

**Bianca Denise Layog**

Age: 17, Grade: 12

School Name: Interlochen Arts Academy, Interlochen, MI

Educator: Joe Sacksteder

Category: Personal Essay & Memoir

---

## How to Construct Your Perfect Puppet!

This first step to becoming your “ideal human being” is to become a puppet. This is, of course, simple— there is no need to change anything about this sort of alteration process. It’s only natural to want the best for your product. According to research conducted by several Asian scientists, it is indeed possible to become a puppet and get into an Ivy League university, which is usually the first big milestone for the customers. However, as it is now the twenty-first century, these scientists have started transitioning from puppets into robotics, as this is where the future lies. This is still in testing and has not been released to the general public as of late. Recent research has found that there is much overlap between the two. Robot is just a fancier word for puppet.

Three is usually deemed rather too early, maybe too cruel, maybe the customer’s empathy is at a human level. There have not been enough case studies to confirm the existence of such empathy levels in the pool of customers. Asian Scientists From Universities Ranked Higher Than 20 On US News College Rankings have, however, confirmed that alteration does not start before the age of three.

At the age of four, you are at your prime time for starting the alteration process.

First, you will be expected to enroll straight off (if you have not already) in an instrument of your choice, whether it be piano or violin. Wind instruments are an acceptable option, as Asian Scientists and Researchers have found that Ivy League Universities desire unconventional instrumentalists. You will spend about an hour every day practicing your instrument(s). This hour must be spent productively.

Your mother will pull up a chair from the dining table. The chair has been stripped of its clothing, which is in the wash. The piano lid goes up, almost like the curtain before a ballet performance. Sometimes, when she leaves to get the hanger, you will shift over to the chair, legs dangling. Your toes don’t even brush the floor. You feel smaller than you have ever been in that moment, and the moments when she screams so loud your eardrums feel like flimsy parchment paper.

According to *The Guardian*, “Piano and ballet give university applicants an edge” (19 Jan 2018)*The Guardian* asks “is that fair?” But it does not matter if it is fair. As Aristotle once said, “The worst form of inequality is to make unequal things equal.” And as it happens, having the opportunity to become a puppet must be treasured at all costs. Part of the process then includes dance lessons. It is best, in this scenario, to start very young, even younger than perhaps learning to play an instrument. Customers are required by procedure to enroll puppets into dance lessons. According to one survey, 65% of Asian girls have taken at least one dance class in their lives. It doesn’t matter if they don’t like dance. In fact, it doesn’t matter what they think about it. Puppets don’t think. That’s the easy thing about puppets. You can tell them what to do and they’ll do it for you, even if in a perfunctory sort of way. If you’re lucky, you’ll get a puppet like a well-oiled machine— perfectly mechanical, perfectly on their way to becoming the next customer for our service!

Benefits of dance lessons are as follows:

- Dancing can be a way to stay fit for people of all ages, shapes, and sizes.
- Dancing can improve your muscle tone, strength, endurance, and fitness.
- Dancing is a great way to meet new friends. (According to BetterHealth)
- Dancing is a great way for the puppet to begin to express themselves so that they seem to be growing in a healthy matter. Dancing is a great way for the puppet to be made fun of in class. Dancing is a great way

for expectations to weave themselves into the body. Dancing is a great way for YOUR puppet to become a model on the brochure of our program!

When you lose your new ballet skirt, you will be chased around your home by a wooden fan long enough so that the home becomes a prison. In class, you will be looked away from, whispered about behind your back by the tall girls who have pretty cheekbones, straight noses, and knees that touch. After class, your mother is told that you are *just not self-aware enough* and *if she actually tried she would improve and she has such long legs for a girl her age, are you sure you want to waste this?* And your bones bitten by the fan will beg your body to straighten itself, activate the right muscles, chin up, turn out, hamstrings!, good port de bra arms, have you ever tried holding yourself up?

While all of this new activity is going on, your puppet must also receive an education. We can't have a dumb puppet, can we now? That goes against our whole mission statement! According to some Asian scientists specializing in puppet alteration, this is necessary to mold these puppets into the perfect image of diligence. Customers don't even have to teach them diligence. In the words of a current puppet product currently working at Goldman Sachs (an investment banking company, for all of you dumb puppet customers!) on Wall Street, "Pressure them. Don't clarify your expectations, but pressure them to produce the best and only the best! Don't teach them to work hard, teach them to expect much out of themselves. This will fire-back in the future and provide an emotional arc for your puppets!"

Academic excellence starts at home. Make sure your puppet is earning the grades. It doesn't matter if they are working for it or not, because you must remember how you are also working towards the emotional arc, otherwise known as impostor syndrome. Feed your puppet. Give them everything they "want". Act like ranking #5 in their class is no big deal. Ask them, instead, how the other kids are doing in class. Who is rank #1? Rank #1 is so smart. Rank #1 is such a wonderful child. Another thing that triggers inferiority. Remember, emotional arc.

C. Trehearn on *Education News* wrote that "There is a direct correlation between the level of education that a person has and the likelihood of finding a decent job." This will be useful for a future step in the process. Although it may perhaps alarm you that the word *decent* is included in the sentence—it is understandable how this must not reach your expectations—you can be assured that the program has a great success rate in making sure that puppets do indeed become the best puppets. To continue the process, you may supplement an especially slow puppet by sending them to math and reading tutorials, or Kumon!

When you are in the second grade, you will be sitting at the dining room table struggling to solve word problems involving fractions. One in particular starts with "A farmer fed his chickens twelve bags of rice..." and involves the solution twelve times one over eighty-four. You do everything. You try to understand what the words mean, and then you can't try to understand anymore because all of a sudden someone is yelling at you and you are crying and you can't stop and you can't stop and you can't stop—. You give him a name. You memorize the solutions out of the solution book. You learn that a stolen solution doesn't result in safety. Even almost a decade later you can turn to your mother and ask, "Do you remember Farmer Ben's chickens?" and without a trace of guilt, have her respond *yes*. And sometimes you want to ask, does she remember the way she had you step out of your skirt, pulled down your white undershorts, hit you harder the more you cried? You want to ask if she felt the sting of the plastic hanger against her own skin, too, if she ever felt sorry, if she ever felt. You have so many questions but Farmer Ben's chickens have taught you that questions aren't allowed here. Will you remember this? *Yes*.

However, we must admit that our process is not perfect. It can only be expected that your puppet might malfunction. Puppets can be lazy during the alteration process, as they will still be part not-puppet while the transformation is going on. Sometimes, the wish to avoid what they deserve will result in a lack of honesty. Lying, of course, must be prevented. Lying will not get your puppet to a Top University. It will not get your puppet to Goldman Sachs or McKinsey. Lying will not turn your puppet into the next Mark Zuckerberg or the next Bill Gates. You must be firm in your prevention.

Although we do not have a specific manual for lie-prevention, there are many accounts of puppets that have been apprehended and given consequences for lying. You must also remember that this process is entirely private, especially in the moments you drag them by the hair across the street, running them so close to a truck they might as

well be dead. Ungratefulness must also be prevented. If puppets desire to talk about their experiences, they must not do so in a demeaning manner. Puppets can kneel outside a door for two hours while you scream at them. Their knees will be enough of a reminder. In the end, remember to say Sorry and I Love You.