

## Rhetorical Analysis of Addison's "Two Years are Better Than Four"

In Liz Addison's article "Two Years are Better Than Four," she argues that community colleges deserve more attention and praise because they are the only place left that students can get the true "college experience of self-discovery." Addison explains that students accepted into 4-year colleges, have already proved themselves "worldly, insightful, cultured, mature" by completing rigorous entrance requirements. Community colleges, on the other hand will accept anyone. There are no placement tests, and for students who might not otherwise have a chance at higher-education, community colleges provide "accessible hope, and an option to dream" (Addison). Ultimately, Addison views community colleges as a great American institution that deserve more respect and recognition for the opportunities they provide to the American public. Addison relies on a rebuttal to set-up her argument. However, most of the article is an evaluation based on logical reasoning, where Addison praises community colleges for various reasons and explains their positive features.

Addison uses a rebuttal to start off her text. She spends the first three paragraphs explaining the position of Rick Perlstein, who argued in a different essay that students today can no longer have a true college experience like the one he had in the 60s. Perlstein's argument is the perfect example of Addison's point that community colleges are overlooked, and Addison notes that his argument is incorrect because "Mr. Perlstein has never set foot in an American community college." Addison's use of Perlstein as a counter-argument sets up her argument, and she can spend the rest of the text explaining why he is wrong. The presentation of Perlstein's ideas provides the reader with evidence that community colleges are often over-looked, which then leads smoothly into Addison's main argument that they need to be acknowledged and appreciated.

Although Addison refers to Perlstein throughout the essay, most of her time is spent evaluating community colleges. She is arguing that they are a "great American institution" using some of Perlstein's criteria, but also some of her own. Perlstein argued that college students today are overly prepared and therefore are incapable of having true personal growth experiences in college. Addison counters that community colleges still welcome those that are un-prepared, explaining that it allows students to "just begin," and that anyone can begin their higher education "as a rookie." However, Addison adds her own criteria to the evaluation, explaining that community colleges deserve respect and appreciation because they offer students who otherwise "would never breathe the college experience" a chance at their dreams. Addison repeats this pattern (community colleges are great because...) throughout the essay, presenting the reader with clear logical reasons to support her evaluation of community colleges.

Although I think that Addison makes an excellent point here--community colleges are unique in allowing any students a second-chance at a higher education--I didn't like her tone in this piece. She makes a good point that Perlstein was wrong not to consider community colleges in his original argument. However, she doesn't need to be so snotty about it. The mocking tone that she used to point out Perlstein's omission undercut her own point. Her argument would have been stronger if she had treated the opposing viewpoint with more respect. This is an error of ethos--her tone might make her seem unreasonable to some readers.

