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Abstract 1D

Online Synchronous Teaching in Psychology

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In recent years the increased need for flexibility in the delivery of courses and the rise of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) has led to tutor/student interaction through forums, instant messaging tools or other communication functions.   This has been particularly useful in undergraduate psychology, as it allows for a more flexible delivery of support in large class sizes as well as encouraging student generated content. The aim of this LTDF project was to evaluate the use of synchronous discussion by focussing on the "open source" web conferencing software the Big Blue Button (BBB). This is a free and basic version of commercial products such as Adobe Connect, and is available through the University VLE Moodle. After a period of "stress testing" the software was evaluated as an educational tool within three small group teaching contexts in psychology: a teacher led tutorial session, collaborative group project work, and a student led approach (Peer Assisted Learning).   We evaluated student's and the facilitator's/tutor's experiences in each of the contexts using a variation of the Technology Acceptance Model (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000), which included measures of "Perceived Ease of Use" and "Self Efficacy", and incorporated a focus group discussion to examine the main themes that emerged from the student's experience of BBB.   We also sought to address technical issues encountered while using BBB software by developing user guidelines to ensure students/ teachers can use the software independently. Results of the evaluation and implications for future use of BBB software in the University VLE will be discussed. There is potential that the use of BBB will help develop graduate attributes such as being adaptable and responsive to the use of innovative technologies' in effective communication.

References

Venkatesh, V. and Davis, F. D. (2000). A theoretical extension of the technology acceptance model: Four longitudinal field studies. *Management Science*, 46(2):186–204.

Outcomes
Be aware of the potential benefits and limitations of using synchronous discussion in teaching and learning. Understand the student's experience of using web conferencing software in teaching and learning Reflect on how synchronous discussion could be implemented in other teaching and learning contexts.