

### Online Instruction vs. Face to Face Classroom

The debate between whether a student should be taught with online instruction versus face to face classroom has developed ever since the use of online instruction was made. Although it was made as a solution to a convenience issue, online learning only really opens up to a selection of students. People see this method as a faster, easier, and simplified way of learning; however, there are more severe negative qualities to this instruction. Therefore, face to face classroom has many more positive features that help the learning process. Learning in the classroom opens to a wide variety of learners, and these learners all have a style of comprehending certain subjects that connect to the need of being in the presence of a professor. Face to face classroom is a better choice for students to learn to get through college.

Although it is clear that classroom instruction is important for students, it is vital that one knows the positive attributes to online learning. According to McFarlane, a writer of the *Journal of Educators Online*, virtual schools "can result in great economic benefits in terms of cost saving...through such things as transportation costs, increased opportunity costs, overcrowding and negative sharing" (9). This benefit does help a lot more students start to join the virtual instruction in that they now have the opportunity to stay at home to learn a subject while not worrying about gas expenses, food to buy, or any other extra spending. It also takes off that extra weight of stressing whether the class will have room or not. Students don't have to be put onto a wait list that way they can take whatever classes they need that are available online. It gives students a chance to work on their own time and at their own pace, which is extremely beneficial for certain people like parents or full time workers. It also helps them become more familiar with the virtual world of the internet and adapt to new technological learning.

With these benefits, it is clear that online instruction is highly beneficial for some students. But although online instruction is a great advantage to certain students, it is also a disadvantage to a lot more. In Rose Senior's excerpt, she presents the idea of "connectivity." Focusing mainly on language courses, she presents ways in which having a student to teacher connection is vital. This language teaching expert indicates that "it is particularly important for teachers not only to develop rapport but also to provide students with opportunities to connect with one another" (142). With this in mind, there is no connection when it comes down to learning through a computer screen; there are no other students to connect with, let alone professors to ask questions to. Her research found that online instruction, led to students feeling isolated, distracted, and disconnected, which then lead to drop-out rates. When taking part in face to face classroom, the main idea is connection, whether it is with the fellow students or the teacher. This connectivity between different people provides a relationship that one cannot encounter online. The connection is like a tool that helps students develop better knowledge of the course material.

Not only is "connection" an important tool, Senior also stated, "Divergence for the purpose of information gathering must be balanced by convergence" (144). The amount one studies should reflect what is being taught in class. For example, if a reading is assigned on a chapter in a Biology book, one may become mixed up with certain facts in the reading. Without a lecture the student is responsible to figure the course material out on his/her own. Students need reassurance or support in the subject. Convergence is what provides a distinct realization of the subject which is maintained by the teacher.

Face to face classroom is known for its capability to involve students in the lectures, become hands on with tools, and cooperate with others. The Los Angeles Times writer John

Villasenor declared, "Something is lost when the classroom experience becomes virtual" (10). All the advantages of being in a college environment are taken away. Although students choose online over face to face classroom because of the reasonable excuse of cost, many of those students don't even finish the courses because online instruction caused them to feel "distracted and disconnected" like Rose acknowledged in her paper. So in the end, how much the student may have saved didn't matter because the student may have not even finished the course online. Villasenor's idea is certainly agreeable because one will never learn the same online as they do in the classroom.

When overlooking the positive side of online instruction, I noticed the constant repetitiveness of the word "comfortable." But one may find that this advantage may be online instruction's very own vulnerability. Students believe that what is seen on the media of these websites called "collegeinpjs.com" is a complete equal alternative to an actual college environment. But staring at a computer screen reading the material doesn't have anywhere near the same effectiveness as listening to a professor describing the material face to face. When taking a course at home, the constant down side to becoming too comfortable is always at hand. These down sides include getting distracted, falling asleep, or even giving up. Even when taking a face to face class, assignments that are given, like typing a paper, are a constant struggle because of other distractions at home, for example the television, or social networking sites on the computer itself. So imagine a student trying to take a class online and having to learn the material. There have been many difficulties for many students to stay on task learning the subject on their own. Yes, some do have that high motivation and discipline to stop themselves from being distracted and becoming too comfortable, but that is a selection of students. There are many diverse students who need to be in a classroom.

In the Forum of Perspectives in Higher Education Speakers, Jim Riggs points out that the university helps give new opportunities to students rather than staying at home with a computer. Each student's objective is to capture any opportunity that is handed to them, and when this student is in a college learning environment he/she is able to know when the next leadership involvement activity is present or when the newest internship is available. A student is able to speak with an advisor who helps them create a path for the future. Being in the classroom helps students to understand, ask questions, and take part into the lectures. Even though online learning does have its benefits, it can't compare to what will be learned in a face to face classroom.

To this day, people are trying to figure out ways in which online instruction can compare to face to face classroom in the best way they can. Kristin Olsen, a Vice Chair of the Arts, Entertainment, Sports, Tourism and Internet Media committee, declared that to make it comparable "they are learning to make classes like face to face." I believe that the only way this can become true is if somehow the students are connected to the teacher discussion as well, but for now, students who want to become more active and more knowledgeable about their courses should stay with face to face classroom. For most students, what they see in the media may not be what is best for them. Although online instruction is becoming a revolutionary way to take classes, it is not the best alternative for most students due to the students own way of learning that they have been familiar with for their whole educational career. Online Instruction shouldn't take over what the traditional way of learning has done for years and years.

## Works Cited

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