

TECH FREE LEARNING

DOES IT HELP STUDENTS FOCUS?

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Introduction

In today's hyper-connected world, technology surrounds us and has become an integral part of our lives. From smartphones to laptops, physical books to e-books, we constantly engage with screens, which introduce various distractions instead of learning. While it is true that technology has made our lives easier, people are starting to overlook fundamental aspects of life. It is essential to recognise how technology has gained significant control over our lives and take necessary actions to address this imbalance.

In this article, we will discuss how we can create Tech-free learning, its benefits, purpose, and reasons to choose tech-free learning. We will also explore the major differences between tech-based and non-tech learning methods, upcoming challenges, steps to make learning tech-free etc.

Tech-free learning

Tech-free learning is an educational approach that intentionally excludes or minimizes the use of technology in the learning process. This approach values the richness of reading physical books, allowing students to involve themselves in literature and explore ideas without any distractions often associated with screens. It fosters meaningful face-to-face interactions, where learners can engage in discussions, share insights, and build social skills through communication. Additionally, tech-free learning promotes hands-on activities, encouraging students to participate in arts and crafts, or practical exercises that enhance their understanding through direct experience. By focusing on these traditional methods, this approach aims to build critical thinking, creativity, and interpersonal skills while reducing reliance on digital devices.

But here, a question arises as to why one should consider tech-free learning over tech learning, which is much better and has engaging content through which students won't get bored and learn effectively and efficiently.

Indeed, reading books and notes is not an easy task, but this world is full of copying and presenting fake information that misleads students, so one can fail to get authentic data if he or she is learning through tech. Things are quite different in non-tech learning, there, you get real knowledge and build skills like creativity, critical thinking, and most importantly, studying for longer hours with great focus. The purpose of learning without technology is to foster different skills and learning styles that might be overlooked in technology-heavy environments.

Benefits of Tech-free learning

- **Focus and Concentration:** By removing distractions from screens and notifications, tech-free learning can promote deeper focus and concentration on the material at hand. Because these two are acting as a barrier. For example:- While studying, turn off notification settings or just keep your mobile or laptop aside for the time you are reading.
- **Improve Social Skills:** Face-to-face interaction and collaboration play a crucial role in developing social skills. For example:- communicating with tech devices may degrade your social skills. Connecting with people around you and having a face-to-face interaction can build you socially and help you to get good moral values.
- **Reduced Screen Time and Potential Health Issues:** Limiting screen time can reduce the risk of eye strain, sleep disturbances, and other health issues associated with excessive technology use. Example:- our eyes are very sensitive. They get affected by white light which causes eye problems or headaches, so to avoid it reduce screen time or you may turn on reading mode on your mobile phones.
- **Reduces feeling of oneness :** You need to accept that technology has made communication faster and established virtual connection with people across the world. But in real life when you look around, you found yourself that no one is there to talk with you, enjoy with you. Technology became so important to you that your bonds began to reduce and create a feeling of oneness. Closing your phone, laptops allows you to create real bonds, real communication.
- **Reduces stress and Anxiety:** Being constantly contacted to e-mails, news articles, scrolling through reels , shorts, make your mind stressed and even

you get pissed off on simple things. By unplugging from technology your mind reboots and make you feel relaxed and bring back to present things.

- Time-saving : There's a saying "Time is money" and what do, we spend our important time in surfing internet that's not going to help us in any way, we are killing our precious time. By taking breaks from tech objects we can save plenty of time and utilise it better . Also instead of watching useless content you can consume informative content as well.

1. **Challenges of Tech-Free Learning**

- Limited Access to Information and Resources: Tech-free learning can limit access to online resources, educational websites, and digital tools that can enhance learning. Example:- someone is preparing for civil services examinations, he or she needs information about daily happenings in the world and society. This is accessible only through online resources.
- Reduced Engagement: Some students may find tech-free learning less engaging and may become disengaged due to the lack of interactive elements and multimedia. This acts as the biggest challenge when we think about learning by reading books. For Example:- Books like maths, and physics contain only text-based information which can reduce reading, whereas learning from online sources like YouTube makes these maths, physics, chemistry, and biology more attractive through animations which students find more engaging.
- Lack of Flexibility: Tech-free learning may not be suitable for all learning styles or situations, as some students may learn better with technology. For example:- In today's fast-paced environment everyone is born in a technological society where learning from organic sources (like books, coaching, and one-to-one interaction is known to very few people, all of them want to learn digitally and get the best online notes. On the other hand, some may not be able to afford mobile phones, laptops act as a barrier to learning.
- Privacy Concerns : While using technology one knowingly or unknowingly shares his/her personal information and by this they put their life at high risk. There are apps that collect your data and may blackmail you in future. Reading all the safety measures and privacy policy of such apps can help in protecting your privacy.

- Slow Progress : Nowadays technological advancements is at its peak, by which your brain don't need to hustle much to solve a numerical, all your work will be done very effortlessly. This degrades ones mental progress and slow their mind. Google assistant can be seen as an example to this .
- Replacement of Teacher's : Nobody thought that one day through technology teaching can be made possible and its so much fine that they are replacing physical teachers giving them nightmares. Many talented faculties are jobless after the AI generated teachers came into the race. This a drawback of technology. Teachers and students were sharing good bonds felt more comfortable and connected but when Tech-teaching made its exposure things got changed they had best knowledge of everything but were missing one important element and that's human emotion that only physical teachers can have.

There are some Preventive measures one should take to avoid excessive use of technology; Students can indulge themselves in hybrid learning techniques, it includes physical learning as well as online learning. It offers Flexibility in online studying while still providing the touch of traditional classrooms because everyone should have an exposure of both the modes. There are several benefits of hybrid learning, students reported that learning from both sides was more engaging and they can score good in exams. Also this Hybridization came into light during the pandemic period of COVID -19 when everything was shutdown.

In that period many students made good use of that opportunity but later things changed and it increased their screen time from 2 hours to 10 hours a day.

One can set limit to their screen by allocating specific time frame to particular apps for example YouTube for not more than 2 hours, also adding reminder to take initial brakes between video lectures to give rest to mind and eyes. This limit should be in between 2 hours to 5 hours and not more than that.



Living in a society that is fully driven by technology has its own drawbacks, like regular connectivity and over-exposure to screens, which can impact our mental health, sleep disorders, anxiety, stress, etc. It can also hinder our ability to think, which may reduce our productivity. Taking regular breaks from technology is very crucial to maintain a healthy and balanced life.

What is a tech-free zone:- It's a physical space or specific period where technology is kept aside, and by creating such a zone, we make a haven from digital noise.

See no one can completely cut themselves from technology so there are some steps to create a Tech-free zone that acts as a Pomodoro to tackle these hurdles:-

1. Select a suitable space at your home where no tech objects are there. It might be a corner in the living room or a separate room where you are surrounded only by books and notes and study for longer hours.
2. Remove all types of distractions while studying to gain more focus, this helps to reduce the temptations to engage with it. Having mobile phones in the place where we study, our mind constantly triggers us to use them and spend quality time scrolling through videos, removing mobile phones from your learning zone can help to focus more.

3. Explore hobbies such as reading books, meditation, reading journals, and learning new things like skating and swimming. These all would help you to disconnect from the digital world and connect with your surroundings, because no one can read for a complete 24 hours, doing extra activities makes one's mind more sharper and relaxed.
4. Make a daily habit where you dedicate some hours or specific periods during the day to switch off from tech. For example:- you can choose the time of evening because that particular period is best for going out, walking on the streets, and in that time make yourself tech-free, doing this on a regular basis can help you take breaks from the screen and focus on your goals.

Practising all these steps regularly can help students focus on their studies; the start is going to be tough, but taking baby steps will create a stressful and happy life.

In conclusion all these:- Switching off from technology allows us to engage in other activities and find respite from the digital noise. So, let's prioritise our mental health by incorporating tech-free zones into our lives.