

Journal 2: August 18th 2025

My relationship with grades like most students has been decidedly mixed. It seems inexorable that a student, particularly one involved enough in academics to embark upon the independent research of EMC would be cognizant of the the impact of grades upon the psyche. Grades are the predominant concern of the student, although given the increasingly evident inflation of them, this concern may be misplaced. Regardless the aforementioned concern is what I view as the driving force behind the negative impact of grades: exploratory inhibition. While it is true of American education that there is limited potential for specialization, it is not nearly as potent as in other nations like the UK where students choose their educational paths by selecting A-levels or India where students are given career "streams" to choose from. This lack of specialization in American educations means that often students are greatly inhibited in pursuing specialties due to the grade-related exigencies of classes which they have no future in, which has happened to be the case with myself and science classes.

Regarding my favorite memories from school both in and out of the classroom, the latter is much quicker to recall. For the most part I have viewed school at least in the classroom as I would a job, it is not as though there are not parts I enjoy, however I feel as though I have made my way through my classes with my mind focused on their salutary effect. It is in my extracurriculars where I recall my most favorite memory in the classroom although I suppose it did happen during after-school. This memory was being sung to by CCC on my birthday this last January, although I am not nor have I ever been a truly sappy individual, I will admit it was touching to see. My favorite memory outside of the classroom spring to mind instantly as it was relatively recent. I was on a Greyhound bus driving through the Canadian side of the Niagara Falls border with my eyes fixed upon my phone listening intently to the model UN award ceremony which due to our long commute home, we could not attend in person. As the committees gradually announced 3-4 award winners, I waited impatiently as my committee chair finally took the stage to announce the winner. I had hoped of course for a gavel, the award for the best delegate although nerves and more than a little cynicism tempered my expectations down to hopes for some lower award. The announcements went from lowest awards to the highest and my nerves got ever more tense as my name failed to be called for the first three of the four possible awards, it was either the gavel or a humiliating return home empty-handed, and when I heard my name called, I was surrounded by supportive roomates and congratulations by the delegation.

What motivates someone is obviously quite a loaded question and for the most part the instinct which seems to predominate is to supply some sort of tongue in cheek reference to not wanting to be a failure. I must admit this constitutes at least part of my drive to succeed although I feel as though such an answer is insufficient if a tad selfish. For the most part I like to imagine myself to be an ambitious person, there aren't many young men who aren't although I suppose the animus differs as widely as can be expected in a world of over 8 billion people. Such ambition as I previously mentioned, is the byproduct at least in my case of a sense of

gratitude. This gratitude of course is to my family and my friends but to me is also to the institutions and culture that I have been raised in and have helped in some ways create me. I want to succeed more than anything so as to be a prudent investment both for my family and for my nation, I want to succeed to a station that while high is not dispassionate and disinterested regarding the affairs of others but rather is centered upon service to ideals and to people.

What I love and hate about school I suppose is more revealing than the question itself is supposed to be at least on a *prima facie* basis, as in many ways school is a microcosm of society and thus any commentary on school life is in some way a commentary on life itself. As I am myself more a critical commentator than a positive one I will begin with my dislikes or what I "hate" about school. Firstly as in life the exigencies of different human needs are often if not mostly discordant ie what is popular is rarely prudent and what is good is almost never either of the two. While I feel as though this is not entirely unique to school, I believe the culture and to some extent the juvenile class stratification that can be found in school encourages mobility not through wholesome or salutary activities but rather through the shirking of them in favor of the petty appearances which via social media are tantamount to truth. As to the question of what I "love" about school it is fairly simple, I enjoy the chance for progression. This I feel is in part unique to school, where although money and status have of course permeated social and institutional relations, it is still very much within one's own control to choose what positions they occupy and how far to climb in contrast to life in the full sense which in the isolated exposure I have had to it seems to be much more prone to disenfranchisement of the individual via systems and institutions which strip control of facets of ones life.

Finally, why did I join EMC? For the most part the answer to the aforementioned question can be picked from any one of the paragraphs which make up this journal. I joined EMC because it represents the great chance of intellectual emancipation, a chance to pursue what speaks to oneself and to strive not within ready-made constraints designed for the median capabilities of large groups but in a box defined by the will and self-motivation of the student.