

Strengths vs. Drug and Alcohol Discussion Post

In the story "Trusting My Strengths", Michael Sanders reveals what it is like to have a learning disability while simultaneously facing discrimination as a minority. Despite his hardships, he does not let it get in the way of his success and it only makes him work harder. Michael displays a growth-mind set ability and views setbacks as an opportunity for growth. He grew up in an extremely supportive home with two parents who strive to see him excel. Although his mom would not let him play traditional sports in school, he joined the debate team which he viewed as "a sport of the mind". He also grew up in a very religious household, which he believes helped shaped his character. During his years with debate he learned how to master the manipulation of language. It was during college he realized he had a learning disability which made it difficult to learn foreign languages. This came as a shock and embarrassment to Michael since he excelled in debate and wished to major in Chinese studies.

In contrast, Nelson Vee from "Riding the Drug and Alcohol Train" views life in a fixed-ability or helplessness pattern. He starts off the essay angrily cursing with uncontrollable rage. He viewed life a struggle and had a dislike for school. He did not have supportive parents and resorted to drugs and alcohol at an early age. Unlike Michael, he did not see school as an opportunity to become somebody, but as a waste of time and developed "survival strategies" just to get by. He was also diagnosed a language disability but for a speech impediment and auditory perception difficulties. He was made fun of because of this, which hindered his self-confidence leading to insecurity.

Reading these two stories relates to my teaching style because I want students to enjoy coming to my class and view it as an outlet to their problems outside the classroom. I cannot fathom how Michael's foreign language teacher in college told him he was a waste of time and belittled his self-esteem. Fortunately, Michael was able to bounce back from that incident and was able to look past it. Others may not be as strong as Michael though and may let it disrupt their learning or it may even lead to severe depression in some individuals. I am also surprised that none of Nelson's teachers stepped-in and helped him since he missed school and when he did go he was stoned. As a teacher, I believe in getting to know my

students on a personal level and to get involved is something is not right.