

Literacy Draft

To me, literacy is a very structured way of writing pieces and communicating them. There are rules that must be followed in order for them to be considered “correct”. There is a difference between being able to communicate regularly vs. in a way that is of a more complex level. Which is what English classes are for. From the very beginning, (of preschool), we are slowly taught how to communicate. We first learn the alphabet and we start learning simple words. Fast forward 10 years, we are learning about grammar and etc. For me and many others, we are also learning another language. I had to also balance my english with chinese to be able to communicate with my parents. We learn how we should speak to adults and how we can talk to friends. Through our educational journey, we are constantly being taught the “proper” way to communicate through writing and how to comprehend by reading. Ofcourse, not to diminish the fact that these skills are extremely important, but there is a world of literature far more complex than the average language. Everyone talks and interprets things differently and that does not mean one is wrong from the other. Personally, I have never been the best in literacy.

I remember how I would always get low 60s on my essays in writing class in the 7th grade. It was so bad that I remember the day when I actually wrote a good essay and got a 90%, my teacher was so surprised, she actually stood up and shook my hand. It was a moment I will never forget. I finally felt like I had written an essay good enough to my teacher. But to be completely honest, I couldn't even tell you why I did so poorly on all my essays. To me, what I

had written seemed fine. Maybe it was the lack of higher vocabulary, or the occasional grammar error. But when you don't usually talk the way you would write in an essay, you find it hard to think of a better way to rephrase an average sentence. But overtime, you do practice and eventually your skills are improved. I would definitely say my writing now is a lot better than 7th grade me. You may not notice, but your environment and the people you surround yourself with have a lot of influence in the way you speak. If you are constantly surrounded by businessmen, bosses, or professors, you will notice that while you may think the way you talk is normal, to others, the level of professionalism is outrageous. You eventually realize how you should convey yourself through literacy in certain situations not necessarily to please them, but to better enhance your character in order to reach a certain audience. For example, Amy Tan talks about how since she is a writer, when she gives talks about the subject, she will talk in a very sophisticated manner and use big words as such. If your life mostly consists of hanging out with friends, and talking to your parents, then there is no need to use such an advanced form.

Like myself for example, having a conversation with my parents who don't speak english, our form of communication becomes extremely different. The words would be casual and even unique to our relationship. There are definitely some barriers at times and so over time, you tend to figure out your own personalized way of communicating things with them. The whole point is to be able to get a message across and so we don't really focus on the "correct" way to say it. We learn how we should speak to adults and not be rude. I remember always talking back to my parents when things didn't go my way, or if I thought what they were saying wasn't right. I would do it so often that it eventually turned into a habit. Nowadays, the way I talk to my parents could be considered "rude" but at this point my parents and I don't even look

at it as a bad thing. Same thing goes for friends. Its common to use slang especially as a teenager talking and texting amongst friends. So you find yourself typing an essay and all of a sudden abbreviating phrases like “I don’t know” into “idk”. Then we stop ourselves and say “this is an essay idiot.” It’s almost impressive how many different ways we can communicate amongst different types of situations.

The most important aspect for me is to never sound fake. When I sit down to write an essay, I like to picture myself as if I was saying it all to my teacher. You have to think about in what way you want to sound to the reader. Take into consideration all aspects, like audience, topic etc. In certain situations, you feel the need to speak or write a certain way in order to gain others approval. You get so caught up in that, you tend to lose yourself when trying to give them what you think they want. Now that I have written countless essays, I have slowly started to get a feel for how I write and the way I portray myself through literacy. I want it to still sound like me or else it would just be any old reading.