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Language and Communication in the Informative Age

Media has evolved from generation to generation due to technological advances. These technological advances have provided new tools and methods of communication that when used with rhetorical strategies are what make up what is known as new media. Examples of this are the news clips that are posted online by popular news companies. Several technological devices were used in order to create these videos as well as to be able to simply host them online through a website. An example is the “kids create hybrid that gets 65+ MPG” video on the CNN news website’s video section. This news clips employs several complex, yet effective, rhetorical strategies to transmit its message to the public, which is that young adults can come together and accomplish their aspirations. This video is about a group of students at the Sustainability Workshop in west Philadelphia, who built an American model car that can sustain a hundred miles per gallon and a hybrid sports car, for a competition. They received national recognition for their accomplishments and for teaching kids about science, technology, mathematics, and engineering. This video is intended for young adults with an interest in vehicles or any parent that enjoys hearing about children’s accomplishments, but anyone could have stumbled upon this video. The clip effectively introduces its idea and builds up to the message that it is trying to convey. Doing this was only capable due to new media technology that is available, and an effective utilization of the communication tools of presentation, interview, and speech.

The news clip employs different still images, each with its own meaning, throughout the course of the video. These can be analyzed using the three messages explain by Roland Barthes’ in his book “The Rhetoric of the Image”. The first picture represents the hybrid sports car that the students built, which is parked on a public road with a group of people crowded around it. This is portraying how amazing the vehicle is and what an astonishing accomplishment it was to build it. It contains no linguistic message as there is not text with present. The literal image is that of a car, but the denoted or coded message hidden within it is that it represents the hard work, team work, and dedication of a group of young adults. This message is referring to the “anyone can do it” or “dream big” ideas that are common throughout the video, as well as the idea that passionate kids can compete with corporations. The group of people crowded around the car and taking pictures are in awe which supports this claim. The symbolic message or connoted message is that this is an astonishing car and that it is incredibly efficient. The second image is a picture of one of the kids from the group, in between the president and the first lady, which represents recognition for hard work. This image also does not have any linguistic message. Its denoted message is that if you follow your dreams you too can be recognized by the president for your accomplishments. The literal image here is that there is Barrack Obama standing to the left of one of the kids from the group that was introduced in the video, and to the right there is the president’s wife. The connoted message here is that it is an honor to meet the president. The use of these still images helped evoke emotion within the viewer, which is one of the rhetorical strategies used in this video.

This clip is posted in the video section of a popular news company’s website, called CNN. Realistically anyone can stumble upon this video while browsing this website, or even when just being suggested different videos when on a website that streams videos. The intended audience is generally young adults, but more specifically people interested in vehicles or green/renewal energy. This is due to the fact that the video is about how a group of kids built these energy efficient cars for a competition, and received recognition from president for doing this. Also, any parent who wants to push their child to do something similar might find interest in this. The video even has a part that explicitly mentions the name of the group, which is the Sustainability Workshop, almost as a form of advertisement. It can also be supported that the video is meant for young and older adults, as it is posted on a news website, which younger kids and elderly people are less likely to view. Any young adult fits into the category of the audience targeted by the message to follow your dreams, be creative, and use teamwork to achieve something great. Moreover, there is an appeal to the rhetorical strategy of Pathos. According to Wikipedia, Pathos represents an appeal to the audience’s emotions and is a communication technique. This can be felt by the way dramatic music is utilized, and how they introduce the creation as being amazing, which then builds up the emotion until ending with the recognition received by the president. The video constructs its overall idea by having three phases. The first phase is that of a person in the video giving a brief description of the program and the cars they built: “In 2002, when we won the tour de sol and beat these prestigious teams, the students came up with the idea that the next car that they wanted to build was a really cool hybrid sports car”. The video then proceeds to show the two cars they built being worked on by students and goes on to explain the competition they had entered. The next phase of the video is similar to an interview, as they has a clip of one of the students explaining the project, but it is as if he is answering a couple different questions, without including the part where the question is being asked. The final phase is the president’s recognition and the reflection of the outcome of the project and the competition. Even though they did not win it was an amazing learning experience. The same character from the first phase of the video says “we really showed the world what kids were capable of doing”, putting a nice end to the video and the overall message conveyed that if people put their mind to it they can accomplish their goals.

New media is one of the contributing factors that helped this video communicate its message that young adults can achieve their goals. Advancements in technology have brought forward many new and revolutionizing ways to present news to the public. Digital cameras and video recording equipment have made it possible to record events and parts of history to be viewed by people live, or recorded for the future. Video editing programs have created the means to edit recorded footage in order to create new perspectives on the event. This can make the video more appealing to the viewer and its footage can be edited later in order to condense it and only keep the important information. The news clip “kids create hybrid that gets 65+ MPG” is compiled from different pieces of video footage that have been edited by these programs and put together. Multiple vantage points were used at times to give the news video more of a “film” sort of feeling. The cinematography in this video such as the music in the background, the still imaging, and the filters used are perfect examples of the capability of these programs. Without these, the video would have been lengthy and would not have been able to achieve the same appeal to Pathos is it does now. The news clip is attempting to instill a sense of hope in the audience by stimulating the viewers’ emotions, and all of the editing options that technology has provided have made this possible. Furthermore, video editing software is capable of rendering video into relatively small file size formats which can then be uploaded onto the internet and streamed without interruption. Due do all of this, new media is now much more efficient and interesting, causing information to be spread around the world faster than it ever has before.

Throughout the course of the video, characters employ different communication strategies such as presentations, interviews, and speeches to drive their points. Presentations provide an alternative in sharing information in a way that textual language or even audio cannot. This is due to the fact that the person presenting is directly expressing their information to others. In this form of communication, the person presenting is expressing their thoughts and ideas in their own words. They will therefore share these ideas with others, but with a description that is natural and unique to that moment and person. It is this human to human interaction that is particular, and cannot be replicated by text or other intimate objects. The character in the first phase of the video seems to be the “leader” or “supervisor” of the students, and he begins the introduction of the video by presenting the group, the competition they were in, and the cars they built. All the information provided was directly from him, as he walked around and narrated the first phase of the video. An interview is the process where an individual is asked to answer certain questions, while the main focus is on them. The next phase of the news clip is of Brandon Ford, one of the students from the group. During this period of the video, it seems that that he is asked a couple questions such as “who are you?” and “what was the panicle of your work with the EVX team?”. After this, a speech was used, which is a form of communication where a single person is talking in front of a group of people about a certain subject. The final phase of the video is of the president of the United States giving a national speech about the students’ achievement and how this positive effort provides hope for others. These three forms of communication work in concordance together to form the whole of the news clip and support the message of achieving your dreams.

A story about a group of students who came together and envisioned a dream of building a hybrid sports car and competing with major corporations, was documented by the news company CNN and broadcasted on the video section of their website. The news company effectively used several complex and modern rhetorical strategies to communicate the message that a group of people can come together and accomplish their goals if they have the right motivation. The clip incorporated different still images within the video to create appeal to Pathos, or emotional effect. Furthermore, they build up the story by working in an organized order. They started by introducing the group and the competition they entered, and then personalized the story by interviewing one of the students and have him talk about his experience and the recognition he received from the president. Then they moved to footage from the actual speech that the president gave, and ended it with a strong saying that helped drive their message. All of this was only capable due to the vast technological advancements that have helped create new media. With new forms of media, information can be shared more effectively and efficiently with everyone around the world. The video was then further broken down into the different forms of communication that were present, which were the presentation, the interview, and the speech. All in all, the video effectively conveyed its message and brought hope to the viewers, that they too can one day accomplish their dreams.

Work Cited

Barthes, Roland. *Rhetoric of the Image.* N.p.: n.p., 1977. Print.

*CNN Video- CNN.com Video*. *CNN*. Cable News Network, 02 July 2012. Web. 22 Nov. 2012. <http://www.cnn.com/video/>.

"Pathos." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, 18 Nov. 2011. Web. 22 Nov. 2012. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pathos>.

**Outcome 1**

Audience: **Strong**. You did a great job of discussing the implied audience up front and relating the   
 rhetorical strategies used back to that.

Content: **Outstanding**, you did a great job of explaining how the topic draws in viewers.

Structure: **Good.** You need to work on the focus within each of your paragraphs, but overall your   
 structure was good. Your discussion of the structure of the video was also really good.

Appeals: **Strong**. Your discussion of the pathos appeal was good, but there are other appeals you could   
 have brought up as well.

Word Choice: **Strong.** You stumbled a bit with some of the terms from class, but overall did very well.

**Outcome 2**

Quotation/Paraphrase: **Good.** You didn’t use much material from the video itself and Wikipedia was not   
 a great source, but what you used from Barthes’s essay was good.

MLA documentation: **Correct**, but you should indent all *except* the first line.

**Outcome 3**

Complexity: **Outstanding.** You really tackled a lot in just over 5 pages.

Stakes: **Strong**, you discussed the stakes of the article well, but the stakes of your analysis were left   
 unclear.

Analysis: **Strong**. You made some really good points, some better supported than others, but it wasn’t all   
 on the same topic.

Persuasive Power: **Outstanding.** You did a good job with examples from the video.

**Outcome 4**

Grammar and Punctuation: **Strong/Good.**

Format: **Correct.**