

## Succeeding together at the Met

by What Kids Can Do with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

student learning in small schools

## REFLECTION &amp; ACCOUNTABILITY


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Pictures by Cal Wolk

*“You can cheat your way through other high schools and you can cheat your way through elementary and middle school, but here you cannot cheat at all. It’s impossible. When you have to stand in front of everyone and do your exhibition, you’ve got to have something.” — Johnny*

*“We refuse to set a specific content standard, because every student starts at a different place. We do it one student at a time, based on their learning plans. You need to have different ways of setting high standards for different students. A test is not a high enough standard. Using knowledge—grappling with real problems and real people—that’s the real test.” — Elliot Washor, Met co-founder*

[Click here for more student and staff commentary](#)

**A**ssessment at The Met is a decidedly public process. In quarterly written narratives, learning team meetings, and exhibitions, students share their progress and their struggles with advisors, mentors, parents, and in the case of exhibitions, other Met students and staff. In their public exhibitions students must do more than simply present. They must also engage their audience, one that frequently includes community experts on the subject at hand. And they must meet real world standards, making habits of revising work and striving for continuous improvement.

Below, we describe the key structures through which students demonstrate accountability for their learning, with links to student work and other artifacts.

## **NARRATIVE ASSESSMENTS**

Written once every quarter by both student and advisor, narrative assessments at The Met take the place of grades and report cards. These narratives document a student's academic and personal progress, noting specific areas of growth and areas needing attention, and suggest revisions to the subsequent Learning Plan. At the end of each year, students use their quarterly narratives to prepare, with help from their advisor, a one-page transcript, an official and public document that records the year's work and learning.

[Click here](#) for quarterly narratives by a student and advisor.

## **EXHIBITIONS**

At the end of each quarter, students give an exhibition, a roughly 45-minute presentation of work to a panel comprising the advisor, mentor, parent(s), peers, and other Met staff. Students present evidence of progress in all aspects of their Learning Plan and respond to questions and critique from panelists. Students generally prepare thoroughly, practicing during advisory and securing feedback well in advance of their exhibition, which frequently is videotaped to help students improve over time. In addition to reporting on what they have learned, students must make their exhibitions interactive, involving their audience in some way. The Met also requires all students to participate as panel members in exhibitions by their peers.

[Click here](#) for Met student exhibition about helping children in foster care.

## **SENIOR INSTITUTE GATEWAYS**

The 11th and 12th grade years at The Met are referred to as Senior Institute, to which all tenth graders must apply and win acceptance. That process begins with special third and fourth quarter exhibitions (of 45 to 90 minutes in length) called Senior Institute Gateways, where sophomores make their case for entry. In addition to a portfolio of their best work, they present four required letters of recommendation (from the advisor, mentor, parent, and a peer), plus a written defense that shows they are ready to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and to play an active leadership role in school.

[Click here](#) for sample Senior Institute Gateway essay.

## **INTERNALIZING HIGH STANDARDS**

Whatever their prior level of success or failure in school, Met students consistently report that they work harder and learn more than they ever have before. They also speak of enjoying the challenge of such rigorous work. The processes of giving and receiving feedback, collecting a portfolio of work, and making regular public presentations contribute greatly to a school culture that embraces high standards. Knowing that others take one's work seriously leads students to take it seriously themselves, motivating them, for instance, to revise a paper ten times if needed, "to keep improving and taking it to a higher level," as one student says.

[Click here](#) for panel discussion about one student's difficulties and small triumphs.



## REFLECTION & ACCOUNTABILITY | **CLIPBOARD**

### Sources:

[1] “Forty-Three Valedictorians: Graduates of The Met Talk about Their Learning” by Adria Steinberg (Brown Lab, 2000)

[2] Learning Journeys and The Learning Cycle (Met videos, 2000)

[3] *One Kid at a Time* by Eliot Levine (Teachers College Press, 2002).

### *On exhibitions*

**Johnny:** You can cheat your way through other high schools, and you can cheat your way through elementary and middle school, but here you can not cheat at all. It’s impossible. When you have to stand in front of everyone and do your exhibition, you’ve got to have something. [1]

**Anderson:** The first exhibition is pretty stressful, but after that it gets easier to talk in front of all those people. Practicing really helps. When it’s over, it’s really cool to read what the panelists thought of the exhibition. Later my advisor will write a narrative about me and my work for the quarter, and our parents read it, too. [2]

**Freddie:** Before, I had to do reports, but not like the way The Met makes me do it. In the eighth grade I had to tell a little bit about it, maybe two minutes. Here I have to do a half-hour presentation, everything I learned, where I got my information, all that. Unhhh, very painful... My first presentation was a total disaster—it was bad, very bad. The second one, I did the stock market. I found out you could make so much money, so I tried to find out as much information as I could. It was 120 percent better than the first. Some of the people were there for my first, so they saw a big difference. I was nervous, but it just started to flow. It could have gone on for about two hours. [1]

### *On self-understanding*

**Maya:** Every year at The Met, it’s like, oh, I realized something new about myself. It’s not always peaches ’n cream I have to go through. This year, every year, I go through this low point, but that’s also related to out of school issues and that’s what kind of affects you at school. And I talked to my mentor about it —I don’t want it to affect my school things, because I know it can happen, and I’ll probably give up, and I don’t want that to happen. [1]

**Freddie:** What did I learn this year? How to get along with others, especially different races. Like the first quarter, I said, “Wow, all white people.” At Central [High School] they had ’em, but I would never talk to them... But now I just talk to anybody. This school gives you the opportunity to focus on a lot of things that you want to learn and do. Even things you don’t want

to learn, you end up learning it, just general habits. Like shyness, or if you talk a lot, you learn how to control that, your anger. Students in this school had real bad attitudes, now they're all friendly with everybody. The school really changed them. My attitude would take a long time to come out of me, now it never wants to come. [1]

### *On internalizing high standards*

**Nadia:** ...I think next year I can take on more challenging things... My writing I feel like I should keep improving, because I know it's not something you learn and then you learned it. It's something you keep improving at. It has improved a lot, just the way I approach different tasks and the way that I reflect on what I do...

We're constantly comparing ourselves now to ourselves a few months ago... Before I thought this was good; now I think it's just okay and this is better. The standards that our teachers have for us are definitely getting higher. We're going on to more complex things, really proving it with evidence... So every year they do raise the standards, because we are able to do more. And it's always to have standards above and not below, so that way you're not doing any mediocre work; you're doing the best that you can. And I've always set standards for myself that were higher. I try to do that, because if you don't, then you're not always going to try your best. [1]

**Freddie:** You should see some of my first drafts, from my first papers. You'd be like, "hmm, all right," then you'd move on to my next draft, next draft, next draft. You'd see I improved. Sometimes I just skim through them, and I read them. [1]

**Leah:** I used to throw my work out right away. Now I want to keep everything. [1]

**Maya:** I changed the way I do my work. [Before] I did my work, but it wasn't top quality. It was usually just sloppy, just do anything. Now I do more, I concentrate, go into depth with it... I've improved on my writing really a lot. You have like five people go through it to make sure if it's good. First, I read it over, and then I give it to my advisor and then to anyone who wants to read it, other students, people pass it on. Finally I give a copy to Doc and Elliot, and they put it in a big book. My last paper was like 30 drafts. Before, I would just turn things in, no corrections.

They refer to us as the Senior Institute people, and you have to live up to that. The work hasn't gotten harder, but it's more in depth, there's more of it... Now we have to start thinking about senior thesis projects. You can't just make a sugar castle. I used to do that. But these are like something is yours and everybody knows about it. It's not just any project. [1]

**Elliot Washor** [Met co-director]: We refuse to set a specific content standard, because every student starts at a different place. We do it one student at a time, based on their learning plans. You need to have different ways of setting high standards for different students. A test is not a high enough standard. Using knowledge—grappling with real problems and real people—that's the real test. [3]

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## REFLECTION & ACCOUNTABILITY ILLUSTRATIONS

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### 1.0 Quarterly narrative assessments

*The following narratives written by a student and an advisor are from **The Big Picture Learning Cycle: Reflect & Assess It**, one of six booklets developed by The Big Picture Company for students at The Met and other Big Picture schools.*

#### An 11th Grade Student's Third Quarter Narrative

I can only start this narrative by saying, "This has been the most hectic quarter I have ever experienced." The reason I feel this way originates from the human anatomy class I am currently taking at CCRI [Community College of Rhode Island]. I can now relate to the words of my professor when he said, "this is a very demanding class." I attended this class four times a week--Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday for 50 minutes and lab on Friday for 3 hours. I am 11 weeks into the course and can honestly say that I have put all my time and effort into this class. At first, I was skeptical of taking this class because of the different things I had heard. For example, my mentor told me that the class was very hard and because of this, many people failed it and had to take it again. A friend from the physical therapist assistant course I took last semester dropped it because he found it overwhelming. Another person from that same class suggested that I take something easier because human anatomy wasn't a "piece of cake." When I told my human anatomy professor that I was still in high school, he said in amazement something like, "wow, this is the foundation, usually people with some of [the] background take this class.. you should have taken zoology or biology before this course." Something else that could have led to my discouragement was dissecting a cat. I really didn't think I could have

handled such [a] task. What helped me endure was the support I received from my buddy, Debra.

Debra S. is a Met student who also took the class. Without her being my partner, I would have never been able to dissect that smelly cat, which we named "Quisqeya, La Bella." It definitely takes "guts" to skin and part open a dead cat, which is why I considered it a need to apply the personal quality, perseverance. The "not giving up" part was the hardest for me but once I forgot how disgusted I was, I focused my attention on what I was learning; which was a lot. I learned the name of the muscles of the scapula, the back, the arm, forearm, rotator cuff, and the face amongst many more. In these few weeks I have also learned the names and locations of arteries, veins and nerves that I would never [have] thought my brain was capable of memorizing. I can identify different organs and specify their parts to the minute detail. For example, the pharynx, with its four types of cartilage, as well as the heart and its many vessels. I can explain levers, types of movements, different kind of joints, how we develop different illnesses etc... Overall my never ending studying for the quizzes we receive every Monday as well as the practicals and lecture exam, definitely paid off. I can corroborate this statement when I look at the grades I have gotten for quizzes, practicals and exams. Right now I have a B average for the very hard human anatomy class, and for this I am proud. I hope I keep improving to the point of passing this class since I very well keep in mind that it isn't over yet...

Other than this class, my work has been with my mentor, Joanna. I have not yet completed the project in which I will help market Watsu by creating a video. This is not something easy for me to do because of the fact that I know nothing about video editing or marketing. Although I can't say I am not interested in learning the steps of creating a video, it isn't my main interest. This demonstrates that I need to work on responsibility and time management more. I feel that I have used both qualities except not in this particular aspect. I hope I can still complete this project before the end of the school year.

Because my mentor has another intern scheduled, my LTI ended. My next LTI is at a nursing home where I will be taking certification classes at the same time to become a CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant). I decided that it would be pretty cool being certified in only 12 weeks and then working as a CNA in the summer. I hope this works out also.

Something else I did do this quarter was visit two colleges. One was Northeastern University in Boston (which I wrote an essay on the questions from the application) and the other was Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts. I got to see the differences between both colleges; one being relatively large while the other was small. I like Northeastern because [it] is not far from home, it is very up to date in terms of technology, it has co-op which is hands on learning and most of all because it offers what I want to major in: Physical Therapy. Curry, on the other hand, attracted me because it is very similar to the Met. It is small and explorative in terms of interest. The only thing I do not like about it is that they do not offer Physical Therapy or Obstetrics. The only thing related to medicine is the Nursing program. Otherwise, I loved Curry College.

Another responsibility I have is that I am now employed. I work at an optometrist's office doing the job of a receptionist. I don't see this just as a job but as a learning experience. Some things I already know how to do such as scheduling appointments and filing. The reason I say it's a learning experience it's because the doctor is always teaching me something new about the eye. For example, papilledema is a condition that can kill you, how you can identify the right and left eye by the nerves, what myopia is, astigmatism and other illnesses.

In terms of preparing for my SAT's I can honestly say, I need a lot of work to do.

I took the practice ACT and looked at my score. I repeat, I need a lot of work to do. I want to broaden my mathematical knowledge and the way that I will accomplish this is by picking three specific skills to incorporate into my project work and really working hard at understanding each one.

I have read a couple of books this quarter including *Bad Angel* and *She's Come Undone*, which I have written a book response on.

Although this has been a pretty long narrative I feel I did get to reflect on this quarter and really focus on the things that I spent more time learning.

Even though I feel like I learned a lot this quarter, I am certain that this is only the beginning. . .

## Sample Advisor Narrative

### College Prep

Thomas worked hard on his college applications and other preparatory work this quarter. He met often with the college team, and revised his college essay more than 10 times. In the end, he had a lovely college portfolio and impressive application packets to send out. He pursued the college work very independently and made sure he met important deadlines. *TO DO: Complete and mail out all scholarships and FAFSA forms.*

### LTI/Senior Thesis

Thomas' senior thesis project was focused around learning the [computer] program Director, and creating a web-based game for children. With his mentor at Concept Link, Thomas created an in-depth timeline for the creation of the game, which would be used by one of Concept Link's clients. Thomas was essentially on-track with his timeline. He researched existing games, learned the program, and made a prototype game in Director. He had not fully developed the game interface this quarter. Overall, I was impressed with Thomas's focus and ability to stick to the deadlines. His prototype showed he had put a tremendous amount of work into the project, and had learned a great deal about Director. This semester, his thesis will change somewhat because he will be working with a new mentor at Concept Link. He will continue to work with Director, but this time for a Fuji Training CD-Rom. *TO DO: Create a new timeline. Keep a Thesis log. Continue to meet deadlines. 15 pg. thesis paper.*

### Autobiography

Thomas did not focus on autobiography during the quarter very much. After completing the work for this thesis timeline he dedicated himself to the autobiography for the last week. I was pleased to see that he had met the goal and had 25 typed pages of autobiography for his exhibition. Although

Thomas has often saved writing projects for last, this was one of the first times that he actually motivated himself to come through with the finished product in time. Great work, Thomas. It has been a pleasure to read, and I can't wait to see the next installments. *TO DO: 25 pages more, edit and bind it. Follow timeline for writing.*

### **Met 401 (senior year requirements)**

- Thomas has focused more on his leadership skills this quarter. He has scheduled time into his week to meet with younger students who wish to learn more about 3-D animation. In a sense, he has created an independent workshop of motivated students. Good work.
- Thomas has also improved tremendously in his ability to meet deadlines. He worked very independently all quarter and really came through with impressive work.
- He participated in two book groups this quarter and finished projects on both of them.
- He did not meet the goals for his journal this quarter; this can be the role of the thesis log.

*TO DO: Start journal writing through thesis log.*

### **Graduation Status**

Thomas is currently on track to graduate.

## **2.0 Exhibition guidelines and excerpt**

*The Met encourages students to tailor their exhibitions to the projects they are presenting and to their own personal style. However, a sample agenda is offered in **The Big Picture Learning Cycle: Exhibit It**, one of six booklets developed by The Big Picture Company for students at The Met and other Big Picture schools.*

### **Guidelines**

#### **The Beginning** (about 5-10 minutes)

**Create interest** in your topic by starting out creatively. Tell a story, use a quotation, ask questions, show something interesting, involve the audience. This is your chance to grab everyone's attention. (Make sure you speak loud enough for everyone to hear and that you sound excited about your topic.)

**Describe your main project** and explain why you chose to do this. (You can refer to notecards, but make sure you don't read them. It's boring when a speaker just reads their presentation off of notecards.) Make eye contact and speak naturally.

Briefly **tell the panel what you wanted to learn** from this project. What were your main (thesis) questions?

#### **The Middle** (about 10 – 15 minutes)

**Describe your project findings and products** as clearly as possible. Show that you have a clear understanding of what you are talking about. Give specific examples and details. This is the time to use your visuals or any references you want to show the panelists. (Make



sure you practice using all your materials beforehand, particularly any technical equipment.) Make sure to maintain eye contact with the audience.

If you **do a demonstration**, describe it step by step. Don't go too fast!

Try to **include the panel** in the exhibition. Is there an active role they can take in the demonstration? Can they try an activity? Before your exhibition, think about an activity you can use to engage the group.

**Talk about your journey** in doing this project. What was the best part? What went wrong and how did you deal with it? Who helped you? How did you find the best information? Is there anything you'd do differently next time? Were you surprised by anything you discovered?

### **The Conclusion** (about 10 minutes)

**Reflect on your learning plan:** Show your portfolio work, discuss the use of your journal, super calendar and other tools. How have you met the goals in your learning plan? What skills did you improve? What can you do now that you couldn't do before? How will you use what you learned in the future? What are your goals for the next quarter?

**Ask if there are any questions.** You may choose to take questions throughout the presentation, or you may ask panelists to hold their questions until the end.

**Thank your panel** members and audience.

*When Zoe presented the work she'd been doing at the RI Department of Children and Their Families, she began with an exercise that immediately brought the audience inside her experience. [From the video **48 Hours at the Met**]*

### **Exhibition excerpt**

My name is Zoe and this is my third quarter Gateway exhibition. I'm going to start off with an activity to help you understand my internship... Here is what I'd like you to do.

First, make a list of all the things you like about your home: for example, that you like the people you live with, your bed is really comfortable, you have food in the house all the time.

Now write all the things you don't like about your home: maybe that there isn't enough food, your bed is uncomfortable, something needs to be repaired, the people are too loud and sometimes you want quiet and peace.

Now imagine that someone just came to your house and knocked on the door and said: "You are not going to live here anymore. We are going to move you to a new place where you won't know anybody, but all the things you don't like about your home right now—things that need repairing, when it's too loud—none of that will happen."

So you drive up to a new and strange home. You notice you are in a nicer neighborhood. The people mover takes you to the door, you're carrying your trash bag. You open the door...and here's your new family. They have two kids, a bigger house...

...Two weeks go by and you are wondering where your other family is. Why aren't they trying harder to get you back? Where are they? Don't they love you? What's happening? You are confused. And you haven't seen the people mover for a while. Where are *you*?...

My internship is at the RI Dept of Children and Their Families, and these are the kids I work with. I supervise their visits with their birth parents, I go with the case workers and investigators, I went once with a detective, I go to court, I get to see everything. I've learned a lot. And I'm only 15.

### 3.0 Exhibition feedback

*The give and take between the student and panelists at an exhibition can involve just as much pressure and learning as the presentation, itself. The following discussion is from Eliot Levine's One Kid at a Time (2002). (Reprinted with permission from Teachers College Press).*

"We're worried that Jo won't be promoted," her advisor told me just before the exhibition. "It's halfway through the year, and she still hasn't found an LTI. Her motivation hasn't been improving, and her parents aren't pushing her at home or attending her exhibitions. Things aren't going well."

Dennis and a second advisor were already seated in the advisory room, along with three students. Jo's rainbow beads and flowing hair evoked the 60s, but her studied indifference was distinctly 90s. She had already done job shadows at the Wildlife Fund, Urban Solutions, and other nonprofits, but none had sparked her interest.

The Nature Coalition was next, and Dennis applied some pressure: "if you do your LTI there, you need you to work hard. It's a great national group, and we have great connections with them that could last for years. I can't have them bailing out because one student didn't make good on her commitments. Let me know if you take it, because we should sit down and do some planning. And if you *don't* take it, let me know that too, because I'm setting up service learning projects for students who haven't found LTIs yet."

Jo began showing her work from the past quarter. She had retrieved government data and created graphs showing how access to quality health care varied for families of different ethnicities and income levels. She pointed out that, unlike the previous quarter, this time she had completed her main project. But an advisor challenged her: "Can I comment on your level of effort? I think one reason you finished this quarter's project is that it was much easier than last quarter's. You've done a nice set of graphs, but it's not a whole quarter's worth of 10<sup>th</sup>-grade caliber work."

Next the exhibition panel concluded that Jo had not gone deep enough with several of the tasks on her learning plan. "You can't just *read* the book about Lori Berenson," her advisor said. "You need to do some analysis and writing about why two Peruvian presidents have kept an American human rights journalist in prison for 6 years without a shred of credible evidence against her. Or why two American presidents haven't come to her aid, despite the appalling lack of due process in her trial. We know the answers are in your head, but you need to get them out on paper."

Jo did make some analytic comments later, off the cuff, about the Grateful Dead's attempts to promote community through their music and live shows. "Now *that's* the kind of thinking we're looking for," Dennis said. "These writers and rock bands are trying to get people to *think*. And that's what I just heard you doing for the past 15 seconds."

Then the push for accountability continued. "Have you been reading a lot?" Dennis asked.

"Not that much—I didn't have time," Jo said.

"Too bush doing math problems?" Dennis quipped.

“No, too much time hanging out.”

“So what do you need to do?” her advisor asked.

“I need to follow through more.”

“This is your sixth exhibition, and you’ve said that same thing every time. So I need to ask you what concrete actions you’re planning to take.”

“I suppose I should be more friendly to you. Then we wouldn’t have to argue so much.”

“I’d really like that. But I must admit that you’ve said *that* before too. When I sit down to talk with you, it seems like you see that as a punishment.”

“I guess I don’t like people reminding me of what I need to do.”

“But *someone* needs to check your progress every day. Would you get more work done if that was someone other than me? Your mother? A friend?”

Jo nominated a friend, a hard-working senior, and the panel fleshed out a plan for checking her work daily. Next they discussed the sociology course Jo would soon be taking at a local college. “Prove me wrong,” Dennis challenged. “If you can’t get motivated even to write in your journal, I’m really worried that you won’t be able to do the homework for a college course. I get embarrassed when a college gives us a generous scholarship and then our student flunks the course. If it was up to me, I would say don’t take the course until you’ve got your other work back on track. That’s our usual policy. But your advisor already agreed to sign you up, so go do it and prove me wrong.”

Last they discussed books Jo had read during the past quarter. She talked about loving *The Bell Jar* and *Go Ask Alice* because they had helped her understand problems in her own life. That’s when Dennis again turned positive: “See, that’s what I’ve loved about this exhibition—the 40 seconds when you talked about really loving things, because I know you have that specialness inside you. I hear that passion in your voice.”

Dennis also praised her carefully organized notebook, which was blanketed with Grateful Dead emblems. Always attentive to student strengths, he asked if she knew the lyrics to all their songs by heart. Jo nodded yes. Dennis looked her right in the eyes, in a way that showed he was impressed. And he wasn’t pretending.

## 4.0 Senior Institute Gateway essay

*During the third and fourth quarters of their tenth grade year, Met students must prove in their exhibitions that they are ready to enter Senior Institute. This is the combination of eleventh and twelfth grades at The met where students take on more responsibility and are given more freedoms, and where their work becomes more individualized and held to even higher standards. Students make their case by assembling a portfolio of their best work and by demonstrating that they have met the school’s expectations to date (Met 101 and 201). They also prepare an essay in which they reflect on their strengths and weaknesses as learners and as contributors in their advisory groups. Below are two essays from students in Damian Gonzalez’s advisory group (featured under Sustained Relationships).*

### Juan’s Gateway Essay November 2002

#### **Advisory Conduct and Participation:**

Currently, my role in advisory is not yet very certain to me. I know that I have a lot to offer the advisory that will make our advisory more differentiated. I am trying to decide what I should do. I am the computer tech. person in our advisory. I am much more than that though. I have just decided to show one side of me though I should show all sides. When I first came to the Met, the first day that the whole class was together, I was more laid back and quiet. I do that all of the time. I think that it is my way of watching who I am surrounded by and how they act. I have changed a lot since I first came to the Met.

With my role in advisory so vague, I am not very sure what I am most proud of about my role. If I have to make a choice, it is my computer skills. I feel that my skills with computers come in very "handy" to my class. I guess that it is also very useful to the school. Not just the students, but the staff also. I am currently working on a project/workshop on Microsoft PowerPoint. I am running this class because I think that it will make the exhibitions of the students rise to a "higher grade." I feel that I still need to work on my kindness. Sometimes people ask me to help them with something really quick and I just say no. I should help them because it lets people know that they can come to me for anything that they need help with. Even if I don't know how to do it, I could point them in the way of someone who could help them.

During advisory, I participate. I won't lie and say that I participate all of the time. I participate most of the time though. I read when we have reading assignments for advisory, and I usually put more than my two-cents into advisory discussions. I feel that I participate very well in advisory. If I had to choose a word to describe my participation in advisory, it would be: **MORE**. As in I would participate more than I think that I need to but that's how it should be all of the time for everyone.

When I led advisory, I shared advisory with Cammie, a 9th grade advisor. We did short mysteries for advisory. I think that everyone had a good time. We had some hard to solve ones, some funny ones and some murder mysteries. That is the only advisory that I have led so far. I am looking forward to running more advisories though.

**Use of independent work time:**

I feel that I have made much better use of my independent work time. I have had much more to do so I had to use my independent time much more wisely. I have made a huge improvement since I first came to the Met. Even when I was in the 9th grade, I had trouble with my time management. I was always just hanging out and chilling on the computer. I always got my work done but I was having a lot of trouble in the time management department.

Here is the part that I dreaded. I do not use my uncalendar hardly ever. I may write stuff every once in a while but I don't really even use it. I have to use it more wisely. I know that it is a big part of my Gateway Exhibition. I have to buckle down and force myself to use it. Then after a while, I will become accustomed to using it. When I write in it, I more or less meet the goals that I set for myself that I write in my uncalendar. So I guess that overall, I am extremely weak in this area.

Before I leave the room, I usually let Day (Damian) know that I am leaving the room. If Damian is not there then I just go. I usually don't work in the classroom so Damian knows that if I am not in there, then I am working on a computer in the lab space. I take a break every once in a while. I have to sometimes because I get frustrated a lot. I get really frustrated when I am trying to think of something and I just can't get it. So I take a little while for a break and I wait for it to come to me. It always does too! That's the Eureka syndrome! I have really gotten better at time management. I have had so much work to do

that I have to manage my time correctly or I will never get my work done right.

**Student/Advisor Relationship:**

Damian and I communicate very well. I think that I could go and talk to Damian about almost anything that I felt I needed to. Damian is a VERY important part of my education. He makes sure that my work is done correctly. Even when he's busy doing something at the moment he will make sure that he makes time to help me or points me in the direction of someone who can at the moment if I really need help quickly. Lately Damian's role has changed. He went from 70% your friend and 30% your advisor to 50~50. It is a lot different but it is for our own good. We do more work, because it is time for gateway soon and we have to have our work on point.

My attitude depends on how I feel and who I'm talking to. For example, when I talk to Damian it is more like student to advisor but when I talk to my boys and the other people I chill with, I talk like we are on the street and chilling. Even in school because you have to give Damian his respect that he deserves. As far as my interaction with Damian goes, it is constant.

I always have something to ask Damian about my work. He is always more than happy to help me. Over the years I would like to see our interactions stay the same. We have fun but I know that it can't always be all fun and no work (I wish). As far as interacting with my advisory, I would like to be more helpful. I have previously stated that sometimes I could help them with something but I just say no because I don't feel like it.

## Ahmed's Gateway Essay January 2003

**Advisory conduct and participation:**

I feel that my role in advisory is to try and be a good student. What I mean by that is when it is time for advisory [ I ] try to keep the conversation at a mature 10th grade level, meaning try and keep the volume level under control. I know at times I am the reason why the volume in the classroom is out of control. Another one of my roles in advisory is to be a leader. A good example of my leadership skills is when I run advisory. I make sure everybody is listening and paying attention. I need to try to keep the advisory under control even when I am not leading it. My goal is to improve on that area in the near future, especially third quarter.

When I first arrived at the Met Center, advisory was out of control, everybody use[d] to talk at the same time. There was no respect in the advisory. I think it was because we did not know each other and we had not adapted to the advisory rules.

I am most proud of my leadership skills in advisory. I have shown leadership skills when I run advisory. When the advisory gets too loud I sometimes get them to quiet down. I am proud of the way I have participated in advisory. I am also proud of when I read in silent reading, and writing in my journal. The reason why I say I am proud of my journal entries is because last year I wrote **all** my journal entries

a day before my final exhibition. This year I write in my journal three times a week. Since I did not write in it last year I have to make up for it this year. By third quarter I need one hundred and seventy-five journal entries, so I have my work cut out for me.

I feel that I need to improve on my **TIME MANAGEMENT**, because I always hand in my work late. I always wait until the last minute to do stuff. I don't know why either, it's just me. Another thing that I need to improve on and that I am working on is my attitude. I have been doing a lot better in dealing with my anger. I have been working on my attitude since ninth grade. I am also trying not to swear every time I speak. It might not seem like a big deal to everybody else, but to me it is out of control. Sometimes I will be talking and swear without even realizing it, then get in trouble and flip out.

I have led two activities in advisory this quarter and both were on terrorism. They both went well and the advisory participated in both activities. I was a leader in both activities because I made sure that nobody was talking and everybody was paying attention. I respected everyone and heard all of their comments.

#### **Use of Independent Work Time:**

I try my hardest to do work during independent work time. It is real hard for me to focus during that time. The reason why it is so hard for me to work during that time is because when I see other people playing around I will start to joke around with them. I think that I work best on Tuesday and Thursday, because that is when everybody is at their LTI's and I am at school all by myself chilling and doing work.

When I first arrived at The MET Center, all I did was joke around during independent work time. I waited until the last minute before my exhibition to do work. I have been this way all my life. Till this day, I am still waiting until the last minute to do any work. I need to improve on my time management. I know in the future that other people will not accept lateness.

Every morning after advisory I write in my un-calendar about what I will be doing for the day. After I am done writing in my un-calendar I show it to Damian, and he tells me if I can go start my day or if I have to add anything that he feels needs to be done on that day.

I take a break every time I get distracted or see a pretty face. I always take a five minute break before lunch, to just chill and get school off my mind for a quick second.

#### **Student/Advisor Relationship:**

Damian and I have a friend/teacher relationship. I feel that as a friend I can tell him anything. As a teacher he keeps me in line and keeps me focus[ed]. As a teacher he also motivates me to never give up. Even when I have already given up on my self, he is there to always help me succeed.

To me I think that my best interactions with my advisor are when he is mad at me. I know it might sound funny to all of you, but to me I work a lot harder when he is pissed at me. When he is mad at me it motivates me to prove him wrong, and to make him feel like I am working my ass off. I know some times I slip up, but when I do Damian is right there

to put me back on track. So in a way I am thanking him for always being there and understanding where I am coming from.

**YOU/ME:**

I am very worried about my exhibition. I always get worried before my exhibition. I wonder if they will like it or even understand it. Some times I get worried because I am not prepared.

Some of my personal goals and qualities have been fulfilled, while others are still being worked on. One of my personal goals was to pass the ninth grade and that was accomplished. Some of my personal qualities were, respecting others, trying not to flip out on the students and/or staff, and keeping my language clean. I am working on my personal qualities as we speak.

My feelings towards school is weird. One minute I am pissed at the school and the next minute I am in love with the school. I would have a better relationship with the school, if they had a one person room where I could go and sit there to do my work in peace, but they don't. When we first arrived at the new building I loved it because the computer area was quiet, but now it is f\*\*ing out of control.



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