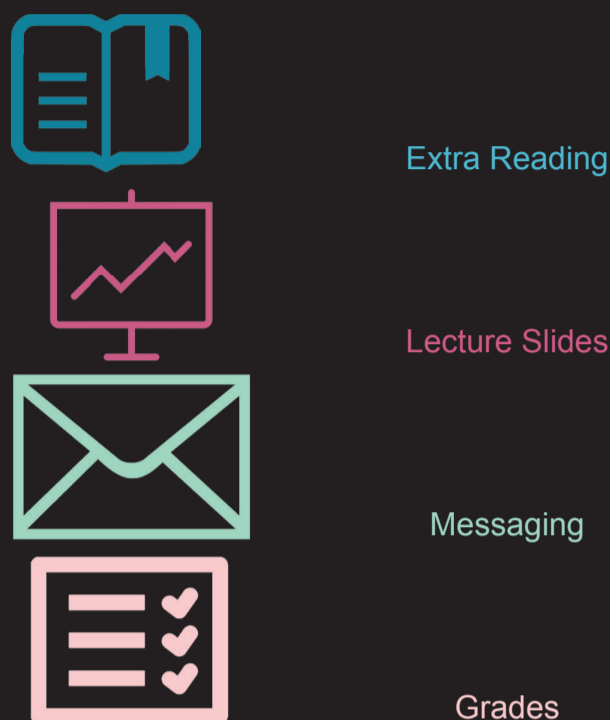


# DO VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS GUARANTEE PEDAGOGICAL EFFECTS?

We decided to base our active research inquiry on Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) with a focus on the VLE used by the university; Blackboard. We began with looking at some theory and studies in the field and found that there was a lack of recent studies within the field and that it may be interesting to conduct our own. We focused our study within the final year class group of Bsc Interactive Media and Ulster University. Our aim was to discover what worked best for students within the Blackboard platform in regards to; the layout and content uploaded onto Blackboard. We researched how this content impacted the students surveyed grades and engagement with the module via Blackboard. We carried out a qualitative survey using the re test method, quantitative focus group and a kinetic survey in order to collect our data. The major comparison, that we predicted the med 315 module to be the best Blackboard space because it was posted in digestible sized amounts but the results concluded that the majority of students in fact preferred the layout and amount of content from med 329 which we felt should have intimidated them, this result came forward in all three tests we conducted. Our conclusion on this study is that students like to have access to a lot of extra information from the beginning of a given module, they like as many sources as possible to be available to them online and this content to be organised into folders. We learned in the focus group that students would like to be able to access a recording of lectures on their blackboard.

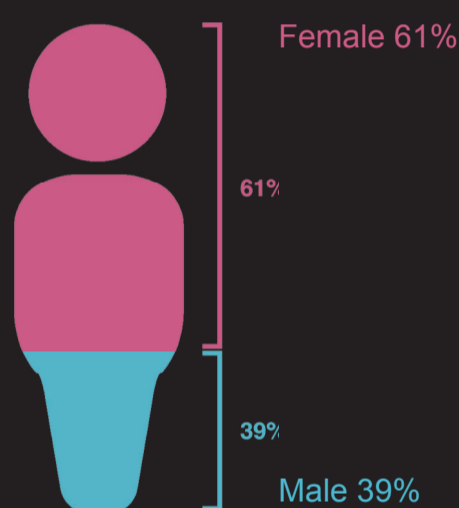
## 1. WHAT IS A VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?

A virtual learning environment (VLE) is a web-based platform for the digital aspects of courses of study, usually within educational institutions. They present resources, activities and interactions within a course structure and provide for the different stages of assessment.

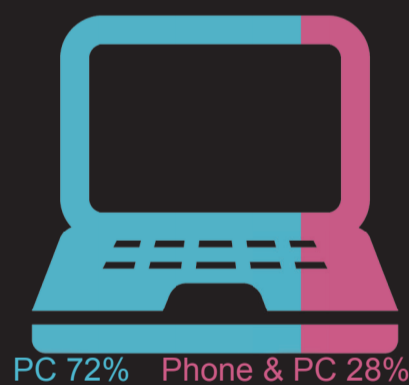


## 2. GENERAL STATISTICS

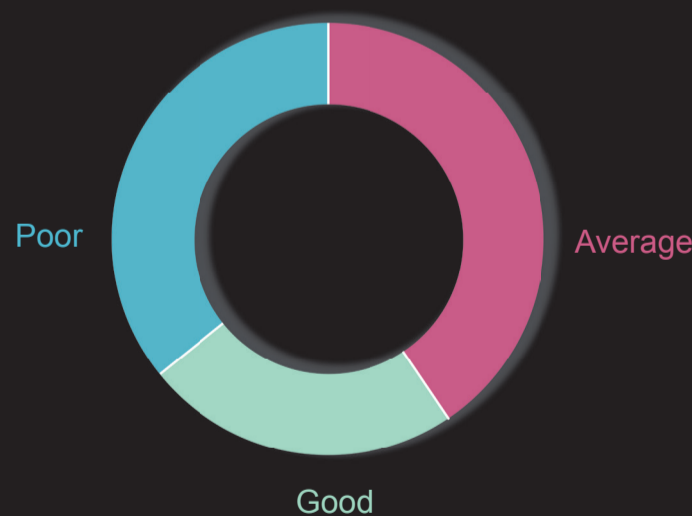
Gender



How Do You Access Blackboard?

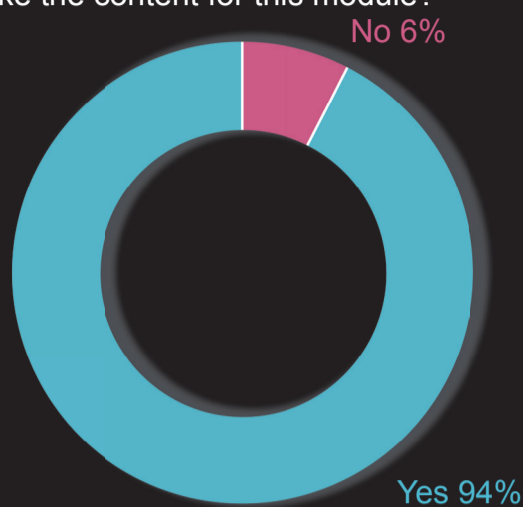


Overall Attendance

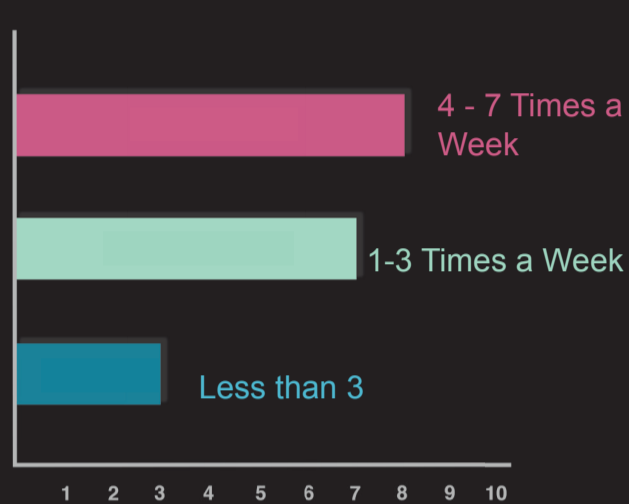


## 3. MED329 TRANSMEDIA AND EXPERIENCE DESIGN

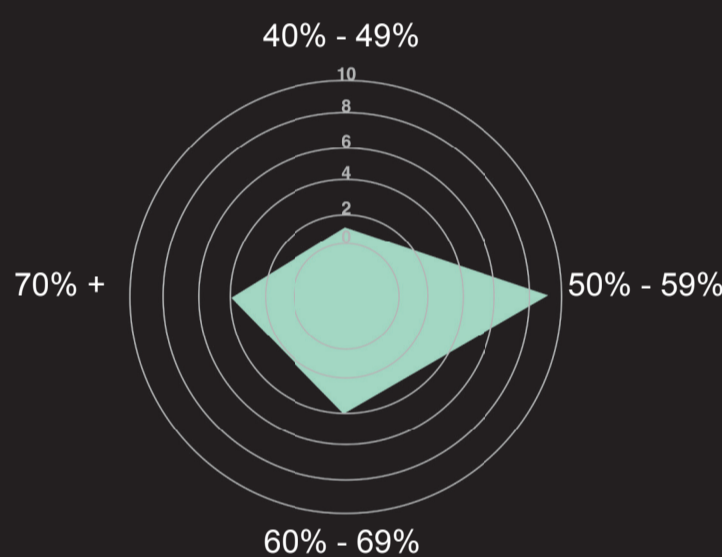
Did you like the content for this module?



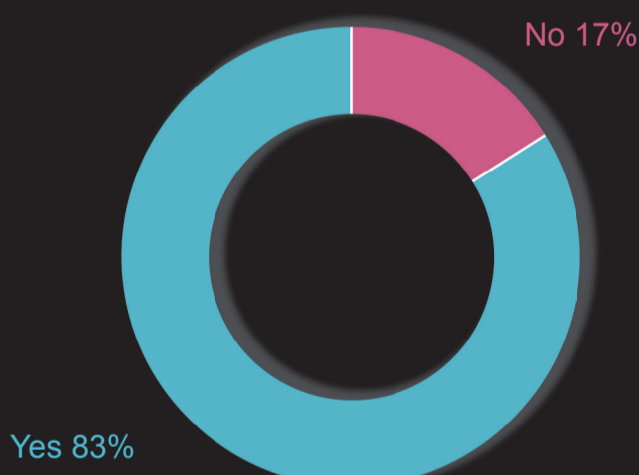
How often did you use visit blackboard for this content?



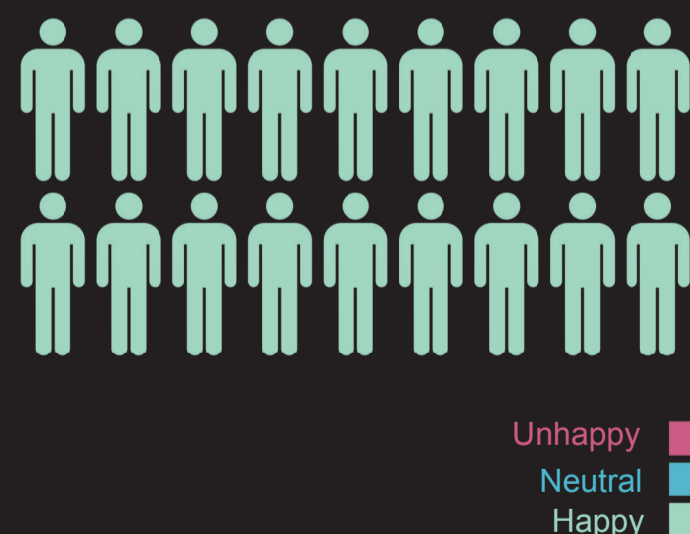
What grade did you achieve in this module?



Did you like the layout of the content?

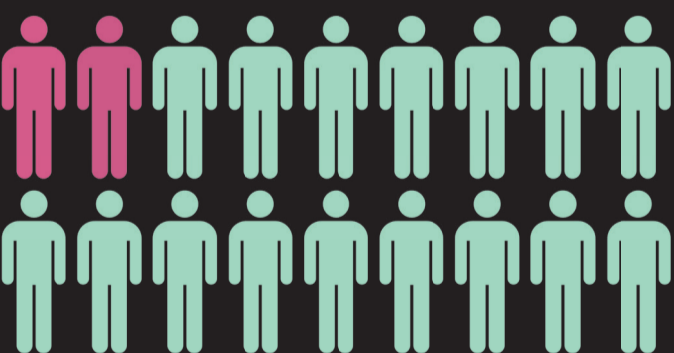
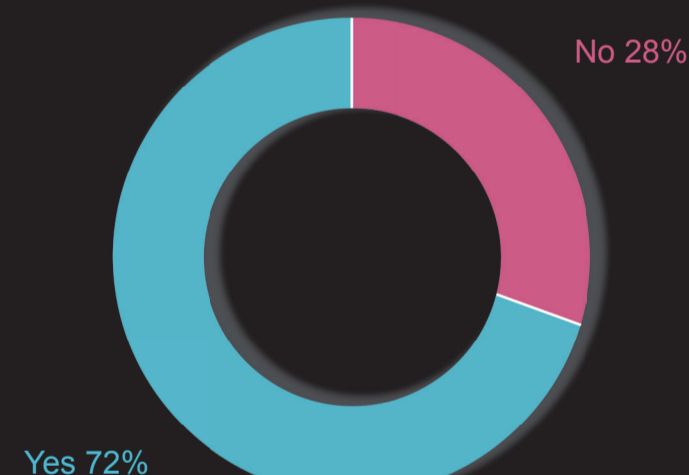
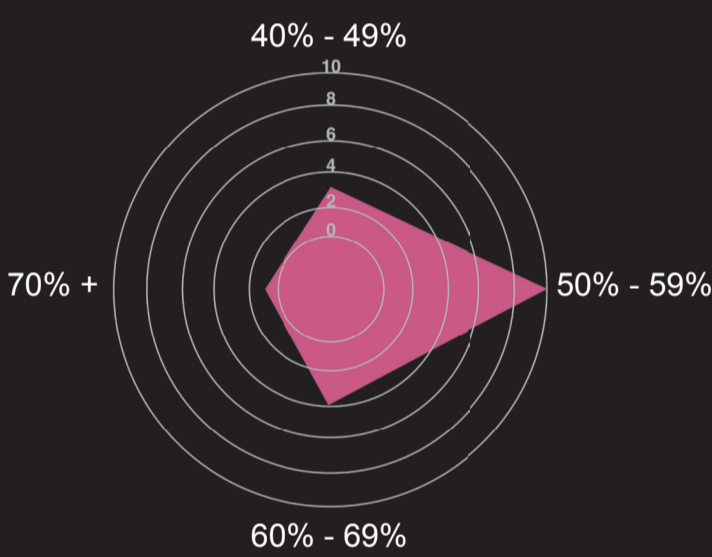
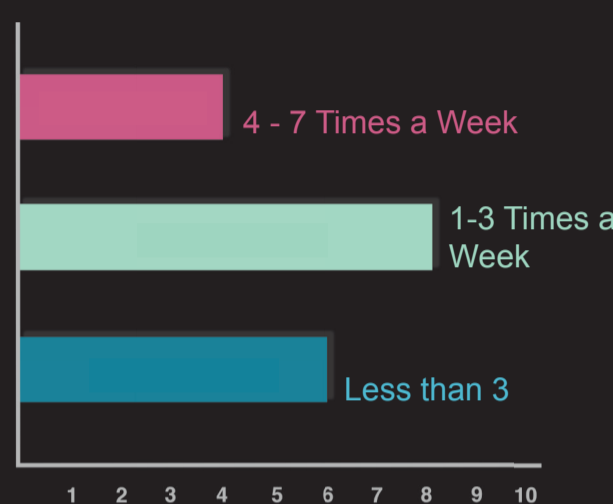
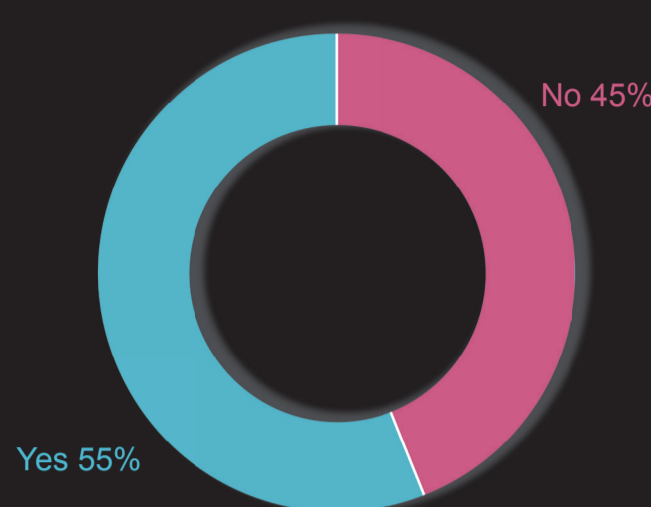


What was your overall feelings on the content?



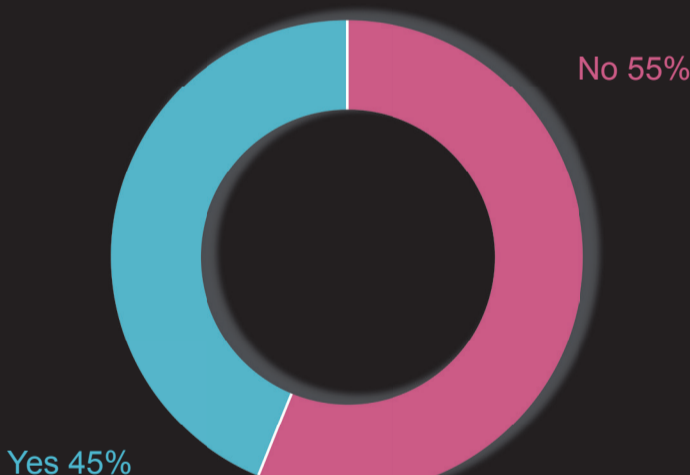
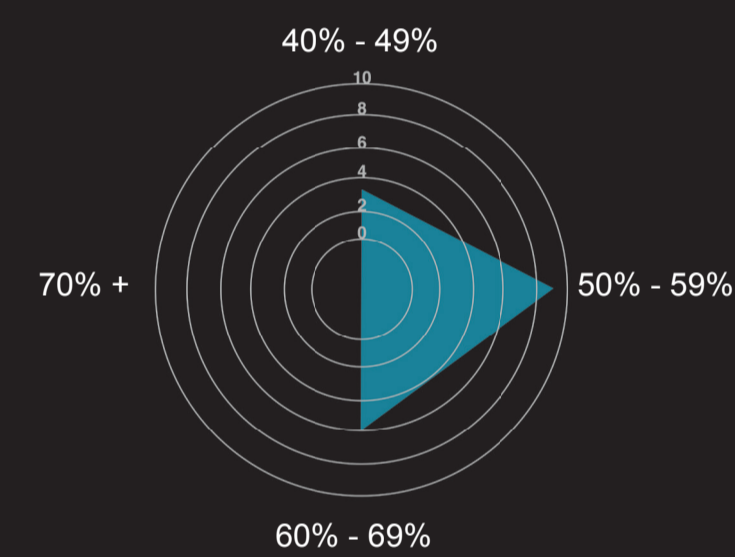
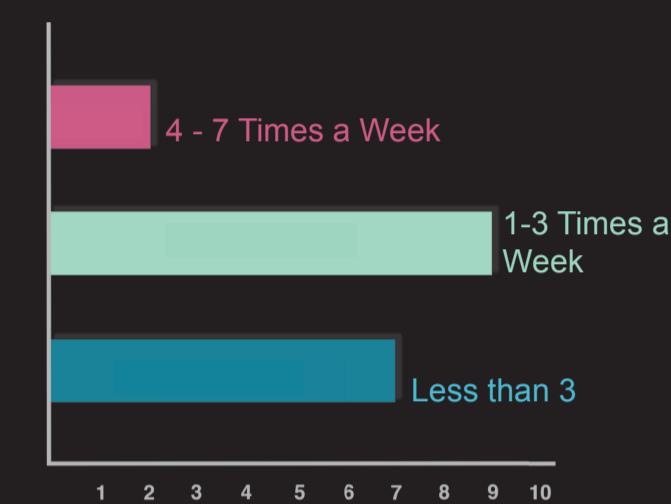
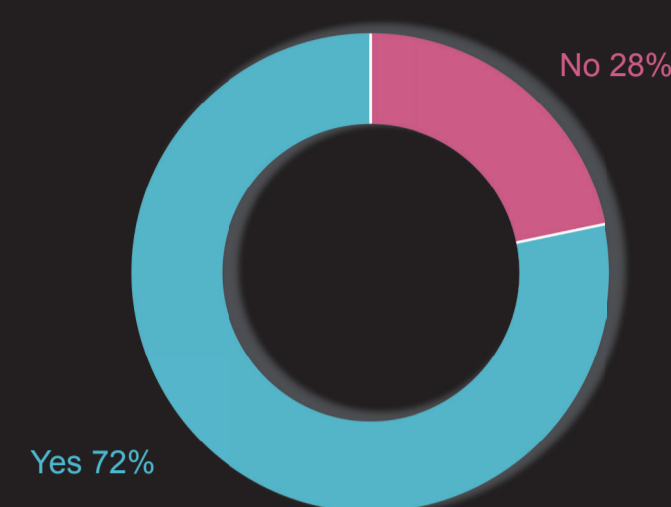
## 4. MED330 INTERACTIVE PROFESSIONAL CONTEXTS

Did you like the content for this module?



## 5. MED315 NARRATIVE AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA

Did you like the content for this module?



" I THINK THE MORE YOU USE IT, YOU GET A BETTER FOUNDATION FOR YOUR OVERALL GRADE."

## 6. FUTURE WORK

From the focus group we learned that students would like a recorded audio of their lectures available on their Blackboard space in order to listen back and reflect on what they learned in class and take any notes that they may have missed. If we were to carry out this experiment again; I think it would be good to make these audio lectures available for a period of 12 weeks and then retest the survey again to see how the students felt about the blackboard spaces in comparison to their grades they achieved.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The results of this study were not as we expected but it did bring about some interesting points. Students on this course like to have access to as much content as possible from week 1 and they want to see this content placed into folders. They use the blackboard space on average 1-3 times a week per module but as stipulated by the focus group this usage increases towards the end of a given module. Frequent blackboard usage has a connection with good results as all but one using blackboard 4-7 times a week showing that VLE usage in conjunction with class attendance had Pedagogical Effects.