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13 **A Study On Alternative Strategies For Sharing Lecture Notes Using A VLE To Promote In-class Participation.**

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The use of Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) has become popular over the last ten years at third level institutions. At the National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM) the Moodle VLE is used to disseminate lecture notes, share course related resources, perform assessment, and provide a means for online communication. This paper is interested in how to effectively use a VLE to disseminate lecture notes. At NUIM lectures notes are typically posted on Moodle before a lecture (for example, all notes posted at the start of the semester or several days before an upcoming lecture etc.) or after a lecture with lecturers having a personal preference for a particular method. In this paper a pilot study on the dissemination of lectures notes through Moodle to a large first year undergraduate class is described in this paper. In previous years student disengagement in this class has been an issue. As such two different approaches were trialed. In the first approach, a summary set of lecture notes to be covered at the next lecture were made available four days in advance. The summary was a one-page document containing at most six slides of the most important material in the lecture. The students were encouraged to read the notes in advance. It was hoped that this would lead to more active participation by the students as they had time to assimilate the material prior to the lecture. In the second approach the students were informed in advance that an in-class assessment would be carried out based on the summary. In both instances a full set of notes were made available on Moodle after the lecture. An overview of the findings of this pilot is presented, including data on student participation during both approaches. In addition, a critique of the potential effects on student results is provided and recommendations based on the findings are discussed.

Keywords: Student Engagement, Large Classes, Lectures, VLE.

14 Student Work Placement: Friend Or Foe? A Study Of The Perceptions Of University Students On Industrial Work Placement.

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At the National University of Ireland Maynooth, Computer Science and Software Engineering students are required to undertake an industrial work placement module as part of their course. The work placement is typically six to eighteen months long and takes place in the penultimate year of the degree. This paper evaluates students' perception of the quality of the learning experience they received through work placement. The voice of many key players involved in the process is captured, including, the students themselves, members of the academic department and the Industrial Work Placement Office; and importantly this paper is authored by representatives of each of these groups. In particular, the paper evaluates the types of preparations students make prior to commencing a placement, the transferable skills acquired and improved during their placement, and student perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of their placement. A mixed data acquisition model is used for gathering data including questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. The gathered data is analysed and a critique on the findings is presented. The paper concludes with recommendations and considerations for any institution that is interested in offering an industrial work placement component.

Keywords: Work placement, student perceptions, soft skills, technical skills.