Book: In Nueva York

Reviewed by: Estela Yap

Level of Difficulty: Difficult

My thoughts about the book and its suitability for my group:

The book is a compilation of short stories, but the short stories are loosely connected. Some of the characters have recurring interactions with each other within the different stories. In fact, the students were eager to see what would happen to these characters. It can be compared to a mini-series on TV. Although the stories are about the struggles of Puerto Rican immigrants in New York City in the 70s, the themes are universal and relatable to any struggling immigrant trying to make it here.

Students’ reaction to the book:

They enjoyed it! We talked about how some of the short stories could be made into a movie. They even loved learning some Spanish words.

Tips for other tutors who may want to use this book:

I printed out some interesting facts about New York City and we read this in class on our first day. Also talked about Puerto Rico a bit. I printed a map of Manhattan, and pointed out where the Puerto Rican neighborhood was. There are lots of Spanish words, some expletives. I got help from a student in the computer lab with the meanings of these words or expressions. In the beginning, the students found it difficult to follow the dialogue because they are not grammatically correct. I explained to them that the author was just being true to characters of the stories. They were able to adjust after one story.