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Students' Overview: the Impact of Technology on Learning in Higher Education

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Students' Overview:

The impact of technology on learning in Higher Education

Eileen O' Donnell & Mary Sharp
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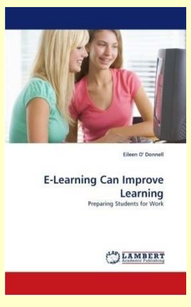


This book is an extract from my Dissertation submitted to DCU for MISM in 2008

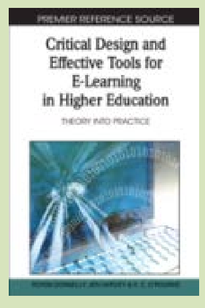
- Research undertaken in the DIT
- 223 students' opinions
- 41 lecturers' opinions
- http://arrow.dit.ie/buschmanoth/1/

Motivation:

Students are the end users of the Information Systems that educators use to enhance students' learning experiences. These research studies were undertaken to obtain students perspectives (as the end users) on the uses of technologies in higher education to assist educators in improving the pedagogical design of e-learning platforms alternatively known as learning management systems or Technology Enhanced Learning.

Introduction:

In April 2009 this survey was conducted in the Faculty of Business, Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and the findings were presented in a chapter of a book. "Critical Design and Effective Tools for E-Learning in Higher Education: Theory into Practice" (R. Donnelly, Harvey, & O' Rourke, 2010). The title of the chapter was "The Student Perspective: Can the use of technologies transform learning?" In March 2010 this survey was conducted in the School of Computer Science and Statistics, Trinity College Dublin (TCD). The datasets collected in both surveys were analysed and comparisons of the findings presented.



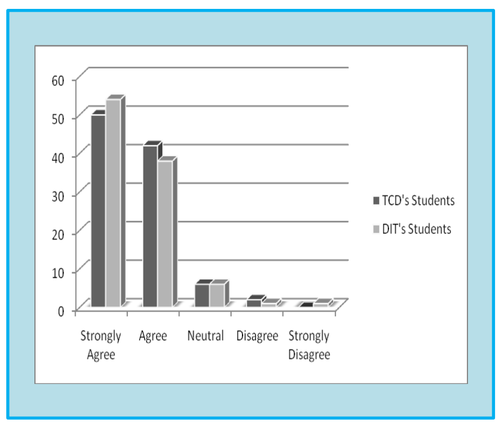
Research undertaken in the DIT

- Chapter 16 contains the views of 160 students from the DIT on "Can the use of Technologies transform learning"
- Published by IGI Global in June 2010

Objective:

To provide educators/learning designers with a selection of quantitative and qualitative data gathered from 160 students in both the DIT and TCD.

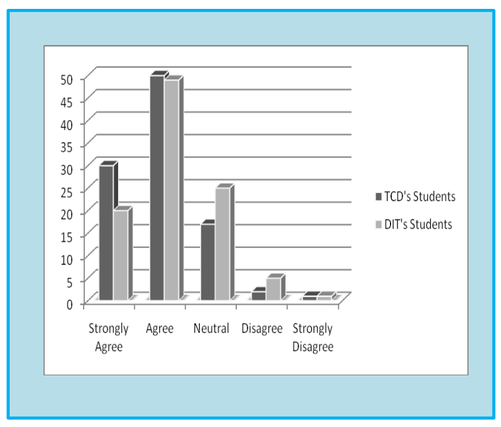
"Developing an e-learning course demands a range of contributions: subject, technical, design and resource expertise" (Connolly, Jones, & Jones, 2007, p. 164).



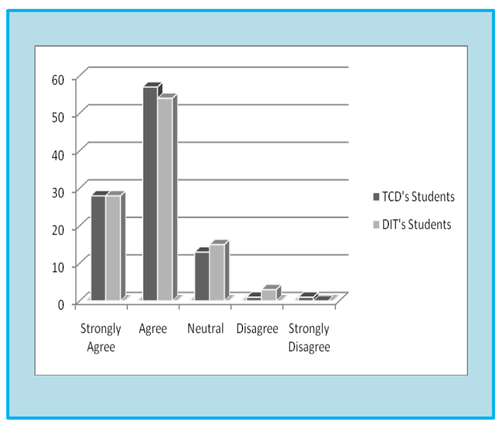
Positive difference to studying

Methodology

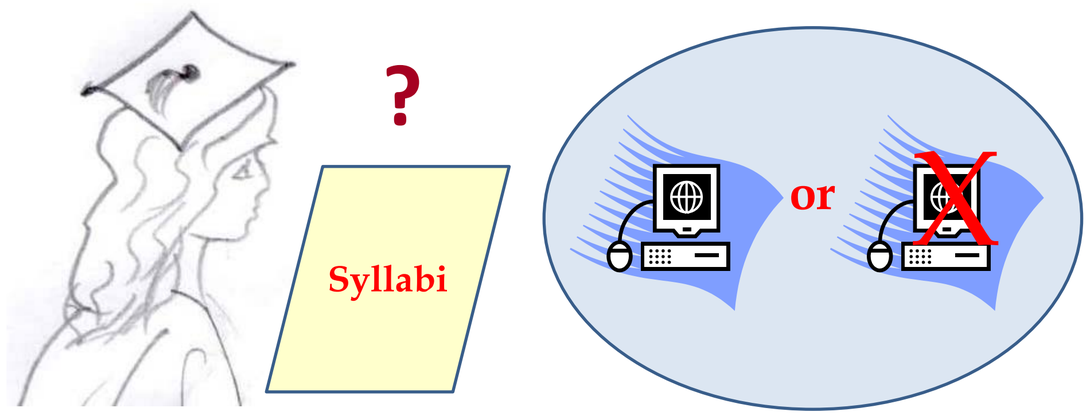
An evaluation of current literature was performed to identify key attributes to be explored. From these attributes statements were devised to seek student perspectives regarding the issues identified. A survey was compiled to ascertain students' perspectives on the concept that the use of technology in Higher Education has the ability to transform learning. Permission was sought and granted from the Research Ethical Clearance Committees in both the Dublin Institute of Technology and Trinity College Dublin to conduct this research.

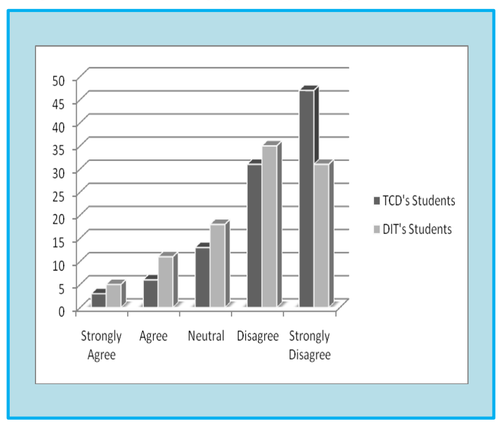


Using technology to augment lectures

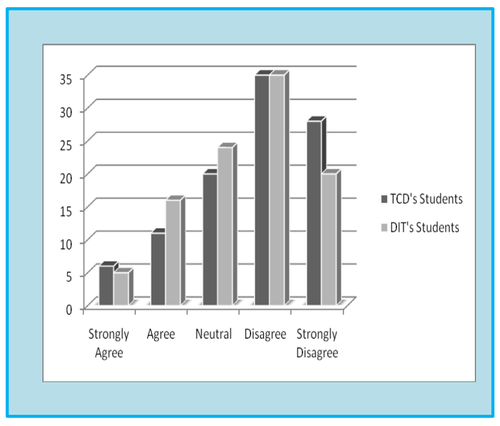


Enhances the learning experience of students



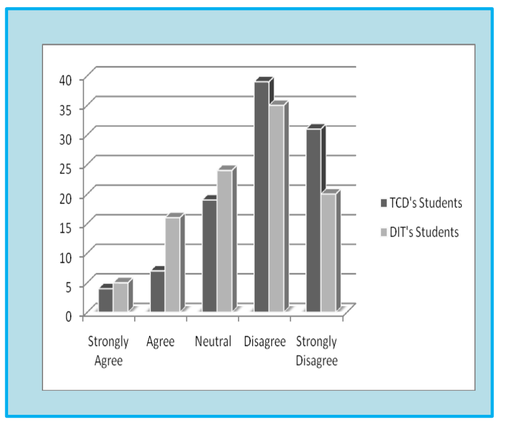


Technology will make lecturers disposable

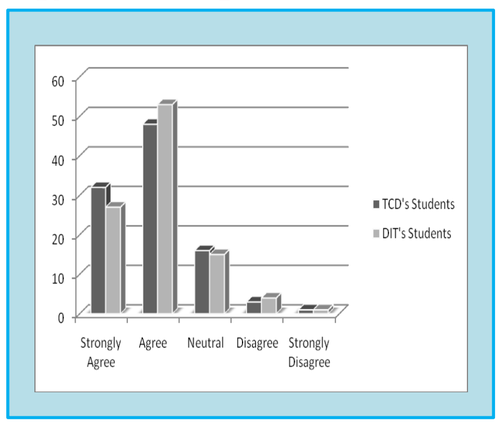


Technology could replace interaction with lecturers

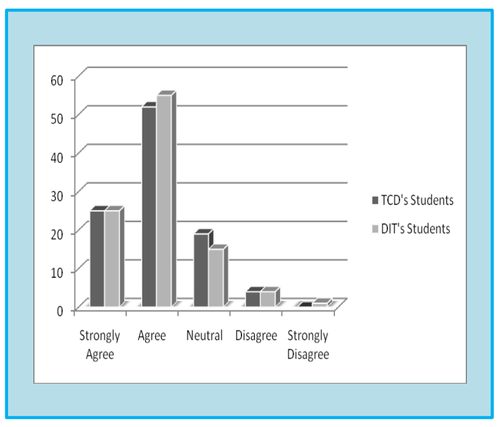
What use of technology has the most beneficial impact on student learning?	Number of students	
	DIT	TCD
Online lecture notes/podcasts/video casts/e-learning	40	65
Ability to access a large selection of information	20	12
Access to academic journals/databases/books/ library	13	6
Internet access	12	7
No time constraints, access anytime day or night	5	1



Technology could replace interaction with peers



Increased satisfaction with course



Improves student engagement

Conclusion:

The statistics outlined in this research indicate that even though students expect technologies to be used in higher education, they realise that lecturers form the backbone of third level education, and while technologies can effectively be used to enhance the students' learning experience, the use of technologies in higher education will never replace the lecturers.

Acknowledgements:

The co-operation received from students of the Faculty of Business, Dublin Institute of Technology, and also from students of the School of Computer Science and Statistics, Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, Trinity College Dublin, who gave their time so graciously to complete surveys. Their involvement in this study was paramount and we are deeply indebted.

References:

1. Donnelly, R., Harvey, J., & O' Rourke, K. (Eds.). (2010). Critical Design and Effective Tools for E-Learning in Higher Education: Theory into Practice. Hershey, Pennsylvania.: IGI Global.
2. Connolly, M., Jones, C., & Jones, N. (2007). 'Managing collaboration across further and higher education: a cause in practice'. Journal of Further and Higher Education, 31(2), 159-169.