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Self-Assessment Essay

Writing has never been my strength. I always had trouble writing essays in my English and history classes in high school and middle school. When assigned an essay, I freak out about how to express my opinion throughout my essay. My least favorite parts of writing include coming up with a hook and supporting my opinion. However, this course has presented numerous challenges in improving my writing skills. My writing has improved because I can see the difference after all my writing in this class.

At the beginning of this course, we learned about language and literacy. Phase 1 in this course teaches me “how attitudes towards linguistics standards empower and oppress language users.” Here, non-native speakers and immigrants can fit into this objective because some of them are discriminated against and not taken seriously because they think that those who don’t speak standard English (or any other language) are inferior to them or they are not important. As a non-native speaker, I was affected by English oppression within the United States. In phase 1, we had to read different readings like Amy Tan’s “Mother Tongue” and Safwat Saleem’s “Why I Keep Speaking Up Even When People Mock My Accent.” in which the main themes were language and literacy. In class, we also discuss these readings and how different individuals handle empowerment about linguistic standards. With this, we had to write a written literacy narrative and a spoken language and literacy narrative. In my written narrative and spoken language literacy narrative, I explained my experience moving to the US and not knowing English, “I had to enter a new school, and at that time, I could form basic English

conversation, so the interview was done by a woman who said to me "that they don't accept students who didn't speak English; that made me feel insecure and dump because even though I didn't spoke English fluently, I understand most things clearly(Karla)." Experiencing that, I realized that people who don't speak fluent English can look down on you and discriminate against you. Sometimes, you don't have many job opportunities or education opportunities. Also, in my narratives, I explain my connections to some of the readings we did in class, "I feel connected to these three materials because English is not my first language, and sometimes I feel that they think I don't know English because of my accent and because I have trouble expressing my thoughts. So, people would judge me or stereotype me because of these things(Karla)." I wrote about my experience and the themes I found in the readings I stated above because those readings talk about how society judges people by the way they speak, and I experienced that. During my classmates' spoken language literacy narrative, most of them spoke about their relationship with language, And some of them talked about Moving to the US and learning English, having immigrant parents, and even losing the connection they have with their native language, in which, for some, I felt connected. During phase 1, I expressed my opinion and emotions in my narrative, which was challenging but improved my writing skills. We discussed language and literacy more in-depth and learned about our classmates' narratives.

In addition, editing and language standards that affect oppression were not the only course learning objectives that improved my writing; we analyzed rhetorical texts and identified important rhetorical terms used in writing contexts. For instance, out of all the rhetorical readings and videos we viewed, I settled on Amy Tan's piece, "Mother Tongue." Thanks to this article, we can understand the author's rhetorical situations to communicate with the reader. The rhetorical devices of pathos and ethos were used in most of her essays. Through "Mother Tongue", the author gave an anecdote that stuck out to me: Amy Tan's mother went to a CAT Scan appointment. Still, since her mother has broken English, it made it hard for her to communicate

with the medical staff there. According to the essay "Mother Tongue", "My mother had gone to the hospital for an appointment, to find out about a benign brain tumor a CAT scan had revealed a month ago. She said she had spoken very good English, her best English, no mistakes. Still, the hospital did not apologize when they said they had lost the CAT." The hospital didn't apologize to her; they did this because she didn't speak standard English. Amy Tan's mother got angry and said she wouldn't leave until the doctor spoke with her daughter. When the doctor called her daughter, who spoke perfect English, they apologized and promised the CAT scan would be found. Overall, Tan's mother's broken English created a barrier for them in the U.S. because people looked down on her for how she spoke, and they didn't take her seriously. Throughout the essay, the author uses both ethos and pathos. Ethos establishes Tan's credibility by highlighting her background as an immigrant and her mother's limited command of English. It shows pathos because the audience is sympathetic, and emotionality was drawn in by the rhetorical situation previously described.

As the course moved forward, and we had to turn in our writings, the professor allowed us to do peer review, which was an excellent idea because I got to "develop strategies for reading, drafting, collaborating, revising, and editing." I was able to receive feedback from my classmates about my writing and also give them feedback. For example, for phase 3, doing our research paper, we got paired up so each other would read and give feedback on our writing. The feedback I received was helpful because my classmate gave me the feedback to make my thesis statement stronger. After revising my classmates' writing, I said they should use more substantial resources to support the claim. Also, when writing the peer profile, I had to revise and collaborate with my classmates to do their peer profile, which developed my writing skills.

In this course, we also did Rhetorical precis, where I had the opportunity to "recognize and practice key rhetorical terms and strategies when engaged in writing situations." We

received a rhetoric and rhetorical situation worksheet, which gave us details about the terms. Also, we received a template for the rhetorical precis so we could make our own for our research paper. Also, for the Assignment Rhetorical Analysis “Profile” Assignment, we had to analyze rhetorical strategies presented by my classmate. Language and literacy narrative, to write a peer profile of their writing. For example, in my peer profile, I stated, “While reading this narrative, I noticed pathos using emotions in the writing. Authors use pathos to elicit specific emotions from the readers. “I felt uneasy and not secure being in this foreign place, even if it was with my family. It’s a difficult feeling to explain, but it’s when you appreciate a place, but it just doesn’t feel right, not because there’s something wrong with it, but that it’s just not “home.” He stated how he felt being in a foreign country, making the readers see how he felt and even relate to his feelings.” I used a piece of my classmate’s narratives to analyze her rhetorical strategy.

Phase 3 involved thoroughly searching for relevant sources that effectively supported your thesis statement. We were introduced to the A-Z database of the CCNY library as a resource for locating academic sources. Students must find 4-7 sources—1-2 academic, 1-2 multimedia, and 2-3 non-scholarly. In my essay, I used Wikipedia sources to support my claim that childhood trauma affects mental health, social interaction, and behavior. I also used scholarly resources and a quote from a movie, considered a multimedia source. I have done research before in high school, but this research was an extensive progress in preparing/gathering sources for the research paper.