

# **Renegotiating Success: A Window into an Accelerated Classroom**

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## **California Acceleration Project**

<http://cap.3csn.org/>

### **Supporting California's 112 Community Colleges To Redesign Developmental English and Math Curricula And Increase Student Completion**

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The "Educational Autobiography" assignment and our grading rubric are modified from The California Acceleration Project.

## **Class Theme: Success**

### **Main text:**

Malcolm Gladwell *Outliers: The Story of Success*

### **Some of the class readings:**

- Jean Anyon – *Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work*
- Rebecca D. Cox – *The College Fear Factor*
- Carol Dweck – *Brainology*
- Bobbie Harro – *Cycle of Socialization*
- Anne Murphy Paul – *Matthew Effect and Why Third Grade is Important*
- Malcolm X – *Learning to Read*

## Educational Autobiography

### Adapted from California Acceleration Project

It's now time to develop a formal response to the readings by Malcolm X, Freire, Harris, Harro, and Dweck readings and the various videos we watched about education, motivation, and success.

Tell me the story of your educational history – the journey you've been on, the good, the bad, how you have felt about yourself as a learner in your past schooling, whether you felt much "intrinsic motivation" ...paint me a picture. Make it detailed, so that I can start to get to know you and learn about your experiences.

### Some things I'd like you to include:

- Describe one particularly good experience you had in your past education and tell me about what it was good.
- Describe one particularly bad experience you had in your previous education and tell me about why it was bad.
- Talk about how the ideas from the readings (Ch. 2 *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*; "What True Education Should Do"; "The Cycle of Socialization"; and, "Brainology," and Malcolm X's work) relate to your educational experience (Not just in English). Has your previous education included any, some, or much of the concept discussed in the readings? (Please refer to at least three of the ideas presented in the readings; this means feel free to quote and or paraphrase some of those ideas). If you HAVE had these experiences, please describe one example and how it felt. If you have NOT experienced these ideas in the past, please think of a specific example when this was true and describe how that felt.
- Include some discussion of your past experiences with academic reading and writing . If you like doing these things, why do you? If you don't, why not? Do you feel confident in these areas? Do you feel a desire for mastery? Do you feel a sense of purpose about developing these skills? Explain. ALSO, do the same for mathematics.
- Please close by bringing me up to the present – what do you want to get out of this particular class? What do you want to get gain from going to college? How will your learning style help you achieve these goals? How might you expand your learning styles? Is there anything you would like me to know so that I can support your learning? Anything you're concerned about? Anything you feel excited about?

**Things to keep in mind and follow:**

- Paper should be a minimum of 3 pages and no more than 5 pages.
- Paper should be typed and follow MLA format – use 12pt font, Times New Roman
- Paper should be **in a folder** and include all the writing drafts or in-class writing prompts that led up to the final assignment. This includes all evidence charts, pre-writing, etc.
- Students must visit our Writing Center. Supporting evidence must be included in your folder. Failure to include will result in a loss of 5 points.
- Late work will not be accepted.

## **EXAMINING A SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUAL**

**For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath. Matthew 25:29**

This essay will give you the opportunity to explore the ideas Malcolm Gladwell presents in the first section of the book *Outliers*. The themes and ideas we will be exploring can be found in the section titled *Opportunities*. To begin this task, you will need to carefully read the first section of *Outliers* and the corresponding readings given to you in class.

Readings:

(Readings we will discuss are: Paul, excerpts from Ericsson/Kramp/Tesh-Romer, excerpts from Bedard/Dhuey, and excerpts from Groth).

Using 3-4 high quality outside sources, research a famous individual who has experienced great success. Once you have learned the biography of this individual, study a segment of the life of this person using Malcolm Gladwell's argument about success in the books *Outliers*. While the successful person you choose must not be someone who was specifically discussed in Gladwell's book, it should be someone with whom your classmates are probably familiar with. (Some examples that come to mind are: Oprah Winfrey, Walt Disney, Mia Hamm, Oscar De La Hoya, Martin Luther King, Julio Iglesias, George Lucas, Stephen King, and Tupac Shakur ).

In your paper, you will explore the ways in which the success of this individual can be attributed to more than simply the conventional ideas of success which are based on intelligence and individual talent. Instead, your essay should discuss how you believe this person's success stems from one or more of the following ideas discussed in the first section of Gladwell's book:

- The Matthew Effect
- 10,000 hours of practice
- Advantageous time or place of birth.
- Cultural practices which encourage success.
- Another idea presented by Gladwell which relates to your individual research of a successful individual.

**Things to include:**

- Using an introductory element, introduce us briefly to your successful person. In the thesis, state which external factors (based on Gladwell's theories) contributed to this individual's success.
- Provide a brief background on the success of the person you have chosen and why he/she is considered successful.
- In your body paragraphs, provide examples and detailed explanations about why this person gained success based on Gladwell's theories and ideas. This should be the largest part of your essay. In other words, MOST of this essay should be devoted to a discussion of Gladwell's ideas applied to a real life person. This is NOT a biography paper. Write this portion of your essay as if your audience has not read Gladwell's book. Consider incorporating ideas (paraphrases, quotes, and summaries) from the other readings in this unit, as well.
- Based on the content of your essay, conclude with a discussion of how our society or the institutions within it should change to allow more people an opportunity to be successful.

**Things to keep in mind and follow:**

- Write a minimum of 4 but not more than 6 pages.
- Paper should be typed and follow MLA format (12 pt. font, Times New Roman, 1" margins)
- Include a list of the sources you have used (except the ones given to you in class)
- Paper must be in a folder with all pre-writing, planning, drafting, and all other assignments and writing elements leading up to the final draft.
- Students must visit The Writing Center or submit the paper to Smart Thinking not less than 4 days before the due date.

## Socialization and Success

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### Readings:

Malcolm Gladwell: *Outliers* (chapters 1 – 5) (as needed)

Malcolm Gladwell: *Outliers* (chapters 6 and 7) [2 evidence charts per chapter]

Rebecca Cox: *The College Fear Factor* (pages 1-14) [2 evidence charts]

An article from the website *Culture Crossing* titled “Explore Your Cultural Baggage” [2 evidence charts]

Alain de Botton: “A kinder, gentler philosophy of success” (Ted Talk)

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Earlier in the semester, we discussed “The Cycle of Socialization” and the impact that our socialization, culture, upbringing, education, religion, community, hobbies, friends, etc. all have on us as humans. Now I want you to explore the specific ways your culture and socialization help and/or hinder your own personal pursuit of success. To do this, you must first define for yourself what success is. (For me, I wanted to be happily married, educated, a mother, able to buy the things I need and some things I want, and have a job that allowed me to have autonomy while helping others.) This explanation will likely be your introduction. Your thesis and body paragraphs, however, will be the place to fully explore your life as a culturally and socially defined specimen.

For this particular essay, we will continue to work on academic language which asks us to support our claims with the evidence and research of experts in the field. As you explore your own cultural and cycle of socialization through the lens of success, think about the ways you could incorporate the readings into your self-analysis. This list is not exhaustive or inclusive of the areas you may explore; it is only meant to get your analytical ball rolling. The idea here is simply for you to use the readings as a way to explain and integrate your own ideas you’ve had about the ways your socialization and culture have impacted you.

Some things to consider for each of the readings:

- *Outliers* chapter 5: Although we have already read and discussed this chapter, since the chapter is focused on race, culture, and success, you will likely find it useful in writing this essay.



- *Outliers* chapter 6: You might consider what traditions and attitudes you have inherited from your cultural socialized past, and how those help or hinder your pursuit of success. Do you come from a culture of honor (or some other type of culture?) And what might your response be to someone who calls you an “asshole?”
- *Outliers* chapter 7: You will probably want to consider yourself linguistically. Do you use “mitigated speech?” Do you believe “Hofstede’s Dimensions” play a role in pushing you toward or away from success? Are you dominate or subordinate?
- Anne Cox in *The College Fear Factor* explores a cultural phenomenon of which you are all a part of: the American Community College. What do you learn about the foundations of this institution that may help or hinder your success? Do you think the college will help you redefine success?
- From the article, “Explore Your Cultural Baggage” I hope you will consider specifically which pieces of baggage you bring with you to life.
- And finally Alain de Botton asks us to consider how culture and our society perhaps even limits or redefines what we see the definition of success to be and our own potential to be successful. He specifically warns, “We can’t be successful at everything.” Therefore, his talk may get you to consider the components of success you value vs. the ones you disregard.

**Details:**

4 to 5 pages plus works cited page

Full integration of readings into the self-exploration using paraphrases, quotes, summaries, and analysis.

MLA format with proper in-text citations and a works cited page

Have a plan (thesis) with some direction and follow that as your format.

## **Applying Gladwell's Theories – Argumentative Research Essay**

### **In *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell argues:**

The lesson here is very simple. But it is striking how often it is overlooked. We are so caught in the myths of the best and the brightest and the self-made that we think outliers spring naturally from the earth. We look at the young Bill Gates and marvel that our world allowed that thirteen-year-old to become a fabulously successful entrepreneur. But that's the wrong lesson. Our world only allowed one thirteen-year-old unlimited access to a timesharing terminal in 1968. If a million teenagers had been given the same opportunity, how many more Microsofts would we have today? To build a better world we need to replace the patchwork of lucky breaks and arbitrary advantages that today determine success—the fortunate birth dates and the happy accidents of history—with a society that provides opportunities for all. If Canada had a second hockey league for those children born in the last half of the year, it would today have twice as many adult hockey stars. Now multiply that sudden flowering of talent by every field and profession. The world could be so much richer than the world we have settled for. (268)

**Your task is to choose ONE facet of society which you feel needs to be changed in order to foster more successful individuals in our society. In a well-researched, argumentative MLA formatted essay of 5-6 pages, write out a researched plan (using Gladwell and at least 5 other academic sources) for how this part of American society must change in order to encourage more success. Possible topics include: K-12 education, preschool, religion, college, parenting, government, unions, workforce, sports leagues, the media, relationships, the income gap, workplace models, availability of technology, communication, corporations, politics, 2-party system, family structures, discipline in the home, cultures, language, etc.**

### **Things to include:**

- Using an introductory element, introduce us briefly to your societal change. In the thesis, state which aspects of this societal change you will focus on and how they will foster more success in American society.
- In your body paragraphs, cover the multiple facets of your chosen societal change. Remember to include paraphrases and quotes, but don't forget to include an in-text citation whenever you use outside sources.
- Don't forget to have a strong conclusion.

**Things to keep in mind and follow:**

- Paper should be typed and follow MLA format (12 pt. font, Times New Roman, 1" margins)
- Your works cited page will be graded. I recommend you visit the website we went over in class to put together your works cited page.  
([http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e\\_ch08\\_s1-0011.html](http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch08_s1-0011.html))
- Remember that this is an argumentative essay. Refer to the OWL article on argumentative essays as you write this.  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/05/>
- This is your final piece of writing for this class. Please leave yourself ample time to read for clarity, edit, and make sure you are submitting your BEST work yet!

**Speed “Dating” Activity**

**RESPONSE TO Anyan’s “Social Class and the Hidden Agenda of Work.”**

**ROUND 1:**

What differences were there in the BLUE COLLAR families vs. the MIDDLE CLASS vs. the WHITE COLLAR families?

**ROUND 2:**

How were the subjects taught in the BLUE COLLAR schools?

**ROUND 3:**

On page 4, Anyan refers to “rote behavior” in her discussion of the blue collar schools. What do you think ROTE behavior is?

**ROUND 4:**

What role did the teacher play in a blue collar classroom? What was the relationship between teacher/student?

**ROUND 5:**

What is the purpose of work in the middle class classroom?

**ROUND 6:**

How are textbooks used differently in the middle class vs. the lower class schools?

**ROUND 7:**

Is creativity valued in the middle class school? Predict why this is the case?

**ROUND 8:**

What are your reactions to the type of work that is completed in the Affluent Professional School?

**ROUND 9:**

Explain how grammar is taught differently in the different schools.

**ROUND 10:**

What is the POINT of this reading? In other words, why did I make you read it? What are your reactions?

**ROUND 11:**

Is this research still relevant today? Why or why not?

Your Name:

Section:

Reading:

Chapter:

**EVIDENCE CHART**

<b>I read.../I discovered.../I found out... INCLUDE PAGE NUMBERS</b>	<b>I felt.../I questioned.../I wondered.../ I linked... MAKE MEANING</b>

Modified from WestEd, Reading Apprenticeship

**NAME:**

**SELF-ASSESSMENT:**

**Considering how much time and effort you put into each of these activities, rank their order of importance for you currently. BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF!**

<b>Sleep</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Job</b>	<b>Family</b>	<b>Children</b>
<b>Travel</b>	<b>Love-Life</b>	<b>Hobbies</b>	<b>Spirituality</b>	<b>Recreation</b>
<b>Health</b>	<b>Appearance</b>	<b>Home</b>		

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

English 092

Quiz 2: Outliers chapters 1-4

Directions: Respond to 5 of the following questions. Be sure to discuss each response in about 2 paragraphs. You have 1 hour and 15 minutes for this quiz; this means that you have 15 minutes per question. Use your own paper, and you may use your evidence charts.

1. In *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell contends in what is arguably the thesis for his novel, *"I want to convince you that...people don't rise from nothing....It makes a difference where and when we grew up. The culture we belong to and the legacies passed down by our forebears shape the patterns of our achievement in ways we cannot imagine. It's not enough to ask what successful people are like, in other words. It is only by asking where they are from that we can unravel the logic behind who succeeds and who doesn't"* (19). Explain, specifically, what he means by this assertion and give at least three examples of ways he supports this thesis.
2. Compare and contrast the 10,000 Hour Rule to The Matthew Effect.
3. Compare and contrast Chris Langan (1 vs. 100) to Robert Oppenheimer (who helped develop the nuclear bomb).
4. Apply the 10,000 Hour Rule or The Matthew Effect to a real-life situation which you are familiar with. Explain the philosophy, and how it applies to the true scenario or situation you have chosen.
5. In chapter four, Malcolm Gladwell interviews Chris Langan. He finds him living in a run-down farmhouse in northern Missouri wearing jeans and a cut off T-shirt. Gladwell argues that Langan is an example of "defeat" and that he is incapable of doing "things that others, with lesser minds, could master easily" (114-115). Explain what Gladwell means by this, and then explain if you agree or disagree with Gladwell's observations about Langan. Be sure to explain specifically WHY you agree or disagree with Gladwell.

6. Using your summary skills, fully explain one of the unique success stories Gladwell uses to explain the many theories of success. (Bill Gates, the Beatles, Hockey Players, etc). In addition to recalling the success story, explain what you have learned about “success” through this story.
  
7. Gladwell explains the two parenting styles coined by Annette Laureau. The first parenting style tends to be utilized by middle class and wealthier families, and is called “concerted cultivation” (104). The second parenting style, often utilized by lower-class families, is called “accomplishment of natural growth” (104). Explain the differences about the two parenting techniques, and what you found interesting about the outcomes of each.



**Free-write how the following topics HELPED and HINDERED your success**

**PARENTS**

**RACE**

**SCHOOL**

**RELIGION**

**POLITICS**

**ECONOMICS**

**FAMILY (brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, etc)**

**NEIGHBORHOOD**

**HOBBIES**

**CHILDHOOD**

**SUCCESS HABITS**

## **In Class Essay – Final Exam**

### **Critical Evaluation of Malcolm Gladwell's *Outliers*.**

#### **Materials Needed:**

Pen or pencil, paper, *Outliers*, the Kakutani review from *The New York Times*, the Leonhardt review from *The New York Times*, and the Gardner review from *The New York Times*.

#### **Your Tasks:**

The purpose of this essay is to persuade a group of English professors about whether they should – or should not – use Gladwell's book in and English 092 class in the future. Is this a good book to use in a class like this? Why/why not?

In your essay, I'd like you to include a discussion of the following sub-topics:

- Examples of parts of the book that you thought were particularly strong (interesting, well-written, important) and examples of parts of the book you thought were weaker.
- At least two points from one or two of the three editorials I gave you in class. In this part, you should summarize the point from the article and then discuss whether you agree or disagree with it. Be sure to include at least one properly used quotation and at least one properly used paraphrase in this portion of your essay.
- A discussion of whether the book was a good tool to use to help you develop mastery as an academic reader, writer, and critical thinker. Did reading, discussing, and writing about this book help you strengthen your skills? Describe specific examples of how this book helped/did not help you.
- If you do recommend using this book, do you have suggestions for teachers about how they might use it in class (sample class activities, guidance they might provide, assignments)? If you do not recommend using this book, which book(s) do you recommend instead? Why?

Make sure you organize your essay well – it should have an introduction that grabs our attention, a clear thesis statement summing up your overall position, paragraphs that have a clear central focus (topic sentences), and a conclusion that wraps up the essay. Please underline your thesis statement.

Finally, take the time to read, reread, and proofread your essay for the common errors you tend to make.