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My Understanding of Complex Vocabulary

“Where’s the Benchmark?” I asked.

“You’re resilient. You can figure it out.”

“Hey!” I shot back, slightly offended.

“What’s the problem? I just called you smart.”

“Oh. I just inferred an insult when none was intended.” I groaned, embarrassed. Ms.

Pahomov eventually gave me the instructions of looking up the meaning of “resilient.” I found out that she was complimenting me for my ability to recover from difficult situations and keep moving forward.

For once in my life, I felt insulted at being complimented, and I knew not the compliment given to me, but this was not the only reason that I felt humiliated. I do not wish to sound egotistical, as I am pretty much always humble and honest, but I felt even more embarrassed when I searched for the definition of “resilient” and found out what it was. In retrospect, I probably should have been able to tell by the context of the word that I was being complimented, as Ms. Pahomov added that I would be able to figure it out. I also once heard of resilience before this event, as I had read it on the internet and heard it in movies and television shows. I used the context to assume that resilience is a synonym for perseverance; never giving up. The definition must have slipped my mind, as I had not seen or heard that word in a long time. This prompted my brain to anticipate an insult even when I was not being insulted. Instead of using that word during writing or talking, I substituted it with persistence,

which describes a person's reluctance to give up. It was truly an embarrassing experience for me.

Normally, I am able to interpret complex vocabulary such as "resilient" simply by thinking about it or examining it in context, but all of that seemed to have changed for that one moment. A similar event occurred on the same day that I discovered the word "eccentric" a long while ago. Seeing it as a personality trait, I did not assume it to be negative, as it did not sound negative. I asked my mother about it and found out that being "eccentric" means not fitting into society's standards of "normality." I discovered that I was partially right in assuming that eccentricity is not a negative trait. As it turns out, eccentricity denotes neither positive or negative in terms of personality, it simply means not the same as others. The only difference between these two events is that I did not feel embarrassed after discovering the meaning of eccentricity, unlike when I inferred an insult where none was intended. In this way, I suppose that I acted a little bit immature after being embarrassed for not knowing the meaning of resilience. I probably could have taken that situation a little better than I actually did.

I suppose that my expertise in complex vocabulary and grammar truly came to be during the time in which I was still a freshman here at the Science Leadership Academy. For English class, I studied under Miss Alexa Dunn, who used to teach here but left her career as a teacher after she accepting a new job. She had an important (albeit strict and somewhat difficult) rule for her class for when we created essays. Apart from not being allowed to use contractions (apart from possessive ones), she had a list of words on the side of the whiteboard which we were basically never allowed to utilize when we were writing. She called these words the "R.I.P Words," or something along the lines of that. Most of these words were so well-known and simplistic that almost anyone could use them. In order to present a challenge to us, Miss Dunn banned us from using these words and wanted to encourage to

attempt to find alternatives to them. We were banned from ever using small vocabulary words such as, “good,” “bad,” “very,” and “a few” in our larger projects, such as our benchmarks. This rule is what forced me to adapt and start using a much more complex set of vocabulary and grammar. In order to do this, I would search through my memories and look for the vocabulary and grammar lessons that I had already learned so that I could apply them to the essays assigned to us.

Even though I am no longer in Miss Dunn’s class, her “no R.I.P Words in essays” rule seems to have followed me, which is why I assumed that I should apply it to my assignments even to this very day. Sometimes I attempt to refrain from using R.I.P words on smaller assignments such as journal entries if I can help it. I even try to use sophisticated vocabularistics when I am simply writing to pass the time (meaning when working on my personal creative writing project). The main reason that I apply these types of words to my writing is because I want the narrator of my story to sound as though he/she was sophisticated and intellectual.

I occasionally use my advanced vocabulary skills when at home, even when I have no imminent work whatsoever. The context in which I use them is during casual conversations with relatives and friends. This way of speaking is what causes my parents (and sometimes other people in the room) to stand amazed at how wise and intelligent I seem to be. Most of the time, my parents are actually amazed at my vast knowledge of science and philosophy, rather than my vocabulary. When telling them facts and philosophies that I know off, I sometimes take the opportunity to use my advanced vocabulary and grammar in order to emphasize my points.

