

Online Learning versus Face to Face Learning What Is the Difference?

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There has been considerable debate about the use of information technology in higher education and whether the technology delivers good educational outcomes. Unfortunately, there is a paucity of 'controlled research', which examines outcomes in online learning (OL) and face to face learning (FTF). This study compared final grades of post-graduate student performance in nine units offered in both FTF and OL mode over the course of two academic years. The influence of age and gender on student outcomes was also considered in this study. Post-graduate students, on average, did better in the OL mode, although, at the individual unit level there were minimal if any significant differences. Students that completed units in both the OL and F2F mode, on average, had significantly higher grades in the units completed online. Age and gender did not appear to moderate performance in any way except for those students under 33 who did better, on average, in the OL mode. The implications for teaching and learning in virtual mediums are discussed.