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ENG 2140-02 Research & Argument First Draft

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**Summary**

In the article, “Is Writing an Essential Skill for Engineers?”, the author, James R. Koelsch makes a clear argument as to why writing is an important skill for engineers to possess and how it could greatly benefit their careers. Koelsch accomplishes this by using a good amount of strong anecdotal evidence, examples and a light bit of factual evidence that doesn’t do much for his writing.

**Analysis**

Immediately, Koelsch kicks off his article with his first and strongest anecdote that was from his time in engineering school, in which after the lecturer gave some basic advice on grammar, it was then added that an editor was going to give the students some tips on the report they were required to write. One of Koelsch’s classmates, however, hated the idea and the activity implying that having the ability to write as an engineer was not important. At this point, the lecturer didn’t disagree, saying the student could not focus on having good writing abilities if he was satisfied with that while risking being stuck as a number cruncher his whole life. This begging anecdote allows the reader to get a sense of the two sides of the argument on whether or not writing is an important skill for engineers by not outright denying the possibility that maybe it is not needed for some people; it provides benefits in the long run. From this point, Koelsch uses similar anecdotes effectively throughout the piece to really prove his point that writing is an important skill.

Aside from anecdotes, Koelsch also uses examples from others in the field demonstrating why writing as an engineer is important. A prime example of this is in the case of Michelle Bryner, a chemical engineer at W.L. Gore and Associates, Inc. In the article, it touched upon that despite being a chemical engineer, she is of the belief that having good writing skills not only helps with the reports she has to make about her work but it helps with oral presentations that she has done before. This example as to how writing can benefit an engineer really helps the article's point. It shows how it is useful in benefiting a career that to some may sound like it lacks writing. This just one the few good examples in this article to show why writing is a skill that matters

Koelsch also uses facts to try and push his point to the reader and while they do have a little weight, they aren’t strong enough to carry their weight in the writing. For example, a fact he uses in the article is that Cleveland state engineers have to take a technical writing class. Another example is at Purdue University, oral communication skills made the list of attributes engineers need. While these facts do help illustrate his point, they are stated with such little fanfare. When compared to the anecdotes and examples, they are just weaker.

On another more negative note, the article itself, while well done and very informative, it does have some negatives. It struggles to use evidence that would draw in its target audience. While the stories and examples are fine pieces of evidence, when trying to pull in engineers, it would be smart to use statistics, numbers and percentages, which oddly enough this article does not do. This would show things in a more appealing way to them or could be used to convey interesting information such as a percentage of how much good writing could affect someone getting employed. The article also talks about writing in books and magazines, even plugging a book which harms the fluidness of reading it. To harm it even more, the article lacks any real strong conclusion; it just kind of ends.

**Conclusion**

The argument presented in this piece is one that can be easily discussed. In the article, the author uses strong anecdotal evidence to show his point that writing skills are important for engineers, even if the writing does contain some things that harm it quite a bit.