

Draft Paragraphs—Thompson

Body Paragraph—Claim & Evidence

As Thompson observes, writing has valuable effects. He claims that when you “write about something . . . you’ll remember it better, in what’s known as the ‘generation effect’” (57). In other words, Thompson is saying that there is a phenomenon known as the generation effect, which is a theory that information is better remembered if it is written down rather than read or heard. To support this claim, Thompson brings in research conducted by two psychologists in 1978, in which they tested people to see how well they remembered words that they had written down compared to words that they had read. The results showed that people who had written words remembered them better rather than the ones who only read. This research somewhat strengthens Thompson’s claim that writing down your thoughts will help you remember them better rather than just merely reading or listening. He uses a valid research study, but also does not clearly state much information about who the psychologists were or where they were from. In addition, the research was conducted thirty-eight ago. Since we do not know much information about these researchers and this fairly old study, it is not clear how credible or relevant these findings are to Thompson’s claim. This is a flaw in Thompson’s argument and it could have been stronger. He should have provided his audience with more detail of the study to have plenty information to make his evidence and his claim more effective than it is now.

Body Paragraph—Claim & Strategy

Thompson employs water metaphors in order to illustrate and characterize the volume of writing he claims “[t]he internet has produced” (46). The first sentence of the second section describes the past few decades of online writing as “a foaming Niagara.” Thompson’s likening of internet writing to the famous waterfalls has several strategic effects. First and most obviously, the size and splendor of the Niagara Falls helps readers understand the enormity of writing Thompson is reference. Second, his selection of “foaming” Falls—or live, flowing water—characterizes the body of online writing as dynamic, responsive, and always changing. That Thompson did not choose a lake metaphor here is significant. Finally, the author’s selection of a nature metaphor works to support his main argument that this burst of online writing is not detrimental to human development, but beneficial to society. Water is ancient, natural, and life-sustaining, and so, Thompson implies through metaphor, is the human impulse to think publicly. Through his use of this strategy, Thompson effectively supports his first major claim by characterizing online writing as both voluminous and dynamic, while working to ease his readers’ fears about the effects of the digital on human cognition.