Online Learning Environment

What are the features of the online course?

In the online courses the instructor provides materials, lectures, tests, and assignments that can be accessed at any time. Students are given a timeframe – usually a one week window – during which they need to connect at least once or twice. But overall, students are free to contribute whenever they choose during the timeframe or duration of the course.

All our online courses do not require students and instructors to be online at the same time. All lectures, discussions, and presentations do not occur at a specific hour, and students do not need to be online at the same time in order to participate.

This feature provides a better way to learn. Many students need more time to form their thoughts or consider all the sides of an issue before offering an opinion.

Features of our online courses:

- **Virtual Libraries/Repositories of Documents, Presentations, and Videos**: The online course will provide you with instructional materials. You may also be asked to download presentations, slides, and illustrative graphics. In addition, you may have instructional materials that consist of video snippets or short videos. In this case, you'll often have the option to stream the content rather than having to download an enormous file.

- **E-Mail**: E-mail is used in all online courses. The instructor will use this tool to send daily reminders and updates to the entire course. You will receive notifications regarding the submission of forum posts, exercise submissions, and reminders of due activities in your inbox.

- **Discussion Forums**: The discussion forum is a foundational item in the online learning structure. Students will participate in discussions facilitated by the instructor. A series of questions are posted in the forums that all students must respond and comment. It's a great way to respond to questions and to share documents and links. It's also a good place to ask questions and to clear up ambiguities.

- **Course exercises**: Each week you will work on an exercise, responding to a series of questions that will ask you to analyze a situation and develop a solution. The exercise has a timeline for submission in order to receive a grade.

- **Quizzes and test**: Each week you will need to complete a short quiz to help you measure your progress in the course. Most courses also include a final test.

What is Asynchronous Learning?

Asynchronous learning is a student-centered teaching method that uses online learning resources to facilitate information sharing outside the constraints of time and place among a network of people. Asynchronous learning is based on constructivist theory, a student-centered approach that emphasizes the importance of peer-to-peer interactions. This approach combines self-study with asynchronous interactions to promote learning, and it can be used to facilitate learning in distance education. This combined network of learners and the electronic network in which they communicate are referred to as an asynchronous learning network.

The online learning resources used to support asynchronous learning include email, and online discussion boards. Course management systems such as Moodle, have been developed to support online interaction, allowing users to organize discussions, post and reply to messages, and upload and access multimedia.

Asynchronous learning's greatest benefit to students is the freedom it gives them to access the course and its instructional materials at any time they choose, and from any location, with an Internet connection. This allows for accessibility for diverse student populations, ranging from traditional, on-campus students, to working professionals, to international students in foreign countries.

Asynchronous learning environments provide a "high degree of interactivity" between participants who are separated both geographically and temporally and afford students many of the social benefits of face-to-face interaction. Since students can express their thoughts without interruption, they have more time to reflect on and respond to class materials and their classmates than in a traditional classroom.

Another advantage of asynchronous learning is that there is a record of nearly everything that occurs in that environment. All materials, correspondence, and interactions can be electronically archived. Participants can go back and review course materials, lectures, and presentations, as well as correspondence between participants. This information is generally available at any time to course participants.[1]

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[1] Wikipedia

Online Learning Environment

We use Moodle to manage all of our online courses. Moodle is a Learning Management System (LMS) that includes all the features discussed before. The learning philosophy of Moodle includes a constructivist and social constructionist approach to education, emphasizing that learners (and not just teachers) can contribute to the educational experience. This means that the process of learning also comes from the contributions all students make on the course. By sharing their experiences and discussing their points of view guided by the instructor.

Moodle is the world's most widely used learning management system used by organizations and universities across the globe [2]

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[2] As of January 2018, Moodle had a user base of 92,658 registered and verified sites, serving 126,021,745 users in 14.7+ million courses in 230 countries.