ual: university
of the arts
london

Research project: Improving Cognitive Accessibility in Virtual Learning Environments
Researcher: Antonia Huber

Participant Information Sheet

About this study
This study is part of my research on the PgCert Academic Practice in Art, Design and Communication at the University of the Arts London (UAL).I am conducting an enquiry into how cognitive accessibility (the ease with which learners can perceive, understand, and navigate information) could be improved within Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) such as Moodle. I am interested in the reflections and experiences of colleagues involved in course design and online delivery regarding how platform design and structure can support or hinder learning.

My research will document, evaluate, and analyse these experiences and practices. The methodology will be qualitative, taking a responsive evaluation approach. This will consist of two parts:

- **Semi-structured interviews** with two course leaders or senior lecturers from either course fully or semi taught online to explore design decisions, platform choice, and accessibility considerations in greater depth.
- A **questionnaire** distributed to approximately two to three lecturers involved in online or blended delivery to gather a broad overview of platform use and accessibility considerations.

In addition, I will conduct a **visual audit and user journey mapping** of several learning platforms (Moodle, Miro, Notion, SharePoint, and Padlet) to identify and compare accessibility and navigational features. Responses will be analysed thematically to identify key patterns and recommendations.

What does it mean to take part?
If you take part you are consenting to taking part in a semi-structured interview or completing a questionnaire about your experience of using or designing learning materials in online platforms. Interviews may take between **30–45 minutes** and will be conducted online or in person. If you choose to complete the questionnaire instead, this will take approximately **10–15 minutes** to fill in and can be returned by email. I will audio record the interviews and transcribe them. The data will be used as the basis for academic analysis. If you choose to take part, you will be free to withdraw your participation at any point. You will not be obliged to give any reason for deciding not to take part.

Will my participation be kept confidential?
Your anonymity is very important. The information about you will be confidential to me, as the researcher. You will not be identified individually anywhere in the research. If I quote anything you have said in an interview, it will be anonymous. An example might be: *'Tutor A said "the interface felt overwhelming at first but improved with structure."'* All data will be stored securely on password-protected university servers and will be deleted 12 months after the completion of the study.

What will happen to the results of the research project?
Analysis from the questionnaire, interviews, and visual audits — including anonymous quotations from participants — will contribute to an academic report submitted as part of the PgCert in Academic Practice. Your words may also be used in academic papers, reflective blog posts, or conference presentations relating to online learning design and accessibility. Any such use will remain fully anonymised.These findings will also contribute to the evaluation and potential improvement of the MA Graphic Design (Online) course currently in development at UAL.

Thank you for your contribution and participation in this study.

Contact for further information:
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