

Portfolio 1.1 Write a reflective paper on your own experiences with reading and writing. When and how did you first learn? How were you taught in school? With what have you struggled? What did you like/dislike about reading and writing when you were an elementary student? What do you do when you come across a word you don't know? Do you read/write for pleasure now as an adult? Why or why not?

My parents have always told me that when I first started talking, it wasn't single words or short phrases. I started off with full sentences. As far as I can remember, that was how it was with reading as well. I can't think of how I learned to read and do not remember struggling through picture books. I am sure that it was largely to do with my parents reading to me constantly as a child, but I always ended up ahead of my classmates when it came to our reading skills.

The only times that I recall struggling with reading was when I tried to read *Tarzan of the Apes* in third grade, *The Hobbit* in fourth grade, and *Anna Karenina* in sixth grade. Each of those books was far beyond my ability in both vocabulary and content; self-selecting texts was not one of my strengths.

I only really remember my literature and reading classes from fifth grade on. From fifth to eighth grade we read novels in small groups (literature circles) and as a whole class (taking turns reading aloud), and we used an anthology style textbook for short stories, informative texts, poetry, etc. I enjoyed reading the novels more than the shorter works, but it frustrated me that I was not supposed to read ahead of my class or small group.

At my school, for fifth through eighth grade, literature and grammar were separated into different class hours, but we had each every day. I'm glad that I had so much time to focus on just reading; however, I think it made the grammar hour harder for me, as I was often bored by the seemingly endless rules of syntax.

As I have continued my education, I've learned that syntax is just as important and stories and that you cannot have one without the other. I still read constantly, whether it is for a class or pleasure. My "To Read" list is neverending and gets longer by the day. There is no joy quite like a used book store.

My goal is to be a secondary teacher, I am glad that Bethany's program is set up in a way that I am an English major with a teaching license. This has allowed me to have a much

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broader base of reading experience and to be an expert in my content area. That way, hopefully, I'll lead others to adore reading and writing as much as I do.