

Pa Dominic Lopyy

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Literacy Narrative Final Draft

Professor Kim Liao

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My first job experience is still vivid in my memory because it was a bitter Sweet experience that's why it's very difficult for an inch of it to fade away from my memory. Here I was just graduated from high school in a third world country whereby the use of technology in schools was very scanty. I graduated with good grades most of them A's especially the science subjects. I was fully literate and could easily attract a job in a country whereby tertiary education was scarce. I quickly landed a job in a laboratory as a laboratory technician and a slide reader. I landed this job because I was considered to have high level of literacy. Here I was, in a medical laboratory, highly ambitious to accomplished a lot on a daily basis but lack the computer literacy skills to smoothen the pavement to high expectation. In this regard, I started seeing myself as a soccer player who can dribble with the ball but can't score a goal. Prior to my job experience, I viewed literacy as the mere ability to read and write good English. During this period of employment, I started developing the notion that, technology literacy equally matters as conventional literacy.

I love my job for the fact it was mostly practical in nature. I have the privilege to work in various research projects. The first project I involved in was antimalarial drug trial. In this project, I quickly adapted as a result of my level of literacy, because it involves filling out forms manually without the involvement of, what I used to call complicated technology. The role I played was to collect blood sample from out-patients sent to the laboratory. I collected blood sample by pricking one of the patient fingers, made a tin and thick blood films. After making blood films, I usually dry them and then, stained them with certain liquid. After the completion of all the necessary procedures, I read the slides with a microscope to determine the number of parasites per microliter. If the patient met the required number of malaria parasites per

microliter, field workers and the medical doctor in charge of the trial consented the patient about the drug trial. If the patient accepted to participate in the trial, he or she is admitted in the hospital and antimalarial drug been tested was administered every eight hours. Blood sample is also being collected every eight hours to determine the effect of the drug. This was a smooth transition for me, but the pneumococcal vaccine trial I involved in was more of using certain software to analyze serum sample to determine the level of antibodies after the patient been vaccinated with pneumococcal vaccine. This was more of a challenge than the previous trial. I was taught from scratch some basic computer skills in order to carry out my duty properly. The trial involved the use of software such as Genesis to read and analyze my lab results after performing the experiment. From that day on, I realized computer literacy skills is a defining parameter to excel in any working environment. It was a heavy task, but I overcame the obstacles. During my academic progression, from kindergarten to twelve grade and even up to college level to this very moment in time, I could say I acquired the intellectual pedigree necessary to quickly adapt, but not a complete skill set to function properly.

The purpose of writing this document is to further buttress on the subject that matters, which is literacy. The term literacy is a very significant point of discussion for the fact that is the back bone of any civilize society. Base on my own cognitive analyses, the term literacy and civilization are synonym. I say so because a highly literate society is a highly civilize society. I might not be a well renowned historian, but I think the later gave birth to the former.

Literacy may be defined as knowledge in a particular domain. Base on the conventional definition of literacy, it's the ability to read and write a particular language or languages. The definition of literacy may vary from one country to another or from one culture to another for

the fact that one could be literate in his or her own domain and might be considered illiterate in another domain due to the inability to read and write another cultures language. To be precise, literacy is the ability to read and understand a piece of written information and this is just the conventional meaning of literacy, which I considered to be superficial definition.

I just want to be given the privilege, to further argue that, on a wider scope, especially in the twenty first century, literacy definition is broader than the ability to read and understand a language. If someone is literate in a more conventional way without incorporating it with technological skills, rationally speaking, that form of literacy is incomplete. I'm not trying to portray the fact that literacy should incorporate all the essential parameters of life. Saying so is just pursuing a fleeting illusion for the fact that the universe is too broad and even the planet we dwell in is embedded with thousands of spoken, written languages and other essential components we need to know, but we can't in a lifetime for the fact that we humans are limited by time. I want to caution the fact that literacy should include the ability to use modern technology for writing and communication purpose. Technology is a defining factor pertaining to our level of competency in a working environment. Most of our communication is via the Internet and the ratio of internet usage is increasing, compare to traditional verbal communication.

Conventional literacy could be detrimental to one's success in life. I usually say conventional literacy because people confined the definition of literacy within the parameters of reading and writing. Rationally speaking, whenever the term literacy is being mentioned, the first thought that gushed out of people's mind is knowledge. This is the very reason our society tend to have high esteem for highly literate individuals. If we decided to fortify the definition of literacy

within the circumference of reading and writing, here is a question I would love to ask, does it really engulf the required knowledge or does it really solve climate change problems we are faced with? Limiting literacy within the parameters of reading and writing is a superficial way of defining knowledge. I sincerely believe, literacy is beyond reading and writing especially in the twenty first century. Literacy is to be consider more than just the ability to read and write. Possessing the technological skills to adapt quickly in any environment should be amalgamated to the definition of literacy. Conventional literacy is no longer enough to make us adapt in a rapidly evolving technological advance world.

I just want to further argue by saying, literacy in a broad sense, is unattainable for the fact that we humans are restricted by time to attain or learn all the languages and different technology evolving at a very rapid rate. Even the languages we write and speak evolve with time or even location. I could still remember when I arrived in America at Atlanta airport, I found it difficult to understand people's accent and they found it difficult to understand mine as well, even though at that time I could read and write English better than the average native speaker. With all the level of literacy I attained in English language in my country, still I found myself entangled in what I would call a mess of pronunciations, but still excel in writing classes in college. I could remember my first year in America on several occasions people asked me to repeat myself and I do the same.

I have no doubt literacy is having knowledge and understanding in a certain domain. One could easily be considered illiterate outside their language of proficiency and it doesn't matter how deeply rooted you might be in your field of literacy. Technology is more of a universal language than other groups of languages around the world. I would conclude, by saying we

should promote technology literacy. We could do this by making technology available to all parts of the world. We should encourage people to sharpen their skills in technology because technology could be a tool to break language barrier by translating one written language to another.