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English 1101

27 October 2017

The Time I Almost Didn’t Graduate

When I was a freshman in high school, I didn’t take my education seriously. I was more concerned with talking and being a class clown than paying attention. All of my friends were in my math class (Coordinate Algebra A) and no one knew the material because everyone was talking. There were two teachers teaching this class, Mrs. Jones and Mr. Scott (a paraprofessional, and the teacher). They both could tell that entire class was going down the wrong path, but Mrs. Jones was a little more vocal about it. If we were laughing about something she would say things like “We’ll see who’s going to be laughing when you don’t walk across that stage.” At the time, we all thought she was just a bitter lady who didn’t like us but as the years went by and graduation got closer, I started to realize what she was talking about.

 I remember taking tests in the class and failing them because I didn’t know how to do any of the problems. Whenever I got a failing grade back, I didn’t care because everybody else got a failing grade too. I felt that if I wasn’t the only one failing, I wouldn’t be the only one that would have to face the consequences. Then it was time for the final exam and of course I failed it, but then again, I wasn’t the only one that failed and most of the class did also so I didn’t care. This was my first time failing a class and I didn’t know that it would affect my GPA. In order to receive credit for that class I would have had to pay to take the class online, or take the class over the next semester. I chose to take it over the next semester because I didn’t have two hundred and fifty dollars to pay and I knew I wouldn’t be able to learn math online.

When I took the class again, I took advantage of tutoring and extra credit opportunities. This opened my eyes to not take my education for granted because it didn’t look good on my transcript. I also blocked out all distractions and stayed focused to ensure that I would pass this time around. I passed the class spring semester but since I had taken Coordinate Algebra A for the fall and spring semesters, I wasn’t able to take Coordinate Algebra B, and this caused me to fall behind with my math credits. The affect this had on me was that I had to take two math classes my senior year.

I took Advanced Algebra B which was my required senior math class and Coordinate Algebra B both in the spring. It may not sound too bad, but I had to pass both classes in order to graduate. There was no second chance like there was freshmen year. There were only seven other seniors in the class, and it was sink or swim for them as well. The teacher spoke very fast and if you didn’t understand the material you were on your own. I went to her tutorials, watched videos on YouTube, and even went to other math teachers for help to make certain I took advantage of every opportunity presented to me.

 Looking at the underclassmen in the class, I saw myself when I was in their position. They joked around the whole class period and didn’t take anything serious like myself freshmen year. I tried to tell them that I used to act out in class, and that is why I am a senior in a freshman class. When it came time to take a test or quiz, most of the underclassmen cheated. They wouldn’t come to class the day of a test, but instead, they would come in the next day, and the teacher would let them take their test in another class. When they came back from taking their test, they would brag about how they used their phones to get their answers.

Months went by and it was time to take the final exam. Seniors would leave a week earlier than the underclassmen, so all of us seniors took our test in another class. The test was what I expected it to be, but I made sure I didn’t leave a question unanswered even if the answers were wrong. After the test everyone was complaining about how they didn’t get to finish and how they knew they failed. When the test were graded and put online, I found out I passed but most of my peers didn’t which meant they didn’t graduate on time. I was happy that I basically taught myself in this class, and I passed without having to cheat. The experience of being a failure has motivated me to put in more effort on assignments and pay attention in class.