

Learning Environment in Modern Era in Context to Virtual Classes

K. S. Sindhav

Principal,

Swami Vivekanand Vidyalaya, Anjar.

Ph.D. Scholar, Rai University,

Ahmedabad, Research Supervisor Dr. P. P. Dave.

Received Jan. 1, 2016

Accepted Feb. 6, 2016

ABSTRACT

Almost all of us have spent a great deal of time in the classroom, beginning in kindergarten and extending for years beyond. This paper presents close attention to the learning environment, or the physical, psychological and instructional atmosphere as it creates deep effect on the students and their achievement. In 21st century learners are looking towards both physical as well as virtual classes. They are having tremendous experience form both the side. The researcher feels here that it is very important for teachers to understand the concept of learning environment modern era.

Key words: learning environment.

Conceptually speaking, the Learning Environment refers to the whole range of components and activities within which learning happens. While technically speaking, a Learning Environment relies on computer-supported Systems such as a Learning management system, a combination of various educational technologies is virtual environment. However, each kind of instructional design model has its own way of defining the learning environment. See also the discussion around technology enhanced learning. Learning environment refers to the diverse physical locations, contexts, and cultures in which students learn. Since students may learn in a wide variety of settings, such as outside-of-school locations and outdoor environments, the term is often used as a more accurate or preferred alternative to classroom, which has more limited and traditional connotations—a room with rows of desks and a chalkboard, for example.

The term also encompasses the culture of a school or class—its presiding ethos and characteristics, including how individuals interact with and treat one another—as well

as the ways in which teachers may organize an educational setting to facilitate learning—e.g., by conducting classes in relevant natural ecosystems, grouping desks in specific ways, decorating the walls with learning materials, or utilizing audio, visual, and digital technologies. And because the qualities and characteristics of a learning environment are determined by a wide variety of factors, school policies, governance structures, and other features may also be considered elements of a “learning environment.”

Educators may also argue that learning environments have both a direct and indirect influence on student learning, including their engagement in what is being taught, their motivation to learn, and their sense of well-being, belonging, and personal safety. For example, learning environments filled with sunlight and stimulating educational materials would likely be considered more conducive to learning than drab spaces without windows or decoration, as would schools with fewer incidences of misbehavior, disorder, bullying, and illegal activity. How adults interact with students and how students interact with one another may also

be considered aspects of a learning environment, and phrases such as “positive learning environment” or “negative learning environment” are commonly used in reference to the social and emotional dimensions of a school or class.

This ideal learning environment optimises wellbeing. It reflects a positive school ethos that makes the school an exciting, stimulating and welcoming place.

Schools do this by:

- developing and communicating an explicit commitment to wellbeing
- acknowledging individual differences and providing opportunities for all students to learn and succeed
- ensuring students have opportunities to participate in school decision-making processes
- applying consistent school-wide rules and consequences.

School Classrooms are not the only settings for effective learning. More and more educators are using "Out of Classroom" settings as learning environments, where children become educated through experience rather theory. Experiential education is about placing the learner and their learning in a real environment that is relevant to their prior knowledge and the knowledge they will acquire.

Virtual Learning Environment

Computerized learning systems have been referred to as electronic educational technology, e-learning, learning platform or learning management system. The major difference is that VLE and LMS are applications, whereas the Learning Platform shares characteristics with an Operating System where different educational web based applications can be run on the platform. The terms virtual learning

environment (VLE) and learning platform are generically used to describe a range of integrated web based applications that provide teachers, learners, parents and others involved in education with information, tools and resources to support and enhance educational delivery and management.

A virtual learning environment (VLE) is a Web-based platform for the digital aspects of courses of study, usually within educational institutions. VLEs typically: allow participants to be organized into cohorts, groups and roles; present resources, activities and interactions within a course structure; provide for the different stages of assessment; report on participation; and have some level of integration with other institutional systems. The following are the basic or the main components required for a virtual learning environment or online education curriculum to take place. A VLE may include some or all of the following elements:

- syllabus of program.
- The basic content of some or all of the course; the complete course for distance learning applications, or some part of it, when used as a portion of a conventional course. This normally includes material such as copies of lecture in the form of text, audio, or video presentations, and the supporting visual presentations
- Additional resources, either integrated or as links to outside resources. This typically consists of supplementary reading, or innovative equivalents for it.
- Self-assessment quizzes or analogous devices, normally scored automatically
- Formal assessment functions, such as examinations, essay submission, or presentation of projects. this now

frequently includes components to support peer assessment

- Links to outside sources – pathways to all other online learning spaces are linked via the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment).
- Management of access rights for instructors, their assistants, course support staff, and students
- Documentation and statistics as required for institutional administration and quality control
- Authoring tools for creating the necessary documents by the instructor, and, usually, submissions by the students
- Provision for the necessary hyperlinks to create a unified presentation to the students.

A VLE is normally not designed for a specific course or subject, but is capable of supporting multiple courses over the full range of the academic program, giving a consistent interface within the institution and to some degree with other institutions using the system. Virtual Learning Environment offers a learning system with many components, with added advantage of computer based learning and teaching space. One of the process to enhance the learning experience was the virtual resource room, which is student centered, works in a self paced format, and which encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. In virtual mode, the materials are available in the form of computer aided learning program, lecture notes, special self-assessment module. Another mechanism for student to student interactions in a form of simple discussion forum is by using a novel link Cyber tutor. This allows the students with an email account to connect with course content and the staff with their doubts and related questions. The students are able to contact the staff without a face to face visit

which saves the on campus time. The staff remains anonymous which allows for the several staff to act as a cyber tutor during the course. The student do not remain anonymous although their email address are cryptic enough to mask their identity. Students can discuss about the exams, lab reports, posters, lectures, technical help with downloading materials. The evaluation of the use of Virtual resource room is done by surveys, focus groups and online feedback forms. The students have 24 hours of access to the learning material in a day which suits their varied life styles. They also find the learning materials to be very useful for many different reasons.

Both supporters and critics of virtual learning environments recognize the importance of the development of 21st century skills such as, cultural and global awareness, self-direction, creativity, communication, and knowledge application; however, the controversy lies in whether or not virtual learning environments are practical for both teachers and students. Economize on the time of teaching staff, and the cost of instruction. Likewise: Facilitate the presentation of online learning by instructors without web authoring experience. Provide instruction to students in a flexible manner to students with varying time and location constraints. Provide instruction in a manner familiar to the current web-oriented generation of students. Facilitate the networking of instruction between different campuses or even colleges. Provide for the reuse of common material among different courses. Provide automatic integration of the results of student learning into campus information systems. In short it can be sum up in following points:

- Content management – creation, storage, access to and use of learning resources

- Curriculum mapping and planning – lesson planning, assessment and personalisation of the learning experience
- Learner engagement and administration – managed access to learner information and resources and tracking of progress and achievement
- Communication and collaboration - emails, notices, chat, wikis, blogs

VLE as learning platform is a safe and secure environment that is reliable, available online and accessible to a wide user base. A user should be able to move between learning platforms throughout their life with no loss of access to their personal data. The concept of a learning platform accommodates a continuously evolving description of functionality changing to meet the needs of the learner.

References

1. Basque, Josianne & Sylvie Doré (1998) Le concept d'environnement d'apprentissage informatisé, *Journal of Distance Education/Revue de l'enseignement à distance*, 13(1), ISSN 0830-0445, HTML.
2. Britain, Sandy; Liber, Oleg (1999). "A Framework for Pedagogical Evaluation of Virtual Learning Environments" (PDF). JISC Technology Applications Programme (Report 41). Retrieved 1 February 2015.
3. Harnish, D; Reeves, P (2000), "Issues in the evaluation of large-scale two-way interactive distance learning systems", *International Journal of Educational Telecommunications* 6 (3): 267–81.
4. Kris Popat (2007), *Virtually There: Learning Platforms*, Scunthorpe: Yorkshire and Humber Grid for Learning, ISBN 9780955600609
5. Peat, Mary (July 2000). "Towards First Year Biology online: a virtual learning environment". *Educational Technology & Society* 3 (3): 203–207.
6. Sandberg, J. A. (1994). Educational paradigms: issues and trends. In Lewis, R. Mendelsohn, P., (ed.), *Lessons from Learning*, (IFIP TC3/WG3.3 Working Conference 1993), pages 13--22, Amsterdam. North-Holland.
7. Weller, M. (2007), *Virtual Learning Environments: Using, choosing and developing your VLE*, London: Routledge.
8. Weller, Martin (2007). *Virtual learning environments: using, choosing and developing your VLE*. London: Routledge. pp. 4–5. ISBN 9780415414302.
9. Xu, Yan; Park, Hyungsung; Baek, Youngkyun (October 2011). "A New Approach Toward Digital Storytelling: An Activity Focused on Writing Self-efficacy in a Virtual Learning Environment". *Educational Technology & Society* 14 (4): 181–191.

Failure is success if we learn from it.

~ *Malcolm Forbes*