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Traditional Learning vs. eLearning

> Once we free ourselves from the mental limits of viewing this technology as a weak sister to face-to-face synchronous education, the potentials to revolutionize education and learning become readily apparent
>
> Turrof, 1995

Introduction

There is an argument that traditional learning is the best way of maintaining a learning process. Other models are always considered to be inferior or less efficient. There is no finding to support this argument, and research shows that eLearning models are at least as good as traditional learning.

Comparing traditional Learning and eLearning

When comparing learning an identical course in a traditional framework to a computer mediated learning framework, students have expressed higher satisfaction from the computer-mediated learning, and rated the learning as more effective than in the traditional framework. In other studies, too, it was argued that computer mediated or online learning is more effective and interactive.

Findings of research conducted in the seventies and eighties, comparing the use of computers as a learning environment, also indicated a slight improvement in the student's achievements following use of a computer.

eLearning includes many components that are familiar from traditional learning, such as: presentation of ideas by the students, group discussions, arguments and many other forms of conveying information and accumulating knowledge. The contents of the course's curriculum might be organized according to subjects and in a serial manner.

eLearning also includes advantages which are not found in traditional learning, such as: time for digesting the information and responding, enhanced communication among the learners, both as regards quality and as regards urgency, knowledge being acquired and transferred among the learners themselves, the ability to conduct an open discussion, where each learner gets more of an equal standing than in a face-to-face discussion, access to information and to discussion ability, responses may be made around the clock with no restrictions, a higher motivation and involvement in the process on the part of the learners.

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The very use of technology for learning has been found to have a positive effect on the student's commitment to the learning process. Also, use of technology creates a greater commitment on the students' part to learning.

The following table summarizes several opinions regarding the comparison between traditional learning and eLearning:

	Traditional Learning	eLearning
Classroom Discussions	The teacher usually talks more than the student	The student talks at least as much as or more than the teacher
Learning Process	The learning is conducted with the whole class participating; there is almost no group or individual study	Most of the learning process takes place in groups or by the individual student.
Subject Matter	The teacher conducts the lesson according to the study program and the existing curriculum	The student participates in determining the subject matter; the studying is based on various sources of information, including web data banks and net-experts located by the student.
Emphases in the Learning Process	The students learn "what" and not "how"; the students and the teachers are busy completing the required subject matter quota; the students are not involved in inquiry-based education and in solving problems, but rather in tasks set by the teacher.	The students learn "how" and less "what"; the learning includes research study which combines searching for and collecting information from web data banks and authorities on the communications network; the learning is better connected to the real world, the subject matter is richer and includes material in different formats.
Motivation	The students' motivation is low, and the subject matter is "distant" from them.	The students' motivation is high due to the involvement in matters that are closer to them and to the use of technology.
Teacher's Role	The teacher is the authority	The teacher directs the student to the information.
Location of Learning	The learning takes place within the classroom and the school	The learning takes place with no fixed location
Lesson Structure	The teacher dictates the structure of the lesson and the division of time	The structure of the lesson is affected by the group dynamics.