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Inspirational Philosophy of Education Paper

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Inspirational Philosophy of Education

An Asian student once asked me, “How did you do it Mr. Her?” “Did what,” I asked. “You know! You told me that you just learned your English alphabet in High School but you don’t seem to have a very heavy accent at all. Besides, what really impressed me is the fact that you went on to pursue a post-secondary education and became an instructor at Madison College, too.” I told her that it’s long story. There are many contributing factors towards my success. I was saved from the Vietnam War to do something great with my life. There was this burning desire, flame, and force inside of me for wanting to learn. I told her that my goal is not to waste my life in America. Furthermore, I didn’t plan to become a teacher either from the beginning. It was an accident. Giving the fact that my English was poor and I used to be a very shy person; teaching was a wrong occupation for me. As a matter of fact, what I really want to do in life is to pursue a singing career. I can get up and perform in front of a large crowd without any stress at all. That is my true gift.

I went on to describe some of the contributing factors that made education a priority for me. The Vietnam War almost killed me in the jungle from hunger and diseases. It took away all of the years that I was supposed to be in school learning. The communists were chasing after us, trying to bomb us, and gunning us down. We couldn’t rest in one place for long. We didn’t have time to grow rice, vegetables, and farm. We ate anything that was edible to us, wild plants, vegetables, horses, etc. It was a survival of the fittest moment for me. Life was difficult and unfair.

Though on the more positive note, however, because of the war I was given the opportunity to come to the United States to pursue a high school and college education, and to better my life. I told her that without the Vietnam War and political refugee status, I probably would not be able to come to the United States at all. When I got here, I had to face another kind of enemy, the English language and culture shock. I cried countless times in my bedroom back in college. The problems were something like this. I couldn’t express myself freely in English without making mistakes. Moreover, writing essay papers or doing report papers just made me sick to my stomach. My documents had never passed my teachers without any red pen’s marks the first couple of lines or sentences. That just pissed me off so much. I just wanted to shoot myself in the head. I got very upset and frustrated every time. One time I had an English composition course with a very mean English teacher. This teacher was not sensitive to people from another culture at all. She got angry with my writings and threw me out of her class. She said she could not put up with my English barrier and mistakes anymore. That incident really broke me down and hurt me so much. That night I went back into my dorm and banged my head against the bathroom

wall really hard, and kept on reminding myself over and over again. "You are too stupid. You will never succeed. You are not college material. You are not born to be smart. You will never be smart as your cousins. Why did you come to this country to be humiliated like this anyway? What are you trying so hard for? Just pack up your bag and go home. You don't have to put up with these kinds of humiliation." But there was another voice that was on my side. It said, "You did not to come to this country to be a loser or to throw your life away or to be a dumb ass. You are given an opportunity of a lifetime to change your life forever; that is to pursue the American dream. One of these days, you will become somebody important. You will be able to do something great with your life. Teacher like you is heavenly engineered. You are humble, compassionate, a good listener, and can really connect with students like yourself. You will have a very good influence on people. Then, I responded to this little voice of mine. Are you sure? How come my English teacher hated me so much that she threw me out of her class then? My little voice replied back to me, "Maybe she is doing you a favor before you are getting an F grade." For whatever is worth, one of these days if I do become a genuine teacher, I won't treat my students the way she treated me. She didn't even give me a chance or try to help me at all. Teachers like her probably had no experience working with English Language Learners at all. I was beginning to think that perhaps she was prejudiced or racist. Anyway, after I confirmed to my hurt and pain with my little voice, I then was able to wipe my tears, take a big breath, wash my face, and hit the books again. I wouldn't let people like her kill my dream in America. Nothing can be compared to the time when I was still in the jungle back in Laos.

The two things that kept me going were my mother and sisters. My mother literally had to go and pick aluminum cans to sell and sent me some gas money. My sister was very supportive of me but got married during my second year of college. Life was very hard. It didn't matter which way you looked at it. I came to this country too late and too old. I can't speak, read, write, and spell. I looked in the mirror and talked to myself constantly. The reason I did not die in Laos was because I had a purpose to live. One day in the distant future, other people will value, respect, and look up to you. Give your family some hope and reason to be proud of. It doesn't matter how much you are struggling; you will graduate. However, in reality I felt like I wanted to give up so many times.

I came a long way to the United States and then to get to where I am right now. I felt like I just took one giant leap from the 18th Century, from a very primitive culture, and landed into the 21st century civilization. That can only mean one thing-I must maximize my freedom, complete a post-secondary education, and live the American dream. It doesn't really matter how many mountains I have to climb or how many valleys I have to cross, or how many bad people I have to confront, I am a true fighter and a survivor. I, therefore, decided to write an Inspirational Philosophy of Education Paper. All credits go to Mr. Barlow, Mr. Stebbins, and Mrs. Docter for their positive, humorous attitudes with facilitation and of course for taken care of business. Mr. Barlow encouraged us be creative and be personal with our philosophies. As an instructor, I want my philosophy to begin with a SMILE, then to inspire, relate, convince, and challenge every one of

my English Language Learners and GED/HSED students to not give up easily without a fight but to go for the American dream and gold. Let me stress this again. In order for anything to work, it all begins with a BIG SMILE. You have to make that learning atmosphere non-threatening or nobody wants to even come near you and you just lost it. Don't display a bad attitude like a tiger that is getting ready to make a move on its prey. As instructors and professionals, we have to try to build in students a win-win attitude. We need to really connect and establish that trusting relationship first. Last but certainly not least, if you are ever down on your faith and your volcano is just about to explode for miles, then please think of Mr. Her's story. He went through hell to get where he is right now. If he can do it, I can too. Say it with me, "I CAN TOO! I CAN TOO! I CAN TOO!"