My Quest for Quality

Normally, I try to avoid a first-person perspective when I write; but today’s topic is based solely on my personal experience. While many students choose to start college right out of high school, live in the dorms and take a minimum of four classes at a time, I took a non-traditional approach. For one thing, I was twenty-two when I decided I was ready and wanted to go. I had been out of high school for four years and my former classmates were either getting ready to graduate or had already left. I also chose to live off-campus and was exempt from a degree requirement because I wasn’t a full-time student. I started with three classes per semester; and after a year I went down to two because one class usually ended up getting neglected.

While there were downsides to being a half-time student — I spent two and a half years at each grade level instead of just one and the financial cost was higher — I came to discover that it was worth it to me to slow down. Taking only two courses at a time meant that I could put more energy, time and focus into each one — and by extension, it helped me lower my stress level and take better care of my GPA because I didn’t have as much going on at any one time. I poured my heart and soul into my classes; and my professors recognized and respected my desire to perform as well as I possibly could. Several of them asked me if I had a job; and my response was always the same: “College *is* my job.”

Thus far, I’ve spent six years pursuing a B.A. and I’m still not finished. I’m a very different person now as compared to when I started. My journey is far from over; but I’m not worried about how long it will take me to finish my degree. Somewhere along the line, I learned the most important lesson of all: I’m not going to be in college forever; so I want to make the time I have really count. And when I’m done, I want to be able to look back and say, “I wouldn’t change a thing.”