Writing Task: Response to a prompt

With the development of the internet and the dissemination of computer use for virtually everything such as office work, chatting, media, shopping, dating, and research, online education has become a very popular topic among young as well as adults as they consider enrolling or not enrolling in web based academic programs.

In fact, the question "should students take online courses?" has generated national debate ranging from familial households' dinner table chats to informal discussions on high school and college campuses. It has taken even a serious tone and ample dimension both at local districts' formal board meetings and amongst officials in the state department of education, to end at the doorstep of the state legislators for further consideration.

In their attempt to rationally answer this question, people have split in two major groups, advocates and challengers of online education.

On one hand, supporters of online education stipulate that this novel instruction and learning model facilitates students' access to education practically from anywhere while it enables them to finish their required courses on time and, most importantly, prepare them for the 21st Century highly demanded skills to perform their task in the New Age work place.   They also emphasize the idea that with the education portal open 24/7 students, ranging from high school pupils to postgraduate fellows, will no longer suffer the trauma of failing a course or not pursuing or finishing their academic endeavor. Advocates' strongest argument portrays a very depressed pregnant twelve grader and a working high school senior who did not graduate because they did not have access to online education.

On the other hand, however, opponents of the web based learning and teaching express their reservation vis-à-vis this "too technological" way of educating the new generation of students. They state that while this tool might maximize pupils' daily use of computers, it deprives them, however, from the intellectual challenge that can only take place through discussion and exchange of ideas in the classroom setting. Additionally, students, as they grow older, might miss the social interaction deemed essential to the development of their personality and acquisition of social skills not learned through the virtual classroom. Furthermore, the "virtual teaching" does not uphold students to highly rigorous expectations in meeting learning standards and respecting deadlines. Students become procrastinators doing some work anytime, anywhere, and any fashion without any immediate intervention or feedback. Antagonists' boldest argument is that " one click of a mouse away" education reduces students' learning to an endless clicking that is in vain and far from any real academic achievement .

In response to the prompt "should students take online courses?" write an essay in which you

1. Give background information on the debate over "online education",

2. Present your claim or position, as an advocate or opponent of online learning,

3. Present strong supporting evidence,

4. Explain your evidence, and

5. Consider writing one counterargument in response to your opponent(s).