

But what does it mean for ME? Students' engagement with learning technologies.

An exploration of student satisfaction with and aspirations for learning technology developments



This project was funded by Abertay Teaching
& Learning Enhancement Fund

Lead by lecturer Siobhan MacAndrew with learning technologists Carol Maxwell and Alice LaRooy from Abertay Teaching and Learning Enhancement Team

We thank all of the student
participants who shared their
views with us

To improve student achievement, it makes sense to go straight to the source – students

Mitra (2008)

Our motivation

Research for students
designed by students

Researching about learning is
a learning experience in itself

Student Research Assistants

- Wendy – 2nd year forensic computing



- Kevin – Final year Sport and Exercise programme



- Andrew – 3rd year Computer Arts and Game Design



- Frane – Taught Masters Psychology



- Ashleigh – PhD Psychology



WARNING

This is not a Scientific
Study!

What we did

Six one-hour focus groups of five people, some individual interviews

We have over three hours of recorded video footage

Masses of data to explore – continuing next year

A key consideration

- You have to ask the right question for the right reasons and in the right way
- The University, staff and students had different agendas
- More to it than 'asking questions'

Abertay research was driven by

- New teaching, learning and assessment strategy
- Institution-wide curriculum review
- Major IT and learning technology investment
- Desire to improve the student experience

Team examined student
opinions on...

Our research themes

- Usefulness of various types of electronic feedback
- Usefulness of online PDP
- Appropriateness of social media as a learning tool

- Blackboard as a learning tool
- Usefulness of lectures delivered as movies and stored online
- Effectiveness of online assessments

Another key factor

- We also explored students aspirations for use of learning technologies – not only current use
- How could they be used more effectively?

What we found...

Blackboard

- University Corporate design was wanted by students
 - E.g. 'Blackboard Exemplar Program'
 - Currently being investigated by student researcher at Abertay
- Far too passive, lecturers use it as a repository

- Lecturers were very conservative in their use of blackboard
 - Some shared wikis/video whilst others were minimal
- Recognition that staff need support and staff development on this issues.

Lectures as online movies

- Available 24/7
- Great for revision
- Can rewind them

Webinar software

Real time streaming of lectures

convenient

still feel part of the audience

Movies of lectures – can then use lecture slot for discussion

BUT!

- Still want 'live university experience'
- Students don't want correspondence course
- Value academic pursuit, shared learning, even the location of learning
- Movies as extra supplement not replacement

Online assessments

- MCQ's ok for formative but not summative assessment
- Only MCQ's being used as online assessments - no others
- Feedback for many online tests is pretty minimal – just a score

Electronic Feedback

- All Abertay students submit electronically now
- Staff use Grademark to insert their comments
- Students welcomed it - good that can save the comments to look back at

Types of feedback

- Audio feedback used rarely and only some disciplines
- Video feedback not used and students no opinion on it really
- Most preferred option was written comments embedded in electronic coursework submission

Online PDP – e.g. Pebblepad

- Hated it!!
- Staff no time to explain software in lectures
- Staff had no time to explain ‘reflection’ and how to do it
- Students asked to do something ‘pointless and time consuming’

Social media as a learning tool

- Resounding NO!
- Want divide between work and play
- Feels too intimate
- Not everybody uses Facebook

The experience of the
research team

- Acquired employability skills
- Felt their work was meaningful
- Felt they were making contribution

- Spoke at Abertay Teaching and Learning Enhancement conference
- Their work is already influencing policy and strategy
- Their work is being continued by others

Anything problematic?

The team had too many
masters!

- Many parts of the university wanted to make use of them and additional research questions were added on as study progressed
- Hard for them to focus on what THEY were interested in
- They recommend universities establish clear parameters early on and stick to them

Abertay should have been
more radical

And allowed the research team to set the agenda as
well as run the studies

Research Assistants' views



Wendy, What did you find most surprising about the students responses?



Frane, What did you learn from being part of this project?

Andrew, has being a part of this research team changed your perspective of Learning Technologies?



A warm up for the later
activity

Question Time!

We asked these questions

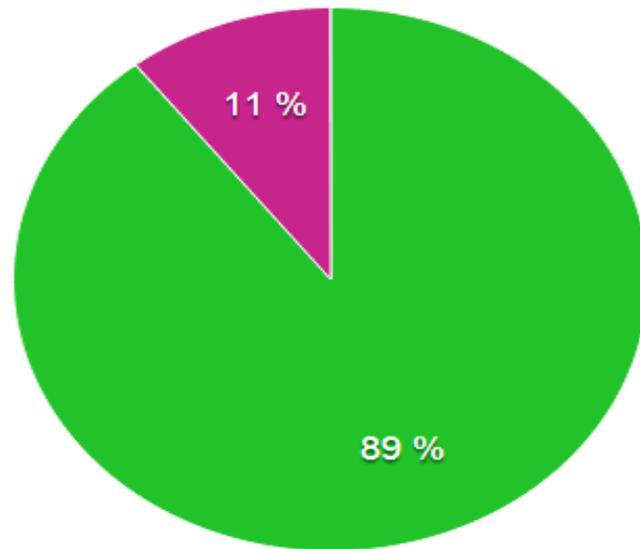
What would YOUR students
say?

Q1. Have you ever taken an
online test?

Q 1

Have you ever taken an online test?

19 Responses



A Yes

B No

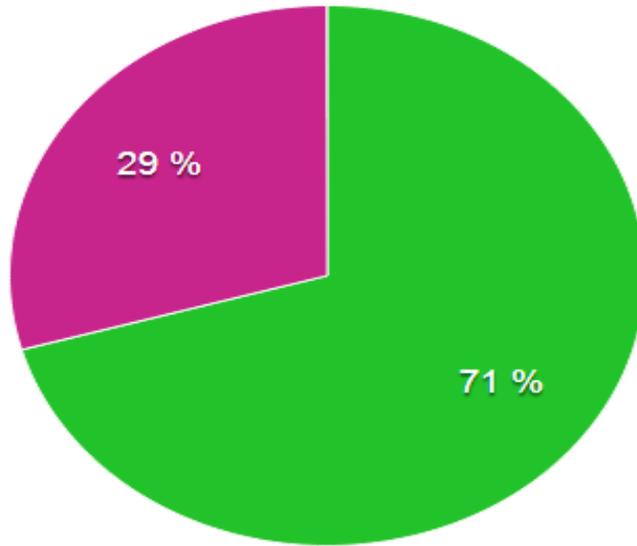
What do YOU think of online tests?

Q2 Have you ever received
feedback online, e.g. by
Blackboard Grademark?

Q 2

Have you ever received feedback online e.g. Grademark?

17 Responses



A Yes

B No

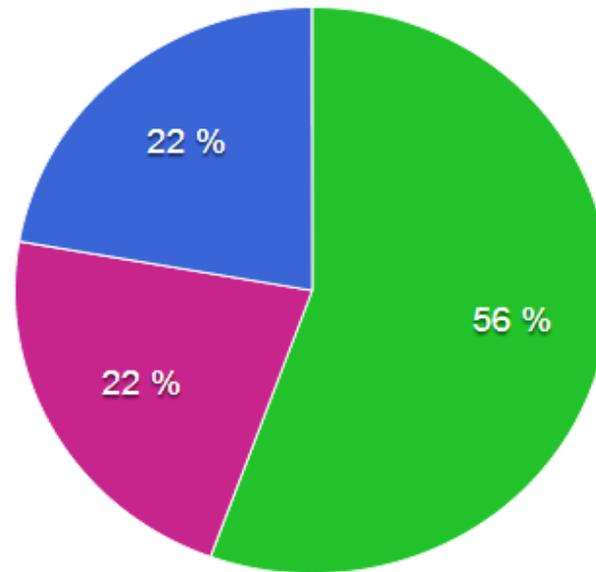
Do YOU use Grademark?

Q3 What do you think about
audio feedback?

Q 3

What do think about audio feedback?

18 Responses



A Like it

B Not sure

C Would not like it

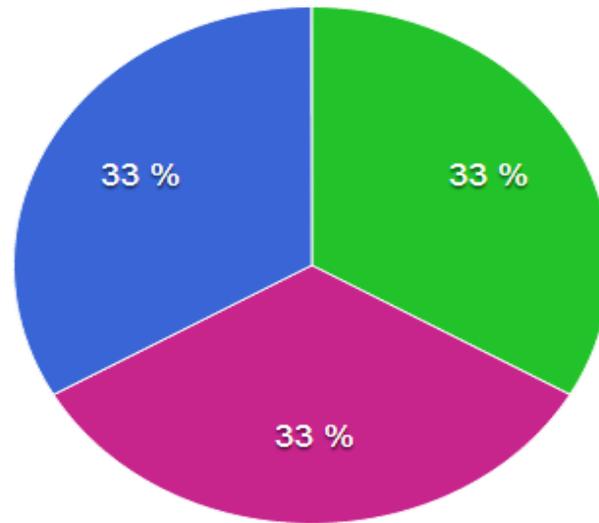
Do YOU use audio feedback?

What do you think about
video feedback?

Q 4

What do you think about video feedback?

18 Responses



A Like it

B Not sure

C Would not like it

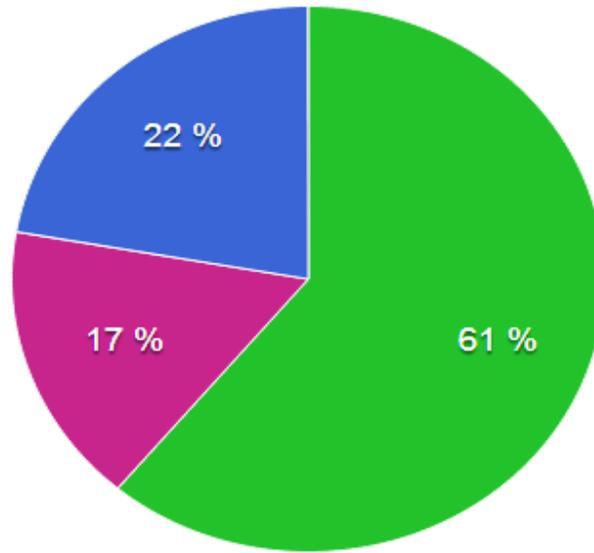
Do You use video feedback?

How do you feel about
typing exam essays?

Q 7

How do you feel about typing essay exam responses?

18 Responses



A

I'd like it

B

Not sure

C

I'd prefer to handwrite

Should typing exams be
extended to all?

Thoughts?

- Do you know what your own students would have said?
- Are the responses Abertay students gave as expected?
- Which question/s would you have asked?

But what does the Abertay experience mean for
ME?



*How would you apply our method to
your own practice?*

Identify your research
question

Make it specific

What are your hypotheses?

What factors do you think influence your issue?

Design and plan a study

We will circulate around you
and chat

Feedback your proposals to
room

Prize for the best one!

Conclusions

- Students can set the agenda and explore it
- University needs to trust and respect them as colleagues
- We are all on the same side

Recommendations

- Involve your students
 - Honours research projects?
 - Internships?
 - Staff development workshops?
- Great way to embed employability in curriculum

Thanks for listening