

Considering that this year's "Top Ten Banquet" is now the "Top Eleven Banquet", all of you know that I am graduating a year early. Trying to earn enough credits was incredibly challenging this past year; I had to take multiple college and online classes. The biggest challenge of all these, though, was to satisfy the English credit requirement. To do this I took an AP English Class at school, an AP English class online and a college English course at UW-Sheboygan. As a complete left-brain, math and science have always been my favorite topics, whereas I always have had a distinct hatred for English classes. Ironically enough, my most influential teacher, Ms. Harter, is an English teacher.

Last year, when I had Ms. Harter as a teacher, she taught me some important things, not only about English, but also about appreciation and myself. Of course she taught me the standard English 10 curriculum and helped strengthen my writing skills, though that part of her teaching is minuscule relative to the other things she enlightened me with. Prior to Ms. Harter's class, I thought I might be among the ranks of the worst writers in our school. But over the course of the year with her instruction, feedback, and encouragement, I finally felt confident in my writing. Confident enough to feel that I could tackle a college level English course in the next year. Though I didn't think I would be taking 3.

Ms. Harter opened a whole new world through her style of teaching: Shakespearean Plays, Greek myths, creative writing, even public speeches became a true source of enjoyment. I really thought I'd never say that last sentence in my entire life. The way Ms. Harter teaches reminds me the reasons for the creation of literature and art: to display a message, to inspire, and to entertain. To my surprise (at the time of this English class) literature and art WERE NOT actually made for high school analysis. Keeping in mind those reasons for literature and art gave me a much higher appreciation for them, and for the first time EVER, I was enjoying an English class. Furthermore, Ms. Harter inspired such an interest in Shakespearean Literature that we even started a club together, and that has become a highlight of my high school career.

Although my experience with Ms. Harter was relatively short, she made what will become a lifelong impact upon me. From the very first day of class I felt an intellectual connection to her. I can only hope to emanate the qualities that make her such a great educator and even better person. Her impeccable constructive criticism, sharp humor, and unforgettable satire are just a few of her remarkable qualities.

I wish you the best of luck Ms. Harter, and I hope that many more minds can learn from you as much as I did.