

NAME: KOLAWOLE KEHINDE PIUS

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LECTURER NAME: ALFRED MENSAH

RESIT REPORT

The virtual learning module can influence students because they are widely used in education, in many sectors, typically to deliver instructional materials and facilitate communication. The statistically significant findings report that use of Moodle procedures improvement in learning and motivation to learn as reported as us students participating.

Introduction

A virtual learning environment is a web-based software system designed to facilitate learning and teaching with the use of tools and activities (JISC,2009a). Students using virtual learning can be set a task to complete in class or at their own pace, time, and location, they can contribute to synchronous and asynchronous discussions to help develop their learning (JISC,2009b).

Empirical evidence suggests that the use of a virtual learning environment has an impact on student achievement, encourages independent learning and increases students' motivation to learn. This study provides a snapshot of students' views about the use of virtual learning and its impact on their learning, from which there are recommendations for teachers and teachers educators

Virtual learning literature review

This literature review outlines the background and development of virtual learning environments to support teaching and learning. It starts with a brief historical background followed by general positive and then negative impacts of virtual learning environments use. The last section examines specific impacts of virtual learning environments on independent learning.

Positive impacts of virtual learning environments are supported by the collaboration of students using a software tool that enables students and teachers to communicate online to develop their understanding and analytical skills. Students performed significantly better on standardized tests in reading, language, and vocabulary and on measures of depth of understanding, multiple perspectives, and independent thought than students who did not use the software? The study concluded that virtually learning environments maximize student reflection and encourage progressive thought, and independent thinking. This research was one of the seven empirical research studies which concluded that students with access to one or more of the following: computer assisted instruction, integrated learning systems, simulation software, collaborative networked technologies and design and programming technologies all showed positive gains and achievement on research constructed tests, standardized test, and national tests (Schacter, 1999). In the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, they made the virtual learning environment extremely easy by gaining free access to the university Moodle, which is extremely easy to operate, the Moodle is an application created for all student to access their previous or upcoming works, it is also used to submit assignments and gain free access to the university library. In the best practice of virtual learning environments were found

to enhance learning particularly via the opportunity for reinforcement and enable students to catch up on missed materials. Over three quarters of the virtual learning environments examined had elements that were good, but subject use and coverage within instructions was variable. Little use was made of interactive tools such as forums and other discussions facilities. Success with the use of virtual learning environments appeared to be linked to the enthusiasm of individual teachers to use technology. Ofsted identified that access to broadband internet from a student's home and staff training / development time were key factors in the effectiveness of virtual learning environments. As a result of the survey Ofsted recommended that virtual learning environments be used to enhance learning and should be formalized in instructions in order to access impact and improve effectiveness (Ofsted,2009).

In summary, virtual learning environments have a range of research reported positive impacts from various contexts. They can promote reflection, accommodate the needs of students, increase enthusiasm and confidence, improve readiness to learn, and broadly reported above improved course assessments performance.

Negative impacts in virtual learning environments Seabolt & Arends, (2000), express the view that web-based instruction does not allow for the social and emotional interaction that takes place in traditional experimental classrooms. In 2001 Piccoli, Ahmad, & Ives compared, using a longitudinal experimental design, classes taught using virtual learning environment with traditional teacher-led classes. They found no significant differences in learning performance between the environments. However, the participants in the virtual learning environment reported being less satisfied with the learning process. Robertson and Klotz (2002) agree and assert that students in an online learning environment lack the opportunity and benefits of structured dialogue and the sense of community created in a traditional on-site classroom environment. The student Experience of e-Learning study, (LXP), the LXP study, explores differences between subject disciplines in the use of technology. Four Higher Education Academy subject centers, the study comprised both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and was based on a survey of over 400 learners, 85 audio logs and 14 follow-up interviews. The research identifies how learners' study habits are changing, from prioritizing use of the internet for information retrieval to incorporating personally owned tools and technologies e.g., laptops and mobile phones, (Conole et al., 2006). The research concludes that virtual learning environments are often used for passive rather than active learning and a significant number of respondents listed discussion boards as one of the least used technologies.

Research methodology

The quantitative research was carried out in the form of an e-questionnaire (Survey Monkey) allowing analysis with Excel. The questions were organized and grouped around the three research questions below (appendix one). All 650 second (about 11 minutes) year students at SFC were invited to complete the survey. The survey was promoted during group tutorials and students were invited to complete it in their own time. To establish a minimum representative sample a sample size calculation was conducted (confidence level 95%). To generate representative results a response rate of 37% was required a minimum sample size of 242.

RQ1. Does the use of Virtual learning environments have a positive impact on student learning?
Yes

RQ2. Does the use of a virtual learning environment in a learning and teaching help develop student independent learning? Yes, it really does help the student.

Data analysis and discussion

During the two weeks 248 useable questionnaires were completed (155 females and 93 males in class) representing a 38% response rate from a cohort of 650 second year students. Of these respondents 75.8% accessed the virtual learning environment without any problems, 20.6% with 'some' problems and 3.6% had not tried to access Moodle. Regarding the use of SFC Moodle as an integrated part of student learning, 43.2% of respondents (63 females and 32 males) use Moodle to a small extent and 35.9% of respondents (49 females and 30 males) use Moodle to a large extent. A small figure of 4.1% did not use Moodle at all. 13.6% used Moodle to a very small extent, whilst conversely 3.2% use Moodle to a very large extent.

Graph: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the use of Moodle in the university of Wales Trinity Saint David,

Answer Options	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score
a.) The opportunity to learn using Moodle at a time, place, and pace to suit myself encourages me to learn independently.	(8) 3.2%	(13) 5.2%	(61) 24.6%	(113) 53.6%	(33) 13.3%	3.69
b.) The way in which subject/courses are set up encourages me to learn independently.	(9) 3.6%	(19) 7.7%	(77) 31.0%	(127) 51.2%	(16) 6.5%	3.49
c.) Generally for my subjects the resources for me on Moodle are for information purposes.	(8) 3.2%	(14) 5.6%	(43) 17.3%	(155) 62.5%	(28) 11.3%	3.73
d.) For my subject the activities on Moodle encourage me to talk to other students about the work.	(39) 15.7%	(80) 32.3%	(68) 27.4%	(55) 22.2%	(6) 2.4%	2.63
Total respondents as percentage of response count	7%	13%	25%	47%	8%	

The result for the question 'Does the use of virtual learning environments for teaching and learning increase students' motivation to learn? The learning respondent 46.8% 'agree' or strongly agree that are being in control of learning, learning at a time, place, and pace, increases motivation to learn, 49.5% agree or strongly agree that the variety of course tool

available on Moodle increase students' motivation to learn, 35.5% 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that the variety of formats available on University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Moodle increase students' motivation to learn and 40.3% agree or strongly agree that feedback on activities increase students' motivation to learn. The mean response score for all four questions was to the agree side of neutral and aggregated statement responses indicate that 43% of students either 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that the use of University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Moodle increases motivation to learn with 22% 'disagreeing' or 'strongly disagreeing'.

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