Dear 22 year old Emily,

Before it’s too late, I want to let you know how “tracking,” has influenced my educational career and English studies; I specify English because it is the only subject you have ever been “above average” in.

If it weren’t for Mrs. Cruise, (“Cruise,” pronounced with a C-sound, not a Z; She doesn’t want to be compared to Tom Cruise even though her name is spelled exactly the same way) I would have a less enjoyable vocabulary. But if it were not for your mom, you would not even know how to read and write. So when someone tells you homeschooling is inefficient or that preschool is a necessity, they are wrong.

My first English class, in a public school, was instructed by Plainwell’s woodshop teacher, and how convenient for the craftsman that there is a video version of *Lord of the Flies*. My most vivid memory of his class is writing apologetic lines committing to never talking [to Dai Dai] in class again. And when I turned in that piece of paper with 200 of the same commitment spread across the lines, I was flabbergasted to watch him crumple it up and throw it in the trash. I mean, I guess I would not have read every line either if I had been him, and it was of course a punishment, but I was surprised that my hard work had not been carefully examined.

Anyway, I want you to know that you excelled in his class (seems surprising I know). And you were consequently qualified to take Mrs. Wingles AP course the following year. Her class disappointed you though. You expected an AP class to challenge you intellectually and make you work harder than you had before, but the only difference was that it was taught by an actual English teacher who assigned meaningful tasks, and we got to go on a field trip at the end of the semester to see a Bollywood version of *Midsummer Nights Dream*. What a great way to experience Shakespeare!

One thing you have not forgotten from this experience, is how those two measly letters, “AP,” influenced your perspective of learning and also your self-perception. When you changed from the Craftsman’s class to the English teachers class, you became more interested in the content, focused on the tasks, and proud of your work; which makes me think, how much harder would students work, if they also had the teacher who had higher expectations and more meaningful lessons? Just because I was “eligible” to be her class, does not mean any one of the other students would should have been ineligible. And I also am sad to think that many missed out on a great opportunity to experience English in a more positive light.

Perhaps that’s why you want to be and English teacher.

-Emily