

Japanese University Students and Learning Management Systems

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Traditional Model

Uni Course ---- PAPER BASED ----- Home

- Expensive
- Disconnected
- Unsustainable

Blended Learning Model

Uni Course ----- IT ----- Home

- Far less expensive
 - Connected
- Arguably more sustainable
- Arguably enhances engagement

Learning Management System (LMS)

- ‘LMS is a form of technology used by instructors to build and manage courses’ (OECD, 2005)
- History – PLATO (1960s)
- Today – 97.5% diffusion in tertiary educational institutions in the UK/USA Hawkins & Rudy, 2008)
- Multimedia & Multiple Functions.

What makes LMS usage successful?

FOUR KEY CATEGORIES (Selim, 2007)

- IT
- University Support
- Lecturers
- Students *Current OECD focus: student engagement

The question of student satisfaction = Willingness to use LMS.

- North America/Europe/ Parts of Asia/ Australasia
– Higher rates of LMS engagement/ satisfaction
- Middle East – Lower rates of LMS engagement/
satisfaction, Al-Jarf (2009) and Al-Naddabi
(2007)

What about Japanese Students?

INVESTIGATION CONTEXT

- Middle ranking 'regional magnet' university (23,000 students)
- A4 paper and printing costs 126,000,000 JPY per annum (2014-2015)
- Moodle usage(hardly anyone uses/trained for) maintenance 1,000,000 JPY per annum

LMS: Coursebase

- Online
- Simple 'Tabula Rasa' interface
- Bilingual
- Messaging system but no discussion board
- Enables use of multimedia
- Enables language proficiency/access tracking

Example: R&L Course

- 10 asynchronous reading assignments with supporting images/video (50%)

ASSIGNMENT

- 10 closed items designed to support comprehension (10 points)
- Open written response to reading item (5 points)
- Self-selected but related listening activity. Answers pasted into the LMS. (10 points)

INVESTIGATION

- N = 458 (64.6% Humanities, 35.4% Science)
- Mean age 19.2 (SD = 0.84)
- English courses: 53.5% ESP / 32.8% R&L / 13.8% IA
- Yes/No and 1-4 scale Likert Survey
- Survey Instrument Reliability – Cronbach's Alpha 0.78
- Factor analysis

Survey

CLOSED ITEMS

- Students' course/major
- IT education/ LMS experience
- LMS Access/ support habits
- LMS Ease-of-use
- Willingness to use

OPEN ITEMS

- Student Views

FINDINGS N=458

TERM START

- 65% - Difficult to use LMS

TERM END

- 30% - Still difficult to use LMS

LMS Proficiency Issues

- 60% - Did not know how to insert or attach weblinks/images/audio files/etc and post a message.

Willingness to Use N=458

I do not wish to use the LMS in my other language courses.

- Approx. 30% Disagreed / 30% Agreed

I wish other courses in my department used the LMS.

- Approx. 40% Disagreed/ 20% Agreed

I'd rather do paper assignments and have paper info.

- Approx. 50% agreed/ 20% disagreed (*60% LMS content very useful)

WHAT WAS SIGNIFICANT?

- JHS and SHS IT education = Increased LMS proficiency score.
- Students who received IT education at ES and have keyboarding skills = Less likely to wish to remain paper based.
- Noticeable correlation between scholastically adept students and LMS satisfaction.
- Lecturer's LMS induction = Frequency of access to the LMS.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Only minority adapted well.
- 22.3% students had never received any form of IT education.
- Only 77.1% received IT education from ES
- Only 10.5% could use a keyboard with ease.
- IT illiterate students used smart phones to access LMS = problematic.
- Student IQ problematic

Key Considerations

Can students acclimatize to blended learning over time? Key factors.

- Peer Satisfaction/Influence
- Improving IT education in primary/secondary education
- Large numbers of IT illiterate teachers in state school system
- Students complaining about LMS usage on university assessments about teachers hinders usage.

What can we learn from students' responses?

Take proactive steps

Improve IT induction / education (notably keyboarding skills)

Modify LMS interface – Simplify?

FUTURE RESEARCH

Effect of Assignment design

Acclimatisation?