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Comparative Analysis on the use of Rhetorical Appeals in an Academic Article versus a Journal Article

When articulating an issue, writers and authors purposefully and effectively use mainly three rhetorical strategies to invoke a series of response in their intended audience to convince them of their stance in that issue. While in an academic essay such as, “The Lived experience of students with an invisible disability at a Canadian University” [1], Laura Mullins *et al* uses logical approach, facts, and statistics as well as the credibility of publishing their article in a peer-reviewed academic journal for their intended academic audience, Christa Baika, in her online article “College students with disabilities are too often excluded” [2] uses emotional grounds and personal credibility as well as a number of logical evidences backed by facts and opinion pieces to tailor the needs of her intended online audience. Though the authors of both articles discuss the issue of accessibility on university campus, their articles appeal to complete different audiences. Therefore, both articles use almost same rhetorical strategies in a very different way, to appeal to their specific audience.

Baika centers her article around AnnCathrine Heigl, who was rejected from joining all eight sororities at her university because of her disability. Through using the example of someone who was directly affected by the issue, she’s giving an emotional ground to her argument to pursue her general online audience. She then establishes logical grounds in her argument using a number of facts and statistics from reputed sources, as well as emotional and personal credibility to appeal to her readers, followed by a few points on how to help mitigate the issue of accessibility on university campus and ending her article with one final appeal to emotion by reminding her reader that no one should experience what Heigl did.

To establish emotional grounds in her article, Baika uses interrogating sentences like “How many books did you read in school that featured characters with disabilities? How much did you learn about the disability rights movement in your social studies classes? Or was it largely a hidden story?” [2] At the same time, she uses her personal credibility as a researcher on this particular issue through statements like “Some educators have begun to recognize the importance of disability-based lessons. Still, I’d argue that those lessons need to be more deliberately incorporated in school.” [2] In the next couple of paragraphs, Baika gives out a couple of points on how the current situation on accessibility can be improved, through the successive use of facts, statistics, and history to make her claim more legitimate.

Though Baika’s use of logical appeal is appropriate for her intended audience, it might not be sufficient for an academically focused audience of the academic article. Mullins *et al.*, in their article uses mostly facts, statistics and data backed by reputed sources to make their case on the experiences of students in an institutional environment. Though their use of logical, conventional, and emotionally detached format was enough for their intended audience, their inclusion of anonymous accounts of the participants might stir some emotional grounds in their intended research as well. The authors of the academic article used several direct quotations from the interview with the participants to legitimize their findings in their study.

Most of their article has been dedicated to the use of other findings from credible studies done on the issue of accessibility in the past. The authors use history, facts and findings from previous studies made on the issues, like “It has been indicated that the lack of a visible sign of disability presents students with unique challenges for their education (Longo 1988)” [1] and “According to two national surveys, the two largest categories of disabilities reported included dyslexia (23.9%) and mental health disorders (17.8%) (Holmes 2005)” [1], the authors introduce their readers on the current standing of the issue of accessibility. Through this, the authors made the case on the importance of their study in understanding

how students with disability are affected in a post-secondary environment in the present context.

Keeping the accounts of the participants who were interviewed anonymous unlike Baika, who used the example of one person who was directly affected by the issue, the authors of this study made the study rigorously academic and conventional. Through including the original response of the participants, the authors also established emotional grounds in their findings through using sentences like: “Two participants with mental health disabilities reflected on how they were able to excel in their education prior to the onset of their disability, and that now they were struggling. These participants were frustrated by the barriers associated with having a disability and reflected on what they have lost.” [1] Additionally, the use of citations and references from various other credible studies made on this issue makes the article credible for the intended academic audience.

Rhetoric can be a delicate tool in convincing an audience of a stance on any issue. While Baika, in her non-academic article, appeals to her readers through similar appeals but in a very different way than Mullins *et al* in their academic article. Each article uses rhetorical appeals catering to the needs of their specific intended audience.

Cited References

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