

As a part of the Public Scholarship course, students were required to review their educational experiences from pre-k to the present. The goal of this assignment was for them to assess the ways in which they were treated based on their marginalizations or their privileges. Students provided three terms for what their narrative would share — the terms were not to be included in their narrative. After reading their narratives aloud, a class discussion connected their terms to the associated experiences. There are a total of four narratives in this issue, three are also accompanied with a voice recording by the author.

The following is one such narrative.

An Educational Narrative by Amairany Bautista

Before I share my narrative, let me share this: I hope that you see the power of resilience in my narrative and how the moments I share have helped shape who I am, and most importantly, that I am not just another narrative of unfortunate circumstances. As I wrote this personal narrative, I could not pinpoint a significant moment, but multiple moments, in my education that aligned with the terms written on the board. Growing up on the Eastside of Tacoma I was surrounded by people that looked like me and some even spoke the same language as me; I was surrounded by people of different ethnicities who empowered each other. I never thought about a division between class, economic status or race. However, through the perspectives of others I began to view myself, my community and my ability to achieve success differently.

See, I can tell you that the first time I received my very first letter of acceptance to college, I rushed to go see my AP Literature teacher. As me and two of my friends entered the room, I told her I had something important to tell her. She responded, “You're pregnant?” I was baffled. I stared at my friends. In that moment, I was angry and wondered what did she really think of me? In high school, I excelled in everything I did. I knew I wanted to attend college after high school so I made sure to stay on top of my academics and my extracurricular activities. I was always engaged, asked questions and stayed after school for help. I knew how to advocate for myself because I had done it for years.

Months later, I, a first-generation college student had started my first semester. I had applied to thirteen schools, participated in two programs in high school that helped first generation college students with applying to college and I held a job. If I could work, go to school and take care of my siblings, what others thought of me did not matter. Until, it did.

During my first week here I felt as if every room I walked into people were staring at me. See, I was not walking into the classroom alone, I was walking in with premade assumptions. Anytime I spoke I made sure to articulate my thoughts clearly. If I went to see a professor I would make sure to have a list of questions already made because of the fear of what they would think of me. One professor asked me where I was from and his posture changed, it was as if he immediately “knew” what kind of student I was. I felt as if he didn't think I was capable or prepared academically because of the quality of education I had received. A staff member asked me about my major and I replied “Politics” they replied with, “You should

try International Politics because that is where all the money is, wait, you can't." I asked, "Why?" and she replied, "Because of your status." As a brown Latina, it was assumed that I was undocumented. The truth is, I am. I deal with premade assumptions every day and it has shaped how I viewed myself. I felt like I did not belong in this institution, that I a Latina woman was going against a current that would only become more difficult through time and that I was not smart enough. Until, I had a Latina professor remind me during my first semester in college that I do belonged here. I realized that I needed to recognize that premade assumption will always be made about me but I needed to believe in my own worth. So, I did what I do best, I began advocating for myself. If I needed help in a course I would go get the help, whether that meant using the center for learning writing and teach or using all of my professor's office hours because that is what they were there for.

Years later I no longer felt ashamed for asking for help because I had changed my perspective. I began to see it as an investment in myself as a scholar instead of feeling like I was incapable or not smart enough. I worked too hard to give up on myself and my education. Most importantly, I was constantly supported by the community and people that helped me get here. Navigating the system as a first-generation college student was difficult but each experience has fueled my passion to prove others wrong and continue better advocating for myself.

The Three Terms: Double Consciousness, Internalized Oppression, and Microaggressions



Amairany Bautista, will graduate from the University of Puget Sound this spring with the Class of 2019. She is earning a Bachelor's in International Political Economy and a double minor in Sociology/Anthropology, and Latinx Studies. She grew up in the Tacoma area and she loves exploring the beautiful evergreen state one hike at a time.