

## The Construction of Identity and Academic Performance

By Suzanne Moberly

On the first day of teaching Exploring Writing at Littleton High School, I arrived at school early. I wanted to have enough time to allow the inevitable wash of emotions to flow over me and dissipate back into the past before my students reinstated the present. The room was in much better condition than what I remembered. By the time I graduated from Littleton High in 1973, the town had once again voted down a bond to build a new regional school. Finally, ten years ago, the existing high school was completely renovated. The ancient windows, which would not open or close without considerable struggle, had been replaced with state of the art, sliding casings, and gleaming new tiles had replaced the cracked linoleum floor. A great deal had happened to me in here, Room 210: Mrs. Hester Underhill's, the history teacher's room. I closed my eyes and saw myself come through the door, a petite ball of energy with long chestnut brown hair, clomping along in wooden clogs and patchwork jeans. Mrs. Underhill smiles at me. I see myself walk over and take my station by the window, Mrs. Underhill's second desk. This is where I sat for two periods a day during my junior and senior years of high school. Here I tutored other students in everything from English to Sociology. I can hear her voice and see her in one of her famous coordinated skirt and sweater sets. I stand at my desk and look around the room. The past merges into the present and 210 becomes 403, the swing room, the room used for everything from my writing class to Drivers Ed. and Sex Ed. This room is everyone's and no one's. I close my eyes and wipe the tears from my cheeks. I see myself approach Mrs. Underhill's desk. She stands in the same spot on the floor where I am now standing. I hear myself whisper. "Thank you...Thank you for saving my life."

First bell rings and my new students begin to file in. I have arranged the desks in a semi-circle. No stifling rows for this English teacher. I watch to see where they sit. A petite girl with a mop of strawberry blond hair and intense brown eyes sits in my old spot. I look at her and she meets my eyes. This is Jasmine, a sophomore, who asked to take this course, designed for juniors and seniors, to allow her to seriously work on improving her writing skills. Her boyfriend, Christian, introduced to me during pre-registration as part of the Jasmine package, comes in and pushes the next desk next close enough to hold her hand during class. I look around the room and watch the other students select their seating.

My own daughter, Scarlett, a junior, is part of this class. I have mixed feelings about having my own child in my class, but as this is the first writing class to be taught at Littleton High in ten years or more, it seemed unfair to exclude her. As the school population is so small, 325 students 9-12, it is not unusual for most teachers to teach their own child. There is simply no other alternative. Scarlett sits across the circle from Jasmine and Christian with Joelle, who will emerge as Valedictorian by the end of the semester. They are joined by Emily, a junior, and Lindsay, a senior. The four girls immediately establish themselves as the female academic superpowers. From the first

day of class, they participate in good humored academic competition to see who can out perform the other by producing evocative and insightful writing. Vanessa, Morgan, and Ben, all seniors taking my class to escape the standard English offering, inhabit the middle of the circle. Coree, a junior, has taken previous writing workshops with me and wants to work on his writing. Chris, also a junior, arrives late, takes an unoccupied desk, and places it at the end of the circle just beyond Jasmine and Christian. I look at Jasmine and Christian, and I allow myself to drift back to 1973 for one more moment. My sixteen-year-old self lets loose a hearty laugh and Mrs. Moberly, the new writing teacher at Littleton High School, emerges firmly in her place. "Please God, help me to be the teacher Mrs. Underhill knew I was."

As the semester progressed, I came to realize that the entire socio-economic continuum of Littleton, New Hampshire was represented within my small class of eleven students. I had students who openly identified themselves as being from "poor" families and often made comments that they could not afford to go to movies or purchase nice clothes like their classmates. Then I had other students who always had nice clothes, went skiing every weekend, and talked about going to New York, Europe, etc. There were also two students, Joelle and Ben, who attended St. Paul's School Advanced Study Program last summer and one, my daughter Scarlett, who would be attending this summer.

As recently as ten years ago, 80% of the school population was comprised of students whose families originated from Littleton or other towns within a thirty-mile radius (Littleton School District Vital Statistics 2005). There has been a distinct shift in the local population as a whole and this is reflected within the school population. A random sample of nearly any class make-up at Littleton will reveal that over 50% of the students are now from "away", meaning from other states or the southern part of the state, which in the North Country is the equivalent of "away." This population shift may be regarded as a negative by some segments of the population, but as a life long resident of Littleton, I view the diversity and new energy of this shift as a welcome infusion. The North Country, however, as a whole is still 96.7% white (US Census Bureau 2006). Any students or families of other ethnicities are represented in single numbers.

Littleton is in the North Country of New Hampshire, defined as any geographic territory in the state above two distinct and formidable geographic barriers: Franconia and Crawford Notch. These geographic areas also create varying forms of psychological barriers and protections for area residents. The Notches inhibit travel to and from the southern part of the state during winter, and the White Mountains surround and envelope the locals within a protective and separating barrier from the rest of the state year round. It is not uncommon to have students who rarely travel below the Notches and who reside within family units with an extremely small radius of orbit. Jobs and economic opportunities are hard to come by this far north. The 2000 United States Census reports the median household income at \$35,887 and the per capita income at \$18,803. Littleton is considered the economic powerhouse of the North Country with a strong industrial base and service economy, but the majority of jobs are low end or barely middle class.

This economic reality creates a split social stratification divided along economic lines. Littleton High School is comprised of mostly white students, who are children of either middle to low class working families or middle to upper middle class professional families. Students who would be identified as solidly middle class within a more diversified economy are classified as “rich kids” or from families with “money” at LHS. This distinction appears minor from the outside, but within the high school environment, these degrees of social stratification are well established and recognized. It has been my experience that the teaching staff is glaringly split along who does and does not teach to “those kids”: poor kids, kids in trouble, kids from “bad” families, kids with an ambiguous academic performance. Students classified as such are clearly not taught to as ardently and passionately as the “kids from the good families”.

I know from personal experience that this type pedagogical undercurrent has a direct impact upon individual student experience. My family was poor when I was in high school. During my freshman year, my father was in and out of the hospital seven times. He worked when he could, but he never again held a decent paying job. Up until this point, I had been a straight A student. I began doing drugs, having sex, tanking in school and hanging around with a group of kids called The Freaks. No one could figure out what was wrong with me. My father was dying, my mother was on the verge of collapse, and there was no money for clothes or school supplies. I did not tell any one at school what was going on, and no one asked. I began shoplifting notebooks and pens for what little schoolwork I did and a few clothes here and there. I began making most of my own clothes. I would go to church rummage sales and buy fat lady outfits made with nice fabric and re-make them into clothing of my own design. I was very popular for my funky outfits, which helped to minimize the shame and anger I felt about being poor. After running away at the end of my sophomore year, I realized I needed to recreate my own life- with or without support from my parents.

I can attribute part of my successful self-reformation to Mrs. Underhill taking an interest in me. She accosted me in the hall one day, just outside Room 403, and informed me I was signing up for her Anthropology class for seniors. I was a junior. I spent part of nearly every day with Mrs. Underhill from that day on until I graduated. It was she who helped manage my college applications. It was she who encouraged me to not play it safe and apply to a bigger, better school than where I went my freshman year. She sincerely tried to understand my home life and understand, in contradiction to my academic success, why I was a reeking mass of insecurity. She requested that my parents come in to meet with her and the guidance counselor to discuss my future. I was only present for part of the meeting. Years after I graduated, another teacher told me what had transpired. Dear Mrs. Underhill had truly wished to understand why I had no support from my parents. She told them that they underestimated my intellectual abilities and she wanted to impress upon them the extent of my potential. My parents agreed to help me apply for college and do what it took to have me attend, but they couldn't understand why I wanted to go to college and even worse, major in English. The problem was the concept of further education was not something my parents had incorporated into their personal value systems as being important. My mother had been a registered nurse, but she viewed this as simply a way to support herself until marriage. My father's father had

forced him to drop out of high school in the eleventh grade to help support the family. It was the start of the Great Depression, and the pressures on ordinary families to escape destitution were enormous. Throughout his life, my father was always self-conscious over his lack of formal education. Yet, in his mind, going to college education was something other people did. Working class people like us got jobs. It was not that they were trying to stop me from pursuing an education, it was simply they did not understand how to make it a reality. There is no doubt in my mind that Mrs. Underhill's unwavering faith and support throughout those two years was the primary influence that helped me turn a near flunking out of high school performance into the delicious victory of graduating in the top ten percent of my class.

I looked at Jasmine sitting in my writing class and saw myself. She was poor. She was smart, but her insecurity about her social status, both within the class and the school as a whole, appeared to interfere with her accepting the strength of her intellectual abilities. She was also one of "those kids". It was this realization that served as the catalyst for embarking on a research project that has taken on a life of its own as I have turned every corner.

Initially, I wanted to ascertain if individual identification within a specific social group or clique had any influence on academic performance – specifically Jasmine's performance. "Because the social positions we occupy have immediate consequences for our sense of self, group schemas play a major part in processes of identification"(Howard 368). As I pondered this thought, I could not help but remember my father's obsession that I needed to pay close attention to the clique I associated with during high school. He was very much a proponent that I would, indeed, be judged by the company I kept. One of my father's famous fallback statements was, "You're going to get yourself in trouble by hanging around with that clique!"

I remember thinking of the term clique as some archaic concept completely unrelated to my own experience. I knew what a clique was: a group of people who hung around together for various reasons. There were certainly distinct social groups, identifiable by "either deviant behavior or the identification of a distinctive uniform"(Hebdige 93), who readily displayed their style through dress, which in turn caused them to become labeled by the police, the media, and the judiciary as deviant (Hebdige 94). Yet, I thought of myself as simply hanging around kids with similar interests. I did not view myself as part of a clique, and I certainly did not possess the level of insight at the time to understand that I was actually part of a youth sub-culture. My friends and I thought of ourselves as simply The Freaks. We wore 1970-style hippy clothing. Our look was directly extracted from one of the major sub-cultures of the 1960s and 70s. We never once gave a moment's thought to how our individual identification with Hippy culture did or did not affect our high school academic performance.

Was it possible that my father's dire predictions that hanging around with the *wrong clique* could ruin you for life were true? This did not turn out to be the case for me as most of my Freak friends turned out to be pillars of the community, but was it possible that my father could be right on some level? The other question I thought about was

whether academic performance and self-identification with a certain group were entwined with teacher perception and judgment of individual student ability and potential? Through a series of in-class freewrites and interviews, the answers to these questions began to come together.

Jasmine and her boyfriend, Christian, appeared to spend most of their in school time hanging around with the group of students other teachers referred to as “those kids”, and who other students referred to as the Emo Kids— the emotional cutters, dressed in black, social outcast group. I believe Jasmine’s socioeconomic and social self-consciousness had a direct effect upon her resistance to my efforts for her to become more actively engaged with other high academic achieving students in class. I have told Jasmine many times that she is a smart kid and she should not be intimidated. She is just as capable as any of the other high performing students, but the perceived chasm of socioeconomic divide between herself and her classmates made this reality a very hard sell.

We don’t have distinct cliques in LHS, but there are levels. The highest up, most popular people are the athletes. Then there are the people with a lot of money who have name brand *EVERYTHING*. Then there are the people who get along with everyone, they can be in any group of people. Then there are the people who...um, my group of friends. There isn’t really a category I can think of, but we’re all on a level of our own”(Jasmine Freewrite).

During a private interview with Jasmine, accompanied by her boyfriend, Christian, I learned that Jasmine moved to Littleton from Newport, Vermont within the last couple of years. Her parents moved for work. When the family first moved to Littleton, her parents were living together, but Jasmine related that her father soon left her mother and moved in with another woman about a year ago.

It is safe to assume that the family was struggling economically even before the break-up. Until three months ago, Jasmine had been living with her mother in a low-income subsidized housing complex. Her father had lived there as well before his girlfriend came into the picture. Jasmine’s mother developed a relationship with another man. This man routinely beats-up Jasmine’s mother. At some point after the father left, mom’s boyfriend moved in to the apartment Jasmine shared with her mom. A significant altercation occurred at Christmas and the boyfriend was arrested. He trashed the apartment and inflicted serious injury upon Jasmine’s mother. When Jasmine’s mother bailed him out of jail and allowed him back into the house, Jasmine decided to live with her father.

During the interview, Jasmine reports that she had little contact with her mother until Easter. She is now speaking to her mother once again, but she has no plans to move in with her. Her father has recently revealed that he may be moving to South Carolina for a job opportunity. If Jasmine chooses to remain in New England, she will need to move back in with her mother. Job opportunities her mother had hoped for in Littleton have not worked out and her mother is thinking of moving to Lyndonville, Vermont with the abusive boyfriend. At this point, both parental moves are pure speculation and Jasmine does not wish to move with either parent.

It is clear from the interview that Jasmine's identity formation began well before she came to Littleton. Jasmine retains contact with her Vermont friends and her Vermont friends introduced her to the look she prefers to sport. On the day of the interview, Jasmine wore a black *Nightmare Before Christmas* sweatshirt with jeans, and Christian wore a black sweatshirt over a black tee shirt with an insignia on the front from the heavy metal band, Lamb of God. He also wore a black fishnet shirt under the tee shirt with black wristbands and more distorted Nazi insignia, a symbol for the band. His tight fitting jeans were topped with a three-inch wide, studded, metal belt, also topped with an additional belt of looped, lightweight chains. Christian was very proud of his belts and wore them every day. Christian also routinely wore black eyeliner to complete his look.

As we discussed their fashion choices, it was very clear that this look is part of their individual identities. I asked if they chose this look to identify themselves as being part of a specific group. Jasmine states that they just like the look, the "Hot Topic" look. I asked her to explain this and she tells me the look is comprised of black, loose fitting jeans with chains for girls. Boys have the option to choose between tight fitting or loose jeans with chains. Both tell me boys and girls can order custom-made jeans to be as tight as possible. Jasmine stated she planned to get a job this summer and spend her money on developing her "Hot Topic" look. (Refer to [www.hottopic.com](http://www.hottopic.com)) Jasmine also described how she was planning to have her hair cut and dyed over April vacation. At the time of the interview, she had strawberry blond hair and she planned to dye it a bright auburn.

Jasmine and Christian were very much aware that their particular look distinguished them from other students. I asked them if they knew how other students referred to them. They immediately responded that they knew other kids called their group the Emo kids, the emotional kids. They both resented the fact that "everyone thinks we're all cutters". They also found it amusing that other kids thought they only listened to Emo music. Jasmine admitted that she enjoyed one or two Emo groups, but Christian clearly identified himself as firmly in the heavy metal/head banging camp. Music and fashion figured prominently within each of their sense of self and identification within their larger social group.

Clothing was also a significant issue for the high academic achievers in the class. Joelle, stated that her social group, "the kids who do well" consistently wore American Eagle or Hollister brand name clothing. (Refer to [www.americaneagle.com](http://www.americaneagle.com) and [www.hollister.com](http://www.hollister.com))

None of us are rich but we go shopping together... We have a clean-cut look. We wear nice jeans and shirts with collars and sometimes we wear more formal things, like black shirts and skirts. You have the smart kids who are smart and hang out together. I have one group of friends who all take challenging classes, and I have friends who are good students but not *really* good students. Because our school is so small, the social groups are not all that distinct... Classes are so small you have to interact with other types of people (Joelle Interview).

Joelle went on to report that despite certain established norms for dress within the high achieving group, the group tolerates a high degree of diversity. The black Emo look is routinely merged with the American Eagle look and this choice of dress is respected by the other group members. Her observations correspond to Murray Milner's opinions in

*Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids: American Teenagers, Schools and the Subculture of Consumption.* “Once a person’s status was established, the norms about clothing (and most other things) became more flexible and relaxed... The effect of high status and self-confidence in relaxing the pressures to conform is not limited to differences between individuals. Class and ethnicity can also affect this. Groups who are most confident about their status can be relaxed about conformity while those whose status is less secure are often preoccupied with fashions” (Milner 46). If this analysis is true, it explains why Jasmine and Christian spend much more time obsessing over and working to maintain their individual look. Their look helps to provide a stronger sense of self-identity, which in turn helps to compensate for the social and academic insecurity they so readily spoke of in their interview. “How does your group identify yourselves?” I asked.

Jasmine responded, “We’re just the kids that no one else wants to talk to.” They understood that most of the students in the writing class simply regarded them as “The Emo”kids.

Several students related that a fine line differentiates the economic social classes within the school. One student captured the essence of this major distinction very succinctly. “I don’t think there are cliques in our school. Just the clean kids and the dirty kids” (Vanessa Freewrite). Superficially, this statement comes across as overly simplistic and even humorous, but it is blatantly true. The high school is populated by many students who travel under the radar of social acceptability. My students related during an in-class discussion on social groups that they all knew of kids who did not have working showers and bathtubs at home. These students secretly used the school locker rooms to attend to their daily hygiene. One student said she overheard two girls talking in the hall about the necessity to take showers at school and how embarrassing it was. One was worried other kids would find out and tease her. It was a revelation for my students to consider that something as simple as personal cleanliness was an issue for some of their fellow students (Class Interview).

All members of the class reported that the gradation between social groups is extremely porous. “The high school is too small for anyone to just stay in one group, but there are kids who everyone avoids. You know-you see certain kids and hold your breath as you go by them in the hall” (Joelle, Class Interview). The dirty and the clean division surfaces again. When questioned about this my students stated that the dirty kids were usually either the “really, really poor kids” (Lindsay, Class Interview), or “the special ed kids” (Ben, Class Interview). When asked to define how they perceive their own social group identification, each student identified him or herself with a specific group, but again reiterated the idea that most groups maintained a certain level of flux with individuals crossing over into one or more groups, while maintaining a primary identification with one group or another.

Interestingly enough individual student affinity to different groups had more to do with what they were interested in as an individual, including individual sense of style, rather than a conscious identification with one social group over another. In turn, the propensity toward academic achievement also appears to be an individual choice. This is reinforced

more strongly within the academic achieving group than others, but, again, the propensity lies within the individual and all the complex forces which have created that individual rather than within the dynamics of any particular social group.

Yet, I still question if Jasmine's self-identification with the "Emo kids" has a negative or positive impact upon her academic performance in direct and indirect ways. It is clear the "Emo" kids are regarded as outside the norm by the majority of the high school population, including teachers. In most circumstances, social identity with a specific group does serve a positive purpose.

A social identity based on membership in a group or category gives one self meanings that are shared with others in the group. One is tied to many similar others; verifying the self as a group member, one receives recognition and approval, and acceptance from those others. One's ties to the others are like their ties among themselves. One is verified as a member by being like the other members. Being verified in terms of a social identity reinforces group—nongroup distinctions, thus maintaining boundaries and supporting the continued differentiations and cleavages in the social structure (Burke 9).

There was no question that identification with the "Emo" look was an integral part of Jasmine's self-identity. Other than the look, there was absolutely nothing about her behavior that significantly separated her from other members of the class or the high school population as a whole. What I found interesting about the interview was that with the exception of each other and a small group of kids who attend LHS, neither Jasmine nor Christian relied on the social pool of LHS to meet their needs for friendship. They each retained strong bonds with old friends from where they grew-up in Vermont. Jasmine routinely has her Vermont friends and family members over to visit and spends time with them in Vermont as well. Although Jasmine and Christian have spent their freshmen and sophomore years at LHS, they both reported that their individual preference for the "Hot Topic" look originated long before they ever stepped foot in LHS. They were pleased to see that the school had other kids who shared their sense of fashion.

I have come to the conclusion that Jasmine and Christian use their differentness as a way to create identifies outside of the mainstream school culture. They are not however outside the mainstream of youth culture as a whole. Their particular "look" may not be regarded as the norm but it is very much a norm within the totality of American youth culture. Rather than feeling isolated and alone or feeling being apart from the mainstream of LHS, they revel in the difference. Both students possess a strong and healthy sense of self-identity. What is even more fascinating was that neither student regarded the high school as the primary sustenance for their social or emotional lives. Christian sees high school as something he must do to get to where he is not quite sure where that is yet, except that wherever it is involves playing drums and guitar. Jasmine views LHS as a vehicle to get her to where she can escape her family limitations and improve her social class. She "wants to be able to buy a whole wardrobe of "Hot Topic" stuff!" The paradox to this reality is, at this point in their development, I believe neither Jasmine or Christian possesses the insight to understand that by "defining themselves *against* the parent culture" (Hebdige 127) without a consciously recognized concept of

the specific ideology this particular style embraces, their self-identification with the “Hot Topic” style may not be worth the result it produces.

The Emos within LHS do not appear to have a specific social agenda. The difference between The Emos at LHS now and The Freaks of the 1970’s is that The Freaks constituted the majority of the student body. It was impossible for non-Freak members of the student body, teachers, the administration, the guidance department, or the community to marginalize the group. The other significant difference is that The Freaks, as a rule, were able to vocalize a clear agenda. Nearly all of us protested against the Vietnam War and we consciously rallied for social change. If The Emos of LHS have a specific agenda, neither Jasmine or Christian are able to articulate it. It could be that the initial institutionalizing of the group served as a way for the members to directly and indirectly “protest all manner of constraints”(Leblain 6) imposed on them by the mainstream culture. The current Emos, however, lack focus, and this allows the group to be marginalized and labeled as the other by the dominant school culture. This again raises the question of whether or not identification with “The Emos” has a negative impact upon Jasmine’s potential for continued academic success. Is the look alone worth the “cleavage” it creates, or is the sense of identity it provides for Jasmine as an individual worth the classification as the other?

Some groups have more say, more opportunity to make the rules, to organize meaning, while others are less favorably placed, have less power to produce and impose their definitions upon the world (Hebdige 14).

Every school population has students who fall into this category. Yet, what my research project has taught me is that *every* teacher needs to guard against becoming one of “those” teachers who rushes to judgment about a particular student based on looks and assumptions, rather than being open to who that student really is underneath the American Eagle or *Nightmare Before Christmas* clothing. We have the power to change who is more or “less favorably placed”.

In class one day, just before quarter-term grades were to be posted, I heard Jasmine say her father would not be happy if she did not make honor roll. I immediately asked if her father expected her to maintain high grades. “Ya. My dad tells me the only way I’m going to get into college is to do well all through high school.” This was intriguing, as Jasmine had stated on many occasions that one of the reasons she works to get good grades is to go to college to escape her family background. I asked her at a later point if either of her parents had attended college. Her mother did not, but she remembers her father struggling through a few courses at a local college. As I have come to know Jasmine more fully, I realized it is not her family that she is trying to escape. I think it is quite possible that Jasmine and her father have the very same goal, to use a college education as a way to escape the social class of a blue-collar family.

I have learned that individual self-perception is one of the most significant factors influencing academic performance. This self-concept also provides a basis for the formation of future aspirations. Some students like Joelle come to us with a well formed sense of themselves as being smart and capable students. Her self-concept has been

reinforced repeatedly throughout her school years. Yet, many, many more students come to us like Jasmine, and like me, diamonds in the rough. Intelligent, driven, but insecure about themselves and their abilities. It is our jobs as teachers to look beyond clothes, hair, and see each student as possessing the potential for high academic achievement. We need to help our students, regardless of whatever social group they may identify with, to think of themselves as academic achievers.

I asked Joelle, the Valedictorian, when was it that she began to think of herself as a “smart” kid?

I was in the fifth grade and we were doing oral calculations as a class... I had a hard time doing the calculations in my head and I was really worried that I would give the wrong answer, so I freaked out and started crying. My teacher took me into another room and told me that it was OK even for smart kids not to always be right. I said to myself, ‘Gee! I’m a smart kid!’ I had never thought of myself like that before, but it all made sense, and it fit in with what my parent have always told me, ‘Don’t do anything if you can’t give it your best.’ I realize now that being smart and that my drive to always do my best go together. I think to be a smart kid and do well, you need to have somebody tell you you’re smart. I don’t remember my parents actually telling me I was smart, but they just expected me to do well. It wasn’t *if* I went to college, but *when* I went to college” (Joelle Interview).

As teachers, we sometimes forget the enormous capacity we are entrusted with every day. We may be only one of the many factors influencing our individual students’ sense of self, but like it or not, we have the potential to be a significant factor in the lives of every child in our classrooms. Providing our students with “...a sense of ‘possible selves’...such that people compare themselves with ideal versions of self” (Hitlin 124) may well indeed be the most important factor we bring to our classrooms. My little study has demonstrated to me that if we take the time to understand how many other factors have configured and reacted to produce the child in front of us, we may be able to have more of an impact than we think.

I would like to think that my constant implorings for Jasmine to think of herself as a “smart kid” will have a lasting effect upon her on-going development of self. I hope that I have helped her to understand that to change her social status, she must believe that she has more in common than she thinks with those she now regards as being apart from herself. Yet, in the end, it does not matter that my efforts are validated. One of my great regrets in life is that Mrs. Underhill died before I realized how much she meant to me. Yet, it did not change the one absolute truth she had known for years, and the one I have learned through this study. Teachers who take the time to look at students as individuals have the power to change lives. Thank you, Mrs. Underhill.

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