



[ONLINE LEARNING SYSTEM FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS]

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Table of Contents

Research Topic	2
Introduction/Research Background	2
Objective	2
Methodology	3
Channel Used	4
Screening Criteria	4
Sampling	4
Finding and Discussion	5
Recommendations & Action Items:	6
Conclusion	6
Appendix	8
References	9

Research Topic

How international students deal with existing VU Collaborate application and their valuable inputs help to improve the online learning system.

Introduction/Research Background

The online learning system is the method to deliver the lessons using technologies such as videos, learning management systems, digital media, etc. those are available on the internet but it is more than that. The online learning system is important for learners as it should provide students to be effective, easy to understand, and interactive content to get an engaging learning experience. It allows students to participate in creating prototyping or learning through games helps them to real-time experience. In modern days, the demand for online education is gaining more popularity, colleges and universities are exploring more and more mechanisms to provide a better alternative to classroom studies. The online learning system may benefit certain types of courses but executing for every course may deterrent to other students[Dumford and Miller, 2018].

This report is based on understanding the challenges faced by international students and their expectations with the current online learning system VU Collaborate. The purpose of this study was to figure out the expectation of international students and gaining more insights to help to design an efficient platform. The result of the study shows that further areas of research and input from students help to design a better online system [Alexander et al., 2012].

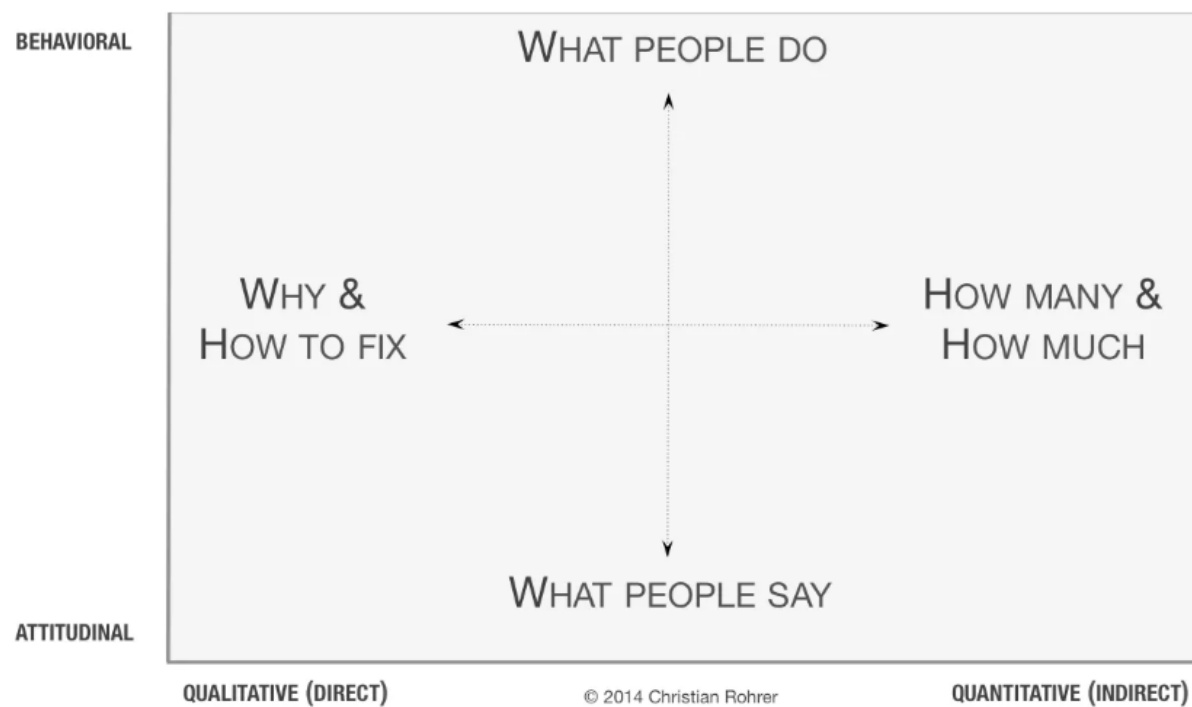
Objective

The objective of the usability testing report is to build an outstanding experience that demands the composition of user needs and frustration. The study aims to analyze the gap between the existing online VU collaborate portal and the requirement of the current international students. The Usability Testing Report is the key document that consists of a quantitative approach to get more insights on what users are experiencing using the "VU Collaborative" [Quantitative vs. Qualitative Usability Testing, 2020]. Utilizing the report information helps the product designing team to enhance the functionality and usability of the online application [Conyer, M., 1995]. Additionally, the major objective of the report is to absorb the expansion of technologies and mobile devices used to provide the best experience to all across the platform.

Methodology

Usability testing has developed numerous techniques to collect user information from behavioral and attitudinal to qualitative and quantitative. In this report, I've adopted Quantitative research as it requires a small number of participants and considered to be the most affordable technique. Quantitative data represents the participant's perceptions of usability that can be based upon the user's experience with the product and measured in numbers such as 'how many, how often and how much'. The quantitative data is easy to gather, reveal fast results and less prone to human bias [User Research: a comprehensive guide to quantitative and qualitative UX research methods, 2020].

As stated above, quantitative methods measured in numbers and shows results in "how many" and "how much" whereas qualitative methods are answering questions such as "why" and "how" [Quantitative User Testing Methods | Usability Testing, 2020].



I've conducted in-person testing with two Victoria University currently enrolled students and randomly interviewed both of them about existing VU Collaborate application. The main goal was to conduct the face to face interview is to get extra data points such as observe the user's facial expression and analyze body language. The usability testing report is a key

document to outline some of the existing methods to create a new methodology called C.A.R.E (cheap, accurate, reliable, efficient testing) [Anandhan, A., 2006]. As a result, such techniques helps the organization to gain in-depth knowledge about design issues and challenges faced by the students using existing VU Collaborate application.

Channels Used:

- Skype Interview
- In-person Interview
- Otter

Screening Criteria :

- Participants who are currently enrolled at Victoria University.
- Participants who are between the ages of 22-40.
- International Students only.
- University students, graduates or higher education levels.

Sampling

The standard number of users required for usability testing is 3 to 5. A maximum number of information discovered with the first few samples and the rest of the additional sets of samples doesn't expose any new information [Turner, C.W., 2006]. In our usability report, we've decided to keep a small sample size to get maximized return of investment and mainly focus on participant characteristics like interest, age, and tasks. We randomly interviewed two participants who are current students at Victoria University and pursuing the Masters of Digital Media. The main objective of such a sample size is to detect the usability issues with VU Collaborate and compare with other groups in the class to get more insights about VU Collaborate and recognize the need of international students.

Participants Name	Age	Gender	Education	Employment Status
Setareh Rasouli	35	Female	Masters(First Semester)	Freelancer
Tanay Akgul	24	Female	Masters(First Semester)	N/A

Finding and Discussion

The next step is to analyze the testing data collected from the interviews or organize the findings, looking for patterns and identifying the common issues. The purpose of usability testing reports is to understand the needs of international students with an online portal and the collected data suggested that 100% of the Victoria University students wanted a redesign of the VU Collaborate application and improve the functionality of the application. Also, the data indicates that the initial few days students are finding the application complicated and hard to navigate the relevant information due to the bad organization of the content.

Usability testing reports identified the challenges faced by the students with VU Collaborate. There are features like help guides, training & support, etc are available on the online portal but users are unable to locate them and also found the application inefficient. However, both the students believed that uploaded recordings of classroom sessions help them to understand the assignment better and recommended a webinar or session for the betterment of the international students before starting the semester.

The usability report will play an important role to create a better UX experience for the VU Collaborate users with the help of the feedback received from the participants. This ensures an upcoming update of VU Collaborate can achieve specific goals effectively and efficiently, which results in overall satisfaction and success. This usability report is a combination of many factors and following are goals that the product team will target to achieve:

- The intuitive design of the new VU Collaborates application.
- To ease the problem of online learning, new functionality will be built.
- The efficiency of use.
- Built search capability.
- User Satisfaction.

Recommendations & Action Items:

- The overall site design should be enhanced and simplified. The usage of icons increases usability, readability and attracts users to perform any action. For instance, the known 3-line hamburger icon, icons are easy to recognize and not require to translate for international users, toolbars and palettes icons are compact and save space, etc [Icon Usability, 2020].
- In modern days, we spent most of our time chatting on different chatbots (whats app, messenger, etc.) and developing unique, beautiful interface and interactive chatbot increase the usability of application [Parallel Chat — UI/UX case study of a new chat interaction, 2020].
- The study shows the human mind can process the images that the eye sees for as little as 13 milliseconds [Anne Trafton, 2020] and the effective use of interactive videos and images helps to improve the user's experience and hold them for a little longer.
- Reading the information on a screen is hard for most readers, it would be a great idea if we publish important content on the portal and other we can organize using the "Read More" links or each unit should have a folder structure to organize the study materials and content efficiently.
- The effective and user-friendly site search experiences tend to increase the usability of the application. By offering a better search design and search filters help the users to get more streamlined content.

Conclusion

The online learning system is the demand of the modern era and becoming popular between students at a rapid pace. The usability testing discovered some important information or feedback from the participants that help the design team to better understand the usability of an existing online portal and user's expectation with future app development. The report indicates that the participants experienced the existing VU Collaborate application is not intuitive and well organized and recommended to redesign the entire application. Also, the testing report pointed out how participants are facing difficulty to navigate the desired information on the learning space. However, recorded videos on the application help the international students to recall the classroom discussion.

To conclude, all the valuable inputs provided by the participants help the university to take advantage of improving the existing application and deliver better user experience for VU Collaborate users.

APPENDIX – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Share your experience using the VU Collaborate?
2. Do you find VU Collaborate is interactive and well design?
3. How efficient is it to find the information you needed using the VU Collaborate?
4. What is your understanding as an International student when you talk about using help guides, training, and support, digital media support on VU Collaborate?
5. How effective was the information in helping you to complete the tasks and assignments?
6. How do you describe the organization of information on the online portal?
7. What are your thoughts about the functionality and capability provided by the online portal?
8. How effective are the lectures recorded videos and does it help to understand the assignment better?
9. What is the recommended training for the betterment of international students before using the VU Collaborate?
10. What are the features do you suggest that should be the part of upcoming updates?

Note : Submitted the evidence of interviews in the recorded audio file.

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