easy to use.	Yes, it is easy to use but sometimes I have difficulties to find information.	No, it is not easy. I cannot find the information, and this slows down my assignment.
	8	10	0

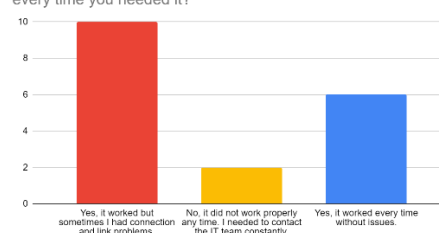
Of the 18 students, all found Moodle easy to use. However, more than half (56.6%) had difficulty finding information at times. The remaining 44.4% had no difficulties when collecting information.

Did you have any trouble with the Moodle system? Did it work every time you needed it?
18 responses



- Yes, it worked every time without issues.
- Yes, it worked but sometimes I had connection and link problems.
- No, it did not work properly any time. I needed to contact the IT team constantly.

Did you have any trouble with the Moodle system? Did it work every time you needed it?



Did you have any trouble with the Moodle system? Did it work every time you needed it?	Yes, it worked every time without issues.	Yes, it worked but sometimes I had connection and link problems.	No, it did not work properly any time. I needed to contact the IT team constantly.
	6	10	2

Regarding the Moodle operating system, 55.6% found some difficulty to be able to connect (connection problems or some links not well directed). Of the 18, only 6 were able to use Moodle without any problem. The remaining 11.1% had to constantly contact the maintenance team because they encountered many technical problems.

How do you think Moodle could be improved?

9 responses

Put the real attendance

Well, seems to be okay with me the way how it is already.

The Moodle's operation system should be able to trained for download or upload documents without troubles. On the other hand, it would be fine, a direct chat with the teachers and students.

Make the library research steps easy

Whit the technology

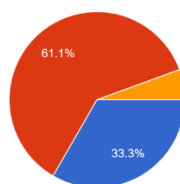
simpler interface

Less steps to use the library

It is ok

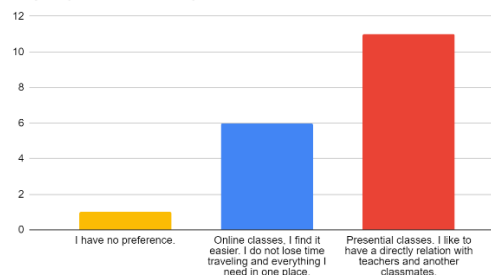
Here we can see that one of the most suggested things is a simpler interface, not so many steps to access the online library. They also refer to communication between students and teachers, real and direct assistance.

Do you prefer online or presential classes?
18 responses



- Online classes, I find it easier. I do not lose time traveling and everything I need in one place.
- Presential classes. I like to have a directly relation with teachers and another classmates.
- I have no preference.

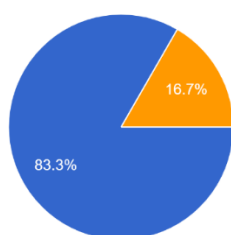
Do you prefer online or presential classes?



Do you prefer online or presential classes?	Presential classes. I like to have a directly relation with teachers and another classmates.	Online classes, I find it easier. I do not lose time traveling and everything I need in one place.	I have no preference.
	11	6	1

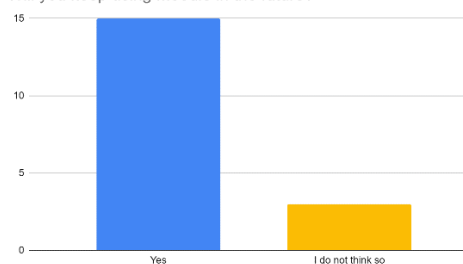
After asking some questions regarding Moodle, the students were asked what type of class they preferred, only one of the students had no preference between online or face-to-face classes. 61.1% prefer to be in class and interact with classmates and teachers, and 33.3% of them think that online classes are easier because you do not have to travel and you have all the necessary material from your computer.

Will you keep using Moodle in the future?
18 responses



- Yes
- No
- I do not think so

Will you keep using Moodle in the future?



Will you keep using Moodle in the future?	Yes	No	I do not think so
	15	0	3

Of the 18 students, 83.3% are sure that they will use Moodle again in the future, while 16.7% have answered that they do not know or do not believe, etc., but none of them has taken it for granted that this tool will not be for them useful in the future.

CONCLUSION

After analysing the questions and comparing the answers, we can see that the students who have found Moodle the most useful are the oldest, but they are also the ones who have had the most difficulties with the platform. Some of the suggestions have been to simplify the interface or fewer steps to access the library. Students also commented that they would like the communication to be real and more direct.

In this case, more than half of the students had some problem with the connection or with the links and had to contact the technical team several times. That can also influence the perception of how the platform works or its usefulness.

Before the quarantine, only 20% of students used Moodle every day, while now, during online classes this percentage has increased to 33%. There is also the difference between those who used it only once a week, before the quarantine the percentage was 16%, and now almost all students use Moodle at least 2 or 3 days a week.

Although some have had difficulties when using it or technical problems, we can conclude that this platform is useful. Moodle has helped us with assignments during this period, we have been able to access the information and the guide on how to do them. We have also found the material given in class, and that is a great help to follow the online lessons.

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- Questionnaire: Definition, Examples, Design and Types, accessed Thursday, 27 August 2020.

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/questionnaires.html>

APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Student Name: Carol Velez Acosta

Student ID: 1917561

Module Name: Digital Skills and Research Methods Term 2

Group: 8

- How old are you?
 - 1) Under 20 2) 20 to 29 3) 30 to 39 4) 40 to 49 5) 50 or more
- Are you male or female?
 - 1) Male 2) Female 3) Other: ...
- Do you find Moodle useful?
 - 1) Yes 2) No
- Before Covid19, how often did you use to access on Moodle?
 - 1) Every day
 - 2) More than three days
 - 3) Two or three days
 - 4) Once a week
- And now, how often do you access on Moodle?
 - 1) Every day
 - 2) More than three days
 - 4) Two or three days
 - 4) Once a week
- During this time, was the online library helpful for your assignments?
 - 1) Yes 2) No 3) Sometimes
- Did you receive the information you expected?
 - 1) Yes, I found the resources to my assignments.
 - 2) Yes, but it was not 100 % useful. I had to research information in other places.
 - 3) No, it was not useful at all. I could not find any resources to my assignments.
- Do you think Moodle is easy to use to collect information?
 - 1) Yes, it is easy to use.
 - 2) Yes, it is easy to use but sometimes I have difficulties to find information.
 - 3) No, it is not easy. I cannot find the information, and this slows down my assignment.

- Did you have any trouble with the Moodle system? Did it work every time you needed it?
 - 1) Yes, it worked every time without issues.
 - 2) Yes, it worked but sometimes I had connection and link problems.
 - 3) No, it did not work properly any time. I needed to contact the IT team constantly.
- How do you think Moodle could be improved?
...
- Do you prefer online or presential classes?
 - 1) Online classes, I find it easier. I do not lose time traveling and everything I need in one place.
 - 2) Presential classes. I like to have a directly relation with teachers and another classmate.
 - 3) I have no preference.
 - 4) Another: ...
- Will you keep using Moodle in the future?
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No
 - 3) I do not think so

How old are you?	Are you male or female?	Do you find Moodle useful?	Before Covid19, how often did you use to access on Moodle?
20 to 29	Female	Yes	Once at week
40 to 49	Female	Yes	2 or 3 days
Under 20	Female	Yes	2 or 3 days
20 to 29	Female	Yes	Every day
30 to 39	Female	Yes	2 or 3 days
30 to 39	Male	Yes	More than 3 days
Under 20	Female	Yes	2 or 3 days
30 to 39	Male	Yes	2 or 3 days
40 to 49	Female	Yes	2 or 3 days
20 to 29	Male	Yes	More than 3 days
20 to 29	Female	Yes	Once at week
20 to 29	Male	Yes	More than 3 days
20 to 29	Female	Yes	Once at week
Under 20	Male	No	Every day
20 to 29	Female	Yes	2 or 3 days
20 to 29	Female	Yes	Every day
20 to 29	Female	Yes	2 or 3 days
20 to 29	Female	Yes	Every day

And now, how often do you access on Moodle?	During this time, was the online library helpful for your assignments?	Did you receive the information you expected?
More than 3 days	Sometimes	Yes, but it was not 100 % useful. I had to research information in other places.
Every day	Yes	Yes, but it was not 100 % useful. I had to research information in other places.
Every day	No	Yes, but it was not 100 % useful. I had to research information in other places.
Every day	Yes	Yes, but it was not 100 % useful. I had to research information in other places.
2 or 3 days	Sometimes	Yes, I found the resources to my assignments.
More than 3 days	No	No, it was not useful at all. I could not find any resources to my assignments.
Every day	No	Yes, but it was not 100 % useful. I had to research information in other places.
More than 3 days	No	No, it was not useful at all. I could not find any resources to my assignments.
2 or 3 days	Sometimes	Yes, but it was not 100 % useful. I had to research information in other places.
More than 3 days	Sometimes	Yes, I found the resources to my assignments.
Every day	Yes	Yes, but it was not 100 % useful. I had to research information in other places.
More than 3 days	Sometimes	Yes, I found the resources to my assignments.
2 or 3 days	Yes	Yes, I found the resources to my assignments.
Every day	No	Yes, but it was not 100 % useful. I had to research information in other places.
More than 3 days	Sometimes	Yes, but it was not 100 % useful. I had to research information in other places.
2 or 3 days	Yes	Yes, but it was not 100 % useful. I had to research information in other places.
More than 3 days	Sometimes	Yes, but it was not 100 % useful. I had to research information in other places.
2 or 3 days	Yes	Yes, but it was not 100 % useful. I had to research information in other places.

Do you think Moodle is easy to use to collect information?	Did you have any trouble with the Moodle system? Did it work every time you needed it?	How do you think Moodle could be improved?
Yes, it is easy to use but sometimes I have difficulties to find information.	Yes, it worked but sometimes I had connection and link problems.	It is ok
Yes, it is easy to use but sometimes I have difficulties to find information.	No, it did not work properly any time. I needed to contact the IT team constantly.	Whit the technology
Yes, it is easy to use but sometimes I have difficulties to find information.	Yes, it worked every time without issues.	Put the real attendance
Yes, it is easy to use.	Yes, it worked but sometimes I had connection and link problems.	The Moodle's operation system should be able to trained for download or upload documents without troubles. On the other hand, it would be fine, a direct chat with the teachers and students.
Yes, it is easy to use.	Yes, it worked but sometimes I had connection and link problems.	Well, seems to be okay with me the way how it is already.
Yes, it is easy to use but sometimes I have difficulties to find information.	No, it did not work properly any time. I needed to contact the IT team constantly.	Less steps to use the library
Yes, it is easy to use but sometimes I have difficulties to find information.	Yes, it worked every time without issues.	Put the real attendance
Yes, it is easy to use.	Yes, it worked but sometimes I had connection and link problems.	Make the library research steps easy
Yes, it is easy to use.	Yes, it worked every time without issues.	
Yes, it is easy to use but sometimes I have difficulties to find information.	Yes, it worked every time without issues.	
Yes, it is easy to use but sometimes I have difficulties to find information.	Yes, it worked but sometimes I had connection and link problems.	
Yes, it is easy to use but sometimes I have difficulties to find information.	Yes, it worked every time without issues.	
Yes, it is easy to use but sometimes I have difficulties to find information.	Yes, it worked every time without issues.	
Yes, it is easy to use but sometimes I have difficulties to find information.	Yes, it worked but sometimes I had connection and link problems.	simpler interface
Yes, it is easy to use.	Yes, it worked but sometimes I had connection and link problems.	
Yes, it is easy to use.	Yes, it worked but sometimes I had connection and link problems.	
Yes, it is easy to use.	Yes, it worked but sometimes I had connection and link problems.	
Yes, it is easy to use.	Yes, it worked but sometimes I had connection and link problems.	

Do you prefer online or presential classes?	Will you keep using Moodle in the future?
I have no preference.	Yes
Online classes, I find it easier. I do not lose time traveling and everything I need in one place.	Yes
Presential classes. I like to have a directly relation with teachers and another classmates.	Yes
Online classes, I find it easier. I do not lose time traveling and everything I need in one place.	Yes
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Presential classes. I like to have a directly relation with teachers and another classmates.	Yes
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Presential classes. I like to have a directly relation with teachers and another classmates.	Yes
Online classes, I find it easier. I do not lose time traveling and everything I need in one place.	Yes
Presential classes. I like to have a directly relation with teachers and another classmates.	I do not think so
Online classes, I find it easier. I do not lose time traveling and everything I need in one place.	Yes
Presential classes. I like to have a directly relation with teachers and another classmates.	I do not think so
Online classes, I find it easier. I do not lose time traveling and everything I need in one place.	Yes
Presential classes. I like to have a directly relation with teachers and another classmates.	I do not think so