ATWP 135 Final Exam

Nick Wurzer

V00958568

Department of English, University of Victoria

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Randy Lawrence

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**Section One: Reading Comprehension – Short Answer Questions**

**Length: 3 questions Weight: 10%**

The questions below test your comprehension of the article, *Student and instructor perceptions of engagement after the rapid online transition of teaching due to COVID-19* which you read in preparation for this exam, and your ability to summarize key information from it. You must use your own words and quote directly sparingly. If you do paraphrase or quote directly, then please cite using one of the citation styles listed in **Section Four** (and note you must choose only one style to use for all sections of this exam, so be consistent). Your work will be marked for accuracy, comprehension, concision, and effectiveness of written expression.

1. What is the main argument of the peer review article *Student and instructor perceptions of engagement after the rapid online transition of teaching due to COVID-19*? State this point in your own words. In other words, briefly summarize the argument. Write your answer in one or two full sentences. **(2 points)**

Kristen Walker and Katherine Koralesky argued that affective engagement generally reduced and cognitive engagement generally increased as a result of courses moving online in response to Covid-19. Although affective engagement and cognitive engagement had general trends, the researchers found that aspects of online courses increased both types of engagement, and some aspects of online courses decreased both types of engagement. Synchronous activities generally increased engagement, and asynchronous activities generally decreased engagement.

1. Describe the methodology used by the authors of the article (that is, how the study was conducted), and list two specific findings. **(5 points)**

The study surveyed students and professors to gauge student engagement after the rapid online transition in response to Covid-19. Surveys were sent to 13 instructors within the multiple disciplinary faculty of Land and Food Systems in order to gauge instructor perceptions of engagement after the transition. Likewise, 9 of those instructors sent surveys to about 1,000 students enrolled in courses in the faculty of Land and Food Systems and about 145 students responded to the survey. Students and instructors were asked whether overall engagement has increased or decreased and then they were asked to explain any aspects of online courses which resulted in increased or decreased engagement. Students were then asked to rate 29 activities according to how engaging they were, 1 being very engaging and 5 being not engaging. One specific finding was that student’s cognitive engagement mainly increased because students could review recorded lectures and refer to material not provided by the course. Another specific finding is that contributions to in class discussion were more diverse because students felt less anxious using the chat box than they would speaking in front of the class.

1. Explain what strategies the authors of the article use to address possible counter-arguments. What opposing arguments and/or criticisms do they anticipate, and how do they handle these issues? **(3 points)**

The study acknowledged that time zone differences, language barriers and other personal issues relating to the pandemic may have impacted the results of this study. The authors also addressed possible sample bias related to grade point average, demographics and faculty selection. Data on grade point averages and demographics could have helped get more clear results, but the researchers stated that this information could make respondents identifiable and therefore the information could not be collected for ethical reasons. The authors do not provide solutions to these anticipated counter arguments beyond the need for conducting more research, but by acknowledging the limits of their study they build credibility. Had information from this study been used to improve online courses, the results of the study may have changed as well.

**Section Two: Argument**

**Length: A short essay totalling approximately 750 to 1000 words**

**Weight: 40%**

Write your own short argumentative essay on a subject related to the topic discussed in the popular press article *The 7 elements of a good online course*. and the peer-reviewed scholarly article *Student and instructor perceptions of engagement after the rapid online transition of teaching due to COVID-19.*

Before you start writing, critically evaluate these two sources and consider how you can use them to make your own argument as persuasive as possible for your readers. Be sure that you have an arguable claim or position you are taking about the topic (covered in both articles). Then, to develop and support your position on the topic, you must use both of these articles as evidence in the form of quotations, paraphrases, and/or summaries accompanied by appropriate in-text citations. For guides to correct formatting, please refer to **Section Four.**At the end of your essay, under the heading “Audience Description,” include a paragraph that briefly describes the primary audience you imagined you were writing to.

Now that you have written your essay, you need to include a bibliography. The good news is that this bibliography is worth points (**see Section Four**).

How might long-term online education impact student’s success, not just in school but also later on in life? George Veletsianos (2020) claims “there are no significant differences in students’ academic outcomes between online and face-to-face education”. Veletsianos explains that the value of the course is not defined by the medium used to deliver the course, but by the qualities which are promoted in the structure of the course. What Veletsianos fails to address is the long-term impacts of online education. Regardless of whether online education affects short-term academic achievement, the lack of social interaction in online education means long-term online school is not viable. Social interaction associated with face-to-face education is important because it promotes mental wellness which is needed for long-term success. The social skills gained in the face-to-face setting will also help students succeed in life beyond post-secondary education. As a result of Covid-19, many clubs, jobs and social events have gone online or been cancelled altogether which results in decreased social stimulation and long-term performance. Online education does not allow for the same social stimulation as face-to-face education, therefore long-term online education is not sustainable.

Veletsianos (2020) is not the only researcher claiming that online school may be viable. Walker and Koralesky (2020) conducted research on students and instructors’ perceptions of emotive and cognitive engagement after the rapid online transition in response to Covid-19. Walker and Koralesky concluded that both students and instructors perceived diminished overall engagement after the transition, however they noted that students thought some aspects of online course delivery resulted in higher engagement. The study found that emotive engagement decreased and cognitive engagement increased as a result of the shift to online education. I argue that the enhanced cognitive engagement is not sustainable due to the decreased emotive engagement. Social aspects associated with face-to-face education are necessary to maintaining good mental health. Many students and instructors have made changes to their daily routines in order to improve their mental health in the online setting. Some strategies my peers and I have used to promote our mental health include socializing inside our bubble, separation of spaces, daily routines, exercising regularly and getting outside. These efforts to improve mental health are amiable but unsustainable. The lack of opportunities to meet new students and see instructors in person mean that connections are missed and therefore learning opportunities are as well. In person classes can create study groups and friendships that encourage collaboration motivation to study. The lack of interaction also means that students need to be more emotionally independent which can be hard especially as many students transition from living with parents to living on their own. Walker and Koralesky speculate that instructors could have improved overall engagement based on the results of their studies and Veletsianos claims that online mediums have no significant impact on the effectiveness of course delivery; however, neither source considers long-term effects of online delivery on mental health. Students need social interaction and support from peers and instructors in order to maintain good mental health and be successful learners in the long term.

Beyond the emotional support that is needed to be successful academically, students develop key social skills in the face-to-face setting that will help them as they progress in their careers. Effective online communication is becoming increasingly important, however social skills developed at universities are not obsolete. The skills that students develop as they support each other will be the skills they use in the workplace to support their coworkers. Many jobs rely on effective teamwork and often social relationships are established before or during the establishment of business relationships. Some programs which help students land jobs after university such as mock interviews can still be conducted online, but when it comes to being successful in the workplace, especially face-to-face, students need in-person interaction. The development of online communication skills cannot replace social skills developed during in-person education because social skills are needed to be successful in the workplace after university.

As well as courses, many events which typically support mental wellbeing and help in developing social skills have moved online. Some of these events may not be as impactful online and some, such as sporting events, are not possible. Sporting events for example, allow students attending to relax and enjoy the game after a stressful week. Players get stress relief in the form of exercise and adhere to routines which positively impacts mental health. Furthermore they must work together as a team to achieve a common goal. Other events which may not be as impactful online include student concerts, volunteer positions and student jobs on campus. Meeting face-to-face for these events is important for students because it can help develop their identity and improve mental health and social skills.

The long-term effects of studying online go beyond academic achievement in the short-term. Perhaps students who are self-motivated can succeed in school, but many need support from peers to be successful academically. Not only does peer support help during post-secondary schooling, but the social skills gained from interacting with other students day-to-day are important to helping students succeed in their careers. School-related events may be less impactful or cancelled altogether, leading to reduced student to student interaction which corresponds to poorer mental health and worse social skills. Perhaps online school can work as a short-term solution, but students depend on face-to-face education for strong mental health and success in post-secondary school and beyond.

**Section Three: Rhetorical Analysis**

**Length: A short essay totaling approximately 750 words**

**Weight: 40%**

Please write a 750 word short paper (you can be over or under by 150 words or so) in which you rhetorically reflect on the essay Persuading a Skeptic you wrote in **Section Three**.

By “rhetorically reflect,” we mean that you need to discuss the rhetorical choices and strategies you chose to persuade the readers you identified as your primary audience. You need to use the rhetorical language you learned in our course. For example, you might note that you tended to use pronouns in certain ways to create a certain effect. You might explain that you organized your arguments using a certain logical strategy and that you supported your arguments using well-explained and properly cited evidence. You should then state what type of rhetoric those choices engage.

We expect that you will use first person and cite any sources used here correctly with the format chosen for **Section Four**.

In my rhetorical analysis of Christensen-Dalsgaard’s article I try to convince garden owners, who believe in global warming but aren’t sure that they should change their gardens to be more sustainable, that Christensen-Dalsgaard is a reliable author and that she is correct in urging garden owners to have more diverse gardens. Throughout my persuading skeptics assignment, I use structure and repetition to ensure that the content is organized to facilitate comprehension for the reader. I use the active voice and the present tense to keep the reader interested in my writing and help me seem more relatable. In the introduction I address the topic, my stance on the topic and try to tease out who the audience is. In the following paragraphs I use topic and concluding sentences to prepare the reader for what they will read, and recap what they just read. I use an introduction and conclusion before and after two body paragraphs to achieve a similar effect. I use active voice and present tense to keep the reader engaged and structure to facilitate reading, therefore my persuading skeptics assignment is credible and persuasive.

My introduction introduces my topic and position on that topic and teases out who my audience might be. After introducing my topic, I give a little background information which is important because it refreshes the readers’ memory on Christensen-Dalsgaard’s (2008) article. Then I ask rhetorical questions to the reader, hinting “are you my intended audience?” If the reader is still reading, then perhaps they are my intended audience. This creates an opportunity to present my stance on Christensen-Dalsgaard’s article, that she is a credible author and private garden owners should create more sustainable gardens. I use the first-person for my thesis because I am presenting my position on this article and it is not scientific enough in nature to deserve a more objective statement. Throughout the rest of the paper, I use the third person to appear emotionally detached from Christensen-Dalsgaard’s argument. Something that could have made my introduction stronger would be introducing the main ideas from my body paragraphs in my introduction. After reading the introduction, my audience is hopefully interested to see what I have to say next and has some idea of what to expect.

I use structure throughout my persuading skeptics assignment to organize content. The organized content makes my essay easy to understand for the reader. Although not the five-paragraph essay, my paper has an introduction followed by two body paragraphs and a conclusion. This structure introduces a reader to the topic, explains the topic and provides evidence, and then recaps so that the reader may retain what they read. Likewise, my paragraph structure has a topic sentence and concluding sentence to facilitate comprehension. Other elements of structure include direct quotes and paraphrasing with proper citations so that the reader can reference my sources. The structure and clear sentences build my credibility as I argue that Christensen-Dalsgaard’s work is reliable.

In conclusion, the structure of my persuasive essay makes evidence easy to understand for the reader while building credibility. The introduction hooks the intended audience, prepares them for the rest of the paper by making a claim and gives some background information on the topic. First person was chosen for the thesis statement, as I state my opinion on Christensen-Dalsgaard’s article. I used the active voice to keep the reader engaged, but for the majority of my essay I use the third person to establish credibility. Although my thesis could have been restructured so that could be more clearly identified, my essay is persuasive for skeptical garden owners who have read Christensen-Dalsgaard’s article.

**Section Four: Documentation and Citations**

**Length: Complete list of sources**

**Weight: 10%**

In this section, you need to create a correctly formatted bibliography for any sources used in this exam, including the peer-reviewed scholarly article and the popular press article. Please note that it is not a requirement to use any additional sources, but if you do, then you must include those here, too.

Your mark for this section will also take into account whether you have used in-text citations correctly in **Sections One, Two, and Three** (above). Please double-check before you submit.

It’s recommended that you choose the citation style you are most familiar with. The options are provided below. It’s up to you. Please explicitly identify which style you are using. Choose only one! Be sure to title your list of sources appropriately (e.g. References, Works Cited, or Bibliography, etc). Note that you are expected to know and comply with the expected rules for the style, including details like italicization, capitalization, punctuation, and so on. Details MATTER, so please take care, and if you do, you might earn a perfect grade.

Do not rely on citation generators to do this work for you. They often mislead students, which could result in you losing marks unnecessarily here! Instead, you should use the guides provided by the [UVic Library](https://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/index.php) (Citation help: <https://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/index.php>). [As *Why Write* points out in “4.6.3: Style Guides](https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/whywriteguide/chapter/4-6-citational-practice-writing-from-sources/),” the instructions and examples offered in citations style guides help us to figure out exactly what our audience needs to know to find sources efficiently. Links to the specific guides are provided below:

**APA**

<https://www.uvic.ca/library/research/documents/apa7.pdf>

**MLA**

<https://www.uvic.ca/library/research/citation/documents/mla.pdf>

**CHICAGO**

<https://www-chicagomanualofstyle-org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/tools_citationguide.html>

**CSE**

<https://www.scientificstyleandformat.org/Welcome.html#pt2>

**IEEE**

<http://ieeeauthorcenter.ieee.org/wp-content/uploads/IEEE-Reference-Guide.pdf>

**TURABIAN**

<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian/citation-guide.html>

For Part four of this exam I have chosen to use APA style for my references. My references are included on the next page.

References

Christensen-Dalsgaard, K. K. (2021, June 28). *How Urban Gardens Can Boost Biodiversity and Make Cities More Sustainable*. The conversation. <https://theconversation.com/how-urban-gardens-can-boost-biodiversity-and-make-cities-more-sustainable-162810>

Veletsianos, G. (2021, June 10). *The 7 elements of a good online course*. The conversation. <https://theconversation.com/the-7-elements-of-a-good-online-course-139736>

Walker, K. A. & Koralesky, K. A. (2021) Student and instructor perceptions of engagement after the rapid online transition of teaching due to COVID-19. *Natural Sciences* Education. 50(1). <https://doi.org/10.1002/nse2.20038>