

Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.

Speaking

Something I've struggled with for years is either speaking in front of the class or a large group of people. Entering high school I was put in Mr. Bertrand's Freshmen English class, it seemed like all we did was give speeches and I dreaded every minute of it. Little did I know how much it would help me in high school and help me achieve opportunities that I never imagined doing.

I have never enjoyed giving speeches and being put on the spot, I've been pretty shy since I was in elementary school. I would prepare so much for my speech but freeze when I got to the front of the class. Being in front of everyone made me so nervous and uncomfortable, my mind would go blank and I wouldn't say anything or I would talk really quiet. I would have to give the speech AGAIN because no one heard me the first time. To try and help with my public speaking I would look down at my feet and act like no one was there, but eye contact is so important so really it didn't help me at all. Right before I would present I would freak out and get scared like it was the end of the world, my stomach would ache because I was so nervous.

Freshman year I had Mr. Bertrand for English, and after seeing the syllabus and getting to know his personality, I freaked out. He wasn't afraid to call you out and put you on the spot. I was the quiet girl that kept to herself and didn't like to talk in front of everyone, but of course this class consisted of many speeches and presentations. When the first speech came there were requirements like eye contact across the room, speak loudly, no "ums," and a time minimum. It was a big eye opener because when I spoke I looked down, when I froze up I would say "um," and I always talked really fast to get it over with. I was so afraid I would fail the class because I was lacking some serious public speaking skills. I would hate going to that class every day, because it seemed like

we were assigned a speech or two on every topic. After a while I got better and better and felt comfortable in front of the class. I now thank him so much because I can now successfully give a speech. His class helped me so much with being in front of people without having an anxiety attack.

After being in Mr. Bertrand's class, I was given the opportunity to give a speech on our freshman year project at the Bureau of Land Management. This presentation was in front of about 30 BLM staff members, and parents of the selected few to present. That day I overcame one of my biggest fears, public speaking, in front of a room packed with people I didn't know. I was so proud of myself for accomplishing something so foreign to me. I never thought I would be one to represent BLM at a huge organization like the BLM. If it weren't for Mr. Bertrand I would probably still be the world's worst public speaker. I am very thankful for that class because it made me a better student and will definitely help me succeed in the future.

I was that shy girl terrified of going up and speaking in front of people, but with the help of my freshman English teacher I was able to accomplish public speaking. By getting past this fright with public speaking, I was given opportunities that I never thought were imaginable for someone like me. Although I still don't like public speaking, I can do it now successfully and not be so self-conscious. I will use this skill for the rest of my life.