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English 1102

23 April 2018

Face-to-Face Education vs. Online Education

As technology becomes more involved in people’s daily lives, more people are considering using technology as a tool to further their education. College students now have the option to complete courses online instead of taking them on a campus. Some people are opposed to this idea for several reasons like the lack of human interaction or because of the nontraditional learning environment. These people believe that face-to-face learning is superior to online learning. However, there are several reasons that contradict this opinion. Online learning is more efficient than face-to-face learning because it teaches self-discipline, demands lower costs, and has a flexible environment.

Online learning and face-to-face learning both promote self-discipline, but online learning requires self-discipline. To make up for not having an attendance grade, online courses have other assignments that require the student’s attention. Some online professors do not post lectures, forcing the student to learn the content on their own. In fact, online learning requires more self-discipline and self-motivation than face-to-face learning does (Heap). Not only will students learn the subject they are studying, but they will also learn self-discipline, “a trait that will make you stand out in the workplace” (Heap). With students learning how to discipline themselves with their online classes, critics bring up additional concerns since their first argument was addressed.

Many people argue that online education is careless and is less rewarding. An article in the *New York Times* claims that online learning lacks accountability and leaves the student unmotivated (Chandler). While there is some truth to this, students can find support in online chat rooms that the school website provides. In addition, some professors require that the students interact with each other for a grade. Even though students have to find motivation to do their work, the accountability is still there. The article also claims that “a classroom inspires effort” (Chandler). This statement is true, but students should not depend on the classroom for their inspiration. After school, the students will not have a classroom to go to be inspired. They must find this inspiration in themselves and in other activities around them. Failure to find inspiration in only the classroom reflects poorly on the student. Despite these concerns, online learning is still superior to face-to-face learning because of the lower costs.

Several people choose online learning because of the lower costs. When students are enrolled in school online, they will only have to pay for tuition, book supplies, and a possible fee. However, if the students were enrolled at a college campus, they would have to pay for room and board, food, and transportation as well as the items previously mentioned (Heap). Parking fees, orientation fees, and technology fees are additional costs that are involved with face-to-face education (Powell). In spite of the saving money argument, there are individuals who are still in favor of face-to-face education because they believe online education is impersonal.

Some people may also argue that online education does not allow students to connect and engage with each other. This idea is not entirely accurate because professors provide areas in the class for the online students to get to know one another (Levinson). These areas can include chat rooms, introduction assignments, and discussion posts. These options allow instructors to learn about their students and students to build an online community. There may be parents who are concerned with their children not getting the help they need if their children enroll in online education, but most professors provide a phone number and email address in case their students have any questions. The college website can also provide tools that are there to give students further help (Levinson). In contrast to this opinion, many students still choose to attend school online because of the flexible learning environment.

Another benefit of learning online is that students have flexible environments to complete their work. If students have full time jobs, they can complete assignments whenever their schedules permit. Students would also have the advantage of being able to choose learning environments that work best for them (Heap). In like manner, online students could be spending less time commuting to class and more time studying in the environment that they choose. They would also not have to worry about missing an important class, and instead they could watch a lecture as many times as they wished (Heap). Some teachers may see students as unfit to choose their own learning environment and recommend students to become involved in the school’s environment.

Some educators recommend the environment that would include the college campus and the resources that it provides. The flexible environment point is probably the most popular benefit of online education. Nevertheless, critics suggest attending a campus, so that students have access to the necessary resources that they may need. Although, students can visit public libraries, take advantage of online writing centers, and technology. Furthermore, some instructors suggest that online students will not learn course material as well as they would in person. However, a government study says, “Students who took all or part of their class online performed better, on average, than those taking the same course through traditional face-to-face instruction” (Wadham). Ultimately, the decision to further higher education online or in a face-to-face environment is up to the student.

Online learning strengthens character, calls for few expenses, and provides an adjustable school setting for its students, therefore, making online learning superior to face-to-face learning. Online learning strengthens character by forcing student to keep themselves accountable for their work. Attending school online has lower costs than attending a school campus because it requires fewer necessities to pay for like. For instance, online education does not charge students to pay for orientation, technology, and parking fees. The flexible learning environment that online education provides helps many future students make their decision. Students would like to take online classes so they could fit their school work into their schedule by picking when they should complete an assignment and also study. Finally, how to further their education is up to the students to decide.

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