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INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Shatter with Words: Langston Hughes

Ages 9-14

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Synopsis: Transported accidentally back in time to a college campus in the South in 1931, Kenneth and Aleesa meet the young Langston Hughes on his poetry-reading tour and confront racism and threats to Hughes first-hand. What do they discover about the real power behind his words?

Strategy: Ask students to name movies or video games or TV shows in which they saw a character get very angry. List these on the board.

Ask, "What were some of the things the character did to show his/her anger? (ex: hit, yell, drive fast, etc. Keep it PG-rated!)"

Then say, "Think of a song, or book, or poem that makes you or someone you know feel better when he or she is angry. Music and words have the power to make us feel better. In twos and threes, list some of the songs or books or poems."

Have students individually pretend they can go back in time and help the character they to change what happened. What would they say to or do for that person?

Say, "Langston Hughes took his sadness and anger and wrote about them in poetry, and in doing that, he helped many others feel optimistic and hopeful, knowing they weren't alone."

Have students write about a time when they or someone they know handled anger in a positive way.

Recommendations: Multicultural Review, December 1998, Editor's Shelf. Endorsed by the National Urban League. Recommended by Shenandoah Valley VA Youth Librarians. Recommended List, Institute of Character Development, Drake University. In legal and social compliance with the State of CA Dept of Education. Recommended by the University of Kansas and the Langston Hughes Society.