



Towards a New Generation of Engaged Universities: *The Need to Act, Adapt and Transform*

16TH– 18TH April, 2024 | Kempinski Central Avenue
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Examining Interactive Digital Platform Adoption in Higher Education: A Case Study of the British University in Egypt, Faculty of Business Administration, Economics, and Political Science



The
BRITISH UNIVERSITY
IN EGYPT

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Introduction

Blended learning has many definitions and dimensions. It can be considered a blend of web-based teaching or learning mode and face to face interaction.

For Higher education institutions, there are *4 main issues to be considered to have an effective blended learning strategy* as follows, culture, policy, technology and support.

As of the above issues, technology business has identified *market opportunities in Higher Education* (Helen IQ, 2018).

Publishers shifted their strategy *from traditional textbooks* and standard assessments to digital transformation strategy, which involve *digital courseware platforms & online program management platforms*

Digital Learning Platform is a *web based instructional environment* that involves content in a digital format while using interactive technology. The interactivity varies in dimensions and it enhances the relation between the student and content, also the relation between the teaching staff and content.

The following study discuss the adoption of publishers' platform in the Business Department in Faculty of Business administration and political science at the British University in Egypt.





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Digital Learning Platforms in The British university

The University started its education mission in March 2006. It's mission was "to provide a British-style education of the highest quality supplying graduates that feed and stimulate industry, social and public services and commercial activities of Egypt, the Middle East and beyond."

The Faculty of Business Administration, Economics & Political Science (BAEPS), as one of the University 11 faculties, has a student population around 2146 registered students in three central departments: the Business Administration (81% of students); the Economics (8% of students) and the Political Science programme (11% of students)

The university in General and the faculty in particular has been considering the blended learning strategy to encourage a student centered approach in learning since the academic year 2015/2016





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The Initiation of the Digital Platforms

The Publishers digital platforms was first introduced as a pilot idea in 2016

The publisher did provide full access for all features available on the platform. Those features were the smart book, exercises, assignments and quizzes, recording a summary lecture in addition to lots of video cases.

According to the results of the pilot study in academic year, 2017/ 2018, the faculty decided after consulting the university administration to include the publisher's digital platforms on a number of modules in the academic year 2018-2019.

The digital platform adopted were McGraw-Hill Connect, Pearson My lab and Cengage Mind tap.





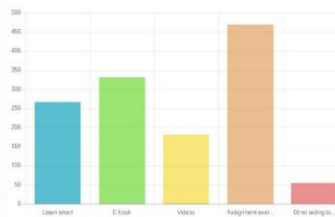
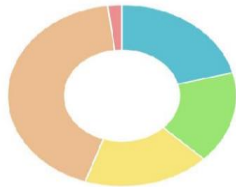
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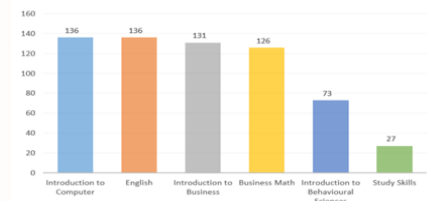
The Initiation of the Digital Platforms

At the end of the academic year, a questionnaire was distributed on students to assess the perceptions of students regarding the accessibility, usefulness, performance and satisfaction of students.

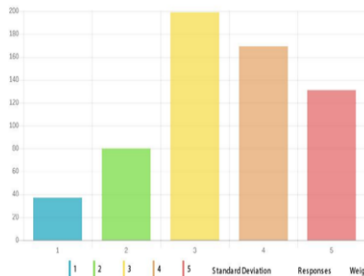
How often did you use the interactive system?



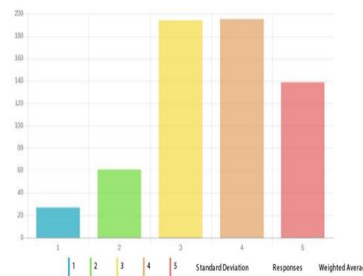
Business – Prep Level



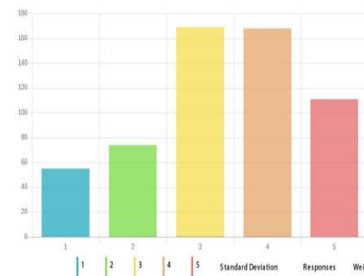
By Using the interactive system, I can improve my learning in the subject.



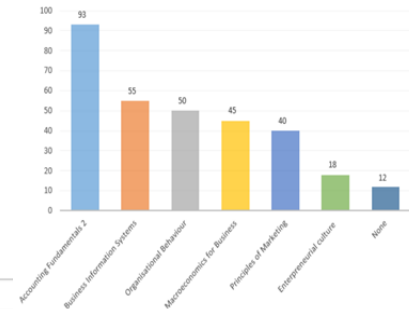
The interactive system provides some good functions to help me complete my learning tasks.



I am pleased with the experience of using the interactive system.



Business – C Level





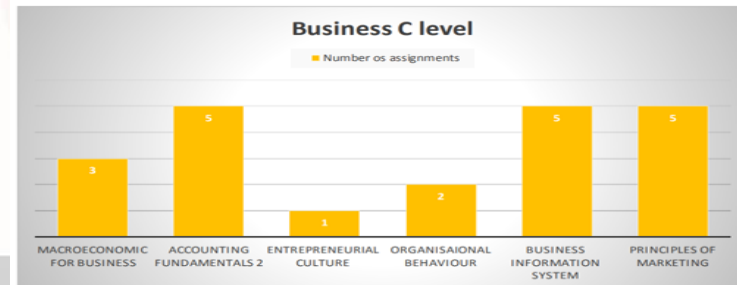
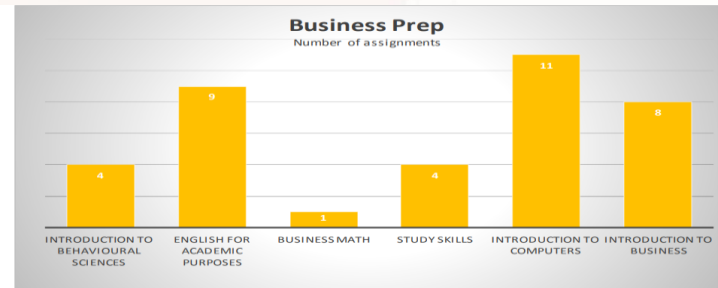
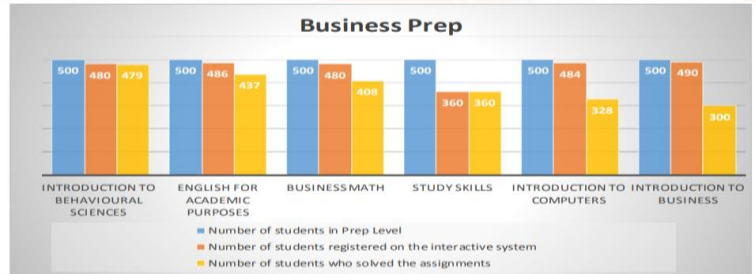
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The Initiation of the Digital Platforms

In the following academic year, most of the modules had a registration percentage of not less than 80%. Also the number of students enrolled in both assignments and quizzes reached minimum 60% for prep and second year as shown in the following figures.

For the prep year (first year cohort), modules that had a large numbers of assignments, had the highest registration and enrollment rate for assignments, also, this is attributed to both the quality of the materials provided and the role of the module team. As of the second year, certificate level, the quantitative modules had the highest enrollments for assignments.





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The Role of Digital Platforms during COVID 19

As of the academic year, 2019/2020, the whole world was overwhelmed by the surge of the pandemic COVID 19. The university was urged to implement the highest precautionary measures to ensure the safety of students and staff. Closure was the only alternative. The university did consider the role of digital platforms in sustaining the educational process in university.

Publishers did their best to reduce the effect of the pandemic,

- Mcgraw-hill provided free access to 22 modules with total of 3504 free accounts, 15 of those modules were granted for faculty of Business administration, Economics and Political Science, Business department.
- Cengage, Publisher platform, granted access for 3 modules and a total of 364 free accounts. Also, webinars were conducted on MindTap, Cengage platform, and its features.
- Pearson, on the other hand, contributed with webinars on the best practices in online teaching.





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The Role of Digital Platforms during COVID 19

Extensive training was conducted under the supervision of the Interactive team. The team included a coordinator representing the platforms for the faculty and an officer for each department along with a team of demonstrators to assist in students' inquiries and rising issues during the semester. The trainings were conducted by representatives of publishers'.

The teaching staff posted a guide for students on how to get enrolled on platforms in addition, the first tutorial included a step by step illustrations for the system and how to use it.

In order to integrate the system with the teaching process and urge students to consider it in their learning process, **20% of the grades have been assigned to the platform activities.** These grades have been assigned to assignments and quizzes.





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The Role of Digital Platforms during COVID 19

Publisher platforms was exploited for online assessments for a number of quantitative and qualitative modules for the four academic years.

In preparing the assessments for quantitative modules, the module leaders used algorithmic questions to generate a large pool of questions and to provide as many versions as possible.

The assessments were assigned at a specific date and time. Also, students had a trial assessment to train students on the platforms and to acquaint them with the type of questions they would encounter during their summative assessments.





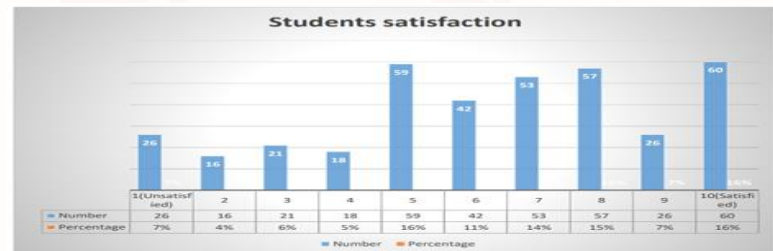
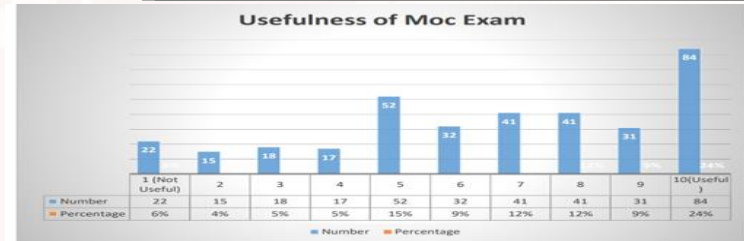
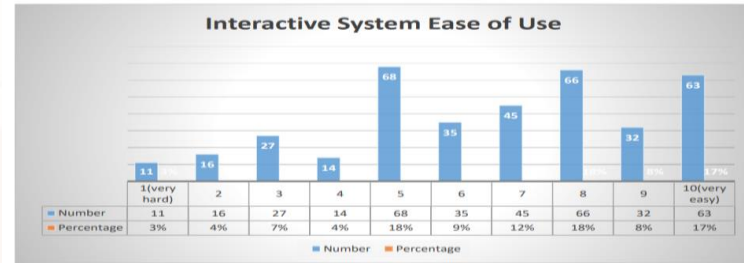
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The Role of Digital Platforms during COVID 19

At the end of the Pandemic year, 2020-2021, a survey link was posted on the elearning and sent to students to evaluate their experience for online assessments.

About 302 students responded to the survey. The survey was evaluating a number of aspects related to assessments, the most preferred platforms, the ease of use of online assessments, the platform reliability during assessments, the platform stability, the training provided before assessments and support during assessments, and finally the overall satisfaction of the online assessments on Publisher platforms.



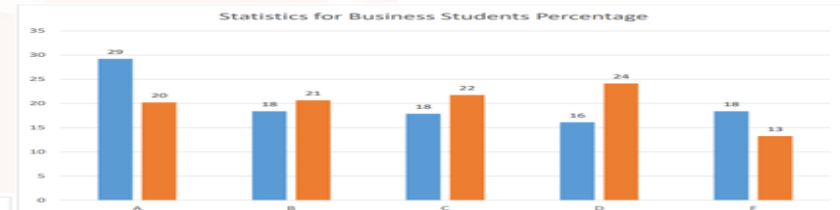
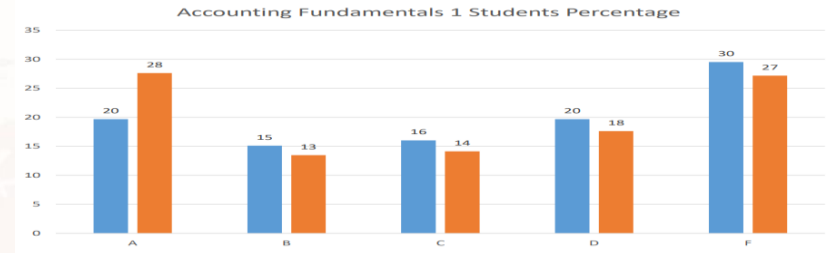
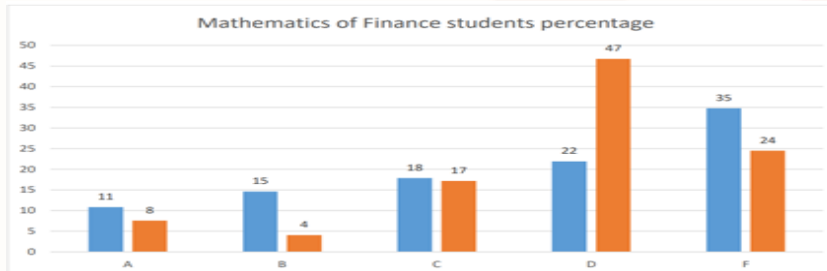


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The Role of Digital Platforms during COVID 19

A sample of modules were considered for comparison between a traditional assessment conducted in 2018 and the online assessments performed on the Publishers platforms and the following are graphical comparison for those modules

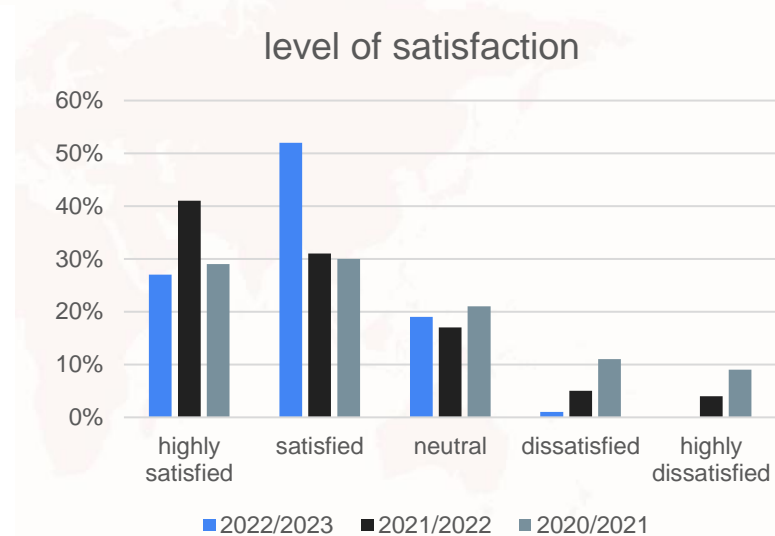
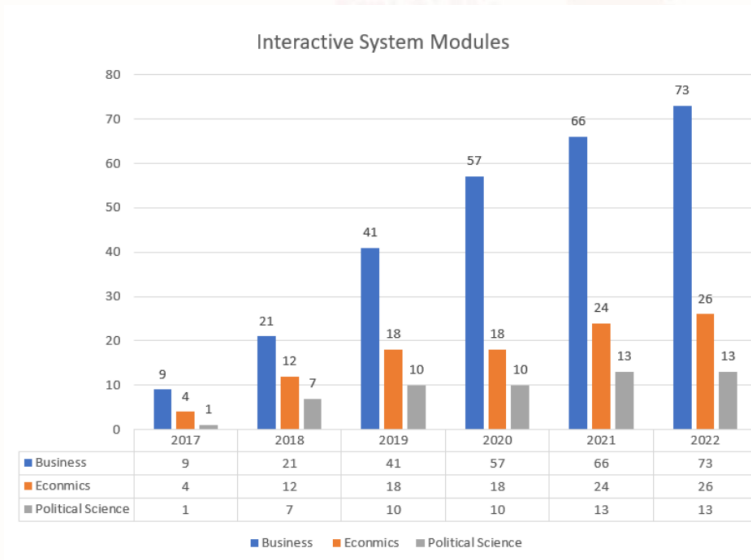




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Summary of the of the Publisher's platform Modules during the years





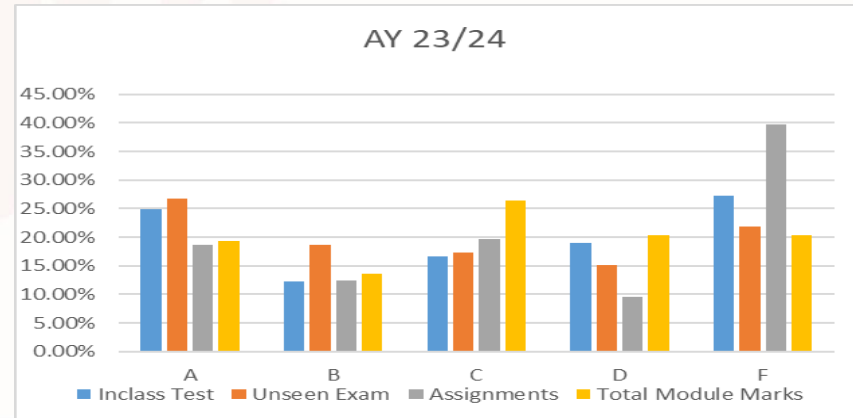
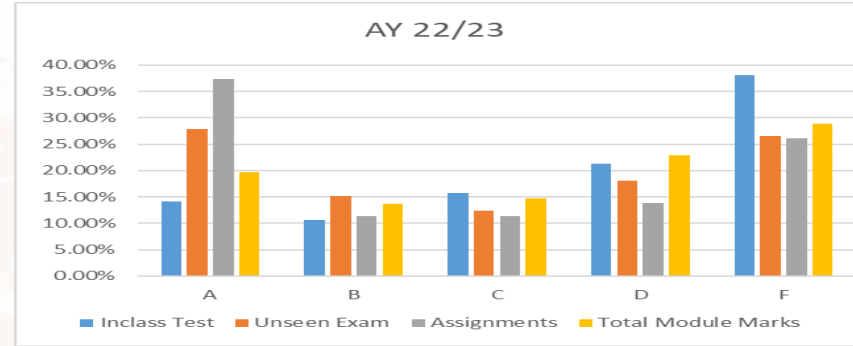
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Recent developments of the system: Integrating the system to in-class (mid terms)

In addition to the integration to assignments, the platforms was applied on the In class (mid terms) to consider their effect on the performance of students during exams.

The In class was conducted in Labs to control access to resources for students, also most of the current Lab exams are proctored through platforms' features, also through invigilators. There a number of modules that conducted such experience on platforms. The first Module was principles of finance module.

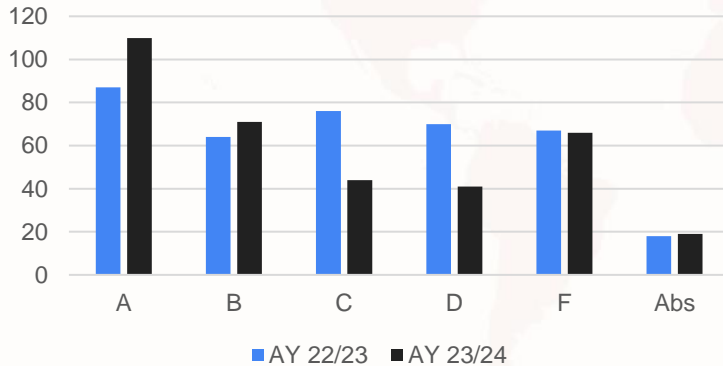




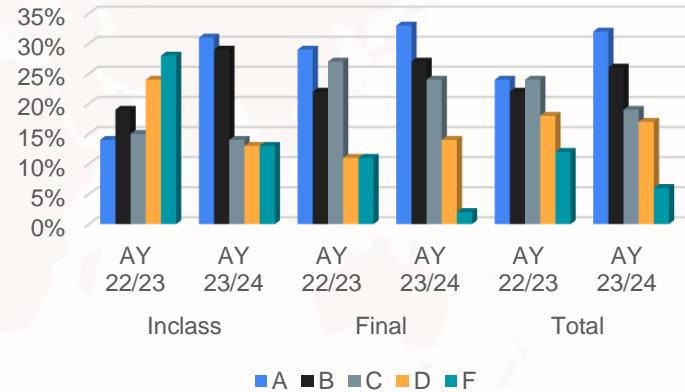
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Microeconomics Inclass Paper exam Comparison



Management Accounting and Control Module comparison





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Conclusion

Lots of Students are **welcoming the usage of technology in education as it provides them with more interactivity** that isn't available in the traditional teaching approaches.

At start of the integration with modules, lots of students and instructors were not acquainted with the features and benefits. Then students started considering its many benefits in terms of **interactivity, convenience and self-study features.**

Further, **the system provides spontaneous performance analysis** for students as well as module leaders. Students can detect their points of weaknesses as well as exercises on how to improve. The module leaders on the other hand, are having a spontaneous feedback on the students' performance and areas of weaknesses which was lacking in the previous assessment systems.

However, students who took advantage of the current system are **students who partially engage in the learning process**, weak performers are less likely to be involved. Those students, who are partially engaged, are likely to perform better with such platforms. Further, assignments and quizzes were better managed using the platforms as it provides the module leaders (instructors) with multiple options for questions.





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Conclusion

The Pandemic was a challenge for lots of academic institutions in Egypt. Since most of the students were not able to attend face to face lectures at campus.

The **availability of resources and recording of lectures provided a tool** for students to listen to lectures they missed. Also, the assessments were cancelled on campus due to the possibility of causalities.

Most of the assessments was conducted online using the digital platforms, also, the usage of proctoring tools did provide a valid solution at the time, however, it required a professional assessment management in terms of time management by instructors and a wide pool of questions.





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Conclusion

The Platforms can be an alternative for assessments as it reduces the paper exams. It can be managed in Labs post pandemic to avoid any unfair practices.

Also, the usage of assignments on platforms improved the performance of students along with digital platform summative assessments, it is expected that students can have an overall enhancement in their performance.

The role of the instructors is expected to be more innovative and encouraging for students using such platforms.





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