

Student Name
ACR 150-section #

Oral History Project

You will conduct an oral history project of an individual who attended school at least 20 years prior to you. You will record an oral history of that individual's experiences with literacy instruction, followed by your analysis/ response to what you learn. This is an opportunity to explore another generation's experience with literacy instruction, to place it in a cultural and historical context, and to compare/ contrast it with your own.

1. Can you describe how you learned to read/ your experience with learning literacy skills (in elementary school)? "I learned to read by the teachers starting out with identifying letters , phonics, learning about vowels and it became easy for me to learn because I was a fast learner. It didn't start from home first, it was definitely from school. It was fun, I enjoyed going to school, especially my primary years of learning. I found algebra and math to be my weakest , the concept of using letters to work out an equation was quite hard for me".
2. What books were you assigned at school ? "mostly folktale books. Books that originated from our culture of jamaica. Story telling about our ancestry especially on the country's national heroes and how they got to overcome their obstacles in the past. These books broke down why people in our culture were the way they were and provided a better understanding for me."
3. How was reading taught when children were expected to know how to read? " We used to have this fun thing of having these words on the boards, that was engaging for us. We would play games like " I spy and we would point that ..." I spy the word mother". My teachers back then made learning to read fun for us."
4. Did they have an overall positive experience with school? " Yes, It was positive because I felt like I was amongst the bright set in my class. It had the advantage of making us want to learn more and being ahead of others. It was a healthy competition for me."
5. Did any teachers make an impact on your life? "on my negative side. My first day grade teacher beat me with a ruler and she hit me because I couldn't provide the answer to a question. It was my first day and I was very shocked at this approach. I was just hurt and upset but it didn't discourage me from going to school. I didn't go to basic school , just straight to all ages (1-6) so I was a little behind. On a positive aspect, my principal in all ages always encourages us to pass and to excellence. He had a quote , "I shall pass this way but once, any good thing I have to do I shall do now" , it stood out to me because it

was telling me to prepare myself for the future that whatever I do now will impact my future.

Option 1: write up a paragraph reflecting on what you learned, on the cultural context of the individual's literacy experience, on the individual's overall experience with acquiring literacy skills (positive or negative), and compare/ contrast it to your own.

- **Submit the transcript and your reflection paragraph or podcast on Blackboard.**

You are done!

Based on what I have learned, my uncle and I's experience of our early days of literacy learning are quite different. However during my first years I learned to read and sound out vowels from home. I had an advantage because my stepmother was a teacher, however even with this aspect I still placed amongst the lowest in my class even with the advantage I had versus my uncle who learned everything from going to school and still went to a private institution after all age with some of the countries brightest with a grade average of 95% and above whereas after all age for me I passed to go to a lowest education high school with a grade average of 65% and under for most students that went there. I believe the difference between us was that I was never eager to learn like my uncle, I was all for fun and playing. Meanwhile my uncle was always in his book even after school hours. His teachers made learning for him fun and engaging whereas I felt as if my all age teachers were more stern and strict on us. In similarity though, the same folktale book he was assigned to read was the same one we read in my all age days. They taught us about our ancestors and how our country of Jamaica came to be. When it comes to cultural aspects, even though my uncle was amongst the brightest and considered one in his all age and high school days, life at home was quite different. His mother and father didn't have it financially, so money was always a problem at home. On a deeper note, my uncle went on to become a police officer. Things went south when he was approached to smuggle in cocaine as a way of making extra cash for his family however he was caught on his first go at it and he got fired from the force. He now works as a skilled carpenter. My uncle stated that had his cultural background from poverty been different he would not have gone astray and as he taught about what his all age principal said he wished he would have kept that saying with him before doing something that jeopardized his whole career. As a young adult I too often find myself tempted to find other ways to make a better living for myself financially for myself and myself but then I find myself reading about scholars that have made it the right way by going to school and getting their degrees and elevating in life, becoming successful individuals. My uncle's interview really opened my eyes in remembering to never lose focus and to remember my "why". Why am I in school? Why is Literacy education important? Why am I doing this? . Every decision we make now will shape your later life in the future.