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Georgia Writers Curriculum Unit Rationale

Dr. Peter Smagorinsky

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This unit is intended to give the students an introduction to writers who are from, and in many cases, write about the state of Georgia. This unit is by no means comprehensive. The authors and selections have been chosen based on the author, the difficulty of the writing, the literary history of the work, and the content of the work. There are three underlying themes behind the works we have chosen: the struggle for civil rights, the landscape of Georgia, and the Southern voice. In this rationale, we will address four topics. First, why a study of Georgia writers is important. Second, we will discuss how this unit will meet the needs of our students. We will then explain what we expect students to learn from the study of this unit. And finally we will discuss why this unit is important, and why we have chosen the works that are included in this instructional unit.

We feel the study of Georgia writers is important to students who live in the state Georgia because it fosters a sense of connection to place. By realizing that Martin Luther King based his ministry out of downtown Atlanta, or Joel Chandler Harris based his Uncle Remus Tales on

stories told to him by former slaves at a train depot in Norcross, the students can attach a personal connection to the works. These works are about the places they live. By understanding the deep literary history of the area, the students will gain a sense of pride for the area in which they live. We feel that if students can have examples of successful people from their area, then they will take the pride they gain from this and work to be successful themselves. Not only do these writers come from areas that the students know and are familiar with, they write about topics that are important to the students. Martin Luther King fought for equality for all people. Pat Conroy's *Water is Wide* is set in a school, and deals with a teacher and students overcoming obstacles. Carson McCullers "Correspondence" deals with the frustration of unrequited friendship. It is our hope that the students will connect to the themes presented in these works. Finally, since this unit is intended for eighth grade Language Arts instruction, and eighth grade Social Studies curriculum is based on Georgia history, this unit will reinforce the information presented in the student's Social Studies class. For example, Sidney Lanier's poetry gives detailed descriptions of the physical landscape of Georgia. Martin Luther King's speech gives information about the history of Georgia, plus instruction of Georgia literature necessarily involves discussion of Georgia history. So this unit is intended to be a cross-disciplinary instruction on the literature of Georgia that will foster a sense of pride and connection to place for the students.

We feel that students need to have a pride in the area in which they live. The South has been a much maligned area. A former slave state, a state which resisted integration, a state in which the Confederate flag still appears on the state flag, Georgia is often viewed in a negative light. We feel that students need to see the positive things that Georgians have done. Students need something, and someone, to be proud of. We feel that by studying writers such as Martin Luther King and Pat Conroy, students will see Georgians who have fought for the equality of all. By studying writers like Lewis Grizzard and Flannery O'Connor, students will see writers who look at aspects of Southern life that are not commonly addressed. We feel that by seeing how Georgians have worked to improve Georgia, the United States, and the world, the students will gain a sense of pride for their state. We hope that students will use this pride to work to improve their area. To this end, we expect this unit to foster good citizenship. We also want to help to

dispel the "Bubba" stereotype (this is taken from a Lewis Grizzard article). Students will be made aware of the diversity of the population in Georgia. We hope that students will recognize the diversity of the region, and learn to respect this diversity. These are all personal needs we feel will genuinely improve the lives of our students. By teaching this unit as cross-disciplinary, we will help the students meet the academic needs prescribed by the state. Furthermore, by focusing on the concept of authorial voice, we hope to make the students more aware and astute readers. By reading works that are in some cases quite difficult for readers of this level, such as "The Marshes of Glynn," "Everyday Use," and "A Good Man is Hard to Find," we expect students to gain experience reading literature, and become better readers in the process.

We expect and hope that students will learn several things from this unit. We will focus on the cross-disciplinary information first. We expect this unit to teach and re-enforce instruction on the role of Georgians in the civil rights effort. We plan to accomplish this through the use of the "I Have A Dream" speech, and writings by Alice Walker. This will complement the instruction of the Social Studies instructor. We will also focus on the role that both King and Pat Conroy played in fighting for civil rights and equality. To this end, students will be expected to produce a paper based on "I Have a Dream" and *The Water is Wide*. We also expect students to come to a greater understanding of the vast natural diversity in the Georgia landscape. Georgia is one of the few states that has mountains, Piedmont, coastal plains, ocean shore lines, and swampland in one state. We want students to recognize that by noticing natural description in Sidney Lanier's poetry, Flannery O'Connor's short stories, Martin Luther King's speech, and Joel Chandler Harris's *Uncle Remus Tales*. Knowledge gained from reading these works will also complement the Social Studies instruction, and help the students come to a greater understanding of the landscape of Georgia. We intend to focus a great deal of the literary focus on the concept of authorial and character voice. We define authorial voice as the way and manner in which the author writes, a manner which may differ from the author's normal writing style, which gives the characters in the story an added depth. Character voice is the manner in which a character speaks which helps the reader to identify key facts about the character (age, education, background, etc.). We expect the students to identify these techniques in the literature they read, and use these

techniques to come to a greater understanding and appreciation of the literature. We expect the students to become familiar with the lives of the Georgia writers we present in class, and realize key events in their lives which helped shape the significance of their writing (the assassination of Martin Luther King or Sidney Lanier contraction of tuberculosis in a Civil War P.O.W. camp are a few examples). We further expect the students to learn, both by the study of the literature and the study of the authors, the adversity that many have faced to improve the lives of Georgians, Southerners, and all people.

In choosing the works for this unit, we are aware that we have omitted certain authors.

Any attempt to study Georgia authors cannot be truly comprehensive, especially a six week unit. We have chosen works that we feel will help us accomplish the goals that we have set out in this unit. We have also chosen works that we feel have literary significance. Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech is perhaps the most recognizable speech of the twentieth century, and discusses issues of civil rights, the history of Georgia and the South, and the Georgia landscape. Furthermore, it is an excellent example of authorial voice. King uses phrases and language devices to help emphasize his point. Alice Walker is an award winning novelist. Her novel *The Color Purple* was adapted into an Oscar award winning movie. The story "Everyday Use" is told from the point of view of a poor Southern mother who is forced to make a choice over who gets priceless family treasures. The story brings up issues of sibling rivalry, a topic that many eighth graders struggle with. Sidney Lanier is one of Georgia's most famous poets. He fought in the Civil War, and wrote many poems about the natural beauty of Georgia. We have chosen two of his most famous poems, "The Marshes of Glynn" and "Song of the Chattahoochee" because of their vivid descriptions of the Georgia landscape. Flannery O'Connor is one of the most prominent women writers of the twentieth century. Her stories, often bizarre in nature, earned her worldwide acclaim. In "A Good Man is Hard to Find", the characters comment on the physical landscape of Georgia. Additionally, the concept of character voice is important in understanding this work. Pat Conroy is a Georgia writer who has produced some of the most successful and widely-read novels of the past two decades, including *The Prince of Tides*, *The Great Santini*, *The Lords of Discipline*, and his most recent work, *Beach Music*. Conroy's *Water*

is Wide, with its vividly varied island characters and wonderful descriptions of the disappearing Southern dialect of Gullah, is a deeply moving book. Carson McCullers wrote about the life of Southerners to great extent. Her works often describe dreary and desolate landscapes, ravaged by poverty. Her most notable works are *Ballad of the Sad Caf*, and *Member of the Wedding*. In "Correspondence", McCullers writes from the perspective of a seventh grade girl who attempts to make a friend through a pen pal program. Aside from the excellent examples of how a change in authorial voice can change the tone of writing, we feel the concept of unrequited friendship will strike a chord with many of our students. Joel Chandler Harris wrote the "Uncle Remus Tales" after talking with a group of former slaves at a Norcross rail depot. We feel these stories carry special significance in the civil rights debate and the concept of authorial voice. Our final author is one whom many considered the voice of Georgia until his death a few years ago. Lewis Grizzard was born in Newnan, attended the University of Georgia, and wrote for the "Atlanta Journal and Constitution." A true Southerner, Grizzard wrote from a unique perspective, and we feel that the students will appreciate seeing an author using his own voice to make his point. His columns are often humorous, and we expect the students will enjoy closing the unit with this author. We realize we have omitted authors such as Margaret Mitchell, Fanny Flagg, Terry Kay, and Augustus Bradstreet. Had we more time and resources, we could include these authors. The decision to include some works over others is never easy, but we feel that the explanation we have presented here explains our choices.

We base our decisions and arguments largely on personal experience. We have learned a large number of these works through the course of our education. We further feel that our decision to do a unit based on Georgia writers is justified by the State's policy of teaching Georgia history in the eighth grade. We welcome comments and suggestions on how we can improve this unit. Our focus is on the best possible education for our students, and any input that helps further that goal will be greatly appreciated. We look forward to teaching this unit on Georgia writers, and we hope that our students enjoy what they learn from it.

## Objectives for "Georgia Writers" Unit

These objectives are adapted from those found in *Fostering the Reader's Response* by Smagorinsky and Gevinson.

1. Students will develop and become conscious of the reading strategy of recognizing authorial voice.
2. Students will acquire, access, and use appropriate background knowledge about Georgia writers, the history of Georgia, and the cultures of Georgia.
3. Students will acquire, access, and use knowledge of the dynamics and conventions of social interaction and human intentionality in understanding the history of Georgia, and Georgia writers.
4. Students will acquire, access, and use knowledge of the literary techniques of authorial and character voice, and the rhetorical strategies behind their use.
5. Students will judge the validity of a literary statement by analyzing the degree to which the concrete evidence of a literary text reveals or generates truth about the reality of life in Georgia.
6. Students will participate actively, thoughtfully, and enthusiastically in small-group work and class discussion related to literary response to Georgia literature.
7. Students will respond regularly to literary experience with Georgia writers in written compositions.
8. Students will respond empathically to literary characters and their experiences as found in Georgia literature.
9. Students will relate the themes of Georgia literature to their own personal experiences.
10. Students will better understand, appreciate, and participate in social interaction within their social groups based on knowledge gained from the study of Georgia literature.
11. Students will gain an awareness of other social groups and their struggle for equality through the reading of Georgia literature.
12. Students will read assigned literature by Georgia authors that is increasingly sophisticated,

challenging, and enriching.

Materials for "Georgia Writers"

"I Have a Dream" Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Everyday Use" Alice Walker

"The Marshes of Glynn"(excerpts) Sidney Lanier

"Song of the Chattahoochee"(excerpts) Sidney Lanier

"A Good Man is Hard to Find" Flannery O'Connor

The Water is Wide Pat Conroy

"Correspondence" Carson McCullers

"Uncle Remus Tales"(excerpts) Joel Chandler Harris

It Wasn't Always Easy, but it Sure was Fun(excerpts) Lewis Grizzard

Additional Materials

"Eyes on the Prize"(excerpts) documentary film

Conrack film starring Jon Voight

Song of the South(excerpts) Disney film

"Closing Video of GPTV broadcast"

Day 1 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will gain basic knowledge about the curriculum unit

Students will work in groups on an introductory activity

Time line

0-5 minutes: Clerical duties (attendance, messages, DOL, etc.)

6-20: teacher will explain the unit on Georgia writers. Using the rationale provided, teacher will inform students of what the unit will entail, authors that will be covered, and expectations

of students. Student Calendar will be distributed at this time.

21-25: teacher will explain small group activity (see handout attached)

26-50: students will work in self selected small groups of three or four students each on introductory activity. Each student will be given a handout to fill out and keep in their folder. Teacher will assign Martin Luther King, Jr's "I Have a Dream" for homework reading.

## Day 2 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will participate in class discussion on "I Have a Dream"

Students will view excerpt from "Eyes on the Prize"

### Time Line

0-5 minutes: Clerical: DOL, etc.

6-10: teacher will ask questions of students to assess completion of reading assignment and basic comprehension of, and responses to the assignment. For example, "What is Martin Luther King's dream? Who does he say this dream will benefit? What do you think about this dream?" Teacher will also provide students with background details of King's life (his ministry was based in Atlanta, etc.) and his struggle for equality and social justice.

11-25: students will discuss the questions "Has King's dream been fulfilled? In what ways has it been fulfilled (if any)? What ways has it not been fulfilled(if any)?"

26-30: students will have the opportunity to ask questions of their own in regards to the speech, state of civil rights today, etc.

30-50: students will watch excerpts from documentary film "Eyes on the Prize" that focus on

King's life and work, including section that contains the "I Have a Dream" speech.

### Day 3 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will discuss impressions of "Eyes on the Prize"

Students will be introduced to Alice Walker and her works.

Time line

0-5 minutes: Clerical: DOL, etc.

6-20: students will finish up discussion of King and "Eyes on the Prize"

21-35: teacher will introduce students to Alice Walker, her life and her works.

36-50: students will begin reading Walker's "Everyday Use," and will finish reading for homework

Explanatory Notes

The teacher will become familiar beforehand, working with the Social Studies teacher as necessary, with the National Civil Rights Act of 1964 as it was the culmination of the civil rights movement. As it will most likely come up in class discussion, the teacher will need to be aware of this legislation and how it sought to make King's dreams of equality a reality.

### Day 4 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will discuss Walker's "Everyday Use"

Teacher will familiarize students with writing assignment

Time line

0-5 minutes: Clerical: DOL, etc.

6-30: students will discuss Walker's "Everyday Use" with special attention to themes of family, generational conflict, and authorial voice. Teacher will explain authorial voice and its significance to Southern, and, more specifically, Georgian writers.

31-45: teacher will introduce and explain letter writing assignment on "Everyday Use"(see handout)

46-50: students will begin work on writing assignment for homework.

### Explanatory Notes

The idea of authorial voice could present some confusion for this age group. See rationale for a more detailed explanation of what is intended.

### Day 5 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will brainstorm for ideas about the letter writing assignment

Students will continue discussion of their responses to "Everyday Use"

### Time line

0-5 minutes: Clerical: DOL, etc.

6-30: students will continue discussion of "Everyday Use." Possible topics for discussion (if needed by the teacher to facilitate or further discussion) include the concept of "every day use," what is used every day in the story, the relationship between Dee and Maggie, and what is the most appropriate or "best" way to use something (i.e.-should the quilts be hanging on the wall of a museum and be revered as art, or should they be used to keep warm?)

31-50: teacher will gauge progress on the letter writing assignment, while the students brainstorm for ideas, if necessary, in self-selected small groups (no larger than 4). Teacher will provide assistance as needed. Homework will be for the students to have a completed

draft of their letter in class on Monday.

## Day 6 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will work in peer editing workshops to improve their writing assignment

Time line

0-50 minutes: students will participate in a peer editing workshop (see handout) Attendance will be taken during class, no DOL will be done today. Teacher will walk around to ensure students stay on task and provide help or assistance as necessary. Students will read excerpts of "Marshes of Glynn" and "Song of the Chattahoochee" for homework.

## Day 7 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will become familiar with the life and works of Sidney Lanier

Students will discuss the descriptions of the Georgian landscape as presented in the

poems.

Time line

0-5 minutes: Clerical: DOL, etc.

6-15: teacher will present biographical information about Sidney Lanier, including his service in the Civil War, imprisonment in a P.O.W. camp, and contraction and eventual death from tuberculosis. Students who live in north Georgia may be interested to learn that he is the namesake of Lake Lanier, the source of drinking water for most of metro Atlanta.

16-30: students will discuss "The Marshes of Glynn". Teacher will show pictures of the coastal marshes (provided the unit is taught in a region of Georgia where students may have had no contact with the marshlands on Georgia's coast). Teacher will guide discussion on the physical description in the poetry to prepare the students for Thursday's homework assignment.

31-50: students will discuss "Song of the Chattahoochee", once again focusing on the physical descriptions. Teachers will provide pictures of the river if students are unfamiliar with the area. Students will read Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find" for homework.

Day 8 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will become familiar with the life and works of Flannery O'Connor

Students will discuss "A Good Man is Hard to Find"

Time line:

0-5 minutes: clerical: DOL, etc.

6-15: teacher will present background information on Flannery O'Connor, including her works (focusing on the recurring themes of religion, the grotesque, and the bizarre in her works), her life, and eventual death from lupus.

16-50: students will discuss plot, themes, characters, etc. in "A Good Man in Hard to Find" as identified by the students. Particular attention will be spent on the ending, which is particularly shocking, as a younger age group may have trouble with it. Other topics of

discussion the teacher may prompt as necessary include discussing a quote by O'Connor "Whenever I am asked why Southern writers particularly have a penchant for writing about freaks, I say it is because we are still able to recognize one. To be able to recognize a freak, you have to have some conception of the whole man, and in the South the general conception of man is still, in the main, theological." This quote could be particularly helpful in getting the students to think about O'Connor's characters, their views of religion, and how religion does (or does not) play a role in their daily lives, etc.

Note- quote and biographical information on O'Connor from Guth and Rico's *Discovering Literature*.

Day 9 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will continue discussion of O'Connor

Students will pay special attention to and think about how King, Walker, Lanier, and

O'Connor include physical descriptions of the state of Georgia in their writing

Students will begin work on a writing assignment about physical description

Time line

0-5 minutes: Clerical: DOL, etc.

6-20: students will finish up discussion of O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find," by wrapping up any unresolved questions from the previous day's discussion and beginning to focus on O'Connor's physical descriptions of the state.

21-40: students will work in self-selected small groups (4 or less). Each group will be assigned one work that they have read up to this point. They will find and write down specific quotes from the authors they have read so far that relate to their description of the state of Georgia.

41-50: groups will share quotes with each other. Teacher will write quotes on the board, students will use these quotes for their homework assignment. Assignment: Based on what we have read so far, what is the physical terrain of Georgia? How have the writers that we have read so far described it? Write a one page short essay in which you compare how

each author has described it so far and how you think it relates to their works over all.

## Day 10 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will share their essays that they wrote for homework

Students will become familiar with the background and writings of Pat Conroy

Time line

0-5 minutes: Clerical: DOL, etc.

6-25: students will share their essays on physical descriptions of the state and how they feel it relates to the over all writing that they have read so far.

26-50: teacher will introduce Conroy and his work. Teacher will pay special attention to Conroy's Southern background (born in Georgia, attended the Citadel, etc.) and the large amount of success he has achieved with his writing. Students will be given any additional class time left over to begin reading Conroy's *The Water is Wide*.

## Day 11 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will discuss the first two chapters of *The Water Is Wide*

Students will make connections to other works that they have read up until this point

Time line:

0-5 minutes: Clerical: DOL, etc.

6-10: teacher will give students a writing prompt: "What does Conroy say about race relations?

How does it relate to King's work to improve social justice? Do you think Conroy will

work hard to improve the lives of the islanders? Why or why not?"

11-25: students will write; this is only to check for reading of the material, it will not be graded.

26-50: discussion of issues raised by first two chapters; HW for tomorrow: read chapter 3.

Day 12 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will discuss chapter 3 of *The Water Is Wide*

Students will discuss any issues, concerns, or themes that they feel to be emerging in the novel

Time line:

0-5 minutes: Clerical: DOL, etc.

6-15: teacher will begin discussion by asking if any unresolved questions or concerns from yesterday's discussion still exist

16-50: discussion of themes of chapter 3. Teacher will guide discussion to cover the island children's use of the Gullah dialect and the state of their education when Conroy arrives.

The discussion can also encompass student reactions to other elements of the book; HW for tomorrow: read chapter 4

## Day 13 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will discuss chapter 4 of *The Water Is Wide*

Students will make connections between what they have read up until this point and Conroy's novel

Time line:

0-5 minutes: clerical: DOL, etc.

6-15 minutes: teacher will begin with any unresolved questions or issues that have occurred to the students during their out of class readings

16-20: teacher will give the students a writing prompt: "What initially happened when Conroy attempted to make friends with the islanders? How did this differ, or how was it similar, from how you thought the islanders would react to him?" Again, the assignment is only to check for reading; no grade, other than a component of class participation, will be given

21-35: students will write on topic presented

36-50: discussion of responses and any other relevant issues raised by the book up until this point

HW: read chapter 5.

## Day 14 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will discuss chapter 5 of *The Water Is Wide*

Students will discuss the book and the themes and issues that it raises

Time line:

0-5 minutes: Clerical: DOL, etc.

6-15: teacher will begin discussion by asking if any lingering questions or issues exist with the students from their readings up until this point

16-50: discussion of any unresolved questions. Following this, discussion of chapter 5 will follow. Major topics of discussion to be introduced by the teacher include: Who were the California boys? What was the islanders opinion of them? Also, How did the islanders treat their pets and other animals? Why do you think this is? What do you think this says about the difficulty of their existence on the island? HW for tomorrow: read chapter 6 of The Water Is Wide.

Day 15 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will discuss chapter 6 of The Water Is Wide

Students will complete a writing prompt to discern whether or not they have been reading and to gauge their comprehension of the book

Time line:

0-5 minutes: clerical: DOL, etc.

6-10: teacher will give a writing prompt: "Conroy comes across many obstacles in his efforts to take the children trick or treating on Halloween. One obstacle is the continual objections of Mrs. Brown. She and Conroy, although they remain polite on the surface, come to be

rather bitter enemies. Write a page in which you discuss your views of Mrs. Brown and why she seems to be so against everything Conroy tries to do."

11-25: students will write responses to the writing prompt.

26-50: class discussion of responses. This will lead into discussion of the chapter as a whole, including the series of events that leads to the children's going trick or treating, Mrs. Brown's treatment of the wetting the mat incident, Conroy's on-going battles with Mrs. Brown, her views of the children, etc. HW: read chapters 7 and 8 over the weekend.

## Day 16 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will discuss the book and major issues raised by it that they see as important

Time line:

0-5 minutes: Clerical: DOL, etc.

6-15: teacher will begin discussion by asking if any questions, concerns, or issues that we have not covered as a class have been raised by their reading so far.

16-50: discussion of chapters 7 and 8. Possible topics for class discussion include: How does the relationship between Conroy and Mrs. Brown deteriorate as time goes on? What problems does this cause Conroy with the powers that be? What do the school administrators think of Conroy's attempts to improve the children of Yamacraw's education? How do you (the students) think the building confrontation between Conroy and the school authorities will end? HW for tomorrow: read chapter 9 of the book.

## Day 17 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will discuss relevant themes and issues of the novel

Students will complete a short writing assignment to demonstrate reading of the material and basic comprehension

Time line:

0-5 minutes: clerical: DOL, etc.

6-10: teacher will give the students a writing prompt: "Conroy discusses the violence that sometimes occurred on Yamacraw in chapter 9. Write a one page response in which you discuss the frequency of violence on the island and why you think it occurred so often."

11-25: students will write response; again, it is to check for out of class reading and basic comprehension and will not be graded but will be a component of their daily class participation grade

26-50: class discussion of their responses, chapter 9, and any other issues related to their reading of the novel up to this point. In regards to chapter 9, other topics for discussion (other than the violence) include Conroy's visitors and the effect they had on the children, how little contact and knowledge of the outside world the children had, etc. HW for

tomorrow: read chapter 10

## Day 18 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will discuss responses to the book

Students will receive instruction for a major writing assignment and begin work on it

Time line:

0-5 minutes: Clerical: DOL, etc.

6-35: class discussion of chapter 10 of the book. Themes for discussion include the children's trip to Washington, D.C., what Conroy had to go through with both parents and the administration to make the trip happen, what the trip must have been like for the children, since they had so little experience with the outside world, etc.

36-50: distribution of handout for writing assignment and explication of it to the students.

Because they may have had little experience with this type of writing before, extra time to answer any questions has been built in here. HW for tomorrow: read chapter 11.

## Day 19 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will discuss the novel and any relevant issues that have been raised by their reading

Time line:

0-5 minutes: Clerical: DOL, etc.

6-10: teacher will begin by asking how the students are coming in their progress with the writing assignment and answering any questions that have come up

11-50: discussion of chapter 11 and any unresolved questions from their reading. As chapter 11 is essentially the novel's climax, discussion should flow pretty easily. If any problems with its flow arise, however, possible points for discussion include: What happened when Conroy tried to plead his case before the school board? What role did Mrs. Brown play in his firing? What did the people of the island feel about Conroy's firing? What could ultimately be said about Conroy's efforts to improve the lives of the children of Yamacraw? Do you think he was successful? Why or why not? To what degree was he successful?, etc. HW for tomorrow: finish the novel by reading through chapter 12.

Day 20 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will discuss the novel and their overall impressions of it

Time line:

0-5 minutes: Clerical: DOL, etc.

6-10: teacher will again ask about the progress of the writing assignment; reminding students that class time will be spent Monday in revising their papers and answering any questions that have come up

11-50: students will discuss the final chapter of the novel and their overall impressions of the work (We have chosen not to include any more in-class writing at this time because the students are working on the out of class assignment at this time.) possible topics for discussion include Conroy's statements in the final chapter about race relations, how the

students feel the issue has changed, or not changed, since Conroy wrote this, did he ultimately improve the lives of the children of Yamacraw?, etc. Because the book is so moving and engaging, we feel discussion will be interesting and engaging on this day.

Day 21 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will peer edit their Water is Wide writing assignment

Time line:

0-50 minutes: students will participate in a peer editing workshop (see handout) Attendance will be taken during class, no DOL will be done today. Teacher will walk around to ensure students stay on task and provide help or assistance as necessary. Students will begin making corrections for homework

## Day 22, "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will begin to watch the film "Conrack"

Time line:

0-5 minutes: Clerical

6-10: teacher will explain the film to students. The film is based on the novel Water is Wide. It stars Jon Voight and was made in the early the 1970's.

11-50: students will watch the film.

## Day 23 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will turn in writing assignment based on Water is Wide

Students will continue watching Water is Wide

Teacher will begin grading papers

Time line:

0-8 minutes: Clerical, including taking up homework assignment

9-50: students will continue watching "Conrack". Teacher will begin grading papers.

Day 24 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will complete the film "Conrack"

Teacher will continue grading papers, if necessary

Teacher will give an introduction to Carson McCullers

Time line

0-5 minutes: Clerical

5-40: students will finish film "Conrack". If students finish film before 35 minutes has expired, teacher will initiate discussion about the student's reaction to the film. A possible topic is how the movie differs from the novel.

41-50: teacher will introduce Carson McCullers to the class, including her life and major works.

Students will read "Correspondence" for homework.

## Day 25 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will discuss the assignment "Correspondence"

Teacher will assign writing assignment\*

Time line:

0-5 minutes: Clerical

6-10: teacher will explain Jigsaw groups (see handout). Teacher will break students up into four groups. The teacher will attempt to divide groups so that students are with those they do not normally work with. Jigsaw is a common activity, if more information is needed, many education books include sections on how to operate Jigsaw.

11-30: students will work in Jigsaw groups on the story "Correspondence".

31-45: students will report to the whole group their findings from the Jigsaw activity. Teacher will ask questions to probe for depth of engagement with writing assignment.

45-50: teacher will explain writing assignment\* (see handout)

Explanatory Note: Teacher will assess fatigue level of students. The students will have just completed a major novel and a major writing assignment. If the teacher feels that the students are fatigued and need a break, then this assignment will not be given.

Additionally, I am indebted to Evan Powell for introducing me to Jigsaw, and to Leigh Hern for showing it to me in classroom application.

## Day 26 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will turn in writing assignment

Teacher will give background on Joel Chandler Harris

Students will begin to read Joel Chandler Harris

Time line:

0-8: Clerical (including taking up writing assignment)

9-20: students will view excerpt from the Disney movie "Song of the South"

21-30: students will discuss movie excerpt. Teacher will introduce the fact that many consider the film to be racist, and solicit student responses to that opinion.

31-50: students will read teacher-selected excerpts from the Uncle Remus Tales: "Uncle Remus Initiates the Little Boy" and "The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story"

Day 27 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will work in small groups on stories by Joel Chandler Harris

Time line:

0-5 minutes: Clerical

6-10: students will break up into self selected small groups (no larger than 3). Teacher will distribute different stories by Joel Chandler Harris to the groups. Each group member will receive a copy of his/her groups story. Stories include "How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox," "Mr. Rabbit Grossly Deceives Mr. Fox," "Mr. Fox Goes A-Hunting, but Mr. Rabbit Bags the Game," "Old Mr. Rabbit, He's a Good Fisherman," "Old Mr. Rabbit, He's a Good Fisherman," "Mr. Rabbit Nibbles Up the Butter," "Mr. Rabbit Finds His Match at Last," "How Mr. Rabbit Saved His Meat," "Mr. Rabbi and Mr. Bear," and "How Mr. Rabbit Lost His Fine Bushy Tail"

10-25: students will read their respective story silently.

26-35: group members will discuss the story. They will be expected to identify basic plot elements, the theme of the story, and their reactions to the story.

36-50: groups will share their stories with each other. Teacher will give all students the story "Brother Rabbit's Riddle" for homework reading.

Note: Process adapted from the earlier Jigsaw method. Ten stories are listed based on the concept that the class will have fewer than 30 students. More stories will be added if necessary.

#### Day 28 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will discuss Joel Chandler Harris story read for homework

Teacher will give background information on Lewis Grizzard

Students will read "You Gotta Draw the Line Somewhere" in class

Time line:

0-5 minutes: Clerical

6-25: students will discuss the story "Brother Rabbit's Riddle." Teacher will wrap up discussion on Joel Chandler Harris.

26-30: teacher will give background information on Lewis Grizzard

31-40: students will read "You Gotta Draw the Line Somewhere"

41-50: students will discuss reaction to the story "You Gotta . . ." Teacher will be prepared to give background on Operation Desert Storm as necessary. Students will read "The Bubba Stereotype" for homework.

#### Day 29 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will discuss "The Bubba Stereotype"

Teacher will explain final activity for "Georgia Writers"

Time line:

0-5 minutes: Clerical

6-15: students will discuss article "The Bubba Stereotype"

16-30: teacher will initiate discussion based on the line "Of all the Southern stereotypes . . . the one that answers to 'Bubba' is probably the least flattering." Teacher will attempt to initiate a conversation on what stereotypes exist of Southerners, why they exist, and how they are erroneous.

31-45: teacher will read "He Up and Died and Broke My Heart". Afterwards, teacher will pass around Mike Lukovich's editorial cartoon drawn shortly after Grizzard's death, where Catfish is running to Grizzard.

46-50: teacher will explain homework assignment. Each student will be expected to bring in something that to him/hr represents Georgia. The student will be expected to tell the class how that item represents Georgia. Teacher will give example to the class at this time.

Day 30 "Georgia Writers"

What will be accomplished today:

Students will share their items with the class

Teacher will wrap up unit on Georgia writers

Time line:

0-5 minutes: Clerical

6-35: students will share items with the class. They will be expected to identify the item, tell where they got the item from, and explain how it represents Georgia. Other students will be given the opportunity to ask relevant questions.

36-40: teacher will show video of Georgia Public Broadcast Service closing tape. This tape is a collection of Georgia scenes set against Ray Charles' "Georgia on My Mind".

41-50: students will discuss video and their impressions of Georgia. Teacher will ask students

how their view of Georgia has changed in the past six weeks. Students will be given the opportunity to ask questions about the unit as a whole at this time. This concludes the unit on Georgia writers.

### Small Group Introductory Activity

This activity is designed so that you will start thinking about what it means to be a Georgian. Some of you might be lifelong Georgians, some others may only have been here for a few weeks, but you are all Georgians. To help you think about this, answer these questions in a group. Understand that there are no right and wrong answers to these questions.

1. When someone talks about New York, what do you think?
2. When someone talks about California, what do you think?
3. When someone talks about Georgia, what do you think?
4. What makes these three places different?
5. Take a few minutes and tell the group where you are from. If it is a place other than Georgia, how is it different from Georgia?

### "Everyday Use" writing assignment

The climactic scene of "Everyday Use" occurs when the mother decides to

give the quilts to Maggie rather than Dee. When Dee protests that Maggie will probably put the quilts to everyday use, the mother agrees. But she thinks about the reason the quilts were made, and stands by her decision. This decision shocks both Maggie and Dee.

Your assignment is to write a letter from the perspective of the mother to either Dee or Maggie. You may choose to whom you write the letter. In this letter, you are to explain why you made the decision to give the quilts to Maggie. Look to the story for reasons to support your decision. Remember that you are writing from the mother's point of view, not your own. Think back to our discussion about authorial voice. Try to use voice in this assignment. You are expected to have a completed draft in class by Monday. On Monday, we will peer edit each others' letters. The final draft of your letter will be due on Wednesday.

You have almost a week to complete this assignment. It will be graded on content, form,(including spelling, grammar, and mechanics), and your attempt to try and use voice in your writing. If you have any questions, see me after class. I look forward to reading what I am sure will be excellent work.

### Peer Editing Workshop

This activity is designed for you to both receive and give feedback on the writing assignment which will be due in a few days. This assignment is important because it will give you a chance to improve both the content and form of the assignment. Since you have been given this opportunity, your paper will be graded with regard to content and form (mechanics, grammar, spelling, etc.). I highly encourage you to use your time wisely, as this is an excellent way to improve your grade.

You will be split up into groups of three. You may choose the members of the group, but I may change the groups if I feel that the group will not work efficiently. Groups of four may be created in order to balance numbers, but no more groups of four will be created than necessary.

You will start by passing your paper to the person on your left. You will read the other person's assignment. This should take about ten minutes. You should read the paper and make any necessary marks. After these ten minutes are up, you should pass your papers to the left again. Read these papers. Once again, make any necessary marks. By this time there should be roughly 20 minutes left in the class. For those in groups of four, it will take longer to read the assignments. It is important that you stay on task in order to finish the assignment before the bell rings.

Take this time and talk about each other's papers. Tell the other people in your group what you liked and what you did not like. Point out any errors. Remember to be supportive of each other. Do this for each person individually. For example, start with one person and discuss his/her paper. Then do the same for the next person, and then finish with the last person. If you finish before the bell rings, then work on the corrections to your paper. Do not start talking about other things, as you may distract others who are still working on their assignment. Make the corrections tonight, and get a good grade.

### The Water Is Wide writing assignment

Pat Conroy's *The Water Is Wide* documents a struggle, the struggle to bring real genuine education to the children of Yamacraw Island. The book is filled with many smaller losses and victories along the way. In Conroy's own way, he is struggling for justice and equality as Martin Luther King, Jr. was in the civil rights movement. Write a three page essay in which you compare the efforts of King and Conroy to bring about social equality and justice, noting specific examples from what you have read and learned about both men. Include examples from King's "I Have a Dream" speech and class information presented about his life and work and examples from Conroy's *The Water Is Wide*. You will be graded on grammar (punctuation, spelling, etc.) and your ability to construct a coherent, logical piece of work that reflects

your knowledge about both men. You will have nearly a week, including time for your peers to evaluate your paper and suggest changes, to complete this assignment. You will be expected to have a rough draft ready for class by Monday to make use of peer editing time. Your final drafts will be due one week from today. As always, I look forward to seeing the excellent work I am sure you will produce.

### Jigsaw Activity

You will be split up into four groups by me. Each group will be asked to look at one of the four letters that makes up the story "Correspondence" and answer the questions below. Everyone must agree on the answers. Use specific quotes to back up your answers . If you disagree, you must work to come to a group consensus. Near the end of class, we will share with the class our findings. All members of the group will be expected to present something to the class. It is important that everyone in the group participate and know the answers the group has agreed upon. Take note of the answers of other groups, as the information we gather will be used in tonight's writing assignment.

1. What is Henky's attitude in this letter? What words do you feel best describe it?
2. How does Henky feel about Manuel?
3. Do you believe Henky's feelings are justified? In other words, is she right for feeling the way she does?
4. How would you respond if you received a letter like this?

### Writing Assignment on "Correspondence"

You are to write a letter from the perspective of Manuel to Henky explaining

why you did not write back. The reasons are up to you, so be creative! Your letter should be at least a page long. Address some of the issues that Henky brings up in her letters, your notes from today's activity should be very helpful in doing this. Remember the discussions we have had about authorial voice. Remember that you are not writing this letter, Manuel is writing this letter. While I do not expect the letter to be in Spanish, I do expect you to try to write it from his perspective. Here are some questions that may help you as you are writing the letter.

Why do some people not write back?

What reasons does Henky think might explain why Manuel does not write back?

How would you respond if you received a letter like the first one? Like the last one?

This assignment is due on Monday. It will be graded for content, but you should still pay attention to spelling, grammar, and mechanics.

### Assessment for Georgia Writers

In this unit you will have 5 graded assignments. In addition, you will be graded on your in-class participation. This sheet will explain to you how each assignment is being graded, and the percentage of the final unit grade it will count. This sheet is tentative. Should any of the assignments change, so will this evaluation.

#### The Water is Wide writing assignment:

You will have a week to complete this writing assignment. During this week, you will only have one additional homework assignment. I expect this assignment to show the best work you can do. This assignment will be graded as follows:

Grammar, Mechanics, and Spelling: 50% of the grade (you will work on this in a peer editing workshop, so this should be easy points).

Content (including adherence to the assigned topic, use of concrete details, and well thought, well supported arguments): 50% of the grade

This assignment will count as 25% of the final unit grade.

Everyday Use writing assignment:

This assignment will be the first writing assignment of the unit. You will have a peer editing workshop to help you with this assignment. This writing will be assessed as follows:

Grammar, Mechanics, and Spelling: 40% of the grade (your peer editing groups should help you with this)

Content (including adherence to the assigned topic, use of concrete details from the story, and well thought-out, well supported arguments): 50% of the grade

Attempt to use voice in the assignment: 10% of the grade (this will be discussed in class, notice the points aren't for using voice well, they are for attempting to use voice)

This assignment will count as 15% of your final unit grade.

Physical landscape assignment:

This assignment is designed to make you look at specific details in four of the works that we will read. You will have one night to complete the assignment, so the grading will not be as strict. However, I still expect thought and effort in the assignment. This assignment will be graded as follows:

Adherence to the assigned topic: 10%

Concrete details, including quotes from works, to support your ideas: 40%

Ideas which are relevant, well supported, and which show thought on the physical landscape of Georgia: 50%

(Note: Because there is no peer editing, and you are given one night to do this

assignment, grammar, mechanics, and spelling will not be counted in the grade. Any errors will be marked, however. They just will not count off the final grade.)

This assignment will consist of 15% of your final unit grade.

"Correspondence" writing assignment:

This should be an easy assignment. We are doing an activity in class which will give you all the information you need to write a well thought-out, thorough assignment.

Paying attention in class on this day will be most helpful. The assignment will be graded as follows:

Adherence to assigned topic: 10%

Response to the concerns raised in Henky's letters: 40% (you and your classmates will come up with these in class. Taking class notes should make this easy).

Well thought and creative reasons for not writing back: 40%

Attempt to write in voice: 10% (once again, making an attempt to write in voice, not write well in voice)

This assignment will count as 15% of the final unit grade.

Item Sharing assignment:

This will be the final assignment for the class. You will be expected to present an item to the class and tell how it represents Georgia. This is a fun assignment, so be creative. Just be sure that the way it relates to Georgia makes sense. Grading for this assignment will be based on actually bringing in an item and presenting it to the class. Explain to us how it relates to Georgia, and you will get full credit! This is an easy grade, do not forget your item.

This assignment will count 10% of the final grade.

Class participation:

As a member of this class, you are expected to contribute to make the class a

better learning environment for all. You are expected to come to class every day having read the appropriate readings, ready to participate in class. This unit contains peer editing workshops and Jigsaw activities, which both require input from you. During the course of this unit, you will be assessed based on your class participation. To do well on this portion of the grade, you are expected to come to class every day and be prepared to discuss the works. I reserve the right to give reading quizzes if I feel that a significant number of you have not read the work. You are also expected to participate in the small group activities which will occur throughout the unit.

Class participation will be evaluated as follows:

Participation in class discussion: 50% (this includes any reading quizzes I may give, as well as the writing prompts that you will do for *The Water is Wide*)

Participation in both peer edits: 30%

Participation in Jigsaw activity: 20%

(Note: If you are not present for these activities, we will have to decide on an appropriate make-up activity. This activity will involve more work than the in-class activity, so I strongly encourage you to be present unless absolutely necessary).

In-class participation will count 20% of your final grade.