

LITERACY NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

Purpose: By answering the following questions and interviewing peers, we will be investigating the manner in which language develops a sense of place and sense of self.

Directions: Circle 5 questions that you find most interesting to answer. Use the opposite side of your notebook to answer these questions before you interview peers.

1. Parents' Literacy Histories: Can you tell any stories about where your parents grew up? Went to school? What literacy values and practices characterized their family lives? In what reading/writing/computing activities did they engage? What careers did they pursue? What reading/writing they did within their professions?
2. Grandparents' Literacy Histories: Can you tell us any stories about where your grandparents grew up? Went to school? What literacy values and practices characterized their family lives? In what reading/writing/computing activities did they engage? What careers they pursued? What reading/writing they did within their professions?
3. What important political and/or social events do you remember hearing about or reading about in the newspaper when you were a child growing up? When you were a teenager? Please list as many of these as possible.
4. What are some of the earliest encounters you remember with language, written or verbal? Why do you think you remember them? Can you tell how/when/why you learned to read and write? Can you tell any stories about when/ how/why you learned to read and write?
5. What kinds of reading materials were present in your home? In your room? Can you tell us any stories about your reading when you were young?
6. What kinds of writing did you do when you were very young? Where/when/why did you write? Can you tell us any stories about your writing when you were young?
7. Did your father or mother/grandparents write on a regular basis? If so, what did they write, for what purpose, and where (letters, shopping lists, religious documents, community or organizational material, reports)? Can you tell us any stories about the things they wrote? Their writing habits?
8. Did anyone ever read to you when you were young? What books? Can you tell us any stories about this?
9. Did your mother or father have any sayings or proverbs about reading or writing? Your grandparents? Can you tell us any stories about these?
10. Who were your heroes when you were growing up? Who did you want to be like? When you were a child? When you were a teenager? Why? Can you tell us any stories about this?
11. Think of a time you were proud of or embarrassed by your ability to communicate. Why? Who was involved?
12. What language do you speak to your family? What language do you use to speak with peers? Which do you prefer? Why?

13. With what people do you usually feel most comfortable communicating? What makes you feel this way?
14. Who is the storyteller in your family? Relate a story frequently told. How has that person/story influenced you?
15. Who has helped shape you as the speaker, reader, or writer that you are today? How?
16. Think of a time when language(written or spoken) got you something you wanted. How did you accomplish this task? What did you learn?
17. What has some one ever written to you that you treasure? What have you ever written to someone that the receiver kept as a "treasure"?
18. Do you consider your literacy skills better/worse than those of others? Whose? Why?
19. Have you ever used your literacy to judge somebody else in a negative way? How? Why? Was it a conscious decision?
20. How has learning to read and write in a second (or third) language been different from your first-language literacy development? What different meanings do these literacies carry for you?