

'A Note About Online Learning'

Warm Greetings.

I regularly get many calls from parents asking a series of questions about online learning – How does it work, how is the student's absorption level, does it even work. So I thought to write a short article about it.

How's a Typical Class.

Just like the regular classroom, a online class needs 2 things: the *Blackboard* and the *Voice* interaction. In an online class the teacher & student talk in real-time (just as in person) using simple VOIP tools such as Skype; and the whole screen of the tutor is the blackboard for the student, on which the tutor shares power point presentation using a simple screen sharing tool. So whatever the tutor explains is heard as well as seen. A digital writing pad helps in the process for the teacher to write on the screen (blackboard) and its good if student has got one too. Some tutors use web based blackboards too; its just matter of choice.

I don't know much about Technology.

There is no need for the student to be tech savvy. If he is used-to PC's, which nearly everyone is, he can easily do this too. There IS a small learning curve for the technology, but its just a matter of few classes for the students to become adept in. I try to bring down even this effort by keeping it as simple as possible.

Now do the online classes work?

Answer is Yes. And No. It does not work for every individual. There are many advantages such as - Personalized learning experience (biggest advantage), Getting to study with some good educators, Elimination of some of the drawbacks of regular classroom (asking questions to teacher), Safety, Saving travel & time etc. Apart from this, i personally feel a challenge of 'impersonalism' that creeps between tutor & the student because of not being face-to-face. So if the student (and parents) are ready to utilize this wonderful asset with a pinch of salt then they are most welcome. In any case, the student posses the choice whether to continue or not.

My view.

Students should take few classes, say 2-3 classes, and then decide themselves if it is helping you.

Warm regards.

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