

Exploring the learner perspective on the use of Virtual Reality to develop employability skills in the legal sector

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The learner-Virtual Reality project aims to explore Law Students from Centre for Commercial Law Studies views on Virtual Reality (VR) training to prepare them to experience legal professional scenarios; and by that, check if VR training can help them develop employability skills.

The double benefit of this project was to **collect data on the perceived likeliness of VR to enhance learners' employability** as well as **gather learners' views on the optimal VR training support they would require**.

This project was conducted as part of the Queen Mary Academy's Learner Intern Programme, which undertakes scholarship and development projects in partnership with our diverse learner population.

METHODOLOGY

- The study employed a mixed-methods approach with a three-step process: an **initial survey**, a **virtual reality trial**, and a second **post-experience survey**.
- The survey covered VR experience for moot courts and professional legal case scenarios, asking learners personal views on the likelihood of VR training to enhance their learning experience and impact on their soft skills and employability.
- For the VR trial, we used two Meta Quest headsets and the VR training provider *Bodyswaps*.

BACKGROUND

- The **Active Curriculum for Excellence approach**, based on co-creation with students, highlights Excellence in Learning Environment and Excellence in Student Employability.
- Centre for Commercial Law Studies has a strong background in innovative teaching initiatives. This study specially focused on **learners' opinions on VR's ability to develop employability skills**, especially for moot-court practice and professional discussions in the legal department of a commercial firm.
- "It is suggested that VR technologies increase students' memorisation of the concepts learned (Buttussi & Chittaro, 2018; Meyer et al., 2019), transfer of knowledge (Chittaro et al., 2018), and increase their emotional performance affecting learning outcomes (Cheng & Tsai, 2020)" however there is less evidence around VR impact on building employability skills.
- Queen Mary Graduate attributes** for students were used to measure an eventual correlation between VR training and likelihood of improvement of employability skills

While some students deplore VR is "lacking the human touch the legal field has", the vast majority considers that undergoing virtual reality training can "broaden perspective, boost confidence, and improve communication skills."



Percentage of participants who were „confident” or „very confident” that VR could improve their employability based on selected soft skills



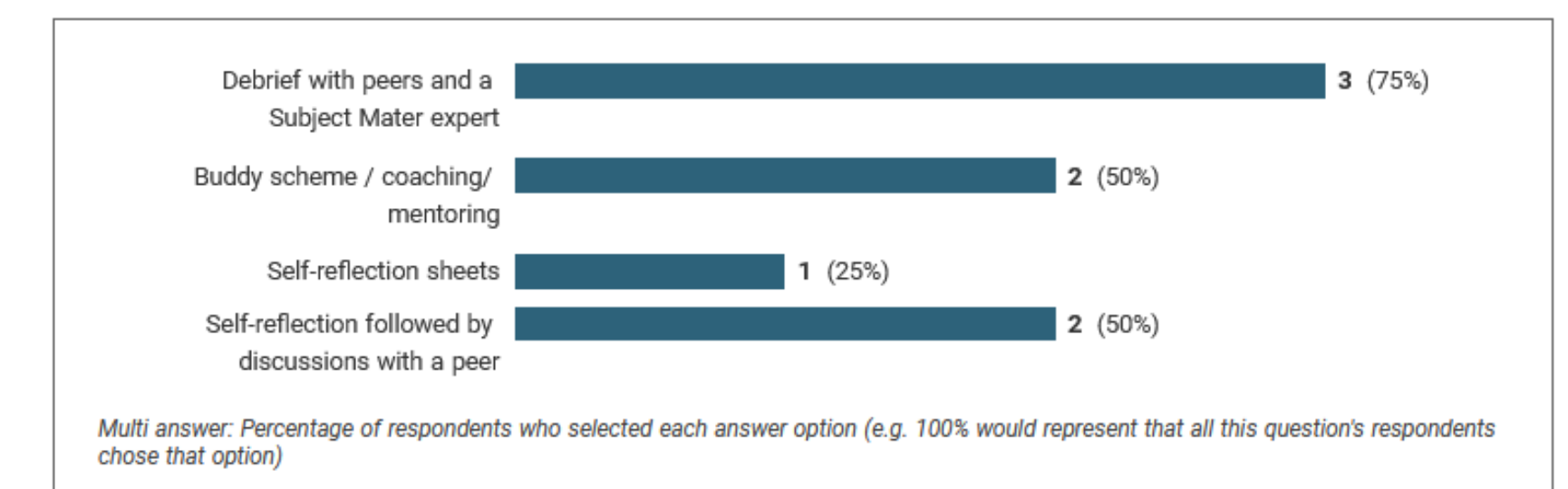
KEY FINDINGS

There is an undeniable appetite and readiness for VR training among CCLS students.

- 100%** of participants thought choosing a role in a virtual moot court and **making decisions at key stages** would be of value to their training.
- 100%** of participants would like to **observe a professional legal case scenario of their choice**, using a VR headset.
- 95.2 % of survey respondents said they would be **interested to borrow VR headsets to complement their study**. This number raises to 100% for those who have participated in our VR trial.

Pedagogical approaches

Learners indicated the VR learning experience could be complemented by:



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Offer VR training as an extra opportunity to learn by doing.
- Offer bookable slots for self-paced training, one hour a week, until learners are happy with their VR training outcomes.
- The VR learning experience should be embedded in a social constructivist pedagogical approach.
- Develop a suite of technical and pedagogical support to successfully engage learners in the immersive training world.

