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ENC 1102

Literate Activity Report

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Literate Activity at a Hotel

Introduction

When it comes to literate activities, people will always view it in different ways. No one person reads or writes the exact same way; it will always vary in some way. For example, each country teaches different materials or if they teach the same material, it varies in the way they teach it.

When Fishman was studying Eli Jr., she said that what "...he learned at home was consistent with the one he found at school, though it differed in several important ways..." (Fishman 42). She is right in that regard. Some things may have some similarity, but you will never find something to be the same. Not everyone likes the same genre of books or writing. Not everyone speaks the same language, or they might speak a different dialect of the same language. There is slang and abbreviations in writing and speaking or comic and chapter books in writing. In every aspect of our lives, you cannot find conformity. For this paper, I will be studying how people react to specific literate activities.

Methodology

For my research I decided to study my girlfriend Katie when we were inside our hotel room because we were both trying to finish some homework before the Fourth of July. I chose to observe my girlfriend on July 3rd, 2026, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. I chose to only do my research on one night because since we are dating, we do homework together quite often, so I know that what I observed is an accurate representation of what each homework night looks like. I had my computer with me so while she did her homework, I would observe her reactions and ask her questions on how she felt when doing her assignment.

Results

The activity I watched my girlfriend engage in was doing her Spanish homework on her computer. Her homework consisted of an audio recording that she had to translate back to English to then reply to the questions back in Spanish. She also had to read a Spanish article and answer questions from the article. Katie spent most of her time listening to the audio trying to translate it so she could post her video of her replying to the questions in Spanish. She used Google Translate on her phone while listening to the recording on her computer to get the questions and then writing her responses in English so it can translate it into Spanish. When reading the article, she also copied and pasted it into Google Translate. She read the article in English and just like the recording assignment she put her answers in English and had it translated back into Spanish. When I asked Katie whether she was enjoying the time she spent

doing her homework she actively laughed and said “Yo odio el Español” which translates to “I hate Spanish”.

When asking if she had any struggles when doing these assignments, she said that her biggest challenge was everything. Since she doesn’t speak or understand any Spanish, she felt that she needed to use Google Translate to succeed in her class. When I asked her what she felt the purpose of this class and its assignments was to her, she said, it was purely for the credit. Katie sees this class as a prerequisite for her other more important classes. I also then asked her what she thinks the real purpose of these literary activities are, and to that she said to learn Spanish. The reason for these activities is to teach students another language and to hopefully make them bilingual, trilingual, or even multilingual.

Discussion

Something that really stood out to me when conducting my research was that people's perception of literate activities vary. While some see literate activities as an essential part of life, I myself am included in this category; others just don’t find it as important. Fishman said, “Schoolwork rarely enters there because household, field, and barn chores matter more.” (Fishman 7) Everything that Katie did when doing her homework matches how the Amish view literate activities. She finds that there are other things that are more important than a simple Spanish assignment. The entire time she was doing her work, she was frustrated, making jokes, and getting distracted all because this task was not high on her priority list.

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Reflection

The biggest issue I faced while working on this paper was finding evidence in the article "Becoming Literate: A Lesson from the Amish" by Andrea Fishman. It required me to go through all my notes and even then, I needed to reread the article to find a piece of evidence that would work for the paper. My favorite part was the actual observations. It was fun to just watch Katie do her work because majority of the time it was just her complaining and that made it a very interesting experience. The thing that stood out to me the most was how similar Katie and Eli Jr's. Parents think. She finds schoolwork less important than other things just like his family. But it really showed me that even the Amish have similar thought processes of those who don't grow up in that scenario even if it is slightly different.

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Works Cited

Fishman, Andrea R. "Becoming Literate: A Lesson from the Amish" *The Right to Literacy*,
edited by Andrea A. Lunsford, Helene Moglen, and James Slevin, Modern Language
Association, 1990, 29-38

Observation Notes

- Katie listening to audio recordings
 - Originally seemed focused
 - Lost interest when she realized she didn't understand what it was saying
- Katie replying to audio recording
 - Makes jokes on how she is bad at Spanish
 - Used Google Translate to tell her what to say
- Katie reading her article
 - Not interested at all
 - Didn't try reading
 - Used Google Translate to reply to article questions