

Memo

To: Elizabeth Bennet

From: Kayla McCorrison

Date: October 1, 2020

Subject: How to Write to Different Audiences

Hello! Welcome to our company. We are so excited to have you working with us and cannot wait to see what you accomplish here. As a member of this team, you may be required to communicate with different audiences frequently. You must remain professional and cater to the readers' needs as you would with the audiences you are used to communicating with. In order to attain each audience, you must be able to understand how to differentiate them. Here is an example to help you better understand what we expect. You are researching a comet, writing a memo to an expert, and a blog post to people who want to learn about it. The expert's report must be written sophisticatedly and professionally as a person of more knowledge would expect to receive. The report to people without the amount of knowledge you obtain on the topic must target an informal audience with explanations and general language usage. Readers value an understanding writer, as it can build rapport and give you, as a writer, a wider audience. If a writer does not understand how to communicate with different audiences, it can poorly affect both yours and the company's reputation.

I have chosen two articles for you in this memo to help you understand how to differentiate communicating with various audiences. Both articles focus on the same topic: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in children. One article focuses on an academic audience and making educators more aware of the effects to help students with PTSD, and one on a general audience and focuses on informing people on what Posttraumatic Stress Disorder is. While “Children with PTSD: Teachers Can Make a Difference” might be more appealing to teachers and parents with children affected by PTSD, “A Review of PTSD in Children” may easily attract a broader audience of those who do not know the effects of PTSD. Both of these articles cover the same topic but are written to accommodate different audiences. I will also include criteria to guide you through my analysis of the two articles. The criteria I will use to dissect the two articles include the usage of organization, vocabulary, the type of introduction, headings, title, conclusion, and placement of the thesis.

“Children with PTSD: Teachers Can Make A Difference”

This article was published in November of 2019 in the Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, an International Journal for Professional Educators. It was written by Susan J. Grosse, a member of Delta Chapter and a past president of the Wisconsin State Organization, and holds a certificate in trauma counseling from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. This article's audience is aimed directly at teachers, but concerned parents may also read this. It is peer-reviewed and covers everything teachers and parents should know about helping prepare children for traumatic events and helping children cope with trauma without going into an expert or doctor-level information.

Title

The title of this article is big, bold, and direct. It informs the readers precisely what the article's focus is on, so it does not leave readers guessing what they are about to read. The article is about teachers' ability to make a difference in children with PTSD, and so the title is "Children with PTSD: Teachers Can Make a Difference." There is no need for a crafty title to draw in a reader in this case because it is not an argumentative topic, but a matter-of-fact informational topic. The language used and the directness in the title helps the writer create credibility with the reader.

Introduction

This introduction identifies the target audience of the article in the very first section. The beginning of the introduction is not titled, but it is both a hook and a short abstract. The first part of the introduction states that "Teachers must be prepared to educate children on how to respond in a traumatic event. Teachers must also be prepared to nurture children through the after-effects of trauma." Before saying this, it mentions the increasing amount of violence both in and outside of schools. With those two sentences, the writer has identified teachers as preparers and a form of a counselor, but not meant to replace an actual therapist's job, but only to create a safe space and support. Teachers already know that this article helps them better understand how to help students, and parents know that the article will assure them teachers do help their children. Their audience is now established; the writer can then write about what teachers can do to help their students knowing that their audience is going to be teachers with a desire for more knowledge and concerned parents. The rest of the introduction focuses on introducing PTSD, how it can be developed in children, and how children express PTSD in different ways. The introduction ends with another statement of their thesis, "Therefore, it is important teachers become familiar with all possible manifestations PTSD can take in children."

Conclusion

This article ends with a call to action, as it should end with because it can further convince a teacher to prepare and help their students. The first sentence of the conclusion explains why teachers must teach survival skills, which says, "Having the necessary survival skills not only

prepares a child for an emergency but also lessens the chance for PTSD occurring following trauma.” The conclusion moves on to say that children with survival skills can continue to feel in control during or after a traumatic event.

This section of the article brings in persuasive tactics to help teachers understand why PTSD is an important topic to be aware of and help students. This article uses an attention grabber at the end of the conclusion, instead of placing it in the introduction. The last sentence of the conclusion is, “Teachers can make the difference that will affect the child for the rest of his or her life.” Many teachers want to make a difference in children’s lives, and this article knows this about teachers. Writers must know what an audience values or wants to hear because it can help draw in that audience and help get your point across.

Placement of Thesis

The thesis can be found in the title, abstract/hook, and the conclusion. The thesis is not stated plainly but instead repeated in similar ways, making it known that “Teachers Can Make a Difference,” as stated in the title. It is also stated in the last sentence of the abstract/hook, “the difference teachers can make in the lives of children so affected,” and again in the last sentence of the conclusion, “Teachers can make the difference that will affect the child for the rest of his or her life.” The writer wants to be sure that the audience knows from the very beginning the focus of the article.

Headings

The writer divided this article into several sections by using bold headings like I am in this memo. They are direct, so there is no question in what that section of the article will discuss. For example, the section preceded by the bold heading “Clues from a Child’s Behavior” discusses and precisely lists that. The writer mentions how a teacher can learn to be a keen observer for these clues and lists the behavioral clues from children by making bulleted-lists. The writer refrains from making side-comments or witty remarks in headings and the article altogether, making the topic more professional and appropriate for an academic setting.

Type of Language

As this article and the journal it has been published in is academic and aimed at educators, so is the language used in this article. While the language is both informing and persuading, it provides many examples in bullet-lists to back up everything the writer says, making the article more academic than it would have been without the examples provided. For example, the writer tells the teacher, “Knowing how a child behaves on a regular basis can provide the criteria for identifying behaviors that may signal a problem. Teachers should be alert for • negative, acting out behavior when none had been previously noted; • avoidance of activities that a child previously enjoyed...” and the bulleted-list continues. The writer also includes an emotional

aspect throughout the article to connect with teachers and reach them at the teachers' level from a helping perspective. The usage of emotion in this article also helps the writer reach their goal; to spread the word of PTSD in children to teachers so they can observe better to see the signs and help them. I also mention the emotional aspect and provide a quote from the article in the section titled "Placement of Thesis."

Documentation

The writer used in-text citations and paraphrases repeatedly throughout the article but does not have an accessible reference page in the PDF file, which may make the writer lose credibility. Writers must always give an accessible reference page when documenting someone else's work into their own. Much of these documentations appear in the introduction and came from previous studies of PTSD. The writer's usage of citations and paraphrases shows the audience the amount of work that was put into the article, and that it is well supported. I would, however, triple check that there is a reference page available before publishing.

Graphics

There are a few graphics in this article, just as you would see in a school textbook. There are no charts or graphs, but only three pictures of examples of children who look unhappy. The placement of these graphics makes them appropriate for this topic. The first photograph is placed in the section "Clues from a Child's Behavior," and conveys a sad girl in a black-and-white frame. The second photograph is placed in the section "Providing Support," and represents a boy crying and a teacher offering comfort by holding him. The third and final photograph is in the section called "Survival Skills to Teach," and shows a girl outdoors who looks sad and scared, and a teacher holding her hands and advising, warning, or informing the little girl of what to do or not to do. Although in a professional setting graphics may take away from the message, this academic writing style and placement of the pictures emphasizes the message.

Definition of Terms

Although it could be assumed that those reading this article already know the terms regarding PTSD, the writer gave definitions and explanations for certain things being said and discussed. This is usually done through placing the definition in parentheses beside the term in question. The reader can see this happen most in the introduction, for example, "post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)," and "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychological Association (DSM-IV)." There are other ways to define terms, such as giving examples of what to do by placing them in parentheses beside the phrase that may be confusing, such as "how to get help in any type of emergency (i.e., tell a teacher, dial 911 or call a neighbor)." This way, the reader is able to see the definition and learn without the flow of the paper being interrupted.

Organization

This article is very well organized; placing bold headings to divide each section is one of the easiest ways to organize anything, as it lets the reader know what they will be reading about before they read it, and guides them for references. Although each section focuses on a different aspect of what teachers need to be aware of for PTSD in children, the article's focus is the same, and that is educating teachers about PTSD in children. The different aspects the writer included in the article are, "Characteristics of PTSD," "Clues from a Child's Behavior," "Providing Support," and "Survival Skills to Teach." These headings are very helpful to readers as it not only breaks down writing blocks, but also makes it easier for readers to find exactly what they are looking for within the article. The usage of bulleted-lists also help readers find a specific point if they want to look back at a later date. This article flows easily for readers, teachers specifically because it flows in the same way a textbook would. The article goes from introduction, thesis, defining and explaining PTSD in children, offering helpful tips and suggestions given with explanations of how it can help children, and finally a conclusion. By maintaining an organized article, the writer conveys to the readers the professionalism because it shows their writing skills.

Advance Organizers

By using an abstract/hook in the beginning of the introduction and providing bulleted-lists for their tips, the writer emphasizes their message with an expository and descriptive advanced organizer. Advance organizers keep the audience engaged, as it makes it even more easy to follow. This also gives readers a broad idea of the content before reading. They are able to use the abstract organizer to see what the article will be about before reading, much like reading the synopsis on the back of the book to see what it is about. The bulleted-lists will better prepare the reader for recommendations, examples, suggestions, or any kind of lists. Advance organizers are in place to help the reader better understand the written piece.

"A Review of PTSD in Children"

This article expounds on both a general and somewhat formal audience, as they do not explain many terms and use a more formal language. This article is written by Atle Dyregrov and William Yule, who wrote many books and articles together, including the book: "Grief in Young Children." This article is peer-reviewed, and was published on November 4, 2006 in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health medical journal. Both Dyregrov and Yule are psychologists, so they assume many people know the terms that are mentioned without explaining them, and they know a great deal more about PTSD than others. This article is aimed at groups of people who already obtain knowledge of PTSD and want to learn more. This article explains in detail what PTSD is and explores previous studies and theories that need to be studied more in-depth.

Title

This title is made to reach an audience who is seeking a general review of PTSD in children. The title is big, but not as direct as the previous article, "“Children with PTSD: Teachers Can Make A Difference” as this article simply says, “A Review of PTSD in Children.” Readers will know that the topic is PTSD in children, but what about PTSD in children? There is also no evidence of emotion in this title, and when combining both this and the generic word choice, it is easy to figure out that this will be a more formal discussion.

Introduction

This article starts off with an attention grabber about how PTSD was first believed to be relevant to children, “Although the diagnosis of PTSD, when first formulated in 1980, was not believed to be relevant to children and adolescents, Leonore Terr’s studies (1979, 1983) of a group of children who were kidnapped and held hostage soon proved otherwise.” There is no direct statement of purpose or thesis, but readers know what the topic is based on the next paragraph, stating that, “The diagnosis of PTSD in children and adolescents is almost isomorphic to the adult core criteria...” and listing four ways the criteria for adult PTSD is similar to child PTSD. This tells the readers that although there is no thesis or purpose statement, the article will be based on the general topic of PTSD in children and how to help identify and treat them compared to adults.

Conclusion

The authors chose a different approach to the conclusion, rather than a call to action, they used the “what needs to be done” approach. The authors realize what information they have on treating traumatized children, and they realize what they need more of. Two different intervention methods for traumatized children are mentioned, but they admit that little information came from them both, as the sample size was small and was mostly done by sexual abuse victims. This limits their knowledge even more because children can be traumatized by so many other things than just sexual abuse. The authors also mention, “More research is needed to identify the active ingredients in the therapeutic approaches, as well as learning more about what methods to use with which children. How best to include family members in the follow-up of children is another area that needs more study.” The authors end the conclusion with reassurance that although they do not have as much information as they would like to have, they do have “a variety of tools to choose from to help the individual child...”

Placement of Thesis

This article is discussing a very general and widespread topic, so they did not use a direct thesis. These authors explore so many different aspects of PTSD within children, such as, stress, family influences, examples of PTSD in children, natural history, predictors of PTSD, diagnostics, interviews, treatment, and medication. The authors mostly cover previous studies. They never tell the readers everything they will be discussing, the most readers get from the introduction is that PTSD in children has been proven and they give us the general criteria.

Headings

There are nine headings excluding the introduction and conclusion in this article, which shows the broad topic and the organizational skills these writers have. The authors use bold heading to grab the reader's attention, so they know what they are about to read. This organizational skill is good for this article to have because the authors did not provide a thesis. Each heading states exactly what the audience will be reading about, as they are direct and to-the-point. For example, the section preceding the heading "Family Influences" contains how important family members' influence is to a child, and they play a big role in children's reactions after trauma. Another example, "Incidence of PTSD in children," shows the reader they are about to read about cases of PTSD in children. This section relies heavily on citations and references to back up these case claims.

Type of Language

The language used in this article is very formal and is not aimed at readers who do not know what PTSD is. The journal that this article is published in is very professional, so the language must maintain the same professionalism as the journal. The authors assume the readers know certain terms like "PTSD" and "ICD-10" and "DSM-IV," which tells the audience that readers should already have a basic knowledge of the diagnostics and tests and other things about PTSD. There is no usage of emotion in this article, which also shows its professionalism because any side comments would be inappropriate and throw off the flow of the article. While the authors are not making an argument, this article is still very factual and evidence-based because they took the route of talking about the history, medication, treatment, and studies among PTSD in children.

Documentation

The authors use many in-text citations and paraphrases in this article, and provides a detailed "references" page at the end of the article, which shows the organizational skills of the authors. Much of the evidence provided within the citations are from previous studies and evidence to back-up the author's claims. The amount of resources used shows how serious these two psychologists take this topic and that the topic was well researched and developed.

Graphics

There are no graphics included in this article, as this is a very professional and formal discussion, as a formal journal is not focused on additional graphics because it could take away the focus on the words. Graphics are not appropriate for this writing style, as it can distract the readers from the authors message, and that is to inform on the history and studies and progress on PTSD in children. The focus in this article is solely on words, and to inform people of PTSD in children.

Definition of Terms

These authors assume their audience knows a few terms, which means their audience is aimed at people with knowledge on PTSD in children, but they did define many terms later on in the paper. This is done by adding the definition of a term or phrase in parenthesis beside the term or phrase in question. Many examples of this can be found under the section “Structured interviews for PTSD in children and adolescents.” A specific example is, “ADIS-C-PTSD Module (Anxiety and Depression Interview Schedule for Children).” The authors knew that the audience would know things like “PTSD,” but also knew they would need to define upper-level terms. By using parenthesis instead of putting the definition somewhere else on the page makes it easier for the reader to learn without breaking the movement of the paper.

Organization

This article does not have a purpose statement or thesis for a reader to find to know what they will be reading about. All readers know is they will be informed on a review of PTSD in children when reading the introduction. As the reader goes through the article, they can decipher that the authors message is the history, treatment, and medications of PTSD. This is an unorganized way to organize a formal article, but because the topic is so broad they did organize the article and possible by including the specific headings. Headings are crucial when organizing most written documents, as it helps guide the author and the reader through the document. Using headings shows the professionalism of the authors as well as their ability to write effectively.

Advance Organizers

This article does not contain any advance organizers, as it is not necessary. The authors created the article in a simple form to make it easier to read, even with the number of citations used. An abstract would have been appropriate, but it is not needed, as this is an informal article aimed at readers who want more information on PTSD in children. An entertaining introduction may have distracted the reader from the paper's true purpose, so the authors kept the article professional and straightforward.

Tips for Writing for Different Audiences

As a brief review of my analysis in this memo, I have composed an overview of tips for you to use for future reference.

How to Write to Academic Audiences

- Think about how your document looks visually. Does it look professional and similar to a textbook? Are there any advance organizers, such as a bullet-list? This is what educators are used to reading, this may draw them in more.
- Include pictures in your document to help emphasize the examples and keep your audience engaged. Usually, this would be considered a distraction and not recommended for professional writing, but in the case of an academic audience, it is useful.
- Make a clear connection to your targeted audience before going further into discussion. Use something such as an attention grabber, abstract, fact, quote, problem, question, or story in the introduction. This helps you get an emotional response, and conveys to your audience that you understand what needs to be discussed.
- Softly repeat your purpose in the introduction to make sure your audience knows they are where they need to be.
- Your language should match your audience. When writing for an academic audience, you should not be too formal, but you do not want to write as if you are talking to your friends either.
- Teachers care about making a difference in their student's lives, so if you were discussing teaching methods or mental health, you should make it a point to mention teachers can help the children in these cases.
- Your document should be organized neatly, with direct headings, bullet-lists, etc. This will not only help create a guide for your audience, but make your document flow smoother and keep your readers engaged as well.
- Define terms relating to the issue or discussion at hand, you should not assume your audience will know these terms because some people have more knowledge of the topic than others.
- A call-to-action placed in the conclusion is recommended to help persuade your audience of your argument.

How to Write to Professional or Formal Audiences

- Do not include side comments, such as witty or crafty jokes or comments in your document. This can distract your audience from your message.
- You should not make connections with your audience in an attempt to draw them in, as the information you will provide is all they need.

- Organize your document neatly, so your professionalism is not questioned. Your audience expects a pristine document without heavy chunks of disorganized words, but rather one topic with subheadings used to branch into that topic.
- Make your purpose clear to the audience, as a formal audience does not want to waste time trying to decipher your document for what they are looking for.
- Do not include graphics in your document, as this is an unnecessary addition that may distract your reader from your message.
- To ensure credibility, make sure your references and citations are properly documented, as this shows that your discussion is well-supported and protects you from plagiarism claims.
- Language is also important when writing to any audience, especially to a formal audience as you should not try to use language that would be used for children or people who do not know general details about your topic.
- If your topic includes medical or a controversial topic, you must make your argument clear before discussing the topic further. Acknowledge both sides to the argument, but provide plenty of references to convince your audience of your argument.
- You should not place a call-to-action at the end of your document, but rather what should be done to progress your topic or argument, and what steps you think should be taken.

Conclusion

This memo should serve as your reference for future communications in determining how to write to different audiences. This is a crucial skill in this company you must obtain if you wish to succeed. We look forward to working with you and seeing your progress and growth in our company. If you have any questions that are not answered in this memo, feel free to contact me during my office hours, which are listed on the company website. You can stop by my office or email me at mccorisonkn@appstate.edu.

References

- Dyregrov, A. and Yule, W. (2006), A Review of PTSD in Children. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 11: 176-184. doi:10.1111/j.1475-3588.2005.00384.x
- Grosse, S. (2019). Children with PTSD: Teachers Can Make a Difference. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 86(2), 30–33.