

# **An Exploration of Learning Environments used by students in a first year University course**

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# **Abstract**

This research involved the design, development and implementation of an online survey instrument to identify the physical learning environments and resources students use when studying an online course. It was found, through a review of the literature, that there was no appropriate instrument available for this purpose. It was also found that the term physical learning environment actually is not well defined in the literature. These two factors have been addressed in this research.

The results obtained from the survey found that students used a mixture of physical learning resources such as textbooks, and online resources such as email and online submission of assessment items. However, none of these resources were used all the time. It was also established that the majority of students preferred to learn at home using either online or paper-based resource material. The results also showed that the library both as a resource and as a learning environment was not being used to its full potential.

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## Acronyms

CES – Classroom Environment Scale  
CL – Computer Literacy  
CSCL – Computer Supported Collaborative Work  
CUCEI – College and University Classroom Environment Inventory  
CQU – Central Queensland University  
DOVILES – Distance and Open Virtual Learning Environment Scale  
EBAP\_ECOM – Online environment used by a Brazilian college  
GRSLSS – Grasha–Riechmann Student Learning Style Scales  
HTML – Hypertext Markup Language  
ICEQ – Individualised Classroom Environment Questionnaire  
ICT – Information and Communication Technology  
IT – Information Technology  
LEQ – Learning Environment Questionnaire  
LEI – Learning Environment Inventory  
LSI – Dunn instrument for learning style preferences  
MCI – My Class Inventory  
OLE – Online Learning Environment  
RTS – Research Training Scheme  
SAD – Systems Analysis and Design  
SPI – Student Perception Inventory  
TROFI – Technology–Rich, Outcomes–Focused Learning Environment Inventory  
URL – Universal Resource Locator  
VLE – Virtual Learning Environment  
VSM – Viable Systems Model  
WIHIC – What is Happening in this Class questionnaire  
WWW – World Wide Web

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## Declaration

I declare that the work presented in this dissertation is to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted either in whole or in part for a degree at this or any other university.

The submission of this dissertation is in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Informatics at Central Queensland University.

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