

Workshop 4

Research and Discovery: Edwidge Danticat, An Na, Laurence Yep, and more

Video Program Overview

In Clayton, Missouri, Kathryn Mitchell Pierce's sixth-grade students read works that explore issues of historical and contemporary immigration. Pierce uses "text sets" of multicultural picture books, poetry, and nonfiction to introduce the students to a wide range of perspectives and to set the stage for their novel study. The students choose, and then discuss in literature groups, novels by An Na, Edwidge Danticat, Walter Dean Myers, Pam Muñoz Ryan, and Laurence Yep. In culminating presentations, they synthesize themes and pose thought-provoking questions that invite others to examine these novels in new ways. This program features author profiles of Laurence Yep and Edwidge Danticat.

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

Workshop Session (On-Site)

Getting Ready (30 minutes)

- Work in pairs or small groups. You may wish to work with those who've read the same novel.
- **Share** your thoughts about the following questions.
 - What challenges did the protagonist in your novel face before and after immigrating?
 - What are the major themes in the novel?
- **Share** your "Where I'm From" poem.
- What questions do you have about the historical, cultural, or political context of the novel? How might you investigate these questions?
- If time permits, **share** your small-group discussions and poem with the entire group.

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 4** (overview, information about the authors and literature, teaching strategies, video summaries, commentary, student work, and resources).
- **Prepare for Workshop 5** (preview the overview and information about the authors and literature).
 - **Read** *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis.
 - **As you read**, consider the following questions:
 - What are the themes in this novel?
 - Author Christopher Paul Curtis notes that *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* is a story about a family, but it is set in a particular historical context. In what ways does Curtis infuse history throughout the novel?
 - What questions do you have about the historical and cultural context of this novel?

Workshop 5 Reading List

Curtis, Christopher Paul. *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*. New York: Delacorte, 1995. ISBN 0385321759

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
