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Lighting a fire or filling a pail? Users' perceptions of a Virtual Learning Environment.

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“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

W. B. Yeats

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The Context

Introduction

With wide spread use of the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and 97% approval by students (Papachristou, 2005) all must be well in the world of Swansea e-learning. However, this appears to contrast with the experience of much of UK higher education. As Salmon notes:

there is considerable evidence that most HEIs are still struggling to engage a significant percentage of students and staff in e-learning, and real development beyond projects by innovators has so far been modest.

(Salmon, 2005)

So is this utopian near unanimous approval true? Or does more lie below the surface of the headline figures?

This paper revisits the survey of 2005 to look more deeply at the perceptions of students and, in addition, those of staff in relation to the University's VLE. Are the perceptions of students as unanimously positive as previously suggested and how do they compare with the perceptions of staff users?

This leads us to three questions.

- What are users' experiences of the current delivery of e-learning though the University's VLE - Blackboard?
- What are users' expectations of an e-learning environment?
- Are there differences between the experiences and expectations of staff and student users?

VLE Implementations

Innovations in education often fail - in 70% of cases compared with 47% in the public sector in general and 30% in the private sector (Bolman & Deal, 1999; Borins, 2001). The introduction of a blended approach using a VLE can be more of a challenge to academic staff than a more traditional method. A recent report by the Institute of IT Training highlighted this point with a quote from Steve Clark, Chief Executive of IT training company Epic.

It's easy running a classroom course, you just put some time down, get people to turn up, when it's over they leave. But with other forms of blended learning you've got to sustain them over time.

(Charles, 2005)

Although somewhat tongue in cheek, Clark's comment does illustrate the point that any blended e-learning requires additional thinking, skills and resources in order for it to be successful.

Staff Support

One key element in successful implementations has been the provision of a comprehensive staff development and support structure that goes beyond a simple 'driving lesson' approach (Collis & Moonen, 2002). The 'driving lesson' approach, where training concentrates on a step by step guide to using the software, can lead to one of the main criticisms of e-learning; that it is often too technology oriented with the focus on providing the technology platform and ensuring participation rather than on the content of the learning itself (Xini

& Petropoulos, 2004). Simple knowledge of processes is not enough as learners need to choose which knowledge to use and when (Kennewell, 2003). In addition, in HEIs where the implementation of VLEs has not been as successful as anticipated, a key factor has been their use of technologists rather than teaching practitioners to deliver staff training (M.Bell & W.Bell, 2005). Furthermore, Bell & Bell (2005), in their successful VLE implementation, discovered the importance of a multi-disciplinary support team and a proactive approach in which they engaged in a range of methods to discover their 'customers' needs. They viewed their 'customers' as both students and staff; using questionnaires, helplines, focus groups and discussion groups in order to discover their needs and provide on-going support.

Student Engagement

Although there appears to be widespread use of the VLE; are students actively engaging with it and using it as a learning tool or is it just a convenient way of getting access to lecture notes? A recent study of student engagement at Nottingham University found that 'interest', 'enjoyment' and 'interaction' were key words when students were asked to define engagement in the context of learning (Charlton, Langmark, Peirce, & Sach, 2004). Students cited the method or quality of teaching and a lack of student confidence as constraints to effective engagement. Of all the teaching methods mentioned in the survey e-learning was seen by students as the least effective teaching method in promoting engagement. However, this is of course dependant on how e-learning was used within the University. Oxford Brookes University uses a three level 'Modes of Engagement' template to guide tutors through course creation (Francis & Raftery, 2005). The modes range from a basic level where tutors provide course information and administration, past exam papers, course handbooks, lecture notes, course evaluation tools, additional web resources, reading lists and FAQs, to a more advanced third level where communication, collaboration and reusable learning content are integral to the course.

The Oxford Brookes 'Mode 1', the VLE as a repository, is where many Universities now are (Salmon, 2005); high usage figures, impressive increases for requests for new courses but mainly focused on content delivery with little real student engagement and thus little real learning taking place. This is fine if the VLE is merely an additional tool provided at low cost but issues arise if it comes with a several thousand pounds a year price tag and a team of staff to run it. This is not to say that a VLE is not an important part of learning but that the challenge is not promoting uptake but facilitating effective implementation that is likely to affect student learning in significant ways (Sharpe, Benfield, & Francis, 2006).

Student and Staff Perceptions

It has been argued that student satisfaction is a key variable in the success or otherwise of e-learning courses (Bollinger & Martindalel, 2004). Students' perceptions of their departments and their teachers are shown to bring important influences to bear on their approaches to learning (Ramsden, 1979). Additionally Ramsden suggests that a student's perception of a particular learning task influences the level at which the task is tackled. Student evaluation of teaching is widely used in higher education and its accuracy and usefulness is well documented (Ramsden, 1991). In addition

research has shown that there is general agreement between staff and students on what constitutes good teaching in higher education (Marsh, 1987). Previous surveys within the University have examined the student use of the University's VLE and no formal examination of staff perceptions has been carried out, although informal consultation has taken place. Equally in the wider world, although research has been carried out into student perceptions of e-learning, staff perceptions of e-learning and comparing student and staff perceptions of learning in teaching in general, little research has been carried out which compares student and staff perceptions of e-learning in higher education.

Methodology

A survey of students and staff using two parallel questionnaires one for staff users and one for student users (Appendix 1 & 2) was used. The questionnaires address the same areas but from the two perspectives.

Two online questionnaires were compiled using Question Mark Perception and participants were sent an email explaining the research and including a link to the url to complete the appropriate questionnaire. The emails were sent using the 'All-Staff' and 'All-Students' mailing lists. In order to include those who would not wish to complete an online questionnaire, an rtf version of the questionnaire was attached to enable participants to either complete the questionnaire using a word processor of their choice and return by email or print it out and return it using the internal mail system.

Analysis

Student Survey

What are users' experiences of the current delivery of e-learning through Blackboard?

As can be seen in Fig. 5 overall 89% of those who used Blackboard during the academic year 2005/06 felt that it was at least acceptable. This is comparable to the 97% who answered "Yes" to the question "Do you find Blackboard to be a useful vehicle that should be maintained and used at UWS?" The more favourable response in the 2005 survey may be due to the leading nature of the question, which implies that if respondents answered "No" they would like the use of Blackboard to be discontinued.

As students increasingly come to the University having had growing use of information technology in their academic and everyday lives, it is interesting to compare how the University's web based delivery compares with major providers of web content used by students. Figs. 4 and 5 show this comparison with a selection of major websites. The University's provision compares favourably with around 90% regarding the University website and Blackboard as at least acceptable. However, this drops to 68.07% for the University website and 64% for Blackboard of respondents who regard them as 'Very Good' or 'Good' compared to 90% for the BBC, 97% for Google and 81% for MSN. This may be seen as an unfair comparison given the resources available to the BBC, Google and MSN. Nevertheless, these are the types of websites students have often had experience of and it is likely that such comparisons will be made by student users.

However, as with all websites, perceptions of how good they are depend on the quality of the user experience and content available. There is a variation in respondents' perceptions of the quality of their Blackboard modules, as Fig. 9 shows, with only 7% stating that all their modules are very good and 6% that all of their modules are of poor quality and the remaining 87% of students spread across the three further categories. The comments made by students also show this variation in quality with 29% of comments indicating that the quality of modules is dependant on the lecturers running the module.

When examining how students use the content on Blackboard some interesting themes emerge. 70% of students agree or strongly agree that the information on Blackboard allows them to go over lecture and seminar material (Fig. 12) and 75% that it is a useful addition to lectures and seminars (Fig. 20). 67% of students 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that the information on Blackboard helps with their revision (Fig. 22) and 72% that their main use of Blackboard is for lecture notes and PowerPoints (Fig. 26). However, only 39% 'Agree' or 'Agree Strongly' that the information on Blackboard helps them prepare for lectures (Fig. 25), 51% that it provides the information to pass exams (Fig. 10) and 52% that Blackboard is a vital part of their studies (Fig. 13).

This appears to indicate that while students like to have the lecture notes accessible online for later review and use them for revision, they are not using the VLE in preparation for lectures and don't generally see it's use as fully integrated into their learning but merely as a useful additional resource. This is very much the Level 1 Mode of Engagement of Francis & Rafferty (2005)

discussed earlier. This level of use of course depends on what material is made available to students by lecturers.

Reinforcing the view that respondents see Blackboard as a support to traditional forms of teaching are the 77% of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that using Blackboard is making them lazy about taking notes and attending lectures and 80% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that they use Blackboard instead of going to some lectures.

What are users' expectations of an e-learning environment?

The 'Wish List' section of the student questionnaire (Appendix 1) looked at student responses to a series of possible innovations. Overall the responses reinforce the view that students see the VLE as supporting traditional methods and not as a replacement. Fig. 27 shows 63% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with online classes replacing lectures seminars with only 22% in favour. Equally 68% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with having all the information they need on Blackboard so they don't need to go to lectures with only 15% in favour.

The various possible innovations were met with mixed responses. Four met with very favourable responses with over 70% of respondents in favour – formative assessment (Fig. 28), podcasting of lectures (Fig. 29), additional activities to reinforce lecture material (Fig. 30) and keeping an online record of work, essentially an e-portfolio (Fig. 36). The remaining innovations received more mixed responses and will require further research, apart from the issue of taking exams online where over 40% strongly disagreed and 72% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with only 12% in favour (Fig. 34).

Staff Survey

What are users' experiences of the current delivery of e-learning through Blackboard?

Fig. 46 shows that 95% of staff who used Blackboard during the academic year 2005/06 found it to be at least acceptable with only 5% regarding it as Poor or Very Poor. This compares favourably with the University web site (82% at least acceptable) MSN (86%) and the BBC and Google (both 100%). However, both MSN and My Space (42% at least acceptable) were not used by 63% and 84% respectively (Fig. 45).

Staff respondents generally feel that the quality of the content they provide is of acceptable quality with 92% stating that their Blackboard modules are 'Generally OK' or better and 37% regarding at least some of their modules as 'Very Good' (Fig 50).

Respondents feel strongly that Blackboard is a useful additional resource for students. Fig. 52 shows a majority of respondents disagreeing or disagreeing strongly that Blackboard adds little or nothing to the material they give in lectures and seminars. 84% of respondents 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that the information on Blackboard allows students to go over what has been presented in lectures and seminars (Fig. 53). Fig. 58 shows that 79% of respondents 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' that the information on Blackboard helps students with their revision and Fig. 59 indicates that respondents believe that the information on Blackboard helps students prepare for lectures with 66% Agreeing or Agreeing Strongly.

However, respondents do not feel that Blackboard provides all the information students require or that it should be seen as a replacement for traditional methods of course delivery. Less than 50% of respondents feel that Blackboard is a vital part of their teaching (Fig. 54) and only 35% feel that Blackboard provides the information that students need to pass exams. On the subject of Blackboard as a replacement for traditional methods of delivery feelings are even stronger. 79% of respondents 'Disagree' or 'Disagree Strongly' that they use Blackboard to replace some lectures (Fig. 62) and 84% 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with having all the information students need on Blackboard so that they don't need to go to lectures and seminars (Fig. 74). However, 34% of respondents would like to use online classes to replace some lectures and seminars (Fig. 38).

What are users' expectations of an e-learning environment?

When examining the 'Wish List' section of the questionnaire one should bear in mind the exposure respondents have had to the technology discussed. Fig. 45 gives an indication of this exposure; although by no means exhaustive. Although over 90% have used the web sites and search engine mentioned, far fewer have used the more 'interactive' sites – only 16% of respondents have used My Space and 36% have used MSN.

The wish list section of the staff questionnaire provides some interesting themes as well as some possible contradictions. Respondents' opinions are split on whether technology should replace traditional lectures and seminars: while 49% of respondents 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with replacing some lectures and seminars with online classes, 35% 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree' (Fig. 68). However, when asked whether they would like to have all the information students need on the VLE so that they don't have to go to lectures 84% of respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly, with nobody in strong agreement with the statement (Fig. 74). Thus whilst there is strong opposition to complete replacement of lectures, there appear to be some staff who, by using technology, may wish to reduce but not remove their lecture/seminar workload. There is strong support for formative assessment (Fig. 69), providing additional materials to reinforce lecture and seminar materials and for students uploading their assignments to the VLE (Fig. 72). Other areas are more mixed such as Podcasts (Fig. 34) and videos of lectures (Fig. 73). One area where the use of technology was not strongly supported was taking exams online with only 14% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing to this (Fig. 75). However, a significant percentage, 31%, 'neither agreed nor disagreed', indicating that perhaps more information on this area is required by academic staff in order for an informed choice to be made.

Another interesting point of note is the number of staff respondents who would like to keep an e-portfolio. While the general push of e-portfolios has been towards student use, just under 50% of staff respondents would like to keep an online record of their work at the University. If academic staff can be engaged in using new technology from *'the other side of the electronic whiteboard'* as it were, the chances of them being able to effectively use it in their teaching are likely to increase.

Comparison of Student & Staff Surveys

Are there differences between the expectations and experiences of staff and student users?

The frequency of VLE use by student and staff respondents is broadly similar with a large majority accessing the VLE at least once a week during term time (Fig. 82). However, there are some differences with where the VLE is accessed from (Fig. 83). Whilst similar numbers of both student and staff respondents mainly use a combination of on and off campus access, there is a difference in the total off campus use, with over two thirds of student respondents accessing the VLE off campus compared with just under half of staff respondents. Interestingly, this means that just over half the staff respondents and almost a third of student respondents generally don't access the VLE off campus. Whether this is down to how users define on campus or that the ability to access the VLE anywhere is not important to a significant number of users requires further investigation.

When examining respondents' attitudes to the current VLE, a number of the responses of staff and students were broadly similar:

- using the VLE to go over material presented in lectures and seminars
- the VLE being a useful addition to lectures and seminars
- the VLE helping with revision
- the VLE being easy to use
- mainly using the VLE for lecture notes and PowerPoints
- that the VLE does not generally replace lectures and seminars

However, there are a number of areas where student and staff respondents' views differ significantly.

While nearly all staff know where to get help if they have problems with the VLE almost half of the student respondents didn't know where to get help (Fig. 94). This could be due to that fact that while staff may generally require technical help students may in addition need help in where to find content within the VLE modules. This is an area which requires further investigation.

Over three quarters of student respondents do not agree that using the VLE makes students lazy about taking notes and attending lectures (Fig. 91). However, only just over half of staff respondents believe that the VLE is not making students lazy.

The proposition that using the VLE helps students prepare for lectures also show a divergence of opinion with 65% of staff responding that it does compared with less than 40% of students (Fig. 100).

The use of audio and video (podcasts and vodcasts) also shows differences. Around two thirds of student respondents would like podcast of lectures compared with less than a third of staff respondents. (Fig's. 104 & 107). There are almost identical responses to the question of vodcasts, although slightly fewer staff are in favour.

Conclusions

Firstly it must be acknowledged that use of a Virtual Learning Environment is seen as important by both students and staff and that students generally do not see it as a replacement for traditional lectures and seminars. However, whilst it is seen as important it is not yet fully integrated into learning and teaching in the sense of Francis and Raftery's (2005) Mode's of Engagement. The push should now be to moving towards their 'Level 3' engagement where a wide variety of tools are embedded in the University's learning and teaching.

Much of the push towards greater integration and engagement could be facilitated by more innovative staff training. In line with Collis and Moonen's arguments (2002) there is a need to move away from the technologist led driving lesson method to a more wide ranging staff development programme. Additionally, a broadening of the community of e-learning practitioners within the University, to include academics and librarians in both delivery and staff development, will also assist this greater integration. Such staff development could include concepts of e-learning, planning e-learning, web 2.0 tools, e-portfolios, supporting and engaging students as well as working with staff as they plan modules from scratch.

Additionally, as Bell and Bell (2005) discovered it is important to keep in continual contact with both students and staff in order to discover their needs and provide on-going support through questionnaires, helplines, focus groups and discussion groups.

As well as working with users it is also important to work with non-users and very low level users to find out why they are not using the VLE. What are the barriers that keep them from using the VLE? Are they issues of access, inclination or opportunity?

There are also a number of questions that have been raised that require further research to answer.

- Although the results show some interesting information about where users access the VLE, more precise information is required about where and when are students accessing the VLE? Are they using it 24 hours a day 7 days a week? Do they generally access from home, on University PCs or from work? All of these issues have implications for the type and level of support provided.
- When students and staff compare the VLE unfavourably with other websites is it due to the application, the content or a mixture of the two? Are they questions of functionality or design?
- The question of online assessment is holy grail for some with instant results and no marking but appears to get the thumbs down from students and to a lesser extent from staff. Why is this so? Is it the perceived unreliability of the technology? Do students not want to type in exams? Or is it some other reason?
- Students are often unsure where to go for help. Again is this due to the application, the content or a mixture of the two?

The ground work is currently being laid to achieve much of the move towards greater integration and engagement through the revised University E-Learning Strategy but it is important that the impending reconfiguration bid does not

aversely affect this. In the past e-learning has been technology led but the move is now towards e-learning being led by learning and teaching requirements and supported by appropriate technology. However, with the large amount of time, effort and money involved in the bid we must be careful to avoid slipping back to a situation where implementing the technology becomes more important than the learning it is intended to support.

Results

Student Survey

The student survey ran from 19th June to 7th July 2006. A total of 909 students responded to the survey.

Personal Information

Fig. 1 – Age of Respondents

Under 18	0.00%
18-25	85.57%
25-35	9.69%
36-45	3.08%
Over 45	1.65%

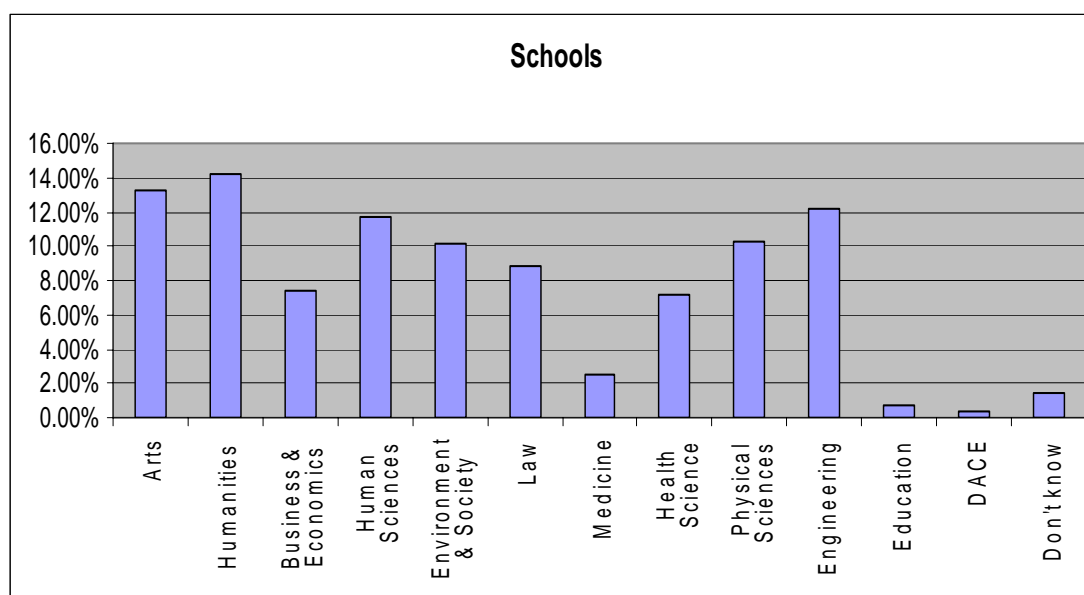
97% of respondents were full-time with 3% part-time.

86% of respondents were undergraduates, 13% post-graduates and 0.5% on non-degree courses. The remaining 0.5% were unsure of the level of their course.

Fig. 2 – Year of Study

1	44.53%
2	29.50%
3	19.01%
4	5.30%
5 or more	1.66%

Fig. 3 – Respondents' Schools



VLE and Other Websites

Fig. 4 – Comparison of Websites

	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Use
University Site	11.72%	56.20%	23.32%	6.86%	1.71%	0.23%
BBC	40.73%	40.50%	8.19%	0.57%	0.11%	9.90%
Blackboard	16.93%	45.00%	25.00%	7.27%	3.18%	2.61%
Google	67.73%	27.94%	2.96%	0.23%	0.11%	1.03%
MSN	32.88%	41.30%	15.02%	1.48%	1.14%	8.19%
My Space	12.64%	23.01%	14.69%	3.42%	1.59%	44.65%

Fig. 5 – Comparison of Websites: Composite (Excluding “Don't Use”)

	Very Good/Good	At Least Acceptable	Acceptable or worse	Poor/Very Poor
University Site	68.07%	91.45%	31.93%	8.55%
BBC	90.15%	99.24%	9.85%	0.76%
Blackboard	63.59%	89.26%	36.41%	10.74%
Google	96.66%	99.65%	3.34%	0.35%
MSN	80.79%	97.15%	19.21%	2.85%
My Space	64.40%	90.95%	35.60%	9.05%

Fig. 6 – Ranking of Websites in order visited

	Ranked First	Mode
University Website	22.35%	1st – 22.35%
Other	15.19%	7th – 24.05%
Search Engine	15.15%	1st – 18.24%
Blackboard	15.00%	3rd – 17.79%
Email	14.40%	4th – 18.76%
Chat/Phone	13.72%	2nd – 17.37%
News Sites	11.88%	2nd – 17.48%

Current VLE Use

Fig. 7 – Frequency of Blackboard Use in Term Time

Everyday	13.54%
A couple of times a week	43.29%
Once a week	18.10%
Every few weeks	15.70%
Less than once a month	9.37%

Fig. 8 – Location of Blackboard Use

On-campus	24.43%
Off-campus	28.73%
A combination of on and off campus	46.84%

Fig. 9 – Quality of Blackboard Modules

All of my Blackboard modules are very good	7.24%
Some of my Blackboard modules are very good	35.45%
My Blackboard modules are generally OK	20.08%
Some of my Blackboard modules are OK but others are not very good	31.51%
All of my modules are of poor quality	5.72%

Fig. 10 – Blackboard provides the information I need to pass exams.

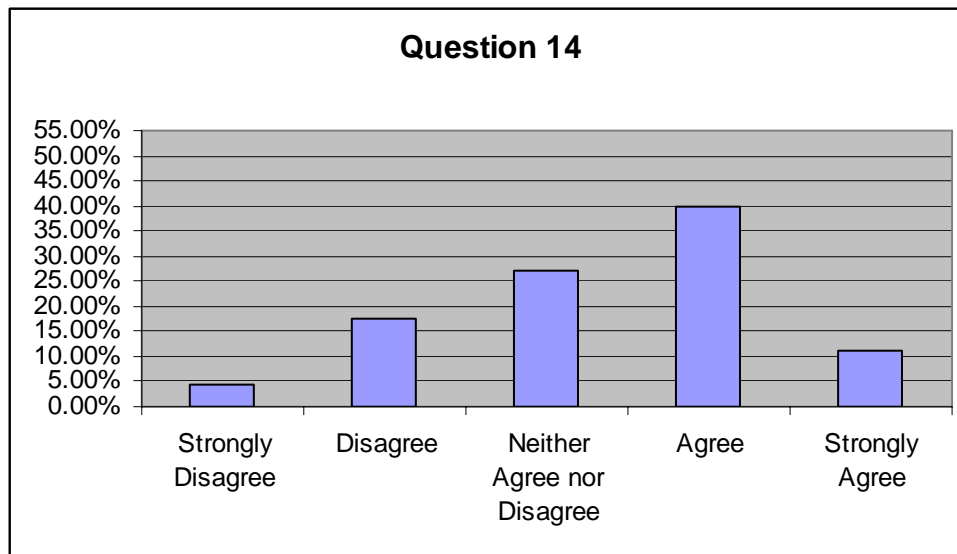


Fig. 11 – Blackboard adds little or nothing to the material I receive in lectures and seminars.

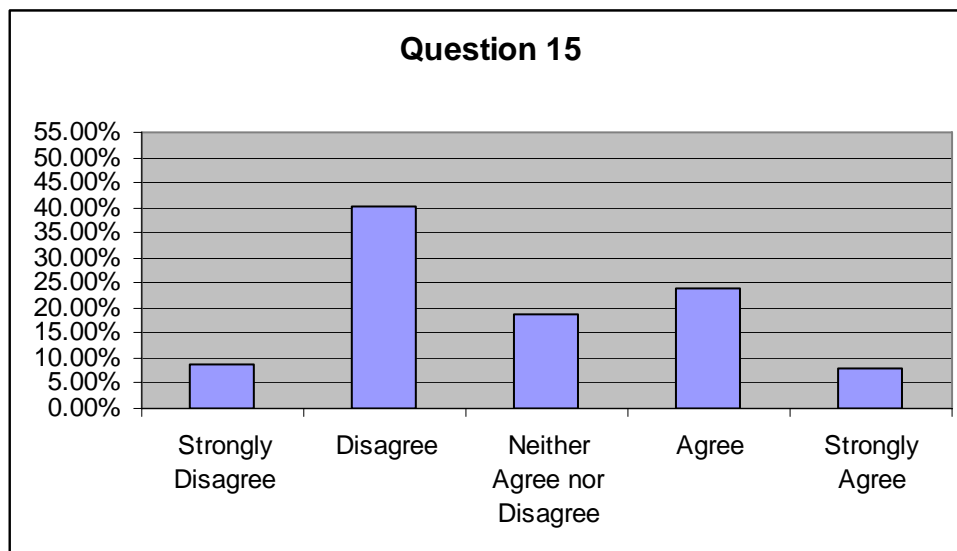


Fig. 12 – I can go over what has been presented in lectures and seminars by using the information on Blackboard.

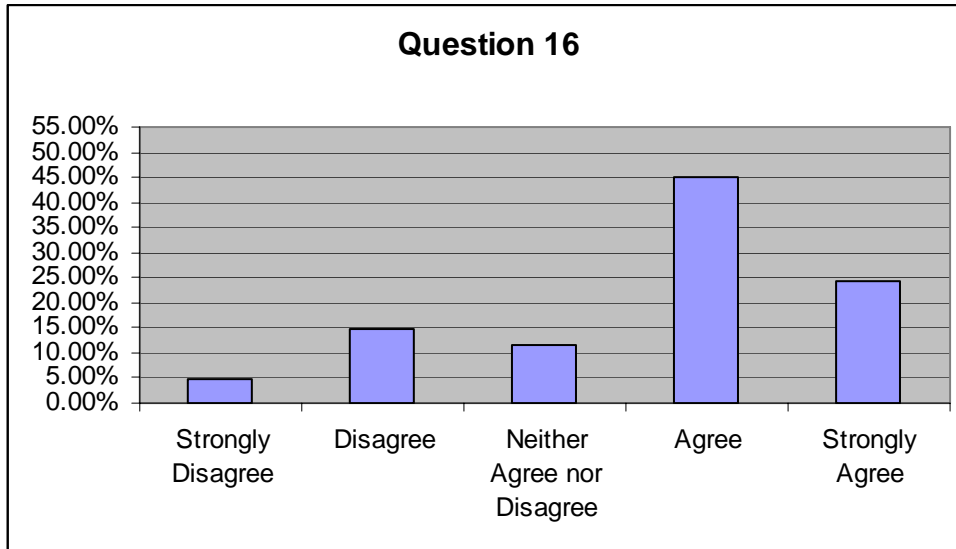


Fig. 13 – Blackboard is a vital part of my studies.

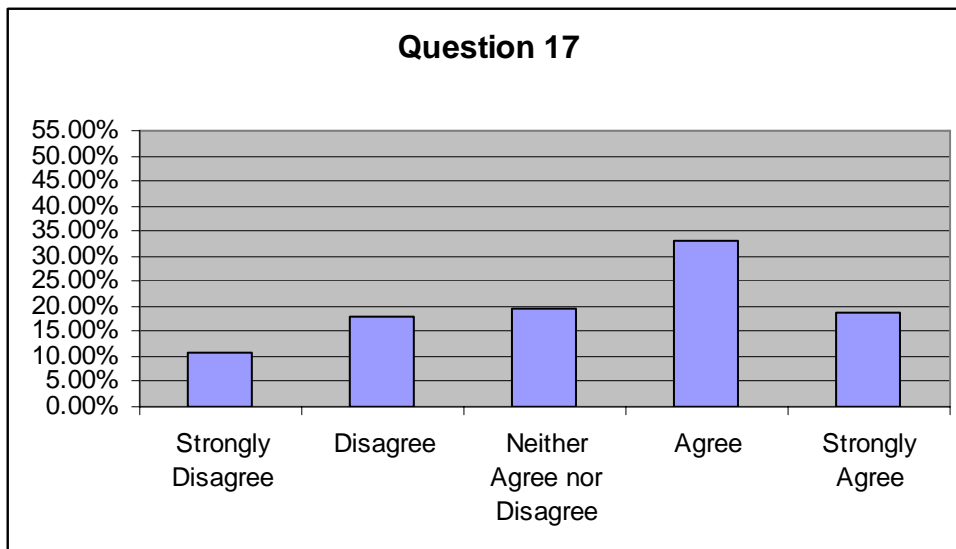


Fig. 14 – Blackboard is boring.

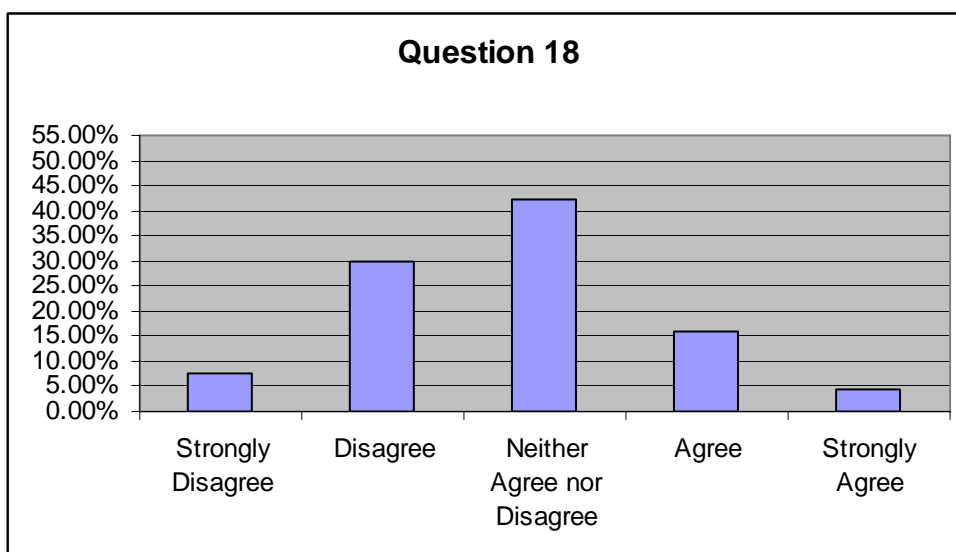


Fig. 15 – I usually use Blackboard whilst on campus.

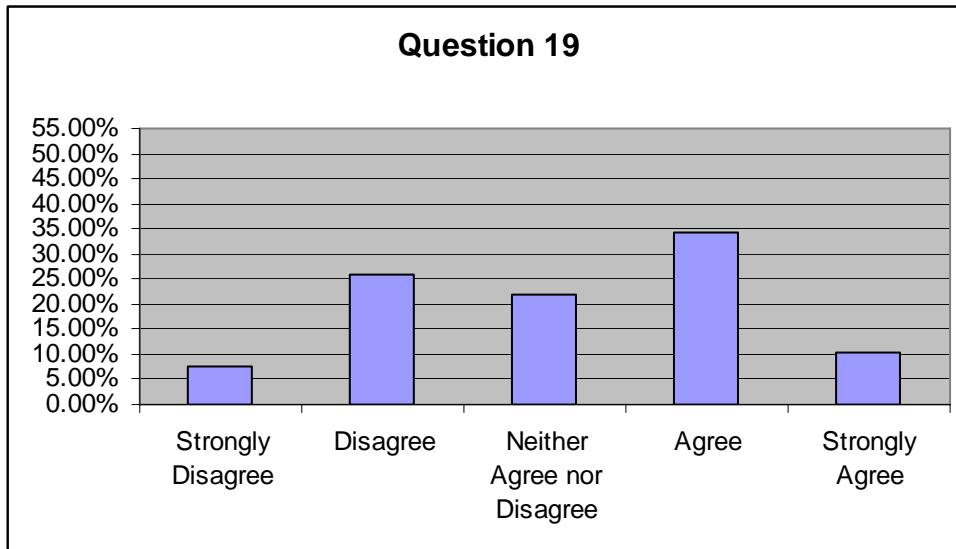


Fig. 16 – I think that using Blackboard is making me lazy about taking notes and attending lectures.

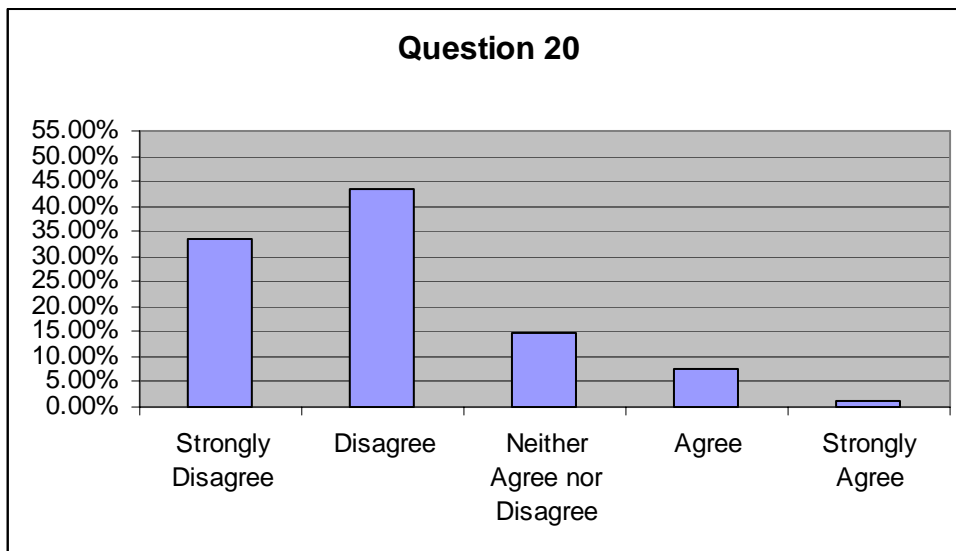


Fig. 17 – I use Blackboard instead of going to some lectures.

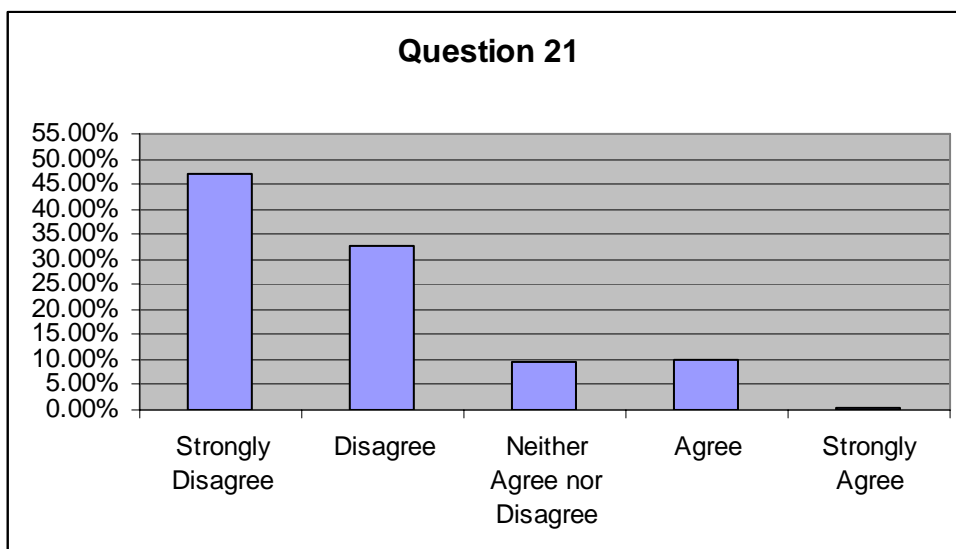


Fig. 18 – I would prefer a simple course website than the overcomplicated ones Blackboard provides.

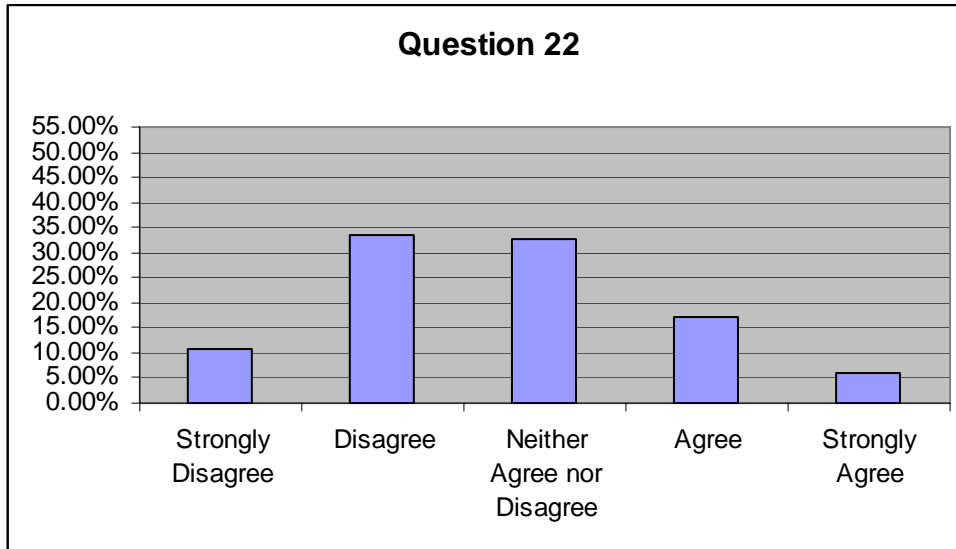


Fig. 19 – If I have a problem with Blackboard, I know where to get help.

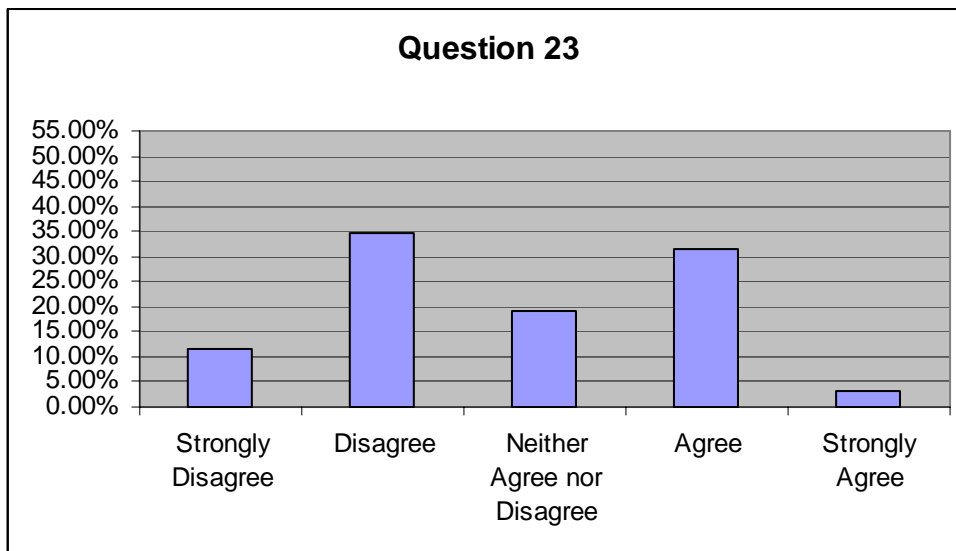


Fig. 20 – Blackboard is a useful addition to the lectures and seminars.

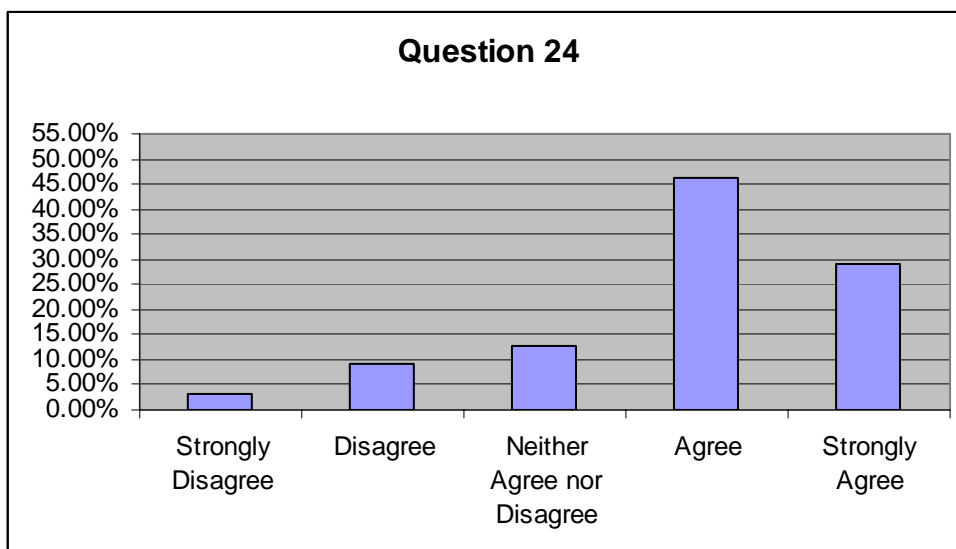


Fig. 21 – I rarely access Blackboard from home.

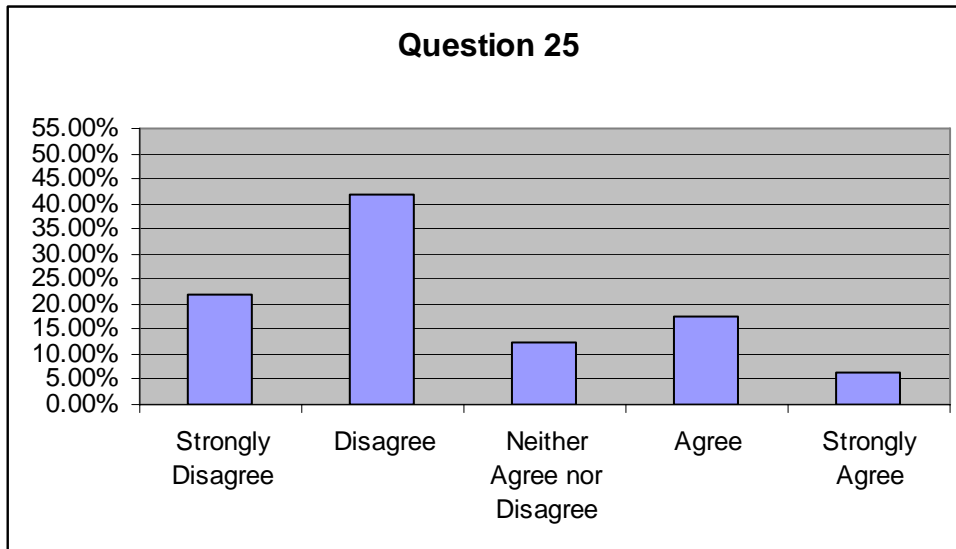


Fig. 22 – Blackboard helps with my revision.

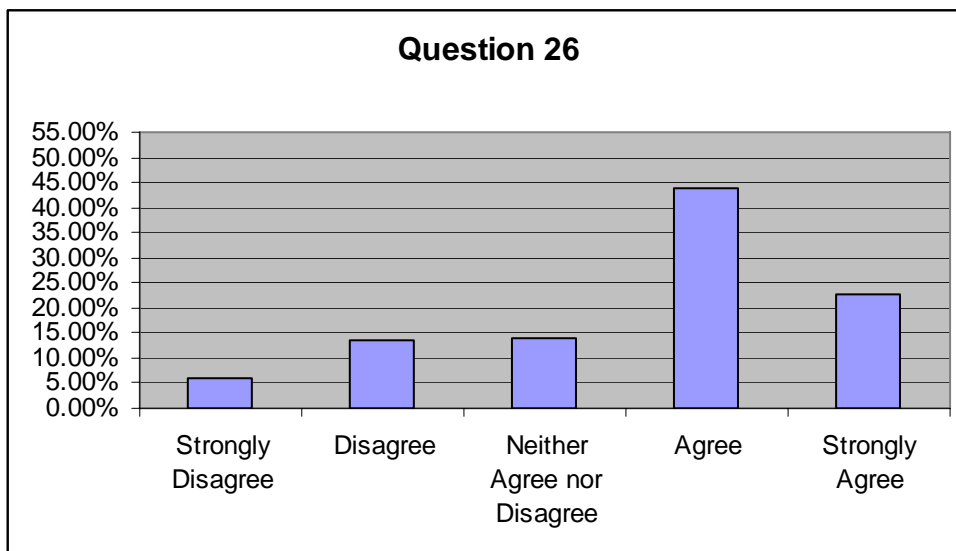


Fig. 23 – It is easy to find the information I need in Blackboard.

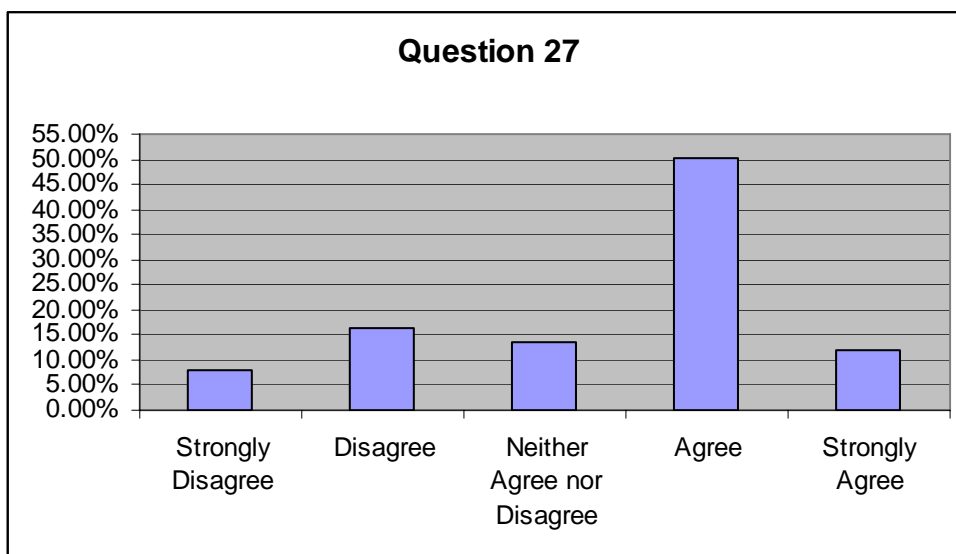


Fig. 24 – Blackboard is difficult to use.

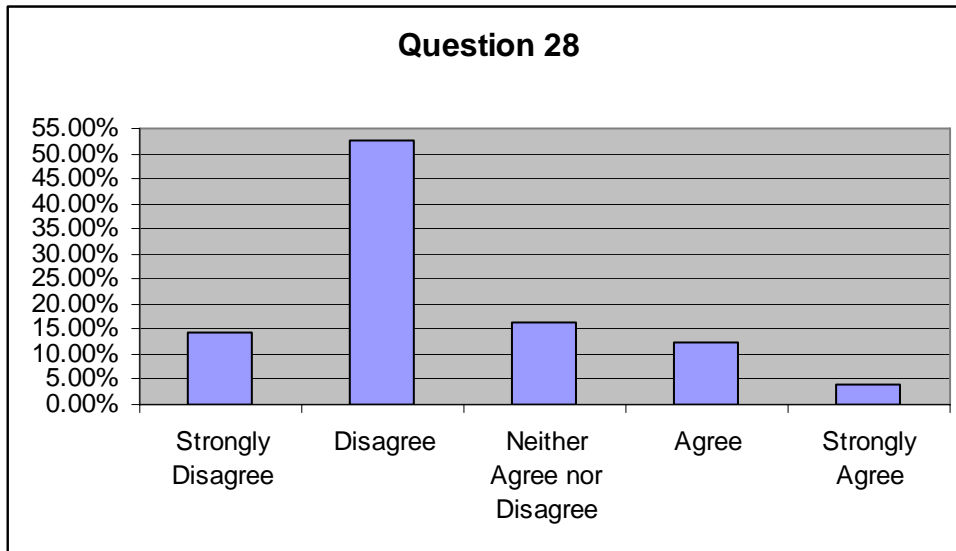


Fig. 25 – The information in Blackboard helps me prepare for lectures.

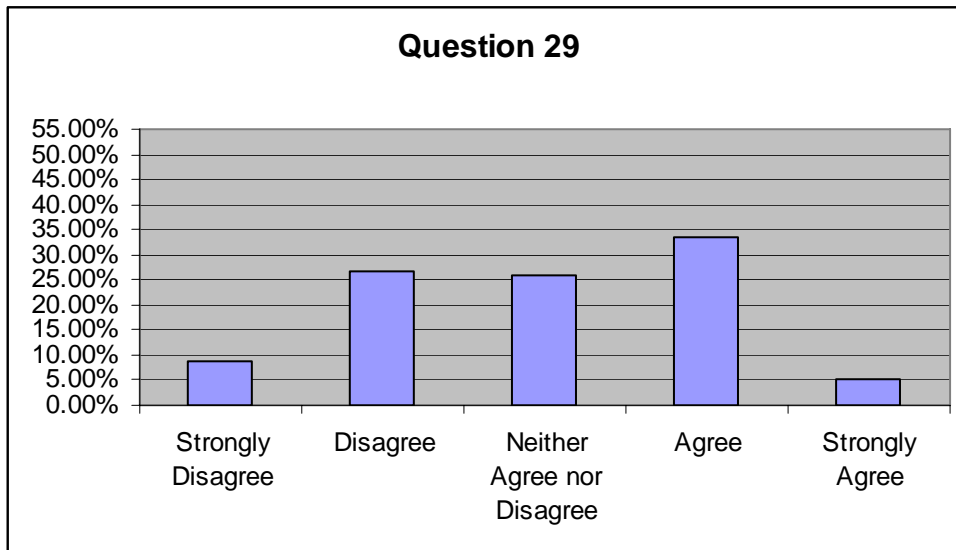
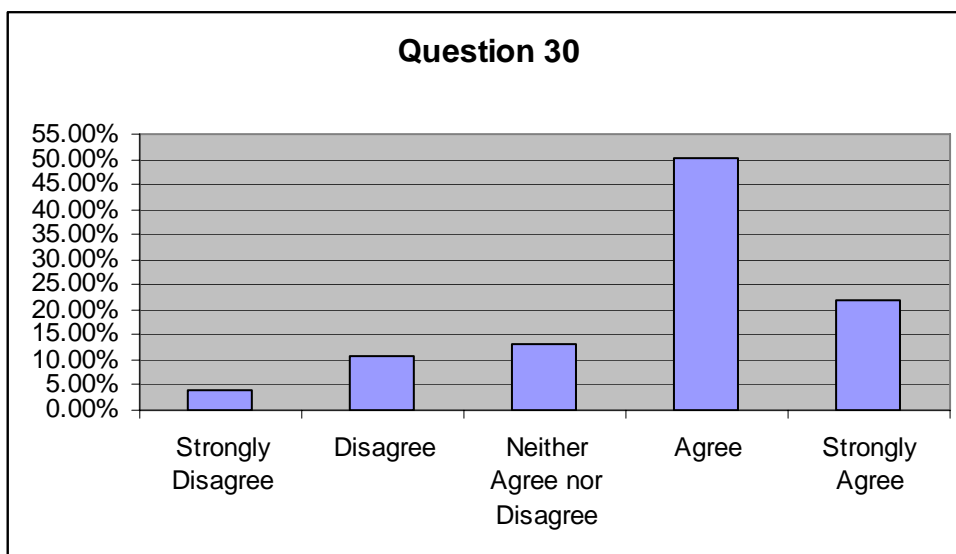


Fig. 26 – I mainly use Blackboard for lecture notes and PowerPoint's.



Wish List

Fig. 27 – I would like to have online classes to replace some lectures and seminars.

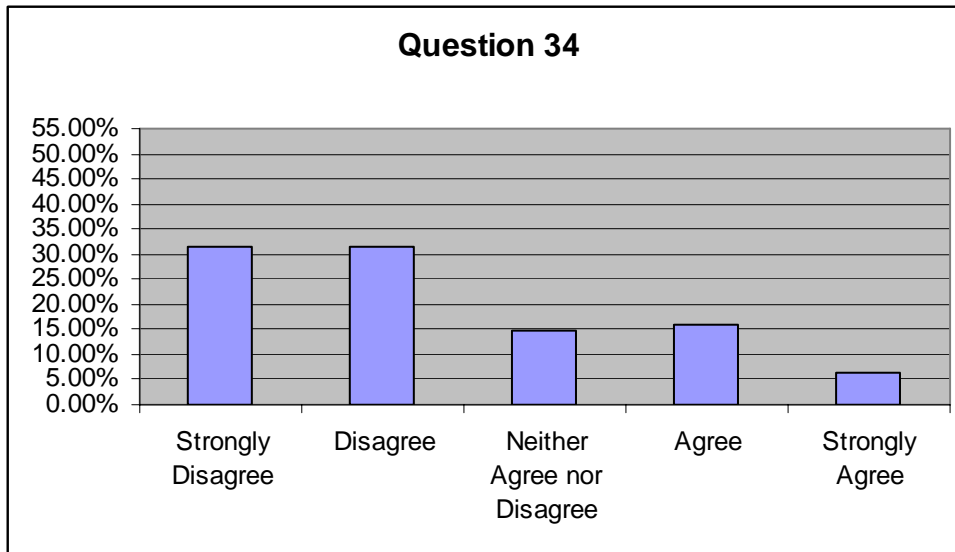


Fig. 28 – I would like to take non-assessed online tests with feedback to help me see what I have learnt or need to work on.

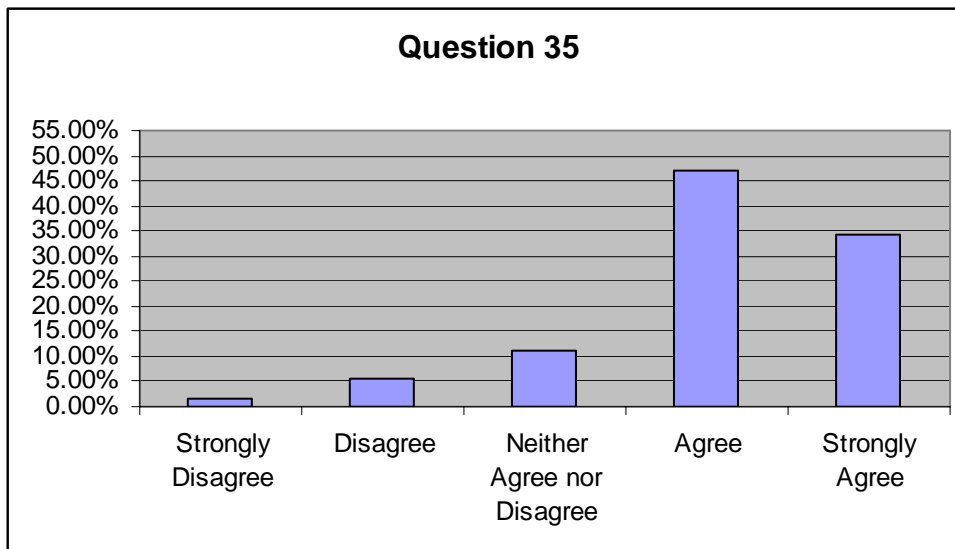


Fig. 29 – I would like to listen to/download audio versions of lectures; like a podcast.

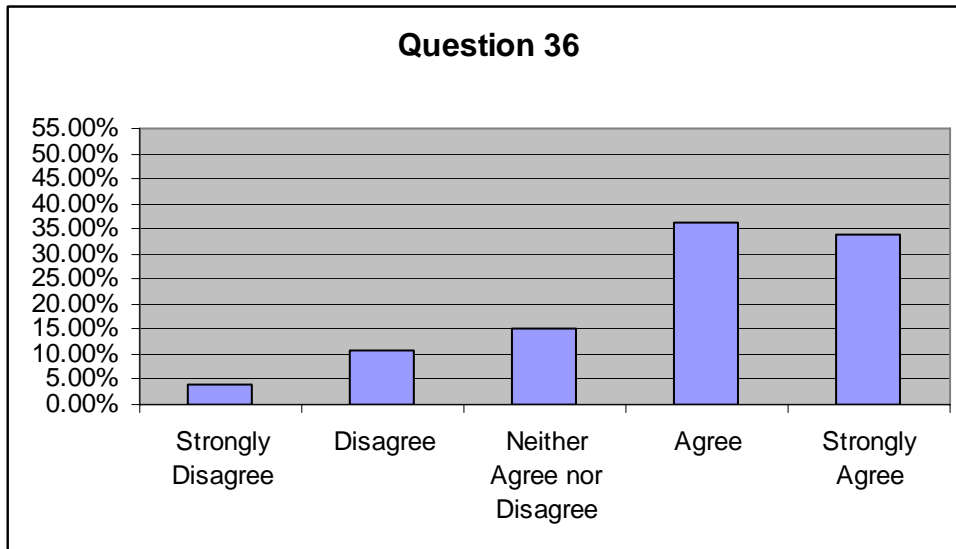


Fig. 30 – I would like to use additional online activities which reinforce material from lectures and seminars.

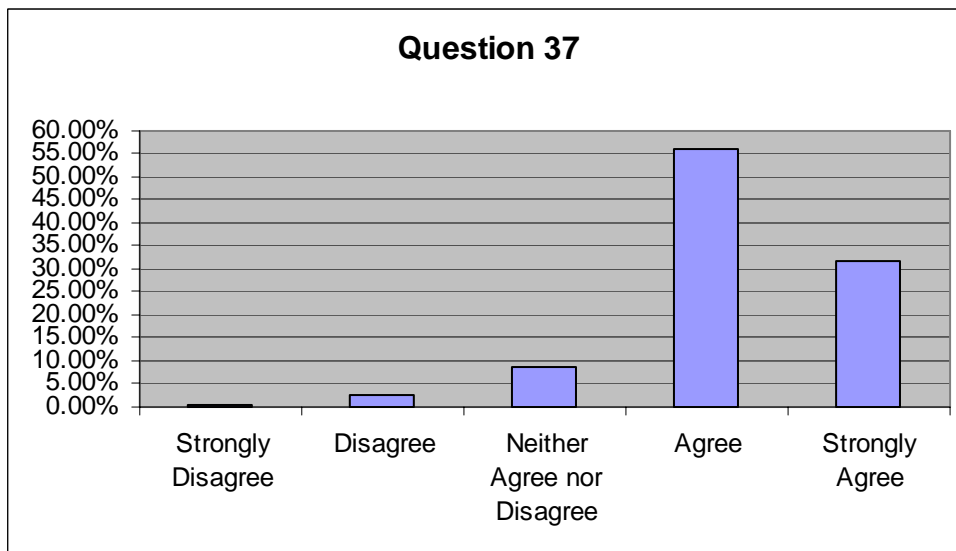


Fig. 31 – I would like to be able to upload my assignments to Blackboard.

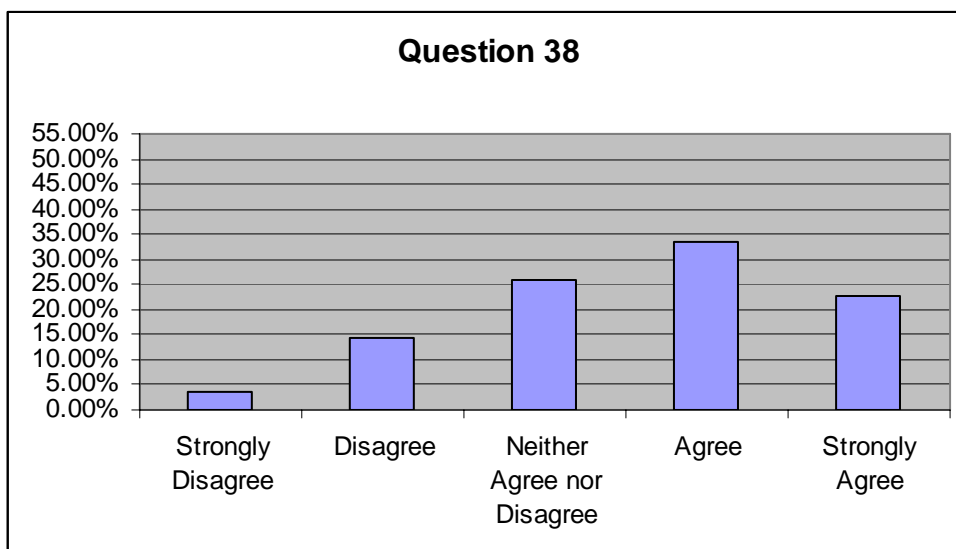


Fig. 32 – I would like to watch/download videos of lectures; like a video podcast.

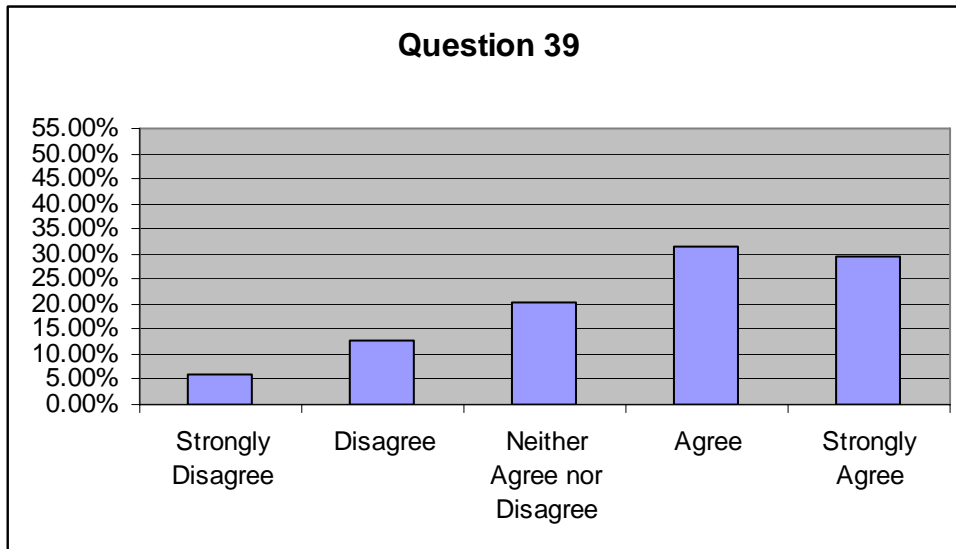


Fig. 33 – I would like to have all the information I need on Blackboard so I don't need to go to lectures.

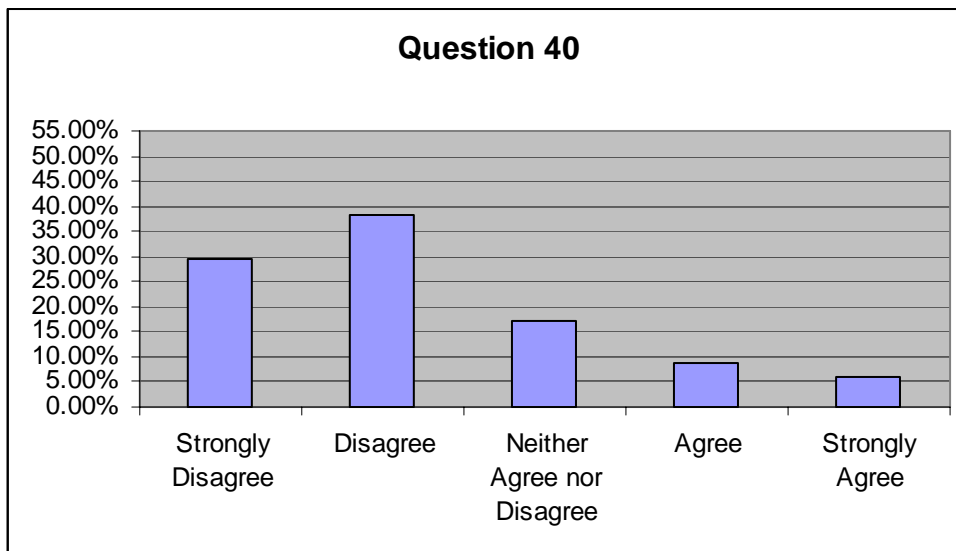


Fig. 34 – I would like to take my exams online.

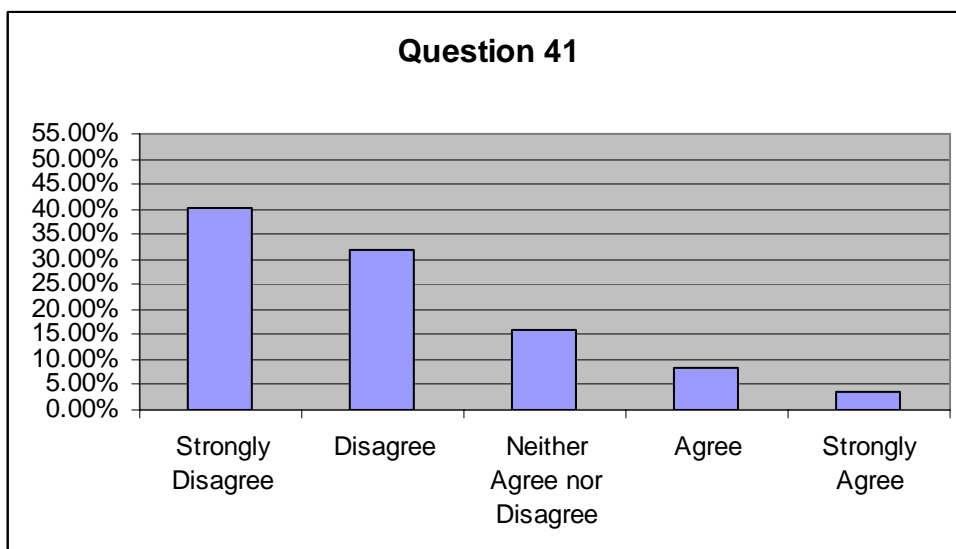


Fig. 35 – I would like to produce work online in collaboration with other students.

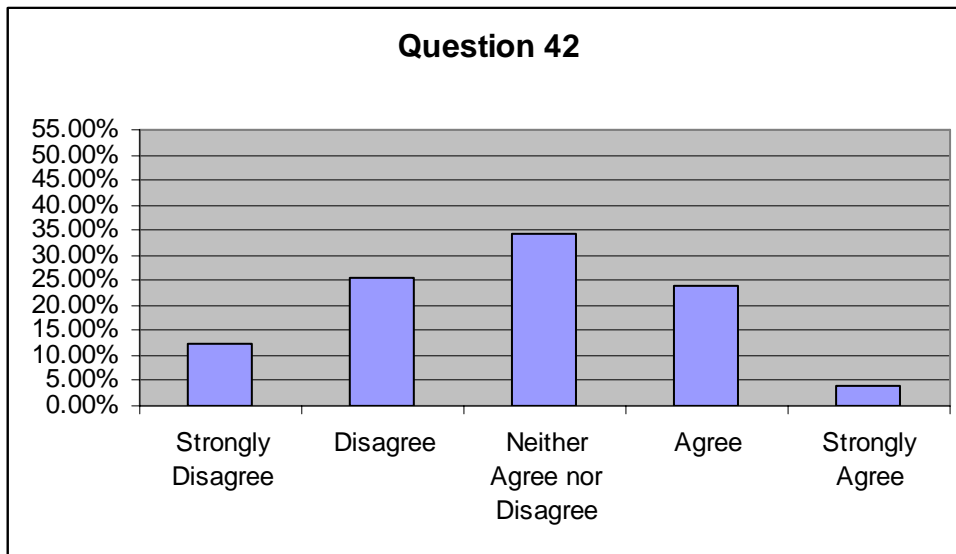
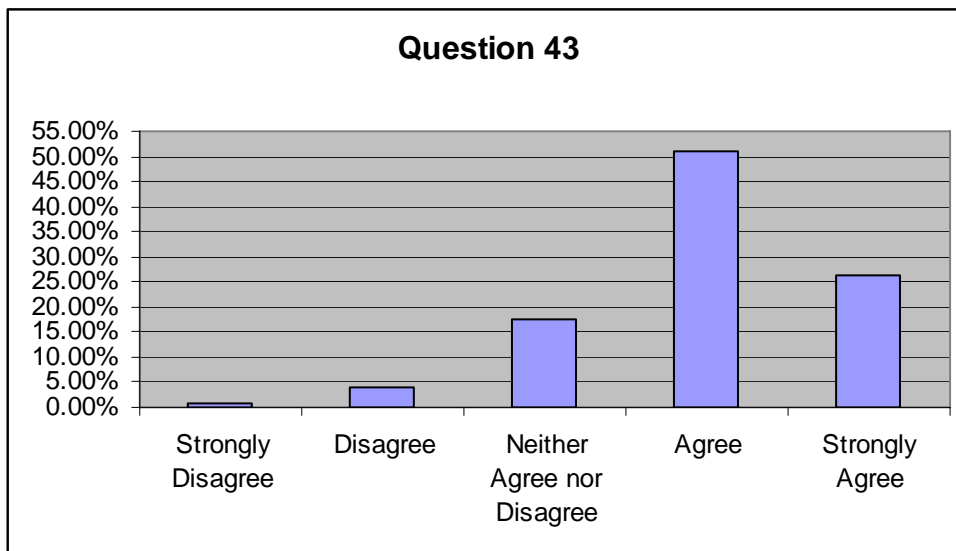


Fig. 36 – I would like to keep an online record of what I have done while I've been at the University.



Support Issues

27% of student users had experienced problems with Blackboard during the academic year 2005/06.

Fig. 37 – What problems have you experienced?

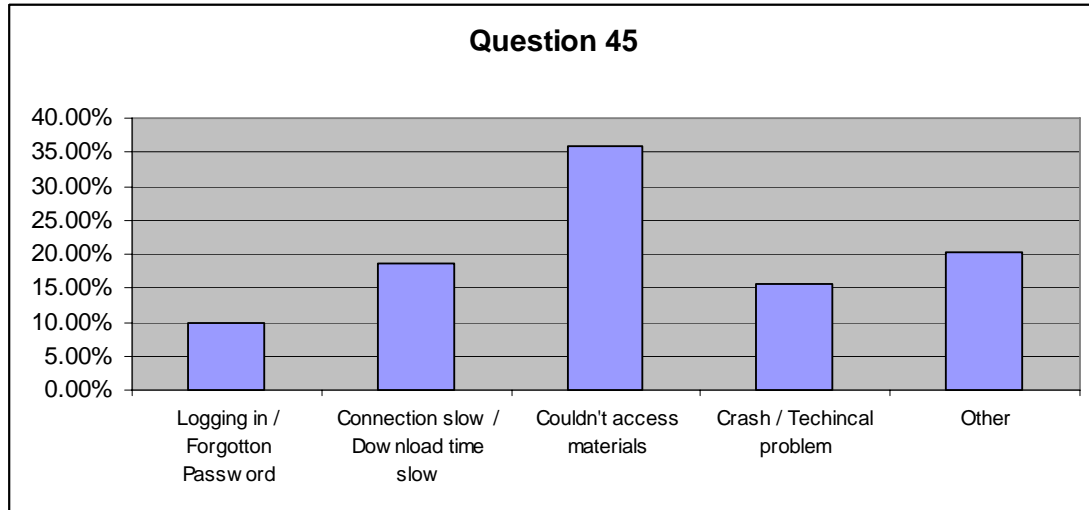


Fig. 38 – What did you do to get help?

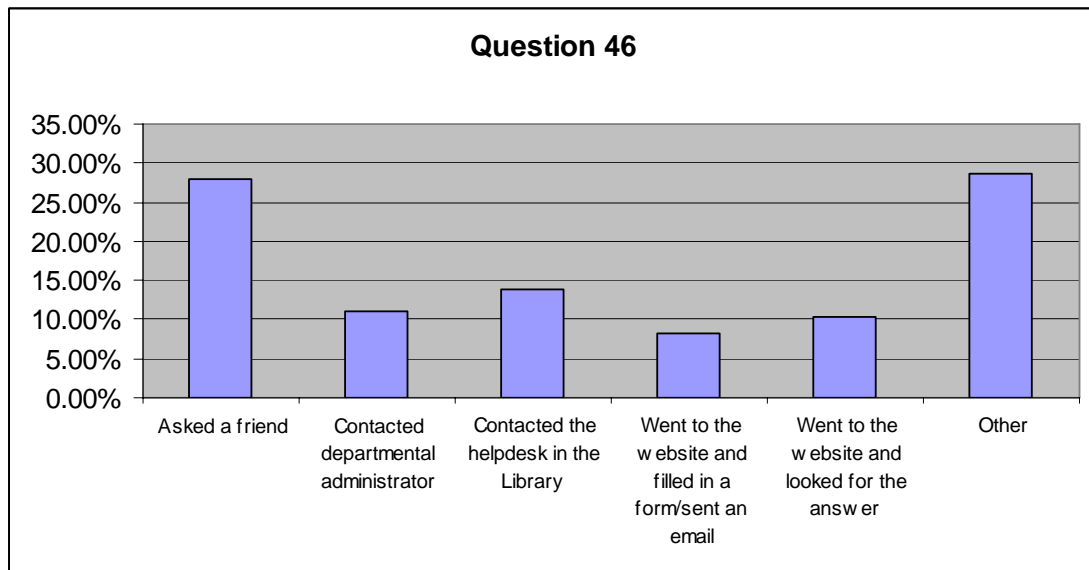


Fig. 39 – Were you satisfied with the response?

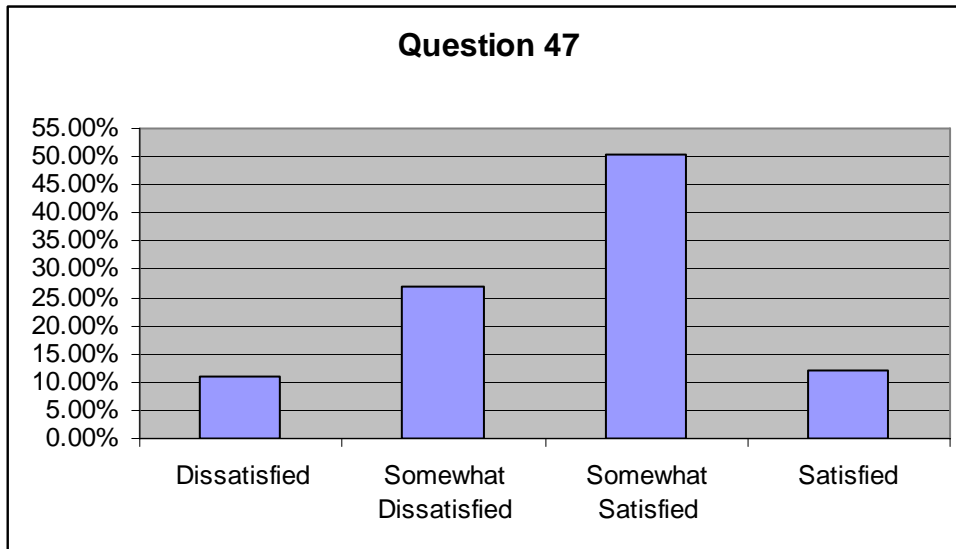
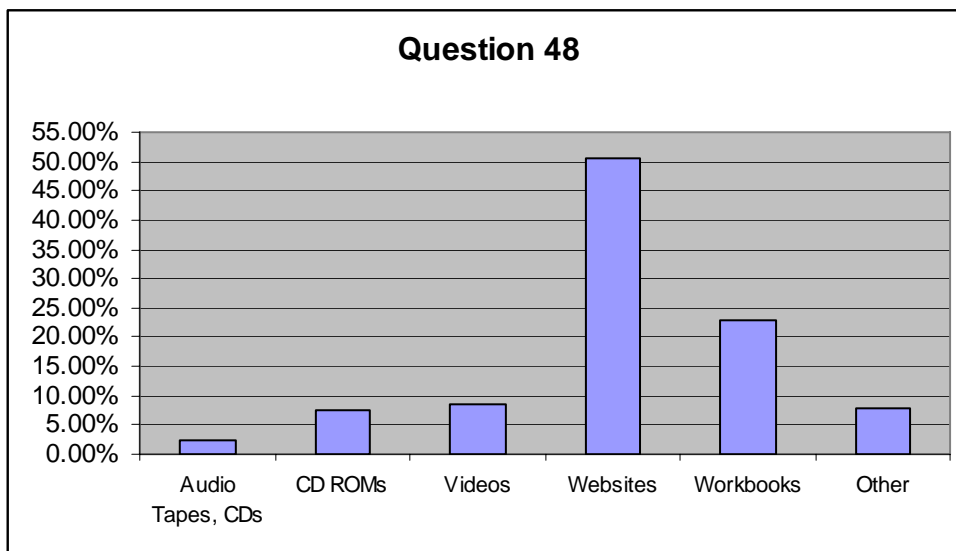


Fig. 40 – Have any of your modules provided any other type of support?



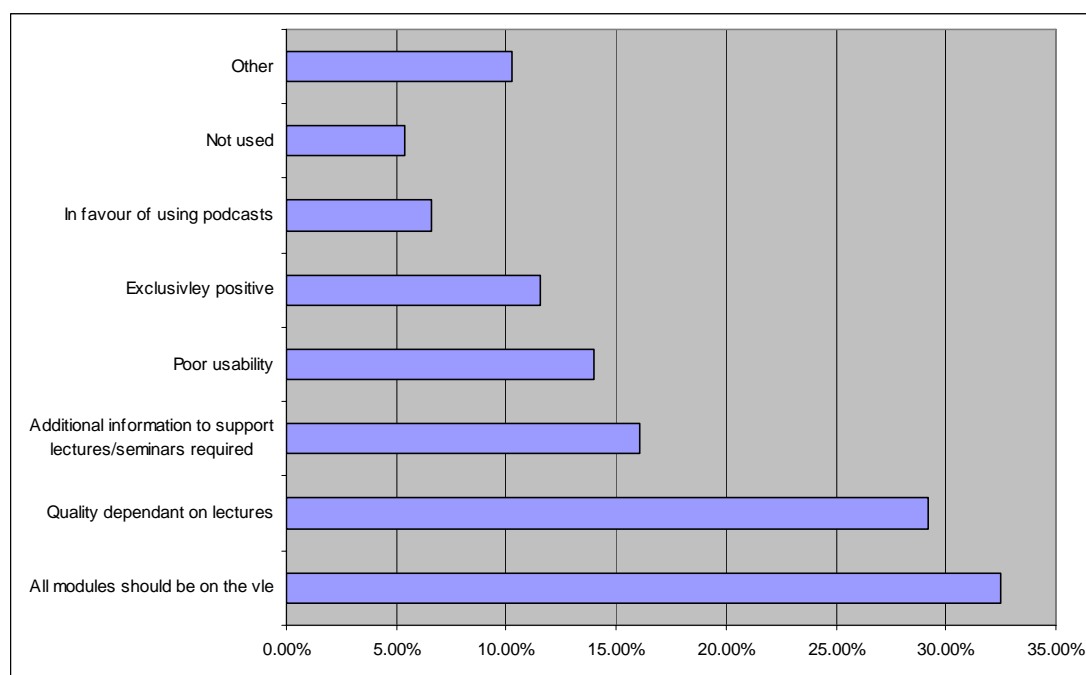
Comments

Question 49 was an area for free comment on any aspect of Blackboard or e-learning at the University. Of the 909 respondents 243 made comments. The comments were coded into 14 categories. Some comments were included in more than one category.

Fig. 41 – Coding Categories

All modules should be on the VLE
Additional information to support lectures/seminars required
Variable quality of modules
The VLE should not replace lectures
University site – negative comments
University site – positive comments
Podcasts – positive comments
Quality of Blackboard modules dependant on lectures
Would like grade tool to be used
Poor usability
Good for accessibility
Student training required
Exclusively positive
Have not used Blackboard

Fig. 42 – Comment coding as a percentage of those who commented.



Staff Survey

The staff survey ran during July and August 2006. A total of 79 members of staff responded to the survey.

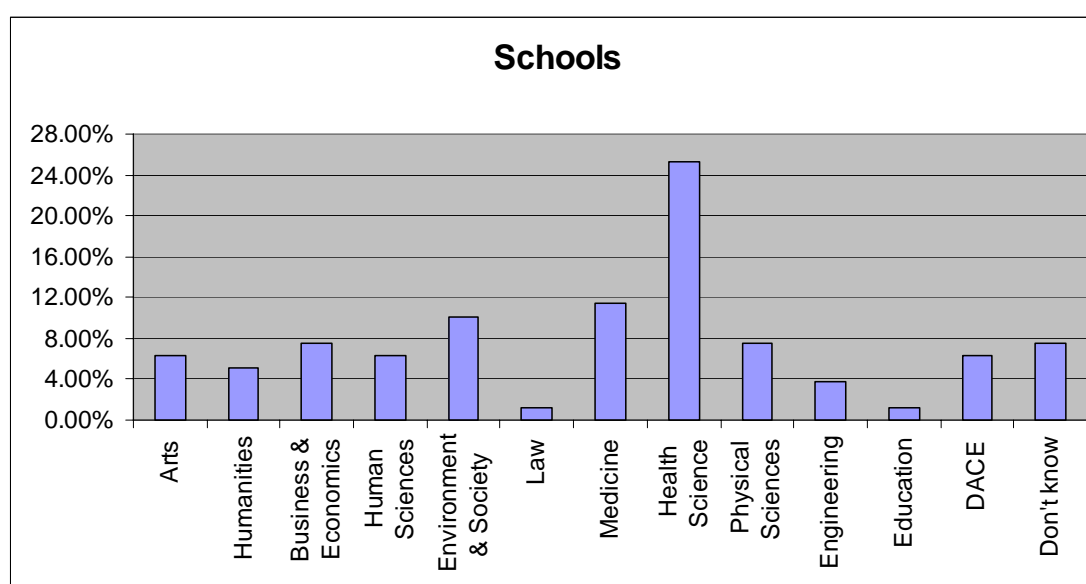
Personal Information

Fig. 43 – Years Working at the University

1 or less	14%
2	11%
3	8%
4	4%
5 or more	63%

91% of respondents were full-time and 9% part-time.

Fig. 44 – Respondents' Schools



VLE and Other Websites

Fig. 45 – Comparison of Websites

	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Use
University Site	5.06%	32.91%	41.77%	12.66%	5.6%	2.53%
BBC	49.37%	37.97%	7.59%	0%	0%	5.06%
Blackboard	11.39%	45.57%	22.28%	3.80%	0%	5.06%
Google	68.83%	25.97%	3.90%	0%	0%	1.30%
MSN	3.80%	16.46%	11.39%	5.06%	0%	63.29%
My Space	2.53%	5.06%	7.59%	1.27%	0%	83.54%

Fig. 46 – Comparison of websites: Composite (Excluding “Don’t Use”)

	Very Good/Good	At Least Acceptable	Acceptable or worse	Poor/Very Poor
University Site	38.96%	81.82%	61.04%	18.18%
BBC	92.00%	100.00%	8.00%	0%
Blackboard	68.18%	95.45%	31.82%	4.55%
Google	96.05%	100.00%	3.95%	0%
MSN	55.17%	86.21%	44.83%	13.79%
My Space	46.15%	42.31%	53.85%	7.69%

Fig. 47 – Ranking of Websites

	Ranked First	Mode
University Website	20.00%	1st – 20.00%
Other	2.67%	7th – 15.79%
Search Engine	21.33%	2nd – 18.24%
Blackboard	12.00%	7th – 21.05%
Email	14.67%	4th – 19.30%
Chat/Phone	13.33%	2nd – 21.62%
News Sites	16.00%	5th – 16.67%

Current VLE Use

Fig. 48 – Frequency of Blackboard Use in Term Time.

Everyday	17.65%
A couple of times a week	41.18%
Once a week	19.61%
Every few weeks	19.61%
Less than once a month	1.96%

Fig. 49 – Location of Blackboard Use.

On-campus	54.90%
Off-campus	3.92%
A combination of on and off campus	41.18%

Fig. 50 – Quality of Blackboard Modules.

All my Blackboard modules are very good	16.33%
Some of my Blackboard modules are very good	20.41%
My Blackboard modules are generally OK	55.10%
Some of my Blackboard modules are OK but others are not very good	4.08%
All of my Blackboard modules are of poor quality	4.08%

Fig. 51 – Blackboard provides the information students need to pass exams.

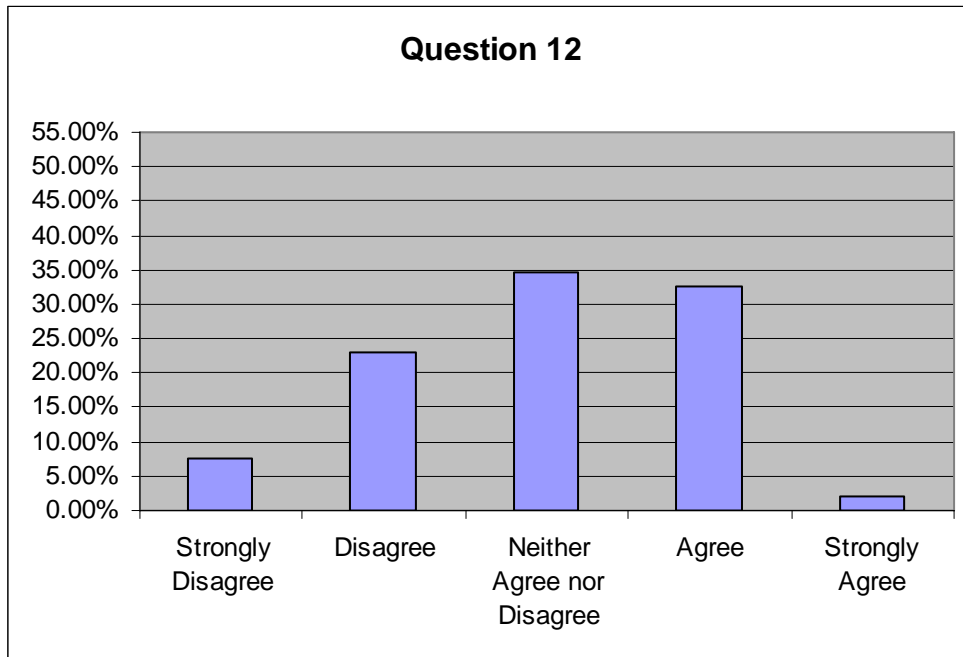


Fig. 52 – Blackboard adds little or nothing to the material I give in lectures and seminars.

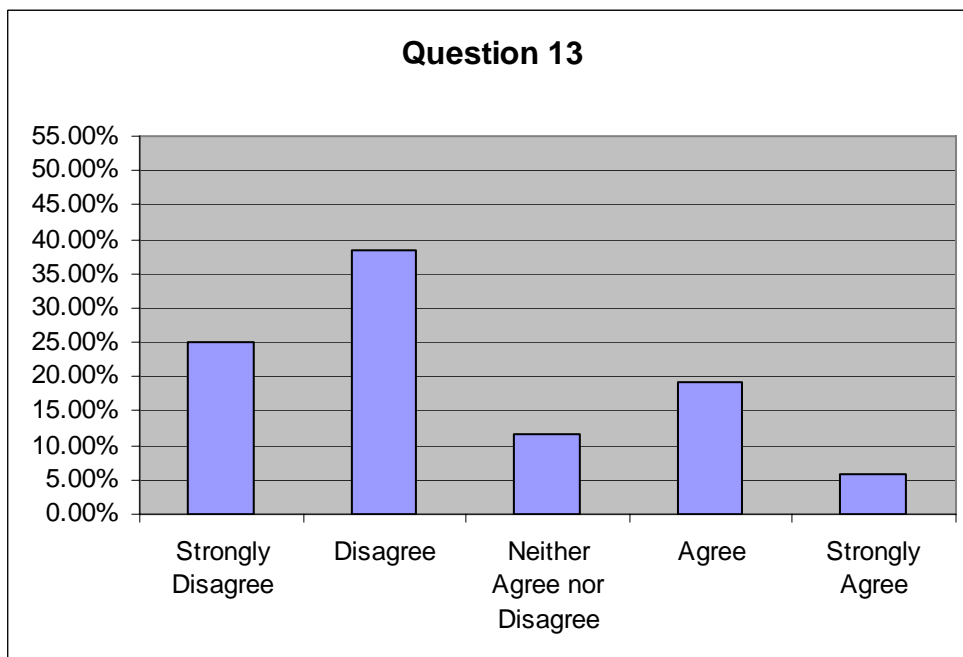


Fig. 53 – Students can go over what has been presented in lectures and seminars by using the information on Blackboard.

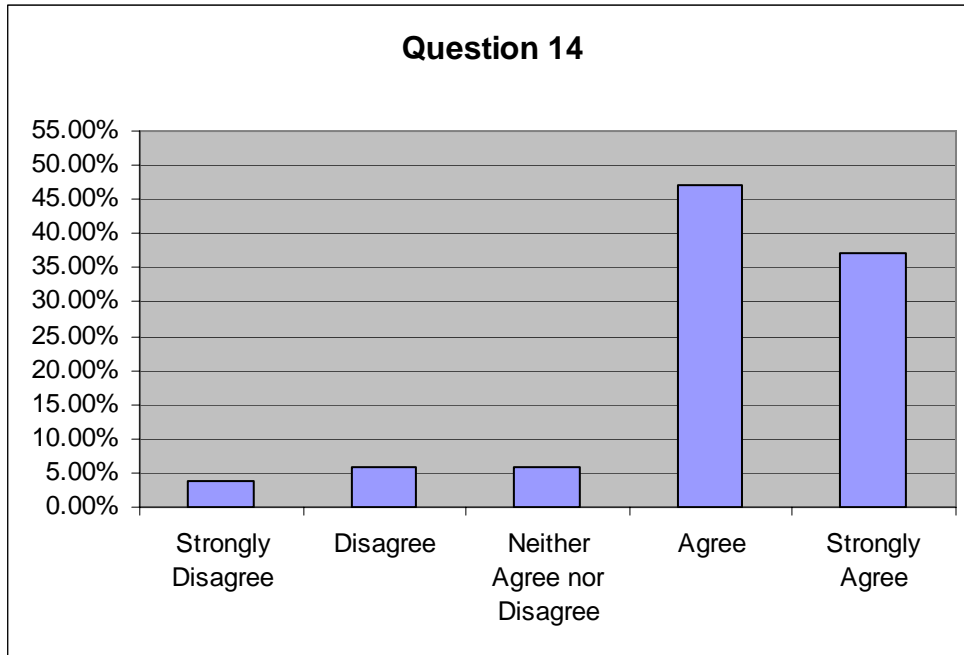


Fig. 54 – Blackboard is a vital part of my teaching

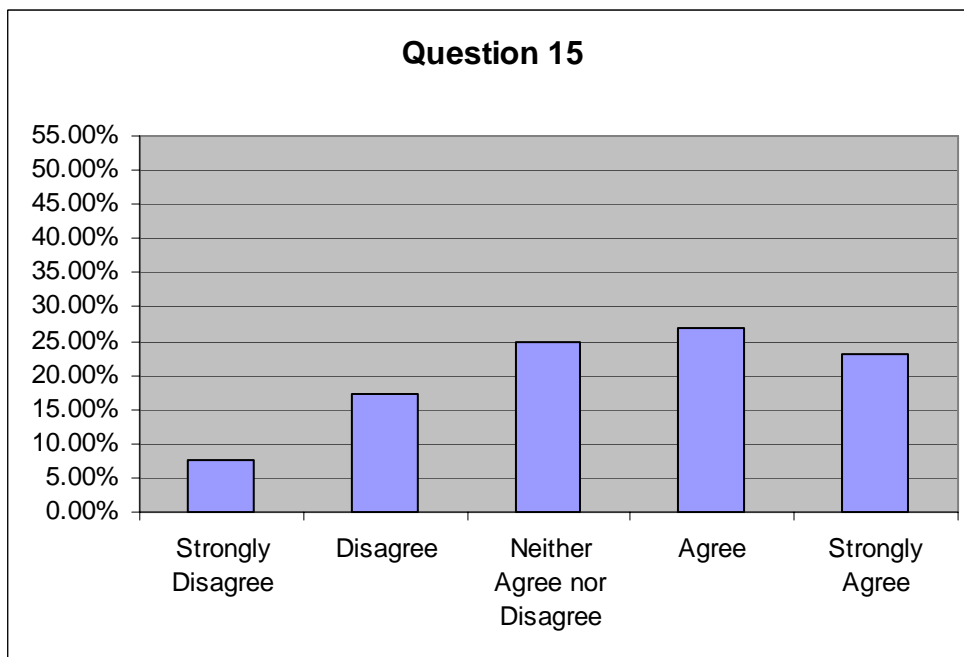


Fig. 55 – Blackboard is boring.

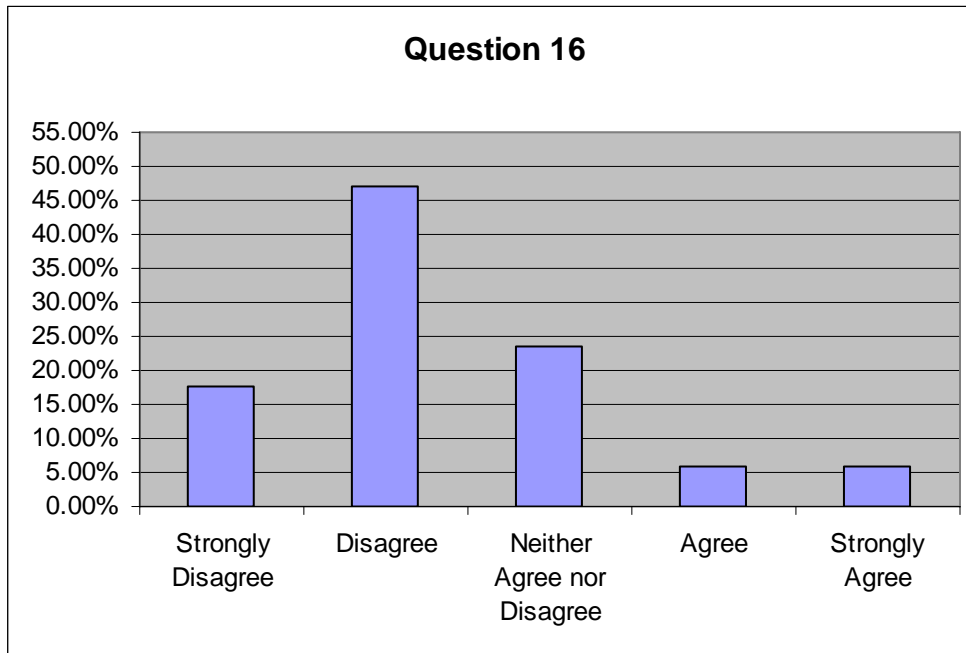


Fig. 56 – I rarely access the information on Blackboard from home.

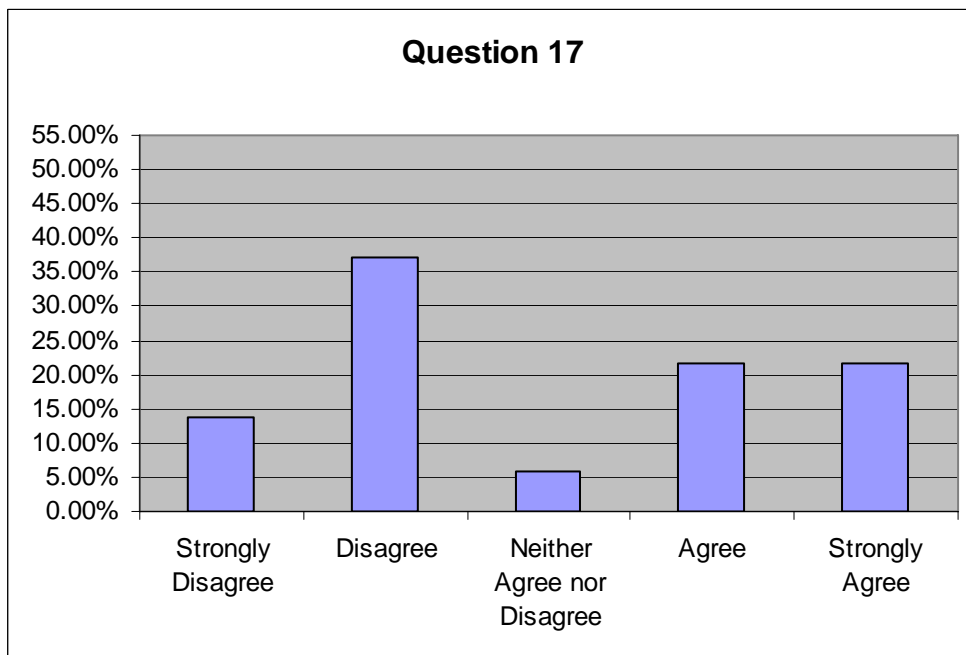


Fig. 57 – I think that using Blackboard is making students lazy about taking notes and attending lectures.

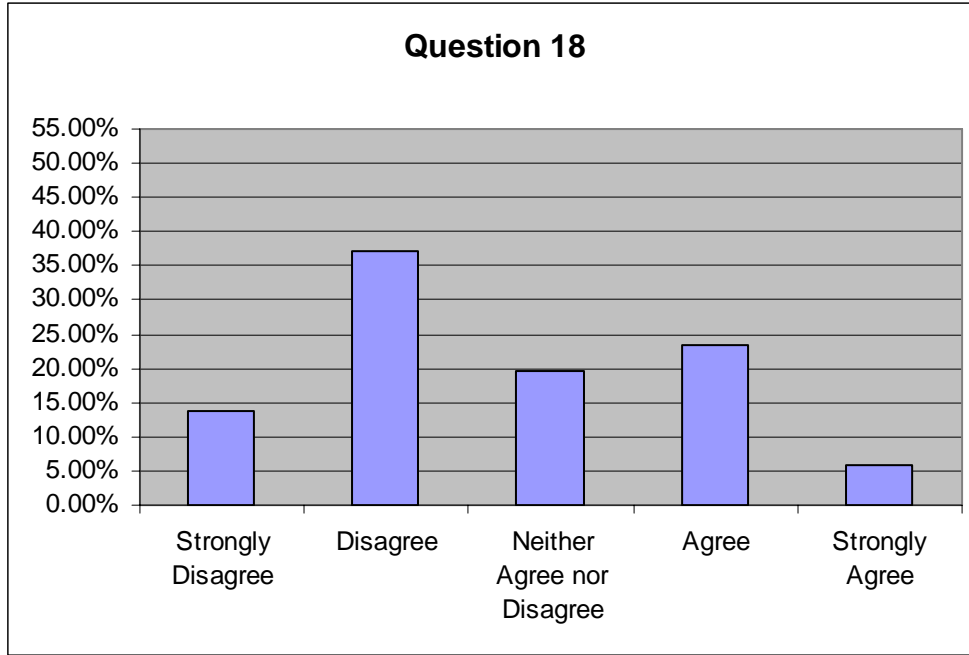


Fig. 58 – Blackboard helps with students' revision.

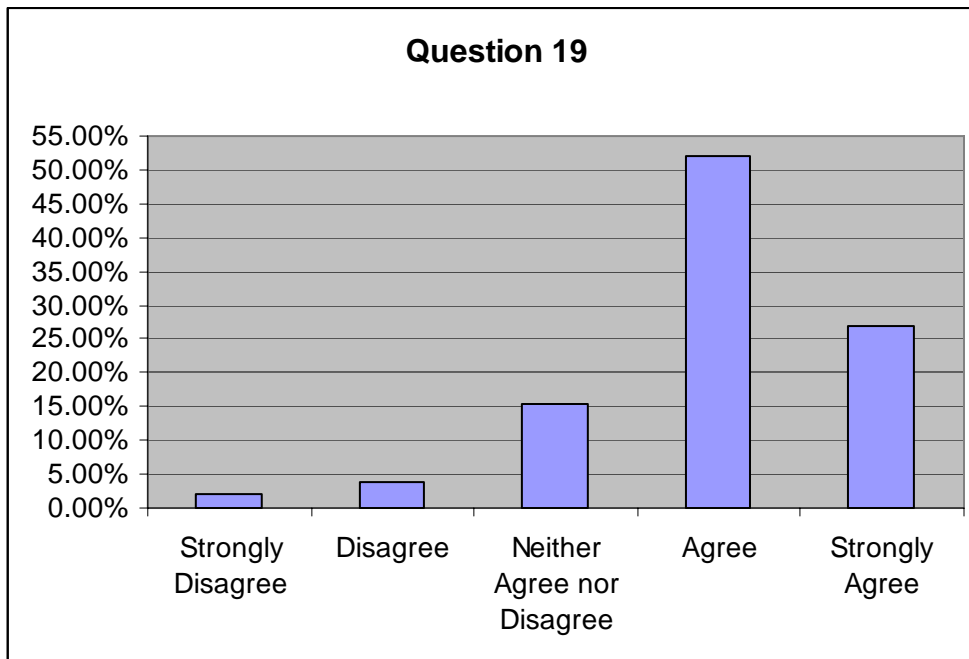


Fig. 59 – The information in Blackboard helps students prepare for lectures.

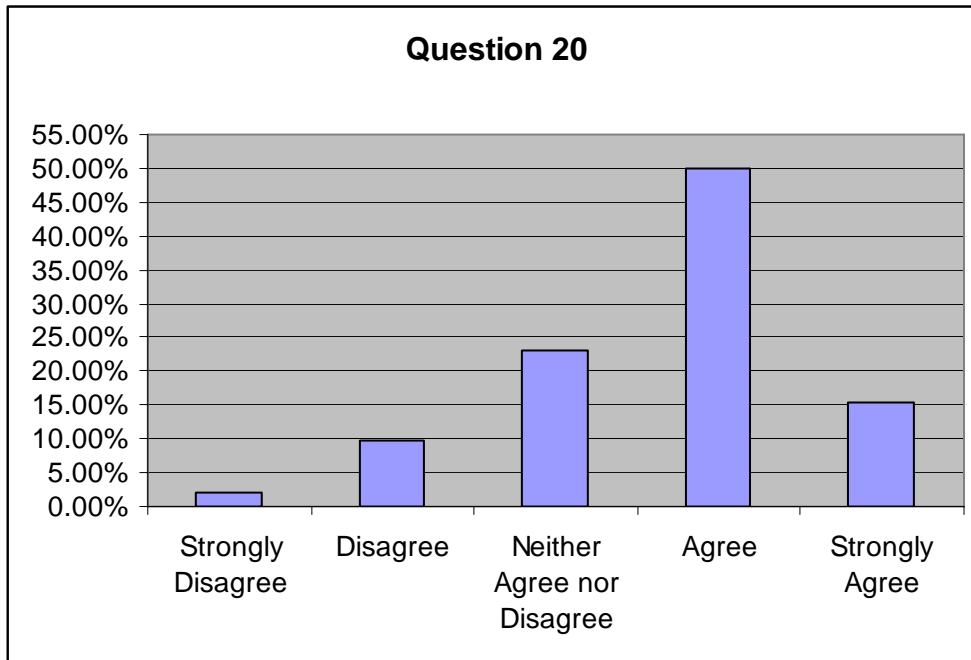


Fig. 60 – I would prefer a simple course website than the over complicated ones that Blackboard has.

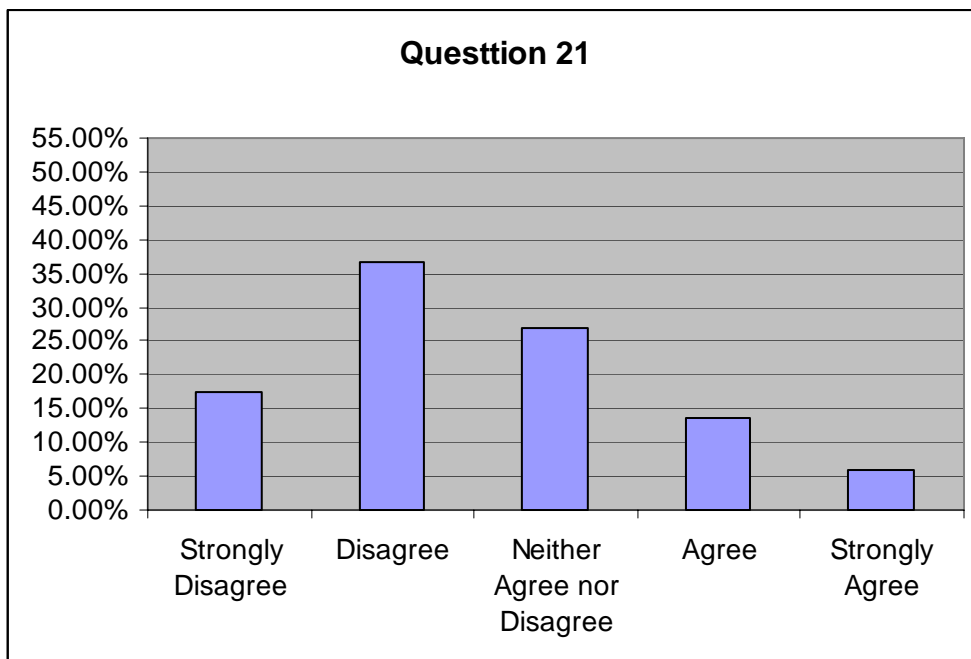


Fig. 61 – If I have a problem with Blackboard, I know where to get help.

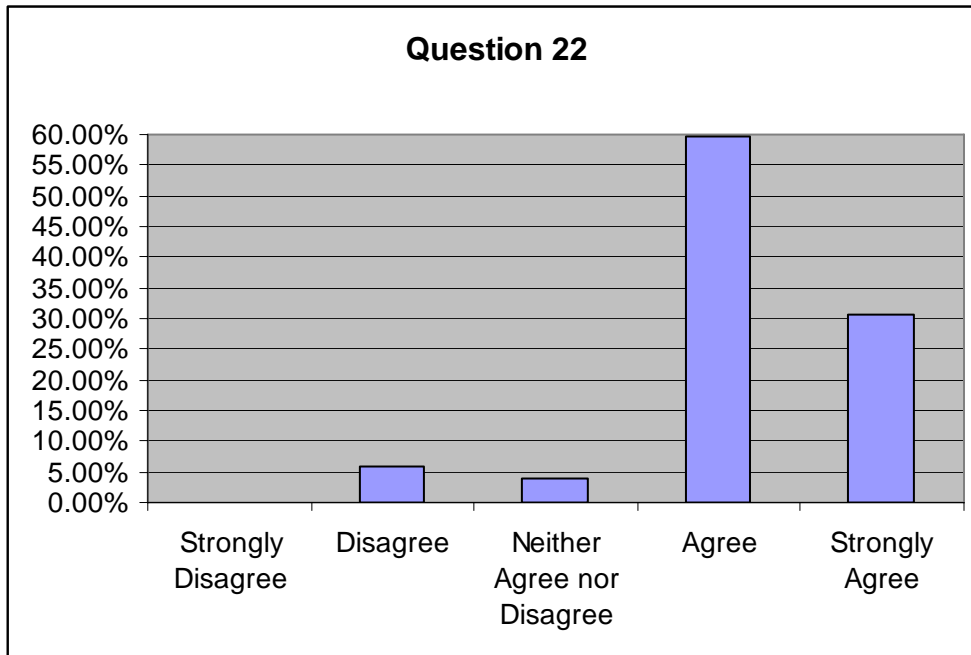


Fig. 62 – I use Blackboard to replace some lectures.

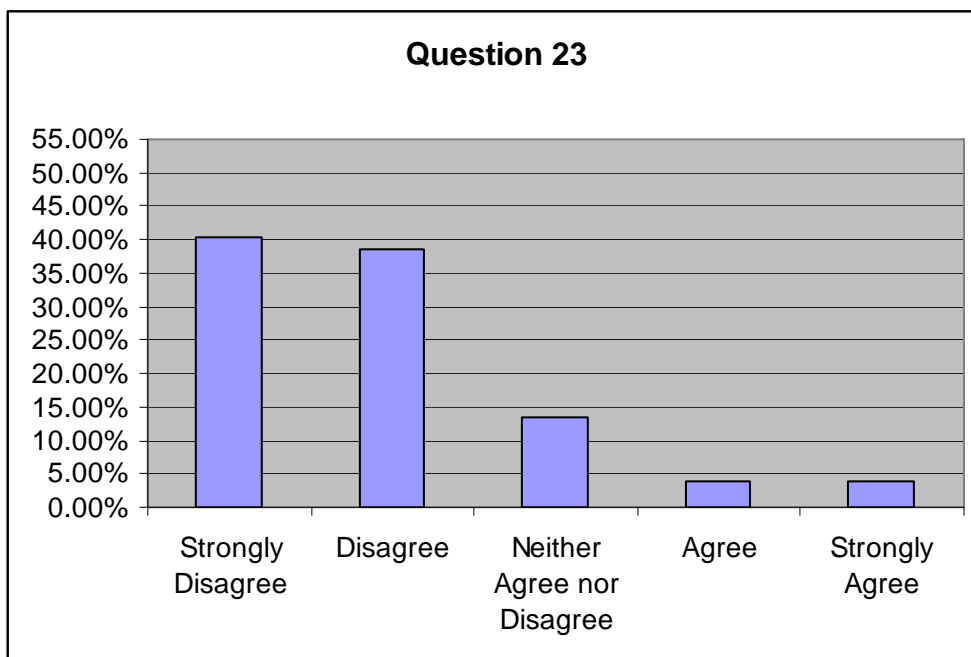


Fig. 63 – Blackboard is a useful addition to the lectures and seminars.

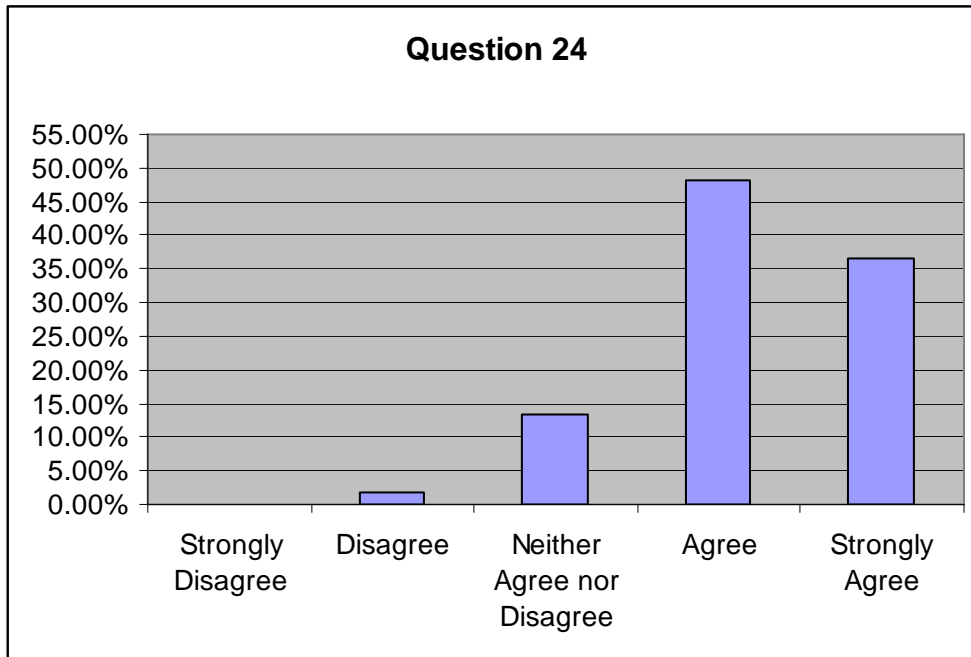


Fig. 64 – It is easy to find the information students need in Blackboard.

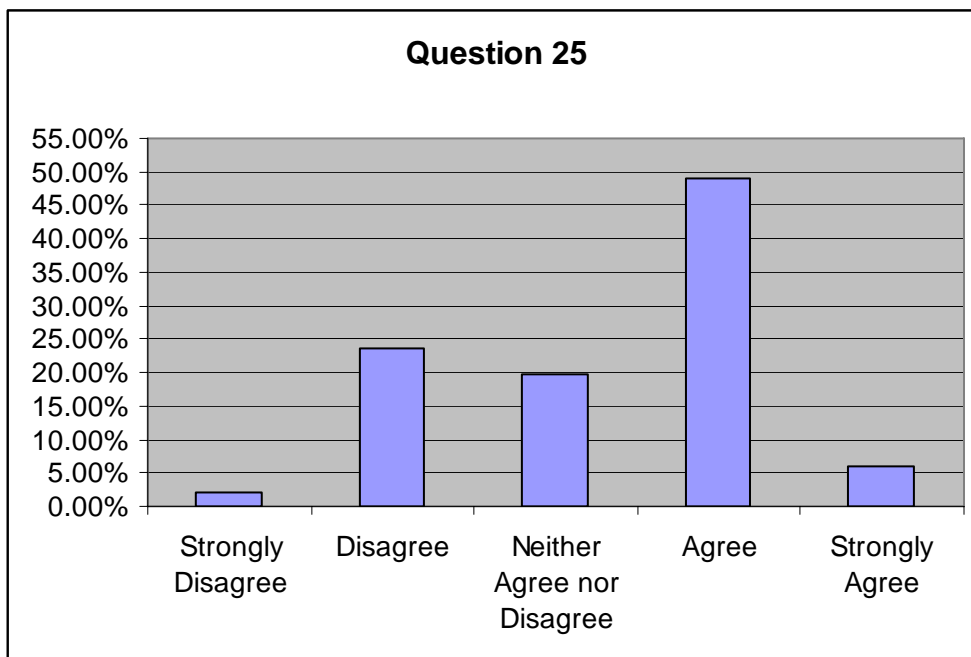


Fig. 65 – Blackboard is difficult to use.

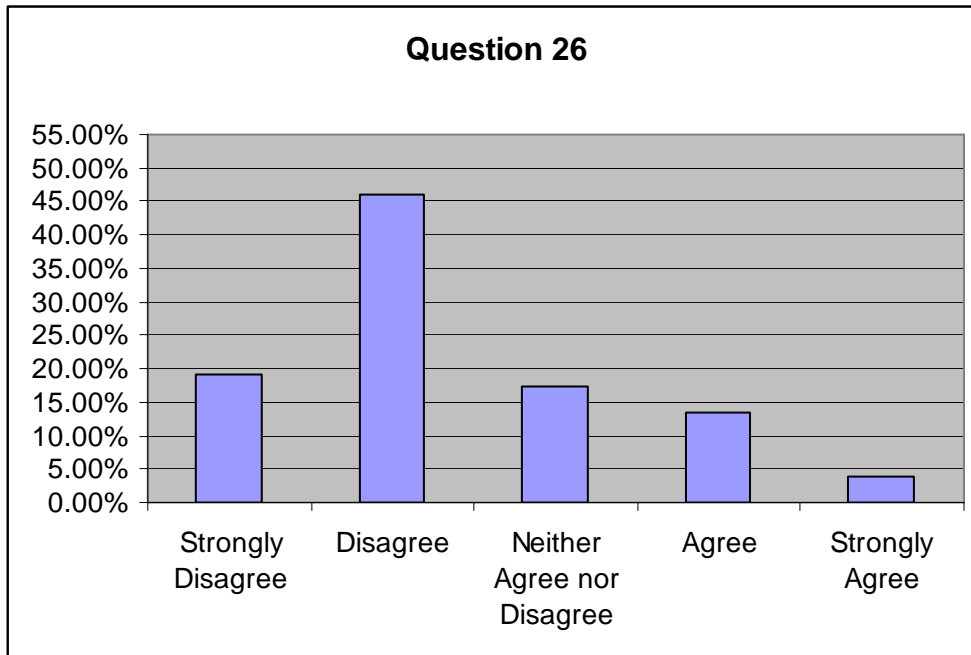


Fig. 66 – I usually use Blackboard whilst on campus.

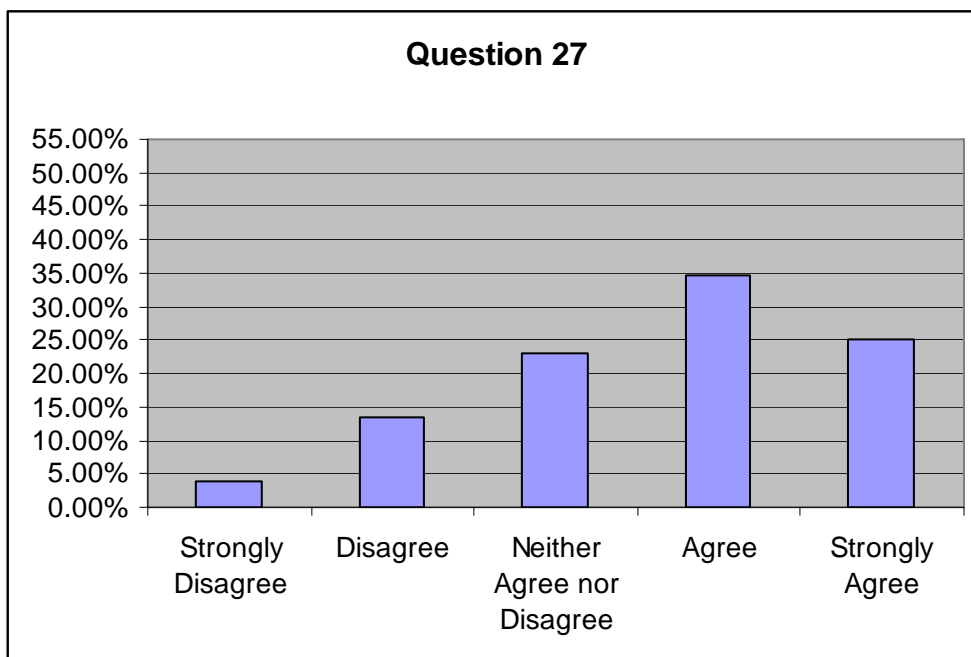
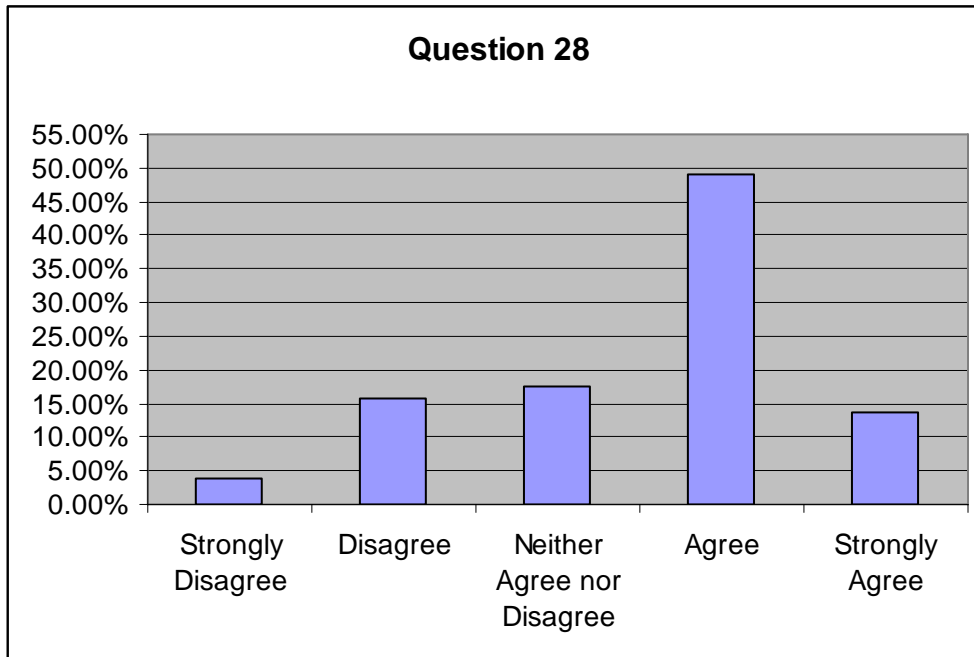


Fig. 67 – I mainly use Blackboard for lecture notes and PowerPoints.



Wish List

Fig. 68 – I would like to have online classes to replace some lectures and seminars.

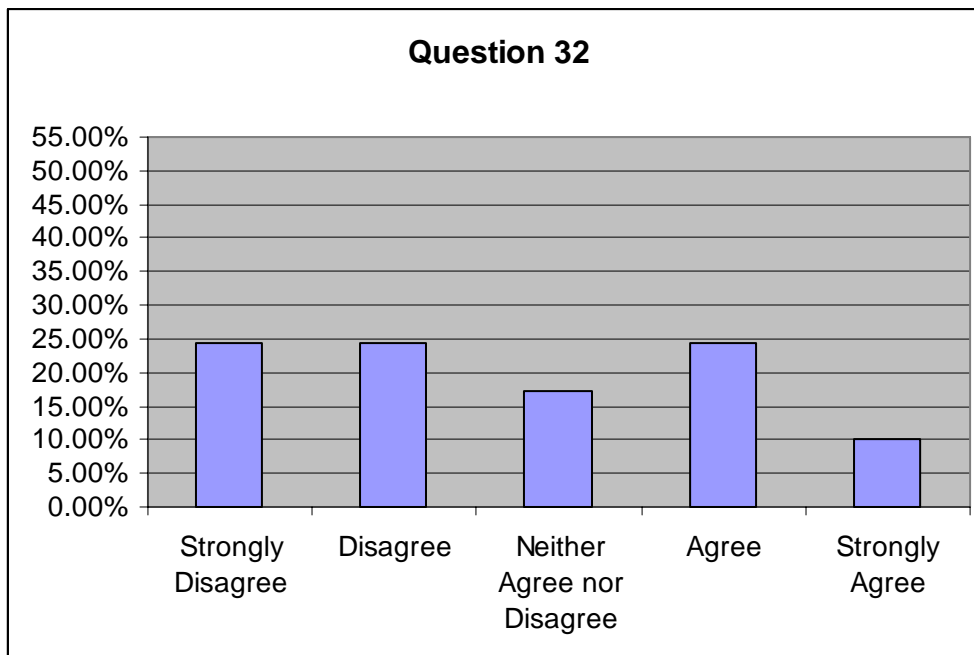


Fig. 69 – I would like to add non-assessed online tests with feedback for students to see what they have learnt or need to work on.

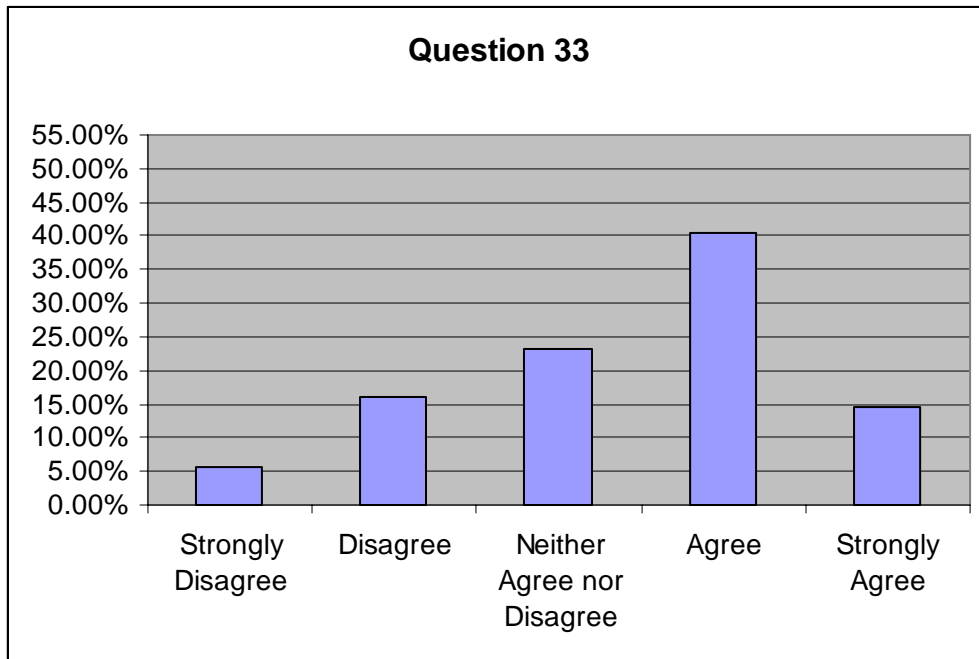


Fig. 70 – I would like to have audio versions of lectures; like a podcast.

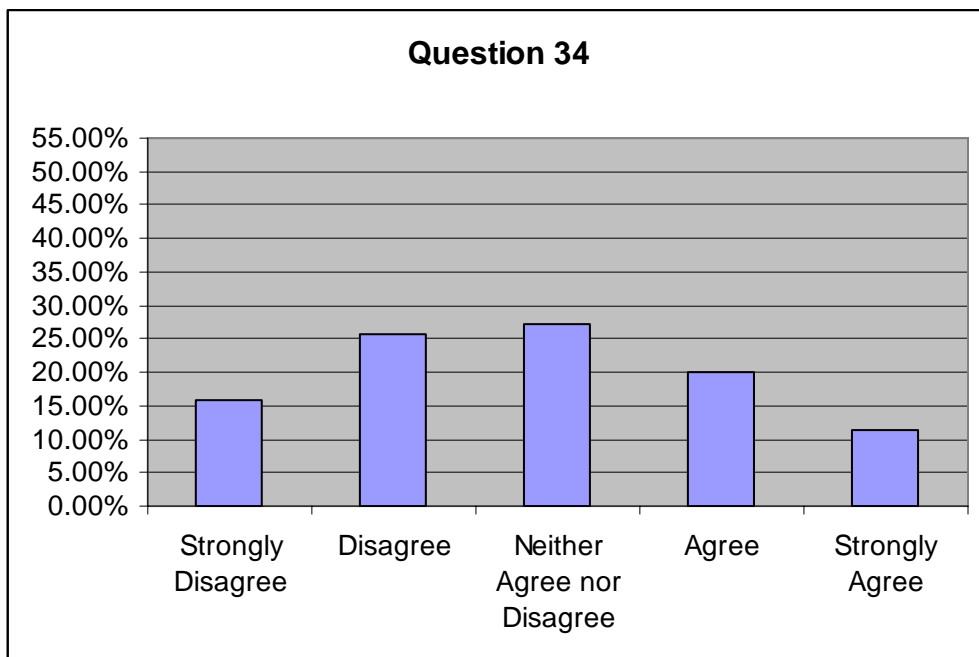


Fig. 71 – I would like to use additional online activities which reinforce material from lectures and seminars.

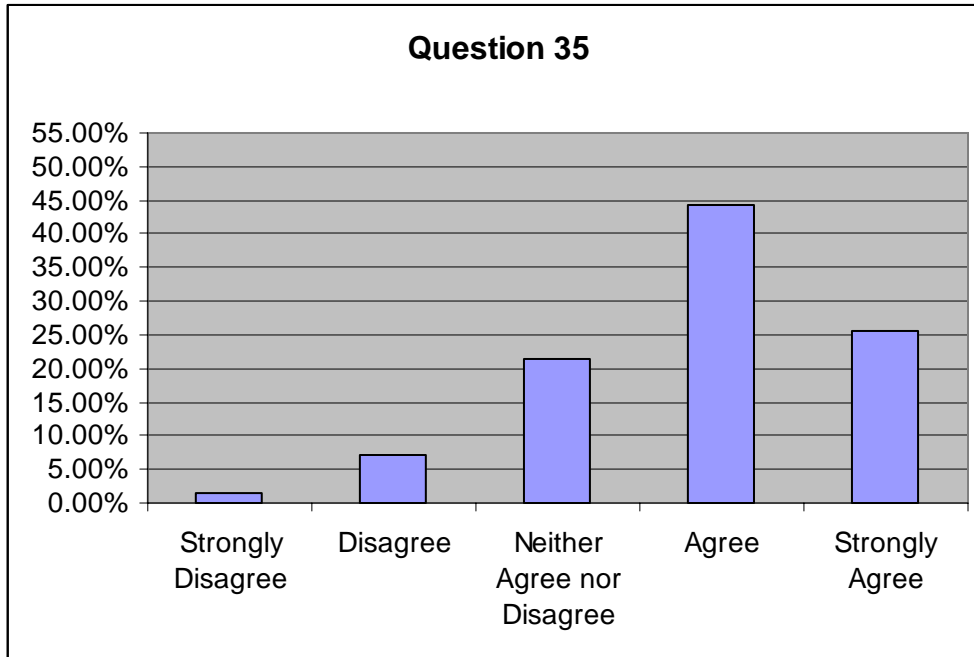


Fig. 72 – I would like students to be able to upload assignments to Blackboard.

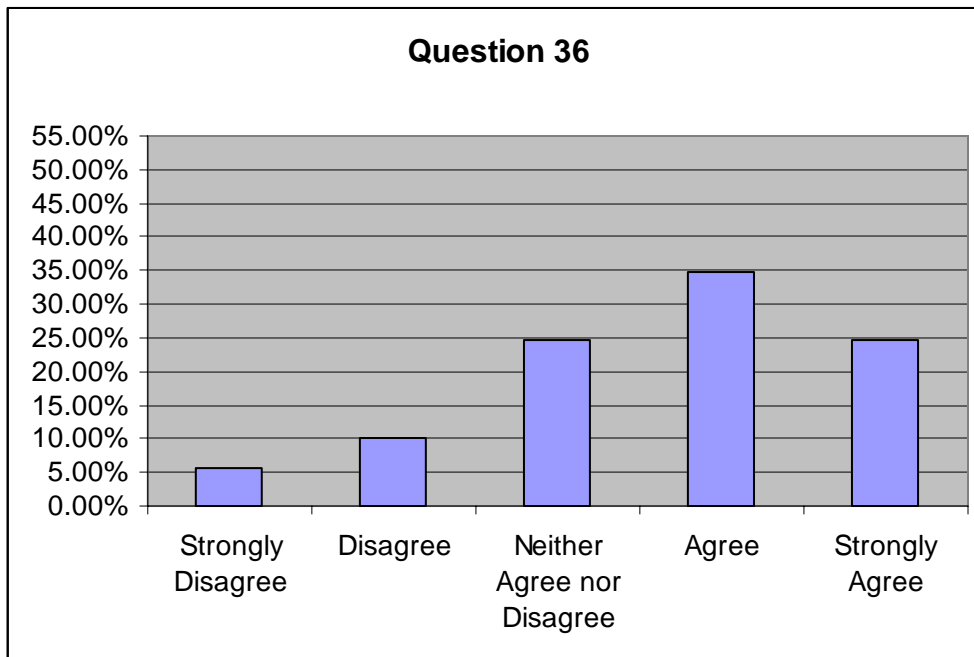


Fig. 73 – I would like to have videos of lectures; like a video podcast.

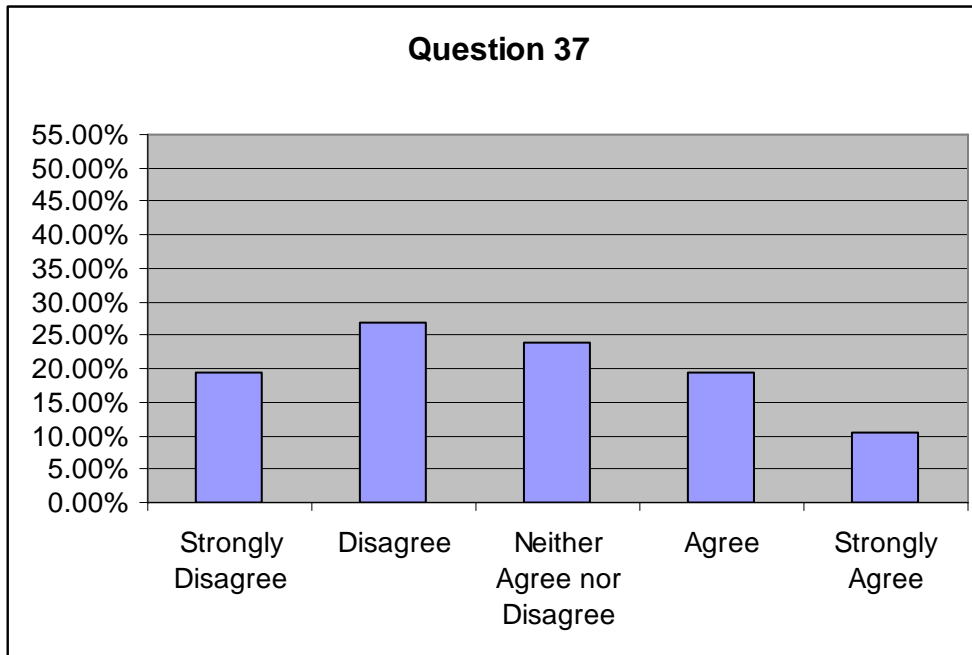


Fig. 74 – I would like to have all the information students need on Blackboard so they don't have to go to lectures.

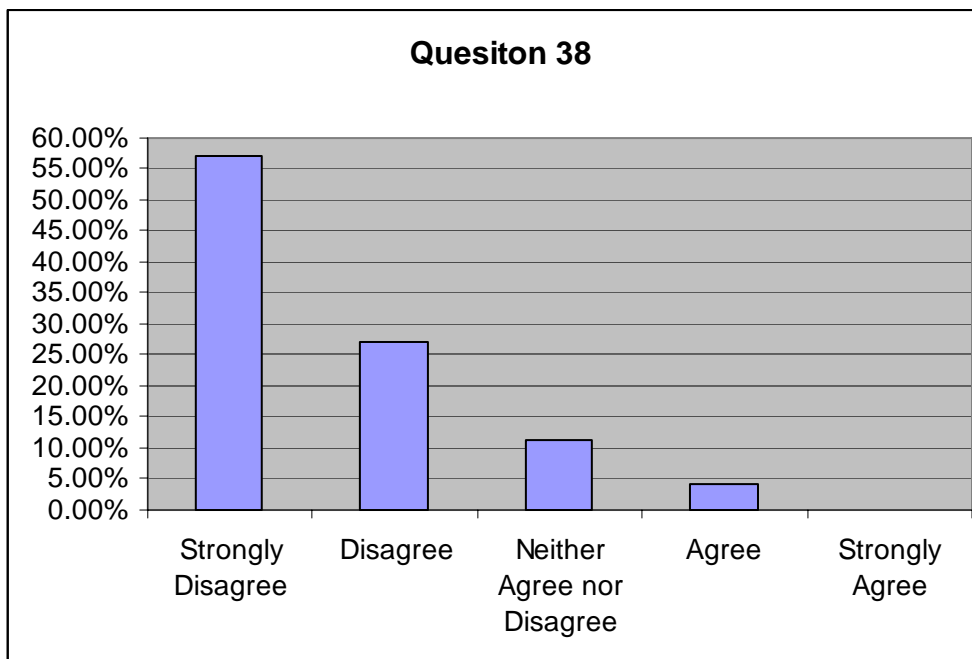


Fig. 75 – I would like to run my exams online.

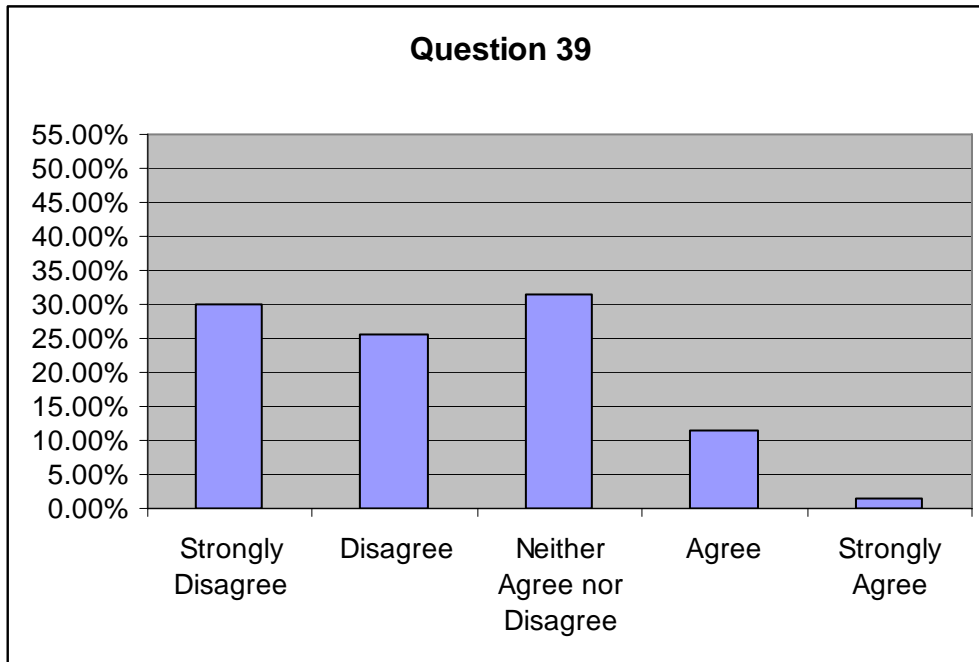


Fig. 76 – I would like students to produce work online in collaboration with other students.

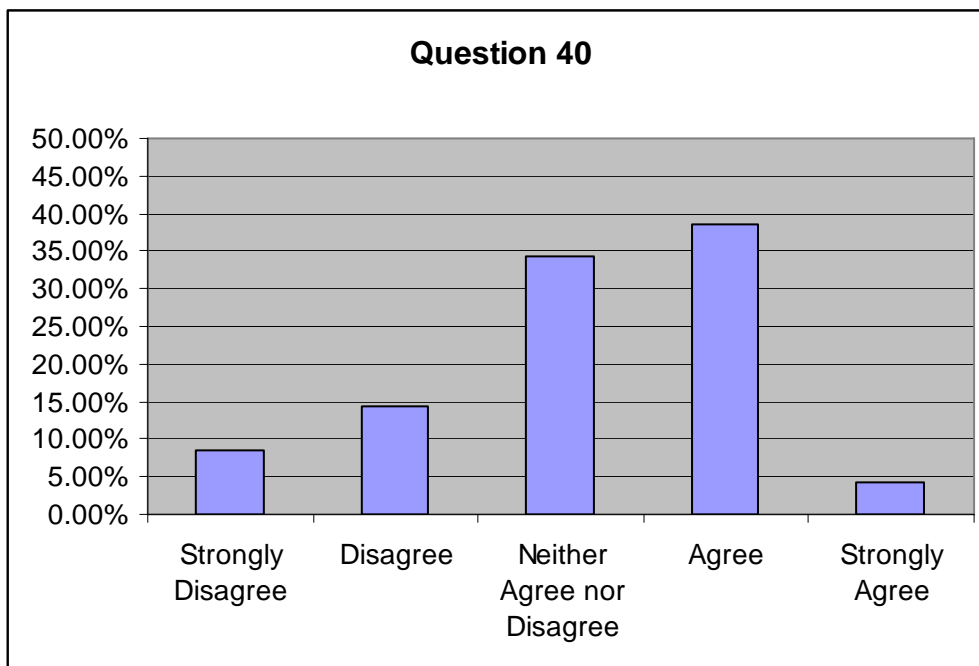
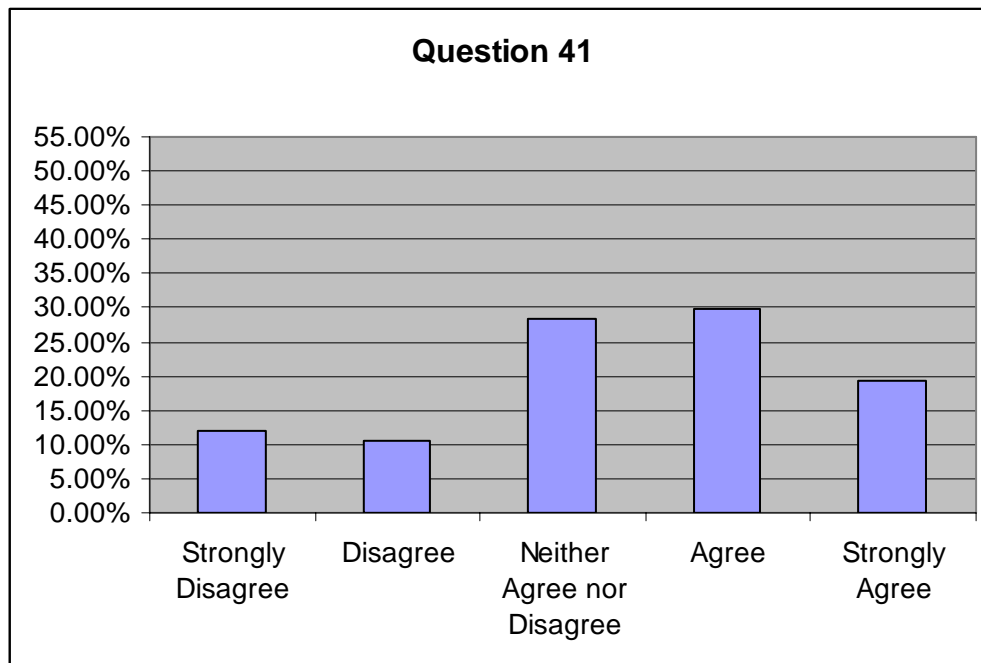


Fig. 77 – I would like to keep an electronic record (electronic portfolio) of what I have done while I've been working at the University. Such as details of professional development, courses, research etc



Support Issues

18% of staff users had experienced problems with Blackboard during the academic year 2005/06.

Fig. 78 – What problems have you experienced?

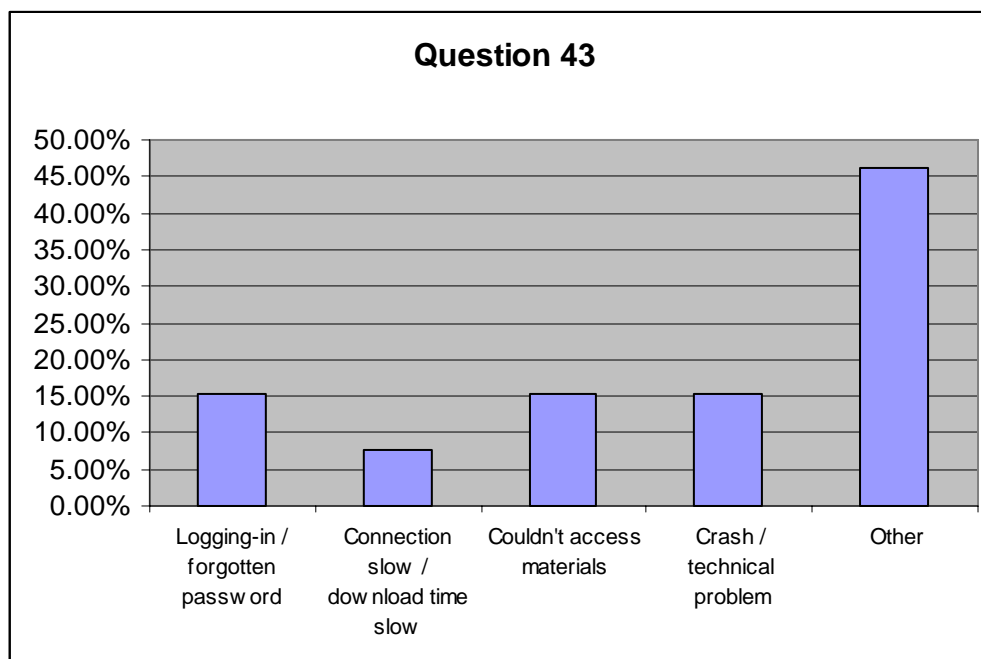


Fig. 79 – What did you do to get help?

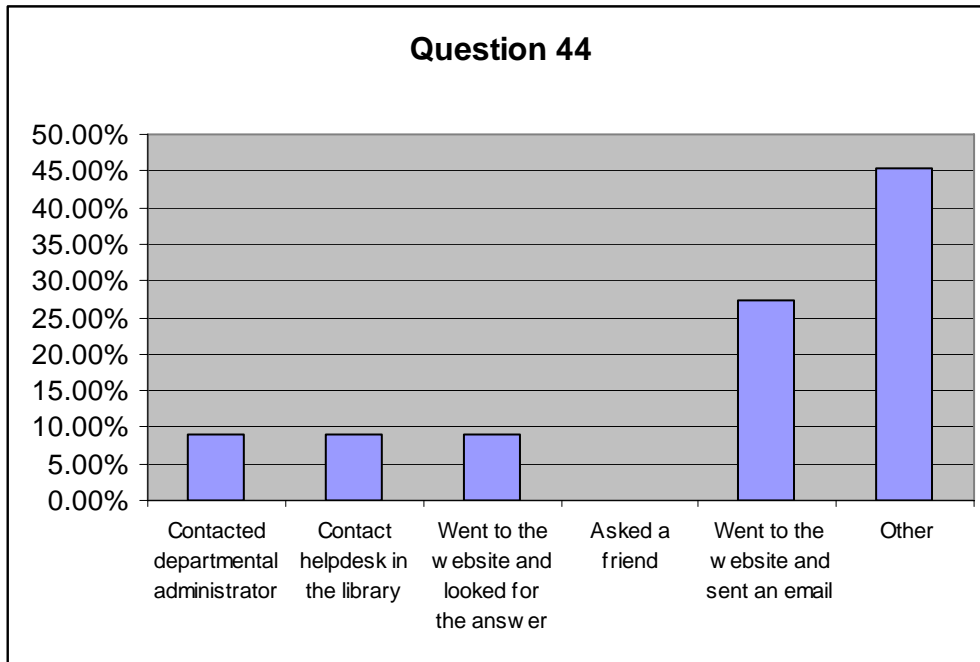


Fig. 80 – Were you satisfied with the response?

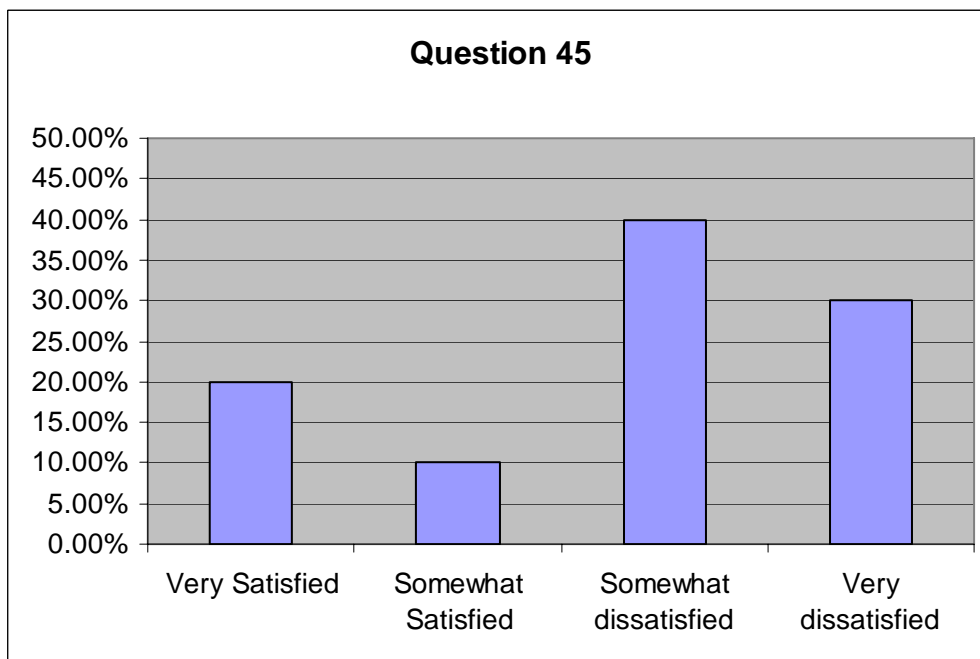
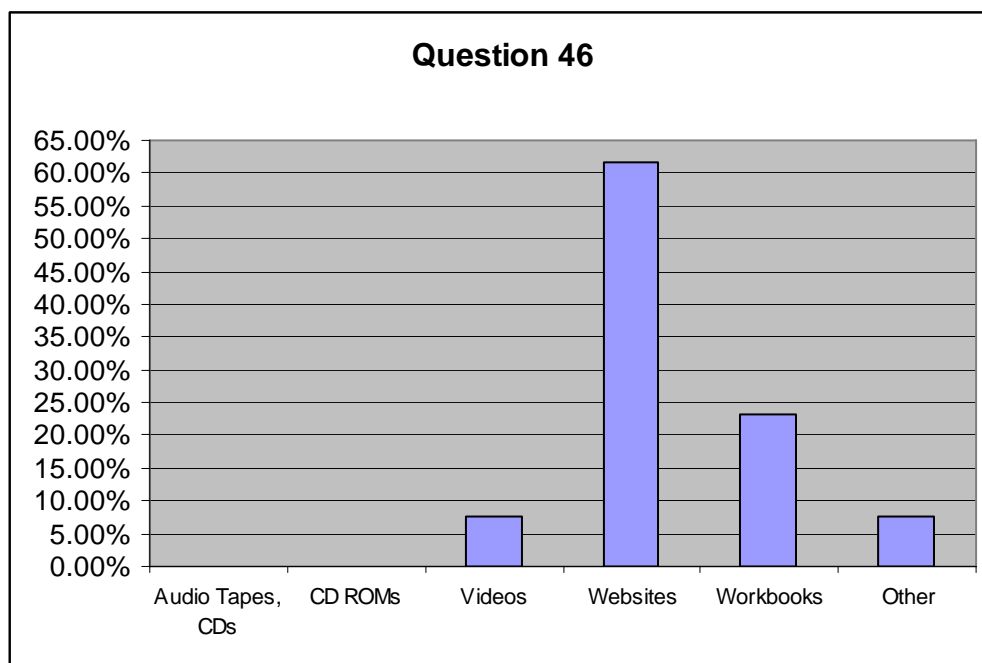


Fig. 81 – Have any of your modules provided any other type of support?



Comments

As only 21 staff respondents added comments they were not coded in the same way as the student respondents' comments. They have been included in full as Appendix 3.

Combined Data

Current Blackboard Use

Fig. 82 – Frequency of Blackboard Use in Term Time.

	Students	Staff
Everyday	13.54%	17.65%
A couple of times a week	43.29%	41.18%
Once a week	18.10%	19.61%
Every few weeks	15.70%	19.61%
Less than once a month	9.37%	1.96%

Fig. 83 – Location of Blackboard Use.

	Students	Staff
On-campus	24.43%	54.90%
Off-campus	28.73%	3.92%
A combination of on and off campus	46.84%	41.18%

Fig. 84 – Quality of Blackboard Modules.

	Students	Staff
All my Blackboard modules are very good	7.24%	16.33%
Some of my Blackboard modules are very good	35.45%	20.41%
My Blackboard modules are generally OK	20.08%	55.10%
Some of my Blackboard modules are OK but others are not very good	31.51%	4.08%
All of my Blackboard modules are of poor quality	5.72%	4.08%

Fig. 85 – Blackboard provides the information need to pass exams.

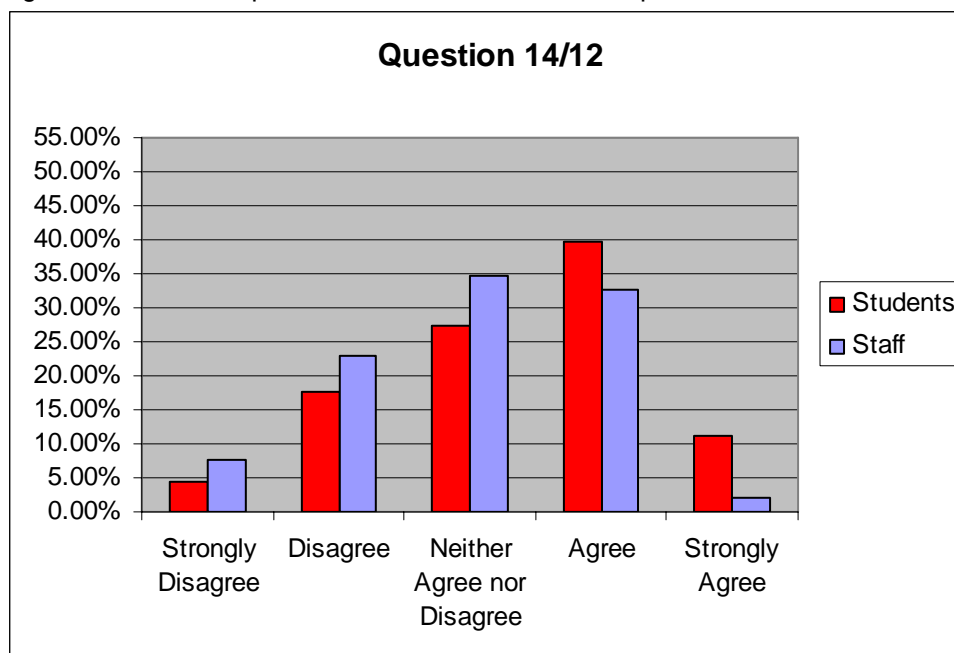


Fig. 86 – Blackboard adds little or nothing to the material in lectures and seminars

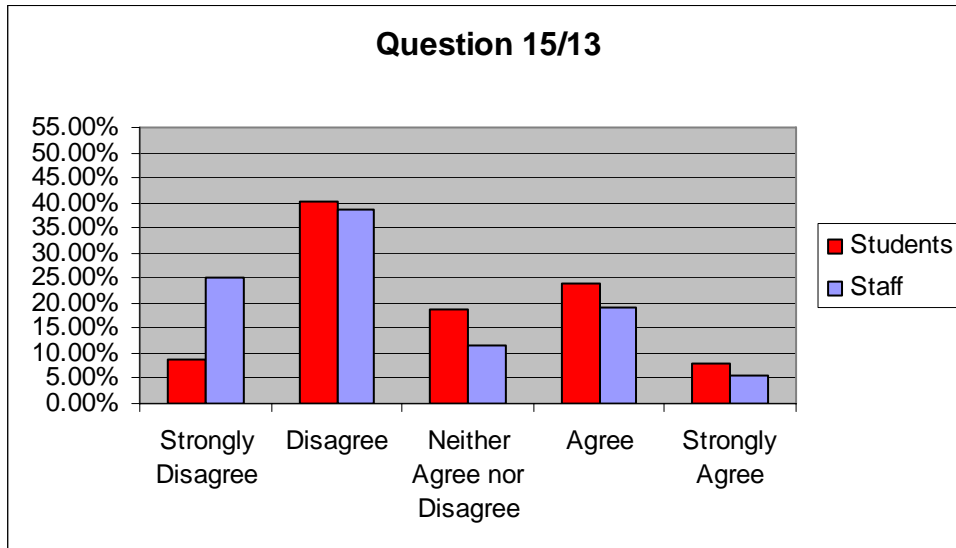


Fig. 87 – Students can go over what has been presented in lectures and seminars by using the information on Blackboard.

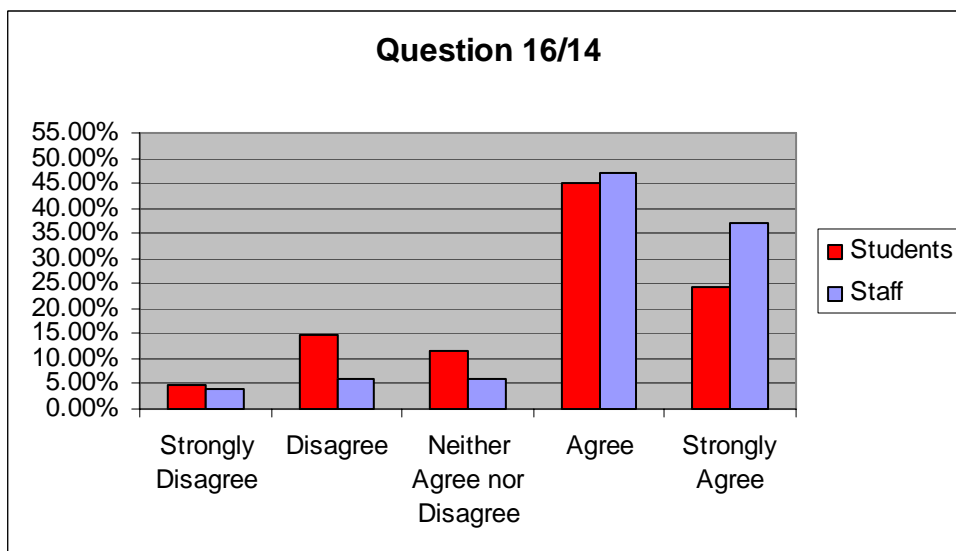


Fig. 88 – Blackboard is a vital part of my studies/teaching.

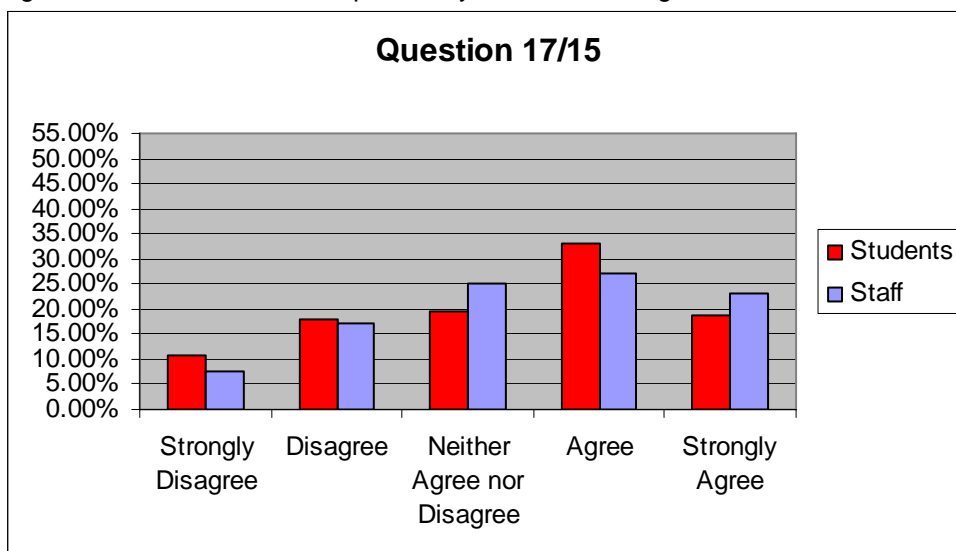


Fig. 89 – Blackboard is boring

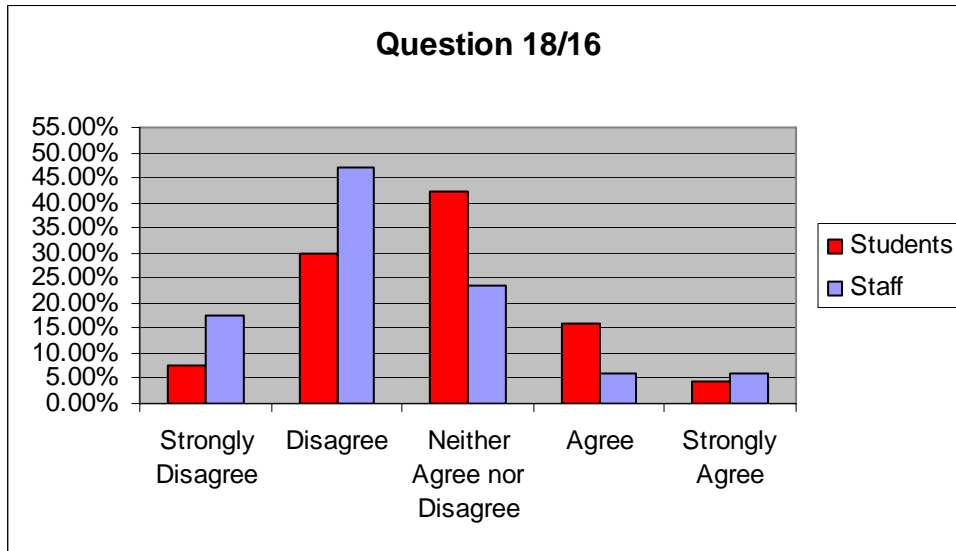


Fig. 90 – I usually use Blackboard whilst on Campus

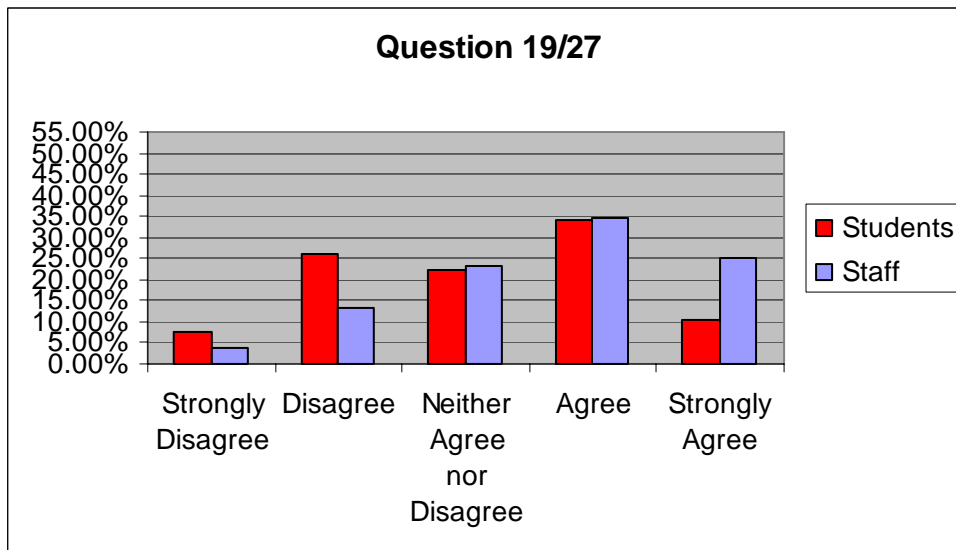


Fig. 91 – I think that using Blackboard is making me/students lazy about taking notes and attending lectures

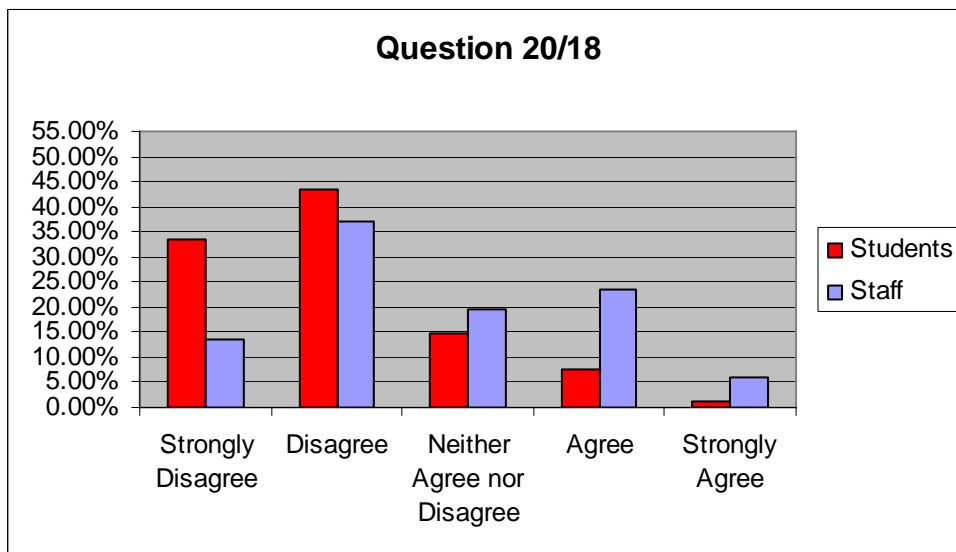


Fig. 92 – I use Blackboard instead of going to/giving some lectures

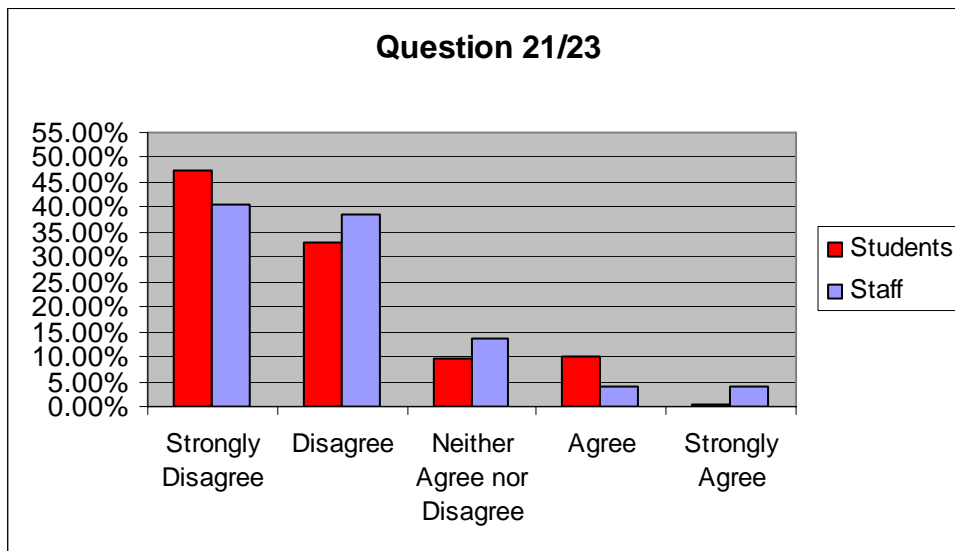


Fig. 93 – I would prefer a simple course website than the overcomplicated ones Blackboard provides

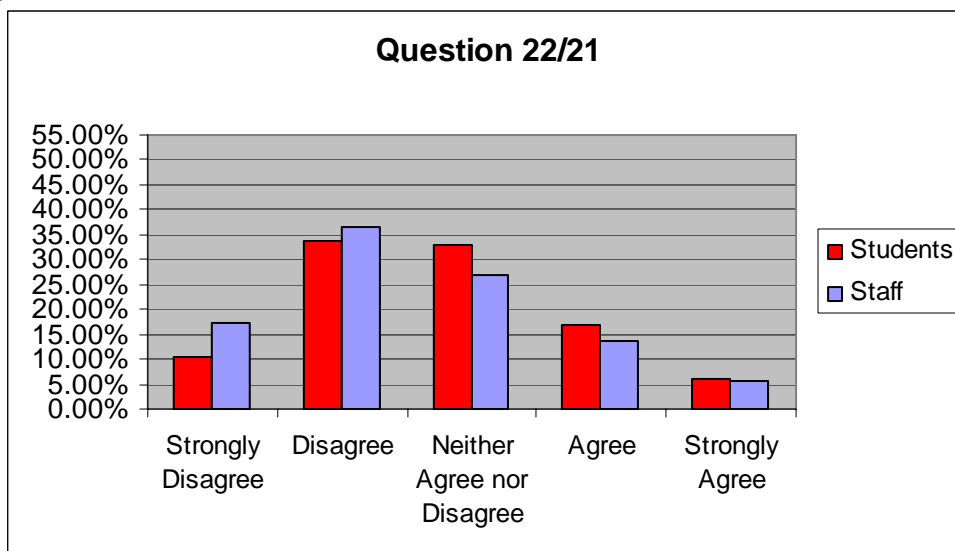


Fig. 94 – If I have a problem with Blackboard, I know where to get help.

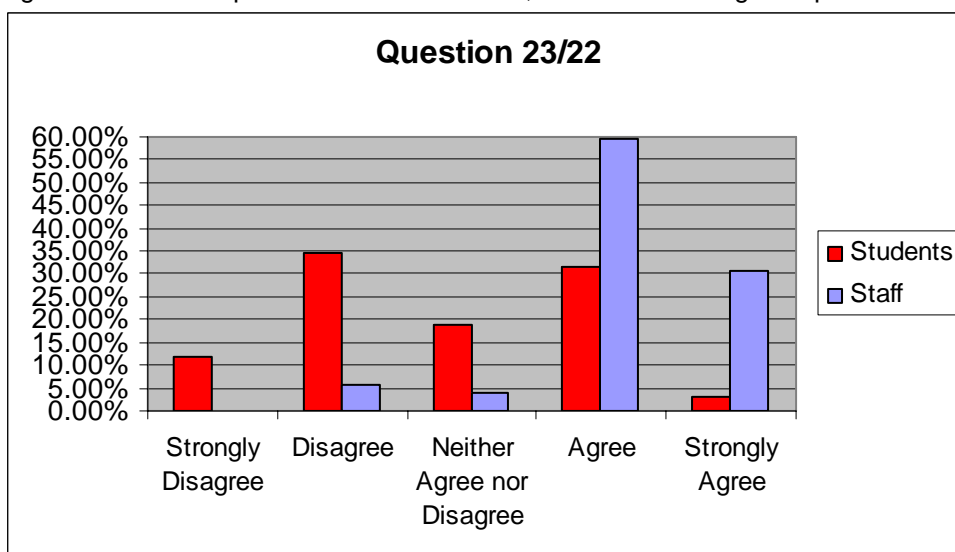


Fig. 95 – Blackboard is a useful addition to lecture and seminars

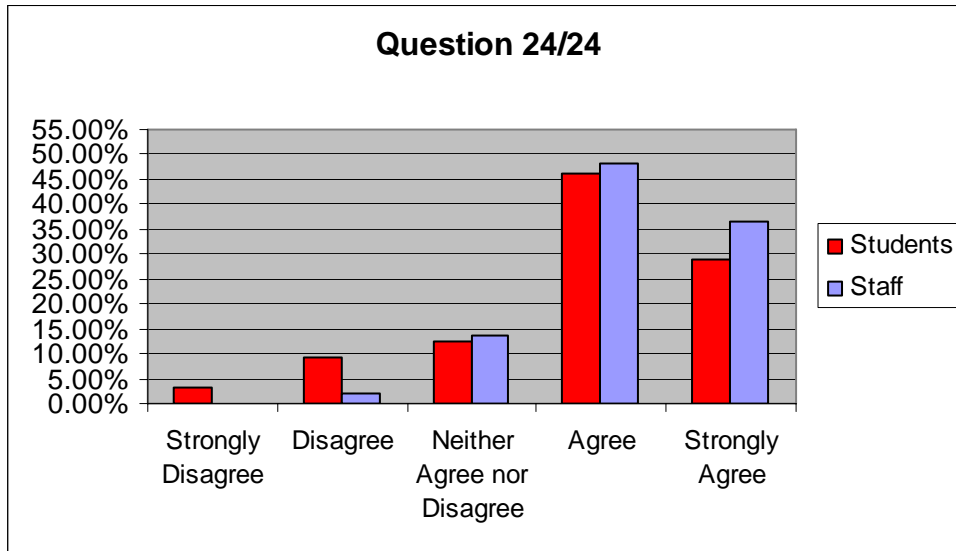


Fig. 96 – I rarely access Blackboard from home.

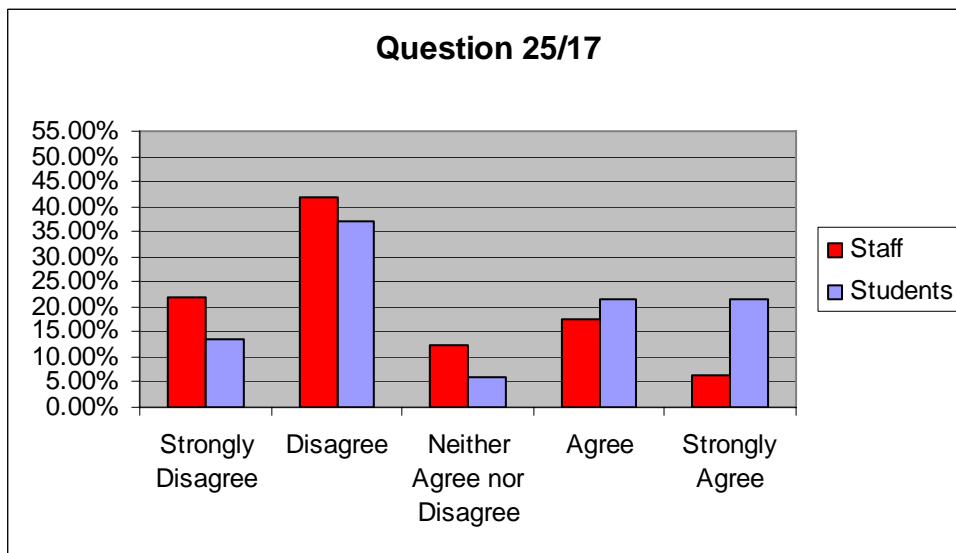


Fig. 97 – Blackboard helps with revision.

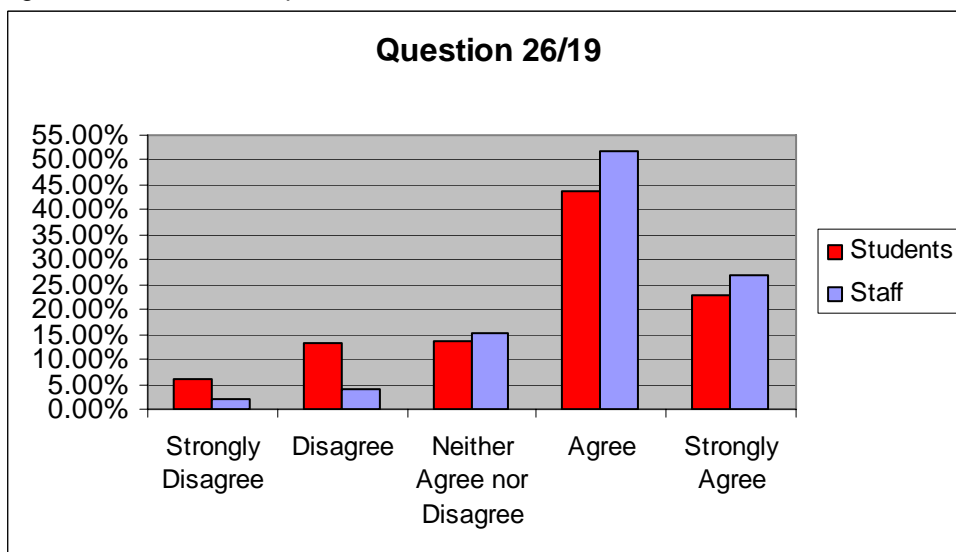


Fig. 98 – It is easy to find the information I/students need in Blackboard.

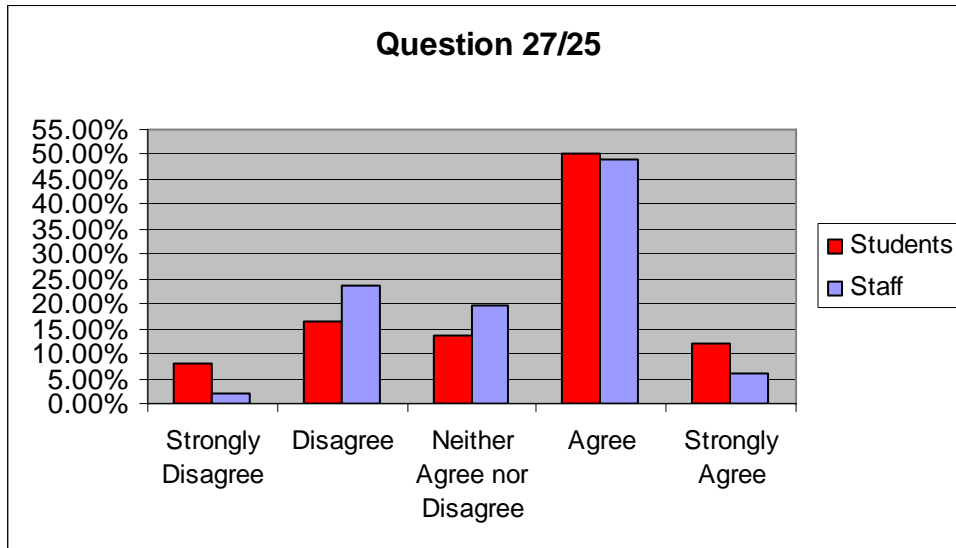


Fig. 99 – Blackboard is difficult to use.

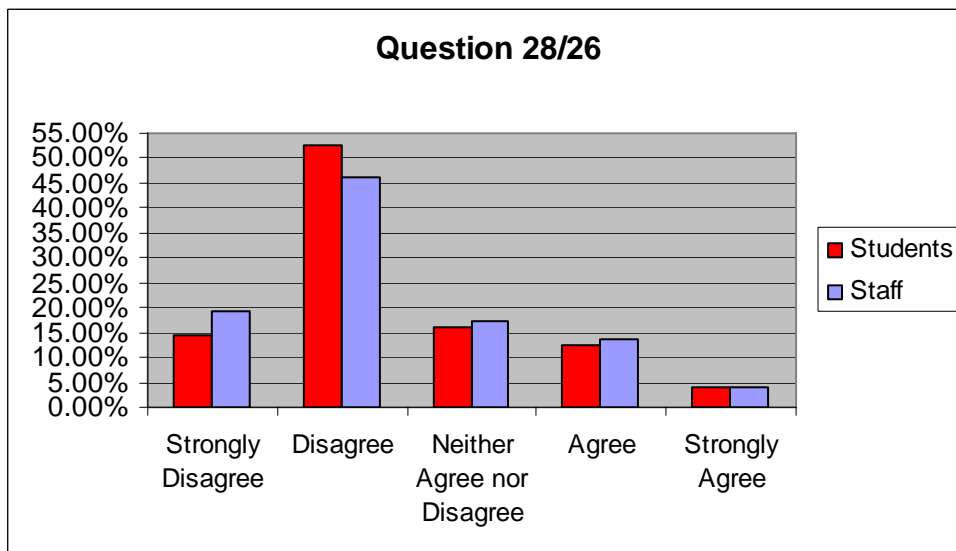


Fig. 100 – The information in Blackboard helps me/students prepare for lectures.

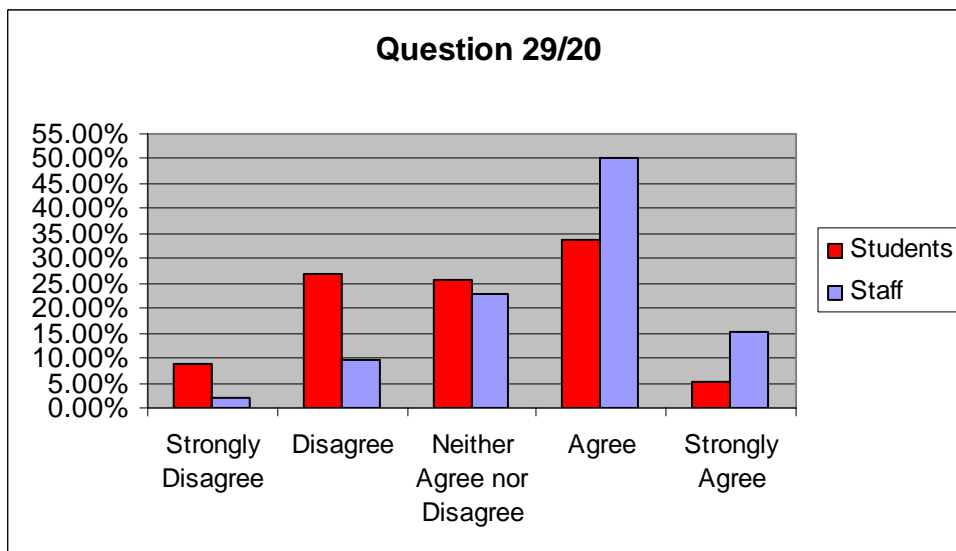
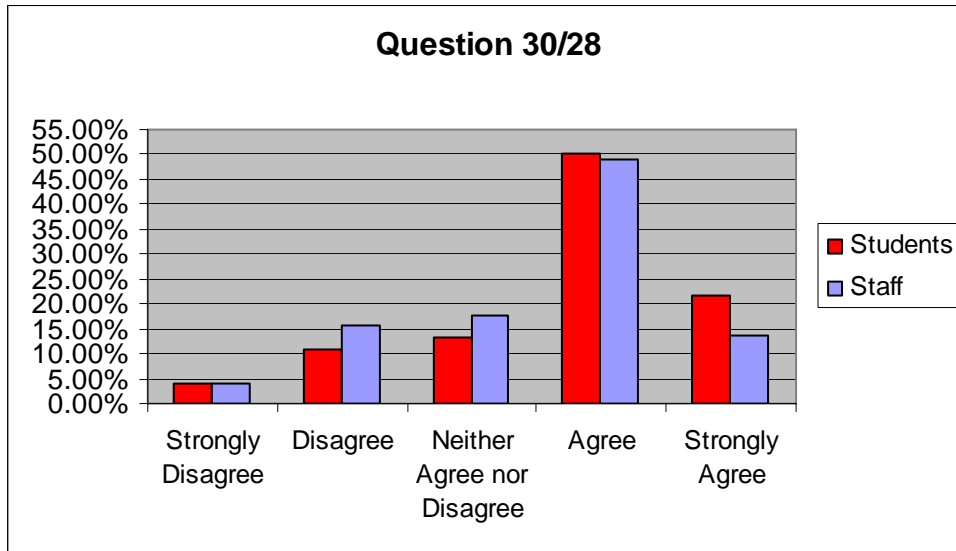


Fig. 101 – I mainly use Blackboard for lecture notes and PowerPoints



Wish List

Fig. 102 – I would like to have online classes to replace some lectures and seminars.

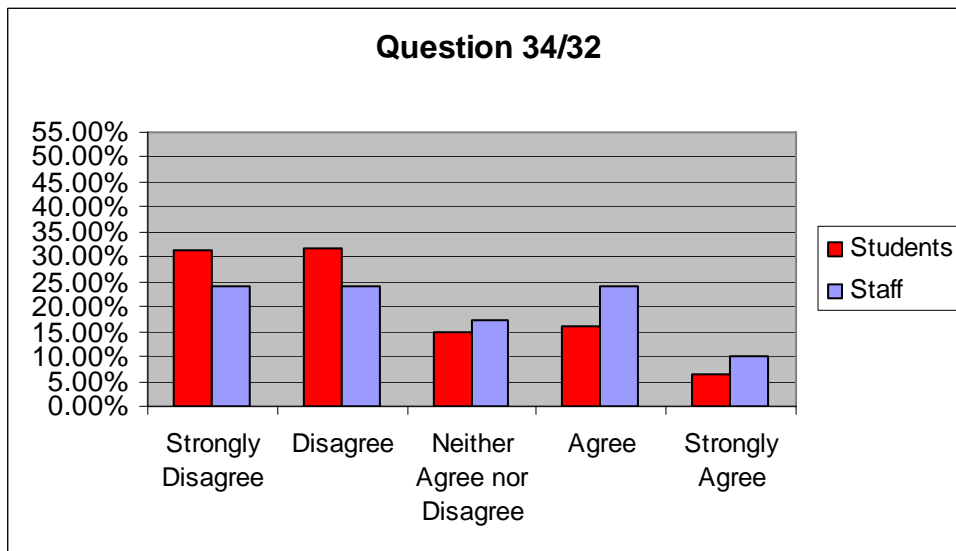


Fig. 103 – I would like to take/add non-assessed online tests with feedback to help me see what I/students have learnt and need to work on.

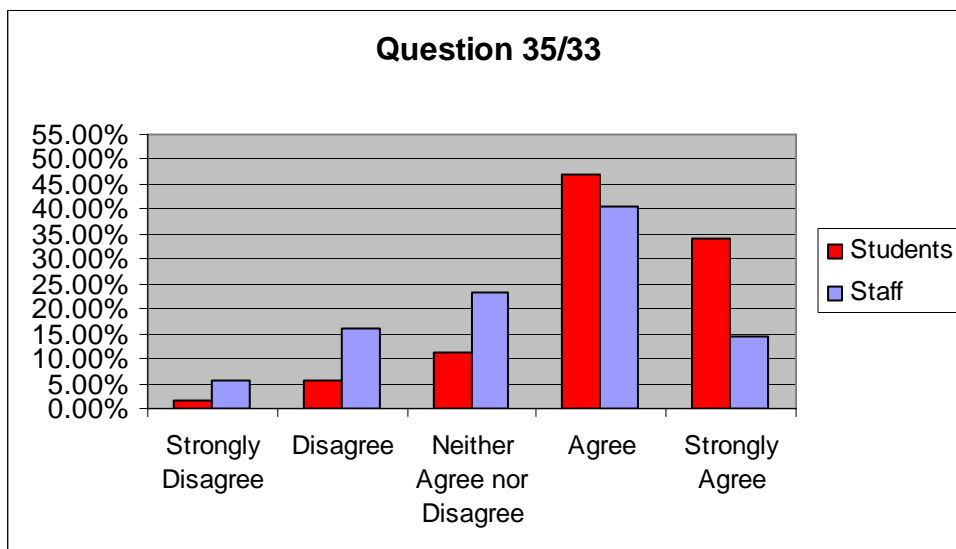


Fig. 104 – I would like to listen to/have audio versions of lectures; like a podcast.

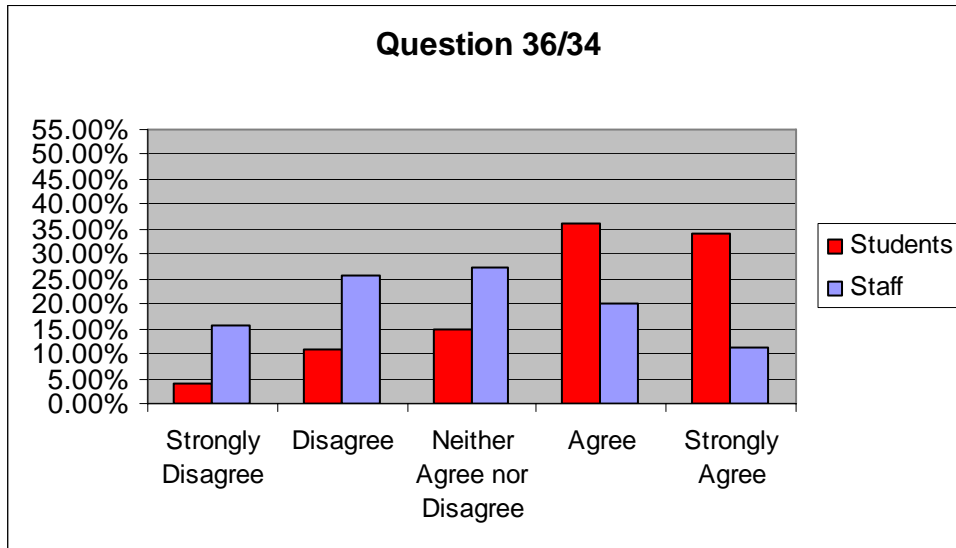


Fig. 105 – I would like to use additional online activities which reinforce material from lectures and seminars.

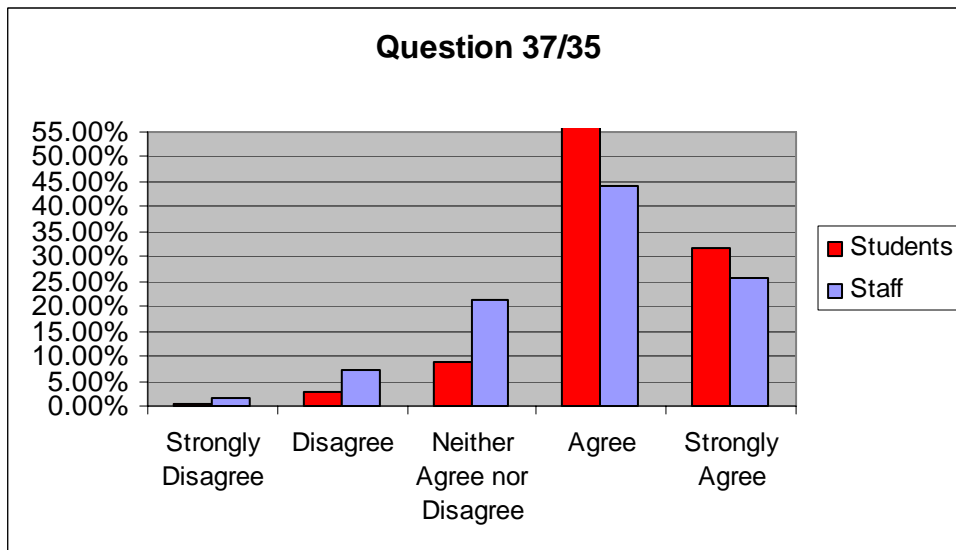


Fig. 106 – I would like [students] to be able to upload assignments to Blackboard

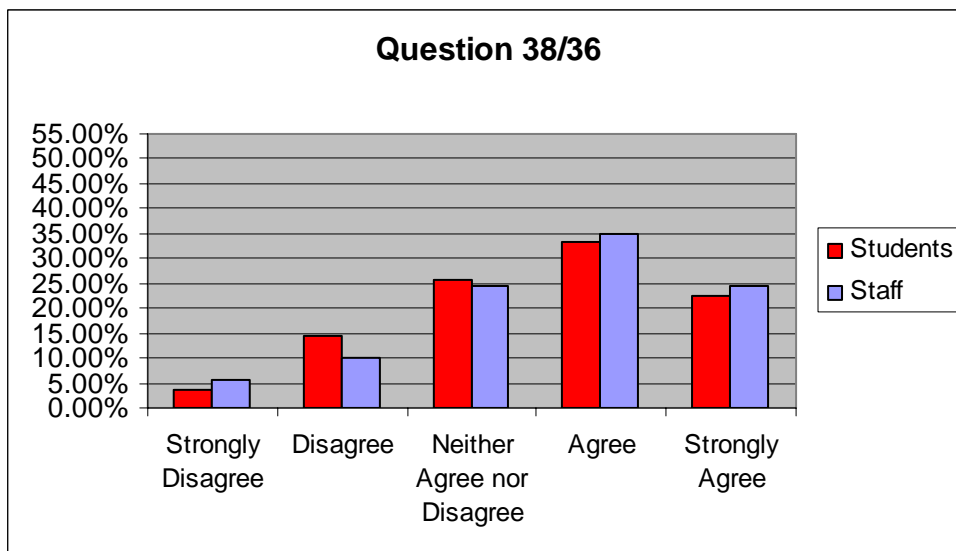


Fig. 107 – I would like to watch/have videos of lectures; like a video podcast.

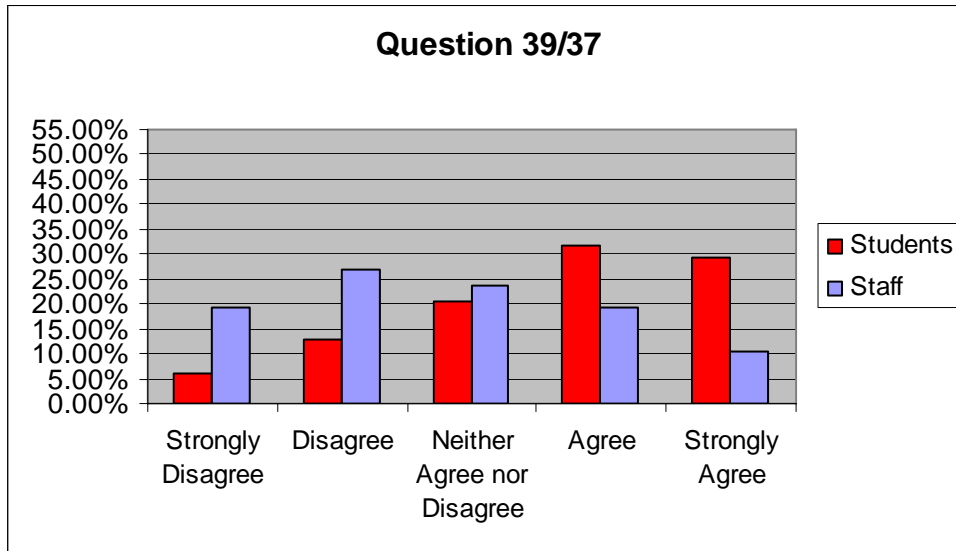


Fig. 108 – I would like to have all the information I/students need on Blackboard so I/they don't need to go to lectures.

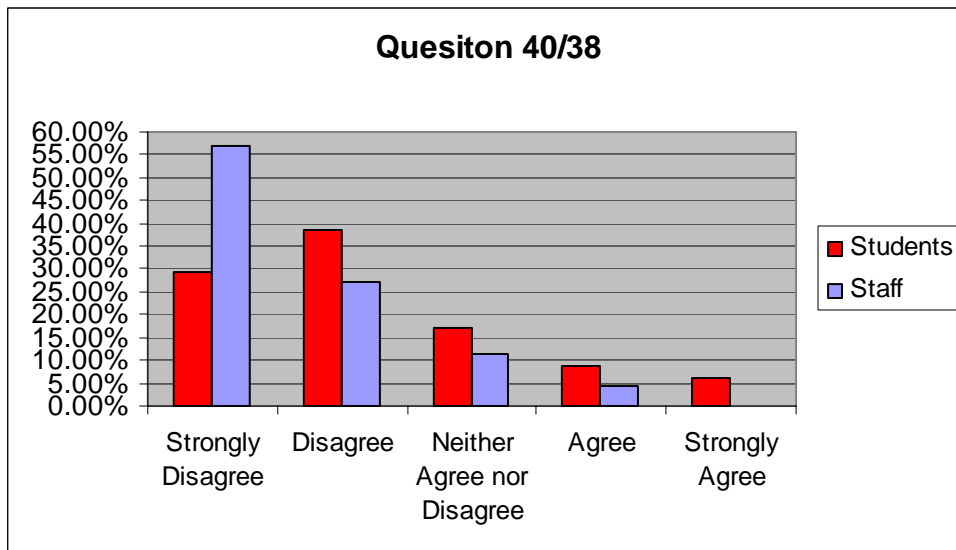


Fig. 109 – I would like to take/run my exams online

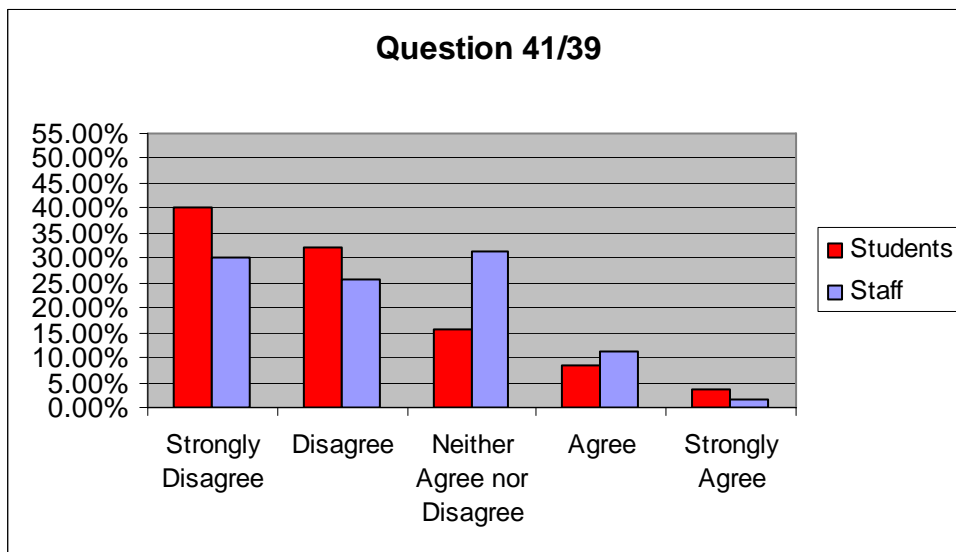


Fig. 110 – I would like [students] to produce work online in collaboration with other students.

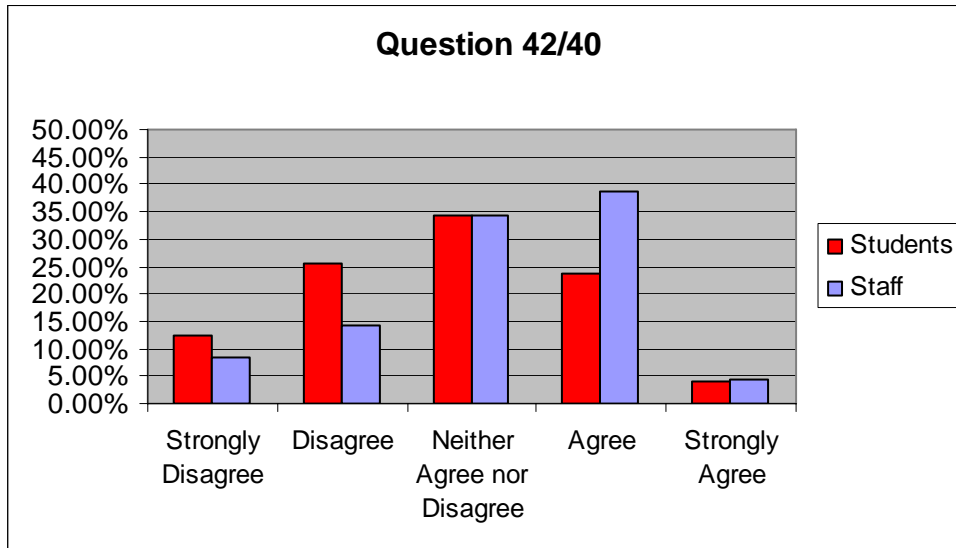
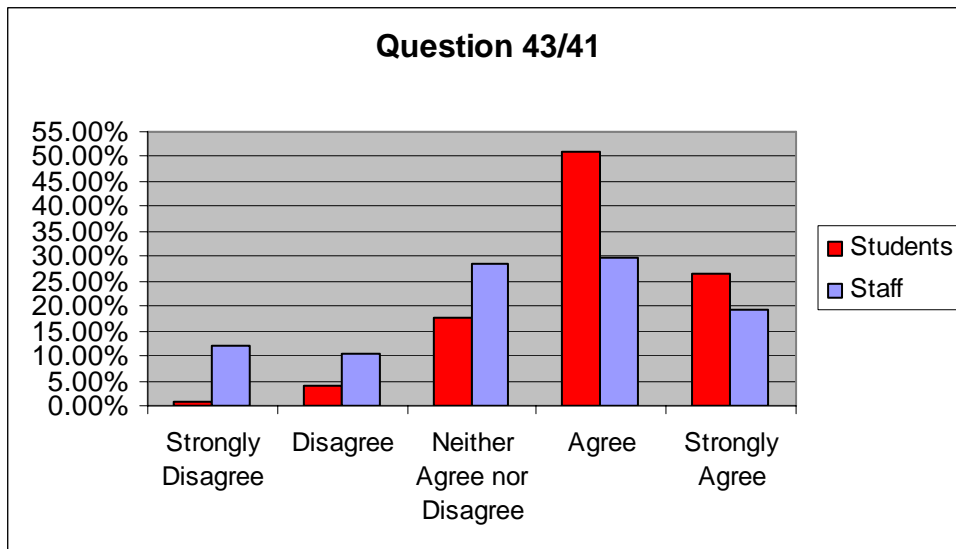


Fig. 111 – I would like to keep an online record of what I've done while I've been at the University.



Appendix 1 – Student Questionnaire

Swansea University Blackboard Survey 2006

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the Swansea University Blackboard Survey 2006.

If you wish to be entered into the prize draw please enter your details at the end of the survey. Notification will be sent to the winner's University email address.

Personal data will not be used in the analysis of the survey.

There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions.

The survey should take between 5 and 10 minutes to complete.

1. Which age group are you in?

- Under 18
- 18–25
- 26–35
- 36–45
- Over 45

2. Are you studying

- Full–Time?
- Part–Time?

3. Which school are you in? (If you are in more than one school, please select you main school.)

- Arts
- Humanities
- Business and Economics
- Human Sciences
- Environment and Society
- Law
- Medicine
- Health Science
- Physical Sciences
- Engineering
- Education
- DACE
- Not sure

4. Which year of study were you in for the academic year 2005/06?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

5. During the academic year 2005/06 were you

- an undergraduate student?
- a postgraduate student?
- taking a non–degree course?
- not sure?

Websites

In this section you will be asked your opinions on a variety of websites.

6. How would you rate the following websites?

The University Website Very Good Good Acceptable Poor Very Poor Don't Use

7.

The BBC Very Good Good Acceptable Poor Very Poor Don't Use

8.

Blackboard at Swansea University Very Good Good Acceptable Poor Very Poor Don't Use

9.

Google Very Good Good Acceptable Poor Very Poor Don't Use

10.

MSN/Hot mail Very Good Good Acceptable Poor Very Poor Don't Use

11.

MySpace.com Very Good Good Acceptable Poor Very Poor Don't Use

12. Could you rank the following in the order that you would visit them when you log on to the internet? If you do not use some of the sites listed, you do not need to rank them.

- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| University Website | <input type="radio"/> | 1 | <input type="radio"/> | 2 | <input type="radio"/> | 3 | <input type="radio"/> | 4 | <input type="radio"/> | 5 | <input type="radio"/> | 6 | <input type="radio"/> | 7 |
| Search Engine – e.g. Google, Yahoo etc. | <input type="radio"/> | 1 | <input type="radio"/> | 2 | <input type="radio"/> | 3 | <input type="radio"/> | 4 | <input type="radio"/> | 5 | <input type="radio"/> | 6 | <input type="radio"/> | 7 |
| Blackboard | <input type="radio"/> | 1 | <input type="radio"/> | 2 | <input type="radio"/> | 3 | <input type="radio"/> | 4 | <input type="radio"/> | 5 | <input type="radio"/> | 6 | <input type="radio"/> | 7 |
| News sites – e.g. BBC, Newspapers etc. | <input type="radio"/> | 1 | <input type="radio"/> | 2 | <input type="radio"/> | 3 | <input type="radio"/> | 4 | <input type="radio"/> | 5 | <input type="radio"/> | 6 | <input type="radio"/> | 7 |
| Chat or Phone – e.g. MSN, Yahoo chat, Skype etc. | <input type="radio"/> | 1 | <input type="radio"/> | 2 | <input type="radio"/> | 3 | <input type="radio"/> | 4 | <input type="radio"/> | 5 | <input type="radio"/> | 6 | <input type="radio"/> | 7 |
| Email | <input type="radio"/> | 1 | <input type="radio"/> | 2 | <input type="radio"/> | 3 | <input type="radio"/> | 4 | <input type="radio"/> | 5 | <input type="radio"/> | 6 | <input type="radio"/> | 7 |
| Other | <input type="radio"/> | 1 | <input type="radio"/> | 2 | <input type="radio"/> | 3 | <input type="radio"/> | 4 | <input type="radio"/> | 5 | <input type="radio"/> | 6 | <input type="radio"/> | 7 |

If you selected other, please give details.

- 13. Have you used Blackboard in the academic year 2005/2006?**
- Yes
 - No

If you selected 'No', then go to Question 34

Blackboard

In this section you will be asked some questions about Blackboard.

- 14. Blackboard provides the information I need to pass exams.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 15. Blackboard adds little or nothing to the material I receive in lectures and seminars.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 16. I can go over what has been presented in lectures and seminars by using the information on Blackboard.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree

17. Blackboard is a vital part of my studies.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

18. Blackboard is boring.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

19. I usually use Blackboard whilst on campus.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

20. I think that using Blackboard is making me lazy about taking notes and attending lectures.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

21. I use Blackboard instead of going to some lectures.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

22. I would prefer a simple course website than the over complicated ones that Blackboard has.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

23. If I have a problem with Blackboard, I know where to get help.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

24. Blackboard is a useful addition to the lectures and seminars.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

25. I rarely access the information on Blackboard from home.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

26. Blackboard helps with my revision.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

27. It is easy to find the information I need in Blackboard.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

28. Blackboard is difficult to use.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

29. The information in Blackboard helps me prepare for lectures.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

30. I mainly use Blackboard for lecture notes and PowerPoints.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

In this section you will be asked some questions about how and when you use Blackboard.

31. How often do you log on to Blackboard during term time?

- Everyday
- A couple of times a week
- Once a week
- Every few weeks
- Less than once a month

32. When you use Blackboard do you use it mainly

- on-campus
- off-campus
- a combination of on and off-campus

33. Which statement is the closest to how you feel about the content of your Blackboard modules?

- All my Blackboard modules are very good
- Some of my Blackboard modules are very good
- My Blackboard modules are generally OK
- Some of my Blackboard modules are OK but others are not very good
- All of my Blackboard modules are of poor quality

Wish List

In this section you will be asked about things you might like to be able to do.

34. I would like to have online classes to replace some lectures and seminars.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

35. I would like to take non-assessed online tests with feedback to help me see what I have learnt or need to work on.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

36. I would like to listen to/download audio versions of lectures; like a podcast.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

37. I would like to use additional online activities which reinforce material from lectures and seminars.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- 38. I would like to be able to upload my assignments to Blackboard.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 39. I would like to watch download videos of lectures; like a video podcast.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 40. I would like to have all the information I need on Blackboard so I don't have to go to lectures.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 41. I would like to take my exams online.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 42. I would like to produce work online in collaboration with other students.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 43. I would like to keep an online record of what I have done while I've been at the University**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree

44. Have you had any problems with Blackboard in the academic year 2005/06?

- Yes
- No

If you selected 'No', then go to Question 48

Support

In this section you will be asked about problems you may have experienced with Blackboard

45. What problems have you experienced when using Blackboard? You may select more than one.

- No problems
- Logging-in / forgotten password
- Connection slow / download time slow
- Couldn't access materials
- Crash / technical problem
- Other

If you selected other, please give details.

46. What did you do to get help? You may select more than one.

- Contacted departmental administrator
- Contacted the helpdesk in the Library
- Went to the website and looked for the answer
- Asked a friend
- Went to the website and filled in a form/sent an email
- Other – please specify

Details

47. Were you satisfied with the response?

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

48. Have any of your modules provided any other type of support? You may select more than one.

- Websites
- Workbooks
- Videos
- Audio Tapes, CDs
- CD ROMs
- Other

If you selected other, please give details

Comments

49. If you would like to make any further comments about any aspect of Blackboard and e-learning at the University, please use the space below.

50. Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

If you would like to enter the prize draw, please enter your University email address in the box below.

Personal data will not be used for the analysis of the questionnaire.

You can email questionnaire to blackboard@swan.ac.uk or send it to Blackboard, Library and Information Systems, Swansea University

Thank you for your help

Appendix 2 – Staff Questionnaire

Swansea University Staff Blackboard Survey 2006

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the Swansea University Blackboard Survey 2006.

There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions.

The survey should take between 5 and 10 minutes to complete.

1. Which school are you in? If work you across more than one school or department, please select your main school.

- Arts
- Humanities
- Business and Economics
- Human Sciences
- Environment and Society
- Law
- Medicine
- Health Science
- Physical Sciences
- Engineering
- Education
- DACE
- Central Support Role – Careers, LIS, Registry, SDU etc.
- Not Sure

2. Do you work

- Full-Time?
- Part-Time?

3. How many years have you been working at the University?

- 1 or less
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

In this section you will be asked your opinions on a variety of websites.

4. How would you rate the following websites?

The University Website Very Good Good Acceptable Poor Very Poor Don't Use

5.

The BBC Very Good Good Acceptable Poor Very Poor Don't Use

6.

Blackboard at Swansea University Very Good Good Acceptable Poor Very Poor Don't Use

7.

Google Very Good Good Acceptable Poor Very Poor Don't Use

8.

MSN/Hot mail Very Good Good Acceptable Poor Very Poor Don't Use

9.

MySpace.com Very Good Good Acceptable Poor Very Poor Don't Use

10. Could you rank the following in the order that you would visit them when you log on to the internet? If you do not use some of the sites listed, you do not need to rank them.

University Website	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7
Search Engine – e.g. Google, Yahoo etc.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7
Blackboard	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7
News sites – e.g. BBC, Newspapers etc.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7
Chat or Phone – e.g. MSN, Yahoo chat, Skype etc.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7
Email	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7
Other	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7

If you selected other, please give details.

11. Have you used Blackboard in the academic year 2005/2006?

- Yes
- No

In this section you will be asked some questions about Blackboard.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

12. Blackboard provides the information students need to pass exams.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- 13. Blackboard adds little or nothing to the material I give in lectures and seminars.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 14. Students can go over what has been presented in lectures and seminars by using the information on Blackboard.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 15. Blackboard is a vital part of my teaching.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 16. Blackboard is boring.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 17. I rarely access the information on Blackboard from home.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 18. I think that using Blackboard is making students lazy about taking notes and attending lectures.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 19. Blackboard helps with students' revision.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree

20. The information in Blackboard helps students prepare for lectures.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

21. I would prefer a simple course website than the over complicated ones that Blackboard has.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

22. If I have a problem with Blackboard, I know where to get help.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

23. I use Blackboard to replace some lectures.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

24. Blackboard is a useful addition to the lectures and seminars.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

25. It is easy to find the information students need in Blackboard.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

26. Blackboard is difficult to use.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

27. I usually use Blackboard whilst on campus.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

28. I mainly use Blackboard for lecture notes and PowerPoints.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

In this section you will be asked some questions about how and when you use Blackboard.

29. How often do you log on to Blackboard during term time?

- Everyday
- A couple of times a week
- Once a week
- Every few weeks
- Less than once a month

30. When you use Blackboard do you use it mainly

- on-campus
- off-campus
- a combination of on and off-campus

31. Which statement is the closest to how you feel about the content of your Blackboard modules?

- All my Blackboard modules are very good
- Some of my Blackboard modules are very good
- My Blackboard modules are generally OK
- Some of my Blackboard modules are OK but others are not very good
- All of my Blackboard modules are of poor quality

In this section you will be asked about things you might like to be able to do.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

32. I would like to have online classes to replace some lectures and seminars.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

33. I would like to add non-assessed online tests with feedback for students to see what they have learnt or need to work on.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

34. I would like to have audio versions of lectures; like a podcast.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- 35. I would like to use additional online activities which reinforce material from lectures and seminars.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 36. I would like students to be able to upload assignments to Blackboard.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 37. I would like to have videos of lectures; like a video podcast.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 38. I would like to have all the information students need on Blackboard so they don't have to go to lectures.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 39. I would like to run my exams online.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 40. I would like students to produce work online in collaboration with other students.**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 41. I would like to keep an electronic record (electronic portfolio) of what I have done while I've been working at the University. Such as details of professional development, courses, research etc**
- Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 42. Have you had any problems with Blackboard in the academic year 2005/06?**
- Yes
 - No

In this section you will be asked about problems you may have experienced with Blackboard

43. What problems have you experienced when using Blackboard? You may select more than one.

- No problems
- Logging-in / forgotten password
- Connection slow / download time slow
- Couldn't access materials
- Crash / technical problem
- Other

If you selected other, please give details.

44. What did you do to get help? You may select more than one.

- Contacted departmental administrator
- Contacted the helpdesk in the Library
- Went to the website and looked for the answer
- Asked a friend
- Went to the website and filled in a form/sent an email
- Other – please specify

Details

45. Were you satisfied with the response?

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

46. Have any of your modules provided any other type of support? You may select more than one.

- Websites
- Workbooks
- Videos
- Audio Tapes, CDs
- CD ROMs
- Other

If you selected other, please give details

47. If you would like to make any further comments about any aspect of Blackboard and e-learning at the University, please use the space below.

48.

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

If you would be willing to take part in a focus group to discuss Blackboard further, please enter your University email address in the box below.

Personal data will not be used for the analysis of the questionnaire.

Appendix 3 – Staff Respondents' Comments

Some detail that would enable identification of respondents has been removed.

Features on my wishlist: Move Forward One Year feature so that timed release of material could be automated year on year. I tend to make materials for a lecture (e.g. the slides) before the lecture and review materials, questions, further reading etc after. Only way to do this is to reset all the dates every year! Grading of essay and short answer questions should allow commentary to be added. It would be nice to explain why a student doesn't get full marks for a question. The model answer is not enough because student may deviate from this and still be correct. There's no easy way to grade material posted in the digital drop box and return comments to students. In general, managing submissions made through the drop box is difficult. Also students see little difference between uploading an assignment and submitting an assignment but only the latter passes the material on to the grader! Perhaps the new upload features in the quiz will help to impose some structure here! Bulletin board [at least prior to 7] is not very useful! Students can't add new topics which makes it very limited. I've not seen a good use case for the Virtual Classroom and chat features. Perhaps not a Blackboard feature but University support for Blogging, Wikis and other collaboration tools would be useful.

A technical issue: it would be nice to be able to rearrange folders (directories) in blackboard. The last time I used this it wasn't possible. Editing features when putting together online tests could be more intuitive and more use friendly.

Another wishlist item: There are some materials which we wish to make available to all students of any computer science module (in particular, archives of past exam papers). At present, we can only make files available by associating them with particular modules. This misses some students. It would be good to be able to upload something which any student of the University could download, provided they had a Blackboard account.

Any inadequacies are my own as I have not spent enough time learning how to use BlackBoard. On the few occasions that I use it I find it very useful. As many of us find it difficult to find the time to go to the training a Staff Blackboard handbook might be useful, so that we can learn to use it properly whilst sitting at our own desks.

Apart from the posting of slides and notes the most useful element of Blackboard is instant communication with students on any important matters. Information logged on Blackboard is available to all and I do not have to deal with students claiming that they were not provided with information as it is all together in one location. Helpdesk is very responsive. Training materials are good.

Blackboard is an interesting development. It should be particularly useful for those with large lecture loads, i.e. teaching in disciplines with small numbers of colleagues and class sizes of circa 20. Unfortunately such units spend some much time struggling with current commitments, insufficient time to learn how to make use of new developments properly.

Blackboard is not very intuitive to use.

I have seen assessment work simply copied from peoples BB notes Removal of much incentive to attend Campus and to keep pastoral care contact. Cannot believe you used the word collaboration along with assessment earlier – specifically banned in most University rules. Finding time to familiarize and a working scanner to actually make use of BB is the problem. There are too few scanners and those in ML are often unusable...word files input may be OK but a lot of things that are usefully put on BB need scanning.

I think Blackboard is fine – the problem is my inability to free up time to learn to use it more effectively. It's still quite new to me and I'm very aware that it can be used much more effectively as a resource for students, but I really don't feel that it should replace face-to-face learning in general as students gain from direct (non-virtual) interaction with each other.

I think Blackboard is hugely over-rated but it seems to be expected that we use it. I see little evidence in students' work that they consult it or use the links or information there to inform their assignments. Its main benefit for me has been to save me carrying piles of handouts and reading lists to lectures, which is a great saving – it also saves paper because you always end up printing more than you need. We are planning to use it in future though for electronic submission of essays to try and combat Internet plagiarism.

I think it would be wise of the University to contemplate moving to Moodle for its VLE and ePortfolio. The OU is investing millions in it and it looks as if open source will be the way to go! I think it will be important to develop the University online team and incorporate people who look at new developments, who can help with pedagogy. [We] are currently looking at developing a postgraduate qualification in e-learning/open and distance learning and would like to work with LIS in developing this

I think that the way one needs to put materials on Blackboard is too cumbersome though I have to say that the support staff are great at helping. In particular powerpoint presentations since many students found it difficult to download these presentations. It was one of the reasons that motivated me not to use Blackboard this academic year though I recognise the immense benefits that Blackboard can offer to the learning environment. I have attended seminars on how to use Blackboard but unless you use it regularly one tends to forget how to use it.

I use another e-learning platform, for a European Social Work programme. I find a) e-learning, in general, comes into its own, and is extremely valuable when large distances are involved, such as working with students in a range of different European countries. I think it would have applicability to all-Wales programmes as well. However, it does not seem to be able to replace all of the positive aspects of face-to-face learning. Also, I feel it has less use in supporting on-campus learning (although I am aware I do not use it to its maximum benefit). b) I find Blackboard much easier to use, and much more user-friendly than the one they use in, which is called 'It's Learning'. Finally, I would be interested in any research/evaluation of the use of Blackboard, as it links to my role in the European network.

I will be setting up blackboard sites for two new modules beginning September and will no doubt be requiring some support!

I'm not really sure about the resources available to help students use Blackboard. In my own department one of the main problems is that students do not get sufficient support or introduction to the use of Blackboard.

It is sad that to force people to use your system you make personal folders more difficult for the students and staff to use

Just completed the first Blackboard training session – very good. I'll be using Blackboard for the first time in the upcoming academic year and am looking forward to it!

Need Active X and one other piece of software on home/off site centres to view work I use and high screen resolutions. Simple instructions to that effect would be useful to give to my students.

There is a dual strand developing in my thinking: BB for SUPPORT of f2f modules BB for DELIVERY off-site These appear to need different approaches, and the SUPPORT role is the one I am most comfortable with now, but I need to learn how to use BB for DELIVERY.

There should be consistency between who is enrolled as a student for a Bb module and who is officially registered for the course. It would be good if the instructor could login also as a student, to check exactly what the students can see. There should be a button for an Edit view of announcements (it seems one presently needs to go through the Control Panel).

While I find Blackboard very easy to use, it can be rather cumbersome in terms of clicks needed to add several files. The most problematic aspect of using Blackboard is probably the fact that student use is very uneven. Some hate having to go there, others use it regularly.

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