Five Fatal Fallacies Which Affect Students At University

Thesis Statement:

In this article, Anderson describes a number of in his opinion fallacies which affect students at University and possible solutions to overcome the problems caused by the fallacies.

Main Points:

Throughout this article the author talks about fallacies which Anderson describes as “A fallacy simply means a logical mistake, a wrong way of thinking. But not just any mistake. It's rather a particularly attractive or seductively wrong way of thinking.” (Anderson, 1994)

Anderson discusses 5 different fallacies in this Article which are; the fallacies of professionalism, responsibility, incompetence, competitiveness and the fallacy of knowledge.

Anderson talks about the professionalism fallacy where Anderson suggests that ordinary problems should not require professional help. Anderson believes that ordinary problems should be shared with ordinary people through for example peer support groups “Students, however, can take power into their own hands by Learning how to help one another and help themselves in regular day-to-day matters that do not need that kind of professional attention”.

Anderson talks about the responsibility fallacy where Anderson argues that there are multiple reasons that can impact someone's ability to succeed in academia “We now know with considerable confidence that the conditions that make for successful learning are multiple.” (Anderson, 1994). Anderson argues that the background and past experience that a student brings with them can make failure an insurmountable option even with the best work ethic if they do not have the information to link everything together. Anderson suggests that students can create feedback teams to evaluate how much information they are understanding.

Anderson talks about the incompetence fallacy “There's a widespread belief that students are actually pretty incompetent to make judgements, or have serious well-informed views. about some very Important things.“ (Anderson, 1994) Anderon argues that staff which give out questionnaires are due some credit, however whilst doing so creates an isolated environment for each student that when put together collectively creates an inaccurate group opinion if they have never met to discuss their views.

Anderson talks about the competitiveness fallacy where it’s believed that a competitive environment will stimulate high-performance results in students however Anderson argues that this environment of competitiveness will create negative effects on the students including jealousy, envy, suspicion and mistrust. Research shows us that the outcome is likely to be worse grades and poorer learning results for many students.

Anderson talks about the knowledge fallacy “The fallacy is believing that when Learning takes place in a subject the teacher's 'knowledge' about the subject is somehow 'transferred' to the students.” (Anderson, 1994). Anderson argues that this is completely false and that “nobody's

knowledge can ever be transferred to anyone else”. Anderson suggests that knowledge is something that we can only construct for ourselves, that the way we gain knowledge is through having the teacher's knowledge exposed to ourselves which inturn allows us to digest it into our current knowledge.

Critical Reflection:

I agree with the main points that Anderson argues in this article however that being said I have to say that this is a very one sided article from his own views and opinions not taking any counterarguments from teachers into account glorifying students.

Whilst students have the responsibility to give feedback if they understand the course material I believe that it is their responsibility to create feedback groups and if they do not it is not the fault of the teacher for having preconceived notion that their teaching provides all the correct information to each student and it’s digested as such.

Anderson’s arguments are from his perspective on academia and that reflects in his writings showing through his opinions in an interesting way.

References/Bibliography:

1. Five fatal fallacies about studying at university, Lee Andersen, University of NSW (HERDSA News vol 16, no 2, 2 July 1994)
2. Anderson, L. 1994. 'FIVE FATAL FALACIES ABOUT STUDYING AT UNIVERSITY '' Herdsa News. July 2, 1994.