



From Theory to Practice:  
Establishing the  
Classroom as the Setting  
for Race Talk through  
the Intentional Analysis  
and Discussion of Poems  
by Authors of Color

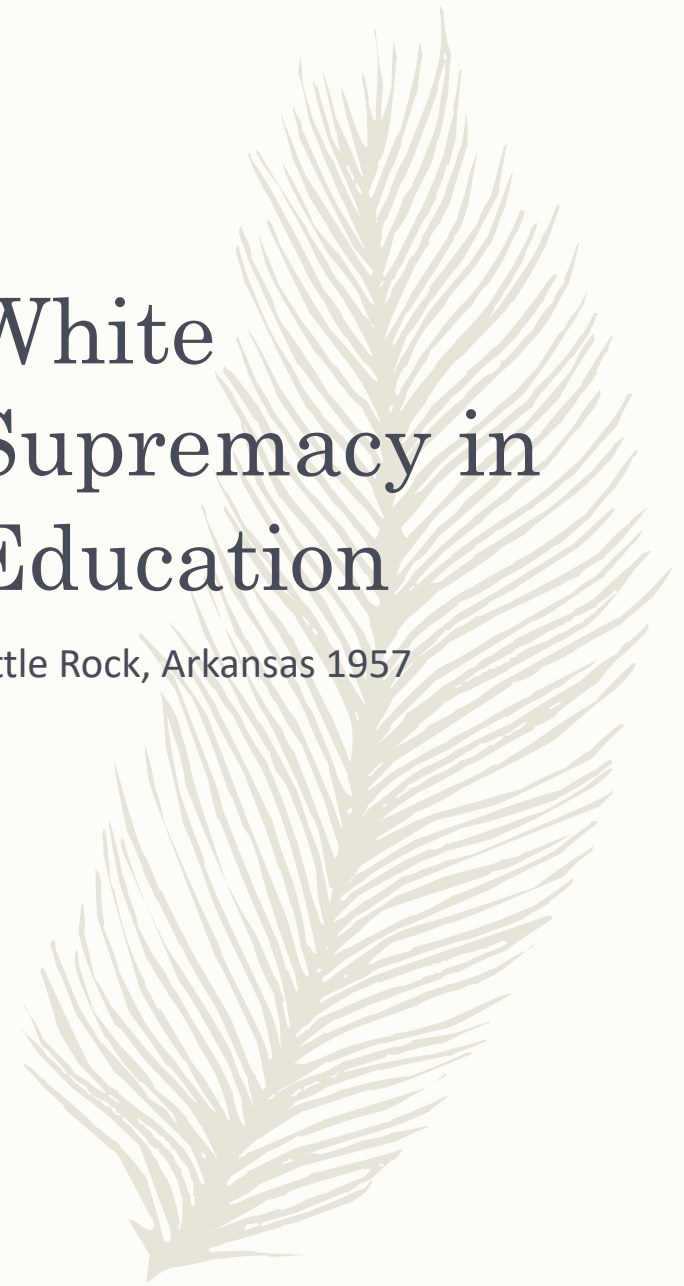
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Cree Taylor, MS – Literature &  
Writing



# White Supremacy in Education

Little Rock, Arkansas 1957





# Integration of Public Schools

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- Closing all-Black schools;
- Firing Black teachers;
- Bussing Black students to formerly all-White schools;
- White flight;
- Private schools surge;
- Decreased funding to low-income schools;
- **Students of Color forced to accept and adapt to an educational system that favored Whites over all other racial groups (hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, p. 37)**

The Canon :traditional collection of writings, against which other writings are evaluated.

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by Harper Lee (shelved 31 times as *literary-canon*)

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**The Great Gatsby (Paperback)**


by F. Scott Fitzgerald (shelved 30 times as *literary-canon*)

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**Pride and Prejudice (Paperback)**

by Jane Austen (shelved 29 times as *literary-canon*)






avg rating 4.26 — 2,797,119 ratings — published 1813

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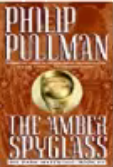




★★★★★

LISTS TAGGED "LITERARY CANON"



**Books You Should Read Before You Read Another White Dude**

354 books — 28 voters



**A Premature Attempt at the 21st Century Canon**

100 books — 15 voters

[More lists...](#)



# The Role of Teachers and Educators

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When teachers refuse to acknowledge or discuss issues of race with their students “they become part of the race talk problem...Instead of teaching children how to address and talk openly and honestly about issues of race, they model behavior similar to their parental counterparts: Race is a taboo topic and should be avoided or ignored” (Sue 212).



# Critical Race Pedagogy (CRP)

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- Places emphasis on race
- Centers race and racism
- Validates experiential knowledge of Students of Color
- Deconstructs dominant ideologies in the classroom
- Works to help students develop positive cultural/racial/ethnic identities
- A commitment to scholarship and anti-racism

## Sure You Can Ask Me A Personal Question

by Diane Burns, 1989

How do you do?  
No, I am not Chinese.  
No, not Spanish.  
No, I am American Indi—uh, Native American.

No, not from India.  
No, not Apache  
No, not Navajo.  
No, not Sioux.  
No, we are not extinct.  
Yes, Indian.

Oh?  
So that's where you got the  
cheekbones.  
Your great grandmother, I  
An Indian Princess, huh?  
Hair down to there?  
Let me guess. Cherokee?

Oh, so you've had an  
That close?

Oh, so you've had  
That tight?

Oh, so you've had  
servant?

### Still I Rise

BY MAYA ANGELOU

You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
You may trod me in the very dirt  
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?  
Why are you beset with gloom?  
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells  
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,  
With the certainty of tides,  
Just like hopes springing high,  
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?  
Bowed head and lowered eyes?  
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,  
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?  
Don't you take it awful hard  
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines  
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,  
You may cut me with your eyes,  
You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?  
Does it come as a surprise

## How to Dismantle a Heart

Rodney Gomez

My mother used to say the heart makes music, but I've never  
found the keys. Maybe it's the way I was brought into the world:  
dragged across a river in the night's quiet breathing, trampling  
sh and tired runaways as if tearing a window's curtains.  
red from entry but repeatedly returned, each time  
arker part of a tunnel or a truck bed. The sky was so  
lickered like carbide lamps. We told time through  
of the dead like cataphiles—the warren of a little  
wolf's irrigation pipe. When you see enough  
g is replaced by the safety of wings. This isn't  
eless are never neutral. Bones sway to elegy.  
the earth as a refugee. I grew up, eventually,  
a cliff with a false bottom: you'd drop and  
n. Enough carcasses draped over the dry  
owers empty as busted rattles. When you're  
tiff neck and demands to be played. Later,  
s could begin to ache, I crawled to the  
1 string. Some wayward zil. I stretched  
nd drummed it with broken pliers. It  
ipped back into a seed, dry and

# Power of Poetry



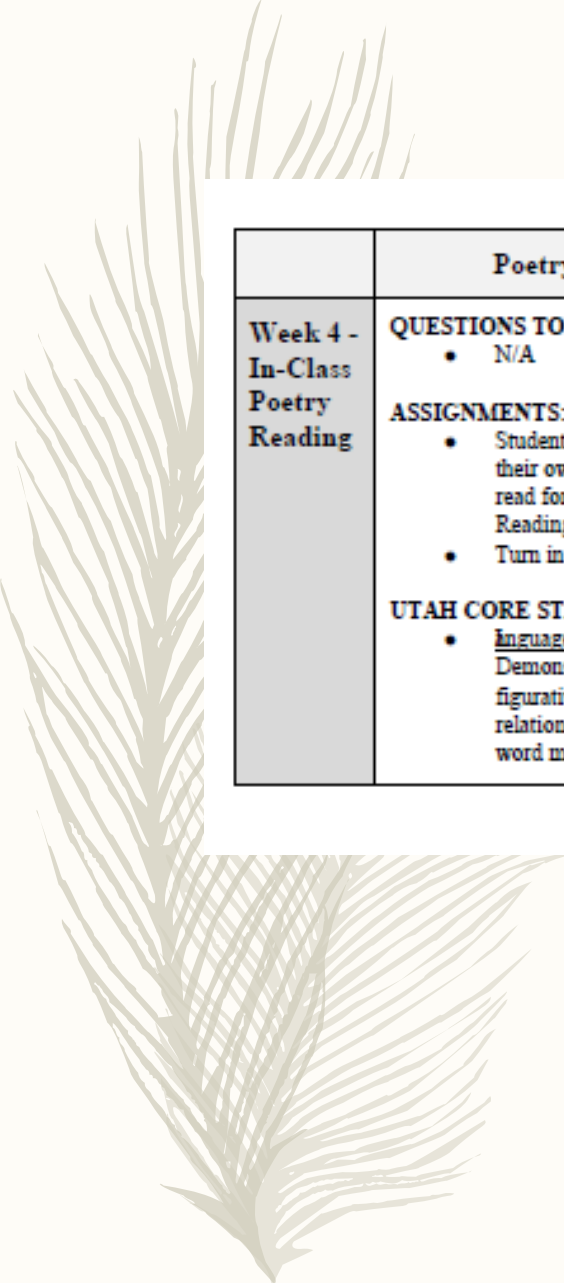
## Unit Plan Overview

|          | Framing and Implicit Bias   | Discussion/ Pre-Assessment   | Identity   | Code Switching / Meshing   | Racism(s)   |
|----------|---|--|--|--|---|
| Week 1 - | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why should we talk about race in our classroom?</li> <li>How do my biases and experiences affect my views on race?</li> <li>What can I do to work on my own biases?</li> <li>In what ways can Poetry help us learn more about other races and ethnicities?</li> </ul> <p><b>POEMS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>How to Dismantle a Heart</i> by Rodney Gomez</li> <li><i>Identity</i> by Juilio Noboa Polanco</li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARD:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Speaking and Listening Standard 1</u>: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</li> </ul> | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can I participate in discussions about race and identity in a respectful, productive way?</li> <li>What is the appropriate terminology for various racial groups?</li> <li>How well can I analyze a piece of poetry to identify racial themes?</li> </ul> <p><b>POEMS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The Kid Next To Me At The 7pm Showing Of The Avengers Has A Toy Gun</i> By Ashley M. Jones</li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARD:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Reading: Literature Standard 1</u>: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.</li> </ul> | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who am I?</li> <li>Who/What determines our identity?</li> <li>How does our environment shape our identities?</li> <li>How do stereotypes influence our identities?</li> <li>What choices do we make each day about how we want others to perceive us?</li> </ul> <p><b>POEMS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>When I was Growing Up</i> by Nellie Wong</li> <li><i>Sure, You Can Ask Me A Personal Question</i> by Diane Burns</li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARD:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Reading: Literature Standard 4</u>: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)</li> </ul> | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is Code Switching? How do I participate?</li> <li>How can code switching be helpful?</li> <li>Is all code switching created equal?</li> <li>What is Code Meshing?</li> <li>How can code meshing help with inclusivity?</li> <li>Who decides the codes? Why? Is that fair?</li> </ul> <p><b>POEMS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>To Live in the Borderlands Means You</i> Gloria Anzaldua</li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARD:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Speaking and Listening Standard 1</u>: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</li> </ul> | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is racism? How is it manifest?</li> <li>What did racism look like in the past (Individual/structural)?</li> <li>What does it look like now (individual/structural)?</li> <li>What does the term post-race society mean? Who does this term benefit?</li> <li>When do racisms develop?</li> <li>How can I counter my own personal racisms?</li> </ul> <p><b>POEMS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The Contract Says: We'd Like this Conversation to Bilingual</i> by Ada Limon</li> <li><i>The Better Sort of People</i> by John Beecher</li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARD:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Reading: Literature Standard 6</u>: Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).</li> </ul> |

# The Unit Plan

|          | Privilege  | Language and Power  | Language and Power   | Microaggressions  | Anti-Racism   |
|----------|--|---|--|---|---|
| Week 2 - | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What types of privilege are there (class, race, etc.)?</li> <li>What privileges do you have based upon things that you have no control over that other people do not have?</li> <li>Why is it difficult for people to discuss and own their privileges?</li> <li>What is the myth of meritocracy?</li> </ul> <p><b>POEMS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Hariem</i> by Langston Hughes</li> <li><i>Let America Be America Again</i> by Langston Hughes</li> <li><i>Caged Bird</i> by Maya Angelou</li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Speaking and Listening Standard 1:</u> Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</li> </ul> | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is language? What is power?</li> <li>How are language and power related?</li> <li>How is language used to break down barriers? How is language used to create them?</li> <li>How do language and power function in your own communities?</li> </ul> <p><b>POEMS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>If Black English isn't a Language, Then Tell Me What Is?</i> by James Baldwin (not a poem)</li> <li><i>Let America Be America Again</i> by Langston Hughes</li> <li><i>The Caged Bird</i> by Maya Angelou</li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Reading: Informational Text Standard 7:</u> Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.</li> </ul> | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How did our class define Language and Power?</li> <li>How did Baldwin define it? What did you learn about how language and power are manifest in your own communities (home, friends, clubs, sports, work, our classroom, etc.)?</li> <li>How are language and power manifest among traditionally marginalized communities?</li> </ul> <p><b>POEMS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Parsley</i> by Rita Dove</li> <li><i>To Live in the Borderlands Means You</i> Gloria Anzaldua (revisit)</li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Reading: Literature Standard 2:</u> Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.</li> </ul> | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is a microaggression?</li> <li>What is weathering?</li> <li>How does the use of a microaggression affect People of Color?</li> <li>Have you ever used a microaggression? Knowing what you now know, how do you think your use of that aggression made the other person feel?</li> <li>How can we combat our own use of microaggressions? Why should we?</li> <li>How can we offend someone without even knowing it, and why should we care?</li> </ul> <p><b>POEMS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Citizen</i> by Claudia Rankine (a series of excerpts)</li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Reading: Literature Standard 6:</u> Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).</li> </ul> | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does it mean to be an anti-racist?</li> <li>Why is anti-racism important?</li> <li>What can I do in my own life to be an anti-racist?</li> <li>What did I learn during this unit that I will carry with me?</li> </ul> <p><b>POEMS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Alone</i> by Maya Angelou (p. 69)</li> <li><i>And Still I Rise</i> by Maya Angelou</li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Reading: Literature Standard 10:</u> By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.</li> </ul> |

|  | Unit Review   | Workshop #1   | Workshop #2   | Workshop #3  | Post-Assessment / Workshop #4   |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Week 3 - Poetry Portfolio Workshop Week</b> | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the requirements for the Final Poetry Portfolio?</li> <li>How can I be a "good" Peer Reviewer?</li> <li>What are some of the themes we have discussed during this unit and what poems have informed them?</li> <li>What poems were particularly powerful for you?</li> <li>What is Figurative Language and how can I incorporate it into my poems?</li> </ul> <p><b>HOMEWORK:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft Poem #1 and bring <b>three hard copies of one complete draft</b> of Poem #1 to class for a workshop</li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Writing Standard 4:</b> Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</li> <li><b>Writing Standard 5:</b> Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grades 11-12.)</li> <li><b>Writing Standard 10:</b> Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes and audiences.</li> </ul> | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is sensory language and why is it useful in poetry?</li> <li>How can I be a "good" Peer Reviewer?</li> </ul> <p><b>HOMEWORK:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise Poem #1 and bring <b>one hard copy</b> of a <b>complete draft</b> to class to submit to instructor for feedback;</li> <li>Draft Poem #2 and bring <b>three hard copies of one complete draft</b> of Poem #2 to class for a workshop</li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing Standard 4</li> <li>Writing Standard 5</li> <li>Writing Standard 10</li> </ul> | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can I be a "good" Peer Reviewer?</li> <li>What feedback does my instructor have about my poem?</li> </ul> <p><b>HOMEWORK:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete final revisions on Poem #1 and prepare a copy to submit with portfolio;</li> <li>Revise Poem #2 and bring <b>one hard copy</b> of a <b>complete draft</b> to class to submit to instructor for feedback;</li> <li>Draft Poem #3 and bring <b>three hard copies of one complete draft</b> of Poem #3 to class for a workshop</li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing Standard 4</li> <li>Writing Standard 5</li> <li>Writing Standard 10</li> </ul> | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well can I analyze a piece of poetry to identify racial themes?</li> </ul> <p><b>HOMEWORK:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete final revisions on Poem #2 and prepare a copy to submit with portfolio;</li> <li>Revise Poem #3 and bring <b>one hard copy</b> of a <b>complete draft</b> to class to submit to instructor for feedback;</li> <li>Draft portfolio Introduction Letter and Reflection Letter;</li> <li>Select a poem to read for our In-Class Poetry Reading</li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing Standard 4</li> <li>Writing Standard 5</li> <li>Writing Standard 10</li> </ul> | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students select poems to read in front of the class for a class poetry reading</li> <li>Debrief/discuss the unit as a whole</li> </ul> <p><b>HOMEWORK:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete final revisions on Poem #3 and prepare a copy to submit with portfolio;</li> <li>Compile <i>Final Portfolio</i> by staple or paper-clipping the following documents in the required order</li> <li><b>DUE NEXT CLASS PERIOD!;</b></li> <li>Select one of your own poems or locate a found poem surrounding the Unit Themes and bring a copy of it with you to class to read for our Poetry Reading and Party</li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing Standard 4</li> <li>Writing Standard 5</li> <li>Writing Standard 10</li> </ul> |



|   | Poetry Reading   |   |  |  |  |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Week 4 -<br/>In-Class<br/>Poetry<br/>Reading</b> | <p><b>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul> <p><b>ASSIGNMENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students bring either a poem of their own or a found poem to read for an in-class Poetry Reading.</li> <li>Turn in <i>Final Poetry Portfolio</i></li> </ul> <p><b>UTAH CORE STANDARD:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Language Standard 5:</u> Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</li> </ul> | <p><b>END<br/><br/>OF<br/><br/>UNIT</b></p> |  |  |  |



# Code Switching Lesson Plan

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## Four Corners Activity Questions

- My racial identity is most important in defining who I am.
- The way I was taught to speak at home mirrors the way I speak in school.
- There isn't much I need to change about myself, my dress, or the way I speak in order to be accepted at my school.
- When I am away from school, I need to change the way I speak in order to be accepted by my friends and family.

# To live in the Borderlands means you

by Gloria Anzaldúa\*

are neither *hispana india negra española*  
*ni gabacha, eres mestiza, mulata,*  
half-breed caught in the crossfire  
between camps while carrying all  
five races on your back  
not knowing which side to turn to, run from;  
To live in the Borderlands means knowing  
that the *india* in you, betrayed for 500 years,

\* Taken from, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*  
(San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), pp. 194-195.  
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Drawing by Héctor Ponce de León.

you *rajeras*,  
that denying the Anglo inside you  
is as bad as having denied the Indian or Black;  
*Cuando vives en la frontera*  
people walk through you, the wind steals your  
voice, you're a *burra, buxy*, scapegoat,  
forerunner of a new race,  
half and half—both woman and man,  
neither—a new gender;

To live in the Borderlands  
means to put *chile*  
in the borscht, eat  
whole wheat  
*tortillas*,  
speak Tex-Mex with a Brooklyn accent;  
be stopped by *la migra* at the border checkpoints;  
Living in the Borderlands means you fight hard to  
resist the gold elixir beckoning from the  
bottle, the pull of the gun barrel,  
the rope crushing the hollow of your throat;

In the Borderlands  
you are the battleground  
where the enemies are kin to each  
other; you are at home, a stranger,  
the border disputes have been settled  
the volley of shots have shattered the  
truce you are wounded, lost in action  
dead, fighting back;

To live in the Borderlands means  
the mill with the razor white teeth wants to shred  
off your olive-red skin, crush out the kernel, your  
heart pound you pinch you roll you out  
smelling like white bread but dead;  
To survive the  
Borderlands  
you must live *sin fronteras*  
be a crossroads.

## Objectives

- Students will be able to define Code Switching and Code Meshing;
- Students will be able to discuss the pros and cons of Code Switching;
- Students will be able to recognize how they use Code Switching and Meshing in their own lives;
- Students will be able to recognize that Code Switching has greater implications for minorities;
- Students will be able to practice Code Meshing by working in small groups to write a poem that integrates two languages or codes.



# Black Educators Matter



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