Portfolio Essay –-Winter 2015

TOPIC:

In Outliers, Malcolm Gladwell offers several instances where individuals and companies were able to recover from setbacks and continue toward their goals for success. He uses examples of pilots and air traffic controllers being hindered by “mitigated speech” and “power distance index” relationships to show how Airline companies improved their communication skills to provide safer flying conditions.

The examples provided by Gladwell and others show that individuals do have the ability to overcome obstacles, whether they are imposed by the individual’s culture or other factors, by being accountable for their own success in spite of challenges and setbacks. Some of the strategies offered for overcoming obstacles to success are persistence, focused practice, and identifying work that is satisfying (offers “autonomy, complexity, and a connection between effort and reward”).

WRITING ASSIGNMENT PROMPT:

Identify three strategies for overcoming obstacles in the “road to success.” Clearly identify and explain each strategy and provide at least two instances of support from Outliers. Please use at least three references from *Outliers* to support your response and follow Modern Language Association’s rules for in-text citations.

Please see the Final Portfolio Assessment Criteria on the back of this page.

**Final Portfolio Assessment Criteria**

**Directions:** Please review the following criteria for your portfolio essays:

1. **Your understanding of Essay Structure**:
   1. An effective Introduction with a Thesis Statement that answers/relates to the prompt question/idea
   2. Clear Topic Sentences that advance the thesis idea
   3. Two or more Body Paragraphs that effectively connect to the thesis idea
   4. Transitions which enhance these connections
   5. A Conclusion that brings the essay to a logical closure
2. **Your understanding of Critical thinking**:
   1. In-depth explanation or analysis that demonstrates an understanding of the prompt question/idea
   2. Adequate details that support and develop the thesis idea completely and clearly, with reflective and evaluative evidence from the text
   3. Textual references (**well-chosen** quotations, paraphrases, and citations) that are appropriately incorporated and documented in the MLA format

**NOTE:** No personal narratives or plot summaries are acceptable as part of the development or critical-thinking criteria!

1. **Your understanding of standard expression**:
   1. Correct spelling, grammar (Sentence Fragments, Run-On sentences, Comma Splices, Subject-Verb agreements), and punctuation usage
   2. Effective sentence structures, using correct verb forms for clarity and logical flow of ideas
   3. Word choices that are appropriate to semi-formal academic standards
   4. Correct MLA format for headings, margins, etc.