We have all at some time sat at a PC reading a document and experienced that feeling of nothing going in. Donning the anti-sustainability blinkers (patent pending), we then print out a hard copy and attempt reading it again. We highlight key words and underline sections, but still the information does not fully embed into our memory.

Evidence informs us that we learn and remember very little of what we read, whether it be on the PC or hard copy. We know, yet forget, learning occurs best when it is situated ie when it has a reality feel to it.

Remember those sessions when we have learnt more from our peers during discussions, debates and questioning than from the trainer. This is quite normal and a good teacher will plan and aim for this.

This therefore begs the question – *does the increasing trend towards read and click online training compromise learning?*

We know young people use the web mostly for human interaction eg Facebook, Twitter et al; so why cannot on line learning tap into this model of internet use. The learner needs to be convinced that there are faces behind the computer screen to present a learning environment that is far more than just read and click.

A search of the web will bring up a plethora of online food safety and health and safety courses, including our own CIEH elearning. Some online courses talk of completion within two hours and are completely silent on guidance or tutor support. This is not learning, it is a tick box mentality that I personally despise. What ever happened to *instruction* in the ‘instruction and/or training’ requirement in EC 852/2004?

A culture change may be needed in academia and some training organisations to ensure that the student’s needs are matched to the long established evidence of learning. The wheel does not have to be re-invented as there are already examples out there of outstanding practice in online learning.

One thing is sure however – online learning is here to stay.