

### Are student silos within the construction studies programme hindering the development of students?

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#### Executive Summary

The purpose of the research was to establish how students within the construction studies programme perceive the relationship between full-time and part-time students and whether the mix hinders student engagement. We examined the positive and negative effects of mixing the two modes of study, examining the current course environment and how collaborating more effectively would benefit the students' learning. Our findings indicate the need for collaboration and our research has explored whether students would be interested in taking part in a mentoring programme where they can further their own learning by helping someone else.

#### Aims

1. To discover if mixed modes of study have a positive or negative impact on learning
2. To discover if a more collaborative approach to studying could enhance student learning
3. To determine whether peer mentoring could enhance student learning and if it is applicable on the construction studies programme
4. If the outcome of aim 3 is negative, to explore why this is the case and note any further recommendations

#### Methods

The aims were achieved by conducting a questionnaire. Thirty-eight quantitative questions were established for students to answer using a 'Likert Scale' which ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. This method of data collection was preferred as it ensured the survey was not time consuming (a potential risk in terms of the volume of responses) and allowed the co-creators to produce relevant statistics. An optional, qualitative 'comments' question was also included in the survey which ensured the survey incorporated both types of data collection and gave students the chance to give feedback. The survey was issued to all Level 4, 5 and 6 students on the construction studies program, via an email from the our academic partner. A total of 55 responses were received and once the deadline date had passed, the Co-Creators were able to export the responses to Microsoft Excel and perform data analysis.

#### Results

Do part-time and full-time students have different attitudes towards their learning?

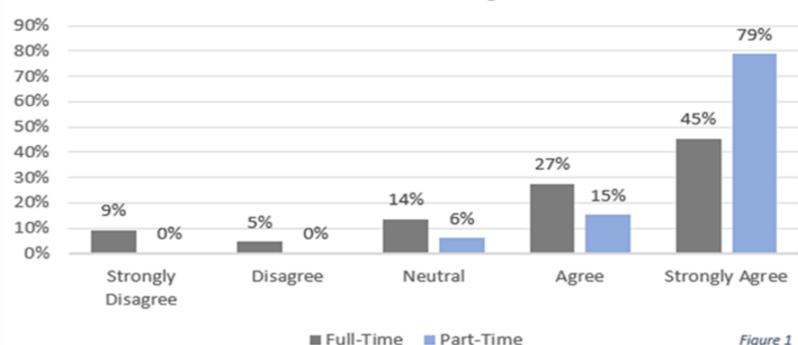


Figure 1

Would the course be more beneficial with only one mode of study?

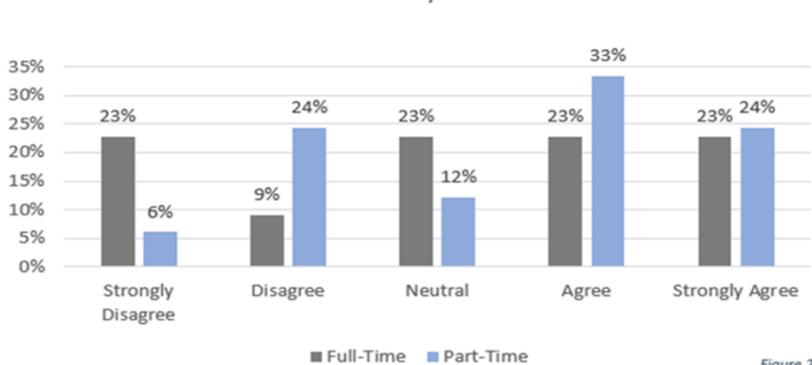


Figure 2

Does the full-time and part-time mix of students enhance learning?

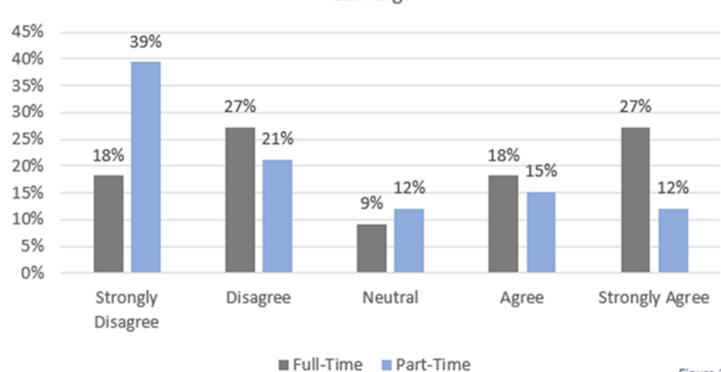


Figure 3

#### Aim 1: To discover if mixed modes of study have a positive or negative impact on learning

Figure 1 discloses that 79% of part-time students strongly agree that part-time and full-time students have different attitudes towards their learning, with 45% of full-time students also strongly agreeing with this question. Figure 2 reveals that 57% of part-time students feel that the course would be more beneficial with only one mode of study, compared with 46% of full-time students. Figure 3 shows that 60% of part-time students do not feel that the mixed modes of study enhance their learning, this is in comparison to 45% of full-time students.

DOES THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER HAVE A COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?

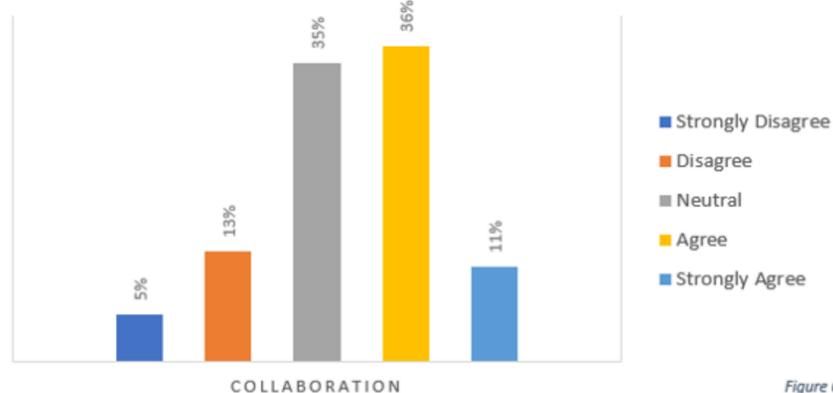


Figure 6

#### Aim 2: To discover if a more collaborative approach to studying could enhance student learning

Figure 6 reveals that only 36% of all students feel that the university of Westminster has a collaborative working environment with 35% sitting in the neutral box. It is clear to see that nearly half of all students feel that their learning could be enhanced by participating in peer discussions which could mean that a more collaborative approach to studying would further enhance their learning. However, the results also show that only 36% of students feel that the university has a collaborative working environment which could be having a negative impact on student engagement/satisfaction.

WOULD STUDENT MENTORS ENHANCE YOUR LEARNING AT UOW?

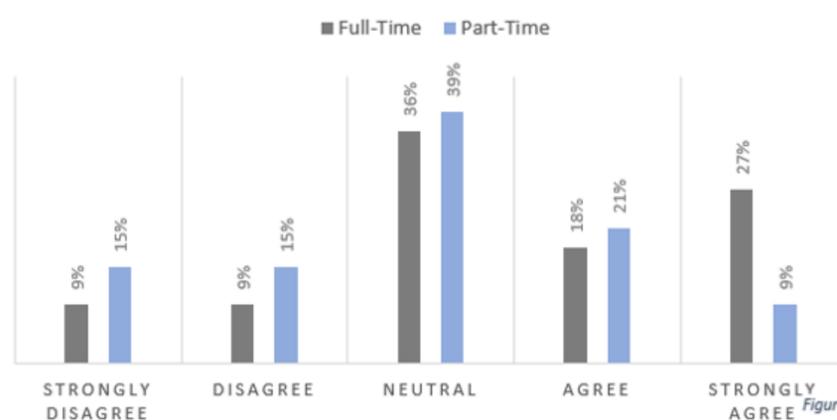


Figure 7

#### Aim 3: To determine whether peer mentoring could enhance student learning and if it is applicable on the construction studies programme

Figure 7 shows that the strongest feeling towards peer mentoring is 'neutral' with 36% of full-time students and 39% of part-time students sitting in this category. However, figure 7 also shows that only 30% of part-time students agree that peer mentoring could enhance student learning in comparison to 45% of full-time students. The above results show that there is a significant neutral feeling towards peer mentoring; this could be because students are unsure what peer mentoring is or feel that it could be an extra-curricular activity in which they do not have the time to get involved with. It is important to note however that 45% of full-time students feel that peer mentoring could enhance their learning, indicating that it could be more beneficial to full-time students than part-time students, as 73% of part-time students feel that their external responsibilities prevent them from getting involved in extra-curricular activities.

Would you like your course to hold more networking events?

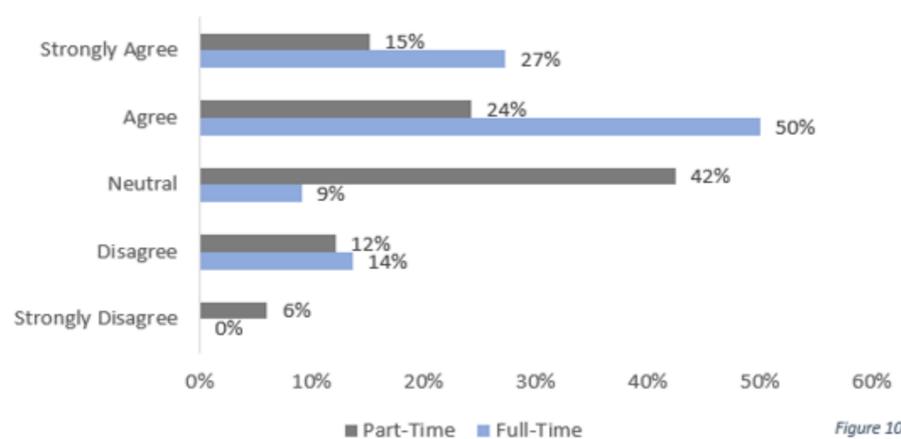


Figure 10

#### Aim 4: If the outcome of aim 4 is negative, to explore why this is the case and note any further recommendations

Figure 10 shows that 77% of full-time students would like the University of Westminster to hold more networking events in comparison to 39% of part-time students. The results explored in the above allude to the view that students feel their course could do more to help them achieve their career aspirations. Figure 10 show that 77% of students would like their course to hold more networking events which could be a suggested recommendation to the university to help improve student engagement and satisfaction.

#### Recommendations

- Additional research to identify reasons for negativity amongst student groups mixing
- To develop a collaborative environment and an appreciation amongst students
- Additional research should explore if students would benefit from a network session within their classes, providing the opportunity to build relationships with their peers and if this would have an effect on the courses collaborative environment.
- Mentoring opportunities for full-time students