

## Personal experience

When I was in seventh grade I stopped turning in any assignments. It wasn't because I didn't do the assignments. It was because I hated teachers grading my assignments. I was so worried about teachers and other students thinking I was stupid that I self handicapped myself. I was incredibly embarrassed every time I got an assignment back that had a bad grade or had more negative comments on it than positive comments. If I turned in an assignment, I would be afraid of other students seeing my grades, so I didn't turn in my assignments. I had a performance avoiding goal orientation. In the article I read, "Classrooms: Goals, Structures, and Student Motivation" by Carol Ames, Ames states that "children who lack confidence in their ability are especially at risk for exhibiting a learned helpless response pattern." I soon began to fail every class. Eventually my science teacher told my family that I was failing so my family began to intervene. I then started actually turning in my homework to make my parents happy, but I refused to look at my grades. I became less focused on the teacher thinking I was stupid, and more focused on just doing my work. I still hate turning in papers, and to this day I still hate turning in anything I write to be read by someone else. Ames writes that frequent grading will foster performance based goals rather than mastery goals, so when I didn't pay attention to my grades, I began to foster mastery goals. I also hated assignments with ambiguous directions, or that involved doing a large amount of work with very little instruction. My parents advised me to go in to teachers when I didn't know what was expected to do on an assignment, and having the teacher break the assignment down for me. This processed made assignments that I would normally not even attempt seem actually achievable. I began wanting to do assignments I would normally avoid. This is probably why Ames advises that teachers break down large assignments into easily attainable steps. I would feel overwhelmed by large assignments. Through learning mastery goals, instead of performance avoiding goals, I managed to go from failing every class at the beginning of the semester to passing every class with at least a 'C'. Through this article and reflecting on my past experiences, I learned the importance of confidence in fostering mastery goals, and that grades should be private. I also learned that tasks should be broken into smaller steps.