ESL 263

WA #2

Draft # 3

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Online Courses’ Limitations Hurt Students

The lack of face-to-face classroom discussions can lead to online courses hurting low-achieving students through the lack of feedback. The teachers can learn about their students’ learning and reasoning capacities by talking to them in class. The observations can lead to praises and criticisms that low performing students can use to improve themselves. However, online underachievers do not get face-to-face time due to physical separation of pupils and teachers. This hurts them because teachers can’t observe and learn about their students. Online courses have discussion platforms built-in to overcome the separation but it’s not enough for underachievers. Discussion forums take time to respond for instructors since they have to deal with a flood of student questions. The delay demotivates the underperformers and discourage them from seeking feedback, causing low-achievers’ failure to improve. This outcome is best described by a study in Chicago high schools. Failing students were randomly put in online credit recovery courses or their classroom counterparts (Dynarski 2). Online students recovered 10 percent less than the former’s students (Rickles 4). Online students’ reduced achievement suggests online courses’ limitations lead to hurting underachievers. Online courses hurt them because their limitations are keeping them from allowing face-to-face discussions with the instructors.

Besides the limiting instructors’ feedback, online courses also hurt low-achieving students since they lack self-regulation skills to stay focused. These skills are vital to managing distractions in online courses because students can easily get distracted from using a computer such as watching YouTube videos. But low-achieving students lack the ability to stay on track. My experience with Harvard’s introductory online Computer Science course, CS50 is a prime example. A CS50 class can last up to 120 minutes. I took CS50 because I was struggling in my traditional college coding classes. However, I found myself constantly distracted after 30 minutes and looking at Netflix videos. Watching Netflix videos meant that it took longer to finish lectures. I learned less, leading to failing all over again. My failing grades in CS50 shows underperformers in online courses are more susceptible to distractions. Since the lack of self-control makes them more vulnerable to getting sidetracked, online courses fail underachievers rather than helping them.

Original Sentences: Students who had failed algebra were randomly assigned either to online or to face-to-face recovery courses. The results were clear: Students in the online algebra courses learned much less than those who worked with a teacher in a classroom.

Works Cited

Dynarski, Susan. “Online Courses Fail Those Who Need Help.” *New York Times*, 21 January. 2018, p.BU3.

Rickles, Jordan, et al. “The Effect of Online Versus Face-to-Face Credit Recovery in Algebra I on High School Credit Accumulation and Graduation” *UChicago Consortium on School Research,* June 2017