



DIGITAL SKILLS AND RESEARCH METHODS

The Impact of Virtual Learning Environment

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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW OF VLE

Virtual learning environment is a platform used by educational institution (teaching and learning) around the world for different types of activities that could be done in class but with the adequate technology such as internet, computers hardware and software components it can be done anywhere and anytime. It allows students to submit work without having to find their teachers/tutors and for teachers it is a way to deliver contents where there is not the space or time to do so or both. (What is a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) 2020) (What is a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), 2021)

BACKGROUND

LITERATURE REVIEW – VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

VLE provides various types of services from teaching in class to home schooling basically, last year as result of the pandemic many teachers found themselves in a position where technology is the only way to deliver/provide teaching point and lessons. This gives an opening to one-on-one interaction/support between students and teachers which I personally think is an important aspect for teaching and learning. The benefits of VLE for teachers is quite high as integrating this method properly helps them with the time, they usually get to spend on administrative work such as the management of grades homework and behavioural data, all this can now be done from home or anywhere. For the student, the benefit is that it allows student to upload their homework, for the teacher to mark and keep track of the individual/student progress. However, the most important thing is that virtual learning environment is 24/7 accessible and that means that student have all the resources at any time it suits them. Time saving is another benefit for student (by finding all the resources they need uploaded online) and for teachers they will not necessarily need to re-upload/reprint as once its uploaded it can be accessed different times. Although all this is

nice, to use this you are required a level of technology that can backup and run the VLE system, we would need a device that can connect to the internet such as computers and smart devices, but not only, the software is important as in the world of today technology evolves every day and some tech might not be up to date and in consequence not support certain system. In our case for the students and staff members of UWTSD the service provided is by Microsoft, Microsoft as one of the biggest tech developers provided a system that is suitable for each category, age and group. All this comes with a positive and progressive impact as well as challenging. The challenge might be in both sides (teacher and student), there are a lot of skills to learn to know how to easily establish a good work, as for example the difficulties might come from the fact that the technology is unknown or difficult to use and to work with or, there is a lack of experience in the navigation of the internet in the search of information, this usually is one of the common problems. In my experience the system used by UWTSD it was challenging initially because there was a lack of experience. There are risks associated to the use of this technology, for student the impact that VIRTUAL LEARNING has is huge, I would say it has a negative impact due to the fact that is home-schooling “ virtually ”, most of the risk reside on the fact that at home you can do anything and get distracted, for the generation of today I think this is what we should try to avoid the most as well as the fact that the social interaction becomes more fragile and difficult to build. The technology provides us with “SOCIAL” MEDIA that does not exactly helps the human being to correctly understand what socializing and interaction is. I particularly feel that this methodology should not be a long-term solution to the current situation and hopefully classroom will reopen. For this programme to work the DAO (Defence Awarding Organisation) provided policies to direct and support required by approved centres who wish to deliver accredited qualification where some, or all, aspects of learning take place through e-learning. This policy will help to ensure that delivery and learning are set at, and maintained to, the highest standards. This policy does not apply to the quality and structure of e-learning material. This is the responsibility of an approved centre.

However, the DAO, through this policy, retain the right to ensure that e-learning resources are appropriate to the qualification it is aligned to.

citation (DAO online learning policy, 2021)

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS RESEARCH

AIM OF THIS RESEARCH

The aim of this research is to find negative/positive impact that VLE has on teaching institute in the UK and find ways to make improvements. I have come across various information and the use of this system has been introduced since the beginning of 2000, between the positive/negative impact most resources point out that VLE methodology maximise student reflection and encourage progressive thought, and a growth on independent learning. Study has reported that the software is commonly used as a depository for teaching materials and assignments uploading but not only, it increases student enthusiasm to participate. There is negative impact although, expert say that the long-term use of virtual learning might impact the mental, emotional and academic impacts of that shift are likely to be challenging, they say that the difference between expectations and reality can be difficult for student, because important milestones, like graduation cannot happen the traditional way. At our current time facing a pandemic the possibility of improvement is immense, the fact that there is an implementation of social distancing pushed the social to become interactive and made possible the acceleration of various software and system of communication. There is room for improvement by making the social-life/school more active and less limited, expert says that student are struggling to find spaces in their home environment to work, dealing with financial and health crisis, and home-schooling their own children/siblings. Students in disciplines that require hands-on learning or applications are worried about achieving their objectives most, but study from the spring showed students performing better than researchers expected, as a result of institutions expanding pass/fail or other binary course options for students. It is still unclear how opting to be graded on one of those more

tolerant schemes will affect students' handover abilities and other outcomes soon.

4.0 METHOD (PRIMARY/SECONDARY RESEARCH)

My research was conducted with qualitative method, primary and secondary research methods was used for goal to gather information and knowledge of VLE on understanding of the service, the technologies required, advantages and disadvantages, challenges faced by students and teachers. This was possible thanks to articles, journals and websites used to retrieve data.

Primary method was used to retrieve data quantitative and qualitative data related to UWTSD virtual learning environment. Consequently, an online software (Google) was used to generate an online survey which includes 10 questions related to the university virtual learning environment and was spread across friends, colleagues and those studying the related topic to get their feedback. Once this was sent via e-mail, social media and class the data was gathered and added in tables for analysis process.

Citation Barker, J., Gossman, P. (2013) 'The learning impact of a virtual learning environment: students' views 'Teian Journal 5 (2) July.

(Long-term online learning in pandemic may impact students' well-being | Inside Higher Ed, 2021)

ONLINE SURVEY 2020 - EFFECTIVENESS OF VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

This survey is designed to determine the effectiveness of VLE as required from one of the modules Digital Skills and Research Methods (provide a survey to identify the effectiveness of University Virtual Learning Environment).

Dopo la sezione 1. Continua alla sezione successiva

Sezione senza titolo

Q1 Are you using VLE for EDUCATIONAL purposes?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q2 Would you prefer the university continues to use VLE platform as a way of delivering education?

☐ yes, it's right as it is now

☐ yes but, I would like some improvements/make changes

☐ no, I want to go back to school

☐ NO, There is a need of improvement in the system

☐ I want to be in class

Q3 Would you prefer another service methodology was used to deliver lesson

☐ No

☐ Yes

☐ Maybe

Q4 How often are you using VLE to communicate to your classmates

Q5 Rate VLE performance based on the effectiveness

Q6 PLEASE EXPRESS YOUR OPINION ON THE SERVICE PROVIDED THROUGH VLE AND HOW ITS HELPING YOU

Q7 Since the lockdown the service provided from the university has been satisfactory

Q8 Are you satisfied in terms of receiving technical service from the IT department when you have an technical problem

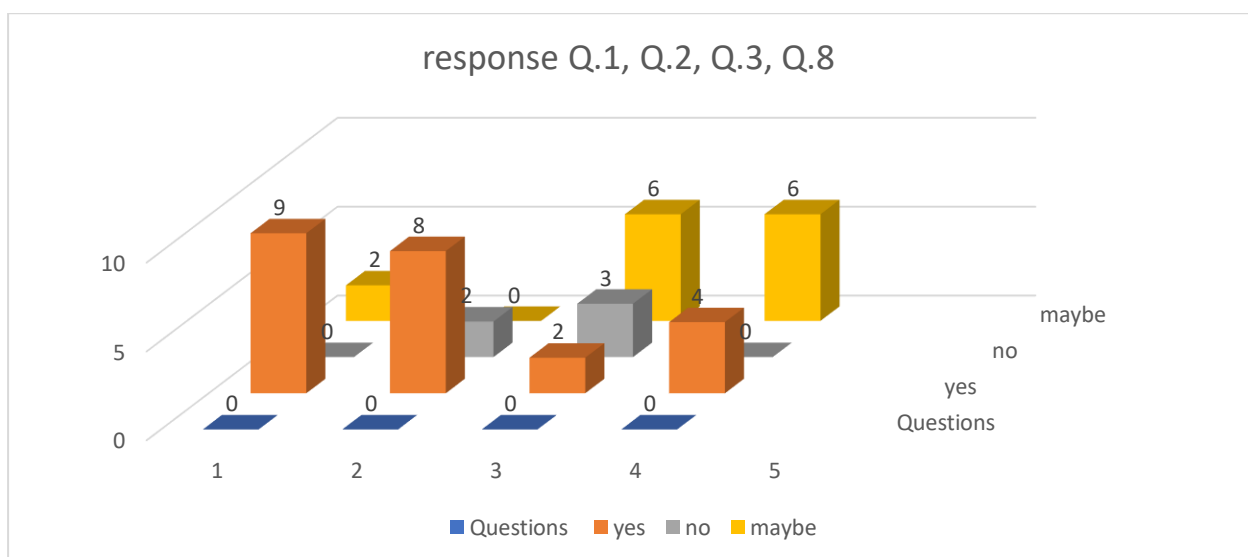
Q9 please say few words about your current experience in relation to use of vle (positive or negative experience)

Q10 please say a few awards on how or what to improve in VLE

5.0 RESULTS

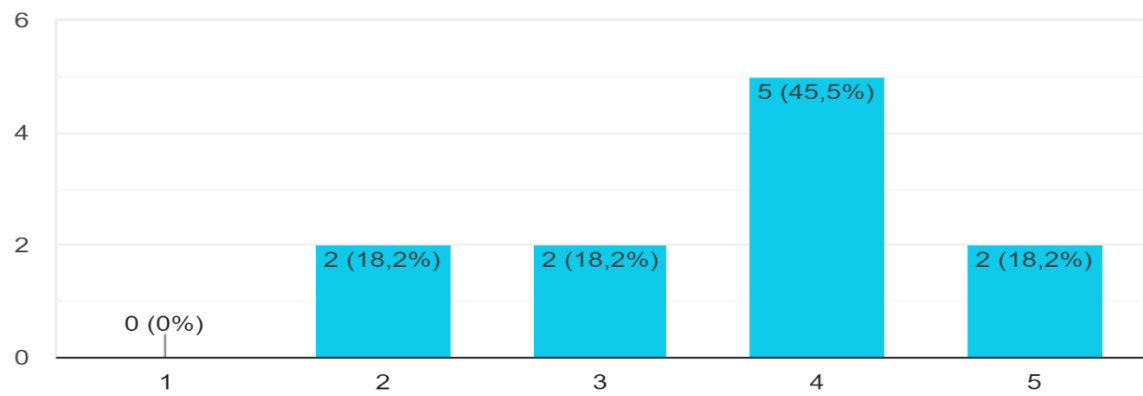
Here are the answers to the questionnaire in a tabular form and graphics.

Questions	yes	No	Maybe
Question 01	9	0	2
Question 02	8	2	0
Question 03	2	3	6
Question 08	4	0	6



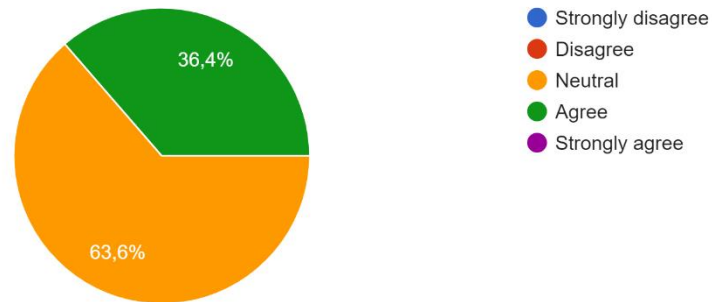
Q.4 Rate how likely are you using VLE to communicate to your classmates

11 risposte



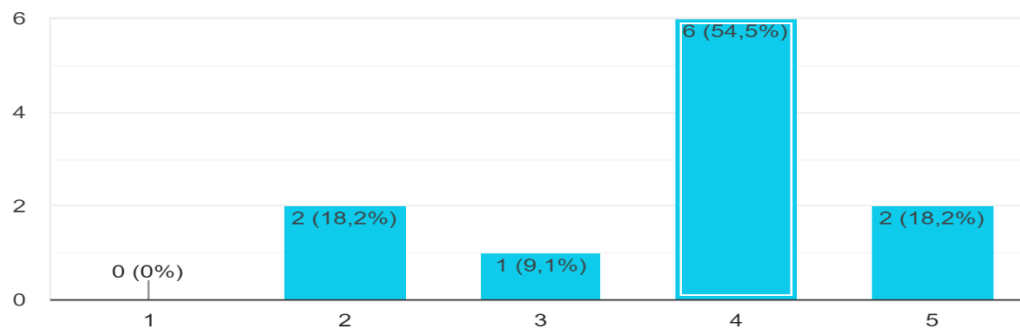
Q.7 Since the lockdown the service provided from the university has been satisfactory

11 risposte



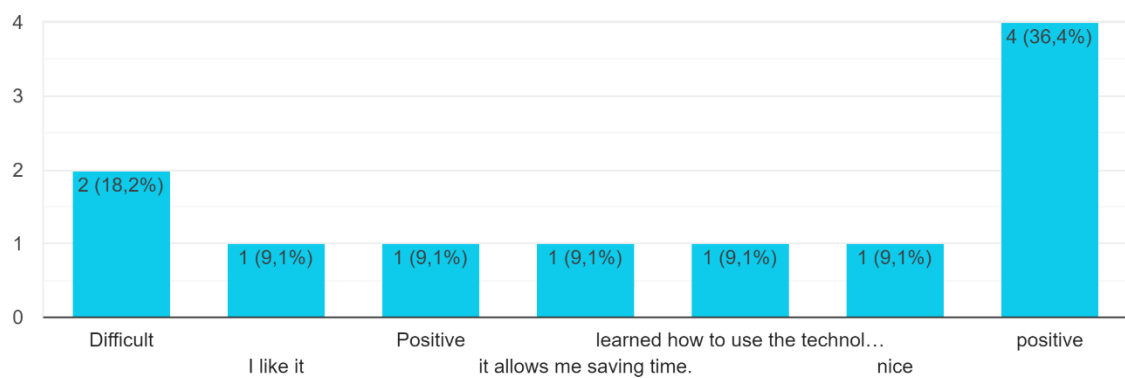
Q.5 Rate VLE performance based on the effectiveness

11 risposte



Q.9 please say few words about your current experience in relation to use of vle (positive or negative experience)

11 risposte



For the answer to questions of 6 and 10 I asked to express how they felt, and this are the answers:

Q.6 PLEASE EXPRESS YOUR OPINION ON THE SERVICE PROVIDED THROUGH VLE AND HOW IT'S HELPING YOU

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10 response

- good
- Just more relaxing
- satisfied
- its good
- Helping me to learn from home
- This is the best alternative platform when there is a pandemic
- Good
- nice

The answer is very short, but they express good feedback and that most of them feel like is a good alternative in this pandemic.

Q.10 please say a few words on how or what to improve in VLE.

The concern was directed towards the I.T department, most would like to have more help and resources to work with. There's an understanding of the current situation and the reason why Virtual learning environment it's important at time like this due to the pandemic.

6.0 DISCUSSION

The impact of VLE from the data I have collected state that, students and teachers are more likely to adapt to the new experience of VIRTUAL LEARNING, student performed exemplary better and adapt to the new system and method. The impact is relatively positive as it promotes reflection, adjust the needs of students, increase interest and support, improved willingness to learn, and broadly reported above improved course assessment performance.

In my opinion in relation to how I've experience VIRTUAL LEARNING it is a bit of problem as I originally come from a country (Italy) where books, articles and journals are the main source of knowledge as a student, rarely I

used the internet for research. The impact I got was a bit negative, I don't really like online classes, I find it difficult to concentrate and to orient myself, I like face-to-face lessons where you can interact with teachers and students without the problem of interrupting (or being interrupt) or staying in with the limited time, the good thing about VLE is that I can access to majority of the work/information any time.

This academic research thought me how to use the web for my research and access third party source to find legit and acceptable information. I learned how to use new software's, learned how to create online survey and to use MS-Excel to create graphs and charts.

7.0 CONCLUSION

This report was a product of primary and secondary research method, it was conducted to find and understand the different types of aspects around Virtual learning environment used by University. The following report is made by the collection of data stored, collected and studied with the help of software and tools (internet, books and article) all with the goal to find/indicate the negative/positive aspect and how to improve the system of virtual learning environment.

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