The Morning Struggle

The clock struck 8am, and Jeffrey struggled to focus on the problem in front of him. Algebra had been easy last year, and the year before that he had gotten a B in geometry, but pre-calc was something entirely different. As he sat in the back row, elbows on his desk and head in his hands, he tried to listen to the teacher's explanation of how to solve the equation they'd been given. But Jeffrey couldn't shift his attention back and forth from the smartboard, to his notebook, and back to the smartboard without losing something in between. 8:05. Just half a period left.

Jeffrey couldn't wait to get to English next hour, where everything seemed to make sense. That was funny, because he had always done best in science and math classes; this year, though, he was falling behind, and his grade in pre-calc at the quarter was a C. His mom was afraid he was going to get even further behind, and she had threatened to make him quit his job so he could focus more on his homework, but that didn't seem to be the problem. He never struggled to do his assignments after work, when he got home and everyone else in the house was already asleep. *Maybe she's right, though*, he thought. *If I wasn't up until 1am, maybe I could focus now.*

"Jeffrey," his teacher suddenly said, shaking him gently on the shoulder. "You with us, my friend?"

"Oh, yeah," he said, emerging suddenly from a sleep into which he hadn't even realized he'd fallen. "Sorry, I was working last night and I didn't get home until late."

"I get it," his teacher said, "but I've been up since five this morning, and I'm here and ready to go. You can do it, my friend! Just let me know if you need anything."

More sleep, obviously. But that wasn't going to happen. 8:10—just a little bit longer. He wished he had math in the afternoon, like he did last year. Did everyone feel like this?

The Morning Struggle

The clock struck 8am, and Jeffrey struggled to focus on the problem in front of him. Algebra had been easy last year, and the year before that he had gotten a B in geometry, but pre-calc was something entirely different. As he sat in the back row, elbows on his desk and head in his hands, he tried to listen to the teacher's explanation of how to solve the equation they'd been given. But Jeffrey couldn't shift his attention back and forth from the smartboard, to his notebook, and back to the smartboard without losing something in between. 8:05. Just half a period left.

Jeffrey couldn't wait to get to English next hour, where everything seemed to make sense. That was funny, because he had always done best in science and math classes; this year, though, he was falling behind, and his grade in pre-calc at the quarter was a C. His mom was afraid he was going to get even further behind, and she had threatened to make him quit his job so he could focus more on his homework, but that didn't seem to be the problem. He never struggled to do his assignments after work, when he got home and everyone else in the house was already asleep. *Maybe she's right, though*, he thought. *If I wasn't up until 1am, maybe I could focus now.*

"Jeffrey," his teacher suddenly said, shaking him gently on the shoulder. "You with us, my friend?"

"Oh, yeah," he said, emerging suddenly from a sleep into which he hadn't even realized he'd fallen. "Sorry, I was working last night and I didn't get home until late."

"I get it," his teacher said, "but I've been up since five this morning, and I'm here and ready to go. You can do it, my friend! Just let me know if you need anything."

More sleep, obviously. But that wasn't going to happen. 8:10—just a little bit longer. He wished he had math in the afternoon, like he did last year. Did everyone feel like this?

© Smith and Hernandez (2020). May be reproduced with citation.