

Keith Harris Narrative Application

My first experience of being in post-secondary education was at Okanagan College in Kelowna, BC. I had no idea what I was doing but I knew I had to pursue post-secondary education. I struggled with severe anxiety and depression during my first year of schooling and I dropped out because I didn't think I was going anywhere in life. All this negativity on how I viewed myself caused me to spiral in a deep depression. I searched for methods on how to cope with my depression, this caused me to experiment with drugs and alcohol. I truly felt that I lost myself and became addicted. With the help and support from my family I overcame my addiction and started working in order to save up for school. I was searching for schools in the Lower Mainland that offered my program of interest. Kwantlen Polytechnic University came up during my research and looked to be a very promising school for the Fine Arts program. My first year at Kwantlen I didn't know anyone let alone anyone in the city of Surrey. I expressed to my Mother how nervous I was about this change and wanted to drop out of school again. She reassured me that everything will be ok and I shouldn't be so hard on myself. She explained to me that this change would help me grow as a person and better my life in the process. Her words really motivated me to stay positive and become a better person from this experience. I noticed the positive mind state rippling outwards during my second year of schooling. I began making friends on campus and within the community. My art practice became more mature and I was developing an understanding for art and how I could contribute to contemporary art. The more classes that I took the more of an understanding of the world I experienced and better knowledge of my surroundings. There was a few hiccups in my third year dealing with financial and emotional stress. My way of coping this time was just to shut down and not really talk to anyone. I finally couldn't take the stress anymore and began venting my problems to close friends and they recommended I go see a counselor at school. I never really did anything like this so I thought to give it a try. I was really relieved on how helpful they were. They really helped me realize the core issues of my problems. The counselors recommended I go for group therapy for people dealing with anxiety. The whole experience was very bizarre for me but later on in the sessions it was very therapeutic for me. I learned that it's ok to be anxious, stressed and uneasy because I've learned methods and strategies that counter the negative thoughts. With these useful tools I began to really focus on my art and really blossom in the medium of painting. At the end of my third year I received the Margaretha Bootsma Award for excellence in the painting discipline. This award truly made me feel that all my hard work was paying off and my life was moving forward in the right direction. With my final year coming to an end in April I can proudly say I will be receiving my Bachelors in Fine Arts. I truly feel grateful for all the ups and downs during my post-secondary education because without them I wouldn't have found the tools and strategies to overcome my anxiety. With the chapter of school coming to an end I am now ready for the next chapter in my life, being a provider and father to my son. I am truly confident when I recite my mother's words of advice, "Everything is going to be ok".