The Rhetoric of Shared Humanity: Exploring How Our Views of Others and Ourselves Are Shaped in the 21st Century Global Community

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"The United States of America is a nation of Christians and Jews, and Muslims and Buddhists, and Hindus and non-believers. Our story is shaped by every language; it's enriched by every culture. We have people from every corner of the world. We've tasted the bitterness of civil war and segregation, but our history shows us that hatred in the human heart can recede; that the lines between races and tribes fades away. And what's left is a simple truth: *e pluribus unum* –that's what we say in America. Out of many, we are one nation and we are one people. And that truth has, time and again, made our union stronger. It has made our country stronger. It's part of what has made America great…Every human being within these borders is a part of [our] nation's story, and you should embrace that. That's not a source of weakness, that's a source of strength—if you recognize it." –President Barack Obama, *Remarks at the University of Yangon, Rangoon, Burma*[i]

One of my greatest hopes in teaching my students in Sophomore English: World Literature is that students will leave my classroom at the end of the year with a broader worldview; that they will know the stories of those in the world around them, understand them, and maybe even be on the path to understanding their own place within their own story...a journey, which admittedly for most of us takes a lifetime. Charlotte, North Carolina, is a "new gateway" city, a city where rates of immigrant settlement are increasing faster than just about any other place in America at this time[ii]. As such, students in our community are increasingly exposed to diverse populations. Our country's history is one of immigrant stories and as President Obama points out in his speech at the University of Yangon, this is what has "made our country stronger". [iii] Currently however, our country is struggling in this area and so are its schools and its students. Each day, students enter my room with a very narrow view of people and cultures different from their own. Some of my students' ideas are fueled by the rhetoric of media, some are from viewpoints expressed at home, and others are just simply a lack of exposure. Some students don't even really know who they are, which makes the questions of finding out who others are even that much more complicated. Who are we? Who are you? What is culture? How does culture shape us and how do we shape it? How does how we say and interpret things influence our beliefs and our ideas? How do we move forward as a society in improving receptivity towards other peoples and cultures? As a 21st century student, it's not just going to be their ability to manipulate technology or their ability to get in to that "just right" college; what is increasingly important is their ability to live and work and participate as a knowledgeable citizen of a global community.

Background and Rationale

I teach at Providence High School a school in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) System. Close to 2,000 students call Providence High School home. The etho-racial make-up of the Providence is 77.6% White, 8.3% Asian, 7.4% African American, and 4.4% Hispanic. 11.4% of students are eligible for discounted/free lunch. The demographics provide the backdrop for this unit of study. Because of a lack of diversity within our school community, students are not exposed to diverse viewpoints through their environment. However, our community in Charlotte as a whole is diverse and the world in which the students will ultimately live is diverse, so exposing them to and discussing diverse peoples, world issues, and how they fit their ideas and who they are within that world is incredibly valuable—this unit involves a study of rhetoric—essentially, how people convey their ideas. Not only do I want students to come to terms with aspects of the world around them and to combat stereotypes, but I want them to understand the mechanisms others use to convey messages through their writing, through speeches, and through media. Our students are bombarded each and every day with varying ideas—so much so it is a wonder they don't arrive in our classrooms with cultural whiplash. The ever-changing socio-political tides are hard to traverse even for informed adults. How then do we prepare these young adults to be ready to navigate this 21st century world?

Sophomore English: World Literature has been an ever-revolving door of changes over the past several years. I was new to teaching 10th grade World Literature last year, after having taught the 11th grade American Literary cannon for many years prior to joining the faculty at Providence. My focus in college was American Literature and American History, so teaching 11th grade was almost like breathing. My department chair pointed out that I, myself, needed more diversity in what I taught. This got me thinking about how and why sophomore English is often such a challenging experience for the students. It was out of my comfort zone…the pronunciations, the names, the places, the cultural knowledge necessary…it'll make anyone's head swim! And that is just it. Sophomore English is uncomfortable because it challenges students to see the world from others' perspectives, which can be frightening. It challenges stereotypes and beliefs. We hear about multiculturalism all the time—it's a great education "buzz word" but what does it actually look like and how do we get students to internalize ideas without a unit of study turning into an "It's a Small World" exhibit? For instance, before reading *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini[iv], I ask my students who lives in Afghanistan. Invariably the first answer is "terrorists". Why do they think this? Well, in a post 9/11 America, the place where all of our students are growing up, the only information they get about Afghanistan is often what is on the evening news or from other people…yet it's a place where we are currently engaged in military operations. Afghanistan is a place that is unlike the United States, but it is also a place where there are people who are not

abstractions and a vast majority of those people are certainly not terrorists - just like the vast majority of Americans are not terrorists, yet we do have Americans who perpetrate acts of domestic terrorism. The people in Afghanistan have a rich cultural history, they have families and friends and goals and dreams…just like every person in my classroom, but all of that is lost in the deluge of rhetoric. Additionally, when we approach Latin American literature, we discuss the very real issue of immigration in our country. Invariably, students think all immigrants are Mexicans. How do these biases and patently false ideas make their way into a student's mindset? According to *Teaching Tolerance*, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, "a multi-cultural curriculum is essential in a diverse society. Students need to see themselves—and people like them—in the stories they read" in order to "deepen knowledge about world religions, gender issues, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.". [v]That is the key element, the aspects that make us human no matter where we live. How can students recognize a shared humanity with a people that they only know from the news? How can students recognize a shared humanity with a people that is featured in those "save the hungry children in Africa" commercials? How can students recognize a shared humanity with a people who have experienced genocide? Or a people who have had to flee their country in order to even live? Or a people who just want the opportunity to get an education, but simply aren't allowed? In the relative comfort of the United States of America, our students can't recognize that shared humanity until we show them how because they are often burdened by stereotypes. We have to expose our students to many different points of view and show them how to wade through the good, the bad, and the ugly sides of rhetoric so they do not have ideas forced upon them, but instead come to understand how to form ideas for themselves.

The mission in the classroom is complicated with the renewed emphasis on standardized testing due to No Child Left Behind and the newest program from the Department of Education, "Race to the Top". This year, sophomores will be "tested" in English II. As of this moment, we aren't completely sure exactly what is going to be tested, but we are expecting (passages, questions, passages, questions) coupled with a handful of short response items that require students to reach back into texts for support in explaining their responses. There is, as a result of the Common Core, an emphasis on non-fiction text and higher Lexile[vi] texts with the phrase "text complexity" being the mantra of the day. So, we provide exposure to long works and supplemental texts with high Lexile levels. However, keep in mind that the other part of text-complexity is dependent upon the subject matter. There are works with relatively low Lexile levels whose subject matter and themes can only be conquered by more mentally mature students. For instance, *Night* by Elie Wiesel rates a 570L, which would place it at a 3rd grade level, however, a first hand account of the Holocaust and its horrors is most certainly not appropriate for a 3rd grader. Text complexity is this combination of Lexile and appropriateness, which can be challenging to manage. Part of justifying the use of a particular text revolves around how it is going to be used in the classroom. For instance, by doing a rhetorical analysis of *Night* and delving into how Elie Wiesel shares his story

with the reader and why he makes the choices he makes with diction, syntax, and tone in order to achieve his purpose, the memoir becomes much more meaningful than is reflected by that "lowly" 570L—especially when analyzed rhetorically.

The READY Assessment, the new standardized assessment for sophomore English, is supposed to account for 25% of a student's overall average in the course for the year. Any coursework must take into consideration this end of course assessmet. This is a worry for students, especially as this year there will be no re-takes allowed. Honors students especially fret because they are generally more concerned about their GPAs and about what and how they do can have an impact on the college admissions process, especially in a highly competitive environment such as Providence. However, I have been in the classroom long enough to see several systems of testing wax and wane. At the end of the day, if you do your job in the classroom, students who have been active participants in their education will do well on a standardized test. This unit of study supports the fundamentals of the new READY Assessment as we will complete close readings, analyze texts, discuss, and write about our points of view.

I am still learning about teaching Sophomore English. I consider it a personal challenge to continue developing my point of view on this course because it doesn't come as naturally to me as the Junior English curriculum, but that's OK because I am enjoying the diversifying effect of teaching a new curriculum. I'm not perfect and invariably after I teach something I spend what seems like almost as much time thinking, "gee, I wish I had done this here, or used this text, or brought in this clip….etc." But, I ultimately hope to see growth in the maturing of perspectives in my students over the course of the year. For them to become better thinkers, writers, and citizens of the world because they are learning how to take apart their ideas and examine them and let them evolve instead of settling for the easy answers. Ultimately, that is the "take away" from this course…a group of individuals who can question and explore their own beliefs and ideas and understand the humanity they share with the world or as the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization or UNESCO defines in its *Declaration on the Principles of Tolerance*, "respect, acceptance, and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human." Our "harmony in difference." [vii]

In the Classroom

What is Rhetoric?

There is an abundance of definitions for rhetoric. Just Google-it and you'll see. The definition we are going to explore doesn't limit the field of scope to just speech giving or to one particular discipline, such as politics. Ultimately, English is a class about communication and as such, the definition of rhetoric we employ should be inclusive of that goal.

According to Andrea Lunsford, the Louise Hewlett Nixon Professor of English at Stanford University: "Rhetoric is the art, practice, and study of human communication."[viii]

When examining text for rhetorical purposes, we analyze how an author's diction (word choice, literary devices, figurative language, details, imagery), syntax (kinds and types of sentences used, organization of the text, punctuation, sentences arrangement), and tone (the author's attitude toward his/her subject) create meaning and help the author achieve his/her purpose. Ultimately, analysis is about how we discern meaning from communcation. Without meaning, true communication doesn't happen.

Why study Rhetoric?

"In an age of propaganda, the most important thing for the survival of democracy is the existence of communicators who know how to present their message clearly and fairly, coupled with an informed electorate that knows the difference between a fair presentation and a con job." –Pratkanis and Aronson[ix]

For upper level high school students, the "who, what, when, where" of a text are all basic concepts…it's time to move to the how and why an author or speaker conveys his/her message. The ability to understand how messages and ideas are conveyed creates depth in understanding and hopefully allows for broader aspects of thought, thus combating stereotyping and myopic views about the world around us. Additionally, beyond the classroom, students will have to make decisions about their own lives in an increasingly complex world. We must give them the tools with which to think critically and to engage with and truly understand the world around them.

Unit / Course Outline

The idea of studying rhetoric goes hand in hand with the yearlong goals of the course. We seek to understand the world around us better than we did before and to be able to articulate our thoughts and ideas better than we did before. The strategies in the unit can be used with any text. The ultimate goal is to provide students with diverse opportunities to rhetorically explore the world around them.

Lesson Exemplar -Funny in Farsi [x] **Rhetorical Analysis Lesson Plan**

Time:

Approximately four (4) classroom days (90 minute class periods)

Lesson Focus:

Rhetorical Analysis of the text *Funny in Farsi* [xi]in order to understand the author's purpose –conveying a theme of "shared humanity" through humorous vignettes.

Prior Preparation:

Students will have completely read and annotated *Funny in Farsi* [xii]by Firoozeh Dumas. This text contrasts with a previously read text, *The Kite Runner*[xiii], in that it offers a different point of view on the immigrant experience of a Middle Eastern family moving to America. Students should be directed to limit their annotations to exactly ten (10) annotations per chapter. This strategy is meant to help students focus their annotations and not be overwhelmed by them as they have a tendency of marking everything and ultimately their annotations are without much meaning. They should be directed to focus on DICTION, SYNTAX, and TONE (focus tone words: proud, humorous, sarcastic, cynical, gleeful, sentimental, contentment, irritation, anxiety, disdainful) and be given a handout with guidelines of how to annotate for these focused areas.

Materials:

Funny in Farsi [xiv]by Firrozeh Dumas, *Discovering Voice: Voice Lessons for Middle and High School*[xv] by Nancy Dean, TED Talk by Maz Jobrani "Did you hear the one about the Iranian-American?", [xvi]large poster paper, dictionaries, Schoology Online Discussion Forum, PowerPoint or Prezi of Background information about Iran and socio-political issues (include video clips about the Iran Hostage Crisis, etc.)

Day One:

1. Students will view and discuss the multi-media presentation on the background information about Iran, the country that our author, Firoozeh Dumas, left behind to move to the United States of America.

2. Students will participate in a 4-3-2-1 Reading QUIZ. The purpose of the quiz is not to assess whether they remember specific details from each vignette (Dumas' text is arranged in vignettes), but to demonstrate how their act of close reading the text translates into a quality response. It is impossible to complete this task in the time allotted without having read and annotated the text. As the study of this memoir is less formal than some other texts, this assessment strategy allows student choice in how they respond and helps achieve the overall purpose of the author— creating "shared humanity".

You may use your text, but your time is limited to 25 minutes. Answer on your own paper, with well-thought out and supported responses to the following:

4 –<u>sentences of summary</u>. Choose one of the vignettes from the text that stands out to you. Summarize the important aspects of the vignette. Be sure to include the title of the vignette you are summarizing.

3 –<u>sentences in response to the author's overall message of "shared humanity".</u> Write out a thoughtful response as to how Firoozeh Dumas creates a sense of shared humanity amongst her family and her readers.

2 –<u>favorite quotes or important/powerful sentences.</u> Write out your quotes with proper citations. (If it's a huge quote, please use ellipses to shorten it to the parts you find important.) Add two sentences for each quote explaining why you picked each quote and why they matter.

<u>1 –personal connection</u>. Which parts of the reading made you think of something in your life? What caught your eye that you found interesting for some reason? Respond with 3-4 supported sentences about how a particular incident/character/statement relates to you.

3. Small Group Discussion of the text. Students will be given a number randomly assigning them to discussion groups. Using the provided "Reading Group Questions and Topics for Discussion" page 211 from the text, students will discuss numbers: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24

4.Whole Group Discussion of the text. We will focus on questions: 2,10, 22, and 24 as a class. We will also share favorite moments and discuss the book as a whole before moving into analysis tasks.

5. For HOMEWORK: Students will read the interview that begins on page 201 of the text *Funny in Farsi* [xvii]between Khaled Hosseini, author of *The Kite Runner*[xviii], and Firoozeh Dumas. Students will respond through an online discussion facilitated by *Schoology*. Students should post their response and then respond to a classmate's post.

ONLINE DISCUSSION QUESTION: Why is it important for Americans to gain insight into the immigrant journeys of the diverse population that make up our society? Share one insight you hav gained about the diverse immigrant experiences from either *The Kite Runner* [xix]or *Funny in Farsi*[xx].

Day 2:

1. The warm-ups in this sample lesson on rhetorical analysis of text, help students learn how to analyze by providing specific questions to lead them through the process of analysis. Students will complete a DICTION warm-up from Nancy Dean's text *Discovering Voice*[xxi]. The warm-up focuses on a quote from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou and her use of diction. Students are asked to analyze by answering specific guiding questions and to then apply the skill of choosing specific diction for a purpose. Discuss student responses.

2. Text Focus – an excerpt from *Funny in Farsi*[xxii]. Students will read a selected excerpt "The 'F' Word" (copyrighted material from the text *Remix: Reading and Composing Culture*[xxiii]). Students will read this excerpt and annotate. Teacher will model how a student would do a close reading on a smaller section of text for more detail than the first reading that provides a foundation for rhetorical analysis of the selection.

3. Small Group Work: Students will work in small groups to respond to critical analysis questions about the excerpt (copyrighted material from the text *Remix: Reading and Composing Culture*[xxiv]). Each group will discuss and make notes for each question. Groups will then be assigned one of the questions to focus on and will write their group response on a poster-sized sheet. Groups will decide who their one or two spokespeople are and each group will present answers to the class. We will discuss answers as a whole group with teacher input to supplement and offer further explanation as needed.

4. EXIT TICKET: Choose one word from *Funny in Farsi* [xxv]that stands out to you as exemplifying something that is key to the text. Explain why you have chosen the word and how it is important as a representative of the text.

5. For HOMEWORK: Students will read and annotate a related essay, "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" by Gloria Anzaldua that traces the author's "linguistic experience as a Chicana and her resistance to attempts made by others to 'tame' her 'wild tongue'." Students will then respond to a question provided by the text (*Remix: Reading and Composing Culture*[xxvi]) that links the essay "The 'F' Word" with "How to Tame a Wild Tongue". Students will respond in an Online Discussion Forum and we will discuss next class.

Day 3:

1. Students will complete a TONE warm-up from Nancy Dean's text *Discovering Voice*[xxvii]. The warm-up focuses on a quote from Baxter Black's essay "Dog Emotions" from *Cactus Tracks and Cowboy Philosophy* and his use of tone. Students are asked to analyze by answering specific guiding questions and to then apply the skill of choosing specific tone for a purpose. Discuss student responses.

2. Discuss Gloria Anzaldua's essay "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" [xxviii]and how it connects with *Funny in Farsi*[xxix].

3. TONE focus in *Funny in Farsi*[xxx]. How does the author's tone advance her argument about the value of diversity through her text? By utilizing a variety of tones, Firoozeh Dumas recreates the feelings that any person in her situation would feel and thereby is sharing her humanity. The teacher will model the process for the day's activity by focusing on one tone word: INDIGNANT. The teacher will define indignant and then find three (3) examples from the text that supports an indignant tone.

- " 'Is that boy from your country?'… 'No, he's not from my country.' I had no idea where the screamer was from, but I knew he wasn't Iranian…Despite the belief of most Westerners that all Middle Easterners look alike, we can pick each other out of a crowd as easily as my Japanese friends pick out their own from a crowd of Asians. It's like we have a certain radio frequency that only other Iranian radars pick up." (20-21).
- "Overnight, Iranians in America became, to say the least very unpopular. For some reason, many Americans began to think that all Iranians, despite outward appearances to the contrary, could at any given moment get angry and take prisoners. People asked us what we thought about the hostage situation…so often that I started reminding people that they weren't in our garage. My mother solved the problem by claiming to be from Russia…" (39-40).
- "Thinking of all that wasted energy, I wanted to scream and tell my fellow countrymen and countrywomen that a nose by any other name is just a nose. It does not hold the soul, for no matter how big our noses may be, our souls are far, far bigger." (166).

We will discuss how the speaker's indignant feelings at certain points in the text belies the overall humorous tone of the text, thus creating a more human point of view and more authentic reactions to actual situations. Ultimately the diversity of tones explored over the course of the memoir supports the value of diversity through the shared humanity point of view. We will also discuss how the author conveys her indignant tone in each example: diction, syntax, etc. and how these elements create tone.

4. Gallery Crawl Small Group Work: Ten (10) tone words (focus tone words: proud, humorous, sarcastic, cynical, gleeful, sentimental, contentment, irritation, anxiety, disdainful) will be defined and each displayed on different posters hanging around the room. Students will be broken into small co-operative groups of three to four (3-4) students. Each group will start at a particular poster and will have five (5) minutes to find an example to support the tone on their poster. Students will then rotate two more times

for a total of working on three of the ten tone words. As students are working, the teacher will monitor and guide as needed to help students find the best examples for their tone words. After students have rotated three times, students will peruse the other posters, recording two examples on their chart for each tone word posted. Students then partner up and spend the remainder of the class period discussing how the author creates the tone for one of their examples in each category. The goal is for students to recognize what specific choices in diction and syntax lead to the crafting of each tone shift. This level of rhetorical analysis allows students to understand and evaluate how an author creates and conveys her message.

5. For HOMEWORK: Students should complete any work on their tone chart. Additionally, students will "brainstorm" three (3) ideas about writing their own vignette about their life. Their goal is to bring in their ideas—they don't have to match the style of Dumas (i.e.—student ideas don't have to be funny in nature), in writing, their ideas and knowing what tone they would hope to convey. Students will work in small groups to discuss their ideas and choose the topic they would like to write about for their vignette (see Day 4).

Day 4:

1. Students will complete a SYNTAX warm-up from Nancy Dean's text *Discovering Voice*. [xxxi] The warm-up focuses on a quote from S.E.Hinton's novel *The Outsiders* and her use of syntax. Students are asked to analyze by answering specific guiding questions and to then apply the skill of choosing specific syntax for a purpose. Discuss student responses.

2. Small Group Meet-Up. Students will meet-up in student choice small groups and discuss their tone charts round-robin style. Each group will select what they feel is their best explanation of how Dumas' conveys a particular tone and will use group dry-erase boards to write their explanation to share with the class. Discuss.

3. Assessment: Students will complete a short group assignment where they apply their knowledge of diction, syntax, and tone to a new passage. Discuss to provide immediate feedback.

4. TED talk by Maz Jobrani[xxxii]: "Did you hear the one about the Iranian American?" as a means of culminating our discussions. Maz Jobrani is a stand-up comedian who utilizes humor with the purpose of combating stereotypes about Middle Easterners. Students will engage in a discussion of what they believe might be ways society can be more receptive to diversity.

5. Personal Vignette. The goal of this assignment is for students to write a short vignette about a specific moment from their own life or the life of a family member that involves

a family tradition or cultural impact. Students will share their brainstorm in a creativity meeting with three other classmates in order to help narrow down which option may work best in conveying their message.

6. Independent Vignette Work. Students will begin planning their personal vignette. Assignment parameters: 2-3 page narrative; utilization of rhetorical strategies; conveyance of clear tone. Students will write a ½ page reflection upon completion analyzing their own rhetorical choices. The final draft is due in four class periods. We will peer review a draft in two class periods.

7. For HOMEWORK: create a rough draft of Personal Vignette. This assignment is due in two (2) class periods. The final draft is due in four (4) class periods and will be uploaded to turnitin.com.

The final draft will be evaluated on a 1-6 scale and will provide feedback utilizing the methods and numbering system developed by Furman professor, P.L. Thomas and on the blog Conventional Language[xxxiii]. The final draft is considered a formal assessment of application of skill of rhetorical strategies.

Classroom Materials and Strategies

The following are materials and strategies that are helpful and can be implemented during this course of study.

Schoology – Schoology is an online forum much like popular social media site such as Facebook. Teachers can post course updates, assignments, reminders, etc. We frequently use this resource to post Online Discussions. Schoology is free.

TED – TED talks is an online catalogue of video "talks" by people from all walks of life and all backgrounds on a variety of subjects. Their motto is "ideas worth spreading".

Mootup – In its pilot stage, mootup is a site where teachers can set up online debates for students within classes. Highly customizable for number of "rounds" and "cross examination" sessions per debate. Students are randomly assigned to "debate" a classmate.

Literature Circles – Students are assigned jobs to accomplish for an assigned text. Jobs focus students on a particular aspect of the text.

Socratic Seminar – In Socratic Seminar, students write questions for discussion and also respond to given questions. Students "circle up" so everyone can see and hear everyone else. Often, I start with a round-robin question in order to break the ice and give everyone a chance to speak. Students then start with a given question. Students are

not called on by raising their hands, but speak with the ebb and flow of conversation. The goal is for students to learn how to self-direct their discussions. As the question turns to rehash, it is up to a student to recognize that people are starting to repeat ideas and either offer up a question they wrote to the group or move on to another given question. Students are evaluating by the quality of their responses and their preparation.

Daybook – Student journal. Students write responses to warm-up questions, etc. in a composition book that is separate from the class binder.

Philosophical Chairs – In Philosophical Chairs, students are given time to "prep" in class to a series of "debatable" questions that relate to a current topic of study. Students are then asked to choose which side of the room to sit on based on their agreement or disagreement of a particular question. Students then start a back and forth volley offering reasons why their point of view is valid. In general, start with the side with the fewest number of students. Over the course of the "debate", if a student changes his/her mind, he/she can move to the other side. If a student moves, he/she must be the next person to speak from their new "side". Continue the back and forth until rehash becomes apparent. Move on to the next question and repeat.

Anticipation Guide – An opening series of statements and questions that relate to a text or unit of study. The goal is to get students thinking about what they may already know or believe about a subject area.

Annotating / Close Reading – Students mark-up text for crucial ideas, diction, syntax, and tone, plus personal connections. The goal of annotating at this stage is for students to learn how to develop their own system for efficiently gleaning useful information from the text so they are prepared for quizzes, discussion, essays, etc. "How to Do a Close Reading" [xxxiv]by Patricia Kain is a helpful article with this requirement.

Exit Ticket – A quick assessment strategy where students respond to a focused item in a short period of time as a way of "crystallizing" something from class. The teacher can quickly determine what further clarification, if any, may be needed for the next class in order to facilitate student success.

Turnitin.com – Turnitin.com is a website used by students and teachers for the submission of papers. Students upload their work to turnitin.com. Turnitin.com then checks students work for plagiarism and offers grammatical help. There are options for students to complete peer editing and for teachers to electronic feedback through online scoring and through voicenotes.

Major Works for Student Reading

The major works we explore in Sophomore English are from a diverse world cannon spanning Europe, Asia, South America, and Africa.

1. *Night* –Elie Wiesel[xxxv]
   In this short memoir, narrator Eliezer, experiences the harsh realities of life and death as a Jew in the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Buna during WWII. This text connects the past with the present as genocide and other human atrocities continue all over the world even into the 21st century.

2. *The Kite Runner* –Khaled Hosseini[xxxvi]
   In this novel, the author seeks to share with the audience the life of a country and a culture that is often overlooked and misunderstood. Afghanistan is shown as a country of cultural depth and political strife. The novel is a *billdungsroman* and follows the life of protagonist Amir as he battles guilt and seeks redemption. This tale is set against a landscape of takeovers of Afghani government by the Russians and the later, the Taliban. The novel contrasts Amir's life in Afghanistan with his new life in the United States after political unrest forces him and his father to immigrate.

3. *Things Fall Apart* –Chinua Achebe[xxxvii]
   How and why are many countries in Africa in their currents states? Exploring this question needs background knowledge of Colonialism and what happens when cultures collide. This novel, by celebrated African novelist Chinua Achebe focuses on the ramifications of Colonialism and the lasting impacts on the lives of those who refuse to change even as the world around them changes.

4. *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* –Ishmael Beah[xxxviii]
   This memoir of a young man who was forced into being a boy soldier reflects the heartbreaking aspects of some countries in modern day Africa. Ultimately, the narrator emigrates to the United States, but he does so without family as they have all been killed. This true story highlights the best and worst of humanity and the impact of starting a new life in America for a former child soldier.

5. *Funny in Farsi:A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America* –Firoozeh Dumas[xxxix]
   A memoir of vignettes told from the point of view of author Firoozeh Dumas. Her stories reflect her childhood as an immigrant in America and all the hilarity that ensues as a result of cultures colliding. However, as an item of note for students, the gentleman who translated this book into Farsi for publication in Iran has since been arrested and presumed dead. This particular point has

become a further talking point for the author as she continues her goal of promoting diversity and "shared humanity".

6. *Snowflower and the Secret Fan* –Lisa See[xl]
   This work of fiction explores the world of 19th century China and the cultural aspects of growing up as a woman in this culture. As China has emerged as a major actor in 21st century geo-politics and as an economic powerhouse, discussing this country's rich cultural heritage provides a backdrop for discussions about current human rights issues in China and other current event items of note.

Minor Works

Minor works are supplemental in nature and are often thematically tied with the major work. Minor works can and are often "current event" related. For instance, while reading *The Kite Runner*[xli], the students read an October 9, 2012, *NY Times* article entitled "Taliban Gun Down Girl Who Spoke Up for Rights" [xlii]about the shooting of a young Pakistani girl, Malala Yousafzai from the Swat Valley by Taliban for going to school and advocating education rights for girls. This article was coupled with a short, 2009 documentary, *Class Dismissed in Swat Valley* [xliii]by Adam B. Ellick, which profiled Malala and the closing of her school in the Swat Valley of Pakistan. Students then responded in an online discussion forum through *Schoology* to the question "Is education a privilege or a right?" Students were then asked to consider whether or not the United States and other developed nations should be responsible for using their influence to ensure that Malala and others like her are guaranteed the opportunity to receive an education in their country. Many students are surprised to learn that in the 21st century there are places where people are still fighting for what our students view as a fundamental right. It is also interesting to hear their views on how personal responsibility plays a role in education. This also brings into focus an issue we are currently experiencing in the United States with immigrant populations and access to education. We will read the DREAM Act and discuss how immigrant populations are viewed in the United States. We will watch speeches both for and against immigration reform and we discuss what words and images were used to convey the purpose of the author or speaker. We will point out the implications of words such as "illegal" and other commonly held stereotypes about immigrant populations in our area and across the country. We will then examine immigrant stories and find commonalities and differences amongst them and analyze how the words that are used and how the text is constructed impact the audience, etc. As we move forward we will incorporate rhetorical strategies into our own writings as we give a voice to our own stories and as we write arguments for and against issues of public policy that impact our culture.

Minor works may be print or non-print. The Common Core stipulates that sources such as *The New York Times* are written at the 11th-12th grade level and highly encourages the use of high interest reads from high level sources. Minor works can also come from essays, which are easily found in anthologies or online, such as from the Brookings Institution[xliv] or from the Migration Policy Institute[xlv].

Teaching Resources

Argument 2nd ed. by Messenger and Gooch[xlvi]
This is a comprehensive text that covers how to read and write arguments, including rhetorical analysis. There are sample texts with questions for reading and analyis, which makes this an excellent classroom reference source.

Conventional Language – Academic and Scholarly Writing: A Guide for Student Writers by P.L. Thomas, Furman University [xlvii]
Dr. Thomas has created a numbered list of writing issues. This is a great way to notate errors in a student's paper because they can consult the list and read the specific writing violations he/she has perpetrated. Additionally, there are linked exercises to practice correcting those common errors. These strategies help students take responsibility for their writing and create a tailored plan for each student to work on his/her flaws.

Discovering Voice: Voice Lessons for Middle and High School by Nancy Dean[xlviii]
Nancy Dean's text provides exercises for students in order to have short "mini-lesson" style focused activities for rhetorical analysis: diction, syntax, tone, etc.

Everything's an Argument with Readings by Andrea A. Lunsford, John J. Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters[xlix]
This text is an anthology of argumentative essays and writings for reading, discussion, and rhetorical analysis.

"How to Do a Close Reading" by Patricia Kain for the Writing Center at Harvard University[l]
This article specifically guides the reader through a process of how to do a close reading. It includes a sample text that the author walks the reader through on how it should be "closely" read. It is a short two pages and great for a guided discussion in class and teacher modeling of close reading/annotative strategies.

Remix: Reading and Composing Culture by Catherine G. Latterell[li]
This anthology contains essays and articles with discussion and critical analysis questions that follow a thematic focus of culturally relevant texts.

Rhetorical Devices: A Handbook and Activities for Student Writers by Prestwick House, Inc.[lii]

This workbook style text provides succinct activities to help students understand and use a variety of rhetorical strategies.

Teaching Argument Writing by George Hillocks, Jr.[liii]
This is an instructional text that provides guidance for teaching students how to write arguments in a step-by-step format with "student handouts, activities, and models for classroom discussions."

Appendix –Implementing Standards

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, in accordance with guidelines set forth by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction follows the Common Core National Standards. This unit addresses the standards listed below:

1. (SL.1) Initiate and participate effectively in a broad range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners, building on other's ideas and clearly and persuasively expressing their own.
    a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

    b. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.

    c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others in to the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

    d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

2. (L.1) Demonstrate command of the convention of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

3. (L.5) Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

4. (RL.1) Students will cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of text.

5. (RL/RI.2) Students will determine two or more themes or central ideas and discuss how they are developed throughout the text.

6. (RL.3) Analyze how complex characters (e.g. those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

7. (RL.4) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific words choices on meaning and tone (e.g. how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

8. (RL.5) Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g. parallel plots) and manipulate time (e.g. pacing, flashbacks) effect meaning in the text.

9. (RL.6) Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

10. (RI.5) Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of text.

11. (RI.6) Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

12. (RI.7) Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g. a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

13. (RI.8) Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statement and fallacious reasoning.

14. (W.1) Students will write arguments to support claims in analysis of substantive topics and texts, using valid reasoning and sufficient and relevant evidence.
    a. Introduce precise claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while point out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.

c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

d. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

15. (W.2) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas.

16. (W.3) Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

17. (W.4) Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

18. (W.5) Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is more significant for a specific purpose and audience.

19. (W.8) Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

20. (W.9) Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.[liv]

Notes

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[iii] Obama, Barack. "Remarks at the University of Yangon." Keynote speech, First Presidential Visit to Burma from University of Yangon, Rangoon, November 19, 2012.

[iv] Hosseini, Khaled. *The kite runner*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2003.

[v] Southern Poverty Law Center. "Professional Development | Teaching Tolerance." Teaching Tolerance. http://www.tolerance.org/professional-development (accessed November 23, 2012).

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[viii] Lunsford, Andrea A., John J. Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters. *Everything's an argument: with readings*. 4th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007.

[ix] Pratkanis, Anthony, and Elliot Aronson. *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*. New York: Freeman, 1992.

[x] Dumas, Firoozeh. *Funny in Farsi: amemoir of growing up Iranian in America*. New York: Random House Trde Paperbacks, 2004.

[xi] Ibid.

[xii] Ibid.

[xiii] Hosseini, Khaled. *The Kite Runner*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2003.

[xiv] Ibid.

[xv] Dean, Nancy. *Discovering voice: voice lessons for middle and high school*. Gainesville, FL: Maupin House Pub., 2006.

[xvi] Jobrani, Maz. "Maz Jobrani: Did you hear the one about the Iranian-American? | Video on TED.com." TED: Ideas worth spreading. http://www.ted.com/talks/maz_jobrani_make_jokes_not_bombs.html (accessed November 1, 2012).

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[xviii] Hosseini, Khaled. *The Kite Runner*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2003.

[xix] Ibid.

[xx] Dumas, Firoozeh. *Funny in Farsi: amemoir of growing up Iranian in America*. New York: Random House Trde Paperbacks, 2004.

[xxi] Dean, Nancy. *Discovering Voice: Voice Lessons for Middle and High school*. Gainesville, FL: Maupin House Pub., 2006.

[xxii] Dumas, Firoozeh. *Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing up Iranian in America*. New York: Random House Trde Paperbacks, 2004.

[xxiii] Latterell, Catherine G.. *Remix: reading + composing culture*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006.

[xxiv] Ibid.

[xxv] Dumas, Firoozeh. *Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing up Iranian in America*. New York: Random House Trde Paperbacks, 2004.

[xxvi] Latterell, Catherine G.. *Remix: reading + composing culture*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006.

[xxvii] Dean, Nancy. *Discovering Voice: Voice Lessons for Middle and High school*. Gainesville, FL: Maupin House Pub., 2006.

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[xxxi] Dean, Nancy. *Discovering Voice: Voice Lessons for Middle and High school*. Gainesville, FL: Maupin House Pub., 2006.

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[xli] Hosseini, Khaled. *The Kite Runner*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2003.

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[xlv] Sohnen, Eleanor. "Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Home Page." Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Home Page. http://www.migrationpolicy.org/ (accessed December 9, 2012).

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[xlviii] Dean, Nancy. *Discovering voice: voice lessons for middle and high school*. Gainesville, FL: Maupin House Pub., 2006.

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[l] Kain, Patricia. "How to Do a Close Reading." the Writing Center at Harvard University. www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/documents/CloseReading.html (accessed November 8, 2012).

[li] Latterell, Catherine G.. *Remix: reading + composing culture*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006.

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Appendix:

Funny in Farsi **Reading Guide**

Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of growing up Iranian in America by Firoozeh Dumas is told in **vignettes**, or short descriptive stories. Dumas uses humor to "highlight our shared humanity" and to "remind us that our commonalities far outweigh our differences." (The Stanley Foundation).

TEXT FOCUS: The focus of our study of this text is to analyze the author's style and how her style achieves her purpose and contributes meaning to the text.

Annotations Focus: ***STYLISTIC characteristics.***

1. For each vignette you are limited to 10 strong annotative entries that are stylistic in nature (focused on diction, syntax and tone) only. So…choose well and make them count! Please NUMBER your annotations 1-10.

2. Your annotations should include judgments (effects) about marked diction, syntax, and tone and how Dumas' choices create meaning and impact the text.

Diction: this includes – word choice, vivid verbs, slang, idioms, colloquialisms, descriptive adjectives, repeated words, and figures of speech

- Is the language general or specific? Concrete or abstract?
- Are the words monosyllabic or polysyllabic?
- Do the words have interesting connotations?
- Is the diction slang or jargon?
- Are there allusions? Hint: numerous popular culture references in this text.
- Do any words seem especially euphonious or cacophonous?
- Does the passage use dialect? If so, what kind?
- Does the level of diction change in the passage?
- What can the reader infer about the speaker's attitude from the word choice?
- Does the passage use unusual images or patterns of imagery?
- Does the author cerate analogies, like similes or metaphors?
- Does the author use personification or apostrophe, anaphora, etc.?
- Is there deliberate hyperbole or understatement in the passage?
- What part do rhythm and sound devices, such as alliteration or onomatopoeia, play in the passage?
- What purpose do the figures of speech serve, and what effect do they have on the passage?

Syntax: this includes – sentence length, sentence structure, punctuation, and organizational patterns of the text.

Kinds of sentences: declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory.
Types of sentences: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex.
Are the sentences loose or periodic?
Do sentences use antithesis, repetition, parallel structure, juxtaposition, rhetorical questions?
Are sentences telegraphic, medium, or long? What are the effects of such?

Tone: Tone is defined as the writer's or speaker's attitude toward the subject. Understanding tone can be challenging because the reader doesn't have voice inflection to

obscure or to carry meaning. Thus, an appreciation of word choice, details, imagery, syntax all contribute to the understanding of tone. To misinterpret tone is to misinterpret meaning.

Terms to Know:

Antithesis: A contrast used for emphasis.

Cacophonous: Harsh sounds.

Euphonious: Pleasant sounds.

Juxtaposition: Unassociated ideas, words, or phrases are placed next to one another, creating an effect of surprise.

Loose Sentence Structure: Main idea stated at the beginning of the sentence followed by additional information.

EX: He resigned after denouncing his accusers and asserting his own innocence time and time again (the sentence continues after the main idea has been stated).

Parallelism: Structural similarity between sentences or parts of a sentence.

Periodic Sentence Structure: Main idea withheld until the end of the sentence

EX: After denouncing his accusers and asserting his own innocence time and time again, the State Department Official resigned (main idea is suspended until the end).

Sentence Length:

- Telegraphic (Shorter than five words)
- Medium (Approximately eight words in length)
- Long or Involved (thirty words or more)

Style: the color and texture of writing. To evaluate style, a reader examines an author's diction and syntax as well as tone.

Tone Words:

Reader's Perception of Speaker:
humble, shallow, bold, fatuous, insipid, haughty, imperious, proud, austere, audacious, confident, insecure, credulous, innocent, naive, triumphant, vivacious, insolent, sincere, inane, vain, gullible, foolish

Ironic Tones:
playful, witty, humorous, sarcastic, sardonic, caustic, acerbic, flippant, cynical, mocking, biting, smirking, sneering, derisive, icy

Reverence:
Awe, veneration

Love:
affection, cherish, fondness, admiration, tenderness, sentiment, romantic, platonic, adoration, narcissism, passion, lust, rapture, ecstasy, infatuated, enamor, compassion

Joy:
exaltation, zeal, fervor, ardor, elation, jubilant, buoyancy

Happiness:
glad, pleased, merry, glee, delight, cheerful, gay, sanguine, mirth, enjoy, relish, bliss

Calm:
serene, tranquil, placid, content

Hope:
expect, anticipate, trust

Sadness:

somber, solemn, melancholy, sorrow, lament, despair, despondent, regret, dismal, funereal, saturnine, dark, gloomy, dejection, grave, grief, morose, sullen, woe, bleak, remorse, forlorn, disconsolate, distress, agony, anguish, depression, misery, barren, empty, pity

Anger:

Vehement, enraged, rage, outrage, antipathy, irritation, indignant, vexation, incensed, petulant, irascible, riled, bitter, acrimony, irate, fury, wrath, rancor, consternation, hostility, miffed, choleric, frustration, exasperation, aggravation, futility, umbrage, gall,
bristle

Hate: vengeance, detest, abhorrence, animosity, enmity, malice, pique, rancor, aversion, loathing, despise, scorn, contempt, disdain, jealousy, repugnance, repulsion, resentment, spite, disgust

Fear:

timidity, apprehension, anxiety, terror, horror, dismay, agitation, sinister, alarm, startle, uneasy, qualms, angst, trepidation, intimidation, spooky, dread, phobia, appalled

Appendix: Funny in Farsi Tone Chart

TONE WORD	**Text Exemplar #1**	**Text Exemplar #2**	**Choose a text exemplar: Analyze how the author conveys the tone…**
proud			
humorous			
sarcastic			
cynical			
gleeful			
sentimental			
disdainful			
contentment			
irritation			
anxiety			

Appendix: Essay Rubric

6	A	Position effectively and insightfully developed through outstanding critical thinking skill; examples, reasons and evidence are clearly appropriate. Well organized and clearly focused; clearly coherent and ideas flow seamlessly. Displays skillful use of language; vocabulary is accurate and varied; words are appropriately and skillfully chosen. Good sentence structure; demonstrates meaningful and skilled variety of sentence structure. Free of most mistakes in grammar, word usage and mechanics.
5	B	Position is effectively developed through strong critical thinking skill; examples, reasons and evidence are generally appropriate. Well organized and focused; demonstrates coherence and ideas flow well. Displays competent use of language; uses appropriate vocabulary. Good sentence structure; demonstrates variety in sentence structure. Generally free of mistakes in grammar, word usage and mechanics.
4	B	Position on topic demonstrates competent critical thinking skill; example, reasons and evidence are adequate. Generally organized and focused; demonstrates some coherence and attention to the flow of ideas. Displays adequate, but inconsistent, use of language; vocabulary used is generally appropriate. Good sentence structure; demonstrates some variety of sentence structure. Contains some mistakes in grammar, word usage and mechanics.
3	C	Position on topic demonstrates critical thinking skill applied inconsistently; inadequate examples, reasons or evidence. Limited in organization and focus; demonstrates lapses in coherence or flow of ideas. Displays developing use of language; contains indications of weak vocabulary and poor word selection. Some problems with sentence structure; lacks a variety of sentence structures. Contains many mistakes in grammar word usage and mechanics.
2	D	Position on topic is unclear or extremely limited; inappropriate examples or reasons; insufficient evidence. Poorly organized; lacks focus; problems with coherence or flow of ideas. Poor use of language; indicates very limited vocabulary and poor word choice. Frequent problems with sentence structure. Grammar and word usage mistakes are frequent and interfere with meaning; poor mechanics.
1	F	No plausible position is taken on the topic; severely lacking in examples, reasons and/or evidence. Disorganized; little or no focus; incoherent. Contains fundamental vocabulary mistakes. Severely flawed sentence structure. Grammar and word usage are so poor that they interfere with meaning; very poor mechanics (like punctuation).