

Workshop Session 4

Inquiry: Tomás Rivera and Esmeralda Santiago

Video Program Overview

Part I: Jorge Arredondo and his students begin a unit on Tomás Rivera's *...y no se lo tragó la tierra (...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him)*. They meet a translator of Rivera's work, conduct Internet research based on themes in the novel, and interview members of the school community who emigrated from Mexico. Part II: Bo Wu's students explore Esmeralda Santiago's memoir *When I Was Puerto Rican*. Inspired by Santiago's style and structure, the students begin creating their own memoirs.

Theory Overview

Based on ideas about thinking, teaching, and learning articulated more than a century ago by philosopher John Dewey, **inquiry** is grounded in readers' natural curiosity about the real world and how it works. Beginning with their questions about a problem or subject, inquiry guides readers through a cycle of investigation, discussion, presentation, and reflection. Inquiry shares key characteristics with the other theories detailed in this workshop and puts great importance on initial reactions, intertextual readings, and student's political empowerment. In a sense, the method formalizes in the classroom the process a learner of any age would naturally go through in exploring a complex issue, problem, or question.

Workshop Session (On-Site)

Getting Ready—Part I (15 minutes)

Discuss the questions you noted as you read the novel (or chapters from the novel) and the online materials on Tomás Rivera.

- What sparked your interest?
- What more would you like to know about the author and the literature?
- If you were going to do a research project on this author, what question/topic might you choose to research?

Watch Part I: Tomás Rivera (approximately 30 minutes)

Going Further—Part I (15 minutes)

Discuss as many questions as time permits. You may want to answer more of the questions in your journals at home and share ideas on Channel-Talk.

- What do you think about Part I and the way in which the teacher used the inquiry approach?
- How might you incorporate or adapt the strategies for use in your classroom?
- What types of guests (experts/community members) might you invite to your classroom?
- What are some possible next steps to this lesson?

Getting Ready—Part II (15 minutes)

Discuss the questions you noted as you read the novel (or chapters from the novel) and the online materials on Esmeralda Santiago.

- What sparked your interest?
- What more might you like to know about the author or the literature?
- If you were going to do a research project on this author, what question/topic might you choose to research?

Watch Part II: Esmeralda Santiago (approximately 30 minutes)

Going Further—Part II (15 minutes)

Discuss as many questions as time permits. You may want to answer more of the questions in your journals at home and share ideas on Channel-Talk.

- What do you think about Part II and the way in which the teacher used the inquiry approach?
- How might you incorporate or adapt the strategies for use in your classroom?
- What are some possible next steps to this lesson?

Between Sessions (On Your Own)

Homework Assignment

Go to the Web site at www.learner.org/channel/workshops/hslit and:

- Review Workshop Session 4: read the theory overview, teaching strategies, information about the authors and literature, lesson plans, and resources.
- Prepare for Workshop Session 5: preview the theory overview and the information about the authors and literature (biographies, synopses of works, Q&As, key references, and resources).

In the Readings and the texts from the Reading List following Workshop Session 5:

- Read: Ishmael Reed's "Railroad Bill, A Conjure Man" and the related readings: "The Wonderful Tar Baby Story," "Hungry Spider and the Turtle," and "Brer Rabbit Escapes Again, or Brer Fox Bites Off More Than He Can Chew."
 - What questions arose when you read "Railroad Bill"?
 - What cultural and/or historical references are unfamiliar to you?
 - How did the related texts influence your understanding of "Railroad Bill"?
 - What other books, articles, stories, poems, essays, films, visual artworks, or music might you explore to help you better understand this work?
 - Bring your notes and copies of these works to the next workshop session.
- Read: Graciela Limón's *Erased Faces*; in particular, the following pages that the teacher, Bobbi Ciriza Houtchens, uses in her lesson: pages 35-43, 54-62, 102-112.
- If possible, read: *The Story of Colors (La Historia de los Colores)*, by Subcomandante Marcos.

Ongoing Activities

- In your journal, include thoughts, ideas, or questions you might have as you review the online materials and reflect on the workshop session. Make note of whether your participation in the session influenced any experiences in your classroom.
- Online, click on Reflection/Interactive Forum, an activity that you can use to interpret poems using the pedagogical approaches covered in this workshop. Read one of the two poems featured and respond to the *inquiry* questions. Share your answers on the discussion board.
- Share ideas on Channel-Talkhslit@learner.org.

Workshop Session 4 Reading List

Works marked with * are required texts for this workshop that do not appear within the Readings in this guide. Other works are the sources for excerpted materials in the Readings or are recommended for additional study.

* Rivera, Tomás. *...y no se lo tragó la tierra (...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him)*. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1995. English translation by Evangelina Vigil-Piñón. ISBN 155885083X

* Santiago, Esmeralda. *When I Was Puerto Rican*. New York: Vintage, 1994. ISBN 0679756760