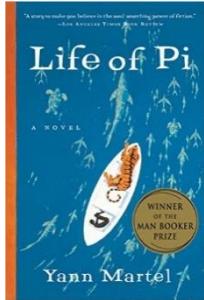


Engaging Saudi Students with Novels & Nonfiction Books
Lily Jaffie-Shupe & Christine Bobal
TESOL 2017 International Convention
March 24, 2017



Reading novels and nonfiction builds:

- Language skills (e.g., understanding of figurative language)
- Academic skills (e.g., managing workload)
- Confidence and pride

Saudi students may have less experience reading books, may resort to machine translation, and can struggle to build the skills necessary for higher education.

Reading program at VTLCI:

100/150: Starter & Level 1 Readers

200/250: Level 2 & Level 3 Readers

300/350: YA books (MS), e.g., *The Breadwinner*, *The Crossing*, *The Circuit*, *Holes*, *The Giver*

400/450: YA books (HS), e.g., *Hunger Games*, *Big Fish*, *Secret Life of Bees*

500/550: Adult books (college), e.g., *Into the Wild*, *The Last Lecture*, *Brave New World*,
Nickel and Dimed

Book selection factors:

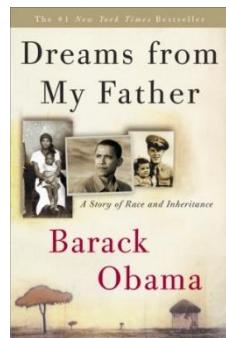
- Lexile: measure of vocabulary and sentence complexity (www.lexile.com)
- Interest to students (previous student reviews)
- Interest to instructors (instructor recommendations)
- Book length

Life of Pi:

- Lots of previewing and introduction
- Quizzes (open book, 2-4 summary/synthesis questions) and discussions
- Students create and exchange discussion guides
- Illustrate similes and metaphors

Dreams from My Father:

- Weekly reading quizzes (closed book, short comprehension questions)
- Weekly class discussion and reading questions
- Weekly blog post (www.pbworks.com)
- Creative in-class assignments



Take-aways:

- Approach books with enthusiasm and encouragement
- Experiment and adapt
- Scaffold reading skills
- Foster student autonomy
- Hold students accountable
- Help students make personal connections

Further reading:

Picken, J. D. (2007). *Literature, metaphor, and the foreign language learner*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.