

## Fostering French Literacy Workshop

### I- Selection of books :

- 1- Who selects the books? I do.
- 2- Criteria : -Must be contemporary books. (no classical, high school books!)  
Themes : deal with current pb in France, with events that have been on the front page : immigration, social riots and unrest, Francophonie
  - A few books that won a literary prize like the Prix Goncourt
  - Books that make the reader travel. Therefore they provide a good opportunity to learn about geography (map of Africa and Mali, Lorraine...)
  - Well written books, linguistic innovations , a prose w/ a "personal music" , a rhythm
  - Books that teach the reader something, that make you feel good because you've learnt sth
  - Books written by Francophone writers, by foreigners who have chosen to write in French : Andrei Makine, Shan Sa...
- 3- The cercle de Lecture members order the books on the Internet (Amazon .com). Some of them borrow my copy.

### Preparation for the discussion :

- 1- I provide information about the writer. Before the discussion I email the members a brief note about the writer, and a summary of the book so they know where and when the story is set.
- 2- During the discussion I show pictures of the author and I lend the video of interviews I might have. I use TV5 literary programs. I tape : *Bateau Livre* , *Culture et dependances*, etc.. So the participants can "see the face"and hear the voice of the writer whose book they are discussing..."I also lend them the video of the movies that were made based on the books we discussed : "Le Gone du Chaaba, Stupeur et Tremblements".
- 3- I am the leader of the discussion and yes, I do some background preparation.

### Conduct of the Discussion :

- We meet once a month.
- We do 11 books a year . There's no meeting in December. But we do have lunch together in a local restaurant and we talk freely about literature in French
- We meet in a cafe.
  - Some participants come w/ a list of words for me to translate
  - I am the leader. So I ask a few questions which will get the discussion started. Some of them like to talk so I just let them express their opinions about the book. Others like to listen to what the others have to say.

This a FREE activity for AF members

***What do I hope to accomplish?***

- Being a teacher, I obviously have pedagogical or educational objectives
- I hope I'll make them sensitive to the music of the language, I would like them to be able to "savor" or to appreciate the beauty of a sentence, make them enjoy the style of a writer
- I hope the story will give them pleasure, but also will make them think, will make them want to discuss ideas.
- I hope the book will teach them something, or nourish them.

Bernadette Theisen, President emeritus of AF of SVV, Californie and leader of the Cercle de Lecture