Why more and more students are taking online classes essay examples

Technology, Internet

The introduction of online learning definitely became one of the most tangible turning points in the history of education. It substantially modified the basic process of teaching and brought it to a completely new level in just a few years. And it keeps developing with a great speed. " By 2014 only 5. 14 million students will take all of their courses in a physical classroom, while 3. 55 million will take all of their classes online, and 18. 65 million will take some of their classes online" says the report of Ambient Insight Chief Research Officer Sam S. Adkins (Nagel). It is a significant increase compared to the situation we have nowadays. But even at this time " nearly 12 million post-secondary students in the United States take some or all of their classes online" (Nagel). So what became a cause of such an incredible growth in the number of online students? And how does this tendency influences the higher education in general?

The main and the most substantial reason for the popularization of online learning is definitely its convenience. You get a chance to attend your classes from anywhere in the world and at any time since they are available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. This is especially important for parents, working students or those who travel a lot as they do not have to change their schedule and can easily fit online classes into their routine. " About 80% of online students are undergraduates, and they are generally older and more likely to be working and have families" (Pope). So the ability to pursue the degrees online might be the only possible way to receive the necessary education for them.

Another extremely important cause for the introduction of e-learning became the personalized approach to every student. A lot of people do not feel

comfortable in a classroom. Some of them need more time to fully comprehend the given material or feel intimidated by the traditional in-classroom process. The ability to take classes online gives them more confidence. " Anonymity provides students a level playing field undisturbed by bias caused by seating arrangement, gender, race and age" (Coleman). They also can have more time for understanding the material as they can re-read and revise it at any point. Another great advantage for them is that each student is free to choose the time for studies. We know that some people cannot focus in the morning while for others it is the only time of the day they can be fully devoted to studies. " Students often comment that online learning lets them attend class when fully awake and attend in increments of convenient time block, rather than rigid 2 or 4 hour stretches once or twice a week" (Coleman).

It is evident that online learning is extremely beneficial and convenient for students. But how does it influence the overall picture of the academic world? The students who take online classes are forced to be more self-motivated and it is definitely a positive aspect. Online instructors do not provide as much supervision as in-class teachers do so it is a student's responsibility to complete all tasks on time and provide all the necessary details. Another benefit of e-learning is the fact that online students receive the extremely important nowadays technological experience as they have to " become fairly adept at navigating their way through a variety of electronic media" (Keffer). Also the overall number of people getting their degree is much higher now due to the implementation of e-learning ideas and their definite usefulness for vast groups of people as " individuals have more

avenues to pursue their chosen careers than ever before" (Keffer). But there are also some negative aspects in online education. The main and the most noticeable is the insufficient interaction between students and a teacher that can be provided only in the physical classroom. Despite of the presence of online instructors the role of a teacher is quite blurred as e-learning ideas are mostly focused on independent work. And that is also a controversial aspect. On one hand it is a great way to teach students self-motivation but on the other hand people who are not very good at time management can easily drop out. They need to put much more work into online education than it may seem.

The reasons for the introduction of online classes and the effects it provides on the educational system are tightly interwoven. And as everything new it brings both positive and negative outcomes. However the growth in the number of people pursuing online degree and institutions offering it is undeniable. " It's higher in absolute numbers and higher in percentages than anything we've measured before. And it's across the board," at schools ranging from doctoral institutions to those offering associate's degrees to for-profit colleges" (Pope). The online education is definitely an invention for future especially taking into account the flexibility and accessibility it offers.

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