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GISAT  
Morgan Benton  
December 4, 2012

### Exit Essay

Since this class was my first college class I have ever attended, I really did not have any idea what to expect. I did, however, expect this class to be somewhat of a challenge. Many of my preconceived expectations were based on my brother's (JMU Class of 2010) explanation of the course. After meeting my professor initially and listening to his, what I thought, absurd grading policy, I thought this class would be a breeze. As the semester progressed, I tended to neglect and procrastinate the work and readings that were assigned. I would choose to complete my schoolwork for other classes which I knew would be graded before I would even think about picking up the book, "Positivity". Towards the end of the semester, however, I began to become more intrigued in the class and the classroom discussions while only occasionally reading the chapter that was assigned in the previous class. At this point in the semester, I almost felt as though it was too late to be fully engaged in the class.

Since I knew that I was not going to be receiving any specific, incremental grades throughout the semester, it made it difficult for me to actually accomplish any of the long-term, or short-term goals that I set for myself in my weekly evaluations. By nature, and with some family influence, I am usually very competitive about everything from sports to grades. In this case, I wasn't even

competing for a letter grade higher than my friend and roommate sitting next to me. What was the point in even attempting to achieve these loose academic targets? As I would set goals to thoroughly engage in the classroom discussion, or stay on top of writing journals for every chapter, I would simultaneously be thinking about how I knew these goals would not be fully accomplished. I soon began to ask myself if these goals would have been accomplished if I were getting rewarded for achieving them. By the end of the semester, it became clear that the answer to this question was yes. Being brought up surrounded by competition and always striving to be number one has drastically influenced me and my learning objectives in this class.

I have definitely learned a variety of things about myself after reflecting on the actions and decisions I made in this course. I have never realized how crucial competition is to me in my life. (I have realized that without competition and personal drive, I would not have the necessary motivation to learn in College.) My lack of intrinsic motivation most definitely impacted the amount of information I retained and learned from taking this class. Honestly, this grading policy and the idea of "No reliably meaningful interpretation" did not encourage me to actively participate in this class. It seemed as though instead of learning course material, I was focused more on learning about myself. GISAT 160 has taught me that because I have a strong competitive personality, it is significantly more difficult for me to put in my best effort to learn knowing that I will not receive a letter grade, a sticker, or even a pat on the back. It is also harder for me to be very interested in learning, without receiving a reward of some kind; lesson learned.

A

Mariah Washington

GISAT 160

December 12, 2012

Coming in to this class, my only expectation was for it to be a science type class. “Problem solving approaches in science and technology” sounded like it would be about how to fix a problem in some kind of science major. By the way it was written in my course sheet I assumed it would be a useful class for my nursing major and surprisingly, it was. This class has helped me to think about things differently and more in depth.

I didn’t have any specific goals when I came to the class initially but as the weeks went on and I started doing the self-evaluations, I started coming up with some. Some of my earlier goals were to pass a certain test, or to complete certain assignments ahead of time. One of my main, and favorite, goals came from our reading of *Positivity*. My goal was to simply start being a more positive person. It’s still a long process but that is definitely a long term goal. Another goal came with our *Willpower* book. I’ve always known that I have a problem with procrastinating and the book inspired me to work on using more willpower to resist the temptation to push assignments or work off.

My goal of being a more positive person is an ongoing process but I have definitely come a long way. I’m becoming more aware of my attitude or when I get angry and I am working on dealing with it in a healthy manner. My goal of resisting the temptation to procrastinate isn’t going so well on the other hand. I procrastinated in writing this paper and I have been putting off studying for a while. I’m still going to work on doing better with my procrastination and study habits though, especially for next semester.

I’ll always remember this class moving forward. This has been my favorite class this semester and you have been my favorite professor! I really enjoyed the readings and how your class is discussion style and not a lecture. I particularly enjoy your stand on grades. Your class has made me think about grades in a whole new light. I’ve always thought of grades as just being a part of school and I’ve just

focused on getting a good grade instead of actually retaining the knowledge. I'm glad our class has taken the first step and contacted President Alger; hopefully we can really be the change and start a whole new system at our school!

B

Andrew Wagner

Professor Morgan Benton

GISAT 160

10 December 2012

Going into GISAT 160 I had no idea what to expect. It was my first college course and so I wasn't really sure how it was going to be. I guess I thought it was going to be a fairly straightforward course, much like ones in high school but perhaps a bit more challenging. Even after the first class where the new grading policy was explained I wasn't really sure how the semester was going to go. In my mind I thought that it would be like all other classes where we would still have small assignments given to us to complete. Then it would be up to us to either do them or not. Even though I understood that there was to be no grading policy. I still thought that there would be the same structure that existed in other courses. However the course proved to be much different and enjoyable. I loved going through and having discussions about the books that we were reading. However I still wish that there was more structure to the course. For example being given a handout to do about the reading for the next class. Even though it wouldn't have been graded I still feel that it would've been more productive than giving us extreme freedom.

I didn't set too many goals for myself at the beginning of the course. I think that I only really had two goals. My first goal was to try to simply enjoy the class. My second goal was to get something out of the class, something that would make me a better person on an everyday basis.

After a while I understood that these two goals that I set for myself were probably too broad to be real goals and I needed to break them down into smaller goals. So for a start I broke down the books and decided to try and take one thing out of each of the three books that we read. In the first book we read positivity, I quickly realized that this book is a lot like the book the secret. Although the two books are very similar I liked how the positivity book backed the information with more statistical analysis rather than just faith like the secret. I do believe that I began starting thinking more positively after reading that book however after a while I quickly forgot about thinking positively and lost what I had gained. In the

second book that we read will power, I think the biggest thing I got out of it was that I need to try to relax and enjoy whatever I'm doing even if it's writing a paper that I hate. However I found out the hard way that it's easier said than done. I still find myself always trying to enjoy what I'm doing and when I do enjoy it, or at least not hate it, I find that I often do much better with the task. I think that I took more out of this book than anything else. The final book Punished by rewards was the book that I think I struggled the most with because although I agreed with him on almost all of his points I just never saw it becoming practical. I guess the one thing that I got out of the book was that yes indeed our educational system is flawed in many different areas and it needs to be fixed.

So after all our classes I do think that overall I did get things out of the class and even if I don't take anything specifically from one of the books we read I think that no matter what I the one thing that I took from this class is to always look at things in different ways. I did enjoyed the class because although I may have not said a lot in class I enjoyed listening to other peoples perspectives and it's amazing to see how differently people think. I think that moving forward in life it'll make be more patient with other peoples opinions and I think I'll be able to reason with them better rather than freaking out and thinking that they're just ignorant.

A

## Exit Essay

On registering for GISAT 160, I believed that the class would focus on problem solving in science and technology as the class description states. To me this meant that we would be looking at different scenarios of problems and look to solve them. When I came to the first day of class, I realized that we would not be looking at problems in science and technology but in grades. This means we were focusing on problems in what seemed to transcend all areas of study not just science and technology specifically.

My goals for the class were to learn the information and to get a good grade. As it happens we are allowed to choose our grades in this class so that one works out well. To learn the information that was taught I read the books that we were to purchase and read in class. Through class discussions I was able to help better my learning in the class. Any information I did not understand in the books I would be able to understand in the class discussions the next day. Another goal I had for the class was to learn the schedule of my teammates. This was a goal we made at the beginning of the semester, and did not workout. We thought it would show that we knew each other well and had gotten together every week as was asked of us. I did not learn the schedules of my group members and we did not get together every week as we were asked to do. It turns out we only got together a few times.

Our group also decided that we would try to complete a semester project. This project would be to research and inform car insurance agencies about the unfair advantage women have over men in their insurance rates, and show that this advantage does not correspond with the statistics of crashes in the US. We were able to research the information, but our plan to send out surveys and then send out information to the insurance companies did not follow through. We were not able to complete our semester project.

While in this class, I learned that grades have no meaningfully reliable information. This means that one should not work towards grades because it will squash the intrinsic motivation while creating extrinsic motivation that will then cease once the reward is no longer received. This would mean that when out of school and one is not dangling an "A" over your head, you will not be motivated to work.

This year, I have also learned about willpower, positivity and why rewards can be detrimental to a person. With this and the emails we have sent to the President of JMU, I hope to be a part of the movement to remove grades from schools. This would help us to keep motivation intrinsic instead of extrinsic. This does not have to be a large jump right away, but smaller ones. For example, instead of banishing grades completely, we could change the grading policy from the A-F grading system to an A or incomplete, where a person must complete the assignment to receive a grade. Thus any work that does not receive an A must be finished. This would not work however with tests in the same way. To fix this

David Szady

problem we could abolish tests or change them in such a way that allows the students not to stress over them.

A



Anna Stogoski

December 11, 2012

Exit Essay:

At the beginning of the semester I had no idea what to expect of this course since this was my first semester at James Madison University. I was assuming this class would be much like some of my courses at PVCC (my previous college) since it is a class made for most first and second year students just like those provided by a community college. I was extremely nervous coming into a new college, not having an apartment mate, not knowing anyone at all, and trying to figure out the school system and how everything works here. After the first day of class I was much more relaxed and realized that, with this class in particular, I would be able to accomplish my goals when I had the time. I still wasn't sure as to what I would gain out of the class but this became very clear to me after the first few weeks.

My goals for this class were not only to do all of my journal entries, assignments presented and to get better skills when it came to critical thinking, but to try to incorporate this class in my every day activities. I continue to use Positivity and Will Power to help me quit smoking. This was one of my biggest goals in the beginning of the semester and although I have not quit completely, I can honestly say that this class has helped me greatly reduce the amount of cigarettes that I smoke and I can see me as a non-smoker in the near future.

About half way through the semester, I was involved in a car accident. I was only slightly injured with a mild concussion; however the driver was severely injured. On top of everything, I was worried about legal charges due to the nature of the accident and the nature of the person who was driving. This class really helped me think straight through this time period where I was not allowed to discuss this issue in anyway with anyone. I wrote journal entries about this accident until the time of my court date where all charges were dismissed for me alone. These journal entries kept my life straight and kept me from literally going crazy. After writing, I was able to collect and organize my thoughts. I used Positivity and Will Power in these journal entries to help myself reason. These two books in particular helped me move forward, even when it seemed near impossible. They helped me look at things with a different perspective and helped me realize that there were certain things I needed to do in order to get my life straight. I was at risk for my whole life turning upside down and my dreams being crushed just because I was hanging out with the wrong person at the wrong time. I learned a lot from that accident alone which is a whole different discussion. The weekly goals also helped me get keep things straight, I was still able to concentrate in school and finish my journal entries for this class. I was able to meet with my group on a regular basis to finish the course project.

I think it was my goals for the entire semester that really kept me going this year. One of my goals was to get all A's this semester. I have never gotten all A's. In fact, the most number of A's I've gotten in a semester is one. This semester, I believe it is possible for me to come out with three A's out of the four classes that I am taking. This is a huge accomplishment for me. It's not only about the A's, but realizing that I can do things with my life that I never thought I could through willpower and positivity. This lesson is the greatest lesson learned from this class.

I do have certain evidence to prove that I accomplished these goals. I have most of my journal entries posted on the website and I have the rest of them saved on my computer which I have also printed out the ones pertaining to the class. I have a copy of the semester project for this class that my group and I worked so hard on completing. I showed up for all of the classes that I could which is shown in my attendance. The only time I did not show up for class is if I had a legitimate excuse. Such as, I was sick, had a court date, or a meeting that could not be rescheduled.

After this class, I realized that it will continue to help me in the future. I mentioned earlier about how quitting cigarettes is a very big goal of mine that seemed like it could never be accomplished in the beginning of the semester. Now, I see my future where I am no longer smoking. I have gotten a better idea of the wide range of James Madison University classes that JMU has to offer to the universities' students. I even made some friends in my group that are still going to be friends ever after this class is over with. This class has gotten me into the habit of writing down my goals on a regular basis and giving myself a time frame in which I will accomplish these goals. This class has influenced me to meditate when I am feeling overwhelmed or when I am getting ready to start out my day. All of these things combined showed me that this class was more than worth taking. If I can see a class affecting my attitude in the future, that class was a good class.

**GISAT 160 Essay**

When I first found out that I was going to be in this class as one of my general education requirements I did not think much of it. I just needed to get through this class to continue in my collegiate career. I was expecting to do what I do for every other class; do the work, study, and get the grade that I want. This course obviously did not follow that tradition. This course was the first impression that I got of a college class; it was my first class of the week in my first semester of college. I walked in the first day and right away I saw the uniqueness of this learning environment. I did not feel the pressure of grades weighing down on me for this class constantly, which allowed me to actually enjoy the learning process. My goals for this class were initially to achieve the best grade possible but they changed after the first week. I then had a quite different set of goals; first of all I wanted to truly understand what you feel so passionately about- the problem with the current grading system. After reading, "Punished by rewards" I understood your argument much more. Seeing all of the experimental data behind those arguments got rid of some of my skepticism. I am now fairly convinced that grades inhibit learning, but I cannot think of an alternative that could be applicable for every class. This skepticism though is something that you emphasized in this critical thinking class. Another goal I had was to try to apply the books that we read to my own life and I think I accomplished this. While reading positivity I tried many of the suggestions in the book to live a happier more fulfilling life. I started to try to spend more time in nature as it suggested, as well as get more exercise. Both of these things made my daily life much happier. In addition, I took some of the things that, "Willpower,"

suggested to increase said attribute. In the book, it said a clean environment would increase your willpower, so I immediately cleaned my constantly messy room and maintained it. The book also said that daily routines would increase your willpower, so I began working out fairly consistently, although I have been short on willpower recently. The lessons learned from these books were pretty consistently in my mind during my normal day. Most classes that I have taken in my academic career have had little to no meaning to me besides learning material to obtain a good grade. This class on the other hand will leave a lasting impact on my mindset for the rest of my life. I will never look at grades the same after this course; I can see that there should be a debate about what the best process for learning should be. In addition I am not afraid now to challenge other social norms that may be detrimental to our society. In addition, I can honestly say that I am a happier person after taking this course. I try to be in wonder of the world around me rather than looking at my phone when I am outside. I focus more on my happiness than I ever have before. Although this class was one of the most casual classes I ever taken, I can honestly say it is the course that I have gotten the most out of. Sure, other classes made me memorize information that I faintly remember now; but this class changed my mindset and how I take in the world around me. I am truly grateful that I took this course and I would recommend it to anyone.

A

Rania Sheikh

Dec 14, 2012

Dr. Morgan Benton

### GISAT 160 Exit Paper

Semester after semester, not just currently in university, but throughout high school as well, my intentions have been clear. If I was in a science class, I would do my best to know and understand the material, to really learn something. If I was in any other class, I would have one goal, to Ace the class doing minimal work. I had no intention in walking the extra mile, in learning something for the sake of learning, or in participating in a discussion or attend class if I didn't have to. And before this class, there would have been no way I'd have written all this and told anyone let alone someone who teaches a non science class this information. My expectations were to sit through a boring Gen Ed class that should be easy enough to juggle with my other classes. Since day one of class, I kept thinking to myself, "There's a catch, there must be a catch" but as the days went on, I've found the catch.

I've worked so hard trying to find reason as to why I can say I deserve that A you promised me! Kept listening in class to find one line I can use to say "This has impacted me!" but somewhere along the line I forgot that I was trying to get an A and started listening to what my classmates and my professor were saying. I started feeling awful for missing class even though I had more than a valid reason, I couldn't pretend I read the book when I didn't, and most of all, I could not, no matter how hard I tried, sit in the classroom and nod. I was interested, I was so interested I wanted to talk about my experiences, listen to people's experiences, and interpret the readings out loud and just talk! It was strange, like I was tricked into caring.

I clearly haven't achieved the goals I had before starting this class, and I don't think I had real goals made during the class time but I simply kept wanting to know more and to just talk. I started talking to my professors in their office hours about their thoughts on grades and explain

to them how GPA made no sense and what they thought of many things we discussed and some looked at me like I'm crazy, others already knew that or believed me but had no hopes of anything changing soon and finally, there were the one or two who understood but simply said "Good Luck". I honestly don't know what I'll take from this class future wise, but I know it has changed my perspective on just looking at new things. I'm more interested in knowing what else is out there besides only that which I am interested in and like, I want to know more, to learn more.

I'm still very confused about the entire idea of being able to choose my own grade, I won't lie. However, from the beginning of class to now, something did change, I trust my professor now and feel like if I was wrong, he would tell me, if I was right, he would admit it, and if I was confused, he would just tell me what's happening. When asked how my classes are going in September I answered with "I have this crazy professor who's just giving me an A if I ask for it." Now, I say "I have this professor who has such great perspective on education and just really cares." I would've laughed at myself if I thought I'd be saying something like this, but I guess is funny.

A

Lauren Sharpe  
GISAT 160 Sec 3

#### Final Essay:

I enrolled for this class thinking it would prepare me for future science courses. From the description, I got the impression that we would be practicing critical thinking to decide how experiments should be set up and conclusions determined. I had imagined being given some scientific problem or example experiment and having to solve or scrutinize it as an assignment or test. I also thought we would have formal debates over issues and have to submit persuasive writings. My goals for this course at that time were to prepare for future science labs by improving my experimentations skills, learn how to produce powerful persuasive essays, practice speech giving for future classes and the workplace, do all assignments, and get an A.

But when I received the books in the mail, my previous expectations proved completely wrong. So before I entered the class, I had goals that I make for every class, subconsciously: do all assignments by the due dates; to learn the material, applying it to my life; and to get an A. Two of these goals sort of went out the window along with my previous expectations. There were no due dates and no grades. So I had a hard time at first adjusting. However, throughout the semester I decided to do all the reading, to do as many journal entries as possible, and to apply the information to my everyday life. These I achieved. I integrated *Positivity* into my daily thought patterns, pushing away the negative self-talk and constant worrying that used to plague me. I also tried to spread that new joy and peace I gained. I wrote many notes of encouragement to friends and family. I also got to share love with people through random acts of service; for example, I spent some time with a lonely coffee shop manager and even braided her hair!

*Willpower* was very fascinating, focusing on how to make goals and form motivations for those goals. I love organization and to-do lists, and I have always been an task oriented person. From the book, I learned when setting plans and goals to be flexible while rigid; be specific; and make an eternal motivation. Specifically, I decided to focus on who I want to be, not what others think/what others are like. Finally, from *Punished By Rewards*, I have learned to keep in mind that a grade doesn't define me, that the knowledge I gain is really what will help me in the long run, and that no matter how others are getting the A, I should earn it by the knowledge and palpable work I produce (although the grade is not my goal).

So the goals I had made – do all assignments by the due dates; to learn the material, applying it to my life; and to get an A – I accomplished as well as I could. I did all the readings, though I wasn't always able to finish the readings by the discussion date. Whenever I had free time, I would read, but some days I would choose to go to sleep early or hang out with friends. Those days were rare, however. If I didn't read it was usually because I had studying for other classes to do. Of the goals I made each week, I accomplished an average of 3 of the 5 goals. Some extra things I accomplished were reading more chapters than I had planned or making the "Would You Rather" activity for class; writing about 17 journal entries this semester (I didn't write for every chapter of each book, because I am a slow, perfectionist writer and I just didn't have time); and of course I made some great friends! Regarding the last two goals, I did apply the information to my life, and there are no grades... so I made an A in my book! All of my efforts I saved on my computer.

This class has affected the way I will live from now on. I will continue to remind myself of my blessings, to see that I have all I could ever need, and pay attention to the

beauty around me. I will also try to focus on how I can uplift and serve others, because that is really all that will make my life meaningful. I truly enjoyed reading *Positivity!* From *Willpower* and *Punished By Rewards*, I have gained a better understanding of grades & their effect on me. These books have opened my eyes to my selfish heart and the lame motivations that drive me to be disciplined. I am now attempting a motivation change in every practice of discipline I habitually do. I will choose to focus less on the grade and more on the knowledge that will help me in my endeavors to serve God and others. I should be healthy, fit, educated, and well-rounded because it will help me serve and understand God better. Finally, way in the future, if I ever have a family, I will be very cautious about the praise and rewards I give, and I hope to instill in my children a love for discipline and learning.

A



Samantha Russell

GISAT 160

December 9, 2012

### Exit Essay

When I first found out that I would be taking a critical thinking course, I was honestly not too excited. I'm not much of a fan of the types of classes that don't have a strict curriculum, and are more based on thinking freely. I work better in classes that have a specific structure, as well as strict lesson plans and grades because it forces me to stay on task and learn the material or else I will not succeed. This class was completely different than any other class I had ever taken. While I did expect it to be a discussion-based course, I didn't expect it to be so lightly structured.

On the first day of class when we were informed that we would get to pick our own grades, I was in disbelief because I thought there would be no way that any professor would do this. I mean, we're in college now, there is no way it could be this easy. After that first class, I thought that there must be some sort of catch. While it turns out that we did have to actually work to "deserve" the grade that we chose, we would still be able to choose any grade that we wanted. As much as I would've liked for this system to work for me, this type of environment was not one that I was extremely successful in.

We started out the year by picking goals for the entire semester, and each week we would fill out surveys and pick goals that we would complete each week. At the beginning of the semester, I met most of my goals, and was pretty consistent with filling out the weekly surveys. Usually my goals consisted of completing the daily readings, posting journal entries, and sometimes getting work done for other classes. Initially, I was pretty consistent with the readings, however not so much with the journal entries. I was usually content with doing the

reading that I often neglected to take a few short minutes to post a journal entry about it. However with my other goals of completing work for other classes, I was almost always successful.

The issue wasn't that I wasn't interested in the books we were reading in this class, because I was able to relate my life to all of them in some aspect. The issue lay in the fact that I had other work that would get graded, where I was simply reading these books so I would be able to participate in a discussion in class. It was very difficult to motivate myself to read these books when I knew that I could still get the same grade even if I didn't read. This was very disappointing for me because it became more apparent that I am not an intrinsically motivated person. I was able to reflect on many other aspects of my life and the reasons why I do certain things. The only reason I run on my own is because my coach will yell at me if I'm not in shape and I won't get any playing time. The only reason I study is because if I don't I won't get good grades, and then my parents will be disappointed in me.

The format of this class did, however, teach me a little bit about myself, and made me more aware of certain things that work for me, and things that I need to work on. As it turns out, making goals did seem to work for certain things. When I made goals for other classes such as making a study guide to prepare for an upcoming class, or making a schedule to work on a project, I was able to stay on task because I would reward myself with getting a milkshake or something like that. It made me realize, however, that I ultimately needed some sort of reward or else I wouldn't have the motivation to get anything done.

I would love to go along with the class and say that grades are not necessary, and that people will do better work when they aren't under pressure to get a good grade. However, I don't see how there is any way that people will actually go along with this idea. Grades have been in

place for too long, and in reality, grades are the only reason that many people actually produce some amount of work. The only way that this structure could work would be if it were uniform throughout all classes. Then the only reason students would have to choose between which work to complete and which they can put to the side will be based on what subjects they have more interest in, which will ultimately lead to whichever career they choose to pursue.

This class really surprised me in the fact that many people were on board with the idea of having no grades, and there was a lot of solid evidence about why school should be like this. However, I still find myself to be more successful in other classes. I am an extremely competitive person, and I love the thrill of beating people. With that being said, I put more of my effort in to classes that are graded, because it is such a great feeling to have your work pay off, especially when you do better than others. Many people getting annoyed with this mindset, but it is how I get work done and you have to do whatever works for you. If anything, this class made me more aware of whom I am as a person, and gave me some things to think about as well as potentially change about myself.

A

Julia McGinn

11 December 2012

GISAT 160 Self/Class Reflection

Last semester I took this same class and received an appalling grade because of my own lack of motivation/not caring, along with other things that are entirely my fault. Coming in to repeat this class, I expected to have more self-discipline and a better environment than the last semester, but with the same topics and papers that I had no interest in from last semester. From day one I knew this was a much better fit for me than the last GISAT 160, where I sat in the very back and paid attention only when necessary. My goal for the semester was originally just to pass the class with an A, and since we choose our own grades I figured my goal was already accomplished. But having started the reading about positive life changes and writing down goals for each week was more helpful to my productivity than I could have imagined.

Since about mid semester, I knew that the major I have now isn't the one I really wanted, and decided to change to Psychology (what I really wanted from the start). Each week for the self evaluation emails, I would have at least one goal pertaining to changing my major and getting settled for next semester. I've accomplished more in the months of October and November involving my college future than I have over the summer with parents breathing down my neck and nagging me all day. The fact that I switched majors, set up a course list for the next three semesters, and developed active plans to study abroad in Australia, all without nagging or prompting, made me more proud of myself than I've felt in a long while. I felt like an adult with my life laid neatly out in front of me, instead of a college kid waiting for life to happen. I have my course plan and my current schedule all set for proof of my accomplished goals, along with my parents saying yes to me studying abroad!

This class taught me a lot about the potential that I have to run my life the way I want it; instead of getting things done because I *have* to get them done or because I don't want my parents nagging me, I'm getting them done because I *want* them to get done. This really means a lot to me in terms of me moving forward in life; the fact that I'm making such great strides with my future plans in such a short amount of time by just my own motivation is a big deal for me, and I'm going to continue setting goals each week/month to keep it up. I've never felt more organized or sure of my abilities, and not having my parents nag me about grades or my to-do list has been more of a weight off my shoulders than I thought it would be.

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A

I came to college under the assumption that I would reach some sort of existential enlightenment. I figured I would find myself through my predominantly general education course schedule. I expected much more than what came to be. I am pleased with my college experience so far, once I realized I had four years to reach a higher state of being. I lowered the expectation of becoming learned over night.

My expectation for this course was that it would be a boring class about science and technology. When my advisor told me that this was my top choice, I was wondering what had to have been going through my head when I picked it. I have zero interest in majoring in science or technology. I think fate works in funny ways though, because if it weren't for this class, I wouldn't have met my best friends, or learned about meditation. I had known about meditation before, but I wouldn't have sought out meditation club without this class.

I did not have a specific goal for this course in the beginning. I feel as if total enlightenment is a bit over zealous. Jessie and I came up with a real goal the last week of class. Jessie emailed Valerie Strauss at the Washington Post, who wrote an article on why kids don't like school. She offered us the possibility of writing on her blog. We were thinking of co-writing an opinion piece using *Punishment By Rewards* as our evidence. It is neat to think that we are going to be using our knowledge from a class outside of class. I feel as if often knowledge doesn't leave the classroom and get applied to the real world unless people have an actual interest in the subject. Because of the way this course was structured, we were able to take more time on concepts that interest us.

Our team goal was to send out a survey to teachers about grades and the grading system. We did not meet that goal. But, when one door closes another opens. I feel as if this opportunity to write for a renowned blog is a new open door. We are going to reach more people than if we just ask teachers at JMU if they think a system without grades would work.

Moving forward we are going to have our work cut out for us. We are going to spread the word and hopefully it won't fall on deaf ears. This class may be over, but we will continue using what we learned in the real world. I hope our articles and the possibility of meeting with President Alger end up sparking up more discussions and starting a movement. We can't keep blaming why things are the way they are on society. We are society, so if we want a change we can't just whine about it, we have to do something. I plan on *doing something*.

A

Josh Hardy

During this course I did not know what to expect. I had taken a critical thinking before in the past, but nothing like this course. I can just recall the very first class that was scheduled; I missed it because I had gotten my schedule mixed up. I was terrified and was thinking I may get dropped, and that you would be like an ordinary professor and look down on me for missing your class. I rushed to talk to you and plead my case. I can still remember you walking in casually and saying "what's up"? I told you my name and what had happened earlier that day. You said hey everybody is human and they mess up; I mess up all the time no big deal, and further proceeded to talk about the structure of the semester. I had felt a huge weight lift off my shoulder as you talked more about what we would learn about this year. From that moment on I knew that this would be the course I would enjoy the most. Walking in the first day and not knowing anybody I picked a seat with Joe, Lemende', and Kevin who would all turn out to be my friends later on. We all looked at each other and said this is it, referring to our meditation. I have never meditated before; I did not know what to expect, so I went in with an open mind. From the quick five minutes of meditating I was hooked. I meditate frequently before tests, and before I study. It helps me calm down and decrease my stress levels for a more effective study session or test. Before this class as I mentioned before I have never meditated, but now I talk to all my friends about it and I feel like a salesman trying to convince them to do it as well. Our class discussions were all over the place but at the end of the class it all came back to something I would hang onto for more than just a couple weeks. The first article we were assigned, I was blown away to know that college students today do not retain a lot of what they had learned, and most of them with me included just spit out what I memorized and totally forget about it the following week. One of the many things that really made an impact on my life in this class was when the former JMU students came in to talk to us about life after JMU. Being a skeptic I was being ignorant and narrowing minded thinking this is just some sales pitch to go into ISAT. As they began to talk about their careers and successes and fails it really got me thinking and within five minutes I was very excited to hear more about what they had to say. One of the former students gave very pivotal information on getting jobs and what to do and say at in interview. When I was picking up little things that we would mention I thought to myself, "I would never get this in any other class, I am in a class that

is giving me advantages in life and being fun at the same time". The material that we covered in this course will forever stick to me as not only a student but successful person as well. When I went home to Michigan I was so excited for people to ask me how JMU was and what I had learned. Thinking back I had nothing to say about any of my classes besides this one. I was preaching about how amazing meditation was, and how I did not have to read a book but I would anyway because it was my choice, also just being positive and trying to be like you. I tried not to judge anybody at any time until I knew what was going on in their life. It was tough but throughout this year that one principal as made me a much more mature person. My friends and family could see how happy I was and how in a short three months I have become a completely different person. I want to thank you for everything you have taught me. I will use everything that I have learned in course in my life every day, and I do not think I could say that for any other course but this one. Though you are just doing your job, you are changing lives for the better and making them realize their true potential. I am doing things that I thought would take me a long period of time to do. For instance, after the JMU students talked to us about careers and volunteering I went up to the president of public health asking for a list of places I could volunteer. All in all this has been my favorite class all year; it was a relaxed environment with TONS of learning, thank you for providing me life lessons that I will forever use and grow further as a person.

A



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# EXIT ESSAY – CRITICAL THINKING

When I walked in to this class on the first day, I was honestly expecting a bogus class that I would be bored with and drag myself through for the missing general education credit that JMU stuck me with. I was expecting countless pointless essays about feelings and whatever else that would drive me insane. I am happy to say that I was wrong.

I have actually enjoyed this class, to my astonishment; a theme that has repeated itself twice this semester. Never judge a course by its course title! If you are curious, the other class is Technical Writing with Julie Sorge Way. She is a great professor and I enjoyed her class immensely whilst I hate writing.

Concerning the goals, let me first say that I did not make a habit of setting weekly goals. While having short term goals is a good idea, I felt that the exercise was pointless for me. I had the same goals every week, and for the most part I accomplished those goals. My goals were things like “successfully balance my school and work” and “wake up on time for Morgan’s Class”, “get such and such assignment done”. My schedule is so stressed that the only time I really had to think about goals was in your class.

Did I meet all my goals? Most certainly not. If I had made all my goals, they would not be very good goals now would they? However, having the few goals that I did have motivated me to be more careful with my time, therefore helping me accomplish more than I might would have before. As for evidence, I passed all my classes, got positive reviews at work, have a wonderful gal who loves me to death, and a couple of families I wouldn’t trade for anything. All my other physical evidence resides in my personal journal which I write in whenever I feel like I need to and have time.

Going forward from here I see one major thing that will make a difference in my future, and I have you to thank for that directly. You can never know the full impact of what you say to someone will have; but when we were having class discussion about “it stinks that we are in this grading system”, you said “All I hear is a bunch of

complaining about how it's unfair. I want to know, what are *you* going to do about it?" You may not have been talking directly to me, but it hit home for me. It's only a shame, like you said, that it took all semester to get there.

Since, I have held an attitude reflective of "What are you going to do about it?" which will probably change the way I think for the rest of my life. Thank you for that, and thank you for an intriguing thought filled semester. Hopefully we will be keeping in touch, I'm sure I'll see you around.

Bryan Conner.



Joe Clark

Morgan Benton

GISAT 160

11 December 2012

When the class started I didn't know what to expect until the first day because it was my very first time stepping foot in a college class. I was surprised to find that the class was nothing like I expected a normal college course to go. I thought that you were going to lecture us about how to solve specific problems and apply them to technology. More like a math class if anything. I was very glad it was nothing like that. I really liked that after attending the first class I learned that we were going to be discussing the books and once you briefly discussed the books I was eager to start reading them. I'm glad that you brought up how everyone comes in at a different starting point and everyone learns at different paces and gets different things out of each course because I think that helped me learn everything that I got out of this course.

After the first week a short term and long term goal that I set for myself was to read each chapter and be prepared to discuss them and to make sure to keep up with that and read every single book that was assigned in class. I feel that I really achieved this because of all that I learned from the class. I loved how in the last book we read "Punished by Rewards" that people are more enthusiastic when they feel a sense of belonging and see themselves as part of a community. And also that you can't motivate people. All you can do is set up conditions to maximize the chances

that they develop a genuine interest in what they're doing. Also, in the book "Willpower" I found it cool that high self-esteem doesn't lead to better grades because that is generally what you're taught and how parents try to motivate you and it's odd to find out that that actually doesn't work at all.

My evidence for the goals that I set would be the fact that I am much more positive in my life. I am usually the person that my friends go to when they need some help or just when they feel in the dumps, and after reading the books I have been able to help them so much more. My one friend found it almost life changing when I showed him the book "Positivity" and showed him all of the ways he can go about increasing his daily life with all those simple steps.

For my future, this means I can be a better person and think more critically to analyze situations. Also, when I am raising my child whenever I have one, I will be able to better prepare him/her for life and raise him/her to have self-control as opposed to just self-esteem so that he/she can be successful in life. This has also benefitted me in the same way. I also really liked the meditating before beginning class because it really got me into focus to learn and pay full attention to what's going on in the class. I use that technique every time before I sit down to start studying. This class has been an eye opener as to how there are completely different approaches to teaching a class, and you can have no grades or attendance policy and I would still actually want to read and learn everything that you taught so well.

I feel that I got a great deal out of this class and am very satisfied that I took this course. I feel that I earned an A based off of the amount that I learned and how much more knowledge I have acquired since I started your class.

### ***Exit Essay***

My expectations for this course originally without having set foot in the classroom was to meet my general education requirement for James Madison University, which was my only mindset. After August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012, when I was actually met Morgan, heard about the course and it's objectives for the semester I was actually really excited to get started. I remember questioning, what does Morgan mean by the main question of this entire semester course is grades and grading, that won't be enough material to cover in a semester. This will be such an easy course, that I will be able to slack off in and zone out in, but who knew that this would turn into something that I obsessively talk about. I expected to come to class, put in a little effort with minimal care and cooperation with others around me because it was only a Gen-Ed and get a good grade learning about grades and grading policies and how they came to be.

Then, after about a week I was in love with this class already; Morgan wanted to teach us how to critically think about topics we were interested in. He assigned readings that opened our eyes to perspectives we had never even been exposed to, then he freely allowed us to critically think about what we had read and pick one topic that stuck out to us and journal about it. After journaling about it, we were instructed to post it on a website for our peers to openly read. The entire semester we read books that changed the way we thought, and then were free to take our journal entries in any direction we wanted, but the best part about this was that there was never any deadlines, restrictions, or grades. This allowed for the ultimate creativity if you allowed for it and I never understood that until writing this now

and looking at how much I have accomplished in this class and my passion for this class compared to my other classes.

My goals for this class became pretty clear after attending a few classes and learning a little bit about the class. One goal that became pretty clear right away was that I wanted to do my semester project on Lyme disease, since that is something that I was passionate on therefore making it something that I was more likely to accomplish. Second goal was that I was going to give this class an honest shot just to see what it was all about, which in turn got me hooked. I began making small regular goals like journaling for almost every chapter I read just because there was always something that amazed me, how could I not? Third goal, try to educate people on this class and the concepts that I have learned in this class. Fourth goal for this class became trying to just accept the way it was because it was very unconventional from how I am used to and sometimes it takes an adjustment period especially because I am used to such a structured life. I do everything in a timely manner with deadlines defined by numbers and I think that causes me a lot of depression and anxiety. I realized when the self-evaluation didn't come two weeks in a row because apparently I had been unsubscribed for whatever reason I felt like I was missing out something that needed to be done and I couldn't accept that it wasn't done. I texted Anna, she had gotten her self-evaluation, I emailed Morgan, he didn't respond, so I brought it up to his attention on Friday in class and it took him an entire week to figure out that I had unsubscribed to the emails. This small example made me realize that I had fallen into the vicious traps of society and that I needed to wake up fast before it was too late. No one else was remotely concerned

about his or her grade or completing work or even showing up because there was no attendance policy.

I did meet my first goal! I wrote a great cover letter with attached statistical evidence with Anna and Kelsey to United Healthcare. The letter was in regards to United Healthcare failing to cover long term antibiotic use for Lyme disease and thereby violating my benefits as a patient. This was a huge accomplishment in my eyes because I feel so passionately about Lyme disease and it's effects. I was able to write a letter to United Healthcare, while educating Anna and Kelsey in the process. But, the best part of all was that this was all for a class; we were able to have autonomy in my curriculum therefore we picked a challenging project. It took awhile to compose the data. It was not as easy as it may look. I also met my second goal of giving this class an honest chance, and in all seriousness that turned out to be for my benefit. Like Morgan one day told me, you are always evaluating yourself, you do not need a weekly self-evaluation, but it is different when you set weekly goals. I have always set goals for myself but never 5 weekly SMART goals, which were not always going to be met. It pushed me; then I would reflect back on the week every Wednesday. I needed this class, but out of that scope I needed it for so many other reasons. I have learned more about grades and grading then I ever knew existed. Sometimes our readings would make me depressed as funny as that may seem, but I think that is because I would truly think about them and wonder why if we know all of this information do we still have the same information, what are alternatives, what can I do? My third goal was to educate people on this class and it's objectives; I have accomplished this goal partially, but plan to continue. I

emailed Evan back today and said that I would like to be on the committee that goes to talk to JMU Provost to take it further. I have been spreading the ideas I have learned about because the class is constantly on my mind; I want to change the current grading system. These were just my long-term goals; I had a lot of short-term goals attached in my portfolio that were from my weekly self-evaluations.

I now have a deeper understanding of how to think about important topics that society is facing with new perspectives, but not only that, now I can also apply it to the challenges in my own life. I really hope that the meeting with JMU provost goes well and that we are able to generate a good discussion with our ideas that we have learned this semester. I am going to spread the wealth of knowledge that I have learned about grades and grading as much as I can because that is how ideas spread and how change occurs over time. But, in our JMU community I wonder if after the JMU provost, I could reach out to Dr. Warner. I am already planning to meet with him next semester to discuss some other ideas I wanted to bounce off of him, maybe I could throw this one in there too and see what his thoughts were. He seems to be a highly respected man of James Madison University. I know for a fact that I do not want to be a product of the system anymore and that I am tired of numbers defining me. I hate that since I was born all I have been in society is a number, before this class I was nothing more. Now I am creativity, color, imagination, freedom, possibilities, and accepting a C in political science because I did the best I could and at the end of the day a C is not who I am and it does not define me. Depending on how it goes with the JMU Provost, maybe I could even talk the committee even spreading the idea to the Harrisonburg Public School systems



and seeing how they react to the idea. The idea needs to be shared and spread; they may not take to it right away but it only takes one faculty member to catch on and do more research of their own and to keep gaining supporters, that is how change occurs!

## Critical Thinking Final Paper

### Evan Duffy-Ledbetter

#### Expectations-

The first day of class you told us we get to pick our own grade. At the end of the semester, we could tell you what grade we wanted, and you would give it to us with no questions asked. You said we did not have to attend class, complete homework assignments, participate in discussions, or any other work pertaining to this class. It was totally up to us. Naturally, I was extremely relieved. I told myself, and my parents that I'd go to class, do the homework, and put in effort despite having an automatic A already in mind. I didn't expect much else beside this though. I thought I would take away from this class as much as I do all my others (very little information relevant to my life). I expected just another regular class, but this time with no grade and little stress. I expected the regular homework, readings, and projects or tests. The one thing I expected that was different from my other classes, however, is the amount of stress. From the beginning, I was relaxed. I already had the A, so why stress about it? I knew I could come to class with little worry, making me more open to new ideas and more able to actually absorb and retain the information taught.

#### Goals-

Right away I set some general goals: I wanted to come to class and read the assigned articles/chapters on a daily basis. These first goals were important to me because I knew I had to at least make some sort of effort, even though I didn't necessarily need to. As the semester progressed, we were given weekly goals and evaluations of these goals. I filled them out and make smaller, more precise goals (such as come up with a group project idea). But soon, I began to shy away from completing these goals and writing journals. I still read and attended class, but just gave little effort in other things. I felt that the journals and weekly goals contributed nothing to me. I received no feedback from you, so I felt that they were unimportant. I did, however, still wish to complete my final project. This goal haunted me the whole semester as I fell out of love with my original idea. My mom pushed and pushed for me to think of new ideas to keep up with my goal to complete it.

#### How I Faired-

I did not keep up with all of my goals. I did attend class almost everyday, only missing one due to not giving a crap. I also read almost all of the assignments/books (I read half of Willpower then stopped). I only stopped reading Willpower because it didn't seem applicable to my ideas/beliefs. I felt that these scientific study-based books were stupid and dense at first, but now I appreciate them in building my critical thinking skills. One must provide evidence and have research and studies to make up his or her claims. This is why we must write this paper, to provide evidence for our wanting a certain grade. I did, as mentioned earlier, fail to keep up with the weekly goals and journal entries. I just did not feel they were important to the class or myself. I somewhat kept up with the final project goal. I set specific goals and deadlines to complete it, but when my original idea seemed uninteresting, I quickly

shoved the project to the back of my mind. My mom pushed me to think of more ideas and I got back on track to complete it. I completed research to form both supporting evidence and rejecting evidence to place relevance in my idea. I completed my own study, but not many participated in it. This is where I "somewhat completed" my goal. However, my email to Mr. Alger did interfere with this goal as I was overcome with passion and ideas that shifted my focus.

#### In the Future-

I learned a lot of valuable lessons that I can apply to the future. I will go on a whim and say most, if not all, were not expected to be learned in the beginning of the year. I learned that although happiness is extremely important, sometimes you have to suck it up, bite the bullet, and do what you are told. I learned this through the readings that sometimes I did not want to do, but the class depended on me to be prepared. I already used this when I seriously thought about dropping out of school. Instead, I sucked it up and realized I am not going to enjoy everything, but should just do it anyways. Another important lesson I learned was to take action. One cannot just wait for someone else to take action, he or she must do it themselves. I learned this when we all agreed that not having grades is a great idea, but asked over and over "What can WE do about it?" No one could ever come up with an answer. We all just thought someone else would figure it out. I decided to take action and figure it out myself. The last important thing I took away from this class was the book Positivity. I really enjoyed this book and was inspired by it. I took some of its ideas and wrote them on sticky notes and stuck them to my door. Some of these notes include smile, be open-minded, have an open heart, be friendly, think of my mom and all she has done for me, be appreciative, visualize the future, socialize with others, be passionate, don't stress, and things of that nature. I will continue to live my life by these principles and re-read Positivity every couple of months. Last, but certainly not least, I learned about the truth about punishments and rewards and how society could benefit without them. Obviously to change all of society would be tough, but maybe changing education is more plausible. I am not sure what will come from this meeting with the JMU Provost administrator, but I hope its something good. Although I may have learned hundreds of more ideas in this class, I feel as these four are the most applicable and important for me to keep in use throughout life.

A

Semester Project  
Evan Duffy-Ledbetter

1. Idea- Is there a relationship between the absence of 1 or more parents on a kids' leadership abilities?

1. Research-

- a. Refuting- Among 18–22 year olds from disrupted families, 65% had poor relationships with their fathers and 30% with their mothers, 25% had dropped out of high school, and 40% had received psychological help. <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/fam/7/1/91/>
- b. Refuting- From 1970-1980, single parent numbers jumped by 20%, showing a decrease in academic achievement from kids. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2112335?seq=1>
- c. Supporting- According to a study at Cornell University, positive single parenting did not show any negative impact on the social and educational development of the 12- and 13-year-olds participating in the study. In addition, children in single-parent families may exhibit strong responsibility skills, as they are often called upon to help out more with family chores and tasks.
- d. Supporting- 14 out of 44 (32%) United States Presidents have come from families missing 1 or more parents.

2. Study-

- a. Participants- Only 14 people took the survey, sent it out on Facebook and Twitter
- b. Results-
  - i. 0 were raised by 1 or less parents
  - ii. 3 of 14 from "normal" families had qualifications to be leaders

3. Explanation- This may not seem like a lot of effort, but I asked my group to help out with research and to send the study to their friends. Unfortunately, they were pretty casual with this project and didn't follow through on their promises.

My college adviser didn't give me much choice deciding what critical thinking class to take for my freshman general education class. I'm a biotechnology major and I would be taking this class. That was it. Don't get me wrong but I didn't choose biotechnology because I like cells and want to work all day with them. I choose this major because I need money. I think, if I could, I would've done something with music or with english. Anyway I was not looking forward to another science/technology class, seeing as the next four years of my life will be nothing but science and technology. My expectation was this was going to be just another science class. I thought, maybe, that we would discuss recent science problems and theoretically find solutions for them. Thankfully, I was surprised.

Honestly my only goal for this semester of college was get organized and settled into this new lifestyle. Unfortunately taking chemistry, chemistry lab, biology, and biology lab I didn't get any of that done. This whole semester I felt as though I was about to break down at any moment. I can't tell you how often, I wished I could've been like my roommate or suitemates, taking general education music classes or psychology electives. Instead I spent hours in the study room. Now, it just seems like that was a waist too because I'll have to retake chemistry again. I realize now that my goal for ISAT 160 was in fact not to fail. I was so focused on so many other things, so eventually ISAT fell on the back burner. I felt like my group started out really putting effort into our group project, but over time and as the semester started bring more work, our project got put on hold. I think it wasn't until the final book that this class started clicking for me. This was stuff that was happing to me. I felt helpless under the rule of grades. I felt like there was no creativity behind anything I was doing.

Now, don't get me wrong. I was listening and trying to add to class the whole time. I wrote about 16 journal entries. I tried reading every single chapter assigned. My group wrote our

proposal. We presented our chapters in ways that we thought people could relate more too. I tried, we tried, but it all didn't seem to matter because it wasn't changing anything. Courtney and I were inspired; I'm not sure by what. I was online reading articles by people who had similar things to say as Alfie Kohn. I came to an opinion piece in the Washington Post about why kids hate school. I read it and actually could relate things I learned in class to the article. It also struck me how much people just didn't care about the information she presented too. Most people commented with "I made an account with the Washington post just to say how stupid this article was." Or "complete bullshit". I showed Courtney and sent the women an email. A day or two after she emailed us back, saying if we ever wanted to write an article for her blog we could. We could reach so many more people this way. My goal ended up changing from trying not to fail, to trying to make change.

In short, I may have not succeeding in fulfilling my original goal for this class but I found a new life goal instead. For once I feel I can be the difference; I'm tired of sitting around having people tell me what to do, what classes to take, and what I should be doing with my major. I want to finally make a change. I think this class was the start of something great for me. Now I just have to look to the future and decide what's next. We are going to write that article. Our class hopefully will talk to President Alger. And fingers crossed, I'm going to get an A in Dr. Benton's class.

Connor Coward

12-10-12

Exit Essay

When I was entering GISAT 160 my expectations were the same as most college kids. I was scared of having a really tough no nonsense teacher. I was expecting my teacher not to care whether or not I learned anything in the class. I was also expecting there to be so much work that I wouldn't enjoy the class at all. I was expecting all the readings to be boring and not of any interest to me.

When I got into the class and realized that this class would not fit my stereotype I changed my goals and expectations for myself. My goal in this class changed from getting a really good grade to getting as much out of the class as possible. One of my goals was to read all of the assigned books and understand them. Another one of my goals was to come too all of the classes. I did not achieve this goal. I was sick far to many times to achieve this goal. My last and most important goal for this class was to be involved in all of the discussions and have a solid understanding of the concepts we were discussing.

The only goal of mine that I did not achieve was my attendance goal. Although I was not there for all of the classes I had a solid grip on all the concepts we discussed. I read all of the books and took notes on what I thought was important. Although it may have not looked like it I think I was just as if not more aware of the things we were discussing in class. I also think I have a better understanding of different point of views when it comes to the things we discussed.

Moving forward I now have a clearer point of view. I also now have a different perspective on college professors and their different views. I also can use the things I have learned in this class in my other classes. I am excited to use what I have learned in the future.

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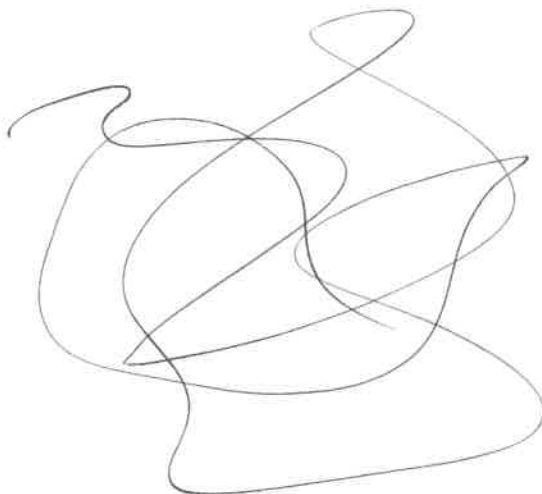
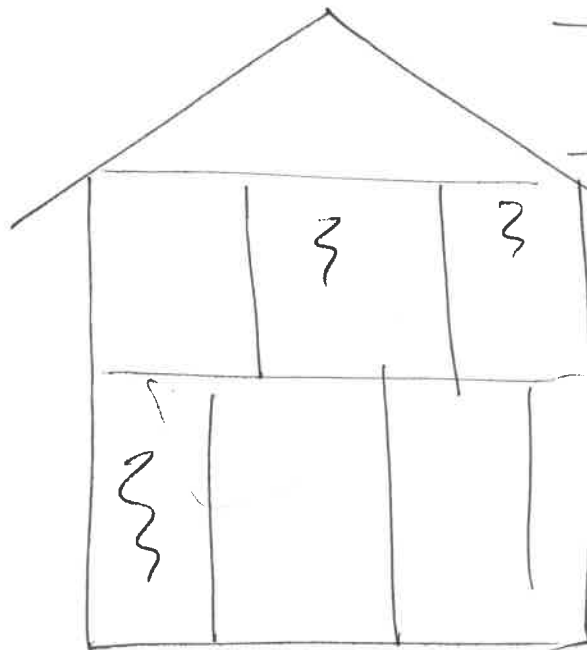
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Hung Do  
GISAT 160  
12/11/2012

Throughout this semester, I have learned many things that allowed me have different perspective on education and life. At the beginning of the semester, my expectation was to make this semester a better semester than last semester. I wanted to make new friends, and be more active in more organizations. It was hard at first because I am not good at expressing myself to people. I have a low self-esteem which makes hard to communicate to people. In order to meet my expectation, I have set a few goals for myself this semester. My goals that I have set for myself are to work out more often and eat healthy. It was tough because I tried to wake up really early 3 days a week to go workout and I have to go to class right after. One of the things that kept me going was listening to the discussion of the book *Willpower* in class. I was able to hear different experiences from my classmates of how willpower helped them deal with obstacles in their life like work, school, relationship problems and life in general.

The goals I have set for myself were hard, but I kept on going. There were times when obstacles prevent me from working out. I almost gave up on exercising because it was such a long process. However, I have met some really amazing people that push me through. I have not met my goal yet, but I have notice the changes inside me with each day come by. I have become to be more positive on many things. By working out, I gain more self-confidence to talk to other people. I used to be self-conscious about my accent when I talk to other. My body also does not feel lazy all the time. Although the result is not that noticeable, but I know that I will achieve a lot if I keep working on my goals.

I have learned that the goal I have set for myself is not short-term. It is a long term goal that even when I have accomplished the goal, I have to continue to maintain that goal for the rest of my life. This is a lesson in itself because it shows me that there are things in the future that will need as much commitment. You cannot do thing half-heartedly or you will fail which is why willpower is really important. It is what allows you to keep on pushing forward so that you will be successful one day.

A

