

CERT HE: SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE

(WEEKEND TERM 2)

Virtual Learning

Investigation on the effectiveness of Virtual Learning platform



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Introduction:

Virtual learning has become the main point of sharing education, especially in 2020. Back in 2016–17, online learning addressed up 8% of all form of higher education delivery. The Open University has been delivering 65% of all online learning courses, and other institutions have been giving 35%. The number of institutions offering online teaching increased in 2020, responding to the measurements established by the break of the COVID-19 pandemic. (Online learning in Great Britain 2019 | Statista, 2020)

This paper is aiming to investigate the effectiveness of Virtual learning, questioning the students on the Certificate of Higher Education from the weekend, at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, London Campus. This research is important because it's examining responses from students who are coming from different backgrounds, with a wide range of ages.

Background:

The outbreak of Covid-19 has been forcing societies to rely on technological methods to assure teaching is conducted. Many countries still in the development process faced issues in regards to the facilities and needs of the students and teachers.

Virtual teaching has become a new normal in many ways. But this is just the beginning, as many researchers in education and training are questioning the effectiveness of online methods and also the need to go back in campus teaching. Teachers and students have been forced to adapt and learn and develop digital and IT skills in order to continue the learning process. (Online learning in Great Britain 2019 | Statista, 2020)

Across the world, many organisations and institutions have put in place systems and platforms which suppose to ease and allow students and teachers to keep contact with their modules, examinations and assessment.

European Union has created international platforms and projects through which are helping students to get their materials and also to connect with teachers and lecturers. (Coronavirus: online learning resources - Education and Training - European Commission, 2020)

Throughout the pandemic, many students found themselves in helpless situations, not knowing how to access the information needed or not having the instruments(laptop, internet) necessary to continue the learning process.

These problems are being discussed, and many universities, as Middlesex University or

the University of Greenwich, have allowed students to borrow laptops from campus, or paid the cost amount for them.

Although financial problems are not the only ones that are striking in these times, moreover, the unprepared teachers/lecturers and students have also a significant impact on the ineffectiveness of virtual learning.

As many students have lacks of digital knowledge, lecturers find it more challenging to keep up with their lessons. From personal experience, online courses can be difficult to understand where not everyone is on the same level of digital knowledge.

Virtual learning is definitely a changing factor in the perception of studying and teaching and is raising many questions in today's modern society.

Aims:

This report aims to show the effectiveness of virtual learning platform used in the last three months at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David-London Campus.

The importance of this paper comes from the feedback of the learners, as the platform used is having as the primary target group students.

Using the results of this report, the platform can be developed or changed accordingly with the students' needs, or programmes of digital teaching can be put in place in order to help the ones who require.

Methods:

The research has been conducted using the questionnaire method. Fellow students have been asked to answer questions regarding the usefulness and easiness of the virtual platform used. Also, the questionnaire contained questions regarding the improvement of digital skills, the efficacy of the tool and recommendations.

The questionnaire has been created using Google Forms and sent to all fellow students using email and Whatsapp platform.

The results have been collected and arranged in diagrams as shown in bellow. The questionnaire used in the can be found in Annexe of the paper.

Results:

In this section, are shown graphics of the answers at the most important questions in the questionnaire.

Chart 1.

VLE is an easy online tool to navigate.

19 responses

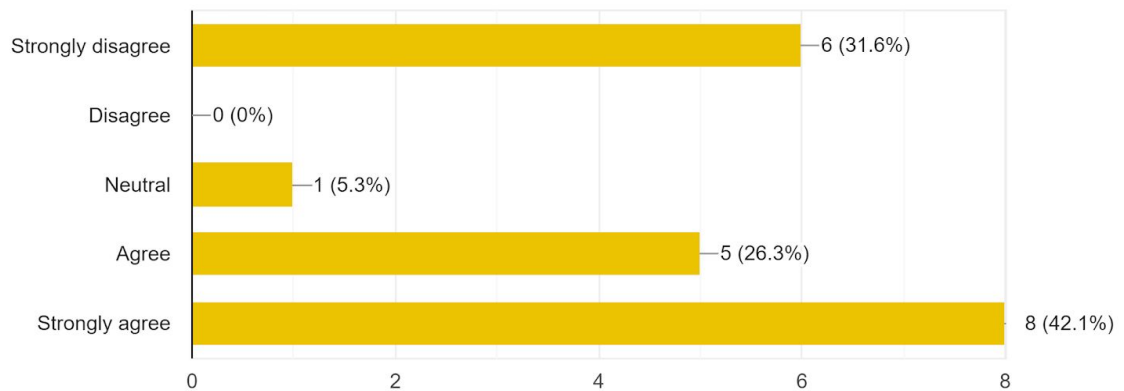


Chart 2.

Content and presentations are easy to access and use.

19 responses

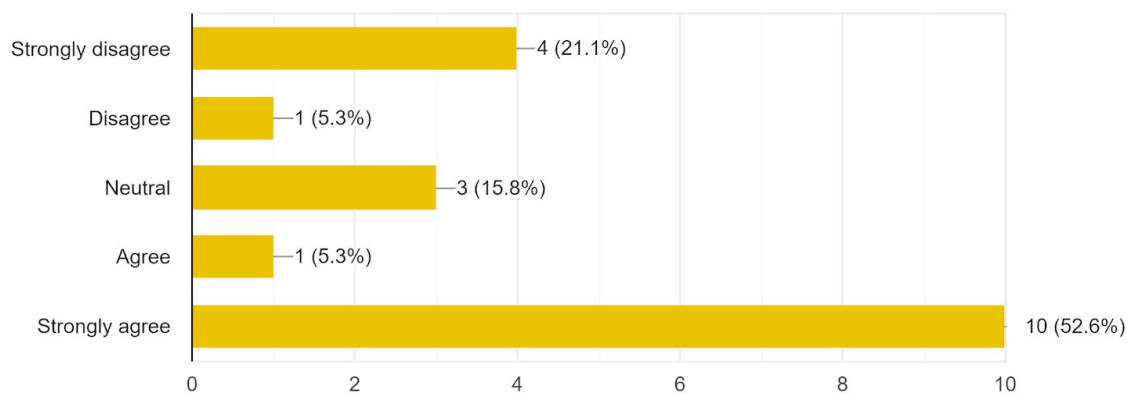


Chart 3.

I feel confident in using the VLE platform.

19 responses

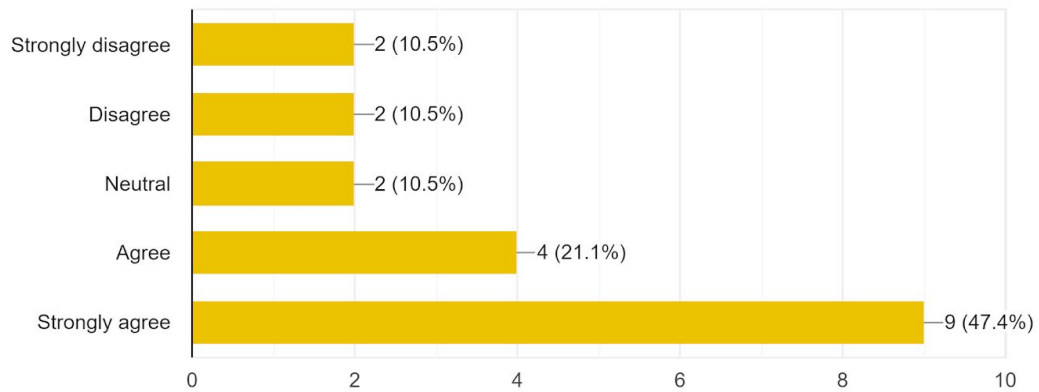


Chart 4.

Course content is easy to understand and practical works are useful.

19 responses

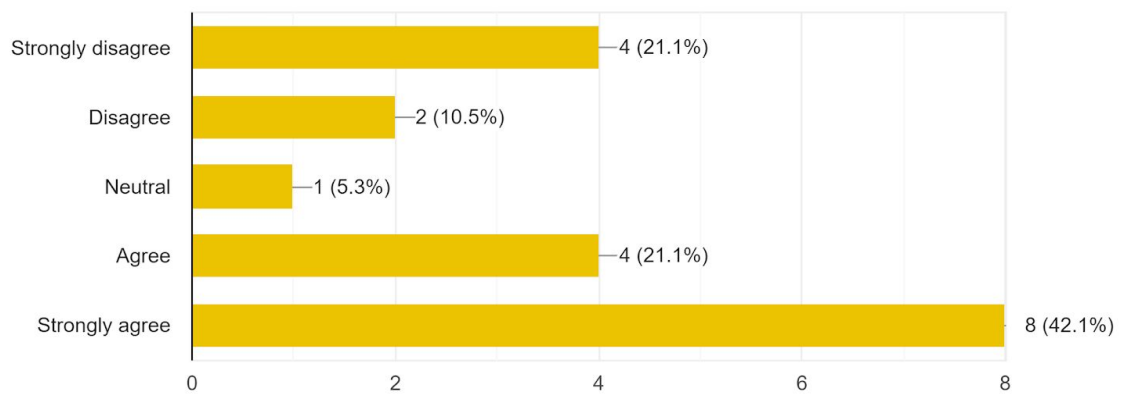


Chart 5.

Using VLE has improved my digital and IT skills.

19 responses

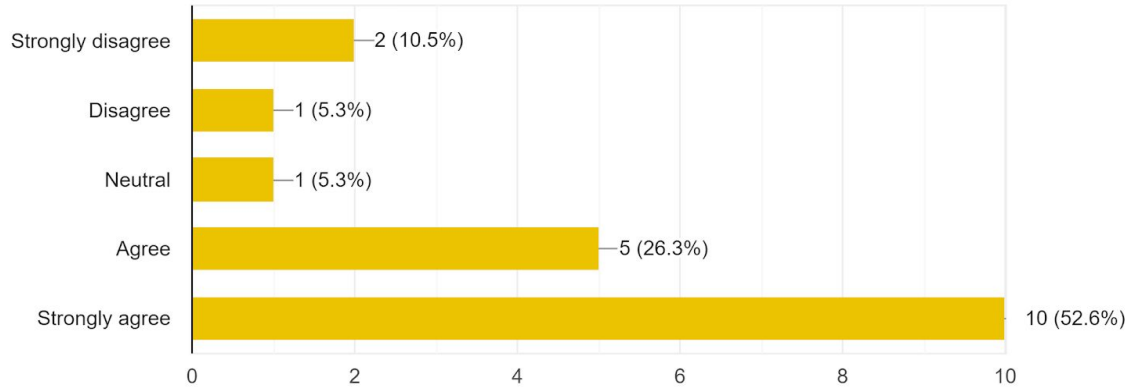


Chart 6.

VLE is essential for my learning process.

19 responses

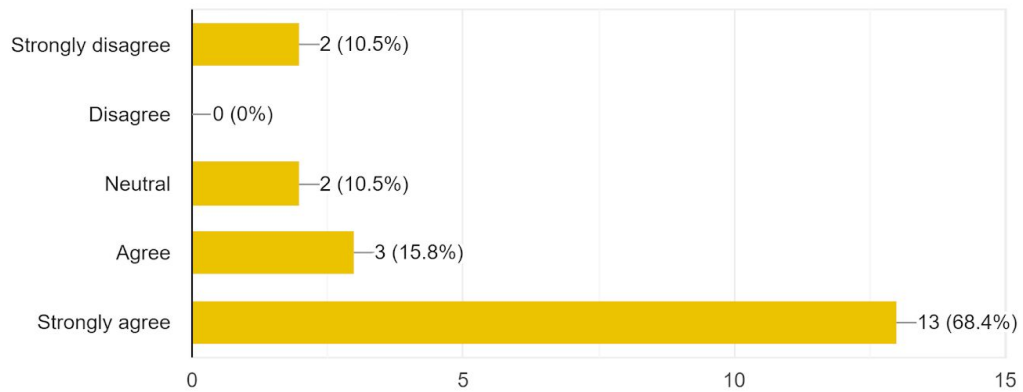


Chart 7.

VLE is a clear, easy-manageable tool helping students with their studies.

19 responses

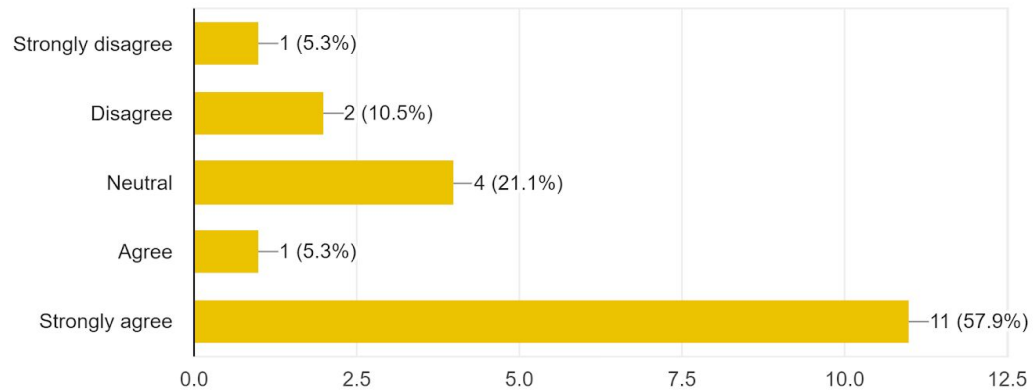


Chart 8.

Which of the following do you think are key components of a VLE? (Please tick all that apply)

19 responses

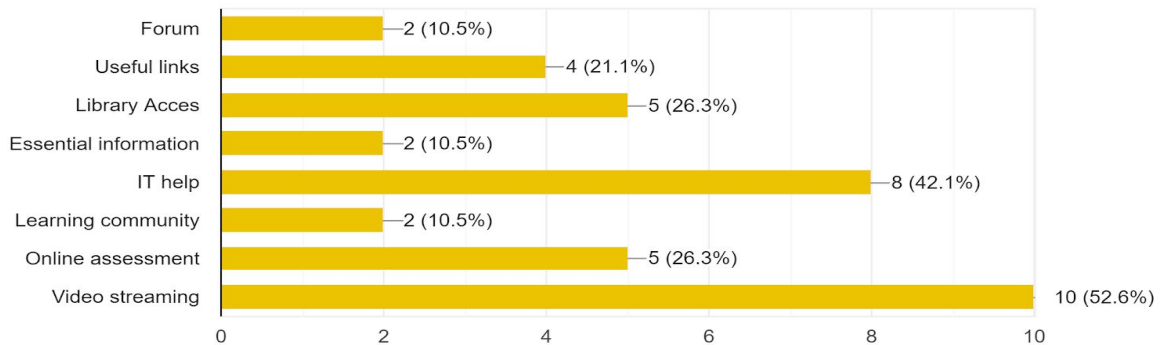
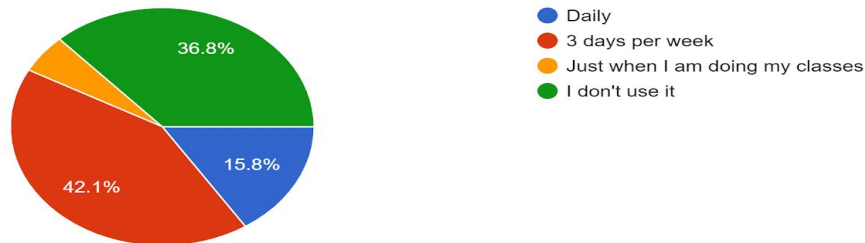


Chart 9.

How often do you spend time on VLE during your course?
19 responses



Discussion:

Results are varying and the graphics are showing that most of the students have found through VLE a useful and easy tool to access courses and resources for studying. In the same time, there have been students who disagreed the usefulness and effectiveness of Virtual learning platform and have found it hard to use.

Even so, none of the students recommended any changes in the way the platform works.

Chart 1, Chart 2, Chart 3 and Chart 4 are showing that not all the students are finding VLE an easy tool to use, representing the lack of information that they might have. In Chart 5 we see that most of the students have found VLE a form to improve their digital and IT skills, by forcing them to get familiar with the digital environment.

In Chart 6 we see that 13 out of 19 students found VLE an essential tool for learning, despite their previous answers.

Lastly, in Chart 8 and 9, the results are showing how students are using the VLE and how often, most of the students using the platform at least three times per week.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the Virtual Learning platform is a useful tool which allows students to connect with their teachers and colleagues, access information and study.

Besides the many issues that unprepared students might face in using this kind of platforms, the majority of them are considering it a must in their education.

The Virtual learning platform is going to change the way we learn, we teach and we examine our work, but also, it will help us develop new abilities which are essential in the modern world and gives us more chances to adapt.

Annexes:

VLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Have your say regarding the virtual learning platform!

***Required**

Before we
start!

This questionnaire is the main source of information and research for the Digital Skills and Research Methods Report.
Please note that all answers will be recorder and analysed accordingly with the module guidance.

Hello!

Please select your answer regarding the VLE platform of learning.

1. VLE is an easy online tool to navigate. *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

2. Content and presentations are easy to access and use. *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

3. I feel confident in using the VLE platform. *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

1

Questionnaire link:

<https://forms.gle/othmDNwHEwxZEvmc8>

References:

1. Education and Training - European Commission. 2020. *Coronavirus: Online Learning Resources - Education And Training - European Commission*. [online] Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/coronavirus-online-learning-resources_en [Accessed 1 September 2020].
2. Statista. 2020. *Online Learning In Great Britain 2019 | Statista*. [online] Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/882117/online-learning-in-the-uk-by-demographic/> [Accessed 4 September 2020].
3. <https://www.google.co.uk/forms/about/>