

# Custom Essay

Compare and Contrast Essay Sample (Point by Point Approach):

Virtual versus Traditional Classes

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The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the worldwide economy, the global health system, and people's everyday life have made the world a vastly different place. People have had to make adjustments, most notable of which are the wearing of face masks and other protective gear in public, keeping distance from others, shifting to a work-from-home setup, and, for students, learning in virtual classes. But while many countries are slowly returning to normal, thanks to research on the effectiveness and safety of COVID-19 vaccines, the emergence of new COVID-19 variants means that these measures may remain for a little while longer. As the pandemic continues and schools are forced to rely on online classes, the effects of virtual classes are becoming clearer. This essay explores both types of classes and their effects. While virtual classes offer a viable means for students to go on with their studies, it falls quite short in terms of ensuring positive student performance, providing teachers a conducive working environment, and encouraging good teacher-student relationship.

[Point of Comparison and Contrast 1] One of the main areas where virtual classes fall short as compared to traditional classes is in students' academic performance. It can be said that traditional classes are far from being 100% effective in enhancing students' academic performance. The education system and the public are well aware of its gaps and limitations, as evidenced by the fact that many students underperform or fail to optimize their potentials. Several factors are linked to these, from lack of funding and misguided policies to students' circumstances. However, evidence shows that student performance tends to decline in virtual classes. A report by the Economic Policy Institute revealed that the widespread shift to online classes has left many students struggling. For one, research has shown that lack of equipment impedes students from learning, thus

making learning via virtual classes more challenging. For another, virtual classes prevent schools and teachers from designing more individualized and targeted approaches. Students are made to learn under one approach, which means students who need extra attention are less likely to keep up. Researchers also found that students are less focused in virtual classes. Students' attention spans are stretched to the limit with virtual classes. Schools have attempted to address this by limiting class hours, which unfortunately also means decreased learning time (Garcia and Weiss, 2020). Indeed, experts have predicted that students who were lagging before the shift to online classes are more likely to further struggle in an online setting (Loeb, 2020). Clearly, between virtual classes and traditional classes, the latter is more ideal in encouraging good academic performance.

[Point of Comparison and Contrast 2] The experience of teachers has also not been as positive in virtual classes as compared to traditional classes. Teachers' experiences in schools are diverse. Whereas some teachers consider the school as a conducive work environment, some teachers find it more stressful than it has to be. Numerous factors shape experience, and this includes workload, access to resources, and interpersonal interactions. For the most part, however, classroom classes offer teachers a more controlled environment, a sense of authority, and the resources required for teaching. Virtual classes, on the other hand, do not offer the same. For instance, many teachers have experienced being lost or unsure of how to go about conducting the class. Distance learning is not new, and a sizable portion of the education system already relies on online platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet for classes. But distance learning is mostly limited to more advanced academic levels, such as graduate schools and beyond where students do not need intensive guidance. But learning through Zoom or Google

Meet is new for grade school and high school, which means effective processes, methods, and approaches are yet to be identified and refined. The lack of clear guidelines and the absence of support from institutions could leave teachers struggling in carrying out their tasks, thus making virtual classes less conducive than traditional classes (Garcia and Weiss, 2020). Teachers have reported being exhausted by the entire process of teaching through online platforms. Some experts believe that this may be due to the lack of meaningful face-to-face interaction. For instance, teachers may be forced to speak to blank screens, which may make teachers feel as if they are speaking to an empty room (Blum, 2020). An investigation by Dias et al. (2020) revealed that teachers also have to contend with many technical issues like background noises, unstable internet connection, and lack of tools and equipment. With so many challenges posed by the abrupt shift to online classes, it is evident that virtual classes are less conducive for teachers than traditional classes.

[Point of Comparison and Contrast 3] Finally, virtual classes are less capable of fostering good student-teacher interaction compared to traditional classes. The relationship between teachers and students is an important aspect of the learning process. Studies show that students are more likely to learn if there is a sense of camaraderie and trust between students and their teachers. A review of over 40 studies found that a strong teacher-student relationship has a positive impact on almost every performance indicator. These include rates of dropping out, attendance, engagement in classes, behavior in school, and grades among others (Sparks, 2019). Traditional classes held in physical classrooms offer more opportunities for building student relationships. Teachers can form bonds with their students individually and as a group, thus making the

experience mutually satisfying for both students and teachers and overall positive for academic performance (Burke, 2020). Virtual classes, on the other hand, rarely offer such opportunities for building connections. Virtual classes can be chaotic. As noted by Susan D. Blum, professor of anthropology at the University of Notre Dame, virtual classes present so many technical issues that can disrupt the dynamic. Participants in virtual classes unintentionally talk over each other, thus preventing effective communication.

Non-verbal cues of communication are also lost in virtual classes, thus preventing teachers and students from reading each other's behavior and using the information towards building relationships (Blum, 2020). Add to these issues like background noises, blurry images, and lack of engagement from students. Hence, between virtual classes and traditional classes, the latter is more ideal for promoting good teacher-student relationships.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2019 and its subsequent spread around the world fundamentally changed people's way of life. The education system, in particular, has been forced to hold classes online via platforms like Zoom and Google Meet. Although virtual classes are the safest choice today given the pandemic, it is vital to keep in mind that traditional classes held in actual classrooms still offer more benefits in terms of student performance, teachers' experience, and student-teacher relationship. Studies show that virtual classes can negatively affect students' academic performance, make it more difficult for teachers to perform their duties, and offer few opportunities for students and teachers to form good bonds. As pandemic rages on, evidenced by worrisome news such as the [COVID situation in India](#), the end of virtual classes is not yet in sight. But as victories against the virus are won and some countries start to open up,

society may once again be able to return to normal. For now, students and teachers can only do their best to make the most of virtual classes.

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