

Benefits and challenges of virtual collaboration in discussion boards assignment

[Sociology](#)



We live in a world of advanced technology. One important aspect of this technology is the growing of educational opportunities that are now available beyond the conventional face-to-face setting in classroom learning. Today students are entering college with a vast knowledge of the computer and Internet. This gives colleges a great opportunity to provide students with different means of educational techniques such as online collaboration in discussion boards. Many organizations are using this technology for easy transfer of communication world wide.

The discussion board is an internet forum that provides instant exchange of communication between a computer, instructor and students.

Communication is delivered through web pages and e-mail. Through the discussion board questions are asked and answered from the students and instructor. The subjects of the discussion boards are primarily the same as that of on-campus classes. This paper is to focus on the benefits and challenges of collaboration in discussion boards (Cooper). A great benefit of online collaboration is that it gives each student a chance to be heard.

Students are willing to engage in conversation that is more in depth and revealing of their thoughts which may build self-esteem in students. This may be because a student feels more anonymous. No one can see a person in online classes. Students feel free to share ideas and even challenge the instructor because there is no face-to-face dilemma. Sometimes it is easier for people to communicate through writing. Students may feel more comfortable expressing and sharing ideas when responding in discussion boards.

Also there is a deeper level of thinking because a person can see what they are going to say and correct errors before it is submitted. Discussion boards may make it easier to develop social interaction skills and help develop oral communication skills. Virtual collaboration in a discussion board can present a number of benefits and advantages. Instructors can assign students to read without having to print out and waste paper. Instructors can teach larger classes through the use of discussion boards. Convenience and flexibility are other advantages of discussion boards.

A person can work at their own speed. This allows people to work around their different work and family schedules. Students and instructors have the benefit of communicating in the comfort of their home through the discussion board. This eliminates travel time. Being able to collaborate in the discussion board at anytime and anywhere is indeed very convenient. Through discussion board students can experience learning from other students replies. Students can view situations from other student's perspectives (Kearsley). A challenge of virtual collaboration is clarity.

Assignments, questions and comments should be presented clearly. A person may get confused if writings are not capable of being understood. A student may have to spend more time online reading assignments and replies over again to get an understanding. That can be time consuming. Non-verbal communication may be a problem for some students. Not being able to see a person's facial expressions or hand gestures may have less of an impact on the importance of the message. If a student has a problem or

question on the assignment they must do, the instructor should respond in a timely fashion.

Also students have to discipline their selves to check assignments and discussion boards daily. Internet and website difficulties can cause late work. If a person's computer crashes their work can be lost. When a person's work is lost they will receive no credit for it, or have to rewrite it. Computer virus can also be a problem. It is very important to have virus protection software for internet use. Participating in group projects may be difficult when members are slow in responding. Collaborating in the discussion board may not be good for social people.

There is a lack of face-to-face social involvement (Kearsley). I am a very shy person. I really do not like to stand in front of a group of people and give a speech, I get nervous. Through research and many classes of collaborating in discussion boards, I will use what I have learned to develop my social interaction and oral communication skills. I have made a commitment to log on to the discussion board daily to review assignments and reply to others in the class. I will write my responses clearly so everyone will have an understanding of what I am saying.

Through the use of discussion boards in many classes I will continue to learn a new way of learning and interacting with others. I also have virus protection and a back-up plan if I have any problems with my computer or internet service. Reference Cooper, L. Online and Traditional Computer Application Classes. The Journal. March 2001. Retrieved July 12, 2005.

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