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Honors World Civilization from 1500
Honors Speech
Honors Geology
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Reflections Portfolio

Long before I became a member of the NWACC Honors Program, I kept seeing frequent reminders of Honors classes being offered. I asked friends how to register for one of those, and the answer always was, “I dunno know” or “You have to be invited.” I left those classes alone but kept watching for them. One day in 2016 I met Sabrina Chesne who finally answered my questions about the program. I knew that was the avenue I wanted to follow. I enrolled in Sevin Gallo’s World Civilization from 1500 Honors class, and I was hooked.

Engaging in Curiosity

In each of my Honors classes, the instructor expected a certain quality of work from the students, and I feel they had that prerogative. I loved how they gave us freedom to complete lessons instead of hounding us. The three Honors instructors I had always put the syllabus out there, expected students to read it and complete work on time. Dr. Gallo, Mr. Turner, and Professor Phillips set the bar high, and I found myself thriving! They gave the assignment and held my hand if I asked them, but often I was on my own completing the assignments.

Sevin Gallo’s class – World Civilization from 1500-Spring 2017

The big take-away from Dr. Gallo’s class was a result of those precis she had us write EVERY week. I finally figured out she didn’t want a synopsis of the article; she wanted CRITICAL analysis. What was the tone, what was the author’s purpose, what was the reason for writing the article? Currently I read newspapers, books, and other materials focusing on those criteria. It is a great skill, and it will serve me well for a long time.

Mr. Turner’s Class-Honors Speech-Fall 2017

I dreaded this public speaking class A LOT. I was so nervous about giving my first speech that I was surprised I made it to NWACC in one piece! As the semester progressed, Mr. Turner required research to be incorporated into our speeches. I LOVED THAT! I always used visual aids to add more substance to my speech. I felt it added to my presentation, though it was not required. I dared myself to have a PowerPoint presentation to bring depth to my speech. Most of the other students were doing it, so why couldn’t I? I am very computer challenged but made PowerPoints in Dr. Gallo’s class, why couldn’t I do this? I rehearsed and rehearsed with the PowerPoint to narrow my speech down to the time limit. I had a few technical issues getting started, but I did it. Hopefully no one knew this was a big deal this was for me, but I KNEW. I was pleased. This is the point I am trying to make with Honors classes: just being in them makes me want to do more and stretch beyond my comfort level. I DID it!

Professor Phillips's Honors Geology Class- Spring 2018

Professor Phillips gives an assignment and requires us to complete it without reminding us 400 times. I like that. We have this massive volcano project to turn in at the end of this semester. She gave us the rubric and expects us to do what she requests. I find that refreshing.

Exploring Perspectives-Examining Different Viewpoints

I believe this was a clear goal in Dr. Gallo's class while reading diversified articles to write our precis. I don't think I would have ever watched the "*Motorcycle Diaries*" and other materials she presented in class, and it expanded my learning palette. I liked most of the articles, but some were lacked compelling ideas. It wasn't my place to create the assignment, but Dr. Gallo made me richer in broadening my reading material.

Examining different viewpoints was also evident in Mr. Turner's Speech class in positive and negative ways for me. I liked the positive aspect of centering the speech around research. I often found research both on liberal and conservative websites, including library databases. The negative feature of that class occurred when we were required to pick a controversial topic for a debate. My group picked the very polarizing topic of removing the Confederate statues. The majority of the group was very much in favor of placing the statues in a museum. That is not my point of view, but I had to go along with the group. Regardless of my personal feelings, I had to work with students and a topic that was highly combustible. I tried to see the issue from their perspective, but I wish they had tried a little harder to see the issue from mine.

In Honors geology, rocks are diverse, but I don't think that is the kind of diversity needed for this reflection!

Demonstrating Engagement

I loved this part of the Honors Program. I didn't know what a Service Learning Project was until I was in Dr. Gallo's class. When I enrolled in Honors speech and geology, Service Learning Projects were not required, but I have continued my involvement in one of the projects I started last spring. Engaging with the community is so important because if you only stay wrapped up in your little NWACC cocoon, then the "real world" comes as a shock. I am glad this is a part of the Honors Program, because it makes a student properly balance time between assignments and giving back to others. We can become sheltered from the world of people in need and not take advantage of the vast resources Northwest Arkansas has to offer.

The first project was close to home. I live across from an independent living facility, so I started going over there and playing cards with the ladies. I made greeting cards and deconstructed them so the residents could put the cards together to make them their own. I often enlisted the help of my twin daughters while making them. I took flowers to the ladies and just stopped to talk about their day. They were like a building full of grandmothers.



The independent living facility where I interacted with the residents



Example of the Mother's Day card I made



Helping the residents make Mother's Day cards

I also explored a service project that had a food connection because Dr. Gallo's class was centered around food. I contacted the Samaritan House in Rogers to see how they received food for the meals they serve. The director told me they receive food donations from local restaurants. I then visited most of those restaurants and spoke to the managers to learn how they made food donations. Then I took a step further in the process and volunteered in the Samaritan Café.



I volunteered on days they served food from local restaurants and I felt like I made the whole circle in that project. I saw firsthand how the food from restaurants was delivered and how it served those in need. I actually took my daughters back in the summer every Thursday so they could hand out Snack Packs to kids. Believe me, this was a very out-of-their-comfort zone experience, but it made them more aware of those in need around us.

This semester a Service Learning Project was offered that centered around History Day. I have been a part of History Day since 2013 while taking Dr. Forrester's Arkansas History class.

I volunteered for Dr. Forrester in advance of the Regional 10 competition, served as a Judge Captain, and helped with whatever Dr. Forrester needed after I finished judging. I believe in the History Day goals and like to make sure this day runs smoothly for Dr. Forrester and the competing students.



I saved the best project for last. My friend, Rebecca Booth, is an ESL teacher at Elmwood Middle School in Rogers. Rebecca and I attend the same Bible Study, and she asked our group if we knew anyone who could come and read with her students. I felt like I could help since I had been an elementary teacher and had taught sixth grade for five years. So, I volunteered and this experience turned out to be fulfilling for everyone. I tutor about eight or nine students in two different periods once a week at Elmwood. I have been blessed beyond measure for my involvement. There are students who will be leaving Elmwood and going to high school so this may be their last opportunity for someone to help them with reading English. I started by working with the Dolch Sight Words, but rapidly moved into Dr. Seuss and story books. A couple of times I didn't think I could juggle my schedule to fit going to Elmwood, but I always have been able to figure something out. Initially, I encountered reluctant students, but in the end, they have come around and become confident and enthusiastic about wanting to read with me. I almost always walk back into the classroom with them and brag on them to Mrs. Booth and in front of their peers. I enjoy their glowing, smiling faces. I will miss those that are going on to high school, but know that I will continue to tutor in Mrs. Booth's class after I leave NWACC.

Skills I Would Tell My Daughters That They Can Find In An Honors Program

The hard skill I found by being a part of the Honors Program at NWACC is that I could push myself further and accomplish more than I thought I could do. I have always extended myself while at NWACC more than I did while getting my Bachelor of Science in Education

and Master of Arts in Guidance and Counseling. Being a part of the Honors Program meant the drive had to come from me; the teacher wasn't going to do it for me. I found a ravenous quest for continued knowledge, I found the confidence to excel. Even when I wasn't officially in the Honors program, I did the extra credit whether I needed it or not. I strove to make the highest grade in the class. This motivation translates to the work place environment. An employer often doesn't want the minimum output from an employee, but wants the best effort every time. A boss isn't going to hold a subordinate's hand. He/she expects results on a timely basis. I also found there are skills I was asked to do such as write a one-page precis over 150 pages long, something I didn't think I could do. In the business world, employees are often asked to complete tasks they don't think they can do, they have never met that challenge, yet it becomes easier and easier. I have been amazed about how I have satisfied teacher requirements. I rose up to the challenge and met it. The soft skill I will take with me from being in the Honors Program is this knowledge: MORE CONFIDENCE in myself to do what I thought I could not do at the beginning of a semester. Priceless!

Memorable Experience to Share

I will remember most about being in the Honors Program is being around so many different people. I worked with the underprivileged at the Samaritan Café. I met a homeless man who was so grateful for everything he had and came to the café to serve others less fortunate than him. I met these wonderful ladies and some of their families at the independent living center. I loved being around middle school students who really looked forward to someone taking time to read with them. I am richer for being around the other Honors students at NWACC. I don't believe there was one experience or event that is memorable to me. Each experience I have had the privilege to learn from has helped me become a richer and wiser person.

Advice for New Members

My advice for new members is simply put: Work hard and don't gripe about it. Being in the Honors Program is optional and if you don't want to work hard, don't take Honors classes. There must be some reason why you signed up for this program, so meet the challenge. Do it with all your might and be proud of what you gain personally and professionally. The result is both satisfying and humbling.