

ENGAGING SAUDI STUDENTS WITH NOVELS AND NONFICTION BOOKS

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DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

- What is the makeup of your student population?
- Do you use full-length books in your classes? Authentic or adapted/graded?
- What books are appropriate or interesting for your students?
- What are some successes you have experienced when students read books?
- How do you help students remain engaged in longer works?
- How do you maintain a communicative classroom environment while incorporating books?

OVERVIEW

- Background
- Virginia Tech LCI's Model
- Case Study 1: *Life of Pi*
- Case Study 2: *Dreams from My Father*
- Take-Aways

BOOKS BUILD LANGUAGE SKILLS

Reading novels and nonfiction can improve learners'

- vocabulary
- reading comprehension
- reading speed
- overall language proficiency
 - (Abdellah, 2013)
- understanding of figurative language
 - (Picken, 2007)

BOOKS BUILD STUDY SKILLS

- Students learn how to learn
 - Time management
 - Managing large amounts of reading
 - Managing a lot of new vocabulary
 - Tolerating unknown vocabulary and ambiguity (Picken, 2007)
- Discussions in class build students' self awareness of learning styles and study preferences
- Experience builds confidence and pride

SAUDI STUDENTS' NEEDS

Saudi students...

- scored lowest on the TOEFL of all Arab countries (Al Abik, 2014)
- typically have little experience reading books (Al-Nafisah & Al-Shorman, 2011; Abdellah, 2013)
- tend to resort to machine translations (Abdellah, 2013)
- do very little pleasure reading in English (Al-Nujaidi, 2003)
- have difficulty developing reading skills for higher ed (Atari, 2003; Al Abik, 2014)
- can build these critical skills (Abdellah, 2013)

READING PROGRAM AT VTLCI

Full-length books: extensive or intensive?

- Neither

Read challenging, long works in order to:

- Increase reading comprehension
- Develop all language skills
- Practice academic skills and strategies
- Promote efficient reading
 - (Ur, 2007 as cited in Alrasheed, 2014)

READING PROGRAM AT VTLCI

- Majority Saudi population
- 5 levels, 6-9 week terms
- Reading & Writing Class
 - Reading Textbook
 - Writing Textbook
 - Novel/Non-fiction book



READING PROGRAM AT VTLCI

Graded

100/150: Readers (Starter & Level 1)

200/250: Readers (Level 2 & Level 3)

300/350: Young adult book (Middle school level)

The Breadwinner, The Crossing, Holes, The Giver

400/450: Young adult book (High school level)

Hunger Games, Big Fish, Life of Pi, Secret Life of Bees

500/550: Adult book (College freshman level)

Into the Wild, The Last Lecture, Brave New World

Authentic

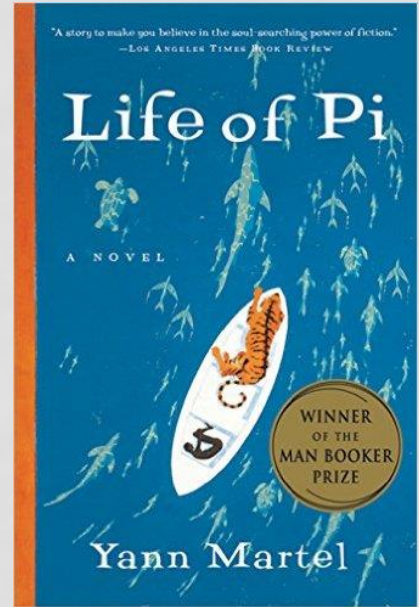
CHOOSING AUTHENTIC BOOKS

Factors considered:

- Book length
- Lexile
 - Measure of vocabulary and sentence complexity
 - www.lexile.com
- Interest to instructors / instructor recommendations
- Interest to students / previous student reviews

CHRISTINE: *LIFE OF PI*

- Written by Yann Martel in 2003
- 336 pages
- Lexile: 830L
- Full of figurative language
- Taught in level 550 (advanced)



THERE'S NO CRYING IN RW CLASS

Introducing and previewing the book:

- Assured students to focus on learning SOMETHING, not EVERYTHING
- Lesson on literary devices
- Previewed front and back covers and *Author's Note*
- Assigned shorter section in Week 1
- Modeled reading the beginning together

NOVEL DAY

- Every Friday
- Entire two-hour class period
- Two components
 - Quiz = “difficult” points
 - Discussion = “easy” points

COMPONENTS: QUIZ

- Individual, written, summative assessment
- 2-4 short answer questions, open book
- Purpose:
 - Hold students accountable for reading
 - Challenge students
 - Guide students toward college-level analytical reading skills
- Skills:
 - Identifying main ideas
 - Summarizing
 - Synthesizing

Name: _____

***Life of Pi* Quiz 2: Ch. 5-25**

Directions: Answer the questions *in your own words* and *in complete sentences*. A short paragraph answer for each would be ideal. You may use the book, but **do not copy!** Use proper grammar, spelling, capitalization, etc.

Grading: 2 questions x 5 points each = 10 points (Reading)

1. How did Pi's father teach him about the danger of wild animals?

2. What is Pi's basic religious philosophy? How did he arrive at his beliefs (or combination thereof)?

COMPONENTS: DISCUSSION

- Group, oral, formative assessment
- Purpose:
 - Engage students (in book and in discussion)
 - Promote communicative, authentic language use
 - Make students “think like a teacher”
 - Encourage students to use one another as resources

DISCUSSION

- Graded for:
 - Active participation
 - Speaking English
 - Staying on-topic
- Students write a discussion guide in groups
 - Follow Group 1 directions
- Then, exchange and complete activities
 - Follow Group 2 directions

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Life of Pi Discussion Ch. 51-57

A. Vocabulary:

GROUP 1: Write 3 new or interesting words (or phrases) you read in this section of the book. Include the word and the page # *ONLY*.

GROUP 2: Find the word in context. From context, determine the part of speech and a definition/explanation. Do **NOT** look at your phones or a dictionary.

Word: _____ p. _____

Word: _____ p. _____

Word: _____ p. _____

A. Vocabulary:

GROUP 1: Write 3 new or interesting words (or phrases) you read in this section of the book. Include the word and the page # *ONLY*.

GROUP 2: Find the word in context. From context, determine the part of speech and a definition/explanation. Do **NOT** look at your phones or a dictionary.

Word: nostril p. 163 the place inside nose.

Word: Raft p. 156 a little boat..

Word: exquisitely p. 143 the degree.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

B. Discussion:

GROUP 1: Write 4 questions that will promote discussion about these chapters. These should *NOT* be Yes/No questions or questions that could be answered with a short phrase. Try to begin with words/phrases like “Explain...”, “Describe...”, “Why do you think...”, “What would you do...” etc.

GROUP 2: Discuss the questions. Do NOT write answers.

1.

2.

3.

4.

B. Discussion:

GROUP 1: Write 4 questions that will promote discussion about these chapters. These should NOT be Yes/No questions or questions that could be answered with a short phrase. Try to begin with words/phrases like "Explain...", "Describe...", "Why do you think...", "What would you do..." etc.

GROUP 2: Discuss the questions. Do NOT write answers.

1. Explain ~~who~~ how PI created a shelter outside the lifeboat?
2. Describe the feeling of the first meeting between PI and the tiger?
3. Describe his feeling of big raining in Ch.54?
4. What are the six plans that PI put to deal with tiger? and which one was the most effective ~~one~~?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

C. Literary devices:

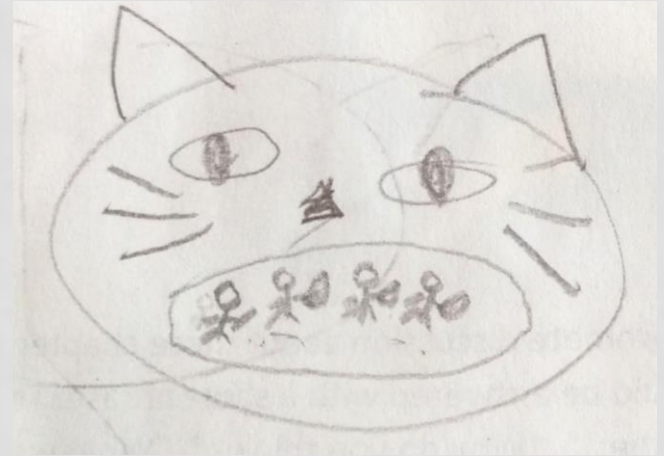
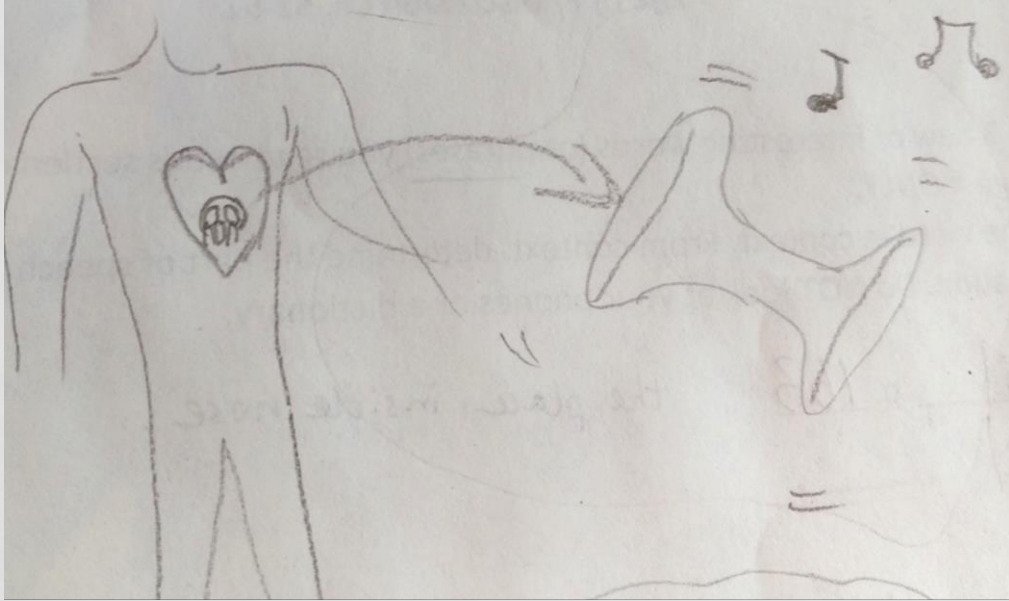
GROUP 1: Find 2 literary devices. Draw the literary device (simile, metaphor, anthropomorphism, personification, etc.) below and give the chapter #.

GROUP 2: Try to find the literary device. Write the correct sentence under the picture.

Literary device 1 (Ch. ____)

Literary device 2 (Ch. ____)

“My heart began to
beat like a merry drum”

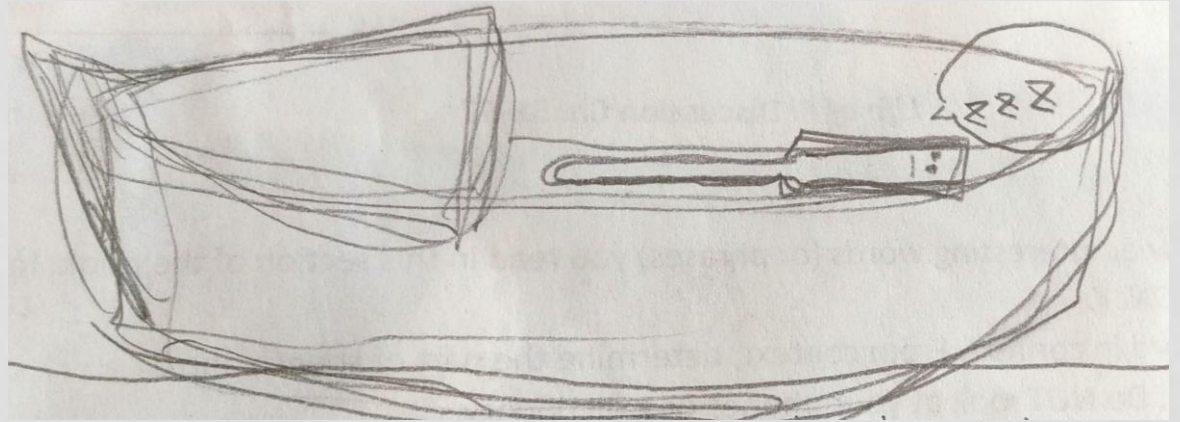


“[Richard Parker's]
teeth – an entire
army battalion in
a mouth”

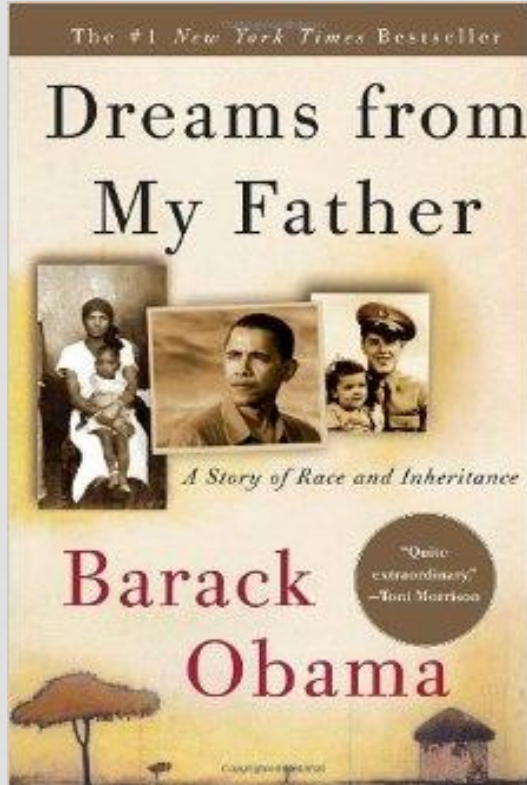


“Atop the head
were small
expressive ears
shaped like
perfect arches.”

“Three oars rested on one side
bench, one rested on the other”



LILY: *DREAMS FROM MY FATHER*



- Written by Barack Obama in 1995
- Major themes: Race & Family
- Difficult vocabulary
- Cultural references
- 464 pages!

COMPONENTS

- One day (two hours) per week devoted to classwork and discussion
- Weekly reading quizzes
- Weekly class discussion and reading questions
- Weekly blog post (www.pbworks.com)
- Creative in-class assignments

WEEK 1 BUY-IN

How can we relate to the major themes?

- Family: Share some of your family history with the class
- Race: Group discussion
 - What is racism? Have you ever experienced it?
 - Is racism a problem in the US? In your country?
 - What are some ways to combat racism?

READING QUIZZES

Novel Quiz 1

Name: _____

Dreams from My Father: Chapters 1-2

Instructions: Answer all of the questions below. You do not need to use complete sentences. Quizzes will not be graded for grammar or spelling.

1. Where was Barack Obama's father from? How did this make him different from other people in Hawaii? (2 pts.)
2. Barack Obama did not know his father growing up. How did he learn more about him?
3. Who is Lolo? How does Obama feel about him? (2 pts.)

CLASSWORK

- Summarize main events of the novel
- Check in on how students are faring
- Break into pairs or small groups to work on harder questions

1. On p. 5, Obama says, “At the time of his death, my father remained a myth to me, both more and less than a man.” What do you think he means by this?
2. Read the story about Obama’s father on p. 6-7. What happened? Do you think this is really true?
3. On p. 8, Gramps says that Obama’s father had a lot of confidence. How does the story about the International Music Festival prove this point?

BLOG POSTS

 Wiki  Pages & Files  Users  Settings


 Search this workspace

VIEW

EDIT

★ FrontPage

last edited by  Prof. Jaffie 4 months, 1 week ago


 Page history


Welcome to Prof. Jaffie's RW 450 class blog!

This is the space we will use to share our ideas on the major themes and topics of our novel, "Dreams from My Father" by Barack Obama. Weekly assignments will be posted below. Every week, your blog post will be due by Friday before class. Comments are encouraged but not required.


Assignment 1 (Due before class 3/25): Go to the tab above that says "pages and files". Open the "Assignment 1" folder and find your name. Open your file and open the edit tab. Choose **ONE** of the following questions to answer. You must write a **minimum of 7 sentences**.

1. In Chapter 1, Obama tells the famous story of his father and the pipe. This is a story that has been repeated many times, and maybe it is not 100% true. Do you have a story like this in your family? Share it with us.
2. On p. 39, Lolo tells Obama. "Your mother has a soft heart. That's a good thing in a woman. But you will be a man someday, and a man needs to have more sense." Do you agree with him that women should be soft while men should be sensible? Explain and give examples.


 Create a page

 Upload files


 Invite more people

 Share this page

 Put this page in a folder

 Add Tags

 Control access to this page

 Copy this page

Navigator

★ Starred Pages and Files

 Assignment 1

 Assignment 2

 Assignment 3

 Assignment 4

 Assignment 5

BLOG POSTS: EXAMPLE

In Chapter 4, Obama gives several examples of how he reacted when other people made racist jokes about him or called him names. Do you think you would behave in the same way as him if you faced a similar situation? Explain.

“Obama experienced many racist incidents growing up. As a teenager understood that happened because of his skin color. I don't blame him or disagree with the way he reacted. Coming from a diplomatic family we lived in many countries studying and interacting with locals. I faced many negative and painful comments only because I was different. I didn't do anything; I knew it wasn't my country nor my people. In contrary, Obama had to live with these discriminations in his country by his people and as a teenager he had to do something. Also, nowadays people are more educated and civilized anyone would make a comment or an action will be considered ignorant and not worth my time or my voice.”

CREATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Write a letter to
a young Obama
explaining the
article he read in
Time magazine

Dear Barry,

I understand that what have you been through today.
and I feel sorry about it. On the other hand, I feel
happy for you. Obviously, you already realize what does the
black skin to a person. But you don't need to be upset
because of the skin color difference. What you saw today
was nothing more than people try to change themselves into
something else to please others. You should be honest and
proud of who you are cause you will never know what you
are capable of in the future.

TAKE-AWAYS

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



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