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Learning Processes

We are currently in an era where we have access to everything right at our fingertips, we can find almost anything in seconds, due to technology. There are certain areas where it is debatable if technology is beneficial or completely overwhelming, education is one of those instances. The information and questions presented will help shape your opinion on whether you believe virtual learning is equally beneficial as traditional learning.

In the beginning the teaching and learning process generally happened with one person teaching a group of people. Over time, we gained more resources to assist us and one of the most revolutionary tools was computers. Now technology is not just limited to one device, it is around us constantly. Many people find it helpful when it comes to education because it gives access to anything at anytime. This breaks the stigma that the teaching and learning process can only occur in the classroom. On the opposing side of this, people believe there is too much access and not enough critical thinking. Is there too much access or is technology strictly beneficial? How can you measure critical thinking? Also, people believe classrooms that are strictly virtual takes away the human interaction that a regular classroom provides. Social skills are vital in almost every career, do you think the lack of it in the classroom will have a significant effect in the future? Many online classes or institutions replace that aspect of that with video chats as a whole

classroom. Students have been leaning towards this option recently but are they receiving the same experience? It says, "...This is still the most common way of learning, although a recent report suggests a decline in traditional college enrollment.." (Purdue), the decline was 7 percent from 2014-2016. Although that is true overall, there are still more people who attend a regular university or college.

The training that professors go through to be able to work the online courses can be an extensive process for the university. Although, some universities are equipped and ready to use technology it can be hard to get everyone on board. There are many instances where the professor prefers to meet with their students face-to-face on a regular basis because what they are accustomed to. Therefore it is harder for them to embrace this new style of teaching; it says, "...many educators have yet to explore the relationship between technology and pedagogy." (Waddell). Does technology affect the teaching process just as much as the learning process? Many times teachers (or professors) have to make their own decisions about how technology can be incorporated with their lesson, which can add a significant amount of stress. So while the load can be taken off the student, it can increase for the professor of the course. Is the stress that the professors go through worth it? Is there a compromise that can accommodate to both sides? As far as costs, this can be expensive not only for the institution but as well as the student. The school must make sure their technology is relevant and provide their staff with proper training on a regular basis. While the student must make sure that have a computer or an effective way to view their assignments. The lack of access to an electronic device can make the playing field unfair to the other students. On the opposing side, a student can potentially save thousands of dollars because they do not have to pay for many things they would have to pay for if they went to a

physical classroom. Online schooling provides flexibility which provides a student to potentially have a full-time job which helps cut costs. This freedom can be a really good thing but self responsibility is extremely important, you must create your own schedule and stick to it. Can one trust themselves to stay on top of everything without someone else having to tell them to do so?

The biggest concern when it comes to online education is the lack of social skills and peer interaction. Social skills are pertinent in all of our lives constantly, but they are even more important in corporate america. Human relation skills are almost just as important as an education is. On the job you may be asked to complete tasks that can only be accomplished with a team and in many managing positions, it is your responsibility to allocate specific tasks to your employees. In an instance like this, online education can not fully prepare a student. In a traditional classroom you are regularly exposed to group assignments and various social opportunities. You also get to see the same people every other day which makes it a lot easier to build relationships compared to only knowing your classmates through a computer screen. Not only is difficult to build relationships with your peers but also your professor. The professor will have difficulty being able to tell if the class is understanding a new lesson or concept. Some online institutions have recognized this as a major issue and have provided a few resources to increase the social aspect. Some of the online schools have opportunities for students to meet with each other. The following says, "Universities are opening satellite facilities across the nation and around the world where online students can meet and participate in events. Also, there are programs where students meet infrequently, usually once a month, for guest lectures and opportunities to socialize as well as work on group projects." (Tom). Do these events/meetings provide the same amount of social interaction? Does social skills contribute to a student's

academic success? Being able to connect to those who have something in common with you is important whether that is online basis or in person.

Online education is most beneficial because of the freedom it gives. You have the option of making your own schedule without compromising your education or other things a person may be involved in. Online education can be the ideal option with people with families or people who do not have the access to travel for school. This can be a great option for those who can get their tuition paid by their job. Another issue that some people feel gets in their way is their age, but this can be resolved whether you go to a traditional school or online. An article says, "...schools want their classrooms to be full of engaged students, regardless of age. In the interest of continuing education, many colleges and universities offer reduced or free college tuition to senior citizens..." (Rowan). Many older adults find retirement boring and are looking for something to do and this provides opportunity for them to obtain the education that they might have not had before. For some others, they just want to add to what they already have, perhaps a master's degree or a doctorate. It says, "a Merrill Lynch study found that nearly three out of five working retirees said retirement was an opportunity to shift to a different line of work. For these adults, they don't want education to stop in their 20s, but well into their golden years." (Kong). Could you capitalize off of the cost due to age? Is a degree still valuable in your later years? Whether you choose to wait or get your degree directly after high school we are now given the choice and resources to help us no matter what route we choose.

Although traditional college comes with independence and is normally people's first step into adulthood, when choosing to do it online there is a greater weight of self-motivation. You must log in and do your work which can be difficult because of other commitments that a student

using online education generally has. It is vital to have the integrity to read your assignments without a professor physically being able to see you do it in the classroom. They can not necessarily pay attention to your attendance or your participation in a class discussion like they would be able to see if you were actually coming into the classroom. Students are also reminded more often of upcoming assignments and you have the help of those around you to complete some of these things. Which is why it is solely your responsibility to stay on top of whatever you have going outside of school and inside. This does not only apply to online learning but in any form of education. There are plenty of students who are dependent on themselves and have no other option but to work and still attend class. With this being said, choosing the online route can help relieve some of this stress and create a better schedule and balance. Although flexibility is one of the main perks of online education, you are still faced with the same challenges as any other student. It will never be easy to be involved with other things and still stay on top of school full time. Creating a schedule and prioritizing is essential whether you choose the typical source of schooling or online. When you are attending your classes in-person there is generally a set schedule that includes the day(s) and time. While an online institution, the decision of day and time is your responsibility which can be helpful or harder. Having the idea that online education comes with ease and with less work than a regular college is unrealistic. Does online learning provide more perks than the typical style of learning? Is one method more appealing than another?

There is a method where a student does not have to choose between in-person learning and online coursework. This idea of learning is not that popular to most students because it is not expressed as an option to some people attending college. Also, some universities are still

equipping their networks of the capabilities that are necessary for this to be successful or they may be preparing their staff to be able to teach this way. This new method is called the blended education model. This alleviates the hassle of choosing between online learning and in-person education because it provides both. With blended education, you are given the option to have some of your class in the classroom and others online. This is a good balance because you still get the social aspect needed without having to physically be in the classroom as often. Some schools are still trying to introduce this capability because it can be hard to find instructors for both in-person teaching and online. If some teachers are teaching the same subject on both platforms it can be extremely stressful for them and costly for the institution. They have the task of translating their lesson plans from the classroom to online while still effectively presenting the information to both groups of students. As for the institution, they would have to compensate for two different sets of professors and that is for each class the school provides. With this method students may come in once a week to get their assignments, discuss what they are currently learning, and ask their peers or their professors about any questions they may have. The following says, "having the idea that online education comes with ease and with less work than a regular college is unrealistic." (Erstad), this is the basis of blended education. There are certain majors that involve labs or group work so this makes it easier than a solely online course does. This method still gives both the student control when it comes to scheduling and it gives the professor of how the material is being taught. They can also pay closer attention to the comprehension between the material and the students. The following says, "It represents the transformation of how we approach teaching and learning. It is a complete rethinking and redesign of the educational environment and learning environment." (Garrison)

Learning processes can be interpreted into many different forms as long as learning and teaching take place. Over time, this process has transformed drastically and I believe it will continue to do this the older we get. Currently, technology has taken over so much of the things around us, one of these being education. This gives a lot more access to tools that were incapable of in the past. The idea of strictly books and handwritten notes will soon become a thing of the past. At first technology was only incorporated in education makes research and grading faster for the professors a lot faster. Now, online education is an option for a lot of people. It is ideal for people who have prior responsibilities such as a family or a full-time job. Online education gives them the opportunity to pretty much create their own schedule. Although, this seems convenient, many people question the effectiveness of this route of education. When in the physical classroom, the professor can better measure a student's progress better than they could through a screen. Students lose vital social skills that they must have when it comes to the job market. Online institutions have recognized this as a major issue and require classes to try to meet together at least once a month. Another method to make of for the lack of social interaction is video chats between the students and the professor. Many students find that online alleviates the anxiety and stress the traditional, education provides because they are normally doing their work from the comfort of their own home. With this being said, the self-motivation has to be extremely high in order to be successful as a student, but especially an online student. One compromise for the both of these is blended education. This is where students can choose some of their classes to be in-person and online classes, that way it can still be convenient for their own personal schedule without losing

out on vital skills a classroom environment can provide. Despite what route you choose the learning process will always be important and always changing.

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