

"abolish this vce insanity" by susie o'brien – language analysis

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Article Analysis - ' Abolish this VCE insanity' In the article ' Abolish this VCE insanity' by Susie O'Brien, she contends that VCE is an unfair and inadequate measure of a student's potential, and it is ruining their lives and mental well being due to its harsh and unforgiving nature. The writer deals with this issue in a very passionate and emphatic tone, in order to present her arguments in a very bold and attacking manner.

The author uses a variety of different persuasive techniques to support her arguments, the first of which is inclusive language. Inclusive language is not the most powerful technique, but it draws the reader into the article and makes them feel as though they are directly affected by the issue. In the beginning of the article, the writer states that VCE is doing " harm to our teenagers". This early use of inclusive language involves the reader in the issue and makes them want to read more, and it also instantly positions the reader to view the VCE system as harmful and dangerous. Hyperbole is also used very well throughout the article, particularly when the writer declares that " VCE is the great lie that destroys adolescence," in order to exaggerate the scale of the problem and create a sense of alarm in the reader. The article also addresses the unfairness of the VCE system, mainly pointing out its inability to accurately evaluate a student's potential.

Provocative in language and dismissive in tone, the writer bluntly refers to VCE as " a total beat up", and asks a rhetorical question: " who'd want years of hard work reflected in just one set of numbers on a bit of paper? , convincing the reader to recognize the harsh and unjust reality of the VCE system. The writer also emphasizes the fact that " doing well at high school is no measure of future success, and refers to some very famous people, "
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Bill Gates, Albert Einstein, Paul Simon, and Russel Crowe," who didn't do well in school, yet managed to achieve many great things in life, as evidence to support her position. Furthermore, she claims that Melbourne University's decision to only allow people with a general degree to enter professional courses, is secretly " an admission that VCE and ENTER scores were a dismal ailure". She gives a very good example to prove that VCE is an inaccurate method of deciding whether someone is well suited to a particular job, in this case to be a doctor, as she says that " the cream of the VCE crop entering Melbourne Medicine were seriously bright, but some were about as emotionally suited to becoming a doctor as Hannibal Lecter. " This statement is very effective as it contains a cliché and a helpful comparison, which makes it easier for the reader to understand the message. Strong messages are sent to the reader to bring to light the extent of the emotional damage that is inflicted on teenagers who " are forced to jump on the academic treadmill and join the rat race," and the writer utilizes disconcerting statistics to really sway the reader into believing her point of view.

The writer draws on statistics such as: " one in five Victorian year 12 students have committed suicide or self-harm because of the pressures of school," in order to substantiate her point and give legitimacy to her arguments. These statistics also appeal to the readers' morals and values, to make them believe that VCE is more of a punishment or torture than a schooling system, and the metaphor used in the article which refers to students as " VCE slaves", creates the effect that school is like a prison. Susie O'Brien's article is a bit one-sided and unbalanced, as it does not look at both sides of the issue. However, she presents very strong arguments

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which encourage the reader to realise that in order to ensure the mental wellbeing of students, we must "abolish this VCE insanity" immediately, and spare future generations from unnecessary trauma.