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**Summary**

In “Is Writing an Essential Skill for Engineers?” the author goes into detail on why he thinks that engineering students should be taught proper writing skills, which most engineering students at large perceive as unnecessary. Utilizing multiple points of evidence, examples and anecdotes Koelsch weaves an argument in support of engineers needing to have solid writing skills to be able to succeed in their future careers.

**Analysis**

Koelsch used multiple techniques to try and make his claim. He used anecdotes, various examples, and some evidence-based arguments to prove his point. His first technique, which was anecdotal stories, seemed to be his go to for making his point. He listed multiple different stories to support every aspect of his argument trying to use real world examples, presumably for more impact. While this can be an effective technique when addressing an argument such as this, he seemed to rely on it too much failing to support his arguments with facts and figures. While giving us anecdotes from his and others lives and examples of universities adopting writing courses for engineers without some hard facts and stats to back up his claims, they remain just that, claims. It comes across as a bandwagon appeal instead of an argument based on any real research or evidence. That’s not to say he didn’t utilize it effectively in driving home his point. There were multiple times where in his examples very qualified people backed up his claim. Anecdote alone however does not make for a concrete argument and in this case took away from his overall argument as it was too steeped in anecdote to be completely believable.

In many instances to back up his anecdotes Koelsch would use an example of people getting ahead by use of their writing and communication skills. Listing one such instance where an engineer got to lead a team and talked on the fact that without proper communication skills they would not have been nearly as effective at their job. Koelsch had many such examples to back up his claims from qualified individuals or institutions, this helped to lend legitimacy to his anecdotal stories as it acted as proof that what he was saying had real world impact. In the absence of stats and figures examples such as these are the next best thing.

Much of Koelsch’s evidence was in the way of listing various university programs which had begun to adopt more stringent writing requirements for their engineering programs. Using this evidence that these governing bodies of knowledge which require many experts in fields to weigh in on decisions as another means to bring legitimacy to his argument. By using these examples he backed his claims with the acknowledgement of many experts all in one or two pieces of evidence towards his claims.

Koelsch’s target audience was engineers as he tried to stress the importance of having good communication and writing skills. He fell short in this regard as his article seemed to not really lean into the argument points that would resonate well with engineers. An audience who would appreciate many facts and figures to back up any claims they may be reading. He chose anecdotal evidence, evidence that universities were adopting these practices, and examples of other engineers succeeding, but he failed to actually provide any hard statistics, facts or evidence towards the claim that it would help to make them better engineers. In fact many of his examples of engineers succeeding were rooted in those engineers getting to write in magazines. Which, while a successful career path in its own right, doesn’t resonate with an audience of engineers who most likely want to be engineers not magazine authors.

**Conclusion**

Koelsch holds the belief that writing, and communication skills are important for engineers. In arguing this point he utilized a heavy dose of anecdote to make his point. However, due to a lack of backing up these claims with any form of facts or figures failed to reach as broad an audience as he possibly could have had he utilized an approach more favorable to his target audience.