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Critical Reading for Value and Re-evaluation

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Abstract

This paper explores strategies for the critical review of content and re-evaluation of two previously selected articles related to technology and education. Following applied use of critical analysis, a comparison and contrast of the value of the two articles will be presented. A conclusion as to the greater scholarly value of one of the articles will be supported by the analysis.

Evaluating two articles with critical analysis

Brown and Adler's work about *Minds on Fire: Open Education, the Long Tail, and Learning 2.0* evaluated the impact of technology on human interaction in organizations with collaborative learning (2008). Brindley, Walti, and Blaschke's work in the journal article *Creating Effective Collaborative Learning Groups in an Online Environment* reported the effective use of small groups in online learning (2009). To evaluate the scholarly credibility of the two articles, purposeful reading techniques were used to scan the articles for practical teaching solutions related to technology and education ("Reading comprehension", 1989; "How to read", 2007; Maxwell, 2001). Upon initial review, both articles came across as credible because they each provided supporting evidence of the conclusions. Beyond the content presentation, additional analysis was done to evaluate the authors, recognize the timeliness of the articles and research the associated organizations to understand scholarly credibility (Ormondroyd, 2004). Among the authors, the most notable is John Seely Brown. He is the Independent Co-Chairman of the Deloitte Center for Edge Innovation and he is a researcher who serves as a visiting scholar and advisor to the Provost at USC. His applied use of knowledge is demonstrated from his years as chief scientist of Xerox Corporation and director of its Palo Alto Research Center. While the other authors did not contain the extensive credentials of Mr. Brown, they were each associated with educational organizations which supported credibility. Brown and Adler conducted their work for Educause, which is a non-profit organization serving

2,200 universities, colleges and educational organizations with 17,000 active members. They are a credible resource because of the accountability to the higher education organizations and members that they serve. Brindley, Walti and Blaschke conducted their work for the University of Maryland University College and the University of Oldenburg. The date of publication of the articles did not raise concern for credibility since they were both published within the last two years.

Comparing and contrasting the scholarly value of the articles

Since both articles demonstrated credible content based on critical review, an additional step recommended to evaluate the coverage of the work is to see if the content substantiates other materials or adds new information (Ormondroyd, 2004). Coincidentally, the articles substantiate one another. Brown and Adler pointed out that shift from the Cartesian view of learning which viewed knowledge as substance, to a social view of learning through student participation supports the evidence of the effectiveness of group learning (2008). Brindley, Walti, and Blaschke discovered using peer-to-peer collaboration in an online environment has the potential to increase student engagement and learning (2009).

Conclusion

Both articles are credible through the demonstrated sources of the content presented. To indicate that one article is of more scholarly value than the other requires an understanding of the purpose that the research will be used for. From the perspective of technology and education, Brown and Adler's *Minds on Fire: Open Education, the Long Tail, and Learning 2.0* article

explored the use of online tools for collaborating and enriching learning experience is a broader perspective for digital learners (2008). From the perspective of specific online classroom strategies, Brindley, Walti, & Blaschke's article *Creating Effective Collaborative Learning Groups in an Online Environment* is specifically geared to one strategy in online courses (2009). Even with the differentiation of a high profile author involved in one of the articles, the sifting and searching strategy of identifying a purpose for the research provides the determining factor in weighing the benefit of one article over another. Since the article *Minds on Fire: Open Education, the Long Tail, and Learning 2.0* is more comprehensive and has application to a greater variety of students, it contains the greater scholarly value.

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