Example 2

First Literature Teacher

When people recollect the memories of the time they learned to read and write, most would think back to their elementary studies and singing the ABC’s. My introduction to reading and writing was different than most because of one factor, my dear mother. My mother is the most influential person in my knowledge of literature. Her background in literature is quite different than other mothers because she is a high school literature teacher in my hometown of Cuenca, Ecuador. Due to her extensive knowledge on the topic, one can only imagine the pressure she’d have on her own child to have well rounded skills in a subject she masters.

Since my early childhood, my mother wanted to teach me the basics of reading in my native language, Spanish. Little exercises like the pronunciation and sounds of letters in the alphabet would help me build a strong foundation in reading before entering school. My mother implemented reading as an everyday routine by reading to me every night before sleep. The main genre of literature she would read to me were fables. Most of them would be stories that deliver a moral teaching or practical lesson. As I got older, I would start reading them to myself and ask my mother questions about the way in which the tales are written. “What does this word mean?” would be the question I asked most often to my mom. Even though the question was annoyingly repeated a numerous amount of times, she’d always happily answer them. This helped me get ahead of my classmates and stand out in class by expanding my vocabulary and knowledge of orthography.

When I first started high school, my mother would emphasize greatly my studies in literature. She wanted me to join book clubs, advanced literature classes, and even join the school newspaper club. Out of all those choices, I picked to only join advanced literature classes. In these, the class would engage in discussions about ideals and literary elements used by famous writers in Spanish literature such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Jorge Luis Borges, and Julio Cortana. The themes they would apply to their works and how they portrayed their ideologies was a popular topic of conversation with my mother and I, since those were the topics she also taught in her classes.

After moving to the United States, the first goal of my mother and I was to learn the English language. We would practice it by trying to speak in it and reading English literature. She would take my sister and I to the library most school days to practice our reading and pronunciation in English. Because I was surrounded by English speakers at school, the language was really easy for me to pick up.

As I became more fluent in English, my skills in Spanish writing started to deteriorate because of my lack of practice in the language. My mom was the first to notice this. To maintain my strengths in Spanish literacy, she would pick out books from time to time for me to read. She would expect summaries and a discussion about the themes and literary devices being used in the writings. This practice would later come in handy during my senior year of high school, when I took an advanced placement Spanish class. Because of her constantly pressuring me to maintain my studies in literature, it was easy for me to get a perfect score on the test.

Through constant reading of popular English works, my vocabulary expanded and I was able to memorize basic grammar rules. My English writing skills were sufficient enough to land me a spot in honor classes in high school. As a result of this, I would become to go-to person when it came to questions about grammar and spelling. When my mom started college here in the United States, I would be the one showing her how to spell words and answering her questions about grammar. The roles had switched, I started to teach her from what I knew. It is said that the best way to understand a subject is to teach it. Considering this, by helping her, I helped myself in strengthening my knowledge of English literacy.

To summarize, my mother has been the biggest influence in my development as a writer. Her efforts to maintain a well rounded skillset in both Spanish and English are the reason I am able to write the way I do. I hope to keep on expanding my knowledge on both languages through my time as a college student with the help of her and my literacy teachers and display it in my future works of literature.