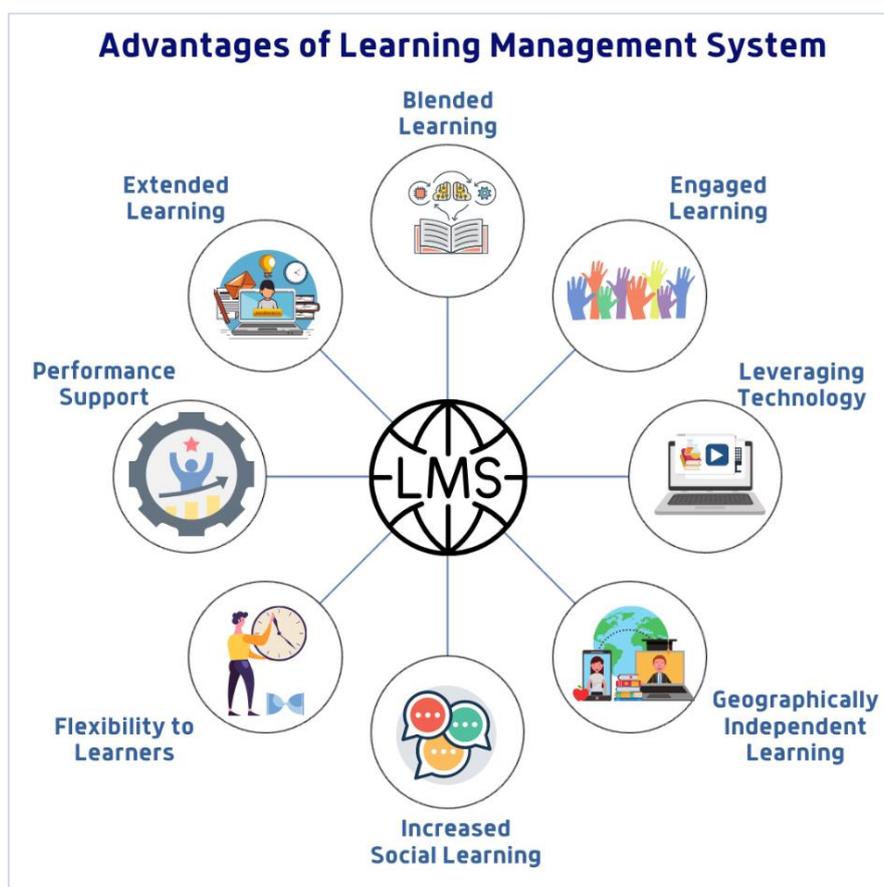


Learning management system (LMS) is a web-based system for managing course content. Instructors can make announcements, share course materials, and enhance discussion, all in one easily accessible location. Managing a course becomes much simpler with a course site, and the site provides significant benefits to your students. Share all of your course materials in one central location. Encourage student participation with the included collaboration and communication tools. All of your course materials can be easily reused in future semesters. Features of a learning management system include:

Information sharing	Post announcements and reading materials for the entire class – easily and without paper.
Automated user management	Students enrolled in your courses are automatically enrolled in the course sites on the learning management system.
Assessment manager	Create quizzes and tests for your students that can be taken online – graded automatically.
Discussion boards	Enhance student communication through a discussion forum for students to post comments, questions, and assignments.
Online gradebook	Grade students’ work and provide feedback.
Assessment Rubrics	Create re-useable rubrics to assess student submissions.

How to Integrate LMS into the Classroom



Chickering and Ehrmann (1996) outline **principles of good practice** for implementing technology in the classroom. When integrating an LMS, an instructor must ask how it will further her teaching goals. Following these good practice principles will help answer this question.

1. Good Practice Encourages Contacts Between Students and Faculty Member

The LMS can be more than simply a repository for classroom materials. While having a common place for the course syllabus, readings, and assignment instructions is a useful part of the LMS, it can also become a place for continued interaction outside of the class. Discussion boards, blogs, and wikis enable asynchronous communication where students can continue classroom discussions on their own outside of the class meeting time. As Harrington, Staffo, and Wright (2006), "Several [faculty] noted that in traditional formats, it always seemed that the students regarded the class as over as soon as they walked out the door. However, the online component meant that this perception changed. The class became an ongoing phenomenon, which engaged the students with the subject on a prolonged and deeper level than before" (p. 184).

2. Good Practice Develops Reciprocity and Cooperation Among Students

Chickering and Ehrmann (1996) state, "Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning." In addition to the collaborative and social learning that takes place on a discussion board, an LMS offers easy ways to put students into groups for a specific project or for an entire semester. These groups can then have their own reading lists, discussion boards, and assignments.

3. Good Practice Uses Active Learning Techniques

Active learning focuses on skill development through activity rather than simply transmitting knowledge. An LMS can provide the means for skill-acquisition, for example, by asking students to provide feedback on one another's work through peer review or allowing students to submit multi-media presentations rather than written assignments. Again, the emphasis here is not just on using the LMS as a digital repository for course documents but engaging the LMS so that students can interact with each other and with the course actively through the digital platform.

4. Good Practice Gives Prompt Feedback

Automation is a key component of an LMS, because it allows instructors to offer students frequent and pointed feedback on their progress through the course. Thus, an instructor who employs the automated feedback mechanisms in the LMS will ensure that students know where they stand in the course, even in large courses with many students.

5. Good Practice Emphasizes Time on Task

Chickering and Ehrmann (1996) state, "Time plus energy equals learning. Learning to use one's time well is critical for students and professionals alike. Allocating realistic amounts of time means effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty. Technology also can increase time on task by making studying more efficient." An LMS platform can utilize student time efficiently by matching course content and assignments directly to the overall learning goals of the class. That way, students will know exactly what they are meant to gain or accomplish with each course item. Further, the LMS can neatly divide course content up by modules.

6. Good Practice Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning

There are many roads to learning. People bring different talents and styles of learning to university. Students rich in hands-on experience may not do so well with theory or vice versa. Students need the opportunity to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them. If instructors can utilize it to facilitate student instruction, with students working together and singularly towards their own goals, then the LMS can help the classroom recognize diverse talents and ways of knowing.

References

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