

Lesson 4 Voice Your Thoughts

Education Debate: Online VS. Traditional

by Emily Mitchell, Editor

In Isaac Asimov's short story *The Fun They Had*, a young girl named Margie living in 2155 receives her education through a "mechanical teacher." Her learning takes place one-on-one in her study next to her bedroom. One day, she finds a "real" book on traditional schools from hundreds of years ago and longs to receive a traditional education. She dreams of attending a real school where all the students learn the same things, laugh and play on the playground, and go home together at the end of the day.

Margie's desire reflects the ongoing debate on the merits of online education compared to those of traditional education. As many of us already know, online education is instruction in electronically supported learning environments using multimedia and Internet platforms. Traditional education, on the other hand, generally refers to the conventional teaching-learning process in a classroom setting in which teachers and students are present together.

Which one do you think is better? We decided to explore this topic by considering the perspectives of our readers. The following represents two sides of the debate.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Innovative Approaches for All Learners

Dear Editor,

Online education is definitely superior to traditional education. Living in an era in which we enjoy technical innovations and boundless connectivity, we should take advantage of what is available in education as well. In the following, I will explore the reasons why online education is a better choice.

First, online education breaks down the barriers of time and space. Learners can access learning programs from anywhere and at any time. For instance, take Khan Academy, an online education program providing free lectures. It started when its founder, Sal Khan, uploaded teaching videos he made for his cousin who was living far away. Now learners from all around the world can enjoy the program's outstanding lectures on a wide variety of subjects at any time they want.

Second, online education caters to personalized learning opportunities that meet the various needs of each learner. One of the criticisms of traditional education is that it takes a one-size-fitsall approach that fails to address the various needs of students. In contrast, online learning can offer a customized learning path for each learner. To achieve this, a computer learning program first assesses each learner's current level and weaknesses. Based on the assessment, each learner is offered personalized online lessons and more detailed explanations when necessary. This kind of personalized feedback process can be highly interactive and motivate learners to reach higher levels of achievement.

Finally, online education uses advanced technology such as multimedia materials or virtual simulations to provide more engaging and impactful learning experiences. For example, students can learn history more effectively by using virtual reality programs, which can show them realistic details of famous historical sites or allow them to travel back in time.

Advances in technology can make education so much better. Learning anywhere and at any time and receiving personalized lessons can make learning more effective and rewarding. It is evident that the future of education lies in online education.

Best regards, Ethan Williams

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Embracing the Foundation of Traditional Education

Dear Editor,

"Teaching and learning is the relationship between teachers and students," Larry Cuban, an education expert from Stanford University, once explained. No matter what advanced technology it is equipped with, it is undeniable that online education focuses mainly on delivering information. It overlooks that education is deeply rooted in the teacher-student relationship, which traditional education is based on. The following will demonstrate the strengths of traditional education in contrast to online education.

First, traditional education has proven more successful in providing an educational environment where students can concentrate and learn better. According to a study on students' level of concentration and understanding in traditional classrooms and online classes, students in traditional classrooms performed better. It seems that it is much easier for students to pay attention and understand the content taught in a traditional classroom because they are learning together.

Traditional education also fosters the development of students' social and interpersonal skills. Beyond classroom instruction, students interact during their lunch breaks and extracurricular activities. While spending time together and being engaged in various types of interaction, students are exposed to valuable opportunities to learn how to communicate with each other. Consequently, students acquire essential social skills such as collaboration, conflict resolution, and leadership.

Finally, traditional education offers hands-on and practical learning opportunities. Subjects such as lab sciences and vocational training rely heavily on experiments and direct guidance from instructors. For instance, in a biology class, students learn how to handle a microscope, and observing the shape of a cell through a microscope for the first time will present them with a truly engaging experience. Online platforms may provide simulations and virtual tools, but they cannot fully substitute the hands-on experiences offered by traditional classrooms.

In short, effective learning requires meaningful relationships between teachers and students, as well as among peers. This interpersonal connection represents the main advantage of traditional education. Guided by strong relationships, students can concentrate better, acquire interpersonal skills, and enjoy hands-on learning experiences. Traditional education makes all of this possible.

Best wishes, Sumin Kim

It is certainly not easy to judge which form of education is better. Online education has advantages such as accessibility, personalized instruction, and innovative teaching materials based on advanced technology. Traditional education, on the other hand, provides a more dynamic learning environment, based on the relationships students and teachers build together.

At present, what seems to be the most effective approach to this debate is to take advantage of each method by combining them. For example, teachers in a traditional education environment can introduce personalized online programs using AI technology or make use of VR as part of their classroom activities. Combining methods this way can benefit students by making up for what seems to lack in each method. Selecting the best resources and methods for learners will lead us to the most successful and fulfilling educational outcomes.