ONLINE VS. FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING

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Just recently, the Department of Education announced the date for the resumption of classes. However, the medium of facilitation of classes (i.e. online or face-to-face) is still dependent on the country’s progress during this crisis. The safety of students, teachers, and staff are also of utmost priority, as the virus is an enemy that is difficult to defeat. These are important points to consider in deliberation of class facilitation. The students’ home conditions and how well the students will learn through either medium should not be left out in choosing between online or face-to-face learning.

Social interaction is essential to learning (Ormrod, 2014). Face-to-face (FTF) learning provides interaction, which is a requirement in the most efficient learning environments of various kinds. Social interaction also promotes better collaboration and student motivation (Baker, 2010). A study by Der Meijden & Veenman (2005) has also shown that FTF learning gave a significantly better elaboration of problems than computer-mediated communication. Students were also more satisfied with cooperation and showed higher performance scores in FTF learning than computer-mediated communication.

Interaction can also be provided by classes that are facilitated online. Depending on how well the teacher can deliver their social presence and the learning materials (Tichavsky & Hunt, 2015), it can serve as a substitute to FTF learning. Students may still be separated from their teachers by the time classes resume. Despite this, transitioning to online learning should not hamper meaningful, thorough, and consistent communication (Jones, 2011). However, the manner in which online learning will be executed is still largely dependent on the conditions of the students beyond the screen.

If the pandemic persists, online classes are suitable for the physical safety of students. However, not all students have access to personal computers, tablets, or other devices necessary for online learning. Most households in our country experience faulty internet connection. We are also uncertain whether the quarantine will be lifted enough to allow students to go to computer shops. Given the novelty of the virus, it is best to assume that students can still contract the sickness despite staying at home. Another important condition to note is that it is highly likely that students have parents who are medical frontliners, social workers, and
employees part of the skeleton workforce. Hence, we must find a workaround that nourishes students’ learning, safety, and well-being and understands the limited access to materials needed for the new, pedagogical normal.

References: