

memo

To: Pam O'Brien
From: Benjamin Briggs Brady
Date: January 19, 2017
Re: Problems with *Pitt News* Article for E2 Students

I write to you today to discuss *The Pitt News* article “NFL punishments lack consistency” and how it relates to an English as a second language, or E2, audience. I will explain that the article has issues discussing the concept of football and using figurative language.

The Concept of Football

The author uses the word “football” throughout the article. Outside of the United States, “football” refers to the sport that we call soccer. An E2 student would be confused about the use of this word and think the author is talking about a different sport. The article also talks about the NFL with an assumption that the audience has a general knowledge about the NFL and American football. An E2 student reading this article could get confused about the specific jargon the article uses when referencing the sport. For example, the article talks about the “Deflategate” incident as its main topic but does not explain the situation. An E2 student having no knowledge of the sport or this incident would not understand the main idea of the article. This also occurs when the author talks about the player positions of American football without explaining what those positions mean. Without that, the E2 student cannot understand their relevance or their importance.

Figurative Language

The article contains figurative language that an E2 student might not understand. An example of this occurs when the author says, “Goodell’s letter promised...” An E2 student might read the sentence and understand it more literally. The E2 student might think the sentence says, “the letter itself actually promised something.” We understand that the author meant “Goodell promised in his letter”, but an E2 student might understand the sentence in a different way. Another example of this figurative language occurs when the author says “The Steelers have not, however, escaped the league’s tyranny...” specifically the use of the word “tyranny”. An E2 student again might read this in a literal sense and believe that the NFL is actually a tyranny.

Recommendations

Overall the author could make a few changes that would help an E2 better understand the overall message of the article. The author could use more universal terms known to an audience outside of the United States. The author could make sure to explain concepts or situations so the audience understands what the author references. Also, the author could use less figurative language so that an E2 student does not get confused.