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ENG1101

Unit 1: Education Narrative Essay

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### Pursuing Dreams Across Generations: My Educational Journey

In 1986, at just the age of 20, my grandmother came to America from Colombia with just a small black backpack, it could not fit a lot of things, it held her passport from Colombia, some baby necessities, and her 3-year-old daughter resting on her shoulder. That little girl was my mother. My grandmother who only knew her first name in English, finally arrived after days of traveling. She made it to New York City in hopes of finding a job and a place to live. She raised 4 kids and 7 grandchildren all by herself. My mother, my aunt, and uncles, and every one of us grandchildren pursued or are in pursuit of our education and these experiences I will share are why I value education the way I do.

My grandmother raised me when I was 6 years old because my mom was always working. Every day after school my grandma would buy me churros and Icee from the corner stand, I remember it like it was yesterday when she would ask me, “¿Quieres churros y helado?” Of course, my answer was always yes. Fried dough with sugar and cinnamon all around it, I used to lick all the sugar off completely before savoring the simplicity of the dough. The rainbow Icee left my tongue and lips purple, and my brain freezes. Then once I got home it was homework time, I loathed this period the most. I was in 2nd grade learning how to add and subtract. My grandma, who sat directly across from me, would help me with my homework, going above and beyond to ensure I understood. She went from using her fingers to uncooked pasta to even

kidney beans. I have always appreciated the time and patience she had with me; I was like every other kid, easily frustrated because I could not solve a math problem. With all the frustrations I felt, she was always there to uplift me and help me feel confident in myself by telling me how well I was doing. Then I moved to Florida and felt alone since I had to leave my grandmother behind. I started the 5th grade and had no idea what was in store for me. I was born to Hispanic parents and was placed in ESOL which teaches English to students whose first language was not English. I was fluent in English, but the administration assumed I only spoke Spanish. As a result, I was constantly called to conduct speaking evaluations after they knew very well, I spoke English, but of course, they persisted. On top of that, I was not doing very well academically. I missed my grandma. I would call her about 3 times a week and she always expressed the importance of school to me and instilled why education in our lives is so important. Although she did not finish school, she made sure we went day after day and continued to make it her responsibility to make sure we were continuing our education. Not continuing her education hindered her success career-wise in life, pushing us motivates us and it feels great to have someone who wants us to have continuous success. She reminds me that there is always a lesson to be learned in life and that keeping ourselves educated is the key to succeeding in our paths.

My mother had always wanted to be a dental hygienist, but she was unable to due to a lack of motivation. Life occurred; she had four daughters over the last two decades and no longer had the same enthusiasm as she once did. Although my mother was never able to become the dental hygienist she desired, she has appreciated the opportunity to work in a dental practice as a dental assistant. I drew her tooth models when I was eight years old, the day right before her big test to become a licensed dental assistant, and I have been captivated by my little teeth models ever since. Fast forward to when college arrived, it was time to decide what I wanted to do with my life. Because my mother was unable to fulfill her ambitions, I chose to do so to make her

proud and feel as though she could live vicariously through me. Although I was unsure like every other teen it had brought me to my decision for my future. After months of independent research, specifically researching how much hygienists make around the country, what schools provide the program, what prerequisite classes I would have to take, and how to balance a full-time schedule, I realized how much I enjoyed the idea of working with my own patients and assisting them in improving their oral health. Since I was a young girl, I loved helping people in any way I could and so, I knew dental hygiene was what I always wanted to do. My present major is Dental hygiene, and my long-term objective is to be able to teach future hygienists the skills and tools they will need to thrive in their careers. Even though my mother and I have not always gotten along, this was something I wanted to do for us, to follow in her footsteps, make her happy, and in a way improve our relationship giving us a more common ground to relate to and share interest in. We have our differences, but she is part of why I am here pursuing an ambitious career in hopes to be successful in my future.

At the end of the day, I still have both my grandmother and mother, and it is because of them that I am the way I am now, with all my faults and imperfections. I make it a habit to continuously strive to do better, whether that is academically or emotionally. It would not have been feasible for me to graduate from high school with a 100.64 cumulative average and to be on the principal's list without the support and tenacity of my grandma. Without my mother exposing me how the dental field at an early age and allowing me to explore it, I would not have chosen this major. Education is a privilege and an opportunity that we are all granted; however, it can often be misunderstood.