

Critical Comparison of Texts related to online learning

Online learning is something that has recently had to be adopted by schools all over the world. Very few of which have experience with education in this manner, creating a confusing atmosphere of sorts. Although this is true, as explained in Tansy Jessop's (2020) opinion article *Let's lose the deficit language about online education* (the first text), online learning is not as chaotic as portrayed by alarmist journalists. In this text the author briefly explains the current situation and how Universities have been forced to alter the learning environment. Jessop further elaborates that the changes to the learning environment were bound to happen sooner rather than later. Jessop states that once lectures started being recorded, the number of students in live lectures dwindled, even before the global pandemic. The conclusion Jessop draws from this is that students prefer to take online recorded lectures because they have more control over the pace and manner in which they learn. She ends the article by detailing the various benefits her and her colleagues have noticed whilst teaching online.

The second text, which is a brief news article written by the video journalist Alyson Samson (2020), details the negative feedback and problems faced by students and teachers with regards to online learning. The article, candidly entitled *University students feeling overwhelmed with demand of online learning*, points out that for many experienced students and teachers this is a complete change to what they have become so accustomed to. Samson presents students' opinions on how it is difficult 'learning a new way of learning' as well as how it is stressful for teachers to re-learn how to do their jobs. Among other issues, Samson reports the struggles of this new learning environment.

The third text, which is a Ted Talk on *The Era of Online learning* by Niema Moshiri (2017), provides a method for teaching in this new learning environment. Although the text was released pre-corona virus, the contents of the presentation are very relevant. In his presentation, Moshiri reflects back to his days in University and how it was difficult for him to learn in large lectures. Specifically his university struggled with getting the right number of qualified teachers so had to have two lecture rooms sharing the same lecturer. After this experience Moshiri researched better ways of learning through online methods. Moshiri presents the idea of massive adaptive interactive texts (MAITs) as a solution to the online learning problem.

The content and stance of the author in the first text is that online learning is beneficial for students and teachers and it is seamlessly becoming the new norm (Jessop,2020). Jessop believes that this is the natural flow of things but doesn't seem to mention the struggles faced by students or teachers when it comes to online learning. Conversely, the second text seems to only present the negatives of online learning and the struggles being faced. In a way both texts are biased however, the first text is an opinion piece so the author could've included a more fair assessment of the situation but decided not to. The second text on the other hand is a news article so the author's opinions were not presented at all. This makes the second text more fair and balanced because at the end of the day it is the students' opinions that matter when discussing the effectiveness of online learning- and these are the opinions being presented. The third text intertwines the first two together as it provides a solution to the problem. All three texts mention- albeit in different ways- that education needs to be restructured. Moshiri (2017) provides a method in which online education can be restructured, The author appears to have done copious amounts of research to reach this method and it seems like a viable option.

The tone of each text is another noticeable point of variance between them. Although the first text is discussing academia, the writing is not very academic. The author utilises humor within her article and it overall has an informal tone. This fits the genre of an opinion piece however, including

research in an opinion piece does not fit well in this context. It creates the idea that the opinion is fair and backed up with evidence but the author does not explore the whole scope of the topic at hand. Although the second text is a news article I feel like it suffers the same problems as the first. The text does fairly present the opinions of the student body and teachers, however, since the newspaper is international the author should've been more specific with stating students from a certain university. Otherwise it makes it seem that all students and teachers struggle with online school. Both texts suffer from making absolute statements. The tone of the third text is the most academic and out of all of them. The author explores many concepts and uses subject specific vocabulary to explain a new concept to his audience. The presentation is very lecture-esq as the author takes the audience through his work.

References:

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