At the time, I thought I could do it. I would say to my friends who’d ask me again just to be sure, “Yeah, I can handle it”. We as the hydroponics club just finished a workshop with primary school students, helping them germinate their own plants. Now it was going to be our job to take the pots home and grow them ourselves. I believed I could bring at the very least ten pots, more than what any one member was taking, and I told the other club members I could do so. Even when the club captain asked me for confirmation if I was going to take ten, I said without a shadow of a doubt that I would. I wasn’t going to let my club down.

Upon arriving home, I had never done this sort of thing before, so it was a struggle finding the proper container to store these plants in, but I did. Every so often, I would come home to inspect the plants, and I would always tell myself I was doing good, that the plants looked healthy, that my friends had nothing to worry about. But as I kept thinking about it, I felt more and more pressure to prove to the rest of the club that I could do just fine. Soon, it was evident that my efforts were not enough.

Day by day, I came home to see the sprouts, ever so short, begin to falter. They began turning a shade of greenish yellow, and I began to fear that the sprouts would eventually no longer be sprouts, and that they would never be able to grow into their full potential. I feared that once my friends heard of my failures, they would be let down that I acted so confidently about how many plants I would be raising and that I failed so horribly that none of them survived for long. Then, one day, it reached a fever pitch and I knew that I had to do something about it.

It was a Saturday, and the bright sun shone down on me as I went outside to check on my plants. I sighed in relief that they looked mostly the same until I took a closer look. Small wriggling mosquito larvae swimming in the water below my plants. I was mortified, and angry that all of my efforts would culminate in my plants dying while I allowed mosquitoes to breed right under my nose. I had to act, and so I did. To the best of my efforts, I covered the container so that no oxygen would reach the larvae, and I made sure to keep it airtight to prevent the possibility of more larvae being entered. Yet, despite my best efforts, my plants still withered, my plants still weakened, my plants still continued to die.

With a heavy heart, fearing for the worst, I let the hydroponics club captain know that I wasn’t able to keep the plants the primary students germinated alive. My fears were unfounded, and despite my failures, he still said it was alright. I realised that my worries were exaggerated, and that my failure was not immediately a reduction of my self worth, least of all in the eyes of my friends and those I trust.

Hello!

Your involvement in the hydroponics club is quite unique! Colleges love well-rounded students with different interests, meaning your essay has a potential to stand out. Although, the rest of your essay needs to clearly answer the prompt, show good writing skills, as well as display your qualities (and journey of personal growth).

Try to focus on conveying your growth instead of explaining too much of the unnecessary details of the story. It is important to give the reader context and explain the problem you faced. At the moment, it feels like your essay stops at the midpoint of the story. As the reader, I expected to see the aftermath of your realisation. How did you change and grow? How did you bounce back from your failure?

Make sure that you have a clear structure and balanced story flow/plot. You spent four paragraphs building your story towards a specific problem that you were facing. However, you only explained what you learned in the last paragraph. Make sure you have at least one body paragraph to explain the lightbulb moment where you learned something new. Then, in the conclusion paragraph, expand on this new mindset/quality you learned. A few questions to help you reflect: How do you plan on implementing this new mindset in your future endeavors? How can this new mindset you learned benefit yourself and/or those around you?

Finally, add some spice to your essay by including a quote, a short dialogue of an interaction (e.g. with your club captain), and add descriptive words and imagery. For example, when describing your fear of what your friends would say if you fail, you can express how you are *anxious about failing to meet your club’s expectation*. *What if you make a fool out of yourself? Perhaps you cannot imagine how you would handle having to stand there and tell them that you have failed?*

Overall, good job on your first draft. Take time to reflect and use your imagination when writing. Best of luck!