

Autobiography on Literacy and Numeracy

Posted on September 21, 2018

Literacy, Numeracy, and the Distinctive Capacities of Human Learning

Literacy and numeracy are extremely important characteristics and traits that set us apart from other species in the world. Humans are the only species that have the ability to think rationally and create things that even baffle fellow human beings, let alone any other species. Literacy is the ability and capability to read, write, assess, analyze, and evaluate everything that goes around in the universe (Skwarchuk et al., 2014).

It is because of literacy that one sees the complicated intricacies of this vast and seemingly endless universe (Notari et al., 2016). It also encompasses in itself the ability to make communication in any form, whether it is through reading, writing, speaking, or symbols. On the whole, it is basically the capability to read as well as write (Burridge et al., 2017). Numeracy includes, in itself, the ability to grasp and comprehend mathematical knowledge and the capability to apply that mathematical knowledge to produce things that are unheard of. It constitutes the application to learn and apply mathematical concepts, even at a basic level (F Dieckmann et al., 2015). At the most basic and fundamental level, numeracy is the ability and the capability to count numbers, starting from simple mathematics to solving complex mathematical conundrums (Karaali et al., 2016).

This is the knowledge that an individual receives during his or her childhood and throughout his or her life, gaining knowledge of various fields (Inyega and Inyega, 2018). This knowledge is not just related to books and the school system but the information and knowledge one gets through different experiences throughout his life. Literacy and numeracy are paramount for every individual to make an impact on his or her life as well as on society (Gee, 2015). Literacy simply does not mean that a person just has the ability to write a name; it should be thought of as having a broader definition. The ability of a person to communicate in a sober and calm manner and make claims and statements that are backed by good logic. Both literacy and numeracy are essential cockpits that fly any society.

Curiosity, Childhood Experience, and the Beginning of Education

I have always been a very inquisitive person. From a very early age in my life, I developed a curious mind. I might be embellishing the statement that I had developed, but I would be remiss if I did not mention the contribution of my family and especially the man whom I have looked up to my entire

life, from childhood to adolescence to adult life, my father. People look for superheroes and miracles, but I found my superhero in my father. He had made me the man I have become today. If it had not been for my father, I would not have pursued my studies because there came a time when I did not take any interest in my education. He did not reprimand me for it, let alone give me corporal punishment. He used to advise me calmly, and he was mature enough to realize and understand that the beating would drive me further away from my studies. He did not let my school studies get in the way of my education, sports, and personal growth.

I like to consider and call myself an autodidact, but I know my father played an important role in it. It is not that I did not learn anything from my teachers. They are the people from whom you learn the most from your parents. I went to a Hindu public school and stayed there from kindergarten till 10th grade. As the name suggests, it was a public school, so it was not of the same standard as that of the private schools, but I did learn some important things there apart from basic education. My father encouraged me to give equal importance to both studies and sports. He used to say to me that a child with all the books in his or her mind and no sports equipment does not have a balanced personality. He taught me the importance of balancing things. He taught me the middle way. He warned me of the dangers and adverse effects of extremism in any field and facet of life. I was equally good in cricket and basketball as well as in my studies, especially in mathematics. A lot that I learned at an early age came from my father. He taught me things that the school did not teach, for instance, I knew quite early in my life to write a professional letter or how to post a letter. I was taught how to write or cash a cheque. I knew these things way before any of my friends learned to do that.

My father loved and admired learning and speaking different languages, and he instilled that quality in me. I learned the English language quite early on in my life, mostly through British and American films. I used to watch documentaries about the history of the universe and time and space. That is how I developed my love for science. I used to watch Sci-fi movies and documentaries without subtitles. That helped my listening. I did not understand it the first time, but that did not make me not watch it again. I would watch the movie again until I understood every single word. I developed a particular interest in reading. My father would bring me books in different genres, ranging from science, literature, history, etc. That helped me read and look at things from a different perspective.

Teachers, Competition, and the Development of Mathematical Confidence

My teacher helped me a lot, especially my mathematics teacher. He would make me participate in mathematics competitions as well as in different school activities. One of my prominent achievements is that I was on the upper echelon list of students in the National Talent Search Contest, which was conducted by the Central Institute of General Knowledge Learning. I was privileged enough to be in that acme bracketed list, and I knew, for a fact, that it was because of my general interest in knowledge, inculcated in me by my father, and because of my talent in mathematics and science

subjects, that was instilled in me by my teachers. Apart from academics, I was a regular player in under nineteen basketball teams when I was only fifteen years old.

As I have mentioned, there came a time when I lost interest in my studies and focused all my energy on basketball. However, I did not stop reading novels and literature books. I chose science over mathematics when I was in 11th grade (2007). After that, I shifted from science to engineering. My father wanted me to become a doctor, but I did not get enough marks, so I studied biotechnology. I did not particularly do well in my mathematics course. There was a time when I used to pride and preen myself on mathematics, but times have changed. I worked hard on those mathematical conundrums and eventually passed those courses. My father gave me advice when I was at my lowest in engineering. He told me that life is never easy for anyone. Life is going to crumble us, but we are defined by what we do when life kicks us to the ground. Life kicked me, but I was resilient and kept on going. I eventually completed my degree with first-class honors. I ended up earning a bachelor's and master's in biotechnology from Gitam University and Deakin University, Victoria, respectively. I wanted to travel and gain more knowledge about everything, not only things related to my studies. I wanted to befriend people of different backgrounds and ethnicities. So I decided to go abroad. Travel opens up one's mind and helps you grow as a person.

Life is hard. It is also not fair. The theory of privilege says that some are more privileged than others with respect to age, race, gender, etc. (Twine and Gardener, 2013). Some people are more privileged than others. But the defining thing is what you do with the resources you have. Most people do not appreciate and acknowledge any sort of privilege they have. According to academics, people do not appreciate the privilege when they receive benefits from it (Coston and Kimmel, 2012). I acknowledge every opportunity and privilege I have received. I was not brought up in a privileged society. People did not have the love and desire to pursue education, but it was my father who wanted me to be an educated and knowledgeable person. I would not have gone through engineering if it were not for my father. I would not have the desire to travel abroad if it were not for the man who instilled a love of knowledge in me. No one from my society had gone abroad for higher education; I was the only one. It was not that my father had the resources to send me, but the desire I had to explore different parts of the world. Now, whenever I go back home, I go to different schools and colleges and advocate the message of constant learning, the love of knowledge, and traveling. Not all knowledge comes from books. It comes from interacting with people of different backgrounds, traveling to different places, and experiencing what we call life. I can converse with everyone on various topics. I have befriended people who are from different fields. I have interacted with people from all walks of life.

Learning Habits, Versatility, and the Continuing Value of Education

My learning has helped me to be a versatile person. I have a strong belief that what you learn in your childhood and the habits you adopt shape your entire life. I [read books](#) and watched movies and

documentaries from a very early age. That helped me in my adult life by researching many different things. If I did not have an interest in books, I would not have come abroad or had an interest in different fields and subjects. I go to different elementary schools, private and public, and try to inspire children to read books and develop a love and hunger for knowledge and education. I believe that I have the skills to give great presentations and to speak eloquently. I know how to present my thoughts and bring my message across to people quite loudly and succinctly. It is imperative for a teacher and a spokesperson to be able to speak clearly so that the audience understands what the teacher or the speaker is saying. I believe whenever I give a presentation, I do not digress from the main subject. People have a way of beating around the bush, but I learned that short and effective points, embedded in truth and honesty, make a great impact on the audience and, in the case of my field, on the students.

The area that I feel I lack is the understanding of people from various different backgrounds; even though I have traveled enough and befriended people of different ethnicities, with the children, I need to get into their shoes to know what the current students' problems and difficulties are regarding learning. However, the main concept is clear to me, and it is to make the student believe that if he or she tries hard enough, he or she can fulfill his or her dream as I did. They would have a practical example in themselves to know that what I am saying to them is true. As a student of knowledge, I know one fundamental and pivotal thing that needs to be taught to every child is the love and interest in acquiring knowledge. Brian Herbert once said, "The capacity to learn is a gift. The ability to learn is a skill; the willingness to learn is a choice" (Pheiffer, 2018).

References

Burridge, L.H., Winch, S., Kay, M., Henderson, A., 2017. Building compassion literacy: Enabling care in primary health care nursing. *Collegian* 24, 85-91.

Coston, B.M., Kimmel, M., 2012. Seeing privilege where it isn't: Marginalized Masculinities and the intersectionality of privilege. *J. Soc. Issues* 68, 97-111.

F Dieckmann, N., Peters, E., Leon, J., Benavides, M., P Baker, D., Norris, A., 2015. The role of objective numeracy and fluid intelligence in sex-related protective behaviours. *Curr. HIV Res.* 13, 337-346.

Gee, J., 2015. *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*. Routledge.

Inyega, H.N., Inyega, J.O., 2018. The Nuts and Bolts for Effective Literacy and Numeracy Instruction in Early Childhood. *Pap. Educ. Dev.*

Karaali, G., Villafane Hernandez, E.H., Taylor, J.A., 2016. What's in a Name? A Critical Review of Definitions of Quantitative Literacy, Numeracy, and Quantitative Reasoning. *Numeracy* 9, 2.

Notari, M., Sobko, T., Churchill, D., 2016. Personal Biometric Information from Wearable Technology Tracked and Followed Using an ePortfolio: A Case Study of eHealth Literacy Development with

Emerging Technology in Hong Kong Higher Education. Int. Assoc. Dev. Inf. Soc.

Pheiffer, H., 2018. The impact of development. Dairy Mail 25, 80-83.

Skwarchuk, S.-L., Sowinski, C., LeFevre, J.-A., 2014. Formal and informal home learning activities in relation to children's early numeracy and literacy skills: The development of a home numeracy model. J. Exp. Child Psychol. 121, 63-84.

Twine, F.W., Gardener, B., 2013. Geographies of privilege. Routledge.