

Workshop 3

Research and Discovery: Shirley Sterling and Laura Tohe

Video Program Overview

At the Skokomish reservation in Washington State, Sally Brownfield and her eighth-grade students study the literature and issues related to the Indian boarding school program through community involvement and self-examination. Brownfield begins with her students' questions and supports the students through a cycle of investigation, discussion, presentation, and reflection as they seek answers. The students use Shirley Sterling's novel *My Name Is Seepeetza* and the poetry of Laura Tohe as lenses through which to explore topics of their choosing. The class visits the Skokomish Tribal Center to interview tribal elders about the impact of the residential boarding program on the community. Author Shirley Sterling visits the class and answers students' questions related to her novel, her life, and their research topics.

Workshop 3 Reading List

(Works marked with an * are sources for materials available online at www.learner.org/channel/workshops/tml; see *Support Materials, Workshop 3 Readings*.)

Sterling, Shirley. *My Name Is Seepeetza*. Toronto, Ont.: Groundwood Books/Douglas and McIntyre, 1992. ISBN 0888991657

*Tohe, Laura. *No Parole Today*. Albuquerque: West End Press, 1999. ISBN 0931122937

Workshop Session (On-Site)

Getting Ready (30 minutes)

- Divide into small groups of three or four people.
- **Share** your K/W/L chart. Notice similarities and differences among your charts.
- **Share** any new questions you have about the literature and Indian boarding schools.
- **Share** your thoughts about the following questions:
 - If you were going to do a research project on Indian boarding schools, what question/topic might you choose?
 - How do Seepeetza's experiences at her home contrast with her experiences at the Indian boarding school?
 - How does Laura Tohe's poem, "The Names," relate to Shirley Sterling's *My Name Is Seepeetza*?

Watch the Workshop Video (approximately 60 minutes)

Going Further (30 minutes)

- **Discuss** as many questions as time permits.
- How did the combination of strategies and activities help the students understand the literature?
- Which activities/strategies are you most interested in trying in your own class? What modifications would you make?
- How did the teacher create a learning environment that promotes collaboration and respect for others' ideas?
- How did the strategies help build students' language arts skills?
- If you were to teach any of the featured literature, what resources, authors, and/or experts from your community might you use to help build students' background knowledge and contextualize the works?
- You may want to continue to explore these questions further in your journal and to share your ideas on Channel-Talk.

Between Sessions (On Your Own)

Homework Assignment

- **Go to the Web site** at www.learner.org/channel/workshops/tml and:
- **Review Workshop 3** (overview, information about the authors and literature, teaching strategies, video summaries, commentary, student work, and resources).
- **Prepare for Workshop 4** (preview the overview and information about the authors and literature).
 - Choose one of the following texts to **read** for the next workshop session:
 - *Behind the Mountains* by Edwidge Danticat
 - *At Her Majesty's Request* by Walter Dean Myers
 - *A Step From Heaven* by An Na
 - *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan
 - *Dragon's Gate* by Laurence Yep
 - **As you read** the literature and the online materials, take note of any questions that arise. What more would you like to know about the author and the literature?
 - What questions do you have about the historical, cultural, or political context of the novel? How might you investigate these questions?
 - **Read** "Where I'm From" by George Ella Lyon (available online; see Support Materials, Workshop 4 Readings). Using the poetic structure of "Where I'm From," **write a poem** from the point of view of the protagonist. Take note of the protagonist's experiences before and after immigrating. What were some of the social and cultural experiences that made it difficult to leave his or her country of origin?
- **Bring your texts, notes, and poem** to the next session.

Workshop 4 Reading List

(Works marked with an * are sources for materials available online at www.learner.org/channel/workshops/tml; see Support Materials, Workshop 4 Readings.)

Danticat, Edwidge. *Behind the Mountains*. New York: Orchard, 2002. ISBN 043937300X

*Lyon, George Ella. "Where I'm From." In *Where I'm From*. Spring, Tex.: Absey and Company, 1999. ISBN 1888842121

Muñoz Ryan, Pam. *Esperanza Rising*. New York: Scholastic, 2000. ISBN 043912042X

Myers, Walter Dean. *At Her Majesty's Request: An African Princess in Victorian England*. New York: Scholastic, 1999. ISBN 0590486691

Na, An. *A Step From Heaven*. Asheville, N.C.: Front Street Books, 2001. ISBN 1886910588

Yep, Laurence. *Dragon's Gate*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993. ISBN 0064404897

Between Sessions (On Your Own), cont'd.

Ongoing Activities

- **In your journal**, include thoughts, ideas, or questions you have as you review the online materials and reflect on the workshop. Note how your participation in the workshop session influenced you as a learner and as a teacher.
- **Online**, click on the Interactive Strategy Workbook. In this activity, you can read two poems and reflect on the teaching strategies featured in this workshop.
- **Share ideas** on Channel-Talk.

Notes
