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ENG 1101

Unit 1: Educational Narrative Essay

Word count: 1,387

Date: 10/19/22

“Tuff Love”

Ms. Eeriffg... A name I would soon never forget, she was the first teacher who genuinely cared about teaching and making sure what she was teaching was being understood. She had already had a reputation with the kids in the school, everyone knew her to be a rude teacher. The first time I had heard of this teacher was in the yard on the morning of my first day of fourth grade. I saw my friends in the yard and we all gave each other a huge hug since we had spent all summer away from one another. We all got caught up and naturally we were all excited to know what teacher we had all gotten and if we were all in the same class. “I have Ms. Whitelock ” said one of my friends, smiling “me too” said another one. Ms. Whitelock was always around in school events so a lot of kids were familiar and fond of her. “Who do you have, Mel?” as they all turned to me. “I’m not sure her name is Ms. Eeriffg. ” I responded. “Oh no we don't have a class with you” said one of my friends “i heard that she was really mean.” said another. One of my friends had an older sibling in the school that just so happened to have this teacher previously. That friend ended up telling me that their sister hated that teacher because she was rude and had a short temper.

By the time we finished the conversation the teachers had come to the yard to pick up their class and take them to their classrooms. I was a bit nervous after the conversation ended and my friends had gone to line up where their teacher was partly because I had none of my friends in

that class and because I had just been told that I had the meanest teacher in all the fourth grade. “Good morning class, my name is Ms. Eeriffg, you will be with me the rest of the year.” “Good morning Ms. Eeriffg” responded the class. The first day was not too bad and it was about as normal as a first day could get but as time progressed I noticed that the teacher had a temper and little patience. It didn't help that she was in charge of teaching all my classes; English, math, and science. I was good at most subjects in school, English was never an issue and neither was science. The only subject I struggled with a lot was math and in this class she would often pick on children at random while she was doing her lesson plan which would give me extreme amounts of anxiety because a lot of the time I had no idea what was going on. When she would pick on me she would not turn to another student until I had given an answer whether it was right or wrong. I knew the whole class could agree that it was pretty embarrassing whenever that would happen.

The longer I was in her class the worse these occurrences would get, I would get scolded strongly if I didn't know an answer or I would hear someone else getting yelled at for getting the answer wrong to a question that the teacher felt should be easy to answer. I learned to be afraid of her class but nothing more, everyday i attended her class i felt dumb and unteachable. My struggles with school had always been present but this was the first time that it felt abundantly clear to me, my class mates, and my parents which was one to many people. It was almost as if my incompetence had been put in a clear fish bowl on display for the world to see, for people to speculate and criticize.

My parents came to a decision after my first report card day with my teacher and concluded I could not continue like this. They had found a tutor shortly after, her name was Rosalinda and we always met on the weekends. When my parents let me know that they found someone I was not

at all thrilled partly because I had convinced myself that I was unteachable and also because it just meant I would have to do more school after school. While I didn't enjoy tutoring, I couldn't deny that I was improving in math a lot more. After tutoring I would be able to better understand the topic that my teacher had covered previously but as soon as I would enter class the next day we would move onto a new topic. It felt like a never ending loop where I would begin to understand something and shortly after I would be lost again.

This cycle did take a huge toll on my mental health as a kid looking back which feels crazy to acknowledge. I had so much anxiety about going to class that I would often tell my mom I was sick in order to avoid going to school. I would blame it on stomach issues a lot of the time but my mom eventually caught on and she asked me if there was something going on at school that I wasn't being honest about but I kept my mouth shut. I had convinced my mom to let me stay home for a week and as soon as the second week came up she had decided to come into the school with me to see if she could get some answers from my teacher since I did not confess.

I specifically remember the trip up the stairs with my mom and how badly I tried to convince her that she didn't have to come in and talk with my teacher. My mother obviously did not listen to me and once we arrived at the front of my classroom I knew there was no going back. "Good morning teacher." said my mom "Good morning, is everything okay? Melanie has come in for about a week now." said my teacher. "Well I'm not sure what's wrong, Melanie keeps complaining about a stomach pain and I took her to the doctors to see if anything was wrong but they found nothing. I assumed something was wrong in school like maybe she was getting bullied or something?" said my mom. "Well Melanie doesn't have any issues with the kids in the class as far as I'm concerned, right, Melanie?" said my teacher. "No" I replied shortly, I knew eventually I would have to tell them what the actual issue was which is what I was dreading.

“Then what's wrong?” asked my mom. I tried my best to prolong the silence that filled the room but the longer it went on the more questions would arise. I felt tears welling up in my eyes and I quietly muttered “im having a hard time with school work.” One after the other, the questions kept coming and so did the tears until eventually I explained in detail about what had been troubling me in school. My teacher told me and my mom that she noticed that I struggled but that regardless of all of that I was still doing very well and I ended up passing for the year which I had been unaware of.

My teacher then went on to explain that the only reason she asked me to participate and why she went so hard on me is because she believed in me, she called it “tuff love”. I didn't notice it then but she ended up becoming one of the most influential teachers I had ever met. She taught me that I had potential and set a whole new standard for the student I needed to become. Since this experience I've learned to apply myself to my learning as well as advocate for myself in a classroom setting. This entails asking questions when I'm confused and making time to study when it's needed. While this experience happened a while back it's one that I'll never forget because of how hard I remembered this time period was for me but how rewarding it felt to know that my hard work paid off.