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Cover Letter Phase 1

Phase 1 of English 110 at The City College Of New York has shaped and transformed my existing English skills and abilities into a different form with new perspectives and new ways of thinking that I did not have prior to taking this class. Phase 1 of English 110 has broadened my mind to the politics of language and literacy, and the narratives and experiences that everyone has in the development of language and literacy in their lives. At the beginning of Phase 1, we started using rhetorical worksheets for a variety of stories from authors who wrote about their own life experiences in language and literacy, learning the different perspectives that those from other cultures experience. The first story that we read in class was “Mother Tongue” by Amy Tan, which is about the language and literacy experiences that the author’s mother faced due to her Chinese accent, causing a multitude of challenges in all facets of her life due to the discrimination and bias that many people had against her mother’s form of communication. Additionally, the second story that we read, “Nobody Mean More To Me Than You” by June Jordan, also provided a perspective of how someone who had been challenged and had barriers placed on them because of their own language and literacy. June Jordan’s student’s brother had been murdered by the police due to his so-called “Broken English” sparking outrage within her causing her to question if true English really does exist thereby opening the gateway for so many other African American children to embrace their own language and literacy narratives. These two stories helped expand my view on language and literacy and began to open my eyes to the different experiences of language and literacy that everyone has. Another assignment in the class that further expanded my understanding on language and literacy experiences and politics is the

Language & Literacy Narratives and Translation 1. These two assignments truly gave me a full understanding of language and literacy because I took the time to think about my own language and literacy development while also seeing the perspectives of my peer's language and literacy experiences, showing how each and every one of the students in English 110 have had different experiences that brought their language and literacy to what it is today. These four assignments, as well as, a variety of in class group discussions, class presentations, teacher presentations, and homework review helped me analyze what language and literacy means and how language and literacy is developed in each individual. I learned from the class presentations during translation that my language and literacy narrative is totally different than some of my classmates' language and literacy, as they have come from different countries and cultures with different languages, making it challenging to understand English. Additionally, they had to face discrimination and bias while trying to communicate in standard settings, like at the grocery store or at the doctor's office. I learned to listen and empathize with the language and literacy experiences of my classmates, gaining insight to the fact that everyone has a different language and literacy narrative that may include discrimination and struggle, but we need to learn about the struggles and challenges in order to alleviate the problem and to allow everyone to experience their language and literacy narrative peacefully on their own terms and at their own pace.

Language & Literacy Narrative

Language and literacy is the essential foundation for learning and communication in our lives. It gives us the framework to develop as human beings through reading, writing, and speaking. Each and every person has unique experiences in their language and literacy journeys, ranging from speaking different languages to being nonverbal. In my life, I have had many impactful language and literacy experiences that have transformed my abilities and have allowed me to become a strong and descriptive writer with the capability to create robust conversation. The language and literacy experience that was the most impactful in my life and that carried the most weight in the development of my reading, writing, and communication is the influence of my mother. As a child, she emphasized words and sentences, created flash cards, and as a middle schooler, she would require me to submit writing assignments that were longer than what the teacher required. Looking back, my mother's actions and influence truly shaped my language and literacy journey.

Education is a fundamental and extremely valuable part of my life. The beginning of my educational journey started way before I ever stepped foot into a school building; it began with my mother and her language and literacy teachings at home. Every moment was a possible learning experience in her eyes. At an early age, my mother would sound out words and have me repeat those words back to her. From counting each step as we went up the stairs, to stopping to smell a flower and being super detailed in its description. Soft pink petals, long green stem. Every word was exaggerated and repeated. Even at the beginning of my speaking journey, my mother would speak to me like I was older and help me sound out simple words to build up my

speech. As we watched *Thomas the Train* on the television, she would repeat basic words and then have me recite it back focusing on colors, numbers, and character emotions. These simple acts that took a little extra time out of her day had a powerful impact on my speech. As my speech began to develop and flourish, she would create flash cards with sight words to improve my reading and speech skills. She began with easy words like “the,” “are,” and “they.” As I learned, the words got increasingly harder, moving into stronger words with more meaning, transitional words, and overall longer words that would challenge me. My mother would additionally make me spell the words outloud, as well as, on paper to improve my writing ability and my analytical abilities. I recall getting ready for bed, sitting in my dark, cozy room, and my mother walked in with the flash cards. At that moment, I was not happy at all to see the stack of square, white index cards in her hands, ready to quiz me. However, as I grew older, I became appreciative of her acts because they truly improved my language abilities. Finally, what I believe the most impactful part of my language and literacy journey was my mother forcing me to write five paragraph essays in middle school when two to three paragraphs would suffice. Writing these long, descriptive essays had the largest impact on my language and literacy journey because it allowed me to have an advantage by the sheer amount of practice that I had with analyzing information and then communicating that information into well thought out sentences. At the time, I would get so upset at my mother for making me write these long essays because all of my classmates would talk about their easy one to three paragraph essays. I complained to my mother saying, “Why do I have to write these long essays? My friends are writing only one,” and she would respond with, “Trust me. You’ll thank me when you get older.” I didn’t understand why she made me write these long essays until I entered into higher education. Her efforts enabled me to smoothly transition into high school and then into college

with a high level of writing experience, which allowed me to easily write long research papers and also to excel on the basic papers.

Language and literacy allows the world to function because communication and writing are key to successful progress. Every individual has their own unique experience with language and literacy, whether it is positive, negative, impactful, disheartening, or any other type of feeling that a language or literacy experience can create. Practicing your language and literacy is essential to becoming an articulate writer, a confident reader, and an eloquent communicator. Continuous reading, writing, and speaking will only improve your language and literacy, and that is what I believe was the central lesson that my mother had been teaching me all this time: practice makes perfect. In my life, I have had a positive language and literacy experience with my mother having a large impact on the development of my reading, writing, and communication skills in my early childhood.