**Columbia University Mind Map**

Without sounding too sappy and sentimental, the Quiz Bowl tournament at Columbia University will be among my last. Quiz Bowl is amazing and phenomenal; it has meant a lot to me. There are three people in the school that I have shared the entire journey with: Aaron Engel, Rachel An, and Jacob Mathai. Because the team has goals for the rest of the tournaments this year, this tournament was designated as fun. All the seniors remaining in the club played on one team together, and we jointly created memories – hopefully, memories that will last. Less than two months later, I can’t actually remember specific memories; I only remember the feeling of completeness of competing with people I have spent the last seven years maturing together – and that’s an amazing feeling. I’m not going to remember how many matches we won – or how many we lost – during the tournament, I’m not going to remember what I had for lunch; however, I’m going to remember my teammates and my friends.

**The Crew Mind Map**

 It’s never fun to do work by yourself. Maybe that’s why study GROUPS are encouraged in education. Collaborating with Sherry and Esther on this mind map is truly a treasure. I remember working on this mind map on a Friday night after dinner. I don’t usually do schoolwork on a Friday night after a long week. *WHO DOES WORK ON A FRIDAY NIGHT?!* Nevertheless, part of the fun was digging through old memories when each part of the individual sections came up while being somewhat delirious from sleep deprivation and fatigue. Graduating high school is right around the corner and we all would like to believe that we’ll maintain all our friendships from high school. Yet, it seems like none of it becomes true. For what it’s worth, I hope that everything will fall in line regardless of the diverging roads that we all choose.

**Identity Card Mind Map**

 Back in September 2013 (wow that seems like a long time ago), I marveled at the “Periodic Table of Sherry” identity card. It was meticulous. It was perfect. Being able to draw tiny symbols that represented a part of her life and combine it like the Periodic Table of Elements is an amazing idea. When we were given this assignment (in September 2014), I instinctively thought back to her ID card. I struggled to think of a creative idea. Quite frankly, I was ready to give up when Esther suggested a Jeopardy! theme. I don’t watch Jeopardy! every night, but it’s fun trying to compete against the contestants (my dad thinks it’s impressive that I can get a lot of answers, but it’s really not). I’ve tried out for the Jeopardy! Teen Tournament in 2013, but I haven’t heard back, yet.

**Personalities of Berries Mind Map**

When we had the substitute teacher, neither of us was in the mood to follow through with her directions of free-writing and turning it into a poem. Katie took out a sheet of paper where she had already started drawing pictures of berries. As a way of deceiving the substitute teacher, Katie threw the mind map in front of me and decided that we were going to collaborate on this mind map. Well, I enjoyed working with Katie on this mind map. My experience was absolutely phenomenal because Katie has a quirky, vibrant, and creative personality. Her mind is free to wander into frontiers and ideas that many people usually don’t. Coming up with content for each berry appeared to be easy. It was a challenge for me to contribute worthy content initially, but, eventually, I got the hang of it. To date, this mind map is probably the most bizarre and most “out-of-this-world” that I’ve worked on. Nonetheless, this mind map was the most fun to work on and elicited the most positive experience. I’m glad I embarked on this endeavor.

**Books Mind Map**

 I LOVE reading! As a young child, I hated reading; I hated everything associated with reading. My mother would tell me stories about the evil sins I committed against books. Some of the stories are interesting and amusing, but I can’t remember enough of one storyline to paint you a picture (*sorry*). I don’t get to read as much as I’d like, but I keep a running list of books that I want to read. Usually, I spend my summer vacation reading those books and crossing it off my list. My mother’s favorite line about reading is the following: “When you were younger, you learn to read. When you are older, you read to learn.” This statement cannot be any truer. I’m primarily attracted to non-fiction novels especially about science, technology, and history. I find books of those genres to be so informative; the amount of research done to write a book on the specific topic is huge, but it makes reading the book worthwhile because I get to learn new information about all sorts of topics – whether it is the Dulles brothers or it is Google.

**High School Memories Mind Map**

 At some point, I was struggling to think of ideas for poems and prose. It’s ironic because there’s so much available to write about and there’s no way I’ve written about everything available. My brain isn’t very linear. I’m constantly juggling many different thoughts. Consequently, I decided to map out some memories that I remember from high school because those memories could help me figure out what I want to write about and what I was thinking about. I would be lying if I said I used every memory listed on the mind map has a component of all my creating writing pieces this year. But, the memories helped me come up with topics I was willing and I was interested in writing about.

**My Goals Mind Map**

 Most of my goals are pretty simple and relate to three things: swimming, Quiz Bowl, and academics. Swimming and Quiz Bowl are both competitive events. Setting goals are part of competition and having goals to progress toward is crucial to a competitor’s development. But, the part of this mind map I enjoyed the most was coming up with outlandish bucket list items. One item on my bucket list is being told “that’s classified” by the CIA. If you ask me, that just seems crazy and bizarre. Anyway, in some way or another, I always have goals. I don’t always put it into a mind map (actually, I never do, but that’s not the point), but I have some way of tracking all the goals that I have for a time period and tracking my progress toward meeting those goals.

**My Thoughts on Education Mind Map**

 I serve on the Shared Decision Making Committee as a Student Government liaison and student representative. With the national education media focus on reforms like Common Core and similar standards, local committees are doing their part in figuring out “innovative” education. In the last two years, the autumnal districtwide Shared Decision Making meeting has been about being more innovative with education and more willing to change our traditional ways. I don’t entirely agree with the need for standards like Common Core and I haven’t actually voiced my opinions on the educational reforms from recent years. Thankfully, I don’t have to experience how Common Core directly affects my education while people are attempting to work all its kinks because I’m definitely NOT INTERESTED.

**Emotions Mind Map**

Emotional memories are pretty powerful if you actually remember the details surrounding the memory. Also, not surprisingly, it can lead to good poetry.