

LEARNING MODALITIES: WHICH IS BETTER?

by:

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After two years of online classes, public and private elementary and high schools have opened their doors for a full 5-day face-to-face class on August 22, 2023, despite the ongoing health crisis. Many students attend school for the first time, especially kindergarteners who started their academic careers during the pandemic.

Online classes have ensured the continuity of classes during times of isolation. It has provided students with great accessibility and offers more flexible and self-paced learning. However, online classes also hold various disadvantages, particularly in the students' lack of engagement, participation, and practical understanding, as all concepts and lessons taught during online courses are theoretical, and students have limited to no means of applying them in real life.

Now that face-to-face classes are back, the students can learn in a classroom setting and interact with their teachers and classmates in person. Not only do face-to-face classes provide opportunities for students to enhance their social skills, but it also allows them to focus on their class and other activities, as there are limited distractions and their time in school is solely focused on their learning. Moreover, being in a classroom provides real-time interaction and allows students to experience and physically hear, see, and touch their classwork and use tactile communication for more efficient learning.

In a study conducted by students of the University of Tasmania in Australia in 2014, their research showed that students prefer doing their school activities face-to-face rather than online. However, their academic performance is similar. Moreover, when doing written activities, students prefer to do their write-ups online but engage in class discussions in

person. This may be because written activities allow them to be more flexible in their work hours, and in-person meetings become more meaningful because they provide greater engagement rather than face-to-screen conversations.

Though both offline and online classes have advantages and disadvantages, evaluating which learning approach benefits the students most is crucial. In addition, rather than seeing online modality as an alternative to traditional learning, assessing its benefits to the students and educators is also essential.

References:

Kemp, N., & Grieve, R. (2014, October 22). Face-to-face or face-to-screen? undergraduates' opinions and test performance in classroom vs. online learning. *Frontiers*. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01278/>