VLEs: The student perspective

Chris Turnock
Teaching Fellow
&
Pat Gannon-Leary
Research Associate
Northumbria University
VLEs: The student perspective

Study Aims:

• To find out what Northumbria students use on the VLE

• To determine what Northumbria students use the VLE for

• To investigate student perceptions of the VLE

• To find out what additional information and features students would like on the VLE

• To identify factors influencing student usage of the VLE
VLEs: The student perspective

Data Collection methods

Online questionnaire: n = 407

Diary completed for a day, once a week for an eight week period: n = 15

Two focus groups: n = 15
VLEs: The student perspective

Themes

• Student activity
• Adopting a student centred approach
• Impediments to student learning
• Impact on lecture attendance
• Communication tools
VLEs: The student perspective

Student Activity

• 66% login daily
• 84% login once a week

• Main activity: Downloading notes; assignment briefs; e-mailing staff
VLEs: The student perspective

Adopting a student centred approach

- Match with learning style
- Aids learning, though not always if not used to full potential or too texty
- Note annotating
- Prepare for assignments
VLEs: The student perspective

Impediments to student learning

- Navigation
- Lack of preparation
- Availability of materials
- Timing of posting
VLEs: The student perspective

Impact on lecture attendance

• Does posting of lecture notes reduce attendance?
• No impact
VLEs: The student perspective

Communication tools

• 17% voluntarily use VLE communication tools
• 30% use VLE communication tools if instructed
• Limited use
• Potential use
VLEs: The student perspective

Recommendations

• Consistency within programmes:
  • Appearance
  • Lecture notes
• Pre-post lecture notes
• Make greater use of communication tools
Further Research

- Possible areas include how to use VLE communication tools to enhance student experience:
  - Announcements
  - Instant Messaging
  - Blogs
  - Wikis