

Digital Skills and Research Methods

Virtual Learning Environment
(VLE)

BMSW4003

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1. Introduction

Worldwide we have been affected by a pandemic leading to new methods of everyday living. This matter has a significant impact on pretty much every aspect of our lives. When I first enrolled to go back studying, I will never think that I will be attending classes through my laptop, phone or tablet. It affects the way of absorbing information or learning. Today everything I deal as my fellow students is online or cloud-based, it will be something to remember and learn.

The big challenge this academic year is how you will be attending classes or learning and how you will be organising your environment to make it ideal for the time you will be spending attending studying. The digital tools provided by your school or university must be the most suitable to conquer your goals. Let us never forget that we still adapting and learning from Virtual Learning.

This report will be analysing what has changed and also the impact of this significant change on students. Will see how the schools or universities virtual tools are making academic life more comfortable adapting to this change. I will be conducting surveys and observation on the process of adaptation and the impact on their academic lives.

2. Research

To determine the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) impact, I will be researching and collecting primary data students from the campus. This study will aim to understand the student's different points of view and the struggles and demands of Virtual Learning.

During the last years (Oliveira,2015), there is a notable increase in Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) within the education offered to adults to continue the process. of constant education.

Depending on different aspects, VLE could be triggered based on the distance between teacher and student, technological or web skills, leading to the student taking responsibility for his learning.

Motivation is the most crucial factor from teachers and students to succeed in academic performance.

Also, I will be adding my observation on VLE to compare and conclude with my research. Being this year, my first contact and perform with the VLEs.

2.2 Survey

We can find different ways to research, survey could be one of the most effective to obtain primary data. A good example and definition of the purpose of surveys is:

"to answer questions that have been raised, to solve problems that have been posed or observed, to assess needs and set goals, to determine whether or not specific objectives have been met, to establish baselines against which future comparisons can be made, to analyse trends across time, and generally, to describe what exists, in what amount, and in what context." (Isaac & Michael, 1997, p. 136)

I will be using the Likert scale on my surveys to express the agree or disagree on the student's opinion, follow the statistics from summarising applying median, or a mode to scale the student's data.

Mcleod (2019) mentioned that Likert scales could get more valuable data or answers as the survey with this scale allow degrees opinion.

2.3 Observation

There are four types of observation research method and data gathering. With this type of research, you can understand how naturally individuals interact with different challenges.

It could sound an easy task, just observing and collecting data. But there are always some differences that can affect the type of data you want to absorb

Choosing the right type of observation research method will depend on the project or purpose of the data:

- Complete Observer.
- Observer as Participant.
- Participant as Observer.

- Complete Participant.

(Sauro, Oct 20.2015)

I will be analysing Observation research as participant giving my conclusion on my personal situation and how I managed VLE, my Everyday online interaction, and also how I managed my relationships with students and lecturers during this term with the tools provided form UWTSD

3.Virtual Learning Environment analysis

Next, I will analyse the study on the behaviour, adaptation and impact of VLA on students of the university through a questionnaire.

I will also be adding a second study from another source to compare and analyse the difference between them.

3.2 VLE analysis from UWTSD students.

1.How old are you?

● 18-24	1
● 25-35	4
● Over 35	3

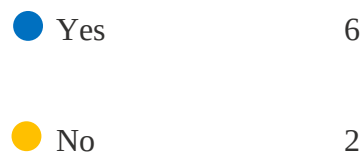


2.Have you experienced or attend other Virtual learning sessions before your enrolment on UWTSD?

● Yes	4
● No	4



3. During your enrolment, have you been informed and provided correctly about tools and Virtual Learning?



4. During this term, how did you find communication with your lecturer or campus services?
Very Difficult 1 2 3 4 5 Very Easy

8 Responses

3.75 Average Number

5. Have you found difficulties to understand the information given from the University?

Very Difficult 1 2 3 4 5 Very Easy

8 Responses

3.75 Average Number

6. In general, how do you find all the tools provided?

Very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 Very satisfied

8 Responses

4 Average Number

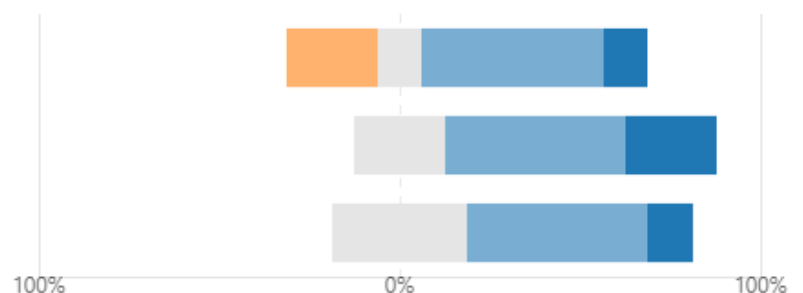
7. Please rate the following tools that help you during this term for your Virtual Learning?

■ Not at all useful
 ■ Slightly useful
 ■ Useful
 ■ Very useful
 ■ Extremely useful

Moodle

Microsoft Teams

Library and Learning Resources



8. Overall, how satisfied are you with Virtual Learning this term?

Very dissatisfied 1 2 3 4 5 Very satisfied

8 Responses

3.88 Average Number

6. Are there any improvements would you like to add on Virtual Learning?

1	anonymous	No
2	anonymous	Add attention to priorities and focus more on class learning
3	anonymous	No
4	anonymous	No
5	anonymous	No thanks
6	anonymous	Additional materials need to be added on Moodle files

On this Virtual Learning research, we can find an average of students between ages 18 to 35 years old. The half experienced before with Virtual Learning environments or has attended online classes or courses. During the enrolment on the UWTSD half of the students find out the university did not get the information or steps correctly to follow for virtual learning, on the other hand, there is the other half that understood and didn't found any problems with the steps to follow to attend virtual learning. In terms of enrolment and classes attendance, the communication between university, lecturers and other students are crucial where we can find on an average the students found easy to very easy virtually communicate with other students, university services and lecturer for any enquires, questions or help from the lecturer. To succeed and achieve the academic goals we need to make use of the tools provided for the virtual learning environments such as communication tools or software, overall, the students satisfied with the software and tools provided to attend and interact on their virtual learning environments. We also can see which tools are the most useful for the students during their virtual learning. 25% of the students found that Moodle is a slightly useful tool, where 12.5% of them think is useful, and the other 62.5% agree that it is a tool very useful or extremely useful to study. On the communication side, Microsoft Teams plays the most important role; without this tool, students will be not able to communicate with the lecturer, students or attend classes. On this case, 25% of the students think that this tool is useful but not the best while, on the other hand, a majority 75% agree that it is a very useful communication tool.

When we want to search for information or learning material, one of the biggest advances is using an E-library where we can find most of the copies from the UWTSD library there are always other ways to do research or find information as physical books or no electronic copies from articles or newspapers. A 62.5% Students agree that the Library and learning resources from UWTSD is very useful and easy to use, there is a 37.5% that use other ways to obtain electronic learning material and thinks that is just a useful tool.

There is always room from improvements, and students are probably the best tool to use to make these improvements to happen. Asking on this research what are the improvements that would you like to add on Virtual learning environments at UWTSD we got responses like:

"Additional materials need to be added on Moodle files. "

"No, the tool and information are really useful."

" Add attention to priorities and focus more on class learning."

3.2.2 VLE Observational Study

This year, my first time experiencing a virtual learning environment, I will base my observational case study on myself. I found that virtual learning is playing an essential role in our lives, depending on different circumstances. In my case and pretty much everyone due to Covid-19, we are obligated to attend classes virtually to avoid the virus's spread. I found the UWTSD it was very well prepared and organise during the first term. Some particular moments there was some doubt about performance from the University services. Still, we need to understand the high volume of the inquiries from all students and lecturers. Overall, I'm really satisfied with the service and tools provided. I mainly found communication and Library sources beneficial to complete my assessments or communicate with lecturers or other students. Moodle is useful for the ones more in touch or higher knowledge of technology. It is still messy and unstructured, finding it difficult to get or download studying materials or assessment links. Communication with lecturers is satisfying, and also they come helpful with one to one help in case of need it. In general, I found virtual learning helpful depending on the situation, easy to access, and a good coming time saver. However, I am still preferring attending class in person as is easy to get in touch with your lecturers or other students and get a more personal approach in some cases.

3.3 VLE analysis from secondary source

A random questionnaire was conducted after two weeks of teaching seasons to different students from Radiotherapy and Oncology, the first week didactic and the second one virtual learning.

Results: Virtual learning seemed to significantly improve students' satisfaction/engagement and recall (n40). The student group taught using the VLE had higher mean scores for retention compared to the didactic group however this was not statistically significant. Students' learning styles seemed to have no effect on their satisfaction/engagement and ease of learning. Three key themes emerged from the qualitative data, (1) the visuals were good/helpful, (2) the talk was informative, and (3) more detail/visuals were required.

(Ryan and Poole, 2019, p. S1218)

4. Conclusion

Putting together all the information collected, overall students are pleased with virtual learning environments. Some of them may struggle a little with the transition from analogue to digital meaning with this that students and lecturers need a medium to advance level on technology knowledge. There is, of course, always going to be help from the lecturers or university services.

This big change could have a big impact on universities and could be on the end of some of the world's campuses. However, there is always a conclusion where all the students agree. They always prefer to attend in person to classes as is easier to approach the lecturer and get a personal relationship, communicate and interact with other students.

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