

# From a student's perspective

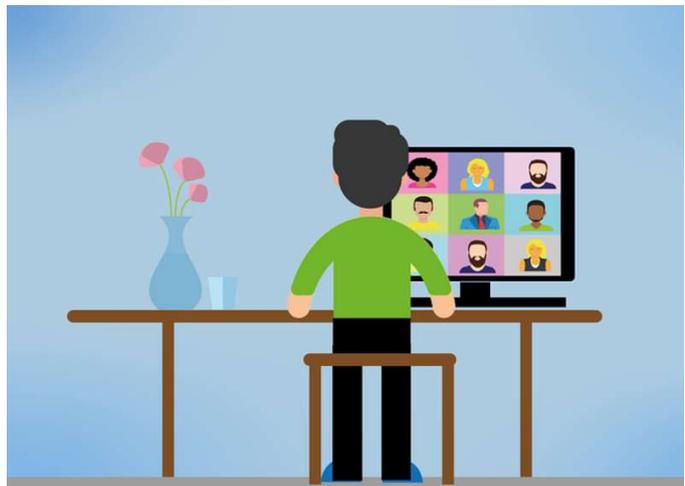
Let's look at some of the implications for students when they are involved in blended or online learning.

## **(Real) connections**

Most students, especially when they are used to meeting in groups, say they do miss the physical meetings because virtual meetings have a different social feel. When you only meet the people in your group online, it raises questions that deal with the core of TEE. Some of these were also discussed in the Member Forum Increase recently organised.

It is difficult to really understand each other's backgrounds, daily lives, and church, challenges and areas of growth. Personal meetings and personal encounter are so important for transformational TEE.

So going fully online may not prove the best solution in the long term. Blended learning, where you mix online and face-to-face learning in some way or other, is better. This way you can draw on the strengths of each system.



## **Motivation**

Students are harder to motivate if they are only working online. They need a lot of self-motivation to finish a course once they started it and do all the work that is involved. In a face-to-face setting there is usually more incentive to take part and do the work that is required because there is usually some form of social pressure to do well.

Online, the most important motivator is grading. Grades for each assignment and for the overall course. One of the Increase members has also found out that gamification (using small rewards, such as you receive in online games) can help encourage people through their Personal Study online.

Another issue connected with motivation is expectations. If you are not careful about what you expect from the learner, and what the learner can expect from the course, this causes real issues. The discrepancy between expectation and reality is often a reason for higher drop-out rates in online courses (compared to face-to-face courses).

## **Generations**

Usually older students have more problems with online technology than younger students do. They don't click with technology as easily as younger generations do. This doesn't mean older students cannot embrace it, they often do after a while, but initially they will find it harder. On the other hand, younger people may not expect to do a whole course from behind their computer, but rather would enjoy and appreciate being able to do (parts of it) on their smart phone or tablet.