



FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION – 2023
FOR RECRUITMENT TO POSTS IN BS-17
UNDER THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Roll No.

ESSAY

TIME ALLOWED: THREE HOURS

MAXIMUM MARKS: 100

NOTE:(i) Make an outline and write a COMPREHENSIVE ESSAY (2500-3000 words) on any ONE of the given topics. Make sure you use different forms of discourses, e.g. exposition, argumentation, description and narration. Credit will be given for organization, relevance and clarity.
(ii) No Page/Space be left blank between the answer. All the blank pages of Answer Book must be crossed.

1. Instruction in youth is like engraving in stone.
2. The one who uses force is afraid of reasoning.
3. Not all recycling projects are cost effective.
4. The fool speaks, and the wise listens.
5. A friend walks in when everyone else walks out.
6. ✓ Online learning is not only convenient but often more effective than traditional classroom instruction.
7. To encourage healthy eating, higher taxes should be imposed on soft drinks and junk food.
8. People have become overly dependent on technology.
9. Both parents should assume equal responsibility in raising a child.
10. Boys will be boys.

~~Conclusions~~ Outline

1. Online learning - requirement of the Information Age

2. Creating easy accessibility

a. Reducing the commute

b. A path to social equity

c. Bridging of the urban-rural divide

d. Vast troves of data on fingertips

3. Affecting student performance

a. Equipping with digital skills for a digital age

b. Adaptability to individual learning

c. Enhancing learning experience through technological innovations

4. Counterargument - Irreplaceability of the traditional classroom

5. Conclusion and way forward

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Online learning is not only convenient but often more effective than traditional classroom instruction.

As mankind goes through the Information Age today, data and the speed of its transmission is more important than ever. With ever evolving technology, our mode of relations also keep changing. A picture of a traditional classroom with a class of ~~te~~ students, a teacher and a whiteboard has been replaced by virtual learning platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet and Microsoft Teams. While the aforementioned platforms provide instantaneous interaction, other platforms like Khan Academy, Youtube and Harvard classroom ~~also~~ provide hands-on learning experience which can be accessed anytime. Online learning is a new breakthrough in educational interaction and has numerable benefits for students which shall be considered in this essay. This essay will also explore ~~the~~ some of the ~~of~~ counter arguments

ported by the opponents of online learning. ~~and~~ and how online learning can still be leveraged to enhance, not entirely replace, traditional classroom instruction.

The convenience of online learning, as compared to traditional in-person learning shall be first explored. ~~Online learning~~.

For majority of the students of our generation, whether in a school, college or university, a typical day involves waking up early in the morning. This is then followed by preparing ourselves and our attire to attend any educational institution.

Subsequently, arrangement for a commute to the educational institution needs to be made. Depending on the ~~distance~~ socio-economic background, the commute distance, mode of transportation and travel time will also vary.

~~In comparison,~~ often in a family with multiple members who work, the mode of transportation will have to be shared as travel times will overlap. Sometimes, all this hassle is done to attend a one-hour lecture at university which only has a minor contribution to the overall learning experience. In comparison to this, logging on to an online platform through a digital device requires mere seconds and is hence significantly more convenient. By saving travel time, students can ~~save~~ utilise their time elsewhere such as preparing for the actual lesson.

Additionally, often a student has to deal with competing priorities. A student might have caring responsibilities or might have to work part-time to

fund their household expenses. Online learning can be more convenient for students from a wide range of backgrounds, who otherwise might face impediments to their learning. Online learning is also mouldable and can be fitted around a student's schedule. Lectures can be recorded and saved online to be viewed later. Consequently, online learning plays a significant part in redressing socio-economic inequalities. Students from a wide range of backgrounds gain access to high quality instruction.

Moreover, online learning creates a more inclusive educational environment. It opens the doors of education to students from remote areas. Hence, it bridges the urban-rural divide effectively.

For example, ~~pro~~ online platforms like Nearpeer on Pakistan have achieved phenomenal success with millions of subscriptions. According to latest World Bank statistics, an astonishing 62.27% of Pakistan's population lives in rural areas. In a country where social mobility is hard to achieve, online learning helps students from impoverished rural areas to gain access to the same high quality educational resources that students from a higher educational background receive. Online learning also improves the channels of communication between people from two opposing backgrounds. For example, in a Zoom breakout session, a student from a Sibi Balochistan and an elite student from Karachi might get the opportunity to interact as counterparts which they might not normally would.

hardly, the convenience of online learning
 can be gauged from the fact that it
 provides ^{access} to a vast variety of data and
 resources in a compact form such as
 in one folder on a platform such as
 Google Drive. A picture of a school-going
 child from yesteryear may show an
 adolescent, often with a heavy backpack,
~~to~~ bumping at the ~~table~~ seats with
 oversized books. The child's shoulders
 become worn out and droopy with the
 weight of carrying all these books. Replacing
 this with a picture of the modern day
 student who can access those same, in
 fact more, books on his fingertips ~~on~~ on
 his digital device. Online learning has
 expedited efficiency and ~~also~~ diminished
 the use of cutters of paper. This modern
 day ~~picture~~ picture is a testament to the,

convenience of online learning. Its not only books that can be converted to PDF files, but videos, educational games, quizzes can all be stored and organised with the use of folders. Mobile and laptop applications such as Google Classroom and Coursera allow a student to navigate vast troves of information in a split second.

In a similar vein, the effectiveness of online learning and its ability to produce results can not be understated. A number of studies have proved that unique and innovative methods employed in online learning, together with the convenience have improved students abilities to retain and utilise information. Online learning is also more suited to the

needs of our time as the current digital age requires digital skills which can be more effectively imparted through online learning. Gone are the days when a teacher hovered over liberty.

Students in a computer lesson. Today's softwares have guided manuals and prompts that guide beginners on their ~~for~~ usability. Invaluable digital skills ~~the~~ such as coding, STATA, website design, Excel, data analysis

softwares such as Tableau can be learnt more effectively through online learning rather than a teacher demonstrating their use on a whiteboard. In conclusion, online learning is well suited and caters to the demands of today's digital age.

Secondly, all humans are not the same. Each of us has a unique learning style. The DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), in the field of psychology has also opened our understanding about learning disorders such as Dyslexia and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). Our learning style also varies with our environmental conditions. Therefore it cannot be reasonably expected for one teacher to teach a ^{typical} class of thirty students in the same way. While traditional pedagogy techniques may have advanced, time constraints do not allow teaching to be catered to each student's learning. Some students learn better through visual ~~of~~ learning, some through audio, some through reading/writing and some through kinesthetic learning style (utilising sense

of touch and movement, such as role playing). Online learning provides a platform to each type of learner. Even the modes of examination can be tailored to the individual person's learning style. Consequently, a student who might feel disadvantaged in a traditional classroom might excel in an online classroom since online classrooms have a variety of options from all over the world.

hardly, an online class room is more effective as it readily ~~uses~~ deploys technological innovations such as ChatGBTs. ChatGBT (Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer) and other artificial intelligence softwares. In a traditional in-person classroom, a teacher may be short of time to answer the myriad of

of queries that emerge in a student's mind. In this instance, ChatGPT can provide articulate responses to every question that springs in a student's mind. Other innovative softwares such as 3D simulations of historical landscapes such as that of Ancient Rome can enhance a student's ~~understanding~~ conceptual understanding. Virtual tours of faraway places can broaden a student's horizons from the comfort of their bedroom. A significant benefit of online learning is that it increases the dissemination of information. Information is no longer one man's monopoly. The increase in virtual seminars, conferences, networking events and even virtual competitions give a student access to other academics, experts and civil society members from far fetched places. In fact,

both legal and illegal methods to gain access to scientific publications and research reports. Consequently, a student today has much broader horizons than a student of the bygone part.

Opponents of online learning posit a variety of arguments that refute the effectiveness of online learning. Each shall be considered each here. Firstly, it is argued that the look and feel of a traditional classroom is irreplaceable. In fact, the traditional classroom is a holistic experience on itself. The interaction with one's peers adds one's soft skills and helps the emotional development of a child as they learn to verbally address verbal cues which enhances their

emotional intelligence. In the world of work along on-person interaction enhances emotional intelligence as people learn to navigate through real life ~~situations~~ pressures rather than communicating from a laptop screen. There is an oft-quoted quote which supports this argument:

"A single conversation across the table with a wise man is better than ten years mere study of books"
 — Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

While online communication can generate conversations, it ~~case~~ does not teach the day-to-day behavioural patterns that we learn by osmosis from simply being in a room with another learned person. It is true that online:

learning can not teach us emotional intelligence which is why the benefits of online learning should be leveraged together with group activities in the physical world, so as to contribute to the full personality development of an individual.

Secondly, a study has shown that students found a teacher writing on the whiteboard and. Secondly, opponents argue that a traditional classroom experience is unparalleled and online learning can ~~even~~ give students a sedentary lifestyle early on as they sit in front of their laptops the entire day. It is important that students do not neglect their physical activities as they harness the benefits of online learnings simultaneously.

In conclusion, the drawbacks of online learning can be overcome through a curriculum which incorporates hybrid methods. However, this does not undermine the vast benefits of online learning for students and the range of possibilities it has opened. Today's students are indeed luckier than their forefathers who had to storm through hundreds of books to find the relevant answer to their question. In a world which values speed and efficiency, online learning can not easily be replaced by traditional classroom instruction!