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ENG 1101

Unit 1: Education Narrative Essay

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### Road To Learning

I remember the first time that I got an actual homework sheet. On it was listed all the homework due for each day. I was in the first grade and I was doing my best to speak and read English proficiently. I had taken the homework sheet and put it away thinking that I wouldn't have to look at it until later on. Once I got home, I immediately showed my mom the homework sheet. She of course didn't understand what it said because she couldn't read in English. I had explained to her that each week we would get a homework sheet that had all the homework due for each day. I remember the look on her face like it was yesterday. She looked worried, anxious not knowing what to do or say. I also looked at her with confusion because I thought that she already knew about this. She quickly changed the look on her face and told me not to worry that she would help me with anything that I didn't understand.

That afternoon, I started to do the easiest homework which was to rewrite the spelling words three times in my notebook. I knew how to do this because we had practiced in class. Next, I had to do math, I wasn't much of a math person so I asked my mother for help. She took a look at the piece of paper and just noticed that it had problems with addition and subtraction.

She told me “this is very easy” and proceeded to teach me. Although her way of teaching me was not the same as the teacher's way, at least I got to understand some of it. Then came the reading and writing part. Each night we had to read books and then write what the book was about etc. At the time my mother spoke little to no English and even though I was born here in the U.S my mother would only talk to me in Spanish. Therefore my English wasn't the best either. I could read a few words, maybe a few sentences but there were words that I couldn't pronounce and even sentences I couldn't comprehend. I remember that for the first night of reading all I read was a kindergarten book that had little to no words, and just wrote some random things about the book.

The next day, when we got to class the teacher made us share our takeaways from the book we read. I was nervous to speak up but I knew that I at least completed the homework. That feeling of nervousness got worse and worse as each student stood up and talked about their book. Almost every kid had read “leveled” books, some even read books that were meant for second graders. Their summaries were long and filled with detail. While all that was happening I looked back at my notebook and realized I had only written about two sentences. When it was my turn I said what was on my notebook and the teacher said if that was all. I responded that my book was short and that's why my summary was short and my teacher said that it was fine. Throughout the whole day I felt like an outsider. I didn't understand how everyone else was using big words and understanding what they were reading, while I had to read a low level book because I couldn't read nor understand other high level books.

When I told my mom about the situation, she told me that we could maybe go to the library and see if anyone there could help me. I remember one afternoon we went to the library and asked if there was anyone who could help me with my homework. The librarian told us that there were in fact tutors who helped with homework. She took us to one of the tutors whose name was Ashley. I remember her being so sweet and kind to me. My mom tried to explain that I needed help with the homework and also asked if she could read to me. Of course she helped me with my homework and got me to read at least two books. Since that day my mom took me to the library Monday through Friday. I would get help with my homework and read some books to catch up to the level I was supposed to be at. The routine was the same for me and my mom, except on the days there wasn't any school. My mom would pick me up from school, she would get me something to eat and then we would head to the library.

The tutor Ashley was really helpful. She was always understanding and explained things very well. She would sometimes reward me if I read more than five books. Since I read everyday and slowly learned vocabulary it was easier for me to read on my own. Although there were some days where I didn't want to go anymore because I would spend my whole afternoon at the library. I would do my homework and then read and write. Some days would be very hard because as an eight year old I would want to play with my friends after school but I couldn't because if I did I wouldn't have anyone to help me with my homework after. I had to sacrifice a lot of things in order for me to learn and stay on level. I would have to say that my mother would have to do the same. I still remember her sitting in the library for hours waiting for me to finish my tasks. She would work in the mornings and in the afternoons she would pick me up and take me to the library. I could tell that she was tired but she never gave up.

One day, my tutor Ashley told me to read a book to my mom. I knew that my mother wouldn't fully understand but I knew she would be excited that I could finally read on my own. After I finished reading my book, my mother had a bright smile on her face and I knew that she was happy and a bit emotional. My mother couldn't speak perfect English but she always tried to thank my tutor for taking her time in teaching me. When I finally could read on my own and even read books a grade ahead I was excited and couldn't believe it. Although all of that did not happen from one day to another. It took a lot of determination and discipline. There were days of happiness but there were also gloomy days. There were days of sunshine and warmth and there were also days that were cold and cloudy. No matter the weather my mom and I would always go to the library. Also at the time my mom didn't own a car so we would walk from my school to the library which was typically a fifteen minute walk. Sometimes it would be so cold that we would have to take the bus. Being a student that has to learn English as a second language can be very difficult. Not only is it difficult in keeping up with the rest of your classmates but it can also be emotionally difficult.