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English I

Reflective Essay

**Making My Way: Reflections and Goals on my Education**

 Glasses, zits, frizzy hair and awkwardness­­: this sums up my middle school years. It wasn’t the easiest time of my life. Not only did I lack confidence and proper styling, I also started to slip up in school. Up until sixth grade, things came easy to me or at least required little work. Once I hit middle school, however, the homework piled up and so did my social activities. Friends came first (or at least I thought they should) and my grades suffered. I’ve learned many things from this experience, and I am now ready to conquer high school with a new attitude and some goals in mind. The first place I’m going to start is English class. Although I did well on vocabulary last year, I struggled to complete my reading homework and performed poorly in creative writing.

 Throughout last year, one area where I showed vast improvement was vocabulary. Because I enjoy reading, I’ve always had a strong vocabulary, but last year I was able to improve my word choice through regular practice. My teacher gave us vocabulary words every week, and we worked on several strategies, such as clozes, synonym and antonyms and word origin. Not only did I pass all of my vocab quizzes with an A or B, but I also found myself applying these words in my writing. For example, I used three of our vocab words in my “Animal Farm” essay. More importantly, however, I learned how to find the meaning of unknown words while reading. This helped me to improve my EOC score from Basic to Proficient. Overall, vocabulary was a big success for me last year because I worked hard and practiced the skills we used in class.

 Although I did well in vocabulary, I did not do well on my reading homework. My teacher gave us a reading assignment every week, and we completed a reading guide to go along with it. Because of social activities, I rarely made time to read at home. Because of this, I fell behind and was never able to catch back up. I missed a lot of homework, and I was confused about what was happening in class. For example, when it came time to write an essay over “Of Mice and Men,” I had no idea what to write about. Because of this, I received a poor grade on the essay, which resulted in a D for the quarter. I also missed out on learning more about books that I might have enjoyed or found interesting.

 Lastly, I struggled on creative writing. For example, our final unit covered poetry, and I found it very difficult to analyze and write poems. Part of the reason for this was that I was talking to my friends when my teacher covered the poetry terms. From then on, I couldn’t keep similes, metaphors, alliteration, hyperbole or any other terms straight, which made it difficult to analyze what we were reading. It also meant that I did poorly on the poetry test and failed at incorporating those writing strategies in my own poem. In general, I found it challenging to come up with creative topics to write about – whether in poetry or short stories. It is something that does not come naturally to me and needs a lot of work.

 I learned a lot last year in English. Although I struggled with reading completion and creative writing, I learned through my vocabulary activities that hard work and practice will lead to mastery. Because of that, my goals this year are to set aside time each night to read and to pay attention to literary techniques to improve my creative writing. I will use the writing process and seek additional help from my teacher as well. Lastly, I will work on my socializing. I will try harder to pay attention in class, so I don’t miss key information and important strategies. After all, there is a time to work and a time to play. This is important to me because education isn’t just about grades on a report card. Education is about improving skills that will help you become more successful in your life and career and most of all proving that you can do anything you set your mind to.