

Virtual learning environment essay sample

[Education](#), [Learning](#)



Virtual Learning Environment is one of the many learning strategies or methods. Virtual Learning Environment or online learning is part of blended approach of learning. The other methods include self-managed learning where a person learns independently with the help from tutors, peers and using course materials and a face to face learning method is a strategy where learning takes place in an actual classroom with the tutors. Online learning started four decades ago with the introduction of internet. The Virtual Learning Environment is using web page platform to learn. It consists of two methods; synchronous and asynchronous method. Synchronous is a form where all participants are connected simultaneously and in asynchronous method the response is delayed according to the student's preference though usually a time frame is given. Virtual learning or online learning has made a tremendous change in the way knowledge is acquired and has given immense benefit to the users/ students and the colleges and universities which provide this privilege.

Firstly it reduces the costs for students and colleges. The number of students going for further studies keeps increasing every day with the increasing population and people opt to further study. And it's very difficult for the colleges and universities to cater the demand due to limited infrastructure. With the use of this virtual learning method the huge costs on infrastructures like buildings and classrooms get avoided. Moreover the costs for printing handouts/notes reduce in a virtual learning platform since the tutors provide course materials through web pages and e-mails. As for the students they don't have to relocate or travel until they complete their course, this saves a lot of travel and accommodation expenses. (McVay Lynch, 2004) One of the

many reasons why many use Virtual learning is due to its flexibility. The asynchronous method of virtual learning takes place through discussion boards and email. A discussion board is a platform provided by the tutor for the students to discuss on the topics given.

The students can answer the questions, comment on the posts written by other students or reply to the mails in their own time, whenever they are free. This gives them time to research and prepare good responses and present. This is an enormous advantage for them since many have a part time or a full time job and looking after a family. (Hasan Siddiqui, 2004) The other benefit of Virtual learning is it helps to learn and communicate collaboratively. The students can engage in group discussions. Working and discussing cooperatively gives a better understanding of the topic and are able to share and enrich each other's knowledge through ideas and concepts suggested by each other. They can interact with the tutors and get their doubts clarified. This could be through synchronous method of Virtual learning where all the participants or teachers meet at the same time in chat sessions. In these chat sessions there is a leader who moderates and keep the tutors and students on the track when they get distracted. By way of collaborative learning and exchanging information with each other, it helps to get to know each other; therefore it helps to get socialized. . (McVay Lynch, 2004)

The Virtual learning helps the students to be more responsible, patient and organized. When they get ready for a chat session to discuss a topic with the lecturer or group discussions, they research, collect the materials and the

take the most relevant information and prepare for the discussion. So they have to get very organized in order to study properly and effectively. Usually it's not a very easy thing to do, it takes time and effort. Students should understand that everyone can't be an expert in use of technology or aware of it. So there might be students who type slowly in chat discussions and fall behind, so students should wait for such students and help them in the best way they could. So it needs a lot of patience in situation like these to control one's temper. So due to virtual learning environment, an aware and responsible, quality person is produced. And a community will greatly benefit from such people and they add value to the work assigned to them. This organizational skill learnt will help them in their future studies as well. So it's a lesson learnt for a lifetime. (McVay Lynch, 2004) One of the most important benefits of Virtual Learning Environment is sharing.

The discussion boards, e-mails and chat sessions are means to share. Students share their ideas, concepts with each other and the lecturers share course materials with students on the web page. This is a great advantage for the students because they get access to latest researches and theories provided by tutors. In giving comments to the posts, students are advised not to write longer replies and give excess comments. So usually students post links of sites containing useful information on the topic. This allows other students to gain more information on the topic than before. The lecturers upload students assignments after marking and this give the students to learn from each other's mistake. The universities and colleges use the web page as a way to make announcements of the faculty and other extracurricular activities. This is a more reliable method of communication.

(McVay Lynch, 2004) A lot of students stay silent in actual classrooms without participate in the discussion. Some students don't even concentrate and get engage in other activities like chatting, texting and listening to music. Most of the time the lecturers don't notice and they get away with it.

But in virtual learning platform this is not possible because many programs are designed in a way that students have to participate in chats, post to discussion boards. And the instructors would know who are following the lessons, participating and not cheating. So this method is a more supervised way of learning. (McVay Lynch, 2004) Almost all the students take notes in classroom; it helps to remember and study later. This is the note taking method for a traditional face to face learning method. But it's a bit different and easier in Virtual Learning or Online Learning. Here, students normally use word processor or special note taking software's to make notes while studying course materials. When they find useful information, they copy and paste. It would take only few seconds. It saves a lot of times and gives students more time to study. (McVay Lynch, 2004) s Virtual Learning Environment is a very effective method of learning which can be used in any college or university especially students at OUM (Open University of Malaysia).

Here, students go to the class 4-5 times a week for three hours each subject. It's a very less time to learn a big content. So the students should use the time very effectively. And Virtual Learning is a very useful method. They could use discussion boards and e-mail for understanding the topics broadening the knowledge of the topic since it's flexible. The students can

make convenient groups and discuss the topics and can get difficult points clarified from lecturers as well. This will enhance the studies of the students. Students can use Virtual Learning Environment is to get more organized and responsible in their studies.

It prepares them for their future studies and learns effectively and more productively. Learning is never an easy process, but knowing how to learn and using productive methods to learn would make the process a little easier. Besides students learn quality characters and become disciplined. Therefore Virtual Learning Environment is one of the most effective methods of learning since it has innumerable benefits like flexibility, collaborative learning, sharing information and resources, learning organizational skills and responsibility, cost effective and self assessing. In addition, students at OUM (Open University Malaysia) could use Virtual Learning Environment in various ways to enhance their studies.

Reference List

1. McVay Lynch, M. (2004). Learning Online: a guide to success in the virtual classroom. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
2. Hasan Siddiqui, M. (2004). Challenges of Educational Technology. New Delhi: S. B Nangia, A P H Publishing Corporation.
3. Dillenbourg, P.(2000). Learning in the new millennium: Building new strategies for schools. Geneva. Retrieved from <http://www.google.mv/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&ved=0CDIQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Ftecfa.unige.ch%2Ftecfa%2Fpublicat%2Fdil-papers-2%2FDil.7.5.18.pdf&ei=>

kVRtUKOdB6SQiAeKzoHoBA&usg=

AFQjCNHCiFE22UZNTd4qUfZRkZLNBi9SHw on 2nd October 2012.

4. Osman, Z., Kaur, A., Hanon Bidin, S., Mohd Khalid, H., Kaur, H., Ahmed, H., & Mohd Yusoff, T. M. (2010). Malaysia: Open University Malaysia.