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Essay Type: Common App	Technical Notes: Original submission was a Word Document
Word Count: 501	

Essay Question: *The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?*

OVERALL RATING: **STRONG**

This is a well written and compelling essay. We recommend only some minor improvements that will make this essay really shine.

- 1) What are colleges looking for in an application essay? The goal of your essay is to convey to the admissions officers something about you that the rest of your application documents do not reveal. At this point, your grades, GPA, class rank, activities and test scores are already fixed, and there is very little you can do to impact or change them. This essay is the area that you still have control over. If you use your essay to restate what the officers already know about you, you will miss the opportunity to stand out and maybe push yourself over the top. You should know that most colleges will use your essay as a determining factor, so you can best optimize your chance for admission by crafting a story that interests and entertains the reader, and reveals something that actually happened to you. You want to relate an experience that taught you something or caused you to grow in some way. You also want to find a story that reveals some depth about who you are, and then connect that revelation to the college and the question they are asking from you. Also, you should tell a story that demonstrates one or more of the Four P's about yourself: Personality, Potential, Passion and Perseverance.
- 2) Why did this essay get a "STRONG" rating? This essay is very well written, with sound structure, strong narrative, interesting characterization and dialogue. The choice of subject brought out a story that is interesting, entertaining, and reveals important aspects of your character, helping to show why you would be a great choice for the school. Overall the grammar and structure are sound. There were a few minor typos as noted below.
- 3) Comments on right side are our specific recommendations for improving your essay.
 - a. **Grammar:** Overall the grammar is strong and demonstrates strong writing skills.
 - b. **Structure:** The structure of the essay is strong and demonstrates an ability to tell a compelling story.
 - c. **Content:** The story conveyed is interesting and relevant. This story will be a strong advocate for you when you apply to colleges.

ESSAY WITH NOTES ON RIGHT

It was the first day of school, I walked into classroom B236 for "Engineering Design and Development", not really sure what to expect, but I found out very quickly what this class was going to be all about. "This is a very open and self-paced course. I am not a teacher, but rather an instructor to guide you all. We are beginning the year with a 3-D print project, where you are to design and print a contraption to hold earbuds". Just like that, I began on my first project.

Commented [M1]: Start a new sentence. "I was not really..."

Commented [M2]: I suggest you introduce the teacher standing at the front of the class with a brief description before he begins to speak.

Immediately my mind started racing. The possibilities were limitless. I grabbed some orthographic paper to start sketching, and furiously put down idea after idea. After coming up with 7 different ideas, I finally come across the perfect one. I was thinking back to my elementary school days when the new craze was the detachable erasers. They came in all shapes and colors, from blue ice cream cones to pink elephants. While the erasers were such a simple knic-knac, they were a whole lot of fun to play with and trade, and the companies making these erasers struck it rich. My idea was similar to the erasers. It's simple, yet genius. I was going to 3-D print a colorful smiley face, where the eyes were just big enough to place the ear buds in, the wire would then be wrapped around the mouth, and the audio jack would then be placed in a hole in the center of the face to make a nose. My earbud holder would be both a convenient and fun way to store earbuds for children across the country. I could create a whole business off of this idea.

Commented [M3]: Consider including a short explanation of what this paper is since most readers will not be familiar with this term.

Commented [M4]: SPELLING: knick-knack

Commented [M5]: You don't know if they did or did not strike it rich, so I recommend adding in a words such as "probably"... "probably struck it rich."

Commented [M6]: New paragraph with "My idea..."

Commented [M7]: You changed from past tense to current tense. I recommend you stick with past tense, relating the story that already happened. "It was..."

I quickly began designing the smiley face on a CAD (Computer Aided Design software). I made it lightweight, durable, and cheap to produce (27 cents), and then I began printing off the knick-knack of the future. My smiley face would be in children's pockets, book bags, and pencil pouches for years to come. Providing tons of fun and non-tangled earbuds.

Commented [M8]: I suggest you reference this as your expectations. Such as "I envisioned..."

Commented [M9]: I recommend you remove this phrase or rewrite.

I came back to school the next day grinning from cheek to cheek, ready to pick up my newly printed smiley face, but I quickly found out that things were not going to go as planned. All in all, the project turned out to be a failure. The wire took forever to wrap around and through the mouth, the earbuds in the eyes didn't sit properly and would fall of to the side, and this in conjunction with the wire spilling out of the mouth made the face look more like a zombie rather than a fun or cute smile face.

Commented [M10]: Move this sentence to the end of the paragraph. This is a summation of your experience. Placed here it interrupts the flow of your explanation about what happened.

Commented [M11]: TYPO: "off"

Commented [M12]: SPELLING: "smiley"

I was excited to get the final project after putting in so much work over two weeks, doing work with a 3-D design software, product research, patent research, and more, all for a failed project was a hard hit to take and certainly bummed me out.

Commented [M13]: I recommend you expand on this paragraph and discuss what you learned from having gone through this experience. Try to put a positive spin on this story about what your Life Lesson is moving forward.

Both life and engineering doesn't always work out as planned.

Commented [M14]: Tie in your expectations about attending college. Not only will "life and engineering" be challenging with successes and failures, but so will COLLEGE. (This is will help make the essay more relatable to the admissions officers.) This sentence should be re-written.

END OF ESSAY NOTES

- 4) **OVERVIEW:** As written, this essay is quite good and the story is compelling. The story you chose to write about is an excellent choice. You also included a Setback in which the outcome is not what you originally expected. The choice of subject demonstrates that you have an ability to convey an emotional and interesting story. You demonstrate strong storytelling and writing skills with this story.

- 5) **ACTION PLAN:** I recommend only targeted and minor changes for this essay. Right now your essay is only 500 words long and you have up to 650 for the common application, I strongly recommend you take advantage of the extra words. Aside from the specific points already noted, the most significant recommendation is that currently you finish the story on the outcome of the assignment (with is a Setback), but you don't relate your experience back to the common app question, which is looking for you to explain what you learned from this experience. In terms of the outcome from your assignment, you end that story on a negative note, I imagine there were other assignments and not all of the assignments were disappointing? I recommend that you consider (briefly) relating another assignment that worked out much better than this one. Mentioning another assignment will then let you contrast the first assignment, which was a failure, with the second assignment, which was a success (and it does not have to be a "major" success, just an assignment in which you were personally satisfied with the outcome). After contrasting the two assignments, you can then relate what you learned with your "Life Lesson". At the end, you touch on a life lesson with your final sentence: "Both life and engineering doesn't always work out as planned." You should expand on this idea and explain more of what you mean, and specifically I recommend that you relate this specific idea you touch on to your future expectation of what imagine life will be like when you attend college itself. In college there will certainly be "ups and downs" and I think you have a great opportunity to show yourself as a mature and strong candidate for college by demonstrating an awareness that not everything in life and college will be a success, in fact, there will be many failures in life as you expressed, but finish the thought by explaining that the key to success is to keep going and keep trying.