

# A Literacy Profile on Tarina Carr

Tarina Carr is an incoming transfer student to UC Davis with a major in Anthropology.

Being from Northern California, it was a top choice geographically and educationally. Her goal



after graduation is to do field research, but her dream job is to become a museum curator and eventually possibly an educator. She is looking forward to learning more about her field, as she considers herself a good student and learner. She owes this passion mostly to her parents, whom she credits to be her most significant literacy sponsors because they allowed her to foster her love for reading.

There are some aspects she recognizes that she could benefit from improving on, partly because of negative technological literacy sponsors. As we explore and elaborate on these areas, I am sure many students can relate to her struggles and strengths.

## Tarina's Early Life

In many of Tarina's writings, including her Literacy Collage and Literacy Introduction Padlet, she explains that she had an intense love for reading. As a young child, she likened herself to Belle, the bookworm Disney princess, as she would read multiple books from the library every week. An impressive fact is that around 4th-5th grade, she maintained a high school

reading level. She explained that reading was so enthralling because she could fully immerse herself into the fictional world, falling in love with the characters, imagining that somehow her continuing to read helped the main character along. While looking into her early life, we gain an understanding of who she believes to be her most influential literacy sponsors. Her parents were always very strict with her education. In her literacy profile, she depicts a scene in which her parents had her rewrite the alphabet over and over again, not letting her cease until the letters came out perfect. While this may sound like torture to some, Tarina reiterated in



her interview that she was actually very grateful to them for the strict parenting when it came to reading and writing. Due to the fact that she had this raw talent, it allowed her to foster her strengths and really focus on what she loved most - reading.

## Tarina's Relationship with Reading

Unfortunately, Tarina's relationship with reading dwindles as she gets older and gains more responsibility. With less free time, and more access to distracting technology, she found herself reading less and less. Now, in college, she rarely reads for fun. She stated in our interview that if she had the time, she would be reading fantasy and adventure books - her favorite genre as a kid. Most of what she reads now is due to required class readings of articles or textbooks, which she does not find to be enjoyable at all. In our interview, she elaborated on why

she no longer reads for fun. If we were to ask Walter Ong to guess, one of the writer's who's article we read in class, he may explain the "...complaint that is made against computers: they are artificial contrivances, foreign to human life"(Ong, 1985). Tarina would likely say that he is onto something, for her at least. She views social media and the internet as having a very negative impact on her relationship with reading, because they are extreme distractions. It is hard now, with constant access to phones and computers, to focus on a book long enough to immerse yourself in it's world. Now, she only has time to do class readings, and she explains her dreaded reading process in our interview.

## The Process

While she does not enjoy class readings, they are still a requirement, so Tarina does her best to make sure she understands them so she can participate in class discussions. She rarely annotates, as she does not find it useful to her. She realized that if she did annotate, she never referred back to those notes so she concluded that they are a waste of time. However, she will make sure to mark the words she does not know, look them up, and then write their definition in her own words. In textbooks, if they've italicized or bolded important words, the first thing she will do is write down all their definitions. Because she is a reader at heart, she struggles to skim as it makes her feel bad for not taking in everything the writer intended on the reader to see. So, even when she has a lot of pages to read, she will separate it out and read a certain number of pages each day to ensure she has read it in its entirety before class.

# Tarina's Relationship with Writing

Tarina explains in our interview that she has no love for writing, stating that it is not because she is a bad writer or finds it difficult, but because she simply struggles to find any type of motivation to do it. This makes her a major procrastinator, because approaching deadlines are the only thing that force the focus needed to write.

## The Process

One of our class readings depicted an example of a student's writing process: "The night before a paper would be due, he'd gather pen and pad, and stare. Clean the dishes. Stare... Then sometime in the night the words would come...he'd use the completed essay to type out an outline, feeling a little guilty about having cheating in not having produced the outline first"(Villanueva, 1993). Tarina describes her process, or lack thereof, and how she relates a lot to this description. She revealed that there is no organized process and she doesn't like to brainstorm or make an outline. She often does not even look at the prompt until one or two days before it is due. When she cannot push the deadline away any longer, at the last minute she will sit and write it all in one day. Her process is very involved and time consuming because she figures out all of the structure and organization as she writes, since her procrastination leaves her with no time to plan ahead.

## Technological Impacts

As we talked more about her literacy sponsors, we reflected on her negative sponsors in life, social media being the primary one. Around the time that she stopped reading for fun, she

started spending all of her free time on social media and playing video games. Therefore, she credits her distance from reading to her social media addiction. She does not entirely blame technology, however, and she recently started to take responsibility for her lack of leisurely reading in her life. It had been a long time since she read a book for fun, but she recently joined an online reading community and started to read a fantasy book.

She does acknowledge technology as something that mostly negatively impacted her in the past. However, she felt it important to point out a positive technological sponsor - educational children's TV shows. A big part of her passion for reading as a child was solidified by the motivational and enjoyable teaching style that many PBS Kids shows utilized. Additionally, she is glad to be able to easily access information to things that interest her thanks to the internet and computers. She has also improved a lot on not overusing social media, as she no longer uses the sites that she used to use for many hours of the day.

## Findings

Tarina is clearly very passionate about reading, and while she may have lost her motivation as other responsibilities began to pile up, she has lately been trying to get better at putting reading back into her life. Even though she did not enjoy class readings, we can recognize that residual passion in that she never skims the readings. She thought of skimming as disrespectful to the writer, which reveals she still has a genuine fondness for reading in her heart, no matter the type.

As for writing, Tarina has never particularly liked writing, but she chooses to be a good student regardless. Even though she doesn't enjoy the process, she was able to find one that worked for her and enabled her to complete her assignments on time.

When it comes to the impact that technology has had on her, she realizes that it threw a wrench into her beloved hobby of reading. However, rather than letting that impact ruin her relationship with reading, she took the necessary steps to correct it. She found a resource that will actually help her start reading again, an online reading group, and is sticking to it. Tarina obviously still loves to read and is making an attempt at bringing that passion back into her life.

## References

Ong, W. (1985) *Writing is a technology that restructures thought*. In Bauman. G, *The written word: Literacy in Transition* (pp. 23-48). Clarendon Press.

Villanueva V. (1993). *Bootstraps: from an academic of color*. National Council of Teachers of English.