

Workshop 4

Moving Through

Introduction

Being In and Moving Through a text is the point in the envisionment-building process where readers develop a deeper understanding, all the while connecting human possibilities and experiences to make meaning out of the text. Readers in this stance are utilizing ideas, hunches, past experiences in reading, and life experiences to build a hearty envisionment. Readers immerse themselves in the text world, trying on multiple perspectives and posing “what if” questions to examine all aspects of the story. This is the stage in the reading experience when readers actually live in the text, trying on characters and their interactions, totally immersing themselves in the text’s words and images. When readers enter this close transaction with a text, they often have more questions than answers. Not only is this expected in the envisionment-building process, it is celebrated. By capitalizing on the experiences and questions of many, each individual in the classroom community creates a fuller, but somewhat unique, vision of the text than what might have occurred without the company of others in that journey.

Some of the questions that readers consciously and subconsciously ask themselves during this stance might include:

- What isn’t being told? What would I still like to know?
- Who are these characters and are they like anyone I know?
- How do those people feel about their circumstances?
- How do I feel about...?
- What have I experienced in my own life that is similar to this? Different from this?
- What if the character...?
- What if it happened this way?
- What other texts have I read that inform this one and in what ways?
- How have the characters changed over time or across the story?
- What motivated the characters’ behaviors or what led them to their actions?
- How would I describe the relationships of the characters in the text?

- How would someone from a different culture or background interpret the story?
- Do I like these characters? Does what they are doing make sense? Would I have done the same thing in this situation?
- How is the plot developing?
- What are the characters like? Are they acting as I expected?
- How do the characters feel about and relate to each other? How will this affect the story?
- How do I think the piece might end?

It is important to understand that Being In and Moving Through is just one position readers take in relationship to a text. Readers recursively draw upon all four stances in order to build a rich understanding. If teachers are aware of what readers do in this stance and others, it allows them to strategically design instructional activities, so that students become effective readers, intuitively asking these questions on their own.

Key Points

- Readers test their hypotheses by calling upon personal experiences and other literary experiences and by posing questions.
- Readers connect their cultural roots and life experiences to the text in order to develop their envisionments.
- Readers make connections across the text, across the characters, as well as to other readings.
- Readers use past reading experiences to make intertextual connections.
- “What if” questions are posed during this stance.
- Multiple perspectives shared during literary discussions are valued, and they help individuals revise and build their own rich envisionments.
- Questions are paramount to the envisionment-building process and they should be encouraged and celebrated in a classroom. Questions help individual readers develop their interpretations of a text, as well as members of the classroom community.

Learning Objectives

After viewing this program, participants will be able to:

- Understand how a reader's cultural, personal, and literary experiences impact interpretations of text in the envisionment-building process.
- Utilize multiple perspectives in a literary community in order to enrich all members' envisionments.
- Build a literary discussion around the principles of Being In and Moving Through, including the use of multiple perspectives and questions for developing envisionments.

Background Reading

In preparation for this workshop, you may want to read the poem "Lost Sister" by Cathy Song and the short story "All Gone" by Stephen Dixon. Literature selections can be found in *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing*, 5th edition, Edgar V. Roberts and Henry E. Jacobs, Prentice Hall. Copyright 1998. ISBN 0-13-010076-5.

Within the workshop session, you will be reading the poem "Sympathy" by Paul Laurence Dunbar. The poem can also be found in the anthology mentioned above.

Online resources related to the authors and their works can be accessed at the workshop Web site. Go to the *Conversations in Literature* Web site at www.learner.org/envisioningliterature/ and click on "Workshop 4. Moving Through" and "Background Reading."

If you have not already done so, you may also want to read Chapter 2, "Building Envisionments," pages 9-17, in Dr. Judith Langer's *Envisioning Literature*. This excerpt examines the process of envisionment building and defines the stance Being In and Moving Through an Envisionment.

For other resources, look under "Additional Reading" for "Workshop 4. Moving Through" on the *Conversations in Literature* Web site at www.learner.org/envisioningliterature/.

Workshop Session (On-Site)

Getting Ready 30 minutes

Activity and Discussion: Reader's Profile

Create a Reader's Profile, detailing your personal vantage points. This activity will allow you to try on a variety of lenses through which you can approach a piece of literature. Brainstorm information for the following categories to be included in your profile:

- religious beliefs,
- political beliefs,
- cultural background,
- family life,
- significant life experiences, and
- a brief list of significant texts read or types of books read.

Discuss the following questions:

- How does your personal profile impact your interpretations of what you read? Can you think of an example from something you have read?
- How can your background and personal experiences add meaning to a literary discussion? Can you think of an example from something you have read?
- How can your background and personal experiences limit your understanding of a text? Can you give an example?
- What can others add to help stimulate your understanding?

Site Leader: Distribute the **Reader's Profile** activity sheet to assist the participants with this activity.

Watch the Workshop Video..... 60 minutes

Viewing and Discussion

Now you will view the video program "Moving Through," in which panelists begin to develop their envisionments beyond their initial hunches. Here, they pose questions, use the group dialogue to enhance their own understandings, and refine their interpretations of the texts "Lost Sister" by Cathy Song and "All Gone" by Stephen Dixon.

While viewing the program, think about:

- the panel members' personal experiences and backgrounds and how they impact their interpretations of the texts.
- how multiple perspectives offered by group members have helped individuals to build their own envisionments.
- how other literary experiences have informed the panelists' interpretations of these texts.

You may want to write your responses in your *Conversations in Literature* journal.

Site Leader: If you are watching on videocassette, you may pause at the segments indicated below to give participants opportunities to discuss, reflect, and interact with the program. If you are watching a real-time broadcast, have participants consider the questions as they view the program, and discuss them later.

You may select any or all of the questions below to discuss, as time permits and according to the interests of your participants.

Workshop Session, cont'd.

As you view the video program, consider the questions below.

Segment One

[Site Leader: Pause after Patricia Elam comments on the pride in bound feet and before the reading aloud of “Lost Sister” section #2.]

- What do readers do when they are immersed in a text and moving through it?
- What are some of your past reading experiences that help you connect to the poem “Lost Sister?”
- What personal or cultural experiences do you have that inform your understanding of the poem “Lost Sister?”

Segment Two

[Site Leader: Pause just at the end of the “Lost Sister” discussion and before Dr. Langer explains that readers ask questions and make value judgments.]

- How are questions vital to the individual readers and to the group as they move through the text and build rich understandings? How do the questions move along their envisionments?
- What questions do you have about the poem “Lost Sister?”

Segment Three

[Site Leader: Pause just after Stephen Dixon explains that the story is about murder and violence and how that impacted his choice of setting.]

- Could you connect to the characters in the story “All Gone?” Are they like anyone you know?
- Are the characters in “All Gone” likeable? Would you have behaved the same way as Maria did?
- Did Maria mourn in a way that is similar to what you know is true in life or different from what you know? Did she ever accomplish anything?
- What do you think the author Dixon is saying to his audience about life?

Segment Four

[Site Leader: Pause just before the dramatization of “All Gone” begins again with news that the newspapers reported the men who killed Eliot were caught.]

- How does setting impact the story “All Gone?”
- Do you think life in a big city is like this for everyone—all cultures?
- Does this story have any cultural relevance for you?
- How does the lens of your own background and culture impact your reaction to the story “All Gone?”
- How do the multiple perspectives of the panelists in the workshop video add to the individuals’ understanding, as well as your own? What is the value of inviting multiple perspectives in a literary discussion?

Workshop Session, cont'd.

Going Further 30 minutes

Reading and Discussion: “Sympathy”

Read the poem “Sympathy” by Paul Laurence Dunbar, then discuss the poem. Throughout the discussion, make a point to welcome multiple perspectives and questions surrounding the text. Discuss the following questions.

- How have your own cultural and personal roots affected your envisionment?
- How have other poems you have read informed your understanding of this one?
- What is the value of hearing multiple perspectives during a literary discussion?
- How did others’ questions help you build a richer understanding of your own?

Site Leader: You will need a copy of the poem “Sympathy” by Paul Laurence Dunbar. See **Materials Needed** on pp. 7-9 of this guide for bibliographic information.

Between Sessions (On Your Own)

Homework Assignment

Journal

In your workshop journal, respond to the following:

How do multiple perspectives and the posing of questions enhance an envisionment-building classroom?

Reading

In preparation for Workshop 5, you may want to read the play *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare.

- Select a passage from the text that you personally connected to or that made you reflect upon a life experience and rethink your way through it.

Online resources related to the playwright and his works can be accessed at the workshop Web site. Go to the *Conversations in Literature* Web site at www.learner.org/envisioningliterature/ and click on “Workshop 5. Rethinking” and “Background Reading.”

If you have not already done so, you may also consider reading Dr. Judith Langer’s *Envisioning Literature*, Chapter 2, “Building Envisionments,” pages 9-23, which examines the envisionment-building process and defines the stance Stepping Out and Rethinking What One Knows.

For other resources, look under “Additional Reading” for “Workshop 5. Rethinking” on the *Conversations in Literature* Web site at www.learner.org/envisioningliterature/.

Between Sessions, cont'd.

Ongoing Activities

Channel-Talk

Remember to post comments and questions on Channel-TalkLitConversations. Go to www.learner.org/envisioningliterature/ and click on "Channel-Talk."

Extension: Classroom Connection

Activity One: Short Story Reading and Discussion

Read "The Lottery," by Shirley Jackson. "The Lottery" can be found in *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing*, 5th edition, Edgar V. Roberts and Henry E. Jacobs, Prentice Hall. Copyright 1998. ISBN 0-13-010076-5. Online resources and texts can be accessed at the workshop Web site. Go to the *Conversations in Literature* Web site at www.learner.org/envisioningliterature/ and click on "Workshop 4. Moving Through" and "Extension: Classroom Connection."

Using "The Lottery" Discussion Guide activity sheet in this guide, lead students through a discussion of the text. As the discussion facilitator, focus on drawing out multiple perspectives and interpretations. Discuss the different interpretations and possibilities. Invite questions throughout the discussion and use them as a springboard for further discussion.

Discussion Debriefing:

- Discuss how the multiple perspectives add to the conversation, as well as to the ability for each individual to build their own understanding of what they read.
- How have other texts you have read impacted your understanding of this one?
- How did others' questions help you build a richer understanding of your own?

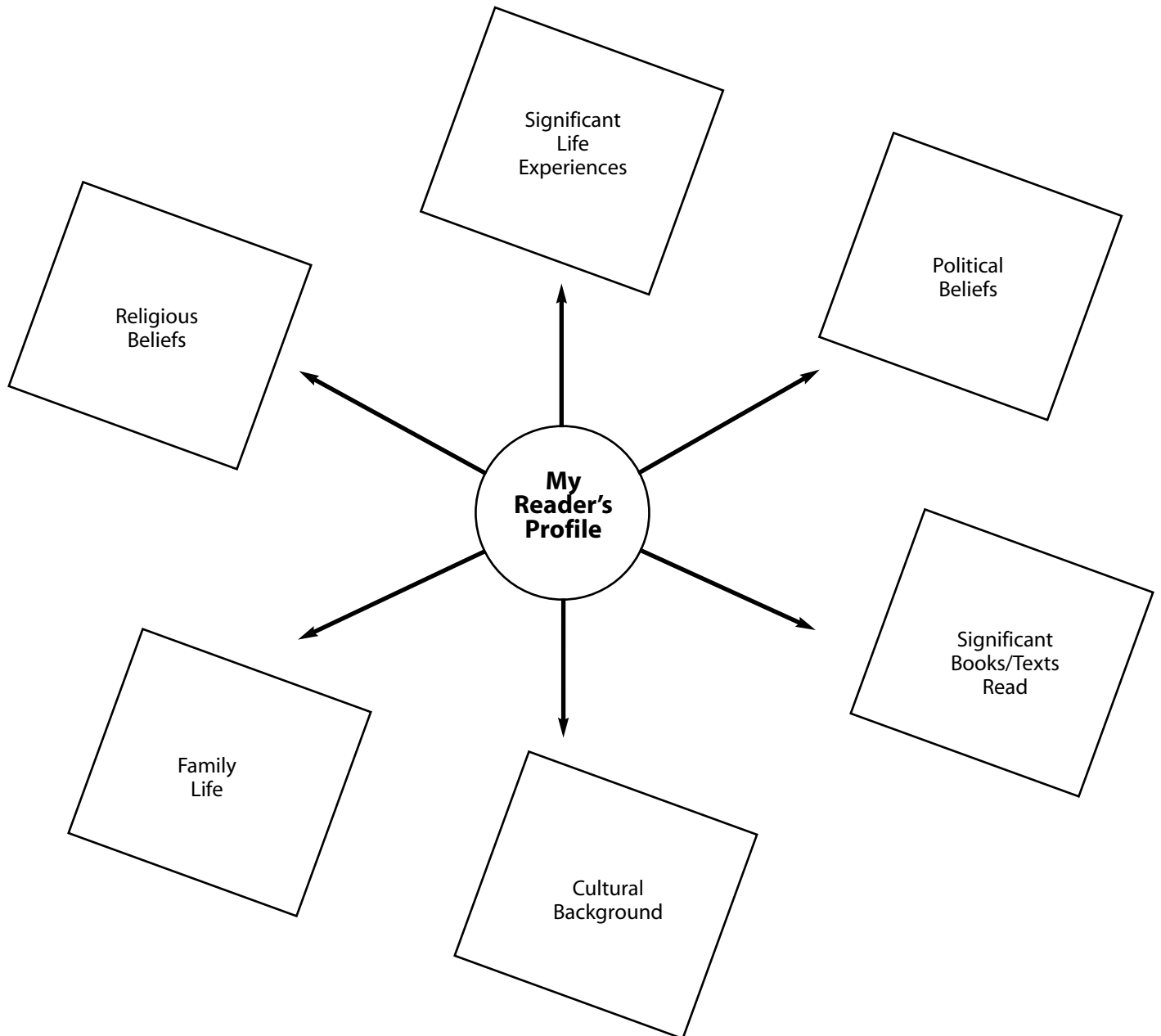
Additional Reading

For other resources, look under "Additional Reading" for "Workshop 4. Moving Through" on the *Conversations in Literature* Web site at www.learner.org/envisioningliterature/.

Activity Sheet: Reader's Profile

Create a Reader's Profile, detailing your personal vantage points. This activity will allow you to try on multiple lenses through which you can approach a piece of literature. Brainstorm information for the following categories to be included in your profile: religious beliefs, political beliefs, cultural background, family life, significant life experiences, and a brief list of significant texts read or types of books read.

You may choose to create a web or use your *Conversations in Literature* journals to create a "free write."



Activity Sheet:

“The Lottery” Discussion Guide

Directions: Use this discussion guide to facilitate thoughtful responses to the story “The Lottery.” Before students read the story, utilize the “accessing the story” questions to assist students with recalling their prior knowledge. Invite multiple interpretations throughout all discussions, giving the students opportunities to explore a variety of perspectives and pose an array of questions.

Accessing the Story

This story by Shirley Jackson takes place in a small rural village. The people are gathered for the drawing of a lottery. Consider what you know about small towns. What are some characteristics of a small town or community? Have you ever been to a small town? What was it like? When you think of a lottery, what do you expect to take place? How would you define a lottery? Have you or do you know someone who has participated in a lottery? What was the outcome?

Making Meaning

Use the following questions to guide students through a post-reading literature discussion. Focus on inviting all students to participate, welcoming a variety of interpretations and perspectives. Utilize student comments to probe at the meaning of the story and to move the conversation along. Encourage students’ questions and celebrate them. Use students’ questions to lead to others, helping students to develop their own unique visions of the text.

1. Why do you think so much time is spent describing the black box?
2. What do you think the purpose of the lottery is in the village? Why do you think people continue to participate in it?
3. Why do you think the lottery is such a long-standing tradition in the village?
4. Does this compare to anything you know in real life? Explain.
5. How do you think the village people feel about the lottery? Explain.
6. What would you have done in Tessie Hutchinson’s situation? Explain.
7. How did you feel about the lottery at the end of the story? What was your reaction?
8. Do you think this sort of lottery could take place in your own community? Why or why not? Are there any events that have occurred in your community that remind you of the events in “The Lottery?”
9. How did your initial understanding of the term “lottery” compare to the lottery in the story? How did your initial understandings help or confuse your interpretation of the story?
10. Do you think this story has a message for readers? Explain your view.
11. How have other classmates’ interpretations of the story impacted your own understanding of it?

Creative Response

Consider how this story would change if it was told from a different point of view. How would Bill Hutchinson or Tessie Hutchinson tell the story? What if the reader knew all of their thoughts? Write a news story about the event of the lottery, focusing on an interview with one of the townspeople. What would they say about the event? An alternative to this activity is to conduct a dramatic interview of some of the townspeople, as in a talk show format.

“The Lottery” Discussion Guide Activity Sheet, cont’d.

Across Texts

Consider using other texts to inform the students’ understanding of this one. Students may point out texts on their own, or the teacher may point out texts students have read or ones they are going to read in the future. You might consider the following:

Novel: *The Giver* by Lois Lowry

Novel: *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Novel: *Animal Farm* by George Orwell

Novel: *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding

Novel: *1984* by George Orwell

Novel: *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury

Short Story: “Charles” by Shirley Jackson

Short Story: “A Jury of Her Peers” by Susan Glaspell

Short Story: “All Summer in a Day” by Ray Bradbury

Short Story: “Harrison Bergeron” by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

Old Testament: Leviticus 16:22, ritual of purification

Current events identified by students and teacher

* Note: Online resources related to the above texts can be accessed at the workshop Web site. Go to the *Conversations in Literature* Web site at www.learner.org/envisioningliterature/ and click on “Workshop 4. Moving Through,” “Extension: Classroom Connection,” and “The Lottery’ Discussion Guide Activity Sheet.”