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The Highs and Lows of My English (Final Draft)

Literacy always held a special place in my life ever since I was in Kindergarten. Once I learned how to speak, my mom would always tell me I was a chatterbox but she knew I was going to be very smart because of it. Once I found out how to write,I’d find anything to write about. Even if it didn’t make sense to anyone reading it, I knew in my head what I wanted my writings to mean. I remember at the age of 5, I grabbed a sheet of copy paper and began to write a bunch of random letters together, but read it outloud to others as if it were a story. Nothing made sense, but I knew that was just the beginning of my learning experience. Starting to read chapter books in the 1st and 2nd grade on the train to my mom while people looked at me as if they were impressed, made me feel a sense of confirmation as to knowing what I was doing at such a young age was a great thing. I remember these moments vividly because it was one of the many reasons to stay motivated.

Elementary school, was what I thought, a time for me to “find myself” but little ole’ me didn’t know any better and found out that I had a long way to go. Some years pass and I reached the 4th grade. I realized by now that all core subjects, including English, began to get a bit more complex. “It shouldn’t be so bad right? You got this, don’t even trip” I told myself. Even at such a young age I would tell myself things like this to reassure myself that even though school may be getting harder, to not overwhelm myself or overthink. The reading levels at the time went by alphabet letters. So for example, let “A” be the ability to read simple and easy readings for Kindergarteners, and let “Z” be the ability to read more high advanced vocabulary filled texts while understanding it as well. As a fourth grader, and even now, I try not to focus too much on the educational standards because I believed everyone is intelligent in their own unique way and shouldn’t be put to the test to where students feel like they’re not good enough. My teacher in the fourth grade (Mr. Magliano) would always pull students to the reading table one by one to see our strengths and weaknesses during independent reading time. Although I knew how to read of course, m capability of summarizing the reading and answering questions asked by my teacher without looking back into the book is when I realized I was struggling. So did my teacher.

Mr.Magliano was on of the best teachers I had, no doubt. So why did I feel anxious and incapable of doing better when he told me I wasn’t reaching any new reading levels like everyone else in the class? Was it because everyone was getting “smarter” without me? Was I not able to learn new information anymore? Several thoughts pondered through my head and I wasn’t able to make any sense of it. I was too scared to ask any questions on how I can reach a new level, so what can I do? Thank god Mr.Magliano was not the type of teacher to make it seem like I was doing drastically bad. All I knew was that there was some work to get done. I took this situation into my own hands and turned it into something positive instead of dreading on it that way I can keep all negative thoughts out my head. My goal I wanted to reach was to prove to myself that not all feedback given to me should be taken as something negative. I can always take that critique and use it to get better at what my weaknesses were in English.

All summer going into the 5th grade now, I made sure I did self assessments by reading books, asking myself questions, and making sure what I was reading wasn’t just information going into my brain but also understanding what plot, setting, and peaks were; down to the vocabulary words even. I wanted to make sure I had these things down pact so that way I can go into the 5th grade confident in what I once was not as confident in. Getting the hang of 5th grade was a piece of cake. The preparation I gave myself during the summer time, helped me throughout the school year and really boosted my self confidence. Knowing that I discovered my love for reading and writing in the early stages of my life, I wanted to do a good deed before graduating. My fifth grade teacher had all students volunteer to read to 1st and 2nd graders that way they can use any new skills we teach them for their own advantages. I remember reading to a timid 2nd grade girl and automatically telling myself that I would find out what she’s good at and what she needs work on. I used the same strategy Mr. Magliano used for me! I gave her encouragement and feedback to make her feel comfortable with what her weaknesses are so she can work on it. I didn’t want to scare her away by telling her what her weaknesses were, because uplifting her to push herself was what helped her become a better reader and writing. This specific time in my life left a permanent mark as to when I felt like I was JUST on the verge of “finding myself.”

Now entering I.S. 278 Marine Park Middle School, I had a feeling there was going to be several new standards that I’d have to get adjusted to which made me anxious once again. But “no worries right” How bad can it be?”. Once again, a task I head-butted with. Shakespeare. Just the sound of it brings me back to the struggles I had trying to comprehend it. No scratch that. Reading Shakespeare was the real deal struggle for me. I hated it. I never understood why people would even speak like that. I made up all different types of excuses to not even try. ‘Till this day I wouldn’t be able to tell you what MacBeth is about without the help of teachers or figuring it out within the students in my class.

High school would have to be the most memorable time of my life for many reasons (not that I miss it or anything, I hated it). It wasn’t up until my senior year where my English teacher Mr.Martin impacted my life. Rumors would spread around the school that he was the most strict teacher and the work he gave was way too much. I beg to differ. I believe everything he gave us was for a reason. Every essay or chapters he assigned to read, and summarizations, made college much more easier. In my opinion, I believed that yes at the time it was a workload that he gave, but it also taught me to balance every subject and not overwhelm myself. That brought back to the times where I’d tell myself “how bad can it be? Don’t trip.” This class itself was very comfortable with expressing their ideas, what we liked and disliked, etc. His class made me realize that in college it’s much more expressive and free than in high school because of how intriguing his way of teaching is.Every strategy he taught me, such as properly understanding a readings’ context, annotating, etc, I still find very helpful because I still use it today.

Throughout my years of learning, aside from educational purposes, I’ve learned lots of new things about myself. Overwhelming myself when a new concept or task comes to me will not help me understand it because it’ll just make me feel anxious. Although I only took one semester of English in college so far, I’ve come to the conclusion that every English class I take I’ll continue to learn how to become more meticulous with my words. I’m open to any feedback, helpful tips, and strategies when it comes down to making my writing better than what it is. The way I approach essays, readings, or any assignment today is the product of my whole experience of English. ENG 1121 is a course I’m excited about taking that way I can continue adding on to my learning journey.