

How effective is online learning?



It comes as no surprise that the year 2020 was rife with challenges. Change was the order of the day this year, and the training environment has certainly had its fair share of necessary changes.

It is unfortunate that we have fallen somewhat behind over the years when it comes to learning strategies, particularly relating to the online variety. Fortunately, amidst the darkness that this year has brought, it has also afforded us the opportunity to catch up to the world's latest learning strategies, with online learning being at the forefront.

In this blog, we will look at whether online learning is really that effective.

How does learning blend into your brain?

In an article posted by Joe Moriarty on 03 July 2018 (<https://www.raven360.com/blog/the-neuroscience-of-how-e-learning-blends-into-our-brain>), Joe explains that there is a reason why online learning is so effective. He states that online learning blends naturally with *how our brains are wired to learn*. It encapsulates all the elements from David Kolb's book titled "Experiential Learning: Experience as a Source of Learning and Development", which was written in 1984. In this book, Kolb says four conditions must be present for our brains to engage in the learning process, namely Concrete Experience, Reflexive Observation, Abstract Conceptualization and Active Experimentation.

Understanding the effectiveness of online learning

An effectiveness study on online learning was published and approved by Google, the National Science Foundation, *as well as MIT*.

This study has shown that online learning has been on the rise for years now. The two main reasons why this is the case pointed to the convenience of incorporating learning into the learner's other commitments, as well as the significant difference in cost when comparing online learning to traditional learning. It was also surprising to see that online learning has provided far more consistent results compared to those of traditional classroom learning.

Five reasons why online learning is effective

The study has also provided 5 reasons why online learning is so effective:

- Students learn more than in traditional courses.
- Retention rates are higher with online learning.
- Online learning requires less time investment.
- More frequent assessments reduce distractions.
- E-learning is a greener option.

What is blended learning?

At *SERR Synergy*, we follow a blended learning approach. To explain what is meant by that, simply take a minute to think of everything you have recently learned. Consider how many of these lessons were digital or online. There is a good chance that you utilised technology to learn and combined it with interactions with others. That is blended learning, and in our current world it is the most natural way of learning.

According to research conducted by Dr Will Thalheimer on the topic of e-learning and blended learning, it is not the learning modality (e-learning or classroom) that matters, but rather the learning method. Technology, however, has allowed us to incorporate learning content with communication platforms that allow learners to work at their own pace, whilst having the freedom to engage with other learners in discussions on the content.

SERR Synergy offers our clients a wide range of training courses which are quality assured by government-regulated bodies, as well as non-accredited training courses. We have developed training courses in innovation, communication and enhancing the analytical skills of employees in the workplace. Our journey into online blended learning thus far has yielded overwhelmingly favourable results for those to whom it matters most – the learners in the workplace.

About the author: Johan Craven joined SERR Synergy on 1 October 2017 as a Skills Development Facilitator. During 2018, he provided additional services as a part-time Training Facilitator in the field of mandatory training. Since April 2020 he has played a pivotal role in the technical development and presentation of SERR's online training products.

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