Name

Instructor Name

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Rhetorical Analysis

It is almost part of every educational institution where teachers use grades to measure the amount of student learning. Their intelligence and amount of learning are measured by their grades and this usually lets students doubt their abilities. Alfie Kohn in his article talks about the bad effects of grading on students learning the process. He very tactfully uses rhetorical devices like pathos, logos and ethos to give weight to his work. Starting from doing research, he moves towards his own experience as a teacher. He believes that there should be some changes in grading criteria that it cannot affect students learning the process as well as their abilities. He believes that authorities should focus on how well a student is doing, how much he is learning, what more he needs to learn instead of who got more grades. According to him, the student’s learning abilities are more important than their grades.

As a teacher, he is very much familiar with the teacher’s perception of grading. He says that teachers believe that putting grading criteria on test motivates students to perform well. Kohn believes that it will only let them get good marks, it will not help them in learning at all. To support his argument, he gives examples from different psychological researches. He delicately uses the logos technique in his article. Well researched findings by motivational psychology talks about students who are more concerned about grading, and how they learn less than they should.

Students keep themselves busy to get good grades and due to that, they hardly put any effort into learning. He also says that it does not mean that students should stop worrying about their grades. He wants students to keep a balance between both their learning and grades. He talks about students who prefer grades over learning, they usually choose an easy task and are afraid to choose a challenging task because it can affect their grading. Such students are unable to grow strongly because they always keep themselves busy to avoid challenging situations. He has got solid reasons for the effects of the grading system.

Kohn puts his idea about the relationship in the academic world. As student-teacher relationship is very important, similarly student-student relationship is very important. The thing that can affect such relations is the grading system. Students may believe that they do not deserve such grading or maybe they think that they cannot get good grades ever. They might come up with untrue reasons in their mind, which will change their perception about the teacher and themselves too. Likewise, student to student relation also gets affected. He says that “the same effect is witnessed at a school-wide level when kids are not just rated but ranked, sending the message that the point isn’t to learn, or even to perform well, but to defeat others (“From Degrading to De-Grading”).” Motivating them to improve class ranking is different from understanding their ideas. To further support his argument, he states his own experience as a teacher. He knows that bad grades force students to question their abilities. Bad grades not only hurt the students but it will also hurt their learning. He provides the solution to have learning-orientated classrooms by making students completely oblivious about grading. He believes that instead of grading, teachers should use comments to evaluate students. He as a teacher tells his students that he will not give any number or alphabet, instead he will give comments. He acted very informally while talking about grades and what he observes later is that very few students bother the need to ask about grades or anything.

In the article “There’s nothing wrong with grade inflation” by Mark Oppenheimer, Oppenheimer says that “the student who gets a 100 on a calculus exam probably grasps the material better than the student with a 60 — but only if she retains the knowledge, which grades can’t show (Oppenheimer).” He mentioned Alfie Kohn in his article to support the same ideas of grading inflation and student learning process. He also believes that better evaluation is needed instead of grading. He is enraged for grading system but he puts the fact in front of the audience that, no matter how much we say that grading is not important but it is important. Grading is important when a student wants to take admission in a well-known university. Most importantly grading is useful while going for employment. People with higher grades tend to get a good post with valuable salary than those with fewer grades. By saying that the grading system should be terminated is not enough, there is a whole process needed in doing so. Some colleges might go grade-free but again it is not enough, the whole system needs to be changed.

Alfie Kohn uses anaphora in his article to highlight his main idea which he wants to convey to the audience. He is very much concern about the students learning the process. He has given few names of some colleges in his article which does not mean that he is only referring to them. He uses them as a metonymic reduction of every academic institute. His message is not only for his student or his colleagues but he wants every student, teacher and head of the school to look at this matter. He has done his part by stating the effects of grading and by giving the solution to those problems. The only thing that is needed is to implement those useful techniques, so that student can learn things instead of focusing on their grading.

Works Cited

“From Degrading to De-Grading.” *Alfie Kohn*, 3 Mar. 1999, https://www.alfiekohn.org/article/degrading-de-grading/.

Oppenheimer, Mark. “There’s Nothing Wrong with Grade Inflation.” *Washington Post*, 4 Mar. 2016. *www.washingtonpost.com*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/03/04/theres-nothing-wrong-with-grade-inflation/.