



## DISCIPLINE IN THE E-LEARNING ERA

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It was American novelist and short story writer Edith Wharton who once said, “There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.” In plainer words, this simply means that we are only able to discover our truest potential once we learn to discipline ourselves the best way we can. Otherwise, we only end up with potentials but no achieved goals. Discipline is difficult to enforce at the onset, but when it becomes our way of life, it eventually leads us to success.

Every time a certain new standard is imposed or a policy is freshly adopted, people protest. You might call it the inherent fear of the unknown: untried, therefore undesirable; unseen, therefore unnecessary. Technology used to be disdainfully considered that way. Those who have found their comfort zones do not wish their lives to be complicated by the advances in technology.

Where teaching used to be kept within the confines of the physical classroom, modern day technology has made it possible for teachers to reach the farthest corners of the globe in their imparting of knowledge. No longer is education a matter of chalk-on-board structures: the computer can serve just as nicely.

When I first ventured into online teaching, I had many apprehensions: how to illustrate a point on the board; how to create rapport through the internet lines; how to make the student truly master the lesson to be learned. My first few months were a genuine learning experience, highlighted by oftentimes funny moments. I have learned to type as fast as I speak, oftentimes misspelling words in my haste and at which my student would ask me what I had written—gibberish, basically. I point at the computer screen with my finger, only to find out that my student is not in the same space as I am. I ask my student to show me her book, only to end up squinting uselessly at the monitor and not actually making out what is in my student’s book. I argue with my student on the color of objects in my e-book, only to realize that my student has the hard copy of the material and therefore is looking at the actual color of that particular object pictured in question. Such moments I still consider precious, and have taught me to have a certain kind of discipline in my teaching: never to point to the screen but use screen share; remember that the computer screen sometimes fails to display actual book color, etc.

Yes, the road to learning is filled with challenges, and it takes a special kind of teacher to master them all. Discipline is the key, and the fruits are immeasurable as well as beautiful in a certain kind of way.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What are your study habits? How did you pick them up?
2. Do you believe you can reach your goals with those study habits you have acquired?
3. How is online learning different from other types of learning?
4. Why is it important to have discipline in reaching your study goals?
5. How can we make online learning more effective?