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ENC 1101

14 September 2021

Major Paper 1

Deborah Brandt describes Literacy Sponsors as "...people, institutions, and circumstances that both make it possible for a person to become literate and shape the way the person actually acquires literacy" (244). Everybody has had a literacy sponsor that helped them. My past literacy experiences have affected me both positively and negatively. My family was a major part of my life that encouraged me to read books. My parents and sister both encourage me in their own separate and unique ways. My parents also insisted that I read books over the summer instead of playing games. Some parts of my education, however, really made me hate reading. The constant piling of books followed by tests wanted me to just read a summary instead of enjoying the books. I believe that the two most impactful threshold concepts are "Writing is a process, and all writers have more to learn" and "Writing is impacted by identities and prior experiences".

At a young age, my parents read many books to me before going to bed. My parents would take turns to read me Dr. Suess books or Harry Potter. The books gave me a reason to want to go to bed. These reading sessions were always an important part of my life. After my parents would stop reading and put me to bed, I would sit there and wonder what would happen next in the story. These events were the very first push in my literacy career. Because of them I was very eager to learn to read at a young age. Once I learned how to read, my parents and I

Commented [JH1]: Reword.

Commented [JH2]: Cite Thresholds

Commented [JH3]: Elaborate on it

Commented [JH4]: Shift sentences to get rid of repetition

would take turns reading pages. This helped me develop my reading skills while keeping me engaged. This engagement helped me a lot when it came to becoming a better writer. I started to not only hear but see how different scenarios required different writing styles.

As I started to read books on my own, my sister, Julie, began to introduce new books to me. My sister always loved to read so she accumulated a large collection of books. Julie always wanted someone that she could talk to about the books she read so she introduced some of her favorites to me. While reading the book, I started to fall in love with the universe the books described. After I finished a book, we would talk about our favorite parts. These moments we shared together always made me excited to either read the next book in the series or find similar books. The exploration of new books allowed me to see and understand different writing styles. My writing style has become a combination of many different writing styles.

My sister and I loved talking about how the stories played out and interacted. Sometimes we would mention something to the other and find out something we never noticed. This constant sharing of moments helped both of us learn. Even though Julie had read those books on multiple occasions and had a higher understanding, I was still able to show her new parts that were overlooked. That just shows that no matter how much knowledge you know about writing or literature you can always learn more. Learning about literature is never a specific set of rules of do and don't, but a way to express yourself that constantly evolves as you learn more and more.

Even with professional writers the constant working on writing allows their work to get better every time. No writers started making a great work straight off the bat. Most famous works have gone through multiple drafts to get it where it is. In *Writing about Writing* Anne Lamott states, "NOW, PRACTICALLY EVEN BETTER news than that of short assignments is the idea

Commented [JH5]: Include more emotional moments

Commented [JH6]: Rework both paragraphs to separate emotional from writing development

Commented [JH7]: Better introduction from previous para

of shitty first drafts. All good writers write them. This is how they end up with good second drafts and terrific third drafts” (88). This writing process is not exclusive to professionals. Everyone goes through this process no matter the subject. The constant learning on your own mistakes allows for our work to improve every time.

Every summer my parents insisted that I read books instead of playing video games all the time. So, every other weekend we would go to the public library to check out some books. My sisters and I always had different interests in books. After we all found a couple books each, we would check them out. This is where I learned to explore new genres and new authors which I previously would have never found. The public library always had a totally different arrangement of books than my schools. The school library was full of books made for the specific age groups. The public library had a large listing of books from books made for babies to novels written for adult level readers. This really allowed me to find what books I truly enjoyed. The public library gave me so much freedom in book options that almost every other week I would get a book from a different author to experiment. I am very glad my parents pushed me to go to the public library.

However, not all experiences in my literacy life have pushed me into enjoying reading. My elementary school would constantly give us reading assignments from books that I never found interesting. Since I never enjoyed the books, I never remembered all the parts of them. This in return made my teachers believe that I struggled in reading and would stack more boring reading assignments on me. This severely destroyed my motivation to continue reading. But once I started middle school, I was given choices on what to read for assignments which helped put me back into enjoying reading. Even with the school pushing, I still decided to take time to read what I wanted. I was not going to let the school system make me hate reading.

Commented [JH8]: Connect from previous book choice mistakes

My entire time at elementary wasn't too negative. My school also hosted parties every month for people who read a minimum amount of books per month. Those books could be whatever we wanted which gave me a lot of freedom to read new books. As much as I was bogged down with all of the boring reading, I occasionally had enough time to read enough books for the party. Going to those parties were always so fun. They really encouraged young kids to enjoy reading. Every kid would try their hardest to make it to these parties. The parties gave everyone who reached the goal snacks and drinks. As a young kid, free stuff is one of the most exciting things for a kid to receive. After I finished elementary school, I was sad that middle school didn't have these kinds of parties, but it also allowed me to just enjoy them how they were. I didn't have to rush to finish books by a deadline, I could just read and enjoy every part of the book.

My entire literacy life has been full of many events both positive and negative that impacted me. Even with the negative literacy events in my life, I still remember the positive moments much more. Those literacy sponsors have truly made an impact on me. Without them it would be hard to believe where I would be. These sponsors really helped push me into becoming better at writing. In return for them helping me, I was able to help them by also questioning things. Teaching is a great way for each person to learn. My literary sponsors really helped me and really demonstrated to me how the threshold concepts affected my literacy. Their pushes were a major part on my literacy education. I believe their pushes was both impactful not just for me but also them.

Works Cited

Wardle, Elizabeth, and Douglas Downs. *Writing about Writing*. 4th ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, Macmillan Learning, 2020, pp. 88 - 244.