



University of Westminster, London, UK



WileyPLUS with ORION



Course – Biological Science, Spring 2015



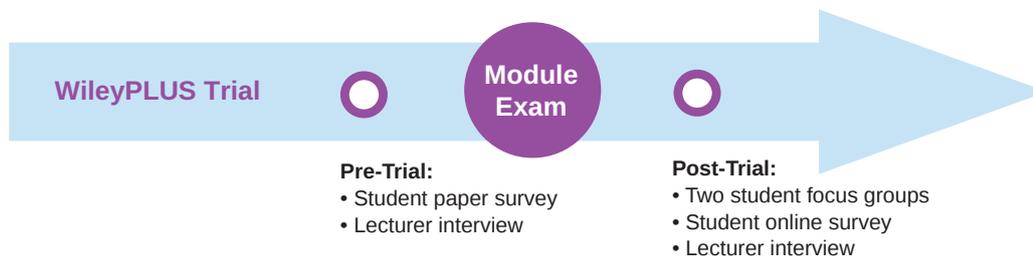
Number of Students – 470



Text – BIO-Principles

Approach

The study was conducted by Shift Learning to examine the impact of class trials for *WileyPLUS with ORION* on the Biological Science course at the University of Westminster. The trial ran for three months from the beginning of February until the end of April 2015. It included 470 students in their first year of University who were taking the core module Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. The study was informed via surveys, focus groups and interviews, and included the following:



265 students completed the pre-trial paper survey and 65 students completed the post-trial online survey. 18 students completed both surveys. Some responses were tracked independently in the findings, but only where relevant. 76% of respondents were female and 24% were male. 93% were from the UK and 79% were between 17-19 years old.

Setting / Rationale for the Trial

STUDENT PROGRESSION

Students are assessed formatively and with summative assessments. The pass rate for coursework was 60% and for the exam, 50%.

STUDENT COMPUTER LITERACY

Faculty had experienced three core challenges in delivering this course; facilitating student progression into levels five and six; identifying and catering for students with different knowledge capabilities and also differentiating between student's skills in digital literacy, mathematics and written communication.

DIFFERENTIATION OF LEARNERS

Prior to the trial, students were anxious that they might miss or forget about areas of content which may then be covered in the exam. The volume of content, specifically what should be covered, appeared to be a key challenge amongst most students. As well as this, students were concerned about managing their time effectively and revising efficiently.

Resources Used / The Trial

All students had access to BIO-Principles on *WileyPLUS* for 3 months from the beginning of February until the end of April 2015. During this time, students had to write a case study and also prepare for their end of year exam.

Faculty encouraged students to use *WileyPLUS with ORION* in order to assess their own knowledge, manage their workload and aid the revision process.

SUMMARY

Since the trial, the University of Westminster has purchased the BIO-Principles *WileyPLUS* course with ORION for all first year students for the 2015-16 academic year. They are now trialling more *WileyPLUS* Courses for different modules.

WileyPLUS with ORION helped faculty to address the diverse needs of a large student cohort by providing a personalised and adaptive study experience which was tailored to the individual needs of each student.

Both faculty and students reported that *WileyPLUS with ORION* was an easy-to-use and beneficial tool which helped students to progress into their next academic year of study.

Evaluation – Instructors

WileyPLUS with ORION helped to address faculty's main challenge of increasing student progression. The platform's diagnostic reports allowed students to address their own areas of weakness. Faculty noted that the platform catered for all student learner types, which took the pressure off providing students with a multiplicity of resources. Faculty also noticed that student confidence in studying online had improved which contributed to an increase in students' skills in digital literacy.

Due to the timing and short nature of the trial, faculty did not use certain features of the platform, including assignments and the gradebook. The faculty also did not use the course stream feature to communicate with students but felt that if implemented from the beginning of the module, students would have responded well to it.

Evaluation – Students

64% of students from the post-trial survey gave positive comments about their experience of using *WileyPLUS with ORION*. Students highly valued receiving feedback online via the diagnostic reports as it allowed for them to productively address areas of weakness in order to achieve a higher grade. At the end of the trial, it was noticeable that students had become more confident about doing well in their exam and felt that they could manage their time much more effectively when using the platform during their own study time.

“The interactive nature means that videos and diagrams are easily accessible, and the ability to set progress tests and to get reports on individual students' progress makes it perfect for teaching staff as well. My students seemed to engage very well with the resource, and those who used it extensively thought it had contributed to their success.”

Ian Bailey, Lecturer in Biochemical Toxicology – The University of Westminster, UK

