

DOES
LEARNING
TAKE PLACE
DIFFERENTLY
ONLINE?

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WHAT IS ONLINE LEARNING?

- *[t]he use of the Internet to access learning materials; to interact with the content, instructor, and other learners; and to obtain support during the learning process, in order to acquire knowledge, to construct personal meaning, and to grow from the learning experience. (Ally, p. 7)*

HOW IS ONLINE DIFFERENT?

- Rather than being composed, organized and packaged, online learning is aggregated by students, remixed and repurposed with the student's individual application in mind (Stephen Downes)
- OL comes not from the design of the learning content but in how the content is used as the basis for learning activities (Stephen Downes)
- OL defines new relationships and behaviors among learners, information, technology, and the world at large (Stephen Downes)
- The learner, the instructor and the technology collaborate to generate an adaptive teaching and learning transaction (Gunardwa and MacIsaac)

Is Different Necessarily Better?

Thoughts: Different isn't necessarily better, but different can often add a new dimension.

Give a different view, so to speak.



Online environments can add layers to a learner's repertoire of skills. According to Webster's, learning is "the activity or process of gaining knowledge or skill by studying, practicing, being taught, or experiencing something". This "learning" happens in online and blended learning environments, so perhaps the question should be, which environment is more effective, for which learners, and why?

Dallas: Different environments have varying effects on different learners. Dallas is dyslexic, so faced many challenges in the classroom. In grade 9, she moved to a total online program. She excelled far beyond expectations. At her graduation ceremony, there was no single class valedictoria, each student gives his own speech. Dallas' speech tells it all ... (Note: The vice-principal of the Alternative programs bet her that she couldn't include the name of the former principal of the Choices DL program, Rob Souther, 10 times in her speech. As you will see, she wins the bet.)



Something To Consider

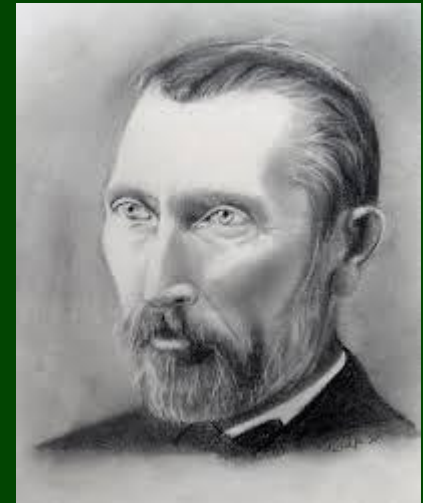
- When considered overall, studies reveal no significant difference in learning outcomes between activities and courses that are taken at a distance and those in the classroom (Dron and Anderson).

Thoughts: Learning outcomes are basically what a learner will know and be able to do (demonstrate) at the end of a lesson, course or program. Why then would learning outcomes change just because the delivery method has changed. If the learning outcome is to identify what a bird is, does the delivery of this knowledge change the outcome?

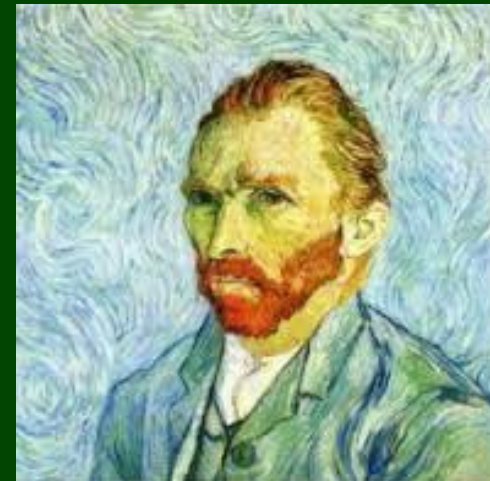


Something that Made Sense

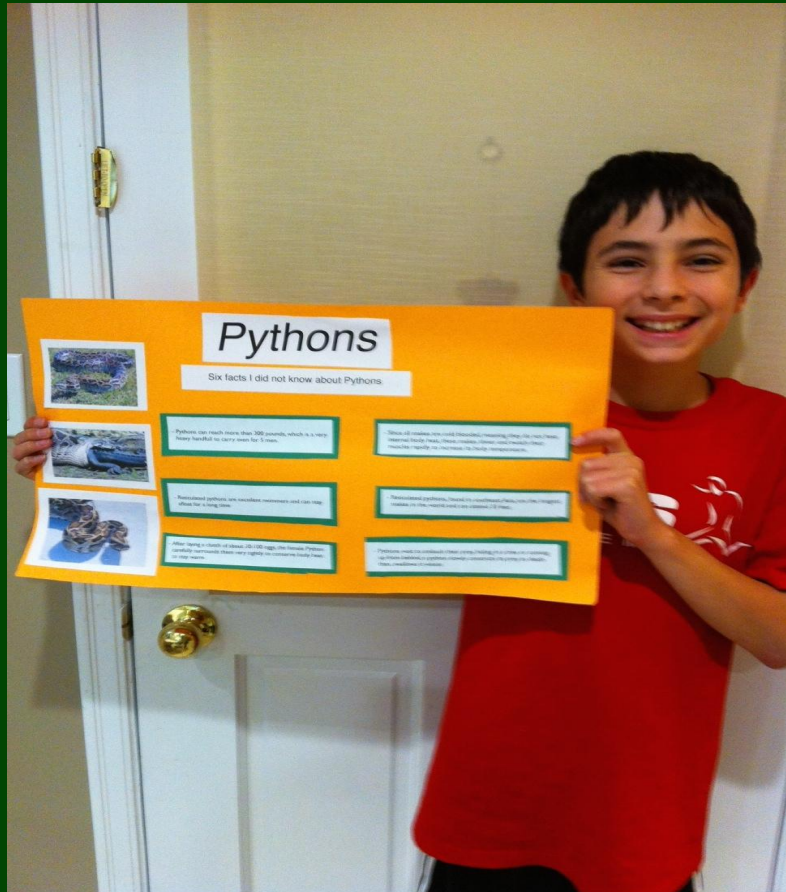
"It makes no more sense to ask whether people learn better at a distance or face-to-face than to ask whether pictures drawn in pencil are better than ones painted with oils. They are different technologies that can produce both excellent and atrocious results." (Dron and Anderson).



Thoughts: Is Vincent van Gogh less of an artist when he's working with pencil than when he's working with paint?



Experiment



DID YOU KNOW...



- Pythons will eat pigs, goats, dogs, cats, chickens and will sometimes attack a human if felt threatened but it is very rare.

A Personal Learning Journey: Never having been a youtube person, creation of the video on the next slide was a true learning experience for me. These were the steps of my learning process.

1. A quick "face-to-face" lesson, from my son, on how to take a video with his phone.
2. An internet search for how to download a video onto my laptop. (My son didn't know how to do that yet either.)
3. Discovering that "iMovie" was already on my laptop. (Who knew?)
4. Several youtube clips later, and an hour of playing, and finally learned how to edit the video to get rid of all the "ums" and "ahhs" from by ever gracious interview volunteer (otherwise known as my husband).
5. More internet research to learn how to delete the two youtube videos I put on before I learned how to edit the clips.
6. I couldn't figure out how to delete them, or maybe I just got tired of searching, but another "face-to-face", "let me show you", from my younger son, and I learned how to do that too.
7. A smattering of drawing on previous experience on how to embed a video, and voila ...

In conclusion, this video experience was a blend of online and face-to-face instruction and learning took place in both arenas. Personally, I learned more from the online exploration and , just as a note, my 15 year old can be a tad condescending in his instructions, - but I'm sure he'll grow out of it :)

Bruce Interview: Bruce Connell is a math and science tutor, and the tutor coordinator for Literacy Alberni in Port Alberni. These are his reflections on his DL learning experience.



WHAT LEARNING THEORY BEST DESCRIBES ONLINE LEARNING?

Connectivism is the theory that best describes learning and working in the digital age. Because of an over-abundance of accessible and ever-changing, information, the learner is not fully in control of his learning. What must be learned is determined by others and is continually changing. The learner also often needs to unlearn past learning and learn to evaluate new information for new learning. An interplay of chaos, networks, complexity and self-organization is required. (Anderson)

Ben and Sam Interview: Ben has been on the CHOICES DL program in Port Alberni for 2 years. He is now a grade 10 DL student taking one course of Information Technology at the local high-school (ADSS). Sam has been with CHOICES DL since grade 9. He is also taking one class at ADSS (Chemistry 12). Both Sam and Ben were good students in the classroom and continue to be successful online. Here are their thoughts.



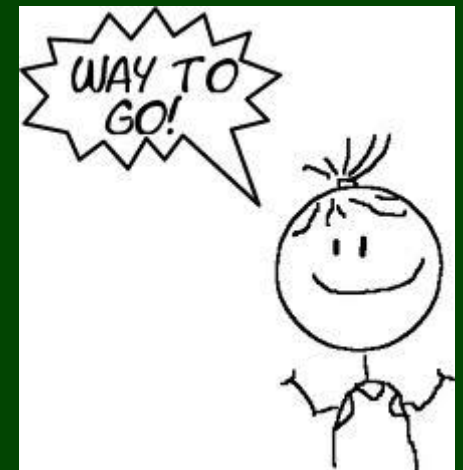
HOW DOES ONLINE LEARNING FIT WITH LEARNING IN GENERAL?

- How adults learn generally is also relevant for online learning context as it is a subset of learning in general (Anderson)
- OL needs to be learning centred, provide a wide variety of authentic assessment opportunities, and be attuned to and grounded in existing knowledge contexts. (Anderson)
- As such, theories and strategies applicable to learning in general can also be applied to OL within the connectivist approach. For example, in OL, behaviorist strategies can be used to teach what (facts), cognitive how (processes and principles), constructivist why (personal meaning and contextual learning) (Anderson)

CONNECTION IS THE KEY TO LEARNING: BOTH ONLINE & F2F

- Learning is not seen as the acquisition of knowledge by individuals so much as a process of social participation. (Etienne Wenger)
- Learning is in the relationships between people. (Etienne Wenger)

Thoughts: When teaching online, maybe we need to rethink the term teacher. Quite often I feel more like an education coach. All my courses are asynchronous, so the only contact I have with students is marking/commenting, and occasionally clarifying a topic or concept - usually via email, but sometimes face to face. I feel more like I'm on the sidelines cheering them on as they make their way through a course - and I like that position.



IN CONCLUSION

- Learning and living, it could be said, will eventually merge. The challenge will be not in how to learn, but in how to use learning to create something, more, to communicate. (Etienne Wenger)



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