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# *Writer's Statement about "The Shift in Parental Literacy Sponsorship and Its Value According to the Children of Immigrants"*

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Since I was young I felt as though I was not meant to be good at reading or writing. And whoever I asked for assistance was either unwilling to help me or was incapable of helping me. Yet I kept turning back to the same sources for help: my parents. I remember sitting at the dining table with a pencil in hand staring blankly at the blue-lined notebook paper. I would even sometimes imagine words on those lines just to occupy the space to temporarily lessen my anxiety. After sitting too long, I would turn to my mother for help. She would sit alongside me and asked what I needed help with. I would reply, and then she, too, would stare blankly at the paper. At the time, my mom did not speak very much English and was, as a matter of fact, learning the complexity of the language just as I was. She would then redirect her attention to something in the house and excuse herself. My dad worked long hours and was not home a lot of the time, so I could not ask him for help. The empty lines on the notebook paper remained and were my worst enemy. I could not occupy them—I could not inform, persuade, or entertain them.

I often reflected on experiences like these when choosing a topic for my research paper in ENC 1102. Driven by curiosity, I often wondered if having parents who were unfamiliar with America's education system had an effect on other children of immigrants, like it did on me. As I began my research, I noted a pattern. There were similar stories to mine in other research. Some parents were capable of helping their children, others would avoid or dismiss asking their child if they needed help, while others knew they couldn't help and sought other sources of assistance. Developing research about the shift in parental literacy sponsorship and its value according to the children of immigrants allowed me, as the writer, to not measure only the result of such experiences, but also how the children perceived their parents as literacy sponsors, even when they couldn't directly help or did not help at all. Sometimes, it is in experiences like these that people find motivation to learn to read and write better, as was the case for me. I learned to value literacy because it is necessary in everyday life. Literacy is not only about having a skillset of using a pencil or scanning a book for meaning, but it offers a new perspective in how you understand or make an understanding.

The development of this paper was quite unique. The more data I received, the more ways of interpreting the different kinds of sponsorship I developed. Instead of trying to prove something

to my readers, my intentions were redirected to informing readers that different literacy sponsors exist and that they can be determined based not on what the sponsor did, but how they are *perceived*. Based on the data I collected from three different subjects, I was able to identify three different kinds of sponsorship as well as a unique kind of sponsorship: *sponsorship plasticity*. I actually created this term because there was no vocabulary that I was aware of that described a shift in literacy responsibility even though many researchers talked about the idea. I feel like these terms were needed in the paper for my audience—educators and parents—to identify when a child needs help and how they can foster literacy. I want my readers to understand that it is okay to feel like they may not be capable of providing certain educational services to a child. But it is not okay for the child to feel as though they do not have support. I want my readers to be encouraged to find resources if they cannot provide the help a child needs. I want parents to realize circumstances in which their child is struggling with literacy-related activities. I want to influence teachers to recommend books, CDs, websites, and afterschool services to parents when a child is falling behind in their literacy development because they have that authority to. Any absences of literacy involvement by a parent must be recognized earlier and acted upon so that every child can be the best that they can be.

Through the process of writing this research paper, I learned to be good at writing. I discovered my own potential to organize my thoughts and present them in an appropriate manner in the form of writing. Even though I primarily thought I was not supposed to be good at writing, I learned that bad writing is still communication. Instead, the most difficult part of writing is not what to say, but how to say it when molding it to a certain genre. Although my parents were not the best literacy sponsors, their actions led me to the realization that I am a literacy sponsor in the making.