

## Research article

# Debunking the Myth of Online Learning with Deconstruction

**Slameto**

President University, Indonesia

**Abstract.** There is an assumption that a myth is not a lie; a myth is a belief adopted by people due to its logic, a belief that it is true, and consistency based on several forms of evidence. However, some myths that people believe are totally false or at least partly false, even dangerous. Surprisingly, in today's modern era where online learning is practiced everywhere, teachers still believe in some myths, specifically in their online learning. Why does a myth dominate? Often this is because it is promoted by 'organized interests'. A myth exists because we believe in it. In fact, myths can be dangerous for five main reasons: preservation, dichotomy, sometimes having seeds of truth, justification, and institutionalization. Then, can deconstruction dismantle a myth? The present study identified 10 common myths from 20 sources and found that deconstruction was the appropriate means of dismantling them. Of this dismantlement, there emerged new concepts of online learning that need to be socialized by stakeholders with the aim of forming new attitudes and gaining positive support for the improvement of online learning quality in the future new normal era.

Corresponding Author: Slameto;  
email: slameto@president.ac.id

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## 1. Introduction

We live in the midst of what has the potential to be one of the greatest threats in our lives to global education, a giant education crisis. As of March 28, 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic caused more than 1.6 billion children and youth for dropping out of school in 161 countries. This was close to 80% of the world's enrolled students. We have already experienced a crisis of global trends because many students are in school, but have not yet learned the basic skills needed for life. The World Bank's "Learning Poverty" - the percentage of children who were unable to read and understand by age the age of 10 reached 53% in low- and middle-income countries before the outbreak began. This pandemic has the potential to exacerbate these outcomes even more if we do not act quickly [1].

We are 'rethinking education' and exploring common misconceptions about learning and the new ways international teachers can present themselves in their classrooms while teaching to create the most enriching educational experience for students [2]. When it comes to education in the Covid-19 era, everything has to be done online,

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everyone has an opinion what makes online education good, what makes a bad teacher, how to teach, and the other lists. In the meantime, online education will become a victim of failure to maintain or even improve the quality of education because of myths. What can be done? What are the main obstacles to these myths, and why do they “win”? What can be done to combat it?

At the World Education Summit, [3] exposed the myths he believes prevent positive change in education. Classroom is always a place of constant change, and teachers who have been teaching for five years or more will attest to the changes they have seen since they first made the decision to become a teacher. Therefore, it makes sense to predict that more changes are to come along with solutions. However, Professor Guy Claxton, education scientist and author, foresees several obstacles slowing necessary change: “The future of teaching will be different,” he said. “But there are bottlenecks holding back innovation in teaching.” Claxton explains that delays in progress are caused by a persistent myth, the prevalence of which prevents teachers from learning in their classrooms.

Myths are not lies, they are beliefs that people adopt because they have a plausible atmosphere, people want to believe that they are true, and they are consistent with at least some evidence. Of course, the myth is not true or at least not completely true. Unfortunately, until recent days many people believe what teachers teach them, including the mythologies. The world of teacher work is dominated by myth. However, by far the most important, the reason why myths dominate is because they are promoted by “organized interests” [4]

On the one hand, [5] states myths exist because we believe them. People believe in the fact that some authority has given them this methodology and will accept it because they trust the source. Apart from the beliefs, myths are dangerous for 5 main reasons: they are usually held, often expressed as a dichotomy, sometimes contain seeds of truth, justify behavior; and often institutionalized.

Deconstruction is a form of philosophical and literary analysis, derived mainly from work begun in the 1960s by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida who questioned the fundamental conceptual distinctions, or “oppositions,” in Western philosophy through a close examination of the language and logic of philosophical. Deconstruction is defined as a way of analyzing literature that assumes that text cannot have a fixed meaning [6].

Deconstruction is an approach to understand the relationship between text and meaning. It argues that language, especially in ideal concepts such as truth and justice, is irreducibly complex, unstable, or impossible to determine [7]. The goal of deconstruction

is to expose within a text conflicting or contradictory meanings and depict them for the reader. It must not elucidate anyone reading and elevate it, but display the undecidability of the text instead [6].

Deconstruction aims to find disrupters. By deconstructing a text, you learn to read beyond a text's straightforward content and uncover new meanings and truths. Deconstructing a text is a common assignment given to students of literature, literary theory, film, communications, or postmodernist thought. If you need to deconstruct a text, start by reading through the work carefully to find any assumptions the writer may have made. For instance, if the author of the text assumes that readers who are females all want to be mothers, you can then deconstruct the rest of their argument by showing how that false assumption affects the rest of the piece. To do this, look for words like "appear" or "seem" in place of stronger words such as "is" or "proves," since these may show a weakness in the original argument. For tips on how reading a text from beginning to end to help you do deconstruction, read on [8].

Deconstruction process makes it possible for us to read or reinterpret the mythical landscape today. By using deconstruction of the myth, one can get insight into his own consciousness and authenticity of his tradition [8] A cyclical deconstruction of a theme found in the bible that I personally find comfort in, is this seemingly trifold set of stages: creation, confusion, and deconstruction with those three stages happen over and over and over [6].

As mentioned above, because of the dangers of online education myths that can harm the quality of education, the problems in this writing are:

1. What are the myths about online education that have developed so far?
2. Can deconstruction be done to combat it, if so,
3. What is the result? What are the implications for the online learning in the future of new normal era?

## 2. Methods

The thinking contained in this paper was based on the literature review method. Literature reviews are summaries and explanations of the complete and current state of knowledge on a narrowed topic as found in academic books and journal articles. The objectives of the literature review are [9]: to summarize, evaluate, and compare articles or studies that are relevant and important to our topic, highlight the main findings; identify inconsistencies, gaps, and contradictions in the literature; and to provide clues as to where future research is headed or recommend areas of focus.

There are seven steps to write a literature review [10]:

1. Narrow the topic and choose the appropriate paper
2. Search literature using Google Scholar. There are so many sources related to the topic of teacher myths, great teachers and self-reflection, but finally 17 references were selected as in the Bibliography.
3. Read the selected articles carefully and evaluate them
4. Organize selected papers by looking for patterns and developing sub topics
5. Develop a thesis or statement of purpose
6. Write the paper
7. Review the work - the draft results and check the similarity (similarity test).

Resources for the selected articles in this study are:

1. Angus Ferguson, 2020. 4 myths about online learning [11]
2. Arianna Lynne Fangonilo, 2020. 5 Online Learning Myths You Need to Leave Behind in 2020 [12]
3. Farzal [Hyperlink "https://elearningindustry.com/elearning-authors/farzal-khan"](https://elearningindustry.com/elearning-authors/farzal-khan) Khan, 2020. 5 Myths About Online Learning During The Covid-19 Pandemic [13]
4. Gvsu.edu, 2020. Common Myths about Online Learning [14]
5. Healthcare Management, 2021. The Myths of Online Learning Dispelled [15]
6. hfcc.edu, 2021. 10 Myths About Online Learning [16]
7. Houston C Tucker, 2014. The 6 Myths of Virtual Learning [17]
8. Justin York, 2017. 10 Common Misconceptions About Online Courses [18]
9. Kenneth W. Miller, 200. Teaching science methods online: Six myths about inquiry-based online learning [19]
10. Laura Lynch, 2020. 8 Myths about Online Education [20]
11. LAVC, 2021. 7 Most Common Myths about Online Learning [21]
12. Mary Burns, 2019. 6 Myths of Online Learning Education Programs in International Development [22]

13. Michael Barbour, 2019. Top Ten Myths About Online Learning [23]
14. Northseattle.edu, 2021. Myths about online learning [24]
15. Purdue University Global, 2018. 5 Myths of Online Learning [25]
16. Stride insghit, 2021. 3 Myths About Online Learning [26]
17. Susan Manning, and Kevin E. Johnson, 2021. 10 Myths about Online Learning [27]
18. Terri Williams, 2015. 7 Myths About Online Education [28]
19. waldenu.edu, 2021. 7 Myths About Online Classes [29]
20. Worldwide, 2020. 10 Myths & Truths About Online Learning You Need to Read Now! [30]

By carefully evaluate the 20 published selected papers through examining the patterns and developing subtopics, finally the researcher found 76 myths with the following top 10 rank:

1. Online education is easier
2. You will not get to know your online classmates and/or instructor. Personal attention does not exist in an online class
3. The quality of online education is lower
4. Cheating is acceptable
5. Employers do not value online education
6. You'll have time to spare, or this is just for the time being
7. Online schools do not give student the opportunity to socialize
8. I will receive computer instruction as part of my online class.
9. Online learning is not recommended by organizations
10. Online credits will not transfer to another school

### 3. Results: Deconstruction to unravel the ten myths

The deconstruction pioneered by Derrida contributes to “an understanding of certain philosophical presuppositions and prejudice which are deeply hidden in Western culture”, considering all philosophical traditions rest on arbitrary dichotomous categories,

and that any text carries implicit meaning. Therefore, to dismantle the meaning, a researcher can play with several possible alternative meanings. After analyzing the bias of a text, there is a need to examine whether the finding supports new interpretations. Deconstruction basically enables readers to “unbox” a text to elaborate new meanings [31], [32].

### **3.1. Online Education is Easier than Traditional Education**

It is obvious that most people think online education is easier than the traditional one. However, does “easier” means less tasks and faster completion? It is essentially an effort to motivate students who get stressed in this pandemic era, while education must still be going (online). That way was expected not to worsen their stress. In fact, online education strives the equal portion of assignments as in the conventional setting. Subjects are delivered online through technology, but the tasks are given in the same portion as in the offline condition; more importantly, students are expected to study as much as possible in offline situation. Therefore, most of us might see that such process seems easier. Online education can be more comfortable since students can do their assignments based on their styles and schedules as long as they meet deadlines determined by educators [33].

### **3.2. You do not know your online classmates and/ or instructors. Personal attention does not exist in online class**

The feeling of “not knowing peers and/ or instructors” is interpreted as a condition which enables students and teachers meet directly in offline condition. This myth is somewhat true, but it does not mean students do not know their friends and/ or instructors. During online learning, students cannot hide. Teachers will know every single student and his ideas, even better than in the conventional situation. Online learning needs participation; Students cannot just watch and listen lectures without doing tasks. In addition, online activities of each student both individual and group are recorded and easily monitored by teachers. Some teachers agree with this idea and argue that students are more free to share their insights and details which support the concept of online learning than those in offline class [33].

### 3.3. Lower quality of online education

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, all educational institutions or schools hold online education with hope that this effort can result similar standards and outcomes to the offline one. However, researches failed to reveal significant differences in terms of statistics between online and traditional learning methods. Even, a leading educational institution which regularly reviews its programs based on the outcome quality standards [33] found that there is no different result of educational quality between online and offline. If there is lower quality of online education, it may be because prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the school itself has already got low quality.

### 3.4. Everyone cheats during online class. Cheating is tolerable

Online learning opens up opportunities for students to cheat, especially during an examination, and that dishonest behavior is tolerable for the submitted assignments. Is that so? There is no proof that online learning cheating is greater than that of offline class. In fact, there has been too much cheating everywhere. However, smart online educators have designed their learning to minimize chances of cheating and used a tool to detect plagiarism. Online cheating is able to detect when teachers have sufficient technology. Some institutions use advanced software to check written assignments in terms of plagiarism. Finally, several teachers ask some questions to students to see whether they can articulate learning materials well [33]. Thus, the assumption of "everyone is dishonest, and that dishonesty is tolerable in online learning" becomes an instrument of character education to realize honesty.

### 3.5. Employers do not value online education

The ideas of these myths are that all online courses programmed by institutions are same, and some online educational institutions have a bad reputation. It is the right of students to investigate whether an educational institution is credible. However, if they assume that an employer does not consider online title seriously, most of today's bosses realize one of leading universities such as Penn State University offers online program which are more comfortable to students. Surely, an employer may consider factors, including accreditation and reasons for choosing online learning, but today, during the Covid-19 pandemic online learning is practiced everywhere. Also, some employers should keep in mind that there is no information in students' graduation

certificate telling they took online courses, so they will not know students took it unless the students tell them [34]. Thus, “employers do not value online education” is internally known by schools concerned because in reality those who are wanted by them are the ones with professional quality. Hence, an increase in accredited online educational institutions are normal due to the increase of appreciation and acceptance among employers and educators. Some businesses even require particular online certification as a part of employee development. Meanwhile, students who plan to transfer should check whether the credits they want to transfer are accepted in their targeted university or not. This works for both online and offline credits [35].

### **3.6. You will have free time/ It's only for now**

Online learning will remain exist and even develop, and this Covid-19 pandemic era is a futuristic step forward in the field of education because looking back on the past will not make you develop. “We do not teach students past for present, but prepare and direct them for the future, so any techniques used must be futuristic.” Old ways must be left for the betterment of future generation. Ways of online teaching and learning need to be adopted for goodness, and not only for today’s option [36]. It reminds us to recall the expression of “having free time/ it is only for now” which consists of three dimensions of time, namely past, present and future of new normal.

### **3.7. Online school does not give students chances to socialize**

There are many definitions, but in school, socialization mostly involves ways children play and get along with each other. Some home schools create networks where students get to know others who learn mostly at home [37]. Nowadays, there has been high quality online learning providers which utilize social learning, video conference, and collaborative projects whose interactions are not limited to online making students who join online class session, virtual learning group, club, and online activities often meet in real life outside school. They also maintain meaningful relationship; socializing on *Whatsapp* group, having pen or social media pals, and joining sports club and community. Even, some educational institutions offer hybrid programs, namely conducting learning in both online and offline situation at campus. It means that socialization in online learning is widely opened online and offline. Of course, online socialization is different from the old-fashioned one. We also realize that full-time online students are active in community-based extracurricular activities at local schools as well. Students

are often actively engaged both online and offline as they complete assignments and socialize with other students and adults at their school, at home and in the community [38].

### **3.7.1. I will receive computer instruction as part of my online classes**

Computer has revolutionized the teaching profession in multiple ways. Teachers use it to record grades, calculate averages, manage attendance and access data on student's performance in online programs and assessments. It has also made facilitate teachers to vary their instructional delivery [39]. The statement "I will receive computer instructions as part of my online class" may be right if students are registered to a course in personal development regarding computer use. However, to meet the ability pf joining common subjects in online class, taking online education to learn how to use computer is a bad idea. People who join such course spend much time to focus on learning how to use computer so that they waste money to learn nothing about course content. Besides, teachers may not have time or patience to guide students in every single task related to the course; their job is to assist students in using software related to the course, not to teach students how to use a computer. It will still be okay for generation z to not learn how to use computer well before joining online education since online learning comes up with computer instructions integrated with the learning materials which actually support the success of students.

### **3.7.2. You must be a computer expert to take online courses**

In the present study the term computer means a device used for instructional as well as pre-instructional and non-instructional purposes by teachers and students in teaching-learning process. The computer use is defined as ways in which teachers work with computers in the instruction of their students [40]. You truly need to understand the basics of how computer work and how to find files, but there is no need to be a geek who is to survive in an online course. There is a list of skills students should master before registering a course, with the basic requirement of having the ability to [41] use a computer and gadgets without joining a specific course for it.

### 3.8. Online learning is not recommended by organizations

Employees and business jointly assume that online courses are not designed to meet the present needs of a company. This may be right given there are a lot of platforms offering curated e-learning contents. However, not all subjects are the same. There are some platforms which offer accredited courses which help employees to improve their knowledge and skills. These courses are also offered to beginner professionals who are serious about their career. Unlike other courses, the accredited courses are focused on high quality in every single aspect. You do not need to worry about the materials quality and teachers' credentials. In fact, most of accredited bodies actively participated in ensuring the quality of the contents prior to its use [42]. In this Covid-19 pandemic, there is no party can reject the policy of online learning, thus, it does not matter if this kind of learning is recommended or not by organizations. In other words, there is no other way than to positively accept it since online learning is an innovation in improving the quality of education.

### 3.9. Online credit will not be transferred to other schools

Since online learning is becoming more accepted, many accredited institutions have included online courses as a part of their curriculum. In fact, today's students are increasingly becoming less commonplace to graduate without having taken an online course.

It's not just higher education that offers accredited courses. More private educators have taken steps to gain accreditation for their courses to increase their credibility. In addition, the route these educators have to take to get accredited is very strict, reminding that just because it is online it does not mean it is easy to get. Some students may experience problems transferring credits regardless of whether they complete their studies online or offline on campus; "Sometimes students see transferability issues with certain nonprofits or with certain types of courses/programs," not because the educational program is online or offline.

In many cases, an institution has no way of knowing whether the courses they are considering for credit transfer are being taken in a classroom, online or a combination of the two. Overall, however, credits from online programs are no more difficult to transfer than on-campus credits [10].

## 4. Conclusion

Myths are not lies. They are beliefs that people adopt because they have a plausible atmosphere, people want to believe that they are true; and they are consistent with at least some evidence. Of course, the myth is not true or at least not completely true. The world of teacher work, including online learning, is dominated by myth. Yet myths are dangerous for 5 main reasons: they are usually held, often expressed as a dichotomy, sometimes contain seeds of truth, justify behavior; and often institutionalized. Deconstruction is a way of debunking it? This study identified the 10 most common myths from 20 sources, and it is true that deconstruction is the right way to debunking them.

This study has succeeded in dismantling 10 dangerous online education myths using deconstruction. Thus, the implications of the findings are that to provide socialization and new concepts implementation related to online learning to all stakeholders with the aim of forming new attitudes and positive support for online learning. Specifically, it is essential to follow up new ways of valuing online learning, form positive and productive attitudes and behaviors in improving the quality of online learning in new normal era in the future.

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