

# Example of rhetorical analysis : murrays article essay

[Law](#), [Evidence](#)



Charles Murray starts his article “ What’s wrong with vocational school” with a catchy title, given that his audience are people that read The Wall Street Journal, meaning people particularly interested in business and economic news. In other words, the title is professional-like and to the point. Had it been friskier and more playful, so as to appeal to younger ages and other reading styles, it would not gain the value required when sent for publication in The Wall Street Journal.

It is clear to everybody from the start that the article is going to unveil facts about how the demand for college is market-driven, mainly because college-level education provides graduates with credentials that employers prefer (623). At this point, Murray also mentions that the four years spent in college are considered unnecessarily long, and give way to two-year colleges to step in and demand attention.

His thesis is clear and spot on: far too many of children are going to colleges, when they should be doing something else, like been provided with vocational training. Murray argues that there are better, faster and more efficient ways to acquire credentials to get a job, than go to college (632). He does not waste time and states his point of view in the first few sentences of his introductory and second paragraph. His last sentence is the thematic sentence and is supported by evidence all across the rest of the article.

Murray argues that most children with a high IQ, meaning more than 100, are admitted to colleges. On the other hand, those with an average academic performance will find it difficult to come up with the challenges of the admittedly more demanding college-level material, compared to high school material, especially in natural sciences (p. 631). No wonder why only

about 25% of the population makes it to college. Interestingly enough, he does not mean to bring sorrow to students with an IQ less than 110, but actually says that a large majority of college students only pursued college-level education to “improve their chances of making a good living” or any other reason that had nothing to do with the real meaning of going to college (632). Murray believes that what those people truly want is vocational training. He appears to want to be unbiased, but he does not try to mention both sides of the same coin. His piece of writing lacks opposing viewpoints that he could confront with arguments.

In most of Murray's article, the audience is alert with the first sentence of each paragraph that motivates them to further read. He uses facts to support his claims, statistics and percentages that all build his case; however, he does not reference his sources, which makes him look a bit unreliable. People reading *The Wall Street Journal*, would most likely want to know where facts presented to them come from, so they evaluate the validity of the information passed on to them. How can one make up their mind or reach a conclusion, either in favor or against a writer's piece of writing/opinion if they do not know whether to trust the evidence presented to them? Otherwise, it would be like expressing a personal opinion on a matter that people would not care much to know, unless they highly value the writer. In this case, all Murray mentions and all facts given are of unknown origin, and he is probably speaking out of personal experience. When it comes to the way he writes, he uses proper writing style to appeal to the readers of *The Wall Street Journal* that are looking for content with a “serious” tone, informative and educational. Murray is careful when selecting

his words and the way he expresses his ideas and evidence; yet, he minds not to exaggerate with too many formalities. He manages to balance the formal writing required with a lighter tone by switching to the first person when he feels necessary, and directly addressing his audience.

Another clever strategy is that he picked an important quote from his article to put aside in larger fonts, and inside quotations to draw people's attention. For example, he writes " A Bachelor's degree in the field of sociology, psychology, economics, history or literature certifies nothing" (632), which is a powerful statement and completely in contrast with what most people believe. That way, Murray, by challenging his readers' beliefs, he actually challenges them to keep on reading to find out what has changed things so much from the time when a Bachelor's degree in the aforementioned fields was indeed something to boast about. He justifies his statement by saying that because of uneven wealth distribution (wealth is mainly shared among the rich) has created an enormous demand for craftsmen. Other than that, attending college has become too expensive for most to bear, and also the information technology is moving ahead trying to create a new class of hi-income, high-status people that could not care less for not having a college degree (633). All that seem like a strike on a knife, given that societies carry college-level education differently among its members.

Moreover, he nods to possible opposition by throwing the contrasting argument on the table and analyzing it until readers are convinced of his point. For example, he mentions that people with IQs lower than 110 are smart enough to engage in hundreds of professions (631). Finally, he closes his article by restating the obvious (from reading through his lines), which is

that college is more fit to a small minority of young adults, which by no means makes them any more special than anybody else (634).

Overall, Murray's article is persuasive enough and manages to get the writer's point across to the readers. Murray chose proper writing style and tone; appealed to his readers with pathos and ethos; used examples from everyday life to make his points clearer. However, he did not reference any source when he used statistics and numbers which make his writing more of a personal opinion than an actual research paper. It should be better off to become a researcher when using evidence that has to do with statistics, governmental policies about student loans and other important information he passes on to his audience. His introduction and conclusion are nicely picked, and he leaves the reader with a sense of hope that nothing is lost if not going to college and that nothing is won if one's IQ hits sky-high levels.

### **Works Cited:**

Murray, Charles (2007). "What's wrong with vocational school?". The Wall Street Journal.