


# Chapter 15

## The Role of Virtual Classrooms in Realizing Effective Online Learning

**Servet Kılıç**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1687-3231>

*Ordu University, Turkey*

**Seyfullah Gökoğlu**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0074-7692>

*Bartın University, Turkey*

### ABSTRACT

*As of 2020, with the pandemic occurring worldwide, face-to-face learning activities at all levels, from preschool to higher education, have been moved to online environments. The importance of virtual classes has become more evident when these courses are conducted synchronously or asynchronously. This chapter mentions the roles of virtual classrooms in effectively executing online learning activities. The features of virtual classrooms in the context of teacher, student, and content are included. In this context, we examined widely used virtual classroom platforms such as Adobe Connect, BigBlueButton, Moodle, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, OpenMeetings, Google Meet, Electa, ClassDojo, WizIQ, and Kahoot. These platforms have many standard features, such as video conferencing, screen sharing, image sharing, presentation features, voice and text chat, document sharing, classroom management, lesson planning, and alternative measurement and evaluation tools.*

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## **VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS**

In their simplest definition, virtual classrooms are learning environments where students and teachers come together in online learning environments. Participants can come together in these environments regardless of place. With a more comprehensive definition, virtual classrooms are a learning environment where participating individuals come together synchronously or asynchronously, teachers play more of a guiding role, different activities are carried out through information technologies, and certain principles and rules are applied like real classroom environments (Can, 2020; Kaya, 2011). Virtual classrooms are preferred as an alternative to traditional classrooms, with features such as providing interaction between students, improving social awareness, and bringing learners together in different places (Martin & Parker, 2014). Adobe Connect, Big Blue Button, Moodle, Zoom, and Open Meetings applications are examples of widely used virtual classroom applications.

Virtual classrooms have been extensively researched in the literature. Relevant studies focus on the academic success of virtual classes, learning attitudes, course participation, the impact of communication and interaction, and material development. Dikmenli and Ünalı Eser (2013) stated that virtual classes are more effective in academic success than blended classes. Çetin and Günay (2011) stated that interactive virtual classes positively affect students' attitudes toward the course. It has also been demonstrated that virtual classroom environments provide permanent information (Yılmaz & Sarı, 2010) and increase class participation (Blaine, 2019). In addition to applied research on virtual classrooms, studies on the theoretical framework have also been conducted (Can, 2020; Ceylan, 2020).

## **ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS**

Virtual classrooms have emerged as an alternative to real classroom environments. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that affected the world in 2020, virtual environments were necessarily preferred. Around the world, training at all education levels, from primary to higher education, is given synchronously or asynchronously in virtual classroom environments. In this process, the advantages and disadvantages of virtual classroom environments have been observed more clearly.

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