

Follow-up survey on online learning – May 2020

Faculty of Medicine, Peradeniya

Batch 2017/18

An analysis of free comments supplemented with quantitative data

Summary

At the completion of eight weeks of online delivery of the MBBS course due to university closure following Covid 19 pandemic. E-library conducted a follow-up survey among all students using a Google form. The link was distributed through batch reps and two reminders were sent. 1123 students responded to survey. This report focuses on 2017/18 batch in which 203 out of 205 local students responded.

Students appreciate the online learning programme conducted by the faculty. Nevertheless, a majority of students are challenged by having to deal with content related to Y2S1 barrier examination and new Y2S2 content. Most agree that their focus is more on the Y2S1 rather than Y2S2. Importantly, a large number of students agree with faculty plans on their Y2S1 examination and some students have suggested opportunities for revision and a study leave longer than two weeks. Given the dilemmas faced by students, which are verified through quantitative data, these suggestions worth given due attention.

Internet connectivity issues prevent a small number of students accessing Medmoodle and a larger number from joining live sessions (E.g. Zoom). Students who face difficulty in accessing Medmoodle and those who are failed in multiple 'pre-clinical' modules may need to be contacted and may be offered individualized support. Details of students with poor access to MedMoodle are included in the report.

Based on the findings of this analysis it is prudent to conduct a module level evaluation on student learning with regards to Y2S2 content before a summative examinations is planned.

Students are generally happy about Medmoodle and Zoom based sessions, but network issues exclude a large number of students from joining zoom sessions live. As such, uploading recorded zoom sessions to MedMoodle is essential.

Detailed analysis

The analysis is commenced based on the free comments for the item 23 of the survey, which will be supplemented with quantitative data of the same survey and MedMoodle records. The lead-in read as;

Do you have any other thing to tell us about online learning? If so please write below.

83 out of 203 respondents opted to provide a free comment. About 25 students indicated their satisfaction with online learning and an equal number highlighted some challenges. Other comments dealt with Medmoodle and Zoom sessions.

Positive perceptions

Students used words and phrases such as *'everything is fine'*, *'good'*, *'much better'*, *'great'*, *'excellent'* to describe their experience in online learning from home. Many students express an idea in line with *'uploading the recorded lectures is highly effective'*. Potential reasons include, *'downloading is easy'*, listening to those is *'easy'*, *'not tiring'*, *'can listen repeatedly'* and *'we can leisurely think and understand'*. Some identified that strong internet connection and free home environment as contributing to these positive perceptions. Some students expressed that the online programme is of *'very good standard'*, state that they *'enjoy'* it and grateful for efforts of the faculty. Requests have been made to continue to upload lectures even after faculty re-opens.

Challenges

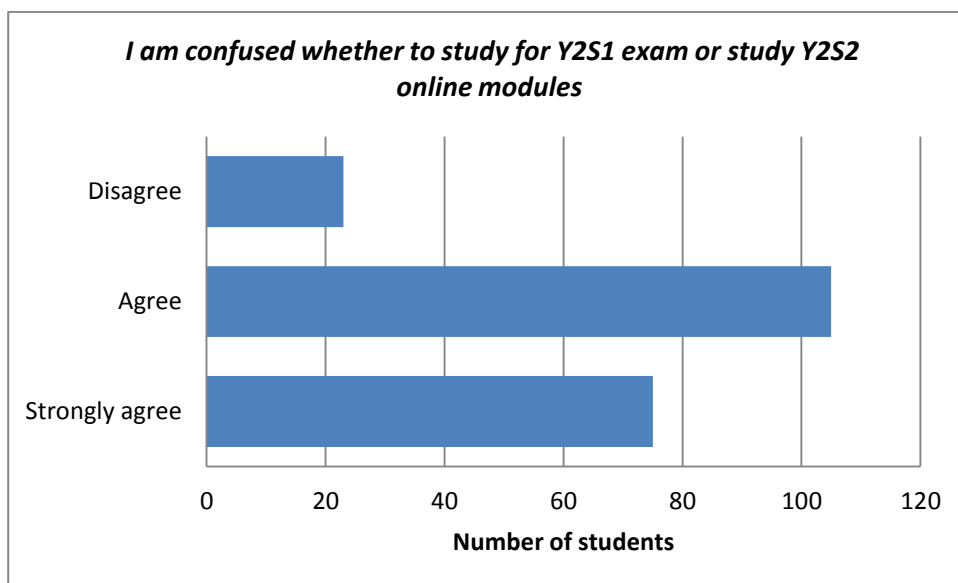
A. Dilemma on focus of learning

Some students do have concerns about their learning experience. About 25 students highlighted a number of stressors they are faced with. A common challenge appears to be balancing between preparation for Y2S1 barrier examination and new content of Y2S2. This has caused stress and lead to a dilemma on whether to focus on Y2S1 or Y2S2.

"Online learning is not so good as it is difficult to cooperate 2 semesters together and actually this is really a stress for me personally. Don't know what to study really confused"

"...I am confused how to balance the two semesters without forgetting the contents in previous semester"

Around 180 students agree with these comments according to a response to another survey item.



Amidst the said confusion, students seem to focus more on Y2S1 barrier exam preparation than Y2S2 learning.

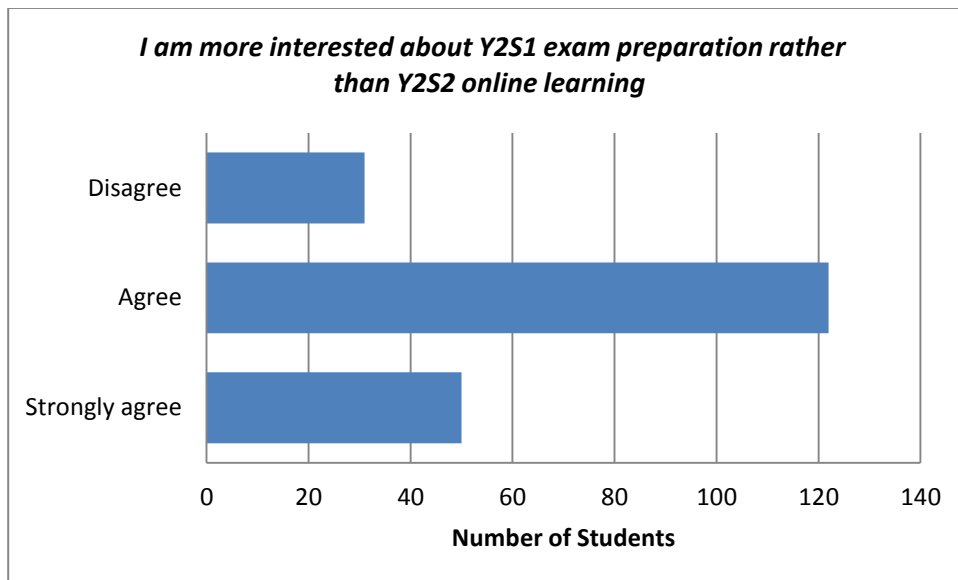
“I joined with all zoom online classes. But my attention after lecture for it is little due to y2s1 content”

“However its becoming very stressful because as weeks pass by I'm forgetting y2s1..”

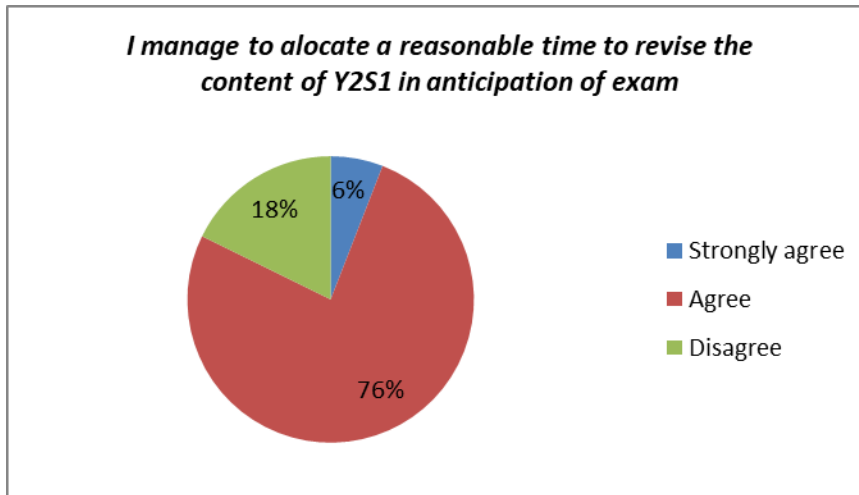
“I'm not much interested in the way I'm engaged in learning completely new modules and with e learning it has been ineffective and paying attention is much harder in studying comparing to the last 3 semesters. I hardly study and revise in daily basis”.

“I like online teaching than learning in lecture halls... but i can't manage it with last semester. When I try to study new semester exam come to my mind so I study y2s1...”

About 170 students have expressed the same on their current focus in learning.



Following response further confirms students focus on Y2S1.



However, it is important to note that when asked about what additional measures would help them to prepare them for the Y2S1 barrier exam (Other than the faculty proposed one week for fill the gaps and two weeks of study leave) 130 students had no further requests. It is interesting because, students had the free option of suggesting anything that would have helped them to resolve their dilemma on Y2S1 exam preparation.

Additional measures to help preparation for Y2S1 exam were requested by 73 students. They are listed below.

- 1. One week to complete incomplete work (Already suggested by the faculty)*
- 2. Revision - Mainly anatomy spots, Physio/BC practical AS REVISIONS and question discussions (Additional one week)*
- 3. Extended study leave (three to four weeks)*
- 4. Stop Y2S2 online teaching one week before commencing faculty*
- 5. Inform Bhutani students one month before commencing faculty work (to enable their travel/quarantine, etc.)*

One student warns that issues of students with repeated modules could be more severe and requests the faculty to be proactive in reaching out and supporting them.

“Please try to contact people who have many repeats in the pre-clinicals and can't manage to balance 4 semesters and are depressed /who have zero cell service and haven't seen a single

slide and can't even take a phone call. They might be initially hesitant to ask for help as some have never talked to more than one staff member. The batch reps might be willing to share details of such people”

Considering all evidence above, it is reasonable to assume that most 2017/18 students are still pre-occupied with Y2S1 barrier exam preparation. It is also possible that a large number of students may not pay sufficient attention to current semester (Y2S2) work. The survey did not directly ask this question due to possible introduction of a bias through the questions, but generated following related information.

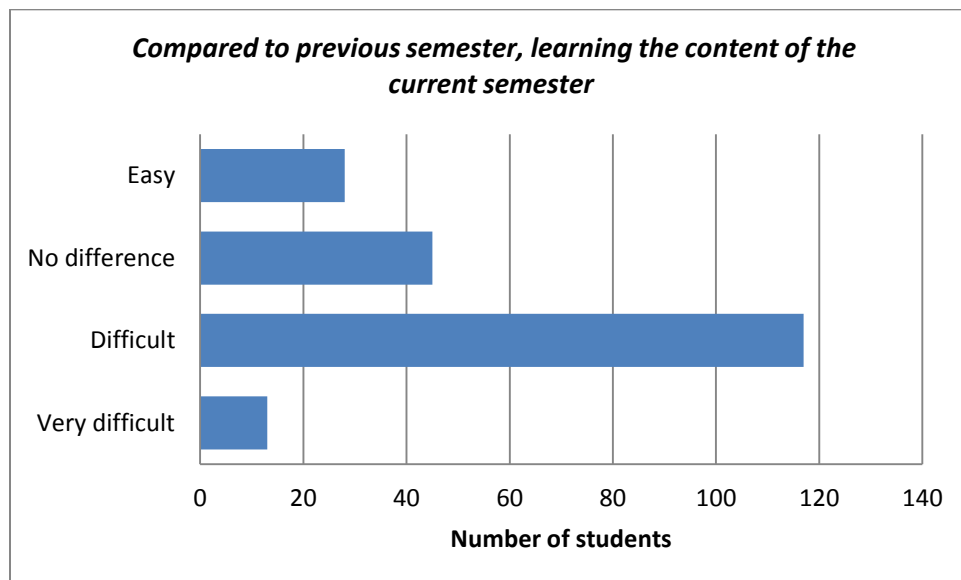
B. Concerns about Y2S2 content

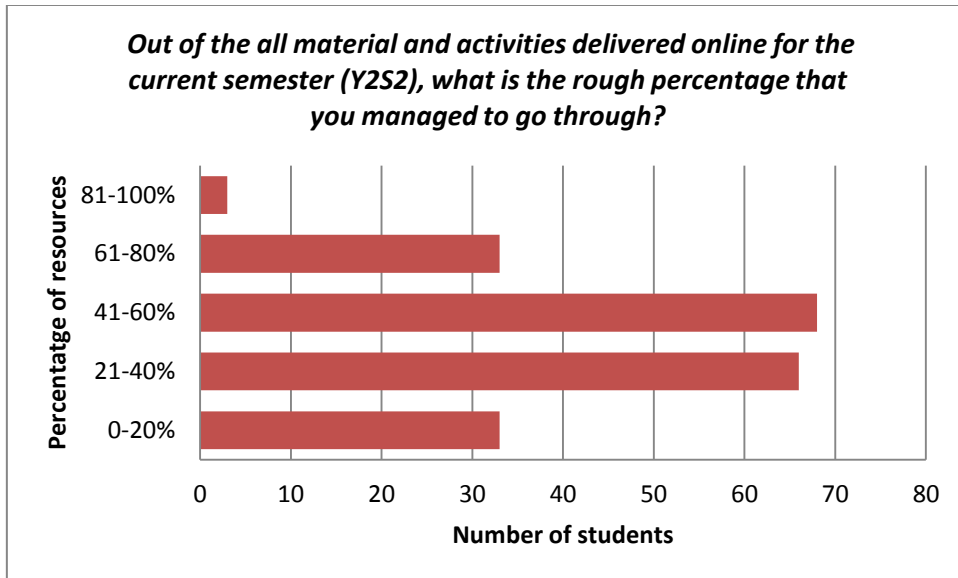
According to free comments, some students found it difficult to catch up with the pace of delivery of Y2S2 content.

“Due to inability to catch up time table it is hard me to attend present zoom lectures...”

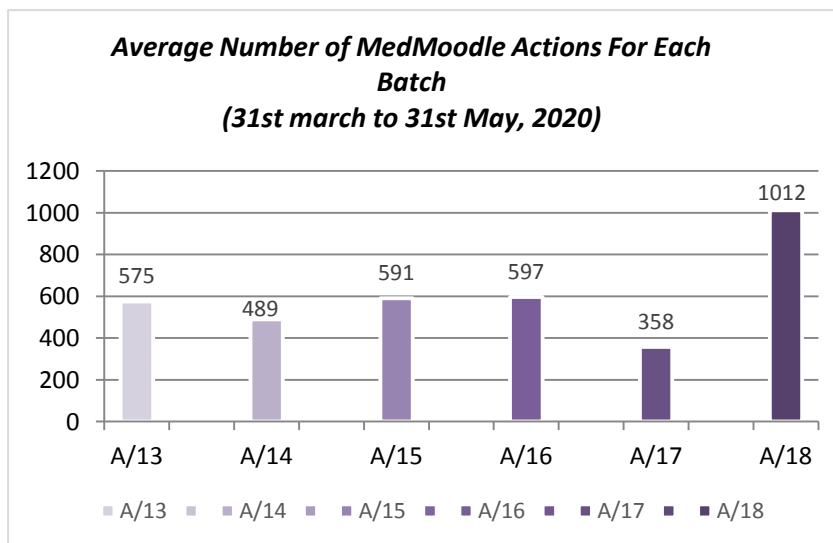
“It’s good if the lectures are scheduled a little bit slower....”

There were no items in the survey to quantitatively validate above comment. Results shown in the following graph may explain the comments on pace of delivery.





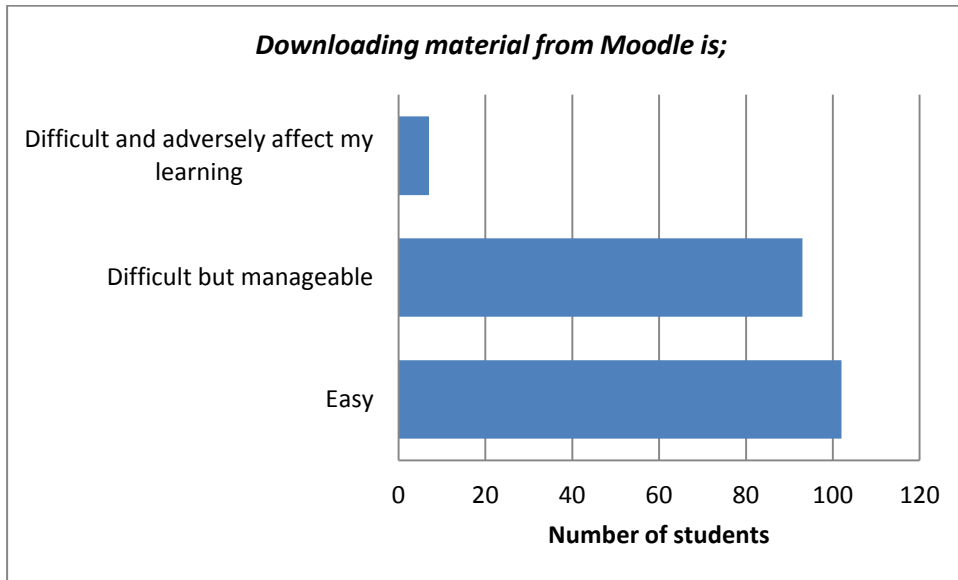
Interestingly, the 2017/18 batch as a whole shows a lower average Medmoodle activity than other batches. These activities include logins, viewing course page, downloading material, uploading and attempting quizzed, etc. This could be a result of student’s attention to Y2S1 rather than current semester work, but it is not possible to confirm this assertion.



C. Network and communication issues are not uncommon.

“Due to network problems it is difficult for me...”

The magnitude of network issue is largely illustrated in the following graph.



Although the numbers who think that poor internet connectivity affects their learning are low, one student used the word ‘disadvantage’ to express the situation faced by students with poor network connectivity.

“it is a disadvantage to students who have poor internet connection”

Following are the registration numbers and contact details of students who said *“Downloading material from Medmoodle is difficult and adversely affect my learning”*

1. Student registration number	2. Mobile/ Telephone Number:	3. WhatsApp Number:
M/17/183	769033857	769033857
M/17/126	779166316	779166316
M/17/146	717193666	717193666
M/17/123	714705519	714705519
M/17/046	711661623	711661623
M/17/057	719734616	719734616
M/17/104	705303157	-

Following students are expected to follow Y2S1 but did not respond to our surveys.

Registration Number
M/17/024
M/17/082
M/16/058
M/16/083
M/16/FQ/003
M/16/FQ/005
M/16/FQ/008
M/15/FQ/006
M/15/FQ/007

It is suggested to contact these students and seek reasons for difficulties that they face. In my experience, some of these students face connectivity, but at least in some of the students issues are not necessarily related to internet connectivity.

MedMoodle and Zoom

Students are generally happy about MedMoodle platform and zoom sessions conducted by teachers. There are a few issues regarding audio narrated PowerPoints not being played in some devices and lectures not being able to download. A common concern about zoom sessions was the failure to upload the recorded sessions to MedMoodle. This is important as some students are unable to join zoom sessions due to network and other issues.

"I can access all zoom live lectures but as I have poor network in my area sometime I cannot fully hear the audio clearly and sometimes video also struck in between"

"Most of our batch mates find difficult to join the zoom online lecture"

"Zoom learning is good. But I miss some parts of the lecture due to intermittent connection loss. Therefore I suggest uploading all zoom recordings so that I can catch up missed parts"

Above are reasonable concerns as only 131/203 students claimed that they joined all live zoom sessions. 45/203 students said that they don't join with live zoom sessions due to poor network and therefore, it is essential to upload recorded zoom sessions to MedMoodle.

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Head/E-library