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Investigation of Adaptation: A Creative Perception of Collegiate Behavioral Responses

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INVESTIGATION OF ADAPTATION: A CREATIVE PERCEPTION
OF COLLEGIATE BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES

Brittney Meador & Caitlin Moliske

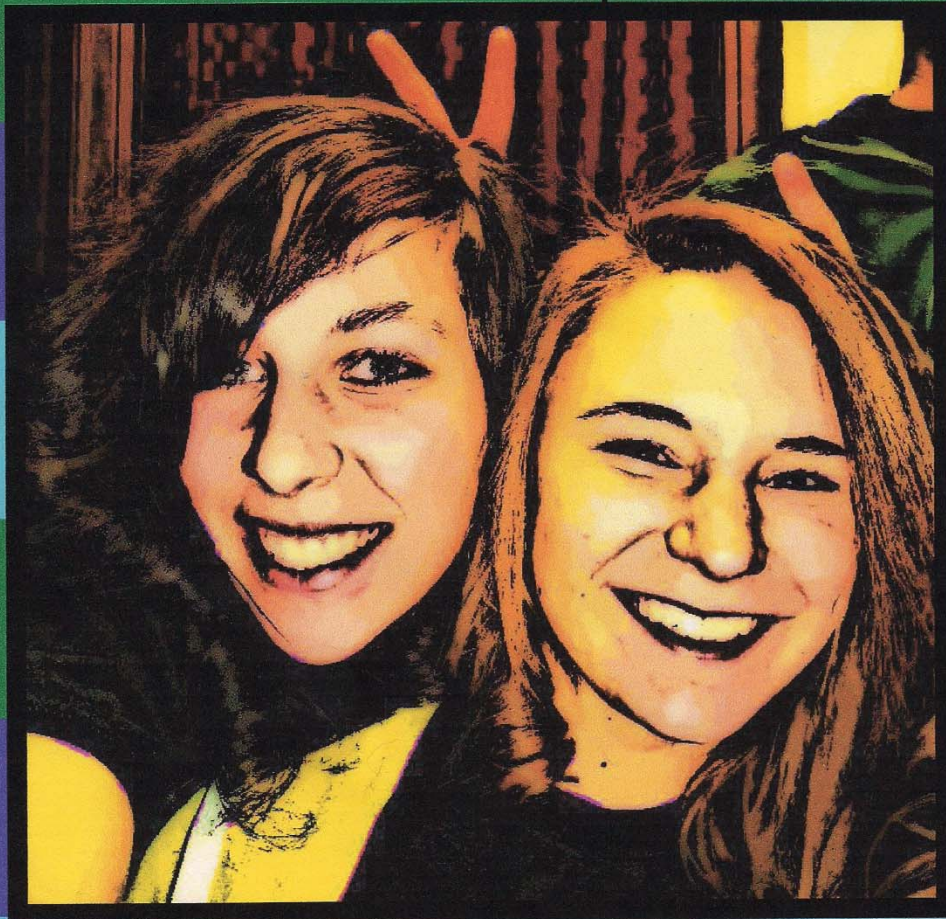
A thesis submitted to the University Honors Program
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Honors Degree

Southern Illinois University

May 08, 2013

INVESTIGATION OF ADAPTATION

A Creative Perception of Collegiate
Behavioral Responses



BY: BRITTNEY MEADOR AND CAITLIN MOLISKE

A University Honors Thesis Project

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of our project would not happen without the help of several people. First and foremost, we would like to thank our mentor, Dr. Edward Brunner, for his continuous support and his suggested references for background information on comics. We would also like to thank Lori Merrill-Fink and the University Honors Program for allowing us to do a creative, collaborative project outside our usual scope of study. We would also like to thank Amy Straub and Rachel Slick for letting us temporarily borrow their rooms to take much-needed pictures.

Lastly, We would also like to thank all our friends. I hope you find yourself in here and smile—it's been a crazy four years and it wouldn't be the same without all of you.

INTRODUCTION



In spring of 2011, we [Brittney and Caitlin] took the University Honors course "Comic Books Grow Up," in which we studied modern forms of graphic representation, specifically to illustrate autobiographical works. Throughout the course, we worked to create a brief example of our lives using this form of artistic media. This work inspired us to continue the project as our senior thesis with the University Honors Program. As both of us are students in the sciences, we wanted to step out of our comfort zone and work toward a project that was meaningful and challenging, and allowed us demonstrate our range of unique talents. Our main goal was to produce a work that illustrated the life of typical college students, focusing on situations that are both common to most and unique to us as individuals. We shed light on social stigmas and deeper, underlying influences that effected our decisions and thus, affected us today. We hope that this account of our college experience will be beneficial to new students, as they will have the chance to see that they are not the first to experience the trials of college life and perhaps give them some advice as to how to handle it.

The format that we are choosing to utilize in our short graphic work is known as "fumetti". This style of comic design uses actual photography, as opposed to hand drawn or computer generated images. In terms of content for our creative piece, we drew from mainly our own experiences. However, work done by Hillary Chute entitled *Graphic Women* really highlighted the plights and experiences of women told through comics. Her work gave validity and importance to graphic representation as well as solidified comics as a legitimate method of storytelling. One of the authors analyzed in Chute's work is Alison

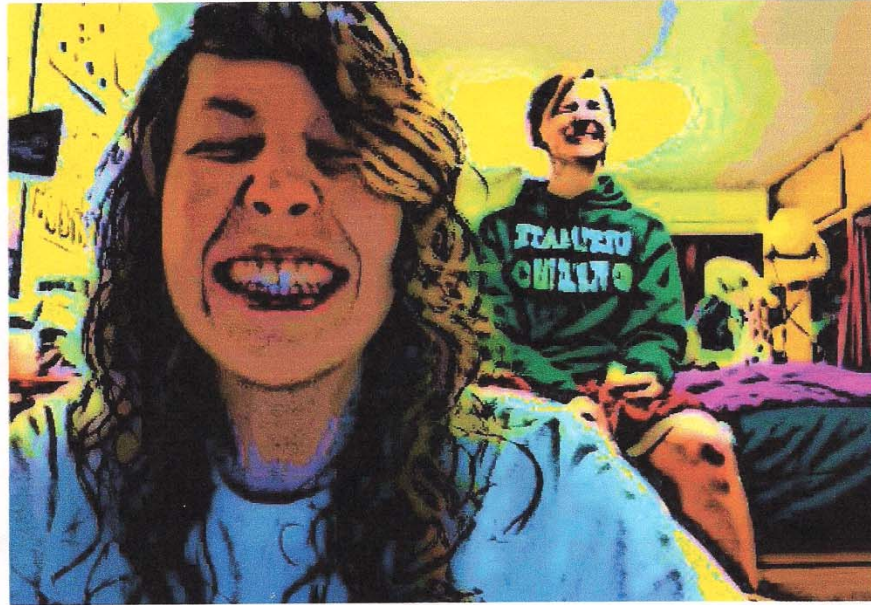
Bechdel, who wrote an autobiographical piece on her childhood entitled *Fun Home*. Bechdel's work was also analyzed in another piece that was referenced by Chute, entitled "Autographic Disclosures and Genealogies of Desire in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*" by Julia Watson. Watson looked at the biographical perspective taken by Bechdel, which is a common theme among graphic novel writers and illustrators. Through our research, we identified a number of authors who chose to write autobiographical pieces using this particular form. Some told stories of their lives in full, while others focused on critical events in their lives. Examples of these authors and their works are Marisa Acocella Marchetto's novel entitled *Cancer Vixen* and *Lucky* written by Gabrielle Bell. These examples give credence and validity to this media as a legitimate method in which to express one's feelings and tell a dramatic story with a purpose.

We first created a rough draft of the entire work, outlining mainly content prior to dialogue. The comic is composed of four sections (freshman, sophomore, junior and senior) with four short anecdotes within each, which we entitled as episodes. Once an outline of each section was made and individual stories chosen, we did a hand-drawn layout of every page including all dialogue and text. From there, we began taking photographs to illustrate the stories. All photographs were edited using Photoshop and a photo-editing site entitled befunky.com. Adobe InDesign was the program used to layout the photographs on the page. All text was added by hand after the photography was taken and graphic design was completed, printed and bound. Because this project was a collaborative process, the creators divided up the work.

Throughout the process of completing our project, we encountered a number of slight problems that required us to adjust our plans. Timing seemed to be the most difficult aspect of our project to control. Picture taking relied heavily on the weather and availability of sunlight. A few of our locations required assistance or permission by a third party, so their schedule had to be taken into account as well. Sizing pictures in a way that the layout could be maintained and enough space would be available for text while trying to keep pictures from becoming distorted and stretched proved to be another issue.

Despite our difficulties, we feel that we have created a product that truly shows our hard work and intent. We wanted our project to be a guide for students who are entering into the same journey that we depicted. Obviously, our story will not be the same as every college student's as it was not the same for either of us; however, as a shared event, we hoped that we could provide insight and support.

We are incredibly excited to present to you our thesis and hope you find it illuminating, amusing, and purposeful.

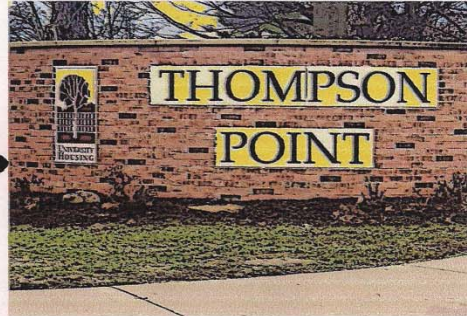
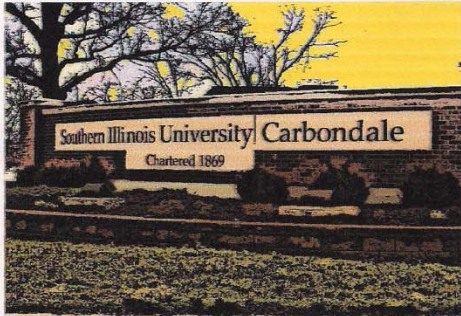


YEAR 1: THE BIG BANG PARADIGM

1. The Roommate Algorithm
2. The Symbiotic Convergence
3. The Unexpected Variable
4. The Force x Distance

Y.I.E.I. The Roommate Algorithm

SO. Here it is. SIU. Our parents are dropping us off, saying goodbye & leaving us to fend for ourselves. We begin our story in Thompson Point...



All I knew was her name, Laila Abdo. & that she liked sleeping in, just like me!



After some Facebook stalking, I had learned my roomie, Josi Young, was a country music loving, Republican Carbondale native. PERFECT!



singing in the shower...



OMG! Put clothes on!



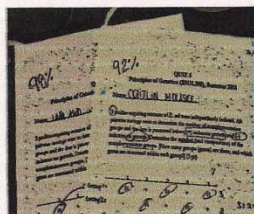
We got along GREAT!



BUT THEN...

At the time, we just had our differences & our personalities clashed

But eventually...



our grades were even a competition. Every minute at "home" was stressful with the enemy watching...

She didn't appreciate cleanliness or impeccable organization like me. Not to mention, she slept through class a lot, which drove me crazy! I sure wish I had a full ride to waste away...

Y1.E2. The symbiotic convergence

In spite of the trouble I was having with Josi, she did have her up sides. She introduced me to a few people & I had started making a few friends. Some boys we knew played on a flag football team & one night, we decided to go to a game.

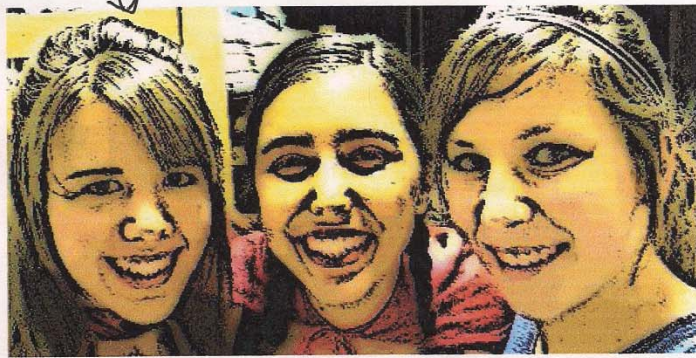


One great thing about Laila is she liked meeting new people... & dragging me along too.



One night, our suitemate, Nicole, Laila & I went to a flag football game...

← NICOLE

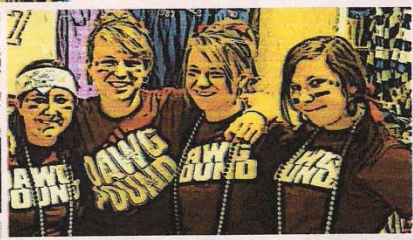


We knew we would make friends in college, but little did we know we would meet the people that became our best friends!

And this is the day that the dream team, super duo who authored the outstanding literary & artistic work you hold in your hands, was born! Pro-tip#1: Don't be shy, you will miss out.

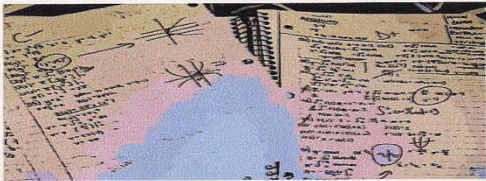


Y1.E2. The symbiotic convergence

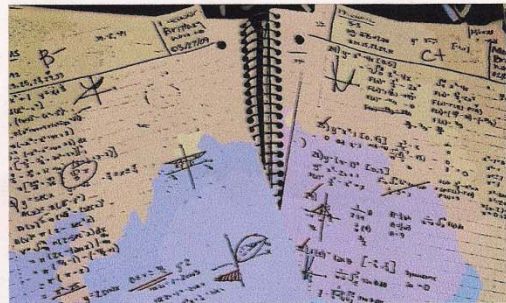


Y1.E3. The Unexpected Variable

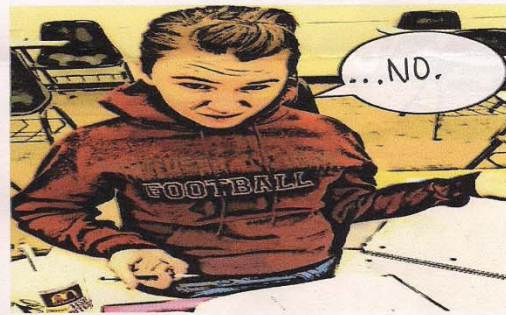
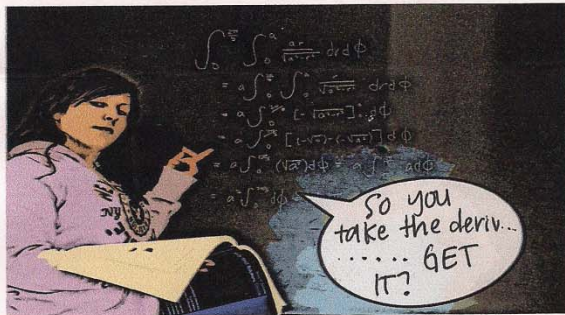
F is for FAILURE!!... maybe I'm exaggerating a bit I didn't fail, but it sure felt like it. What was I thinking, taking calculus!? I can't do math!



But then, a glimmering light at the end of the tunnel... FREE TUTORING!!



Ehh... not so much. Maybe my friends can help me...



I had never experienced this much failure in my life! I was the smart kid in high school... what happened?! If this is what college is like... I quit.



Even though Britt was struggling, I thought calc. was fun. I mean, it was a challenge, but I took advanced calc. in high school. We did in one year what we did in one semester in college. I worked hard every night!

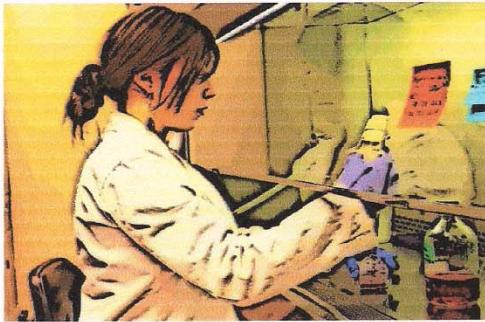
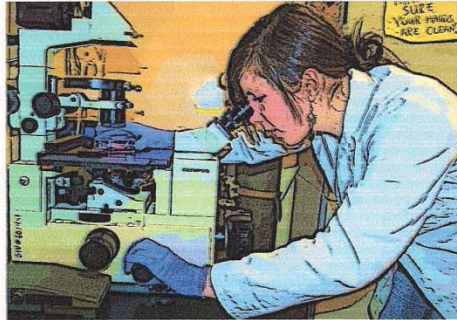


FINAL GRADES: Caitlin = A Brittney = C ... YES!!

Y1.E4. The Force x Distance

Pro-tip#2: No matter how much you save, you're gonna end up a broke college student. My job was a researcher in a lab on campus. I did cool sciencey stuff like.

G1/G0 →

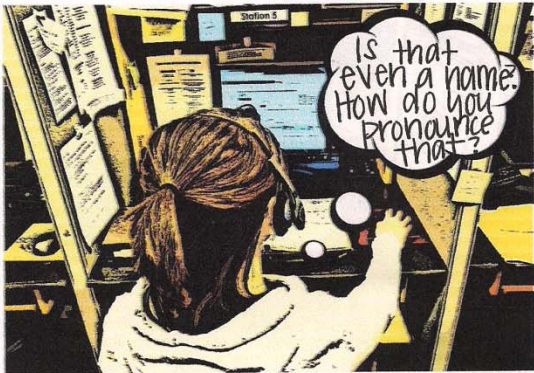


I LOVED my lab job! I got to make my own schedule & it was really sweet!

↖ MITOSIS



My job... not so cool & science-y. I worked in an office that called new students to the university to help them prepare for college. I enjoyed it... but there were some drawbacks.



But, it wasn't all bad. I usually talked to students that were really excited about college & I helped them a lot. Now, I'm the supervisor there & I really appreciate the job I do. Maybe I helped a few freshmen come to school a little better prepared than I was.



YEAR 2: THE VARIABLE FLUCTUATIONS

1. The Theory of Accelerating Complexity
2. The Unplanned Diagnosis
3. The Action Potential Threshold
4. The Mario Kart & Deathly Hallows Solution

Y2.E1. The Theory of Accelerating Complexity

When you think you have it bad, just wait until year two starts. It's like year one... on steroids. Sophomore year consisted of...

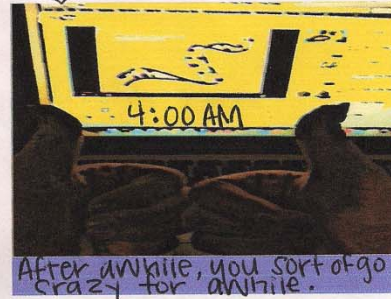
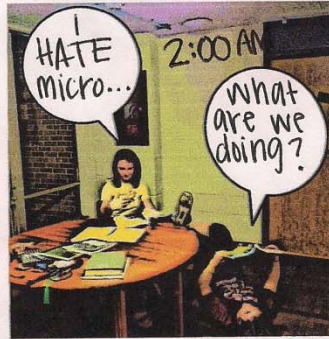
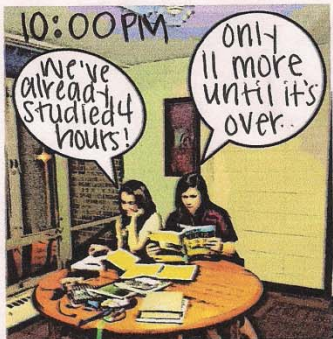
changing study habits



taking major classes, not just gen. eds

And pulling our first ALL-NIGHTER!

"HIP HIP HURRAY FOR DNA!"



But, we got McDonald's breakfast at 5:00 AM, which rocked.



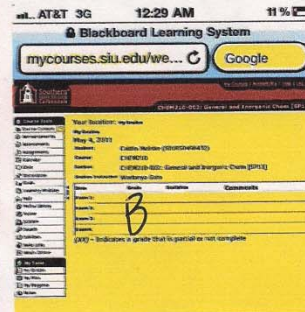
That year was tough on us. We learned how to really study & adapt. All that I did was study...



And she eventually broke down a bit..

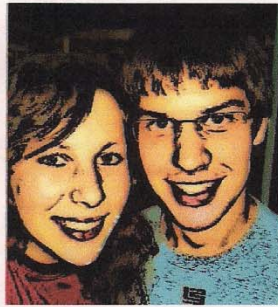
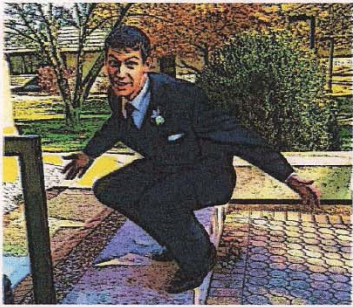


That semester, we both got B's. But, pro-tip #3: A "B" won't kill you & neither will the inevitable all-nighter.



Y2.E2. The Unplanned Diagnosis

You think you have it bad when you've got 17 chapter tests, all-nighters & you're sick of dorm food. But something happened that year that no one expected & really put things in perspective.



Jason, before the start of sophomore year, was diagnosed with Burkitt's Lymphoma, one of the more aggressive types of cancer. He began treatment in the fall. We all had NO IDEA something like this could affect someone our age... some one so close to us.

We couldn't just sit around, so we decided to support him in our own way.

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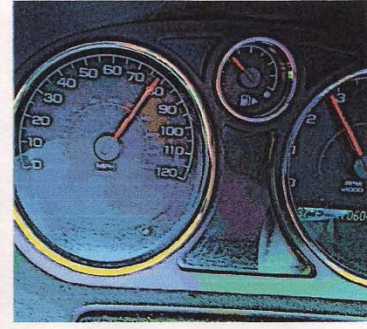
Joel Young



Jason was well enough to return in the spring. He responded well to treatment & has been cancer free ever since.
Pro-tip#4: PERSPECTIVE. (And always check the doors to the roof in the dorm. Leads to some cool photo opps.)

Y2.E3. The Action Potential Threshold

Earlier this year, I took an ASL class & totally fell in love. My professor told me they offered an associate's program in interpreting at JALC, so I decided to double major. Aaaaand... CUE COMPLETE CHAOS.



I started out taking 23 credits this semester, and was up to 31 the semester before student teaching. I loved what I was learning, but I was slowly losing my sleep, gas money and sanity...

"Well... School hasn't been THAT hard. Guess I can take a few more classes..."



Course	Section	Units	Prerequisites	Grade	Credits	Quality Point	and	Grade	Quality
CHM1	230	4.00	General and Organic Chem		3.000	37.00			
CHM1	231	4.00	General Chemistry Lab II		2.000	4.00			
PHIL	301	4.00	Survey of Human History		4.000	13.00			
PHYS	203B	4.00	College Physics		3.000	13.00			
PHYS	203B	4.00	College Physics Lab		1.000	4.00			
SCC	203	0.00	HP Career Prep Seminar		1.000	0.00			
UNCLN	305P	4.00	Person Seminar in Public Health, Critical Issues Course		3.000	13.00			
UNCLN	305H	4.00	Person Seminar in Humanities, Empower, Resilience and the Field		3.000	13.00			
UNCLN	305	0.00	Signature Community Service No Credit for Degree		1.000	0.00			

Current Term: 11,000 14,000 19,000 15,000 18,000 3,700

19 credits... That'll be easy!



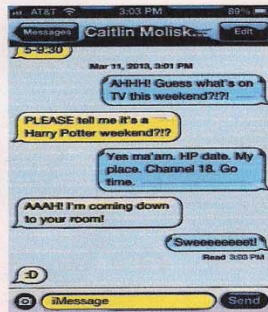
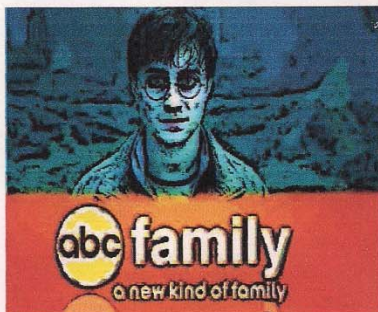
No matter how easy you think the classes will be, too many credits is too many credits. Pro-tip #5: When in doubt, JUST SAY NO!

Y2.E4. The Mario Kart & Deathly Hallows Solution



Even though our workload was intensified this semester, we still found escapes. Mario Kart being one of them.

And Harry Potter was the other. JOSI HATED the series & Laila was just eh... we were diehard HP fan girls. No shame. We used it as an excuse to not think about real-life responsibilities.



We knew we had more productive things we should have been doing, but everybody needs a break from reality once in awhile. Pro-tip#4. Mischief Managed. ♡

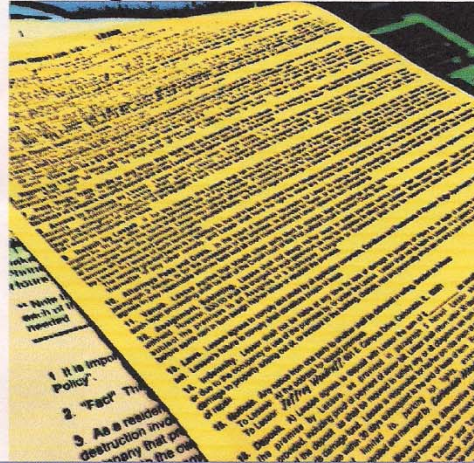


YEAR 3: THE REAL-TIME IMPLEMENTATION

1. The Financial Permeability
2. The Boyfriend Complexity
3. The Fancy Doctor Research
4. The Thunder Chicken Stimulation

Y3.E1. The Financial Permeability

YOU KNOW WHAT'S GREAT?



... bills...

Rent... that WE pay for...

Cooking...



Especially when WE buy the groceries.



Dirty gross dishes...



No one taking the trash to the dumpster and... HAIR.



With 4 girls in the house, that turned out to be a HUGE problem. We broke 2 vacuums. We were excited about living on our own, but Pro-tip# 7: enjoy the dorms. What you took for granted is what you'll miss most. Plus, stuff's expensive. BUDGET!

Y3.E2. The Boyfriend complexity

Here it is. We know you've been waiting for it. Relationships. It doesn't matter if you've got one, had one, or want one, they always bring some kind of trouble. But, it's not all Bad...

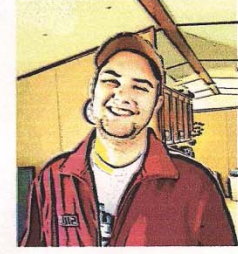


This is MATT.



We dated twice in high school, but 3rd times a charm, because we're going on 4 years now. We didn't plan on going to the same college, but since we did, some problems popped up.

This is CLAY.



I've never been one for dating. one ruins it all, right? Not really. But, I would consider my relationship w/ Clay my first real relationship.



Spending every waking minute together...
Not spending enough time together...
Even some jealousy...



I also learned I'm not good at "love". And anyone who knows me understands I'm the definition of independent. But, it's nice to have help sometimes.



All in all, things are going great. But, pro-tip #8: COMMUNICATE! (HAHA... that rhymed)

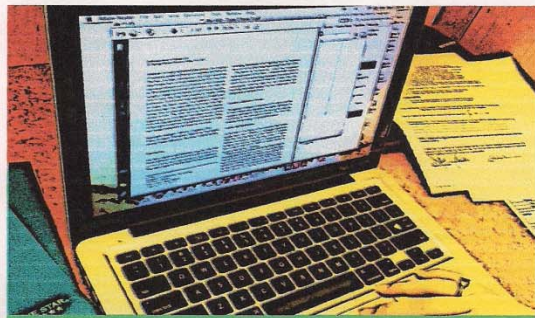


I'm not big on relationships, but part of me that is so thankful I gave this a shot. PRO-TIP #9: you regret chances you don't take.

Y3.E3. The Fancy Doctor Research

The summer of our junior year, Caitlin was accepted for an internship at Washington University in St. Louis, which was awesome for her because she got to work in one of the most prestigious medical research universities in the nation. . . . Aaaaand. . . That's pretty much all I know about it. So here's what I think she did all summer..

She did something with a computer. . .



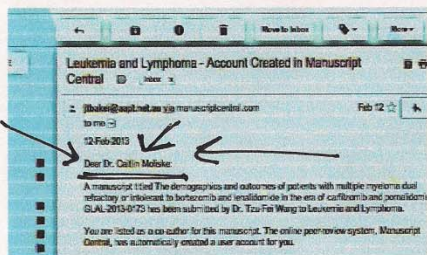
And medical records. . .



She did some math, too. Maybe figuring out how many people with some cancer were cured?

She did have to dress up all fancy everyday. Lookin' And she came back with some B!g new snazzy! words in her vocabulary.

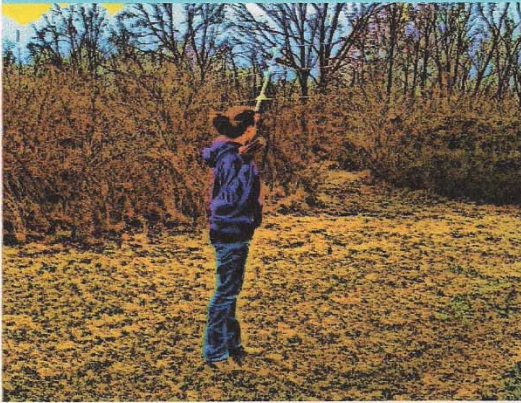
"myeloma"
?
"bortezomid"
"car-tiz-a-bid"



But, whatever she did, I know she got published in a REAL JOURNAL! And, they think she's already a doctor. My roomie's AWESOME!

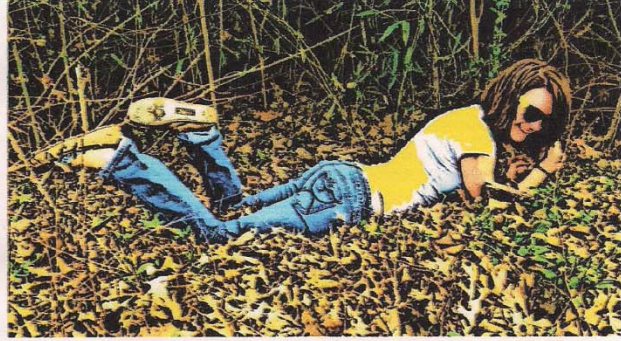
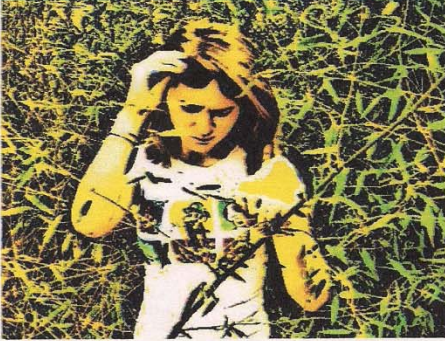
Y3.E4. The Thunder chicken stimulation

Now, watch as Safari Brittney uses telemetry to track wild chickens!



Watch as Brittney sets dangerous traps to catch the natural predator of the thunder chicken, the coyote & the bobcat.

Watch as Brittney stalks her turkeys to catch them with her rocket launcher - net thing...



Brittney had a summer internship with the Cooperative Wildlife Research Lab. She was really excited to have this once in a lifetime opportunity to stalk turkeys, catch vicious animals, get a rockin' tan & work with great minds like Ryan Tebo, the dub-step loving hillbilly. She spent countless hours volunteering for their team... & she didn't even get THAT tan...





YEAR 4: THE UNCLEAR CYCLE

1. The Dependent Variables
2. The Obscure Conclusions
3. The Background Process
4. Future Experiments

Y4.E1. The Dependent Variables

The biggest challenge of senior year isn't necessarily the academics — though they don't help any. But actually figuring out what you have to get done before you can officially say... "PEACE OUT, SIU. I'm graduating!"



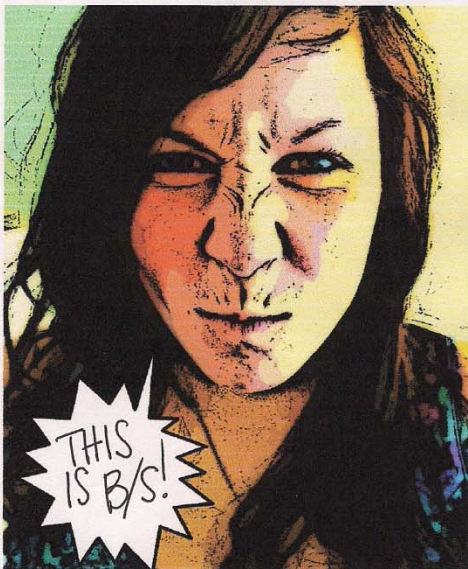
There's all these tiny little things you have to remember to do...

To DO:

- Apply for graduation ✓
- Order cap & gown ✓
- Exit loan counseling ✓

Brittney & I ran into some unique dilemmas where we had to switch around some credits

because we were missing things we needed to graduate. It got a little crazy... But after many phone calls, several slightly disgruntled emails & a few trips across campus we THINK we've got it straightened out.



It would have been nice to know this before fall of senior year...



Thankfully, we had the help of the Honors Program & were able to switch some classes & make it work.

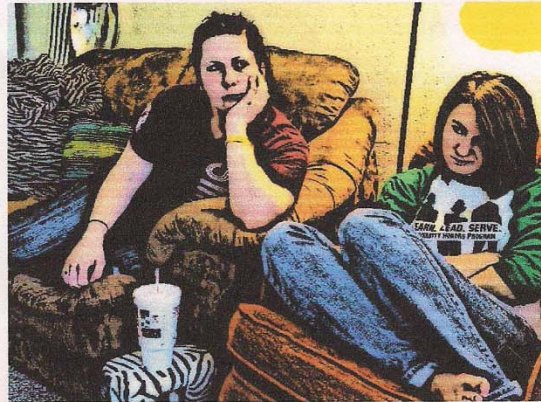
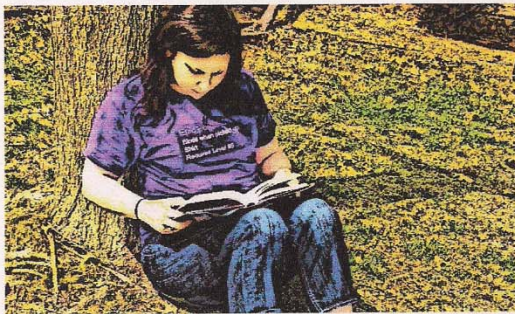
Pro-tip #10: Advisors sometimes make mistakes. It's nice to get a second opinion.

Y4.E2. The obscure conclusions

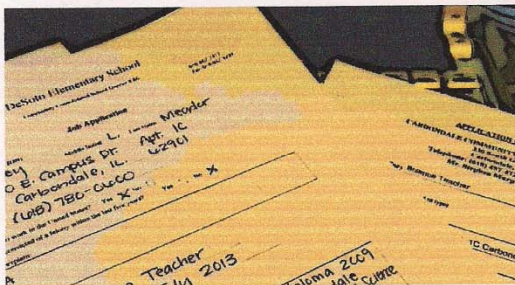
It's crazy how you get so wrapped up in getting your degree that you totally forget you have to actually do something with it. And now, all of a sudden, you're like... OMG!! What am I doing with my life?!

As Caitlin was applying to medical schools, she decided that she wanted to take a year off before she got started.

Smart kid.



I... well... I had an interview... that led nowhere... So I'm STILL applying for teaching jobs.



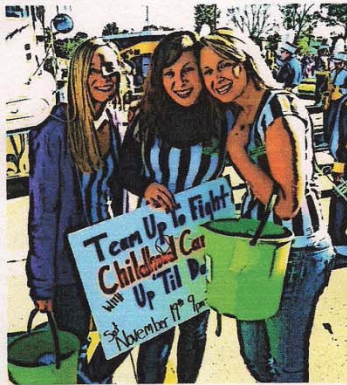
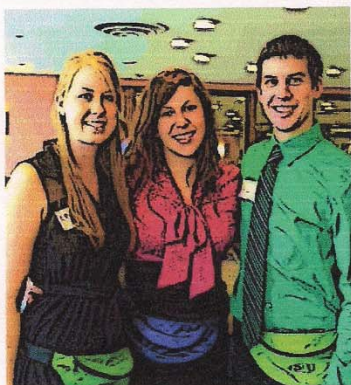
Who knows. Maybe I'll just run off to Arizona and chase around owls and cougars for the rest of my life and call it research...



Pro-tip #11: We haven't exactly figured that one out yet... Woo Graduation... Kinda.

Y4.E3. The Background Process

So, naturally, our resumé's got a little more hefty by our Senior year. Pro-tip #12: GET INVOLVED! For realz. At least one thing. It will make your undergraduate career so much more spectacular! And it will give you something to talk about in an interview.



I was involved in too many RSO's, really. I served as Executive Director for SIU Leadership Conference, helped start Up 'til Dawn on campus and served as the assistant director for two years. I was V.P. of Pre-Health Professionals Association. I was also part of other organizations (too many to list!) and I did research. It was all great, but a bit overwhelming.



As for me, I started in Saluki Science Ambassadors, which really beefed up my educational resumé. I also served as V.P. of school outreach in Unite for Sight, which was a blast. Getting involved in research introduced me to tons of great new friends! All my involvement taught me sooo much!



Y4.E4. The Future Experiment

Well, maybe you've noticed, but we really don't have this whole post-matriculation life figured out yet. At all. Like... seriously. But... we'll be sure to keep you posted.



Cait's gonna be a doctor.



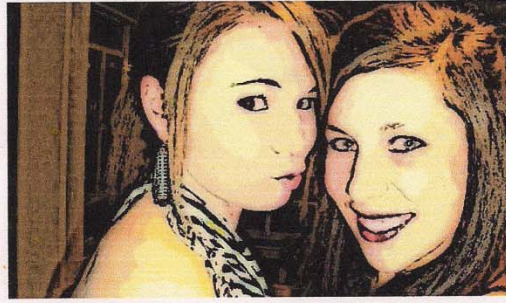
Britt's gonna be a teacher.

... eventually. . . But, it all happens so fast, you just can't ever be completely prepared. Pro-tip #13: College is a TIME WARP! But love every minute of it!! ♡

FRESHMEN



SOPHOMORE



JUNIOR



SENIOR

