

Workshop 7: Who Am I in This Story?

Description

In the video for Workshop 7, you will see how teachers help their students find themselves, their friends, and their families in the novels they read. Novelists and students also examine the complex ways in which readers can identify with fictitious characters. After the workshop, you will develop a lesson plan that encourages *your* students to make these connections.

Workshop 7 Timeline

Getting Ready

30 minutes

In pairs or groups of three, share the lesson plan that you created as homework after the previous workshop. Distribute copies to site participants.

Discuss which character from a novel most stands out in your memory as being someone you can completely understand. What draws you to him or her?

Watch the Workshop Video

60 minutes

During the video

First 15-second break. Question on screen: With what fictional character do you most closely identify?

Five-minute break. ✍️ Freewrite about how oral readings in your classes have helped students empathize with characters.

Second 15-second break. Question on screen: How can you help students hear dialogue?

Going Further

30 minutes

Share the experiences you listed in your freewriting during the video. What technique or activities have you used to help students empathize with characters and experience the story? How can you help students empathize with a character from another time or culture?

For Next Time

Homework Assignment

1. Write a lesson plan that encourages students to connect with characters in a novel you teach. Bring copies to distribute at the next workshop.
2. ✎ Freewrite in response to one aspect of the video program that most interested or inspired you.

SUPPLEMENTAL

3. ✎ “Scripting the other”: Write a dialogue between one person (it could be yourself) and another person you have observed but do not know.
4. Rewrite the following Huck Finn excerpt in another point of view.

“I went to the circus and loafed around the back side till the watchman went by, and then dived in under the tent. I had my twenty-dollar gold piece and some other money, but I reckoned I better save it, because there ain’t no telling how soon you are going to need it, away from home and amongst strangers, that way. You can’t be too careful. I ain’t opposed to spending money on circuses, when there ain’t no other way, but there ain’t no use in wasting it on them.” (Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.)
5. Go to the “Teachers and Lesson Plans” section of the *In Search of the Novel* Web site, www.learner.org/channel/workshops/isonovel. Read Dirk Detlefsen’s lesson plan for teaching *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*.

Reading Assignment

1. O’Connor, Flannery. *Mystery and Manners*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1961.
2. Go to the “Who Am I in This Story?” page on the *In Search of the Novel* Web site, www.learner.org/channel/workshops/isonovel. Read the “Participants’ Comments and Observations” section.

