**Language & Literacy Narrative Brainstorms Worksheet**

Your name:

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Instructions: Please respond to the questions that follow with as much detail and description that you can. The more you put into reflecting now on the complexities of your language and literacy development, the better off you’ll be in completing our major assignment for our first phase of this course. Take as much space as you need.

When it comes to your experiences with language (speaking and listening) and literacy (reading and writing), what specific moments in your life can you recall that are particularly vivid or that emerge as being significant to you? Yes, it could be an example from your earliest memories of *learning* to speak, read, and write (in school or elsewhere), but it doesn’t have to be. It could be a memorable encounter—a moment of tension, confusion, or triumph. It could be about experiences developing additional dialects/languages and advanced literacies (i.e., learning to speak/write in different peer groups, at school, at work, with family, online, in different locations across the nation or world, etc. Please select 3 moments to describe. Then, explain why each is interesting or significant.

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| 1. As an aspiring author, I've been writing creatively since I was in the sixth grade. Admittedly, my stories weren't as good back then and I still think they could be much better now but regaardless I've always been in love with the art of storytelling. At first it was because I had an infatuation with comic books, but upon the realization that I was not as talented an artist as I am a writer, I diverted my attention to pursuing a career in literature. When I say I've been writing creatively, I have been trying to finish and publish a book for the past six years. Tossing aside ideas, taking temporary breaks because of writer's block--I've gone through the woes that every aspiring author goes through. But I remember in the summer of 2020, I finally finished the first draft of the mystery novel I'd been obsessed with ever since May of that year. I was up at five AM, with this empty hole in my heart knwoing that my characters' journeys had ended. Eventually, I ended up scrapping the whole thing and as I'm writing this, I'm on the second draft. But the feeling was something I've only felt once, but it was so potent that it will stick with me for a lifetime.  |
| 2. The senior year of high school was probably my best year experience wise. Among other things, I got to perform an original poetry piece in front of my school crowd. The significance of this was, probably until that year, only my close friends and English teachers knew I had a knack for writing. My poem was for Women's History Month, dubbed "Silent Strength" which I think is an accurate representation of the experience of many women around the world. Women who fight and women who conquer with complaint or hesitation. It was overwhelming to be appreciated in that fashion, and it's a memory that will always stick with me.  |
| 3. This memory is much more hazy than the last two because it happened while I was in elementery school. I was nose deep in a book I had just gotten from the book fair, and I remember the feeling of being almost magnetically drawn to each word. It was almost subconscious how I flipped through each page. The premise escapes me, but if I remember it was about a young boy who had a crush on a girl. Maybe I related to that sort of thing, but romance was never my favorite genre. I credit this as the book that made me fall in love with reading.  |

What specific materials or artifacts (i.e., objects, writing, learning materials, pictures, video recordings, etc.) from your past can you locate/recall and that in some way represent a meaningful moment in your reading/writing development? This can be something like a journal or book, but also anything at all (e.g., a toy, piece of furniture, cereal box, art supplies, etc.) What memories and feelings can you extract from these examples you’ve gathered/recalled? Explain.

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| I had a navy blue book in middle school that I'd write all my stories in. There was bliss on my face whenever I cracked it open during "creativive writing" time. It was like it was a class period specifically made for me. It held every original tale that I keep in the back of my mind, as a sort of prromise to twelve-year old me that they'd be written bigger and better and be on bookshelves so the entire world could enjoy the crazy and complicated ideas I could not go living without. I sort of wish I still had it as a momento.  |

For better or worse, who and what impacted how, when, and why you developed your languages and literacies? Who in your family, at school, among your peer group, or in your community played a part? How did your particular situation or experience shape your literacy? That is, what sorts of issues, experiences, organizations, or life circumstances played a part? What kinds of languages and literacies did you gain from those people and your particular situation? How? Why? Explain.

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| I always found it interesting that my writing was so full of description and flavor, but when I talk to people I rely on slang and phrases as a crutch. I think that has a lot to do with the community I grew up in, South Bronx vernacular is not really Shakespearean. It's unique, hostile, insulting, but also mellow and relaxed which is where I think my language and literacies take the most inspiration from. YouTube videos and going down the Wikipedia rabbit hole also helped learn a few words only to apply them into school the next day.  |

In what ways do you see your language, reading, and writing capabilities as having social consequences or impacting your life circumstances—that is, what advantages did/do you have and what disadvantages did/do you face as a result of your language and literacy learning?

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| Growing up in the United States as a native English speaker, and having a fairly diverse vocabulary makes it easy to communicate on a more sophisticated level then some people might. It gives me the ability to code switch based on who I'm talking to, but in turn makes me very limited. I'm not good with explaining things to people who's first language isn't Englsih and are still learning. Most of my speech is laden with euphemisms and idioms, which can be hard for anyone who's not well versed in Englsih to understand.  |

How might your experience with language and literacy connect to larger social realities (e.g., of your life, family, generation, gender, race, culture, nation, geographic location, historical moment, etc.)?

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| I think language, specifically the way I communicate, can affect me in various ways. A stereotype of African-Americans is that we're somewhat illiterate and can't used "sophisticated language" which is an outdated and offensive narrative. My generation speaks differently than people who are only 10 to 15 years younger than me, and sometimes it creates a gap where we're scrutinzed for communicating a certain way as opposed to the ways of the past.  |