



VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS BRING HOMESCHOOL LESSONS TO LIFE

*Discover the learning possibilities to better
engage and immerse your student.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 03** Letter From the President
- 04** Section I: Virtual Classrooms Defined
- 06** Section II: Teaching to Different Learning Styles
- 08** Section III: Resolving Educational Shortcomings with Virtual Classrooms
- 10** Section IV: How Online Learning and Student Engagement Compliment Each Other
- 11** Section V: Live Online Learning Benefits Checklist
- 12** Section VI: Flexible Live Online Learning is Here



Thank you for your interest in Live Online Classes!

One of the most important tools in a successful homeschool learning lineup is virtual live online classes. Virtual Classrooms, also known as “Live Online Classes,” integrate learning and enhance homeschooling by giving students access to live teachers and interaction with their peers. These valuable interactions fuel critical thinking, healthy debate, and challenging discussions that lead to growth and exploration of the subject matter like nothing else can.

Virtual classrooms help students in multiple ways, primarily by instilling a love of learning, offering a more personalized digital experience to cater to each child’s unique learning style, and providing options for self-pacing so each student can learn on

their timeline. These benefits are what make Live Online Classes a core part of virtually-supported homeschool curriculum.

The fact is, over 56 million students are using and enjoying virtual classrooms at every grade level and for almost every content area. Live Online Classes are here to stay, which is why we at Bridgeway Academy are focused on expanding our live learning classroom repertoire and offerings.

Read on to learn about this exciting platform to educate, engage, and excite homeschool children at every grade level.

To Your Success!

Jessica Parnell

President, Bridgeway Homeschool Academy



Section I.

Virtual Classrooms Defined

Live Online Classes have become an increasingly popular and effective educational option for homeschoolers. Both parents and students enjoy this “hybrid” learning experience, which combines real-time, live-streamed, teacher-directed learning with digital media and computer or web-based activities and assessments. Blended learning also includes some of the best traditional learning tools such as novels, laboratory activities, and even textbooks. Students log in to a virtual online classroom and have access to not only the teacher, but fellow students, and a plethora of classroom features allowing for the exchange of ideas and knowledge.

The live, teacher-led instruction sessions run on a learning management system interface. Here the student can access assignments, projects, and assessments related to the course, and upload completed work for the teacher to grade or evaluate to provide immediate feedback. Live classes encourage student engagement with both their course content and with one another from the convenience of home, giving parents a window into every aspect of the child’s learning.

Children today live in a digital age where incredible software applications rest in the palms of their hands, so the opportunity to use computer technology to enhance their learning is a natural fit for a blended learning educational program.

What Makes a Great Virtual Online Learning Experience?

The best courses not only have great technology tools for students, but also provide avenues for both parents and students to interact with the instructor.

Content and instruction meet the needs of the various learning and personality styles that make up the virtual classroom.

Teachers understand how to adjust to various ability levels and unique student characteristics.

This is truly personalized learning and is what differentiates an excellent program from the more generic “one-size-fits-all” approach shared by many online course providers.

Interactive Tools Make Virtual Classrooms More Effective

The learning tools available to a student in a virtual classroom also have a direct impact on the power of the virtual classroom. Some of these unique digital interactive tools include:

- An interactive whiteboard allowing students to:
 - Illustrate and create new content.
 - Label diagrams and color documents and images inserted by the teacher.
 - Respond to writing prompts and construct graphic organizers.
- Live chat to inspire further conversations and questions within the classroom.
- Student surveys and breakout rooms that provide teacher-supervised areas for discussing questions and sharing ideas.
- Digital media, such as movies and slide presentations.
- The ability to download documents directly from the virtual classroom while instruction is in progress.
- A “Notes” section where students can take their notes save as a downloadable PDF document.
- Live-streaming via webcam so students can share projects (and pets), creating an engaging environment for learning.

With all the exciting tools above, virtual classrooms have many benefits for both students and homeschool parents.

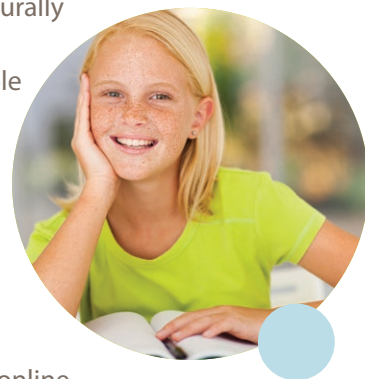
Five things to Love about Live Online Classes:

1. **EXPERT TEACHING** One of the benefits of Live Online Classes is the availability of a real-life, real-time expert. Since parents rarely categorize themselves as experts in all things, having a teacher present new material, facilitate group discussions, and support work assignments is often a much needed break.
2. **INDEPENDENT LEARNING** Once students transition out of homeschool into a college, trade school, or career, it is essential to understand what it means to be accountable to a professor, instructor, supervisor, or colleague. Live Online Classes provide a natural environment for students to acquire greater self-discipline, responsibility, and self-advocacy.
3. **INTEGRATION OF REAL-WORLD SKILLS** Virtual classrooms provide opportunities for students to practice word processing, presentation skills, and project management using the tools they will engage with in the workforce. This enables them to become better public speakers and mesh technology with creativity in a way that prepares them for both a collaborative, virtual work environment and a traditional office setting.
4. **PEACE OF MIND** Who among homeschooling parents hasn't wondered how a child's learning will translate into the world at large, such as larger classroom experiences where expectations, teaching

methods, grading criteria, and other course-specific factors could differ greatly from those of the parent-led coursework? Live Online Classes offer parents another perspective on their child and can often provide an avenue where students are pushed to tackle new tasks, lessons, and courses that don't require significant prep on the part of the parent. In other words, the virtual classroom is just as much a homeschool parent resource as it is a child's tool. Not only are students challenged to leverage technology for their learning, but parents can work with the online instructor to find new avenues for student success.

5. TIME AND FLEXIBILITY

Because many students naturally understand the tech realm, they quickly become capable of navigating the virtual classroom features and content on their own. That frees the parent up to teach another child, fold a load of laundry or maybe even get a cup of coffee while observing the online class session. In delegating the teaching to the course instructor, the parent has a reprieve from checking assignments for completion, evaluating projects, and grading assessments. The parent might even have time to enjoy another cup of coffee after throwing in the second load of wash!



Bridgeway Academy is pleased to offer an ever-growing list of highly interactive online courses, referred to as Live Online Classes. Courses run from 10 weeks to a full academic year of instruction. **Learn more by visiting BridgewayAcademy.com.**

Section II.

Teaching to Different Learning Styles

As technology continuously expands to provide extensive learning choices for students with access to the internet and smartphones, there is a thread of confusion that grows with it. Even entertaining the thought of searching through 30 million possibilities from a simple Google search containing the word “homeschooling” leaves parents exhausted, not to mention dismayed. To make this confusion more bewildering, no two students learn or absorb the material in the same way, so utilizing multiple learning styles and approaches are key.

Families who have more than one child know almost immediately that their children are completely different human beings. This concern becomes even more painfully apparent as they venture into the land of teaching the ABCs, colors, and numbers. While there are endless resources available to help, like games, picture books, apps, flashcards, songs, and videos, what works for one child rarely is a perfect fit for the other. Many parents become concerned when the second child doesn’t grasp new learning in exactly the same way, and assume the child is struggling. But that’s not always the case, and the primary reason for the difference is straightforward. The fact is that children learn in different ways because they are different.

Each child has a primary learning style, meaning that the brain processes information in a specific way to make them understand. That’s why some kids love watching videos and TV shows, and others prefer a more tactile approach, such as building a puzzle or playing with toys. If you want to grow your child’s curiosity and encourage them to love learning new concepts, it’s essential to teach and communicate in their learning style. The three main types of learning styles are Visual Learners, Auditory Learners, and Kinesthetic/ Tactile Learners.

Visual learners learn best by seeing. They observe details in what they view and can remember what they study by visualizing stories and charts. And they also study every little facial expression people make, trying to figure out what they mean. They are often very social children who interact well with others and are easily empathetic and reactive to stimuli around them. For visual learners, be very aware that messages – both positive and negative – are sent, with body language and facial expressions. Inflective eyes and smiles are recognized as approval of what they are doing, and encourages them to continue. Conversely, a frown, however slight, often sends a message that there is disappointment. The virtual classroom features appeal to the visual learner with streaming video content, colorful images and presentation slides, and the ability to see the faces of the teacher and other students while they speak.

Auditory learners understand concepts by hearing and talking. They often repeat everything they hear in order to process and remember it, even if something is muttered from a different room or said very softly. If this sounds familiar, the child may be an auditory learner. Think of auditory learners as having a tape recorder in their head. They hear what is said over and over, even after the lesson is over. In fact, something they didn’t understand at first “replays” for them, and they’ll often “get it” with a bit more time. Not only do they hear words, but they pay attention and react to the inflection and intonation in voices. If a voice is firm or higher in pitch, they may feel disregarded, or like the person is frustrated with them. But if the tone is warm, calm, and inviting, they will tend to open up more, knowing the person is sincere. Auditory learners also benefit from

the opportunity to replay recordings of their virtual classroom lessons whenever necessary for an additional review of the non-auditory components from the lessons.

Kinesthetic/Tactile learners are the wiggle worms! Ever notice those kids who just cannot sit still no matter how much a parent tries to make them? Even when they watch a video, they have the need to drum their fingers, rock back and forth, and fiddle with anything around them, and have trouble staying attentive. They get tired of being told to sit or stand still. Thus, the lessons for them need to provide the opportunity to touch, wiggle, and be active. Offering some brain breaks throughout the day for them to run, jump on a trampoline, or play a game also drains the extra energy out to help them concentrate later. They can even walk around during the online lesson with headphones on if it helps them focus. For the kinesthetic learner, participating in a virtual classroom setting allows them the freedom to move as much or as little as they need, because it poses no distraction to the other online students.

To learn more about learning styles and tips for helping address the various types of learners, check out this free resource on [Why Learning Style Matters](#).

By tailoring learning and communication to a child's strengths, parents see an incredible transformation. Not only do the relationships within the family grow, but students are also excited that they understand new concepts. However, just teaching to their learning style isn't always enough. Some students struggle to learn during certain times of the day. Some families have schedules that make it difficult to school during "normal" school hours. That's why live classes are available at times to fit almost any schedule.

Read on to learn more about the flexibility benefits of virtual classrooms in the next section.



Section III.

Resolving Educational Shortcomings with Virtual Classrooms

Each family has their own values and beliefs to instill in their children, as well as their own schedule of activities and appointments to work around. Now, couple that with the structure, speed, and the way in which children learn best and you have a recipe for either disaster or great success. It is all about the options; there are many ways homeschool courses can get sidelined, so the flexibility and reach that technology provides is one benefit of Live Online Classes.

First, a traditional classroom setting has 20+ children to one instructor. These odds already set children up to fail because they are not able to get the one-on-one attention, guidance, and feedback they need to excel. When a classroom teacher must address the needs of 20 children at the same time, they cannot stop, slow down, or revisit subjects that one or two kids were unable to grasp right away. This issue of pacing is totally resolved in the virtual classroom setting. As parents determine which school is best for their child, they should always consider the student-to-teacher ratio. Children's performance rises as these ratios drop. According to a [report by Northwestern University](#) "the evidence suggests that increasing class size will harm not only children's test scores in the short run, but also their long-run human capital formation."¹ With the high cost of public school education and ongoing budget concerns, schools are unable to provide the small class sizes that have such proven success.

These concerns have fueled the growth and adoption of online learning and homeschooling. These new options, aided by technology and certified teachers and curriculum, have given parents more power and choices than ever before.

Second, technology has grown to the point where it is more reliable and intuitive than ever before. No longer do we live in a world where textbooks are the only tool we have for learning. Today, kids have avenues like educational TV shows, iPads, laptops, gaming consoles, and virtual reality games to explore the world around them from the safety and comfort of home. Now, many children see technology as an escape or toy; however, for homeschool educators, it is viewed as a valuable tool for disseminating information and increasing engagement with lessons. Online worlds can transform reality, taking children to places they could have never dreamed of. It can build a child's imagination and help them ask questions like "what if". But why stop there?

Online devices don't have to be used just for games, we can use these tools to make learning more enjoyable and fun! "Neuroimaging studies and measurement of brain chemical transmitters reveal that students' comfort level can influence information transmission and storage in the brain" (Thanos et al., 1999). When students are engaged and motivated and feel minimal stress, information flows freely through the affective filter in the amygdala, and they achieve higher levels of cognition, make connections, and experience "aha" moments. Such learning comes not from quiet classrooms and directed lectures, but from classrooms with an atmosphere of exuberant discovery (Kohn, 2004).² Thousands of families now use virtual classrooms and online learning tools with great success because, simply put, online learning is fun.

Third, while live online courses require students to be available during that class time, families have the flexibility to choose what course to take and when! The amount of class time required can vary dramatically from one program to another, and families have the option to select

the class that best meets the scheduling needs and personality of the student. Some classes occur at 10 am, while others are in the afternoon or evening. Therefore, parents may choose the best time for students to get the most out of the classes. And if that isn't enough, children can always complete the daily or weekly assignments from class during a time that better fits the family's schedule.

Also, the duration of live online courses can vary; some courses run for a full academic year, while others may run for just a quarter or semester. The live class session may be as short as 30 minutes or as long as 90 minutes; therefore, students and families can select from options that best suit the attention span and developmental needs of the learner. Many live class providers also record each session, so if a child cannot avoid missing a class, families can access the content at a more convenient time.

Online learning works for all modalities of learning styles while allowing students to focus on how they learn best. **Visual learners** will find colorful examples, and can watch as teachers

work through problems on the screen. **Auditory learners** can hear the lectures, understand the tonality of the content, and debate subjects with other students. **Kinesthetic learners** can move around in their seat without disturbing other students and get additional hands-on application projects to reinforce concepts. The flexibility of online live instructor-led classes not only helps address children with varying learning styles, personalities, and pace needs, it also alleviates some of the stress of constant oversight that homeschool parents often feel.

This ability to tailor an interactive classroom to the needs of the children and the family unit is what makes it such a growing option for homeschoolers. Technology has made many changes in the way the world works, learns, communicates, and collaborates, and Live Online Classes classrooms are a critical part of this evolution. There are endless options when it comes to homeschool curriculum and content delivery methods, but flexible homeschooling with virtual classes is one of the most versatile, and it's here to stay.



Section IV.

How Online Learning and Student Engagement Complement Each Other

Right now, the focus in the digital realm is to have fun. Students delve into a different virtual reality and love the gaming aspect, letting their imaginations explore. Technology allows us to bring that “fun” into the classroom and link it directly to the learning of new knowledge and skills.

As a concerned parent, how do you make sure your student gets the most out of their education and loves what they are learning? These very concerns are the reasons virtual classrooms have emerged and are becoming increasingly more prevalent in education today. Additionally, with the heightened ability to personalize digital experiences, there is a growing movement to remove the word “classroom” from the virtual learning environment. Instead, the focus is on providing academics that run at the pace the student needs to excel, and that happens naturally in Live Online Classes.

Furthermore, it is important to begin with the primary pain point that has demanded the call for change, and that is teaching to different learning styles. Online games and activities are so interactive and engaging that they overwhelmingly meet the needs of all the various learning styles. The visual learner is clearly stimulated by the bright colors, animation, and movement. The auditory learner enjoys the feedback of the “pings,” “pops,” and “dings” of online games that reward them with every right answer or new high score. The kinesthetic learner engages with the computer mouse, touchscreen, and keypad or controller to satisfy their need to touch and feel as they learn and move through the virtual experience.



Section V.

Live Online Course Benefits Checklist

There are several benefits of interactive online learning in child development, including these exciting benefits from the website [TeachThought](#)³:



Increases Memory Capacity.

Games and online learning simulations often revolve around the use of memorization to score points, find resources, or move around.



Boost in Computer and Simulation Fluency.

Computer fluency is as critical today as reading and writing, because our world is dominated by technology. Interactive content via the Internet allows children the license to get used to how a computer works, which becomes second nature to them. Online learning games and lessons teach critical computer skills, such as how to use the mouse and keyboard properly, not to mention browsing, usernames and passwords, and general Internet navigation.



Encourages Fast Strategic Thinking and Problem-Solving.

Web-based teaching lessons and online games employ interactive content that requires quick thinking and reactions to solve problems. Moreover, kids must use logic to think three steps ahead to solve problems and complete levels, which develops strategic thinking, logic, accuracy, and the ability to think on their feet and outside the box.



Develops Hand-Eye Coordination.

Since online lessons require children to use a keyboard and mouse to operate the games, they also help develop hand-eye coordination, because children must look at the action on the screen while using their hands to control what is happening at the same time. This translates to outdoor skills in sports, recreational activities, and more.



Beneficial for Children with Attention Disorders

Research has revealed that online learning activities can benefit children who experience attention disorders. This was concluded by a professor at Nottingham University (CNN covered it here), and is a notion that has been repeated by many in related studies.



Skill-Building.

While online learning games are beneficial for skill-building, the coaching of an online educator not only allows the student to see what went wrong, but provides the strategies necessary for skill improvement, and offers reinforcement in a way a game cannot: genuine praise for progress made and efforts toward improvement, as well as the affirmation of the child's peers.

Section VI.

Flexible Live Online Learning is Here

“Online learning is not the next big thing; it is the now big thing.” - Donna J. Abernathy

Flexible homeschooling, where students immerse in a collaborative, interactive learning environment, is here. These exciting courses take engaging subjects like marine biology, art, and even essay writing to the next level with real-time instruction and interactive whiteboard technology. Utilizing virtual classroom tools, students can engage with their peers from around the world without ever leaving home.

And if a student is transitioning to homeschool or needs more peer interaction or accountability, Live Online Classes are the perfect fit. Students will get access to the most inspiring and exciting lessons that don't skimp on in-depth learning. At Bridgeway Academy, Live Online Classes are taught by expert and enthusiastic teachers who can add to home instruction with their professional teaching skills and unique perspective on the material.

“Live Online Classes are a great idea! Children who are not accustomed to being in class with other students learn how to interact with one another. They are fun and interactive, which makes for a very enriching learning experience.” - Carolina C.

– [Read More Reviews Now](#)

Bridgeway Academy's Live Online Classes include:

- Trimester classes for Elementary and middle school courses that meet 60 minutes per week for 10 weeks – trimester durations allow students to pick multiple courses each year.

- Half-credit high school elective courses that meet 90 minutes per week for a 15-week semester – allowing the student opportunity to explore more topics throughout the school year.
- Core middle school and full-credit high school courses that meet 90 minutes per week across the whole academic year.
- Live and online interaction, maximizing engagement with other students and a certified teacher.
- Energetic, upbeat, experienced teachers who are experts in their fields and online instruction.
- Weekly lessons designed to inspire creativity and critical thinking.
- Courses like “Architecture with Brick Building” for elementary ages, “Archaeology” for middle-schoolers, and “World History and Literature Studies” for high school-aged students.

Explore Live Online Classes

ELEMENTARY

MIDDLE SCHOOL

HIGH SCHOOL

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