

## WORKSHOP 5

### *Challenging Our Views*

*"I think if you're impregnated with good literature, with good culture, you're much more difficult to manipulate, and you're much more aware of the dangers that powers represent."* Mario Vargas Llosa

#### **Objectives:**

1. Read and discuss the story "*Night Meeting*" by Ray Bradbury and reflect around point of view, dialogue, and understanding.
2. Develop a writing exercise inspired in the story and using two different points of view.
3. Share the pieces as a group.
4. Explore feelings, reactions, and ideas about the self after the activity.

#### **Materials:**

1. 4 audio recorders.
2. 1 video camera
3. Researcher's diary
4. Workshop guide
5. Flip chart paper
6. Notebook/Block per student
7. Pens and pencils per student
8. Markers for flipchart
9. Post-its
10. Cards with drawings.
11. Copies of short story (*House Taken Over*, by Julio Cortázar, 1951)<sup>1</sup>.

**Notes:** This workshop will be done in two hour period.

#### **Workshop Guide:**

##### **Before the workshop:**

- a. Have the benches back to back and the tables close by to reorganize after the introduction activity.
- b. Have pairs already set up. Then two pairs will come together to form a group of four.
- c. Each group has an audio recorder and have the camera set up and ready to record.
- d. Have their blocks, pencils/pens, post-its, and copies of the story.
- e. Have questions and ground rules done in the previous encounter on the walls where everyone can see it.

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<sup>1</sup> You can find a pretty decent translation here: <http://www.bhcc.mass.edu/media/03-documents/House-Taken-Over.pdf>

**Introduction (20 minutes):**

1. Have the pairs already set up. Ask the students to get their block and a pen/pencil. The pairs should be back to back, in such way that they cannot see what the other person is doing.
2. Give to one person of each pair, a card with geometric figures, and the other person, a white card. The person with the drawing must tell their partner what to draw on theirs so it resembles the original as much as possible. The person with the white card must follow verbal instructions and draw in the card what they understand. **(10 minutes)**.
3. Once the 10 minutes are up, they will compare their cards.
4. Ask them to discuss in groups of four, the following questions (**in the flipchart**):
  - a. What was the most difficult thing for those who had to give oral instructions?
  - b. What was the most difficult thing for those who had to draw?
  - c. How were you feeling throughout those ten minutes? Did your emotions changed as time went by? Explain.
  - d. What would have made it easier? Explain.
  - e. How could you relate this exercise to our daily lives? Ourselves? The exercise of writing?

**Reading the story (20 minutes):**

1. Explain you will be reading the story *Night Meeting* by Ray Bradbury. Explain who Ray Bradbury was and the book where the short story is from (*The Martian Chronicles*).
2. Before beginning to read, ask students to think about the characters' beliefs and language, and if there are similar challenges they face today when communicating.
3. Read the story out loud (*They have asked me to do so, seem to enjoy it more. Sometimes they volunteer to continue reading and we take turns. Individual reading has not proven very effective or engaging for the workshops*).
4. Once done, have the students discuss their thoughts on the story in groups of four. Everyone in the group must participate with a thought, a feeling, or a reflection on the initial task.

**Writing exercise: (60 minutes)**

1. Tell the students they will write about a situation that is unfamiliar or uncomfortable for them, difficult to understand, just like the characters in the story we read. The question leading this exercise will be: ***Is there such thing as right and wrong?***

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2. Ask the students to think about characteristics, personality traits or situations they find challenging to cope with. Make a list on one of the flipcharts.
3. Discuss a few from the list. Ask them:
  - a. Why are they difficult for you to understand/cope with?
  - b. Have you ever faced a situation where you have to deal with it? What happened? How did it turn out?
  - c. Have you seen yourself in a situation where YOU are the one who is doing that thing that annoys you so much?
4. Ask them to pick one from the list. Not necessarily the one they mentioned. Ask them to write it in their blocks and brainstorm about situations where that trait could show. Some questions to help with the brainstorm could be: *What happens? Why? What caused it? How did people react to it? How did they feel? What can explain it?*
5. Once they have a list of ideas, they will create a character that has/acts that trait they chose. What is the story behind this character? What does he enjoy? What is he/she curious about? What are his/her hopes and fears? Why is he/she special? What happened to him/her that made him/her act in this way? *"The key to creating great characters is to treat them like real people with real-life stories"* (Langston-George, 2016).
6. Now that you have your character, create a short story for your character, from a **first person point of view**, narrating the situation each chose to write about where their character is involved.
  - a. Introduce your character.
  - b. Expose the situation he was in and what happened: reactions of others (like you would react to it), emotions your character felt, thoughts others and the character had.
  - c. A solution to the situation: what happened after? How can you make your character likeable?
  - d. Include dialogue if you feel up to it. Use the story *Night Meeting* as a model.
7. Ask a few volunteers to share their story with the group.

**Closing:** Ask them to write a reflection or a thought on today's workshop that relates to themselves, and to the title of the workshop: *Challenging our views*.

#### **Reference:**

Langston-George, R. (2016) *Telling Tales: Writing Captivating Short Stories*. Minnesota: Capton Press.