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ENG1101 CO LC04**

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**Final Essay Education Narrative.**

**“What Happens When You Apply Yourself?”**

**For Once, I Tried**

It was a week before winter break in my Junior year of High School. I had handed in my midterm assignment for my History class a few days before, an essay on the Confederation Period.

I checked online to see my grade. but in the place where the grade should be displayed sat a red exclamation point with the comment, “See me after class.”

My heart sank. The period after The Revolutionary War interested me heavily, and I had worked harder on that essay than anything else I had been assigned that year.

I walked into Ms. Glass’s History class the next day nervous, hoping she would have forgotten. But as soon as I took my seat, she told me to see her at the end of the period.

When class ended, I walked up to her desk, and she pulled my essay out of her desk and asked, “Why haven’t you given me more work like this?”

I was confused, so I asked what she meant.

She continued, “If you are capable of writing so well, why haven’t your other assignments been completed as well as this one?”

I felt my cheeks turn to cherries, and I was unsure how I should respond. This is when she said something that has stuck with me to this day.

She said, “I wish you would apply yourself more. Not just in my class, but in everything. You are capable of doing great things.”

I had been called an underachiever by my teachers in the past, but it had never meant anything. With Ms Glass it was different. I admired her and that is why her words meant so much to me. She was exceedingly kind and cared about her students. When she taught, she held personal interest in the material and had her own opinions on historical figures. She had quite the admiration for Alexander Hamilton. It never felt like she was teaching straight from a book or following a curriculum. Her genuine interest made learning enjoyable.

Her words led me to observe where I was in my life. I was barely passing my classes, cutting school, and hanging out with the wrong crowd. I realized how unhappy I was and how everything I was doing wasn’t making life better. So I did the opposite. I began to show up early to classes, asked questions until my classmates got annoyed, worked harder on assignments, and stopped hanging out with the people I was with.  I even started studying for exams for the first time in my life. I started to look for after school activities to do. I looked on the school’s website, asked teachers about clubs they could recommend, and even signed up for community service.

It turned out Ms. Glass was right. My grades steadily rose. My English teacher, Ms. D had noticed the improvements I was making and said, “See what happens when you apply yourself!”

I talked to Ms. D about joining a club. She asked me if I liked computers and technology. I wasn’t too interested at the time. The only time I did anything tech-related was when I was helping a family member with their phone or internet. This made me a genius in their eyes, even though it was something that anyone my age could do easily. I was struggling to find something I enjoyed, so I said I was interested.

Ms. D met me after school and walked me into the school's tech office. I opened the door into a workshop, lined with shelves that were stocked with laptops, computer parts, wiring and tools. Monitors were mounted on the walls and displayed recordings from the server room; underneath the monitors sat two workstations placed on desks -- all crammed into a room not much bigger than a storage closet.

Hunched over one of the desks was a large man with glasses and a beard. He looked up from the disassembled laptop he had been working on, reached for a handshake and said, “Nice to meet you. My name is Andrew and I look forward to working with you.” I shook his hand and introduced myself. He asked what made me decide to join. I told him that I didn’t have much experience in tech repair, but I was looking to find an activity I enjoyed. He told me not to worry and that I would learn as I went along. Andrew told me to come back during the lunch period the next day.

From that day forward, everyday during my lunch period and a few days a week after school, I was in the tech office. I learned to uninstall computer parts, install new ones, how to troubleshoot and how computer parts communicated with each other. At the end of the school year, Andrew offered me a job over the summer working in the tech department. I was delighted. I accepted and counted the days until the work started.

That summer, my job was to set up the new computer lab for the school. My co-worker Benjamin and I built desks, installed desktops, set up an internet connection for the room, organized wiring, and placed operating systems on each computer. The job was expected to take six weeks but took us only four to complete.

A year later at the school ceremony, we were given an award for our work. It felt good to be acknowledged for something that I had worked so hard on. I felt a sense of pride as I held the framed piece of metal in my hand. It was just a cheaply made plaque, but it represented how far I had come from being a slacker to someone that worked hard. I felt like I was going somewhere. It had been a rewarding summer job experience. I realized I had found something I enjoyed. I enjoyed the tech work; I got to put what I learned to use; and I had made a new friend. The job had given me an experience that not only furthered my knowledge of computers and electronics, but helped me fall in love with working on them and gave me a sense of direction that I will not stray from.