

DIGITAL SKILLS AND RESEARCH METHODS (BMSW4003_LON)

WITH LECTURER ANUPAM MAZUMDAR



DSR Assessment 2 Individual Report



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Introduction

It is believed that virtual learning environments (VLE) interact for the successful transformation of students from passively attending educational institutions to active learners and self-preparing students. Unexpectedly, a great move was triggered by the latest worldwide spread of Covid-19 pandemic. In most universities the VLE – Moodle, has taken place as the only option of studies to continue the fulltime student admissions. Therefore, various challenges obstruct less technically educated entry-level students from achieving a comprehensive capacity of online distanced learning.

Rationale of study and Research Methodology:

This research is based on a quantitative research questionnaire, conducted among the students of Certificate in Higher Education Skills for the Workplace at UWTSD-London 2021-2022. The main objective of this research is, to indicate the positive and negative impacts of VLE-Moodle to the full-time students on a completely distanced online learning. Fifteen students completing the questionnaire, generate data used to show agreement or disagreement to seven statements. Analysis would show how the students were affected of the use of electronic communication and entering the online virtual world of education as an indicator of impact to ease of access. It aims to point difficulties and advantages of introducing the model to the first-time students, remotely applied, and admitted in UWTSD-London.

This research is important to the future assessment and application of the fully distant learning courses.

Literature Review:

It is essential that, an online training program should include comprehensive guidance and support to help the students to adopt self-development skills.

Northon suggest, that the level of students' engagement and interaction with the course and the institution indicates how likely they might be to drop out, (*Norton, 2016*)

Theories describe a gradual transition of learning responsibility from teacher to student. (*Schunk and Zimmerman, 1997; Winne & Hadwin, 1998; Zimmerman, 1989*).

This process does not occur automatically, and it must be supported by instructional techniques like modelling and coaching by sequencing learning tasks from simple to complex as a support to developing self-development learning skills, (*Agricola et al., 2020*).

It is believed that frequency of access to VLE, obtaining the literature and interacting with teachers so called “**coaching**”, **can increase the ability to self-developing learning skills** in the student's performance. (*Paulo Alves et al., 2017*)

Ten helping steps to **complex learning which also happens in the case of VLE**

(*Van Merriënboer and Kirschner, 2018*)

Positive and Negative Impacts of VLE:

There are some main aspects that can be pointed giving different outcomes depending on their realization to the informative and applicable skills to the individuals of students and teachers.

- *First Contact with VLE*, - it is the cognitive ability, understandings and digital knowledge and skills that can begin the respond and be applied to the instructions given by the university or another institution. This stage can be explained by the “**transfer paradox**” mentioned in this research.
 - **Positive** effect of this contact is related to the managing to get into first time user's world, their expectations and step by step introduction received. This point of contact can become a *motivational start*.
 - **Negatively**, the same moment can also be a point of disappointment and discomfort to students was not approached accordingly to their learning level.

- *Use of virtual class applications (Qin Xiao, 2020)*, like Microsoft Teams as a part of the online platform Moodle over the Internet,
 - **Positive** results can be achieved easily by organising and introducing different conceptualizations of learning activities and interaction with other students and lecturers.
 - **Negatively**, the introduction and use of new applications and platforms complicate the accessibility to the level of user's technical skills.
- *Distribution and broadcasting*, of distinct members and online live lectures. (Qin Xiao, 2020)
 - **Positive effect** of distribution is the possibility of distant and unlimited access to real time connection to lecturers and receiving step by step help.
 - **Negatively**, the conducted learning process can be fragmented, by the complexity of the use of communication technology, displaying on screen activities and slow or disturbed internet connection.
- *Sharing information and knowledge*, become very convenient and fast. (Qin Xiao, 2020)
 - **Positively**, the conveniency suggest flexibility and on time application of knowledge, and the speed of realization to the user is a strong factor its efficiency.
 - **Negatively**, that brings a different aspect of the division of the level of student's engagement, considering the abilities and speed of personal learning styles. Different people with different speed and style of learning can result completely separated levels to their achievement at the end of the same course study.

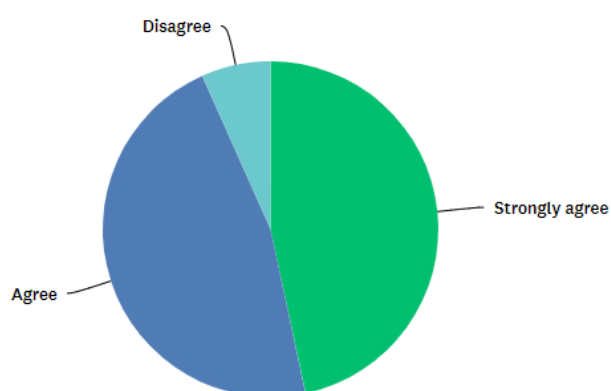
Analysis:

The next part includes data graphics and relevant analysis to the number of statements this survey.

Graphic 1:

I have received clear instructions how to log in to my online learning account at UWTSD-London.

Answered: 15 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	46.67% 7
Agree	46.67% 7
Neither agree nor disagree	0.00% 0
Disagree	6.67% 1
Strongly disagree	0.00% 0
TOTAL	15

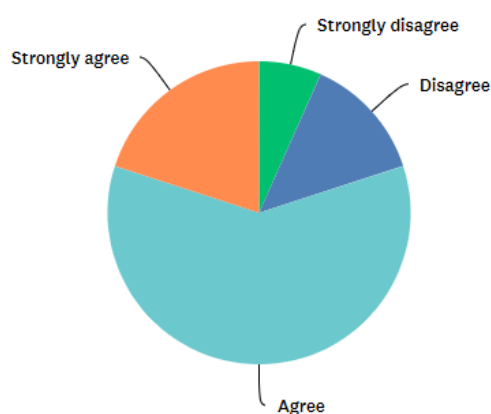
Graphic1: According to the data displayed above, we can state that combined number of 93.33% of the students agree and strongly agree to that statement. This high percentage indicates the level of commitment and accessibility on the part of the University for the informative pre-engagement and preparation to the future VLE user. This also results to a positive motivational effect on “Moodle-entry level” students.

However, there is still a 6.67% of students that did not hesitate to answer negative and leave a gap for a future disappointment reflecting the comprehensive technical and communication side of learning.

Graphic 2:

I can easily login to my online Moodle account.

Answered: 15 Skipped: 0



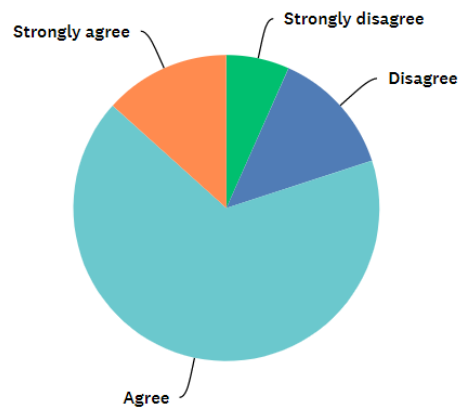
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	6.67%	1
Disagree	13.33%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	0.00%	0
Agree	60.00%	9
Strongly agree	20.00%	3
TOTAL		15

Answers to statement two can give us understanding on entering difficulties found by the first-time user of Moodle when they meet with the complicity of security measures, registering and entering the platform, and how the incoming students are prepared to understand the new virtual environment showing their level of general digital literacy. On this base we have combined positive answers of 80% agree, giving a sure start to 4 in every 5 users. On another hand, a combined 20% answered as disagree, showing a negative position and having difficulties to login into the Moodle to 1 out of 5 users.

Graphic 3:

I can easily interact and cooperate in online class lectures using Teams.

Answered: 15 Skipped: 0



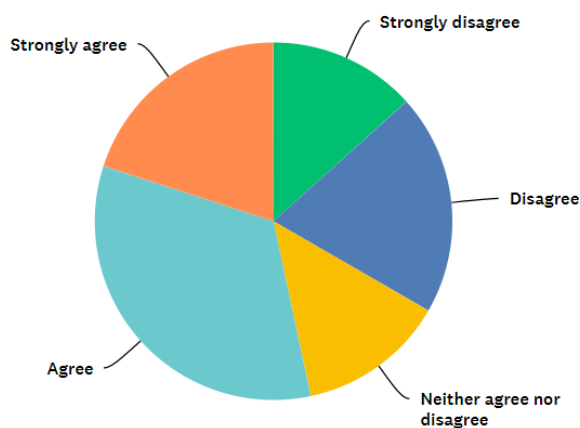
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	6.67%	1
Disagree	13.33%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	0.00%	0
Agree	66.67%	10
Strongly agree	13.33%	2
TOTAL		15

Combined data of 80% agree and 20% disagree, shows a categorical distinction of two groups of users, that 4 out of 5 students will find it easy to exchange the in-class learning with the new Virtual Learning Environment, however, 1 in every 5 would have difficulties to engage in virtual class.

Graphic 4:

I can easily find all the lecture information I need in My Modules.

Answered: 15 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	13.33%	2
Disagree	20.00%	3
Neither agree nor disagree	13.33%	2
Agree	33.33%	5
Strongly agree	20.00%	3
TOTAL		15

Combined data splits in three groups 53.33% agree, 33.33% disagree and 13.33% of hesitation revealed through “neither agree nor disagree”.

The answers to this statement, are a factor challenging a discussion on the questions:

- *On what degree, students are well instructed to be able to self-refer to the implemented for learning course material founded and exposed in VLE- Moodle?*
- *How to assist the self-preparation and self-growth to the course's intended level of knowledge and skills formed in the student?*

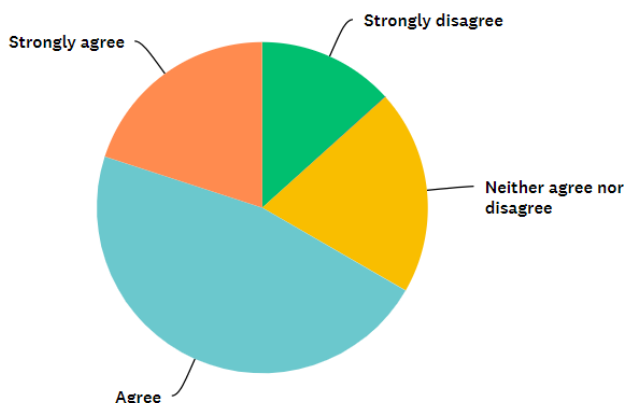
This table reveals, that 46.66%, almost half of the users disagree and hesitate to a positive answer that they are in a strong relation with the source of useful information to revise and study on the course lectures.

This suggests more detailed practical instructions to the use of Moodle when new students accepted in online class.

Graphic 5:

My lecturers have never missed to help and answer my questions.

Answered: 15 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	13.33%	2
Disagree	0.00%	0
Neither agree nor disagree	20.00%	3
Agree	46.67%	7
Strongly agree	20.00%	3
TOTAL		15

This statement, gives us an idea of the **student's experience during the use of the distanced VLE** and online real time lectures using Microsoft Teams on the Moodle. The lecturer or tutor has a function of a mediator between the well-structured course learning material on Moodle and the level of knowledge of the students, therefore, any questions that a student may have during the learning process should be answered or navigated by the teacher's feedback.

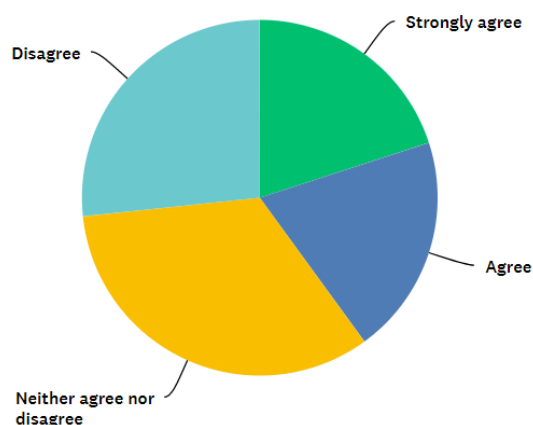
Confirming that 66.67% of the answers are positive, and 13.33% are negative. An emblematic group of 20.00% cannot give a clear answer to that question. Following the above factor of the lecturer position in the learning process, we should take in account that the 20% of hesitating students can tilt to positive or negative site, so if it comes to negative case, **there can be a massive 33.33% of students going to miss any personal or individual approached help**. In result, that can put the student in a situation to wish to keep

the **in-class study as a main factor of an individual approached learning experience**, which is told by the experts in teaching methodology.

Graphic 6:

I would prefer to learn online than in-campus.

Answered: 15 Skipped: 0



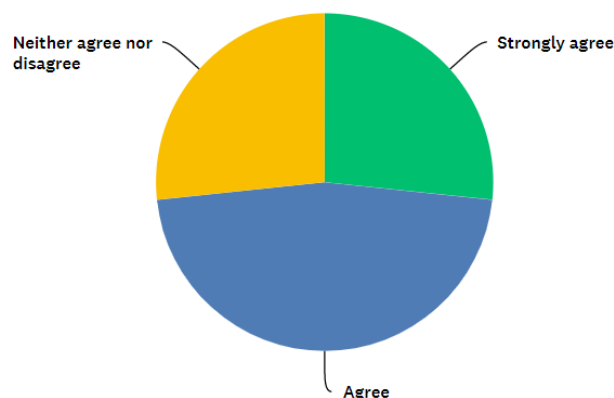
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	20.00%	3
Agree	20.00%	3
Neither agree nor disagree	33.33%	5
Disagree	26.67%	4
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		15

In relation to the last mentioned to the previous statement, we can surely confirm a similar outcome here. The level of hesitation is enormous levelling at one-third at 33.33% of the answers. Compared to the 40% of people's preference to study online, a big 26.67% stays in the disagree side, which means that there **is still a lot to be worked on the approach to accessing the online VLE – Moodle and using it to the level of full confidence and acceptance of the users as a replacement of in-campus study.**

Graphic 7:

I am very likely to suggest online learning to other people.

Answered: 15 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	26.67%	4
Agree	46.67%	7
Neither agree nor disagree	26.67%	4
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		15

This Statement gives a direct suggestion to the learning environment of Moodle, and its application for the future academic career of people.

Leading at **73.33%**, **students are more willing to suggest the online distant virtual learning environment** to others, than the 26.67% of hesitation found in the problematic personal approach, which the onsite study has as an advantage. It is also encouraging to see that there is a clear 0% on disagreement to the current statement.

Discussions:

The main findings of this study suggest that VLE has a huge role and impact in teaching students. The introduction of modern technologies into education such as virtual learning environment Moodle, shows an improvement in student satisfaction and engagement. Whether VLE teach students better than in class teaching is still undecided, as a large proportion of students still prefer to attend class, but these first results are encouraging.

Research Ethics/Ethical Consideration:

For the collection of research related data, was considered the GDPRP and anonymity of the participants taking part in the survey. To ensure privacy and General Data Protection Regulations, the conducted survey did not ask or register any personal information. Questions and answers do not consist of any age, sex, or group related direct or indirect to collected data information.

Limitations:

All results and analysis of this research are limited to the presentation of the targeted group as a sample. The challenges, positive and negative sides of introduction to the VLE- Moodle also any conclusions, can only be a stimulant of further research and more experimentations. Out of a total of 29 students who attended the online learning sessions, there were access to 22, and only 15 actively took part in my proposed online inquiry. Which gives an idea of the limitation in the actual assessment of students' opinions due to lack of sensitivity and commitment to the university's practice. On the other hand, students' learning styles seem to influence their commitment and ease of learning and motivation to be present.

Conclusion & Recommendations:

Conclusions express that mainly, the VLE - Moodle, has a positive impact on the Certificate in Higher Education students at UWTSD-London. However, digital literacy level stands as an obstacle before students getting the full capacity of VLE-Moodle. Even though they find it hard obtaining the needed study material for self-preparation to the projected standards, expectations are still demanded including assessment tasks and engagement with course activities on the Moodle.

While universities using face-to-face learning are challenged by the recent world pandemic, approach alternatives need to be pursued to allow all students, take conscious development in VLE-Moodle.

With the help of the collected data and reflective feedback, UWTSD-London can raise attention to the appointed weak points and gain an effective approach to solve the distracting misapplication of VLE-Moodle platform and put some real time practice instruction lessons (coaching) for the new students in place.

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Appendix 1: In class activities:

In-Class exercise: Questionnaire Design

Student Name: _____Aleksandar V. Mitev_____ Student ID: 2020637_____

Module Name: Digital Skills and Research Methods Term 2 Group: _____4_____

Impacts of COVID-19 at your workplace

Question 1: Covid-19 has caused redundances your work

Strongly agree Agree Do not know Disagree Strongly disagree

Question 2: Covid-19 has caused more need for personal at your work

Strongly agree Agree Do not know Disagree Strongly disagree

Question 3: Covid-19 has caused a higher growth of the business at your work

Strongly agree Agree Do not know Disagree Strongly disagree

Question 4: Covid-19 has caused a cut-down the number of costumers at your work

Strongly agree Agree Do not know Disagree Strongly disagree

Question 5: Covid-19 has caused a drop of customer service level at your work

Strongly agree Agree Do not know Disagree Strongly disagree

Question 6: Covid-19 has enforced higher hygiene levels at your work

Strongly agree Agree Do not know Disagree Strongly disagree

Question 7: Covid-19 has caused drastic business restructures at your work.

Strongly agree Agree Do not know Disagree Strongly disagree

Question 8: Covid-19 has caused a “no food cooking and preparing” policy at my work.

Strongly agree Agree Do not know Disagree Strongly disagree

Question 9: Covid-19 has caused a “no mask – no enter” policy at my work.

Strongly agree Agree Do not know Disagree Strongly disagree

Question 10: Covid-19 has caused partial or full business closure at your work.

Strongly agree Agree Do not know Disagree Strongly disagree

Appendix 2: Research Questionnaire Design preparation:

Clear objectives related to clear quantitative research type of a questionnaire conducted in the form of closed questions on the *Likert scales* was used to discover the views of the respondents.

Strongly agree	1
agree	2
neither agree nor disagree	3
disagree	4
strongly disagree	5

Introduction and Instructions to the survey questionnaire used:

Dear colleagues!

To be able to collect some useful information about the VLE-Moodle.
and its importance to the student's learning experience these days,

I would kindly ask you to complete this short survey!

The survey is completely anonymous! Questions and answers do not consist of any age, sex, or group related direct or indirect to collected data information.

Please read the questions and tick what is appropriate to you!

Thanks for your time!

Questions Layout and purposes

Question 1. I have received clear instructions how to log in to my online learning account at UWTSD-London.

Aims to provide opinion on how the university introduces the Virtual learning environment to new students with no digital preparation into higher level of use of the VLE.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

☐

Question 2. I can easily login to my online Moodle account.

Aims to provide opinion on difficulties on new student accessing the Virtual learning environment.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Question Title 3. I can easily interact and cooperate in online class lectures using Teams.

Aims to provide opinion on how the Virtual learning environment is being used to extend the classroom factor to the single distant learner using virtual communication in VLE.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Question Title 4. I can easily find all the lecture information I need in My Modules.

Aims to provide opinion on how the institution extends the actual information, instructions and study material needed to help students learn through the Virtual learning environment.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Question Title 5. My lecturers have never missed to help and answer my questions.

Aims to provide opinion on how the institution communicates in real time, to help students, learn through the Virtual learning environment.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Question Title 6. I would prefer to learn online than in-campus.

Aims to compare student's preferences to the VLE experiment or the onsite learning environment.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

Question Title 7. I am very likely to suggest online learning to other people.

Aims to provide a prediction on the use of the Virtual learning environment as a main platform for distance learning.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree