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A Simple Syllable

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A Simple Syllable

Writing Process

This assignment was a simple literacy narrative about some point in my life that helped develop my love for reading. I choose a point early in my life where I had a speech impediment and had trouble speaking words clearly. I got over this difficult time by reading. The only research I had to do for this paper was figure out some smaller details from my parents that I could not remember since I was so young. Other than that all the information came from the deep depths of my mind. There were 3 drafts to this paper, a rough draft, a final draft, and then a revised final draft. The first final draft came from a peer review session with a classmate and the revised final draft came from both a conference with my professor and a visit to the Write Place. Overall, I am extremely happy with how this literacy narrative turned out as it is a clear representation with the struggle I experienced as a child and how reading helped me defeat the difficult times.

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A Simple Syllable

“Sound it out,” I hear my mother say in the background as I am staring at a silhouette of a giant African creature. “El-e-phant. It’s ok, you can do this,” I hear again. It is a word I have seen before, something I have seen at the zoo, but something is miles off. I can’t say it. I try and try again and all I can say is the first two syllables “El-e” the equivalent to the girl’s name of “Ellie.” I start frantically crying out of frustration and storm up to my room. Elephant was not the only word that seemed to trip me up. It was all words with multiple syllables that could be classified as advanced. Hat, bat, sat, and all one syllable word came out of my mouth like clockwork, but as soon as my mom gave me the bigger words, I began speaking gibberish. The word “basement” became “basem,” with the final three letters lost in existence. A word like “monkey” just becomes “monk.” A terribly frustrating experience for myself, who was heading to pre-school in a year, and my parents, who cared deeply about me and began to wonder if their second child had some sort of a problem.

A few weeks went by and I somehow managed to be in a small room all by myself. The glaring sun is beaming down on my face from the large, east-facing window. A strip of yellow ducks is wrapped around the room, distinctly painted on the wall. The sun beats off the baby blue walls to enlighten the entire room. My exact version on a dungeon. A tall, stocky woman, walks in with a vibrant smile and says “Hello! I’m Mrs. Kimble and we are going to have the best of times together!” Immediately, I burst out in tears, run out the door into the waiting room, and jump into my mom’s waiting out-stretched arms, screaming. I was in a place where I had

never been before, with a person I had never met. I was in a child's version of hell and there was no way I was staying in a place like that for more than five seconds. After some careful deliberation, my mom somehow coaxed me back into the room with Mrs. Kimble who I overheard whisper to my mom that this was a "normal occurrence" with children this young. I was frantic, this was not something that I wanted to be doing. I felt like a lost puppy in the middle of nowhere. Thousands of little kid thoughts are running through my head. "Who is this person?" "Why does it look like she wants to eat me?" "I feel like I have seen her in an episode of Scooby Doo before?" My mom interrupts my thoughts by whispering "Don't worry, everything will be alright."

Those six incredibly simple words put me entirely at ease. The dungeon that I was mentally in immediately turned into a playground, Mrs. Kimble went from a villain to an ally. Mrs. Kimble starts her introduction over again and away we go. The ducks painted on the wall were dancing as Mrs. Kimble showed flashcards at a mile a minute. I was no longer frustrated like I was when my mom practiced with me. If I slipped up on a word, we would work on that specific word, and others like it, until I felt completely comfortable. At the very end of the first session, Mrs. Kimble gave me what I thought was a blank piece of paper. She writes 10 words on it in her picture perfect "Comic Sans" handwriting. All words that I have struggles with during our first session together. "Practice them every day. The only way you will get better is through practice," she said in a serious, yet loving tone. With those ten words, my desire to improve enhanced from an unlikely source, reading.

I first started with those ten words. I would read them over and over again. Those 10 words became my favorite words for the week. I would constantly say each individual one, on repeat, overjoyed that I could actually say a difficult word correctly. My parents got so tired of

me running joyfully around the house saying words like “because” and “literally” that they gave me a new sheet with brand new words so that they could spare themselves of repetitive verbal pain. It became a constant flow of read and re-read 10 different words over and over, say them aloud and then get 10 brand new words. I quickly began to love saying words correctly, all from reading them off a piece of paper. I urged my mom and dad to start reading to me and showing me the words. I still struggled with some words but the frustration was gone. I would try to work them out with one of my parents or just take them into my next session with Mrs. Kimble. It began a constant transaction of word filled papers and Mrs. Kimble. I would bring her some words and then she would give me some. Mrs. Kimble was delighted to see how enthusiastic I was about learning different words and even more zealous of the fact I was enjoying the task of reading. There was one particular session where we were playing the game Lucky Ducks. Instead of matching the colors on the bottom of each individual duck you had to match a word, read it and say it aloud (I was amazed because I thought she created the game herself instead of the toy manufacturer Milton Bradley). One of the words happened to be “library” which I had no clue what it actually was. She explained what it was and as soon as the session was over I begged my mom to take to my new favorite word, library.

The library became a new home to me. I was lucky enough to have a stay at home mom at that age, and we spent almost every morning there. We would go together and I would want to read every book I could see. I would have read the whole library at the time, if made available to me. Unfortunately, I was limited to the kid’s section. The *Cat in the Hat*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, and *The Giving Tree*, flew off the shelves. My mom and I would sit in this particular corner of the library that was always empty, a long red couch with black vertical strips coming right through it. The couch was so large that my feet would barely make it over the lip, let alone

touch the floor. I would sit there quietly reading and sometimes I would read aloud so my Mom could “listen.” My mom would sit right next to me patiently waiting for me to finish, usually with a newspaper or the closest magazine in hand. My desire to correct my speech impediment directly affected my desire to read. If I would not have been given that simple set of words, my love for reading would have never reached the point it did.

Soon, my last session with Mrs. Kimble arrived. My speech had greatly improved. I still had some small difficulties but nothing that I could not fix at home. I went into our last meeting excited that I had finally defeated the thing that plagued with the utmost frustration. We went over once again the same things that were covered in our previous encounters. I was just going through the motions of a last meeting. Staring off into space, only paying attention when I would want too. Counting those ducks on the wall. I estimated that there were sixty-six on the wall, however, each count would provide me with a different number. Those ducks on the wall, so simple and natural, truly played a large part in keeping me at ease in a situation that was once uncomfortable. Without those walls that were painted in such a kid-friendly manner, I might not have been able to walk back in that room after my meltdown on day one.

I was a young boy who would never know the impact that Mrs. Kimble had on my life until later on. She gave me the motivation to actually try to turn my speech around and eventually turned my frustration into hope. If it wasn't for Mrs. Kimble and the patience of my mom, I would never have had the motivation to read anything at all. That motivation and that love for reading in turn helped me officially conquer my speech impediment that plagued me during my early years. If I wouldn't have found that desire to read, who knows what my speaking level would be? Currently, I just have a simple stutter that pops up occasionally that really goes unnoticed by the people that surround me. Now, as I continue to live my life, I show

appreciation and always break a sly smile every time I hear the word “elephant” or see a painted duck on the wall. I always hear my mom in the background with a soft reassuring tone, “Sound it out, you can do this.”