First Year Reading Assignment – *The Other Wes Moore*

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Personal responsibility, self-sufficiency, and citizen leadership are emphasized through the Longwood Seminar. These qualities are also displayed in *The Other Wes Moore* and how it connects to life as a college student. Personal responsibility is the ability to be accountable for one’s actions. Personal responsibility is displayed by the “other” Wes Moore because he hid from the law a lot so that he would not have to go to jail. Eventually, he stopped trying to run from the police and went to prison. He took responsibility for the murder he committed and went to prison for his terrible actions. I believe the personal responsibly was displayed not only through the book, but also from Wes Moore’s purpose of writing the book. Moore felt that it was his responsibility to show to everyone that there should be action taken to change society. Moore writes in his book, “I realized just how similar were the challenges the young boys here and like the ones I grew up with faced. In both places, young men go through the daily struggle trying to navigate their way through the deadly streets, poverty, and the twin legacy of exclusion and low expectations” (170). He also felt that it was his duty to share with people about two boys with the same name, living in the same area, and having the some of the same family situations, can have two completely different outcomes.

Self-sufficiency means that a person does not rely on outside influences to take care of themselves. This is displayed through both Wes Moores. They both grew up with single mothers which made it difficult for them at times. The author displayed more self-sufficiency than the “other” Wes Moore because the author went to military school, got a college degree, became a Rhodes Scholar, and many other impressive accomplishments. The “other” Wes Moore was a murderer who is now serving a lifetime in prison for his actions. These two examples display how Wes Moore was much more self-sufficient in becoming a successful person.

Citizen leadership is the ability to stand up for one’s community and represent that community in a way that is appropriate. Citizen leadership is represented in different ways throughout the book. The author represents citizen leadership by doing well in school, helping out his single mother, and attending military school. Even though he did not want to attend military school, it represented how he was a citizen leader by attending a prestigious academy. The “other” Wes Moore on the other hand was not a very good citizen leader. He was arrested several times for selling drugs and another time for murder. He was not a good citizen leader to the people in society.

Personal responsibility, self-sufficiency, and citizen leadership are all qualities that a college student should have. *The Other Wes Moore* connects to the life of a college student in several ways. For instance, the “other” Wes Moore was influenced heavily by his brother, Tony. He soon got into selling drugs, robbing stores, and murder. College students can also be influenced by other college students, similarly to how Wes was influenced by his brother. College students are not influenced to the extreme Wes did; however, they may be influenced to participate in activities that they think will make them cool or stand out. Another connection this book makes to life as a college student is absence of parents. Both Wes Moore and the “other” Wes Moore grew up without a father. For the most part, college is the first time that young adults are away from their legal guardians. It can be difficult to adjust to life where parents are not there to help out with every problem someone may have. Also, the author, Wes Moore, was sent off to military school so that his behavior and grades would improve. College students soon realize that college education is very important to the rest of their life. Wes Moore hated his mother for sending him to military school at first, but he soon realized how important it was to improve his behavior and get good grades. If college students do not do well in school then they will not be able to get a good education. All in all, the actions of the characters in *The Other Wes Moore* connect to personal responsibility, self-sufficiency, citizen leadership, and life as a college student.

Works Cited

Moore, Wes. *The Other Wes Moore*: One Name, Two Fates. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2011. Print.