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ENG 2140-90 Argument Analysis 1

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“Is Writing an Essential Skill for Engineers?” is written by James R. Koelsch. Throughout the article, Koelsch uses many different people and scenarios to back up his argument for the need for engineers to be communicate effectively. Koelsch pushes the idea writing is essential to continue progressing through your career, as being an effective worker and leader. When covering the need to polish your skills as a writer, he uses two different examples of practice makes perfect: karate and ice skating. He also covers what businesses and institutions are doing to push for those in the engineering field to continue refining their abilities. Throughout the article, though, Koelsch does not state any facts or statistics to convey his point.

In the article, Koelsch only used two kinds of arguments: examples and anecdotes. He is very passionate about using real world examples and anecdotes from different people he interviewed, and he clearly wants to push his argument through that.

When first reading the article, it’s very easy to identify Koelsch has a love for anecdotal evidence, which is what the article is heavily made of. He used a story from Michelle Bryner, a chemical engineer, which went on to explain how her proficiency in writing had given her the opportunity to be put into a leadership position. Because of her proficiency in writing for her day-to-day work, she was given the leadership position over a global team. She also spoke about her ability to write helped her team to get continued funding from management. Another anecdote used was from Alan Rossiter, who is another chemical engineer and business owner. Rossiter goes on to explain how the need for proficient writing is vital for him to lead all projects and coordinate with academics and specialists. Koelsch also makes note of Rossiter being passionate enough about proper writing for engineers to have written three books and publish articles in different engineering magazines outside of his work life.

His second technique was examples. Koelsch uses an example from Rockwell Automation. Rockwell screens its applicants to gauge their skills with communication, which relies on verbal communication. However, he is quick to follow up with a quote from Susan Schmitt stating some businesses go out of their way to test a candidate’s proficiency in writing. Schmitt goes on to explain the reason for Rockwell’s communication screening is to push for their engineers to communicate clearly. Engineers should not just communicate well with other engineers but also other employees, suppliers, and customers. Rockwell continuously encourages its engineers to continue working on their ability to write and communicate.

Koelsch’s last section of his article “Schools stress writing” talks about Cleveland State University. Koelsch’s intent is to make it seem like it’s so vital for engineers to complete a technical writing course, but his own article states clearly every student is required to complete this course. In an attempt to push the engineering forward, he uses a quote from Will Atherton, the chairman of the mechanical engineering department. The other institution Koelsch talks about is Purdue University and its Engineer 2020 committee. The committee decided on what makes an engineer competitive in their field, and in the final draft, an engineer’s ability to write and speak were added. This section of the article was the end, leaving much to be desired for any sort of final thoughts Koelsch may have had.

Koelsch’s article could be seen as effective, if the audience was not engineers. The article felt more a homologation of different stories from various people in the field, and it was not crafted to keep the attention of an engineer who would benefit from Koelsch’s perspective. Engineers will either pass over this because they already agree with it or find it a waste of time to consider when it’s only personal experiences. There’s an extreme lack of data to use as factual evidence to push an engineer to reconsider their opinion. For any time spent reading the article, the audience will find extra words sprinkled throughout, making it clear where Koelsch had decided to reword a sentence or phrase. He spoke so highly of being able to write well, yet he made multiple mistakes he would’ve caught if he had proof read his own work.