

Education, Health and Social Change

Walking Through The Road Of Transformation




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CHAPTER XI

VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT - CONCEPT, ELEMENTS, POPULAR VIRTUAL SYSTEMS AVAILABLE AND THEIR USAGE

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Introduction

Many innovative instructors at institutions world-wide are discovering the potential of the online environment to deliver instruction of the highest quality to people who would otherwise have limited access to higher education. This is an exciting and challenging time in education. Online education is bringing collaborative learning to the forefront and is affecting the way traditional courses are taught as well. Simply defined, online education refers to courses offered via the Internet. The minimum requirement for students to participate in an online course is access to a computer, the Internet, and motivation to succeed in a non-traditional classroom. Online courses provide an excellent method of course delivery unbound by time or location, allowing for accessibility to instruction at anytime from anywhere. Adult learners in particular find the online environment a convenient way to fit education into their busy lives. The ability to access a course from a home computer via the Internet, 24 hours a day, seven days a week is a tremendous incentive for this group to reach their academic and career goals.

Virtual Learning is usually associated with online courses or online environments, but it has much broader dimensions. In this article we will discuss its definition, characteristics, and benefits. We have also made for you a list of the most common forms of virtual learning, which describe the different aspects of learning and teaching process.

Virtual Learning – Meaning

Virtual learning is a learning experience that is enhanced through utilizing computers and/or the internet both outside and inside the facilities of the educational organization. The instruction most commonly takes place in an online environment. The teaching activities are carried out online whereby the teacher and learners are physically separated (in terms of place, time, or both).