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## Assessment of the Use of Synchronous Virtual Classrooms in Higher Education

### Abstract

The presented paper describes the characteristics of a study conducted on Synchronous Virtual Classrooms (SVCs), virtual spaces which harbour such resources as videoconferences, shared desk-tops, etc. The main objective of the research was to assess teaching and methodological, communication and technological aspects of SVCs in e-learning processes. Empirical methodology of quantitative and descriptive nature was used; a questionnaire was designed to assess these issues with a sample of 116 university students from six different fields of study at the University of Extremadura. As a conclusion, we report that SVCs with a constructive methodology enhance students' creativity, favour virtual collaborative work, promote critical and independent thought, and create alternative channels to stimulate students' active participation by means of flexible and attractive interfaces.

**Keywords:** *e-learning, information and communication technology, management system platforms, synchronous virtual classrooms, higher education, videoconference.*

### Introduction

The knowledge society and the application of technology to education are continually developing processes. The emergence of Management System Platforms (MSPs), as shown in numerous studies in the field of e-learning (Russell, 2009; Winter et al., 2010; Shivetts, 2011; Hung, 2012, etc.), b-learning (Amaral,