

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Digital skills and research methods

(task 2 virtual learning environment)

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Introduction

In this report I talk about what I learned about VLE, thanks to the research I did online and offline, obtaining information from websites, books and newspaper articles; taking as an example Moodle that and the application we use at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

Also in the research, there is information collected by me personally within the university on how students are in the use of Moodle for their studies, you will then be in the search for information obtained by primary data and secondary data.

What is virtual learning environment?

Virtual learning environment, called more simply VLE, is a design space for teaching and learning online, is a system using computer hardware and software, which involves distance learning. In general the term VLE tends to apply to computer programs that facilitate e-learning in a traditional education establishment.

Some people say that the word "virtual" means that it is like studying in presence physically, but the only difference is that it is online. But the reality in my opinion and that of other researchers is that it is not the same at all. Studying online and studying in presence are two totally different realities, there are many benefits that you have by studying online, which in presence you do not have and vice versa; but also many defects that you can have online that in presence you do not have.

starting from the positive sides of the VLE, I can only start by saying that the comfort you have studying online you can not have it studying in presence, you can follow the lessons directly from your home, or from wherever you are, so that everyone can attend a certain institution without worrying about how far it is or the problems that can easily be created in moving. another fundamental point as I have already mentioned earlier is transport. thanks to the VLE it is eliminated and therefore in addition to the disturbance of moving you also have the benefit of saving money on any bus tickets, trains, underground, car gasoline etc etc...

In addition to the benefits we have for ourselves there are others benefits equally important or perhaps even more, which are those we do for our planet. They study online and therefore not moving with ours own vehicles we are reducing the pollution that cause cars and all vehicles that go on gasoline and in doing so we reduce the pollution of smog on our planet.

In addition to the positive aspects there can be found some negatives.

As a first negative aspect is that you lose the human contact that may seem a banality but that for some people is fundamental, for students who will no longer be able to interact with each other but also for professors who will hardly be able to have feedback of how they are explaining simply by looking at their students. Others negative points are that too much time spent in front of a screen may be harmful can cause poor vision, strain injuries, and other physical problems.

Personally as a method of study in this historical moment, with a worldwide pandemic in progress, I think that online study has been the salvation of students not to waste time, and also learn a new method of study that can be useful to them also in the future.

the online platforms for the study are done very well, they can still be improved, but I think this is only a matter of time before the right balance is found and when this is done in my opinion the online study will prevail over the one in presence.

When was this concept introduced?

The Frog Virtual Learning Environment was introduced in the school system in 2011 through the 1BestariNet Project, (that is a project led by the Ministry of Education is to “transform the education arena and establish Malaysia as a model of excellence in integrated, Internet-enabled learning”) which required teachers to be more open-minded so that they could develop the project. But the first recorded use of the term VLE was at the Cetis (a co-operative consultancy) conference in 2004 where they have introduced the idea.

Who is using this technology?

in previous years, this technology for learning was used relatively little. distance learning has always been seen "badly" for the lack of trust of teachers towards students.

People who mainly use VLE are students and teachers who use various online platforms to continue their studies; but they're not the only people how are using this method of teaching and studying, also entrepreneurs and large companies that in this period of pandemic cannot gather live in an office to talk about their business.

Why it is important the research on this topic?

Starting from the assumption that doing research is always important, because looking for information you always learn new things, even maybe on topics on which you think you are informed, there is always someone who knows more than you and researching we expand our knowledge and our cultural baggage.

As previously mentioned, doing research acculturates us, not only from the point of view of the information that we will recover but also improves our skills, for example in the use of the PC or even skills such as reading and writing.

The importance of this research in particular helps us to better understand how technology, which is now part of our everyday lives, is becoming increasingly fundamental for us. how man can always find a way to evolve and continue his life even in difficult moments like the one we are experiencing right now in the middle of a pandemic.

The virtual learning environment has been fundamental for all students in the world to continue their studies during this difficult time, thanks to VLE students have managed to conclude their year of study, many have graduated and as many have graduated, and all this could not have happened if there had not been the VLE.

Doing research on this topic is very important to improve more and more the quality of the virtual learning environment, and this and what is happening in this last period.

I have personally seen the improvement of this new teaching method.

Since 2019 (since started the covid pandemic) I started, like all the other students, to do distance learning, and I remember very well how many problems there were. Problems caused primarily by professors, who had not been able to use online platforms, (not through their fault, but because of the society that never considered this method of study until they were obliged) but also above all

by the problems caused by websites and applications, including system collapses, continuous blocks and many other technological defects.

The positive side of this matter is that since the whole world right now needs to study online, more importance has been given to the VLE, and many things have been improved and many problems have been solved.

What type of service this technology is providing?

This technology provides several very useful services listed below.

Some of the services that this technology provides to give students there for example the comfort that students have in studying from home.

Or for example being able to find all the information you need about the lesson carried out online; for example in my university use Moodle, where I can find everything I need about courses, lessons or any other information I need.

In addition to Moodle, studying online you can find services such as IT SERVICE that are a group of people always ready to help you with all the problems you can find along your school path.

But not only that, there are other services for any problem you may have. with regard to problems on examinations there is the service that deals with the assessments and exams, if you have problems with the study you can contact the study support.

Those few times where there are no people who can help you, there is still a way to solve your problems with guide such as guide to library service or for example the guide to registration.

These listed above are some of the services that Moodle provides, and that have helped me personally. All services that I had never seen and used before, and that I thank for the great service that has been given to me.

Benefits how students are benefited and how is this lectern?

Studying online students have many benefits, which I have personally experienced and which are not at all obvious. I personally as main benefits, and that I have never heard of from anyone, is that for example studying online I have no classmates around and therefore I have fewer distractions that could cause me. Surely even the study from home has many distractions, but when you are at home you are alone, and it is you who decide whether to distract yourself or not, unlike when you are in class that maybe others are distracting you.

Other benefits of the VLE is the time saving that can be exploited for many things such as, instead of wasting hours of time to prepare themselves, to go out and get to school, students can perhaps use this time to review what they have studied or prepare lessons.

Another point is that with the VLE, students learn another method of study so that they have more ways of study and therefore more useful skills, not only for their study life, but tomorrow also for work and for life in general.

Students have a better learning experience because VLEs promote students to learn at a pace everywhere they are that is more comfortable to them and also for the teachers.

Conclusion

finally, to conclude this research, I want to say that there is no right and wrong method of study, but that you have to know how to use them all and according to the moment choose one.

Right now the virtual learning environment is the method of study that the world is exploiting due to the pandemic we are experiencing and has proved to be a very effective study method that surely many students will go on using after they have understood how effective it is; but many others will return to the classic study in the classroom because maybe they are better. The world is beautiful because it is varied and each person has different ways and styles.

I personally found myself very well with distance learning, it proved to be a great discovery and I think I will use it a lot in the future, but I also like the study in presence, because relate to people online is totally different from relating live; but finally both solutions are interesting and we have to know how to find the right balance.

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Here you can find the answers of what the students of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David think on the use of Moodle. the questions were written by me personally printed and distributed in some of the classes of the university. After collecting the information I used Microsoft Excel to draw the percentages that you find here below.

question	yes	no
Do you find Moodle challenging?	10 answered 50%	10 answered 50%
is Moodle helpful for your academic studies?	14 people answered 70%	6 answered 30%
can you find all the information that you need on Moodle?	12 answered 60%	8 answered 40%
is Moodle easy to use?	12 answered 60%	8 answered 40%
can Moodle be improved?	9 answered 45%	11 answered 55%
does Moodle effect you positively?	16 answered 80%	4 answered 20%
do you advice to use Moodle?	17 answered 85%	3 answered 15%

question	1-3	4-7	8-10
rate how often do you use Moodle?	0 answered 0%	11 answered 55%	9 answered 45%
rate your experience whit Moodle	2 answered 10%	14 answered 70%	4 answered 20%
rate Moodle?	1 answered 5%	10 answered 50%	9 answered 45%