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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

by

Cree Taylor

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

English

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ABSTRACT

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

by

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Utah State University, 2020

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Modern-day racism exists in mostly subtle ways and is often felt most keenly in the classroom. When schools began the legal integration process in 1954, Black teachers were fired, all-Black schools were closed, and Black students were bused to the formerly all-White schools. In this new environment, Black students and all Students of color were forced to accept and adapt to an educational system that favored Whites over all other racial groups. Today, White Supremacy in education affects the establishment of state and national standards, school and district boundaries, and the un-fair disciplinary action taken against Students of Color. In addition to all of these factors, White Supremacy in education also affects what and how content is being taught in schools. It is manifest in History class when the plights of Native Americans are described as a necessary evil for the advancement of "true" Americans. It is manifest in Science class when the work of White scientists is heralded as the usual and norm while the work of Scientists of Color is

often not highlighted. It is also ever-present in the Language Arts classroom where works of White authors are celebrated as the standard for Literature and writing while works by Authors of Color are often categorized as "ethnic" and "other." While many Language Arts instructors are teaching works of Authors of Color in their classrooms, these same teachers need to use these texts to help engage their students in real discussions about race and identity and the impact of bias and racism on today's society. Productive race talk is essential to dismantling White Supremacy, helping individuals overcome personal racisms, and to helping Students of Color feel represented in their classrooms. The high school Language Arts classroom is the prime atmosphere for race talk because it is a somewhat controlled environment where teachers can use literature and poetry by Authors of Color to help their students learn how to have these difficult discussions.

This thesis argues that it is important for high school students to engage in conversations about race and privilege and that the empowerment of diverse voices in the classroom will only serve to benefit students both inside and outside of the classroom. One way Language Arts teachers can facilitate productive race talk is to use poetry to humanize the "other." Students can use poems as a starting point to discuss topics such as bias, privilege, language and power, and microaggressions. Poetry has a way of reaching the human spirit in a way that no other writing can. Through the discussion of theory and practice, this thesis concludes that through intentional integration of poems by Authors of Color, teachers can help their students confront issues of race and identity and, hopefully, encourage them to take steps towards anti-racism in their individual lives and in society. It also includes a four-week unit plan centered around poetry by Authors of Color that

provides practical application of these concepts in 11th and 12th grade Language Arts classrooms.

(195)

Table of Contents

PART I: INTRODUCTION	2
Establishing the Classroom as the Setting for Race Talk.....	7
Critical Race Theory as a Framework for Pedagogical Practices	12
The Role of Literature and Poetry in Facilitating Race Talk	19
Student Resistance to Race Talk	24
Discussion Strategies and Overcoming Barriers to Race Talk	32
In-Class Activity Ideas	39
My Intersectional Embodiment and the Classroom	40
PART II: THE POETRY OF RACE AND IDENTITY UNIT	48
Assessing and Evaluating Student Progress	51
Unit Plan Audience and Outline.....	54
Essay Assessment.....	57
Poetry Portfolio	59
APPENDIX	60
Unit Plan Overview	61
Week 1.....	67
Week 2.....	120
Week 3.....	164
Week 4.....	183
Works Cited.....	184

PART I: INTRODUCTION

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court ruled in the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education* that the segregation of public schools in the United States was unconstitutional (Dixon 3). The integration of public schools was a long, highly-contested struggle that spanned decades and still continues to plague public schools today. The majority of Black parents, although fearful of the repercussions of integration, were excited about the opportunity and resources that would be available to their children as a result of public school integration. Many White parents, whether publicly or privately, felt that sending their children to formerly all-Black schools would ruin their chances of getting a good education. These same White parents were also concerned that allowing Black students to attend formerly all-White schools would expose their daughters to predatory Black male students (Domonske). Racial stereotypes fueled hatred between racial groups and caused many districts to further delay integration.

As recently as the year 2016, federal courts were forced to demand that schools in a district in Mississippi desegregate (Domonske). As pointed out by former democratic candidate for president, Kamala Harris, during the 2020 Democratic Candidacy Race, the integration of public schools usually involved bussing Black students to the formerly all-White schools across town. School by school, district by district, Black students were transported into more affluent White neighborhoods to attend school. While the desegregation of public schools had many consequences --White flight, a surge in the opening of private schools, decreased funding to low-income schools-- one consequence was that Black students and all Students of Color were forced to accept and adapt to an educational system that favored Whites over all other racial groups (Transgress 37).

Out of habit, tradition, or simply an unwillingness to change, this system of education continues in public schooling today. In his book, *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence*, professor and racial psychologist, Derald Wing Sue, articulates that Students of Color “have been forced to operate within a predominantly White culture, and are taught the history, mores, and language of Western society from the moment of birth” (110). This is especially true of the high school Language Arts classroom where students are required to read books from the Canon and taught to analyze literature and poetry through the eyes of those who were originally allowed to be involved in the critical study of literature: rich, straight, White males. In recent years, instructors have become better at diversifying the literature they use in their classrooms. Instead of reading *To Kill A Mockingbird*, a White Saviorist novel written by a White author, with a White protagonist who’s main objective is to save the Black man, Tom Robinson from being accused of rape, instructors are turning towards multicultural literature written by Authors of Color to help better expose their students to the diversity that exists in literature and in the human experience (TuSmith 20).

While instructors should be applauded for this step, it is only a step. Often, even though themes of race and racism permeate the pages of multicultural texts, instructors find themselves skipping over that theme in order to address other “less divisive” issues. By so doing, they continue the practice of uplifting the White narratives and experiences while silencing the narratives and experiences of Black and Brown students. Sue reminds us that traditional academic protocol “emphasizes a learning environment characterized by objectivity, rationality, and intellectual thought and inquiry...Race talk, however, is highly subjective, is intense, relies on storytelling, and is emotive in nature” (65). Race

talk is also uncomfortable and risky; characteristics instructors tend to avoid in their classrooms. Additionally, many instructors avoid race talk and racial dialogue because it seems at odds with academic protocols to which they have been taught to adhere since they were students themselves. bell hooks argues that there needs to be more practical discussion about ways the classroom setting can be transformed to promote a more inclusive learning experience. She writes that “if the effort to respect and honor the social reality and experiences of [People of Color] is to be reflected in a pedagogical process, then as teachers...we must acknowledge that our styles of teaching may need to change” (35). Teachers need to be better prepared to engage in racial dialogues as they organically emerge in the analysis and discussion of the diverse texts they choose to study with their students.

As both a student and educator who grew up and attended college in majority White communities, I can attest to the disconnect often experienced by Students of Color when reading multicultural texts in the high school Language Arts classroom. In the beginning, the teacher feels like they are being inclusive because they included Alice Walker’s “Everyday Use” in their short story unit. She asks the students questions like: “What do we do with the past?” and “Who do you think should get the quilts?” After debating for a moment or two about who should have been given the quilts, the teacher pats herself on the back for being inclusive and the class moves on to reading and discussing “The Most Dangerous Game.” The glaring and more important question: “What does Dee (Wangero) believe about her heritage that Maggie and her mother do not?” is almost never asked. As a student I interpreted the avoidance of the heritage question as the teachers attempt to keep the classroom objective, rational, and intellectual

and avoid the inevitable, uncomfortable discussion that would ensue once the question was posed. Dee is trying to rekindle her African roots while Maggie and her mother are holding on to a past of slavery, poverty, and hardship. Maggie and her mother are forced to accept and remember slavery as their heritage because any idea of Africa or their home countries was stripped from their ancestors when they were sold from their homelands, shipped across the sea, and forced to adopt a new language, culture, and even a new name amidst physical and emotional brutality. These very ideas put White students in an uncomfortable position. While the majority of People of Color know that current racisms are more structural than personal, it is difficult for White people to internalize this fact. Sue asserts that “when People of Color talk racism, Whites seem to interpret statements as a personal accusation, and rather than reach out to understand the content, respond in a defensive and protective posture” (140). For the sake of keeping White students comfortable, race talk is most often avoided even when race and its surrounding topics are an obvious theme woven into the work of literature being studied.

Having grown up in a majority White community where I was one of two African-American students in my high school graduating class of over 250 students, I couldn’t help but feel that my story, my experience, and the experience of people who looked like me was unimportant or non-academic. It seemed as if it was more important to learn the language, customs, and stories of the people in power instead of helping students connect to a multitude of stories. Ideas of colorblindness and a post-race society permeated the classroom as teachers articulated that racism was a thing of the past and insinuated that discussing issues of race was more divisive than unifying. I sat there feeling as if I was being erased from the classroom, wishing to be *seen* instead of

tokenized, wanting to talk about my experiences of microaggressive racism on a daily basis but not having the avenue to do so, hoping to talk about how this disconnect between heritage and genealogy is real for me because I have no idea where my family came from or how I got here other than that someone somewhere along the line was transported across the Middle Passage. I wanted to share how isolating it felt to be swimming, constantly, in a sea of White faces with no one who could help me navigate these experiences. But that opportunity never came in high school, and when I attended a majority White college after graduation, that opportunity continued to elude me as racism was discussed as a thing of the past or a deplorable characteristic of old-fashioned people. I understood racism as a structural component carefully woven into the tapestry of society but often ignored as something People of Color makeup so that they have an excuse for their poor socioeconomic status.

All I wanted to do was to see myself and my story represented in the literature that was chosen for us to discuss in my courses and to have the opportunity to address the ever-present elephant in the room. I decided that if I wanted to see myself in the classroom, I was going to have to intentionally put myself there through the literature I selected, and I was going to have to be intentional about discussing themes of race that are so easily and often avoided by White instructors and White students. This thesis is my journey through that process. I want to empower the Black and Brown voices and experiences in my classroom. Themes of race, ethnicity, and identity will be interwoven into the course simply by virtue of the texts that I select.

This thesis argues that it is important for high school students to engage in conversations about race and privilege. It insists that the empowerment of diverse voices

in the classroom will only serve to benefit students both inside and outside of the classroom. It will look at the barriers students and teachers --especially teachers of color-- face when attempting to engage in race talk; articulate how Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Pedagogy inform and influence my personal teaching philosophy; and provide practical strategies to help facilitate these conversations and overcome those barriers through a poetry unit plan designed for high school junior and senior Language Arts courses.

Establishing the Classroom as the Setting for Race Talk

As I sit down to justify the importance of discussing race and privilege in the high school classroom setting, I find it difficult to begin. It seems odd that this is something that must be justified academically in order to be considered important. Topics of race and privilege are on the list of “don’ts” when it comes to the Thanksgiving dinner table because they are too polarizing, too controversial, and can lead to hurt feelings and division. In my experience, White people hide from these issues instead of confronting them, forcing People of Color to silence their experiences so as not to risk being “accused of playing the race card” while “others profess color blindness” or advocate that we live in a post-race society (Closson 14). Critical Race Theorist, Rosemary B. Closson revealed that “although People of Color are generally more willing than their White counterparts to engage in race talk, they are often prevented from doing so” because “they are likely to be met with many resistances” (14). People of Color want to talk about race and to share their experiences, but it seems simply pointing out the fact that an issue is inherently a racial issue is against social civility.

It may seem better to avoid discussions about race and privilege because confronting the issue doesn't seem to solve anything. Sometimes it seems to increase division and misunderstanding and serves to separate us instead of unite us. I find it somewhat comical that the institutions responsible for inventing, implementing, and enforcing racial categories are the same ones that want People of Color to ignore that those categories exist for the sake of "civility." People of Color are expected to mark their racial category on a census, but are often gaslighted when trying to confront the consequences of that category in public and private conversations. Those who employ color-blindness "wish that society would stop thinking in terms of race but instead focus on efficiency, class, merit, and other means of ordering society" (Delgado 120). If we ignore race and just see people as people, some argue, surely racism and racialization would disappear and everyone would be able to make it in this world because they are using their merit and skill to rise to the top instead of hiding behind claims that systemic racism is a hindrance to success. Sue argues to the contrary: "Honest race talk is one of the most powerful means to dispel stereotypes and biases, to increase racial literacy and critical consciousness about race issues, to decrease fear of differences, to broaden one's horizons, to increase compassion and empathy, to increase appreciation of all colors and cultures, and to enhance a greater sense of belonging and connectedness" (Race Talk x). If what Sue indicates is true, why are these conversations avoided in both private and public situations? Part of the problem stems from the fact that children have had poor examples of positive race talk from their parents for generations. hooks reminds us that "no one is born a racist. Everyone makes a choice. Many of us made the choice in childhood." She continues to explain that "a White child taught that hurting others is

wrong, who then witnesses racial assaults on black people, who questions that and then is told by adults that this hurting is acceptable because of their skin color, then makes a moral choice to collude or to oppose” (Community 53).

From a young age, we are taught that to acknowledge difference is to engage in deplorable social behavior. “Self–censoring is learned during childhood when parents quiet children who raise questions about phenotypic difference” (Aleman 131). I think of a time when I was grocery shopping with my children in a majority White community--my brown skin a homing beacon for side-eyes, double-takes, and ignorant stares. I distinctly recall a four or five-year-old blonde girl tugging on her mother’s shirt and pointing. “Momma, momma,” she was saying and pointing and pointing. Out of my periphery, I saw the mother’s look of annoyance from being bothered by her daughter turn into one of embarrassment and anger. “Shhhh!” she demanded, “Be quiet. Don’t point at people.” But the girl did not stop pointing, at least not with her eyes, and I hurriedly gathered my grocery item on my way to the next aisle.

Like many children before her and many children after her, this little girl in the grocery store had been taught “that talking about race is anxiety-inducing for adults” and that it is better “to avoid the subject” (Aleman 131). I include my experience here not to garner sympathy, but because it is evidence of the need to provide opportunities for people—especially children—to speak openly and honestly about race. Critical Race Theorists, Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic articulate the importance of narrative in developing a “deeper understanding of how Americans see race.” Critical Race Theory is “built on everyday experiences with perspective, viewpoint, and the power of stories and persuasion” (45). The idea that parents and guardians are teaching their children to refrain

from acknowledging difference only makes it more difficult to confront, analyze, and complicate those differences as they get older. The differences are there. We notice them. Children notice them. But we are products of hegemony, and society has coerced us into thinking that, when it comes to race and racial identity, acknowledging and even celebrating those differences is a bad thing and that “colorblindness” is the best way to ensure equality among all races (Omi 132).

Studies have shown that racial awareness and the “burgeoning social meanings” occur around the ages of three and five years. “The negative reactions of parents, relatives, friends, and peers toward issues of race, however, begin to convey mixed signals” (*Race Talk* 192). Such is the case with the young, blonde girl eyeing me at the grocery store. Sue argues that “developing race talk skills is crucial for parents and teachers if they desire to help themselves and young people” (213). This little girl’s mother may not have explicitly stated that my dark skin and large, curly hair are bad things, but her negative response to her daughter’s inquiry reinforces a tiresome, marginalizing, and problematic social norm that this child will internalize and carry into adulthood if not taught otherwise. This is why it is important for teachers to engage students in these conversations in the classroom setting: if teachers don’t do it, there is a good chance that no one will.

Diana Hess and Lauren Gatti discuss the importance of placing difficult dialogues back into the classroom in their 2010 article, “Putting Politics Where It Belongs: In the Classroom.” They write: “political discussion engages religion, social class, race and culture, power, and privilege--topics that have the potential to catalyze exchanges which cross a line from lively to destructive of relationships and classroom dynamics,” but this

does not mean that these topics should be avoided (20). They stress that conducting discussions of this caliber in the classroom helps foster political tolerance, an essential element to the “health, stability, and sustainability of a democracy...When a society lacks political tolerance, its enacted policies will likely deprive some groups of their right to influence the political agenda and to have an influence on decision-making” (23). The same can be said about race. When a society lacks *racial* tolerance, its enacted policies will likely deprive *minorities* of their right to influence the political agenda and to have an influence on decision-making.

The classroom is among the most complicated of social spaces. While some students might find the discussion of difficult topics invigorating and engaging, others might see them as uninteresting or even accusatory, but this should not stop teachers from pushing their students to wrestle with and confront these issues (Hess 23). Sue argues that teachers “are in a unique position to teach children and young adults about issues of race, diversity, and multiculturalism. They have the ability to determine the curriculum...to teach about life events... And to facilitate difficult dialogues on race in the classroom when they arise” (*Race Talk* 212). If teachers choose to be intentional, students will have no choice but to confront issues of language and power, code switching, microaggressions, privilege, and implicit bias. When educators adopt colorblind ideology, refusing 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” (212). When race talk is avoided, students recognize it and its avoidance stirs up different

feelings among White students than it does among Students of Color. White students may sigh with relief at not having to sit in discomfort, while Students of Color are forced to accept that, yet again, their voices and their experiences don't really matter.

The classroom setting is an important place for discussions about race and privilege because “without adequate intervention by enlightened parents and teachers during the pre-K through 12 years, our young will internalize the prejudices of society...multicultural education that has strong antiracist orientation is of utmost importance in helping children to develop a nonracist identity” (*Race Talk* 212). Schools have been entrusted with taking on the teaching that parents are not taking up. One element of that teaching is helping students engage in conversations that might be uncomfortable but are completely necessary if we as a society are to enact changes that help People of Color feel more welcomed and represented in the classroom and in society.

Critical Race Theory as a Framework for Pedagogical Practices

Critical Race Theory (CRT) has had a profound influence on my personal teaching philosophy and has guided much of my research into what it means to empower the voices of Authors of Color in my classroom. Derrick Bell, a foundational critical race theorist describes CRT as “a body of legal scholarship, a majority of whose authors are both existentially People of Color and ideologically committed to the struggle against racism, particularly as institutionalized in and by law.” Bell reveals that critical race theorists are “committed to a program of scholarly resistance that they hope will lay the groundwork for wide-scale resistance” (78-79). Delgado and Stefancic, other important scholars in the field, characterize CRT as “a collection of activists and scholars engaged

in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism and power” (Delgado 3). CRT recognizes the value of stories told by individuals whose views are traditionally excluded and includes those stories in the form of narrative, the importance of which will be discussed in more detail later on (Bell 79).

In 1994, Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate presented a paper “in which they demonstrated the relevance of critical race theory (CRT) to education” (Dixon 2). In the classroom, CRT manifests as Critical Race Pedagogy (CRP), a term coined in 1999 by Marvin Lynn who suggested that “a CRP could subvert a class-based discourse by necessarily placing an emphasis on race and its connection to the development of liberatory practices in schools” (Lynn 605). CRP necessitates the usage of engaged pedagogy where students are called on “to be active participants, to link awareness with practice” (Transgress 14). Aleman and Gaytan point out that CRP “encapsulates the teaching practices and content that Educators of Color employ for Students of Color in order to center race and racism, validate the experiential knowledge of Students of Color, and deconstruct dominant ideologies in their classrooms.” Not only do instructors who choose to adopt a CRP make curricular choices as “a form of ‘dissent’ towards the inequities that subordinate marginalized students,” but they also want these choices to be “a source of ‘affirmation’ that helps develop positive cultural/racial/ethnic identities” (130). CRP is similar to Freire’s theories of education in that it emphasizes “praxis -- action and reflection upon the world in order to change it” (Transgress 14). Dixon et. al. reiterates the importance of CRT’s focus on praxis. They write that those who choose to employ a CRT in the classroom are making “a commitment not only to scholarship but also to social action towards liberation and the end of oppression.” They remind us that it

is not for CRT scholars to document and analyze inequity. “CRT also requires that scholars utilize their insight and knowledge to work on the ground to resist and disrupt racism and inequity” (4). This necessary balance between analyzing and disrupting inequity is why my unit plan is devoted to discussing anti-racism and encouraging students to adopt anti-racist practices in their own lives.

hooks further explains a central tenet of engaged, CRP when she describes the importance of a classroom where “students and professors regarded one another as ‘whole’ human beings, striving not just for knowledge in books, but knowledge about how to live in the world” (15). CRP allows me the freedom to incorporate more literature, research, and scholarship by People of Color into the classroom setting with the intent that discussing these stories will provide opportunities for me to engage my students in race talk in my classroom. With these goals at the center of the curriculum, I can select class material that will “challenge color-blindness, Whiteness, meritocracy, assimilation, and conformity” in order to “both challenge mainstream discourses and legitimize the experiential knowledge of Students of Color” (130). Dixon et. al. points out that ever since CRT was first mapped onto education over 20 years ago, “counterstories challenging the dominant discourse have characterized much of the educational scholarship in CRT” (3). They warn that “if the reader is not willing or able to put aside preconceptions and traditional paradigms” in order to really hear the “counterstories and challenges to the dominant discourse reflected in this work” the reader is going to miss the point of introducing those stories in the first place. Applying CRT “requires...scholars [students and instructors] exercise humility and reject internalized White supremacist ideology” (5). It also requires scholars, students, and instructors to

recognize that knowledge and expertise can come from traditionally marginalized voices. The overall intention of the unit plan is to engage students with a variety of perspectives with which they may be unfamiliar or, alternatively, desperately eager to engage with in order to help them critically analyze and attempt to challenge structural racism in their own communities while recognizing the value of these perspectives in school and society.

hooks reminds us that in order for this type of teaching to be successful “there must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes” (8). CRT allows for this to happen by placing emphasis on narratives and counternarratives in order “to challenge conventional accounts of educational and other institutions and the social processes that occur within them” (Powers 151). CRP, then, is the deliberate integration of CRT principles in a classroom setting. It is taking narrative and placing it at the center of the curriculum so that all students can benefit from increased perspectives and diverse paradigms. CRP bridges the gap between theory and practice that exists in our nation. hooks writes that we are “a nation of citizens who claim that they want to see an end to racism, to racial discrimination. Yet there is clearly a fundamental gap between theory and practice” (Community 28). If we want to see an end of racism and racial discrimination, we need to empower the stories and experiences of individuals who experience these things so that we can confront those issues head on instead of hiding behind the false ideology of colorblindness (Delgado 27).

Delgado and Serfancic articulate that “critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law” (3). This idea of questioning

what we think we know is fascinating to me. I find it especially intriguing to think about this questioning in terms of what we know about what a high school Language Arts course should look like. Typically, the course involves an instructor, probably a White, female instructor, selecting materials that will help enhance their students' literacy and critical thinking skills. This course teaches students how to compose a properly structured essay, how to critically read and analyze pieces of literature, how to engage with new ideas, how to conduct basic research, and, maybe, how to compose a piece of creative work using appropriate literary devices.

On the surface, this organization of a Language Arts course looks normal, but what is normal? In my experience, “normal” curriculum, “normal” literature, and “normal” classroom discussions are Anglocentric. According to Delgado and Stefancic, “Whiteness is... normative; it sets the standard in dozens of situations” (86). In education, Whiteness is the standard and norm because “official” educational policies and practices have been dictated by White people in education for hundreds of years. “People of Color have been forced to operate within a predominantly White culture, and are taught the history, mores, and language of Western society from the moment of birth...They have been immersed in the prejudices of their oppressors and their biased institutions” (*Race Talk* 110). CRT allows us to question that normalcy, that standard. CRP allows us to question that normalcy and standard in the classroom.

What does it mean to craft a properly structured essay? Who got to decide that structure? How are we teaching students to analyze a text? Is this the only way a text or work of literature can be analyzed? What pieces of literature am I selecting for the class to analyze? What makes this particular text literature? Who gets to decide? How are the

“new ideas” my students are engaging with shaped by the literature I selected? What ideas and perspectives are missing from the course conversation by virtue of the literature I select to teach? How does race and privilege factor into the social structures we have grown accustomed to as the “norm?”

Language Arts instructors recognize the value of student voice and perspective. What is often forgotten is that the voices of Students of Color also deserve to be heard and recognized --even if those voices and perspectives make White students feel uncomfortable. Traditionally, Language Arts “content is diluted to avoid generating negative emotions such as guilt or shame. It is distanced and depersonalized from the learners to decrease the probability of the learners attributing or being held accountable for the ill effects of racism” (Closson 85). CRT allows us to confront these issues head-on through narrative which provides “a language to bridge the gaps in imagination and conception” that exist between White students and Students of Color (Delgado 52). Philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard used the term *differend* to explain what “occurs when a concept such as justice acquires conflicting meanings for two groups.” The dominant group has their understanding of what is just, so when the subordinate group seeks to explain an injustice, but lacks the language of the dominant group, they may be unable to explain how they have been injured or wronged (51). CRT gives power to these voices by employing the use of “counterstories to challenge, displace, or mock pernicious narratives and beliefs” (50). Narrative helps lessen the differend. It helps teachers recognize “how damaging ‘official knowledge’ can be to students of colour [sp] when their life experiences and perspectives are erased from the curriculum” by allowing the

students the opportunity to express their own narratives or analyze the narratives of traditionally marginalized populations (Powers 152).

David Gillbern, a British educational researcher known for studying critical race theory as it relates to education, reminds us that “although race inequity may not be a planned and deliberate goal of education policy neither is it accidental” (485). Teachers don’t mean to ostracize or silence students, but when they choose not to highlight People of Color in their classrooms or to embrace the counterstories that reflect diverse perspectives, ostracizing is exactly what they are doing. Because “members of this country’s dominant racial group cannot easily grasp what it is like to be nonWhite,” CRT “points out the importance of giving voice to the experiences of People of Color...it reminds [Students and Faculty of Color] to assert their voice as valid and [to] appreciate [the fact that] their voices may not be easily heard or grasped by White professors or White students” (Closson 83).

As a Language Arts instructor, giving voice to the experiences of People of Color looks like incorporating their stories into my classroom in the form of literature, but simply including the literature is not enough. Delgado and Stefancic remind us that CRT “tries not only to understand our social situation but *to change it*, setting out not only to ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies but to transform it for the better (8, emphasis added). Giving voice to the experiences of People of Color also looks like allowing their stories and narratives to shape classroom conversations in the form of productive race talk. Dixson et. al. also point out that there is room for hope in CRT. Yes, CRT requires scholars, students, and instructors use counterstories to point out structural injustices, “but it is coupled with a vision of hope for the future.” CRT

scholars recognize “the permanence of racism while, at the same time, arguing that this recognition should not lead to despair and surrender but to greater resolve in the struggle”

(4). Adopting a CRP provides instructors with the opportunity to point out injustices to their students *and* help students consider ways they can work to shape the future for the better.

The Role of Literature and Poetry in Facilitating Race Talk

As I began to consider literature and poetry that could facilitate Race Talk in the high school Language Arts classroom, I realized that I did not have a concrete definition of what Language Arts actually means. I profess to be able to teach it to students, and I believe that it is an important area of study, but what does Language Arts actually mean? Language Arts teachers teach literacy. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) divides “language arts into five basic categories: reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing” (Teaching). As a teacher of Language Arts, then, it is my job to provide students opportunities to develop skills in these five areas so that they can become literate individuals. In the high school setting, students are expected to develop analytical skills through reading, listening, and viewing literature and proficient writing skills through speaking and writing about said literature. Based upon this understanding, if I am able to teach students how to “properly” read, write, speak about, listen to, and view a text than I have done my job as a teacher. This understanding of literacy and what English/Language Arts teachers have been commissioned to do furthers my belief that because of its engagement with reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing, the Language Arts classroom is the ideal setting for race talk to take place.

CRT compels me to ask: *But who gets to define what “proper” Language Arts instruction looks like?* Randy Bomer, an author and leader in secondary English/Language Arts teaching as well as former president of the NCTE, speaks to this question of teaching literacy when he writes: “both the literacy part of ‘literacy education’ and the education part are wholly shaped by the social doings that educators have become accustomed to. *We expect our students to have minds and habits like our people.*” Bomer points out that in education “our people” typically means “White people of the particular sort that dominate US culture” (11). I can’t help but agree with Bomer that the idea that our students should have minds and habits that replicate our own is problematic, but I also recognize that there is no way for me to completely remove myself, my experiences or my biases from the classroom. My biases are reflected in the literature I select, in the way I decided to teach writing, in the content I choose for my students to analyze, as well as in my grading. My choice to employ a Critical Race Pedagogy, to intentionally push my students to engage in race talk through the literature we read is a reflection of my bias. I do not deny that I have a bias, but I do deny that my bias is detrimental to learning or the overall classroom atmosphere.

As mentioned earlier, CRT places emphasis on “stories as a means of communicating views to those who hold very different views on the emotionally charged subject of race” (Bell 80). CRP takes those stories and uses them in the classroom to help students engage with race in a more critical way. hooks reminds us that students “want an education that is healing to the uninformed, unknowing spirit...knowledge that is meaningful...[and connects] what they are learning and their overall life experiences” (Transgress 19). In the Language Arts classroom, teachers seek to do this very thing. We

want our students to value their own voices and the voices of others, to think critically about ideas that shape our way of living, and to engage with concepts towards which they might feel resistance. We are focused on the entire student growing and moving as a human being. Dana Maloney, the chair of the NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing Advisory Committee, articulated the importance of teaching Language Arts when she said that through literature, teachers “help students understand themselves, others, and the world” (Maloney). In addition to wanting my students to be able to understand the “other,” I also want my students to be able to use literature and poetry to help them reflect on their own experiences and the experiences of their peers by incorporating the literature of Authors of Color into my classroom.

A central tenet of Language Arts instruction is Literary Analysis. We introduce a piece of literature with the goal of teaching students how to critically read, consider, and analyze that literary work. In a classroom infused with Critical Race Pedagogy, the texts selected to analyze are intentionally texts written by Authors of Color. Bonnie TuSmith reminds us that while “one possible outcome of studying literature by various ethnic American writers may be a change of perspective, a new understanding of human life and experience that can encourage self-reflection, reduce prejudice, and help promote social justice,” that should not be our primary pedagogical objective (22). She warns against the danger of student resistance that frequently accompanies race talk in the classroom. Students begin to experience “compassion fatigue” syndrome where their ability to feel sympathy towards a marginalized community has been exhausted. Sue also talks about the tension that arises when teachers actively seek to engage their students in race talk. He acknowledges: “As classrooms become increasingly diverse, for example, difficult

dialogues on race have often served to polarize students and teachers alike, rather than to clarify and increase mutual understanding about race and race relations” (*Race Talk x*). There are ways to combat compassion fatigue and animosity which will be discussed later, and this is one of my main concerns when it comes to selecting ethnic literature as the focus of my Language Arts classroom.

While selecting Ethnic American Literature inherently comes with a social justice component, social justice cannot be the only goal when studying these texts. “A literary text...is a work of art” regardless of whether the text is written by an Author of Color or not. “Treating ethnic literature solely as a sociological, historical, political, or cultural artifacts is a prime fallacy when it comes to multi-ethnic literary pedagogy” (TuSmith 22). Ethnic literature can do so much more for students than rally them towards a cause, it can enhance their lives with rich language, diverse cultures, often under-appreciated perspectives, and unique writing styles. “Ethnic literature is *literature* --and we need to treat it as such” by allowing ourselves to analyze it under the literature umbrella. This does not mean that we White-wash the novels by avoiding race talk as it arises: “race is at the core of American identity” (23). Critical race theorists hold that color blindness “will allow us to redress only extremely egregious racial harms...Only aggressive, color-conscious efforts to change the way things are will do much to ameliorate misery” (Delgado 27). There needs to be a balance between employing color-conscious efforts to engage in race talk and antagonizing students with a merciless onslaught of racial conversations.

Students are “much more willing to face the challenge of multiculturalism” than their teachers; teachers just need to take on the difficult task of engaging students with

these materials in a productive, inclusive way (Transgress 40). While I agree with TuSmith when she says that social justice and race talk shouldn't be the only goal of studying Ethnic Literature in the Language Arts classroom, I do believe that it should be one of the goals. Analyzing Ethnic Literature as a piece of literature means that we treat the work as an entire work and allow our analysis to look at every part of the text as important and worth studying. Ethnic Literature is more than cultural capital. In addition to learning more about the world from a more diverse perspective, these works are also excellent examples diverse prose, plot, dialogue, use of figurative language, and other revered literary devices. What I am hoping is that by studying texts of Authors of Color, my students and I are able to navigate everything that comes with this pedagogical move.

Language Arts values individual voices because all of these voices only serve to add to the richness of the human experience. Bell details that "the narrative voice, the teller, is important to critical race theory in a way not understandable by those whose voices are tacitly deemed legitimate and authoritative. The voice exposes, tells and retells, signals resistance and caring, and reiterates the most fearsome power --the power of commitment to change" (80). Similarly, the narrative voice is important to Literary Analysis in that it helps us better understand the perspective of the author and perhaps even relate to some of his or her experiences. My hope is that by using literature as the vehicle, students will be able to separate themselves from the idea that they are being accused of engaging in racist thoughts or behaviors. Because "specific experiences always have universal elements embedded within them," maybe having a character's thoughts and experiences to discuss instead of their own will serve as an indirect way to

get them to engage in productive race talk without feeling compassion fatigue or hostility (Brookfield 70).

Ethnic Literature serves a purpose similar to that of “traditional” literature from the canon, but it also adds so much more. Not only does Ethnic Literature meet State and National Common Core standards for 11th and 12th grade, but “reading such literature makes it possible to enter the cultural world of minorities in a safe and nonthreatening way” (*Race Talk* 215). Sure, the goals of Language Arts and the Core Standards can be met using works of literature that are less confrontational or controversial, but as an instructor, I am not satisfied with meeting the minimum requirements. Students can and should be pushed to learn the concepts of the core in ways that make them think more critically and allow them the opportunity to envision these concepts as they apply to individuals with diverse points of view. Ethnic Literature helps instructors pursue the goals of Language Arts instruction on a more inclusive, engaging, and refreshing level. It also helps Students of Color see themselves in the classroom and allows them the opportunity to talk about issues they have been forced to avoid. At the same time, studying Ethnic Literature provides the opportunity for White students to grapple with the very ideas that shape our society in a way that does not directly implicate them in the propagation of those ideas.

Student Resistance to Race Talk

Nikol Alexander-Floyd, professor of Women and Gender studies at Rutgers University of Rutgers University, points out that “student resistance to learning about race and racism is pervasive and well-documented.” It is so pervasive that scholars have taken note of a variety of resistance tactics both direct and indirect. These tactics involve

“withdrawal from class discussion...questioning professional authority in classrooms; and verbal and physical harassment and assault” on instructors and classmates (183). Sue adds avoidance, silence, diversion, and dismissal as other race talk avoidance tactics employed by students when racial issues are addressed in the classroom (Race Talk 30). Even though Critical Race Pedagogy and engaged pedagogy have been held up as a standard for increasing student engagement in the classroom, “resistance is likely to be an enduring feature of classes that focus on teaching about race and racism” because race talk is hard (Alexander-Floyd 187).

When discussing the value of engaged pedagogy, hooks details that resisting students prevent the class from becoming a learning community because they do “not want to be in a classroom that differ[s] in any way from the norm” (Transgress 9). Normally racism is discussed as something that happened in the past rather than something that is still pervasive today. The words “racist” and “White-supremacist” are vulgarities only to be used in the most dramatic of circumstances with the most extreme perpetrators of the practice. The idea that students may still hold biases about individuals based on their skin color is an uncomfortable reality for students to face and being forced to confront these issues head on is scary, daunting, and in many cases, infuriating.

So far, I have emphasized the importance of engaging students in discussions about race in the classroom. To recap, if teachers do not take it upon themselves to negotiate these conversations, who will? Our students need us to be brave and vulnerable so that the entire class can grow and learn together. Sue points out that “in a classroom situation...Students of Color report that their decision to engage in race talk often depended on the nonverbals they observed among White students and faculty.” When

White students and faculty exhibited behaviors that were cues of resistance, Students of Color read this as an “unsafe situation” where their ideas were unwelcome and so they chose not to respond (127).

While resistance to race talk can come from both White students and Students of Color, it is more typical for White students to exhibit resistant behaviors. “In general, persons of color are more willing to discuss topics of race than their White counterparts. To them, the actual avoidance of race talk...makes them feel silenced and invalidated” (Race Talk 21). Racialization and instances of racism are very real in the lives of Students of Color and have profoundly shaped their identities. Whether they like it or not, their race defines their place in society and impacts how they are treated by others. Students can tell when their teachers are avoiding race talk, and when the opportunity to discuss the role race plays in the subject matter is “tabled,” or avoided altogether for the sake of keeping the White students comfortable, Students of Color feel like their lives and stories don’t matter.

Closson points out that “White students’ resistance takes the form of silence, challenges to the instructor, classroom disruptions, devaluation...and questioning the professor’s integrity” (83). White people in general tend to have a very difficult time engaging in racial dialogues. They become overwhelmed with a host of emotions such as “anxiety, fear, anger, betrayal, or defensiveness.” Some may even begin to cry as a result of this swirling of emotions (Racial Microaggressions 187). The fear “that they might be misunderstood or unjustly accused” keeps them from participating in the discussion in meaningful, productive ways (Race Talk 16). This fear of being misunderstood seems to be the most pervasive. Instead of risking saying the wrong thing, they tend to try to avoid

the conversation by remaining silent, diverting the conversation elsewhere, dismissing the importance of the topic, speaking about race as a global issue and not a local issue, or tabling the discussion hoping to never return to it again (30).

Aleman and Gaytan summarize Beverly Daniel Tatum's pioneering research in assessing students' engagement with issues of race and racism. Tatum argues that there are three ways White students in her college classes "expressed resistance to curriculum that critiqued Whiteness and highlighted the experiences of diverse racial groups." The first was mentioned in a previous section and involves the idea that race is a taboo topic that White "students want to study...but do not want to talk about." Second, White students "often couch their opposition [to race talk] in the discourse of meritocracy and individualism." Lastly, White students "tend to resist [the] self-awareness" needed in order to interrogate "their role in perpetuating racism" (131).

Even if avoidance tactics are employed by White students out of fear of saying the wrong thing, hurting someone's feelings, or wanting to promote and perpetuate the notion that the "American Dream" is accessible to anyone regardless of racial background, Students of Color perceive these behaviors as an "inauthentic reaction and manipulative ploy" by their White counterparts to garner empathy and consolation, avoid the dialogue by deflecting, and cast the Students of Color in the room as the "bad guy(s)" who are just trying to make them feel bad (Racial Microaggressions 187). Put simply, by refusing to engage White students in these conversations, instructors are giving off the impression that the feelings and discomfort of these students matters more than the feelings and discomfort of the People of Color in the classroom. In order to save the classroom from this discomfort, instructors often table the discussion for another time, hoping that the

students will forget about it. The problem is that the Students of Color don't forget that another opportunity for them to express their point of view and to speak their reality has been swallowed up for the sake of abating White guilt.

White students are not alone in their avoidance of race talk. Students of Color also experience feelings of resistance to race talk in the classroom. Aleman and Gaytan write that "very little research explores how or why Students of Color push back against course content that complicates racism as an endemic and enduring phenomenon" (131). Even so, they cite other scholars who have drawn some conclusions of their own through personal teaching experiences and observations. One scholar argued that Students of Color might be "unconvinced that racism persisted in the United States" because they grew up having "little contact with Whites and were therefore unaware of 'White domination'" (131-132). Other anti-racist pedagogues point to different reasons. Students of Color might be resistant to CRP because they have been "indoctrinate[d] in color-blind and assimilative ideologies...through [their] families, schools, and the media." Perhaps these students have internalized "imperialism, colonialism, and racism that causes them to imitate Whiteness while hating their 'otherness.'" Or maybe "class-and/or skin-color privilege" has "enable[d] them to rationalize disparities as a result of cultural or individual deficits." Finally, some Students of Color might view "assimilation as a coping strategy" to help them evade uncomfortable confrontations about structural racism and White supremacy in the United States (132). Closson adds that "People of Color are very aware of how most White Americans are likely to react to racial topics so they may also minimize differences in order to assure acceptance" (14).

Students of Color walk a strict line between wanting to be true to themselves and their experiences and not wanting to risk offending others or potentially hurting their opportunity to succeed in predominantly White spaces. Often, when topics of race come up “there is one lone person of color in the classroom [or workplace] and she or he is objectified by the others and forced to assume the role of ‘native informant’” (Transgress 43). This tokenization can be particularly troubling to People of Color when they are “unable to relate to the multiple narratives of disenfranchisement centered in the course reading material.” Some Students of Color who have experienced academic success “often take on a persona of ‘racelessness’ [as] a coping mechanism that de-emphasizes characteristics that might identify them as members of the subordinate group” in order to help them better “navigate predominantly White colleges and universities.” Aleman and Gaytan point out that, while “damaging to the psyche,” this “assimilative attempt...is a common tactic that Students of Color adopt to distance themselves from racialized experiences” (139). Students of Color may shrug off the seriousness of racism or White-supremacy in order to avoid being tokenized. Critical Race Theory indicates that “minority status...brings with it a presumed competence to speak about race and racism,” but just because a Student of Color has this competence doesn’t mean that they want to be the sole communicator to their “White counterparts [on] matters that Whites are unlikely to know” (Delgado 11). When put on the spot, many Students of Color might shy away from this opportunity especially if they feel like the course content is not about them or doesn’t really speak to them or their experience (Aleman 139). Conversely, some Students of Color will resist race talk because the course material resonates “too painfully

with their own experiences,” and they aren’t quite ready to interrogate their experiences in a way that requires such openness and vulnerability (140).

Additionally, Aleman and Gaytan write that “mutual experiences of racial disenfranchisement among Communities of Color are not always obvious to students either,” so if a Latino student is in a classroom where the teacher is discussing issues of intersectional discrimination experienced by Black Females, the Latino student may not feel like the content is important for him to understand. “People of Color rarely interact cross-racially and often carry deep-rooted stereotypes and misconceptions about other races,” which results in them not being able to see “commonalities of oppression.” Opportunities for inter-group dialogue between Students of Color where they can identify these commonalities rarely occur, so not only have they developed their own, culturally unique, ways to perform in predominantly White spaces, but they also are unable to interrogate their own “negative perceptions they have internalized about other racial and ethnic groups” (140).

Finally, another reason Students of Color might be resistant to race talk is that they buy into the White-supremacist notion that we live in a post-race society. hooks details that “groups where White folks are in the majority often insist that race and racism does not really have much meaning in today’s world because we are all so beyond caring about it” (Community 28). How can a nation who elected a Black President be a racist, White-supremacist nation? To answer this question I invite people to see who this nation elected in response to that Black President’s election. Constantly experiencing a “denial and invalidation of their racial realities” causes Students of Color to second guess situations where racism is taking place --dismissing it as something that is all in their

head. hooks continues: “While it is a positive aspect of our culture that folks want to see racism end; paradoxically it is this heartfelt longing that underlies the persistence of the false assumption that racism has ended” (Community 29). Both White students and Students of Color who believe in a post-race society would be resistant to talk about race because they would feel like it was unnecessary.

In spite of this resistance, productive race talk is important. When poorly handled, race talk only serves to increase division, misunderstanding, and barriers to learning. However, when skillfully handled, “race talk can improve communication and learning, enhance racial harmony, increase racial literacy, and expand critical consciousness of one’s racial/cultural identity” (Race Talk 21). Specific ways to navigate race talk in the classroom will be further discussed in the following section, but it is important to note here that instructors *can* navigate these barriers successfully. Alexander-Floyd teaches us that “it is necessary at the start of each course to establish the parameters and basis for the examination of racism.” Teachers should front-load the course by explaining from the beginning that students will have to deal with questions of race and racism. They should also provide information documenting the reality of racism (183). Critical Race Pedagogy would dictate that this information is presented through factual narratives and I extend that to include literature and poetry as well. This information also necessarily comes in the form of true accounts experienced by individuals both inside and outside of the classroom.

Alexander-Floyd advocates for explaining to students that “dealing with such topics will likely involve...a range of emotions” and that discomfort is not problematic if it can “be a springboard for intellectual development” (184). An engaged pedagogy

would encourage this discomfort while at the same time requiring that teachers also allow themselves to be vulnerable. Teachers “who expect students to share confessional narratives but who are themselves unwilling to share” are exercising an oppressive form of power over their students. “If professors take the first risk” students are more-likely to follow suit (Transgress 20). Sue conducted a study where he interviewed Students of Color of various racial identities and asked about their experiences discussing race in one of their college courses. He writes about how a lot of the students in the course went through an “internal dialogue” where they wondered whether or not they should speak. The decision they made was influenced by how they thought they would be “evaluated and perceived by peers and professors.” They thought about the “level of emotional support in the classroom and whether or not they had been validated during similar situations” (Racial Microaggressions 187). If the instructor expressed and shared vulnerabilities alongside her students all semester, students were more likely to speak up because the classroom environment was one where their thoughts and opinions mattered.

In short, all students feel some type of resistance when it comes to race talk in the classroom, but the fact that resistance exists doesn’t mean that race talk should be avoided. On the contrary, it means that race talk should be confronted head on with the belief that it is the only way to build bridges of understanding and acceptance. The incorporation of racially diverse voices through literature and poetry will help serve as a vehicle for students to engage in these conversations in natural and normal ways.

Discussion Strategies and Overcoming Barriers to Race Talk

It is understood that there will be resistance by students of all colors when topics of race and identity are brought up in class, but fear of resistance should not prevent

teachers from actively and intentionally engaging their students in these conversations. This section will focus on strategies recommended by teachers and scholars in the field that can be used in order to better navigate race talk in the classroom.

One common recommendation is setting up a classroom climate that cultivates the level and type of participation instructors are expecting from their students. Alexander-Floyd emphasizes that because every student has something to offer “that is both necessary and important...the success of the class requires active participation” (183). If students recognize from the beginning that participation is important and are shown what that participation looks like, they will rise to meet instructors’ expectations.

Race talk requires student engagement. hooks reminds us that “making the classroom a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute” is important to cultivating an engaged pedagogy. “We must build ‘community’ in order to create a climate of openness and intellectual rigor” by recognizing the value of each individual voice (Transgress 39-40). She emphasizes that while cultivating this type of classroom engagement takes work, it is “really the only type of teaching that truly generates excitement in the classroom, that enables students and professors to feel the joy of learning” (204). Arao and Clemens also advocate for this type of classroom environment and discuss it in terms of a “brave space.” Brave spaces “foster respectful but challenging dialogue in the classroom” where “students are willing to ‘risk honesty’ so that an authentic exchange of ideas becomes possible” (Ali 6). A “brave space” classroom helps students understand that the classroom is a place where they should ask difficult questions, challenge content, and seek to push each other towards viewing the concepts being taught in more nuanced ways.

When discussing ways of establishing a classroom where students feel empowered to participate in the learning process, scholars and teachers often advocate for the idea of the classroom as a “safe space.” “Safe space” classrooms are described as places where students feel welcomed, valued, and comfortable participating. While this type of environment is important for students, especially Students of Color, the idea that the classroom should remain “safe” and free of conflict or difficulty is problematic. When teachers choose to acknowledge cultural diversity or engage students in race talk, the idea of the classroom as a safe, harmonious place is challenged. It is difficult for teachers and students to “fully grasp the idea that recognition of difference might also require of us a willingness to see the classroom change, to allow for shifts in relations between students” (Transgress 30). Arao and Clemens discuss moving students away from the notion that the classroom is a “safe space” where they will never feel uncomfortable, and towards the idea that the classroom is a “brave space” where students can ask and answer difficult questions and grapple with issues they might not fully understand in an environment that will take them seriously and recognize that they are just trying to learn. They argue “safe space” philosophy implies that students will never feel discomfort in the classroom, but discomfort --for both students and teachers-- is where learning happens.

The NASPA conducted a survey of students and found that students were more likely to engage with teachers who employed a brave space model in their classroom. Defining the classroom as a brave space allows students to opt in and out of dialogue while “remain[ing] free from attack or excessive scrutiny.” Students in a brave space are free to share emotions and personal fears as they engage in race talk. They characterized a brave space as a classroom with “an unbiased professor who...adopted ground rules,

peers who spoke openly and honestly, and seating arrangements that allowed everyone to see each other” (Ali 8). Arao and Clemens indicate that a brave space within a classroom environment contains five elements: 1) “controversy with civility,” 2) “owning intentions and impacts,” 3) challenge by choice,” 4) “respect,” 5) “no attacks” (Arao). Teachers need to establish these clear ground rules early on in the semester so that students have a clear understanding of class expectations.

Let me just say that the idea of a safe space is important, and marginalized students should have access to safe spaces throughout their education, but the classroom cannot be a “safe space.” It needs to be a place where students and teachers risk, learn, forgive, and grow together with generous attitudes. hooks reminds us that “it is difficult for individuals to shift paradigms and...there must be a setting for folks to voice fears, to talk about what they are doing, how they are doing it, and why” and then to have those revelations discussed, pushed, and challenged by their teachers and peers (Transgress 38). There is a time and place for safe spaces and students should be made aware of the availability of those spaces; however, the brave space also has its time and place. I would argue that time and place is during the school day in the classroom.

After class ground rules have been established and practiced, teachers can rely on various strategies to get students involved in these conversations. Talking about race in the classroom can take on multiple forms: teacher lecturing, student reflective writing, full-class discussions, small-group dialogues, through art, and through quiet pondering. Alexander-Floyd advocates for teacher-led Socratic discussions that “challenge students to think critically in practical ways and focuses discussions of racism on intellectual inquiry grounded in syllogism and debate” (184). The question and answer method can

be used as a starting point before implementing more student-to-student and student-to-teacher dialogue.

Critical educator, Paula Allman, discusses the difference between discussion and dialogue: “Discussions, although often harmonious, actually involve a sharing of monologues that often bear no relation to one another except that they address the same topic or question.” Teachers are responsible for connecting student comments together and then tying the comments back to the theme of the day. Allman continues: “In dialogue, the members of the group share their thinking about the theme or issue that they are investigating...in order to help the group members think critically about the theme or issue they are investigating (Allman 161). The goal of dialogue is to get students to talk with *each other* about an issue instead of to or at the teacher. The teacher introduces the topic, setting, and method for the dialogue, but then they step aside and let the students discuss and learn together. In dialogue, “the objective is to *use* the knowledge or thinking of each member of the group...in order to investigate critically the theme or issue that is the real focus of the group’s attention” (Allman 162). This type of dialogue is not easy to achieve, but with patience and practice dialogue between students can be a very positive way to engage in meaningful race talk. The *Privilege Walk* outlined in the unit plan is an example of an activity that could lead to student-to-student dialogue about privilege and how individuals with certain characteristics of fate have an automatic advantage in society over those who lack these characteristics.

A great way to teach students how to critically engage with unfamiliar ideas that make them uncomfortable is to teach them the skill of Rhetorical Listening as outlined by Krista Ratcliffe in her book of the same title. Rhetorical Listening “signifies a stance of

openness that a person may choose to assume in relation to any person, text, or culture.”

It also “signifies a stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in cross-cultural exchanges” (1). In her book, Ratcliffe points out that “just as all texts can be read...all texts can be listened to” (24). Rhetorical Listening invites people to take a step back and question the *logos* of a person or text before analyzing, scrutinizing, or formulating their own opinions. It invites people to ponder the “why” of a text and not just the “who,” “what,” or “how.” So often we listen with the intent to respond.

Rhetorical Listening is the opportunity to listen with the intent to listen. It promotes understanding of self and others, accountability logic, identifying commonalities and differences, and analyzing not only claims, but the cultural logics that surround those claims (26).

Ratcliffe points out that the goal of Rhetorical Listening is not consensus or agreement. The goal is for participants to “appreciate that the other person is not simply wrong but rather functioning from within a different logic” (33). We learn by listening to those whose opinions differ from our own as long as the listening “occurs in the context of genuine conversation...where there is a desire for all parties to move [their] understanding forward” (36). In order to promote Rhetorical Listening in the classroom teachers could invite students to engage in reflective writing about the following questions: 1) What is happening as I engage with the ideas in this text or concept?; 2) How am I making sense of these ideas?; 3) Why do I make sense of ideas in particular way?; 4) What about my life is causing me to react this way?; 5) What about the author’s logic or paradigm is causing them to discuss these things in this way? Students and instructors can practice Rhetorical Listening to the poems, readings, and videos used in

the unit plan as well as practicing truly listening to other classmates when they choose to comment.

In his 2019 address at the CCCC, Asao Inoue challenged teachers to take Rhetorical Listening a step further and employ the teachings of Tich Nah Hanh when he wrote about “seeing the suchness of a person.” We should “listen to others without trying to control or change them.” Tich Nah Hanh discussed that we should sit close to those we care about and ask: Do I understand you enough? Am I making you suffer? Please help me to read your language properly (Inoue). Teachers can teach, practice with, and encourage students to practice this type of listening when engaging with the literature used in the course as well as in their race talk among each other. Dialogue and Rhetorical Listening make space for students to share in the power structure of the classroom as teachers change their role from teacher to facilitator when these conversations arise.

Participating in reflective writing is also important for students and teachers at any phase of race talk. “Allowing time to reflect on new or differing viewpoints will give students the opportunity to process what has been said in the classroom” (Flanagan 66). Any genre of writing is conducive to reflection. Students could even be encouraged to draw pictures of their thoughts and feelings after engaging in a particularly emotionally draining topic.

Of course, with any new practice mistakes can be made. Teachers need to be careful not to take a passive approach when it comes to discussing race by dismissing the issue as if it is unimportant, tabling the discussion with no intention to return to the topic at a later date, or ignoring the dialogue in order to avoid confronting the issues. Teachers need to be careful not to become angry with students for engaging in the brave space with

information that might be difficult to digest, nor should they look to the Students of Color in the room to be the resident race experts (Racial Microaggressions 188). Race talk is for everyone regardless of race or identity.

Teachers can prepare for race talk by: training in race talk facilitation; acknowledging their own biases, fears, and anxieties about race and being vulnerable with their students; interacting and dialoguing with people of other races, cultures, and ethnicities in real-life settings outside of the classroom; and understanding group dynamics and processes. Teachers who are able to get students to listen to and hear one another in addition to acknowledging and validating the strong feelings likely to arise in a difficult dialogue, are going to be more successful in facilitating race talk in their classrooms (Racial Microaggressions 189). hooks details that “to engage in dialogue is one of the simplest ways we can begin as teachers, scholars, and critical thinkers to cross boundaries, the barriers that may or may not be erected by race, gender, class, professional standing, and a host of other differences” (Transgress 130). Students need to confront these issues in order to build inclusivity into the classroom and into their lives.

In-Class Activity Ideas

The following is a list of possible classroom activities that can be used to help facilitate discussion and dialogue on race, and many of these activities will be incorporated into the unit plan included in the second portion of the thesis:

- Privilege Walk
- *Invisible Knapsack* inventory
- Informal and Formal Debates
- Affinity Maps

- Improv Activities
- Fishbowl Discussions
- Reflective Free Writes
- Interviews
- Object Connections
- Cross-Cultural Group Connections
- Harvard Bias Test
- They Say, I Say activities
- Anonymous Digital Discussions
- Q&A Sessions

My Intersectional Embodiment and the Classroom

I have always wanted to be a teacher, and nothing in my life has ever kept me from accomplishing the things I set out to accomplish. Hard work and natural abilities have made me successful in many areas including sports, academics, and music. I am also not a person who changes my mind very often. When I say I am going to do something, I do it. I wanted to be a state champion track runner, so I did it. I wanted to get a Division I track scholarship, so I did it. I wanted to beat all of my siblings on the ACT, so I did it. I wanted to get high grades in school, so I did. I found the man I wanted to marry, so I actively pursued him, and we have been married for over 8 years. I wanted to be a teacher, so I finished my undergrad with a degree in English teaching. I wanted to go to graduate school, so two weeks after my son was born I started classes. I am blessed to have parents, siblings, and a partner who support me in all of my ambitions.

While I can say that I have been successful in my twenty-seven years, I cannot say that success has come without a bit of pain and a lot of weathering. Every day I wake up and feel like I have something to prove. I am a Black woman living in a majority White community. I have had one Black teacher. I have had one Black female friend. I constantly feel like I need to accomplish more and more in order to get people to respect me and to believe that I know what I am talking about.

I have always wanted to be a teacher, so when I applied to graduate school, I also applied to be a Graduate Instructor (GI). I was so excited to begin my first “official” teaching job. Finally, I would get to do what I love while still showing people that I was smart and that I knew what I was talking about. I have been dealing with microaggressive behavior all of my life, and for the longest time I just shrugged it off, choosing to believe the best about people. When teammates would tell me the only reason I was good at sports was because I was Black, I would laugh it off and work harder. When guys at school didn’t ask me out on dates or to dances, I shrugged it off telling myself that they were idiots anyway. When kids at church tugged at my curls without asking, as if I were a doll to be admired, I told them it didn’t bother me. When family friends and relatives laughed at the fact that my first daughter came out with pale skin, green eyes, and light brown hair, I tried to laugh with them. When I meet people after talking to them on the phone and they remark that they had no idea I was Black and they are so excited to work with a Black person, I thanked them.

I foolishly thought that my students would respect me as an authority figure in the classroom because of my credentials, but my age, my gender, and my Black skin undermined my authority and told my students --especially my White, male students--

that they did not need to treat me like their other instructors. While I recognize that part of this disrespect comes from the fact that I am young, female teacher, none of my young, White, female counterparts in the department have had to deal with the issues I have faced on the level that I have had to deal with them. The fact that I am not only young and female but also Black definitely plays a role in how my students perceive and treat me as their instructor. Alexander-Floyd writes that “students typically experience cognitive dissonance when they have People of Color as professors and... often question the authority of women and men of color.” Upon seeing me in the classroom as their instructor, many of my student’s experience what Alexander-Floyd called “cognitive dissonance.” Cognitive dissonance is a “profound disorientation that occurs when...our lived experience fails to conform to deeply ingrained beliefs and assumptions” (184). In my case, the majority of students I taught at USU had never had a non-White instructor before, and my presence as the authority figure in our classroom was against what they had always known to be true.

This reality --the reality that my brown skin made students feel like they had the right to question or challenge my authority-- was made evident for me during my second semester as a GI. One of my White male students came to visit me during my office hours. He told me that he was going on a cruise and asked if there was anything he was going to miss in class while he was gone. I looked at the schedule and remarked that he would lose some points for being absent, but he shouldn’t miss too much. I encouraged him to check with a classmate when he got back to figure out exactly what he missed. This student missed three class meetings. On the third class meeting of his absence, I handed out a reading and asked students to be prepared to discuss it the following

Monday. On Monday, this student showed up to class unprepared along with over half of my other students. I gave a reading quiz which most of the students failed. The White, male student who was absent on the day I passed out the reading, cheated off of his friend's quiz and turned in a completed answer sheet. I gave him a zero and commented that I saw him cheat off of his friend's paper and that there was no way he could have completed the reading because he wasn't in class to get it when I passed it out.

About 10 minutes after I graded the quiz, this student arrived in my office, visibly angry. He said it was my fault that he didn't get the reading because when he came to tell me he was going to be gone for the cruise, I didn't tell him we were going to have a reading. He said he shouldn't have gotten a zero on the quiz and that he wanted me to change his grade. "It's not fair," he repeated over and over again. "Your class is the only class I am having problems with. All of my other teachers didn't have a problem with me being gone." After considerable back-and-forth, I was angry and upset and I just wanted him to leave. Him, this White male student --a product of our White supremacist society-- who had come to challenge his Black female teacher, to demand that she give him a grade he didn't deserve. Finally, I told him bluntly that I was not going to change his grade and if we got to the end of the semester and the zero was keeping him from passing the class, I would give him the points back. This got him to leave my office, but I still had to face him three times a week in class for the remaining two months of the semester.

I was extra careful in how I graded his assignments. I spent extra time on his papers justifying every lost point with extra evidence not offered to my other students. Each time he got a poor grade I watched the door during my office hours hoping that he wouldn't show up. This student, however, probably thought nothing of his actions and

didn't even make the connection that the only reason he challenged my authority in the first place, is because he was socially conditioned to believe that he could. Alexander-Floyd notes: "Since Blackness in particular has been identified with low intelligence, students question the intellectual capabilities of Black professors and...challenge their authority. These reactions are conscious and unconscious and range from withdrawal to accusations of discrimination to classroom outbursts to physical threats" (184). In other words, what happened between me and this White, male student was not unique to teachers who identify as I do.

Once the semester ended, I was relieved that I would not have to face this student anymore. Little did I know that this was not going to be an isolated incident. I was asked to teach a seven-week summer course and gladly took up the job. I love teaching. I have always wanted to be a teacher. The first few days of class went fine, but then another White, male student approached me and asked if he could leave every class 15-minutes early in order to get to another class on time. There was a mix up in the scheduling and his other class started exactly when my class ended. I told him he could leave early, but that he would have to talk to his classmates to see if he missed anything. He agreed. For the rest of the semester, he left 15 minutes early. He also arrived between 10-15 minutes late every day. As a consequence, he missed announcements about due dates, readings, and other course information which I typically show both at the beginning and end of class.

There were days he arrived so late or left so early that he missed writing prompts and my verbal explanations or clarifications of writing projects. Every week, the students were given an in-class writing day with points attached to incentivize students to show

up. On the second writing day of the term, I noticed that people were packing up and leaving early. Before the following in-class writing day, I explained that students needed to stay for the entire in-class writing day in order to receive their full points for the day. If they left early, they would forfeit some of their points. This White, male student was livid. He started to yell at me in front of the entire class that I was being unreasonable. That he talked to me and I said he could leave early. That he couldn't help it that he had another class. I asked why he always had to leave my class early instead of arriving at his other class late and he responded with, "well, sometimes we have quizzes in that class!"

We went back and forth while the rest of the students looked on. I finally had to get him to stop talking. I just wanted him to stop talking, to stop attacking me in front of all of the other students, to stop blaming me for all of his problems. I explained that I design my class independently of other courses on campus. I make the rules and the rule is that if you leave early on an in-class writing day, you do not get all of the points. I then told him he could file a complaint if he wanted to and he asked me to email him the complaint form, so I did.

Similar to the previous situation, I now felt anxious every day I had to go and teach that class. This student would write things in his assignments about how I was unfair and not good at my job because he never knew what was going on. During class discussions he would make terrible comments about women, immigrants, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Every time he walked into the classroom, the entire room became heavier.

Closson remarks that "faculty of color who teach such courses engage a 'professional, emotional and physical labor'...that often differs from that of their majority

race colleagues, a labor that often is underestimated” (Closson 83). I tried to seek guidance from my mentors, but being White teachers, they could not identify with my situation. Each time I had to face that student I felt sick to my stomach. I just wanted him to go away. I breathed a heavy sigh of relief when the semester ended and final grades were posted.

My embodiment as a teacher has a profound influence on my teaching. It dictates the clothes I wear, the descriptiveness of my syllabus, the content I select, and the demeanor I adopt with my students. Sue rightly points out that while White university professors are generally perceived as “competent, capable, and possessing...expertise in their field of study,” Professors of Color do not have that same luxury. “Black professors...feel compelled to provide proof that they deserve to hold the position of professor to White students and colleagues...Doubts about their academic and leadership credentials are constantly entertained by faculty of color about how they are perceived and may lead [them to employ] communication and behavioral strategies when they enter a classroom” that differ from those of their White counterparts (Race Talk 124-125). This is true of my experience as a college composition instructor. Students feel like they can challenge my authority and manipulate me into changing my course to better suit them simply because of what I look like. It is exhausting, tiring, and something I foolishly did not think would be a problem because I had worked hard enough to prove myself. Or, so I thought.

My biggest fear about engaging students in Critical Race Pedagogy and using primarily Ethnic Literature as a vehicle for race talk in my classroom, is that my students

won't take me seriously because they have been socially conditioned not to. "Of course the Black teacher is going to talk about racism, what else would she talk about?"

In order to help Teachers of Color overcome these barriers, Closson encourages us to adopt a race pedagogy. She argues that race pedagogy is personally liberating because Teachers of Color finally get to share their story. She wants Teachers of Color to choose to teach about race and identity as insiders instead of as objective outsiders. She writes: "The choice to teach as insiders allows us to give voice to our personal experiences of race and validate those experiences through instructional authority...invites openness from Students of Color and encourages them to similarly give voice to their experiences of race" (86). Critical Race Theory advocates for narratives and counternarratives. Engaged pedagogy and dialogue require teacher vulnerability as well as student vulnerability. Faculty of Color need to confidently teach about race and make racial issues a reality for their students by speaking about racisms and microaggressions through first-hand accounts. Closson points out that when Black teachers teach race-based courses with intentional pedagogy, there is "significant hope for fostering transformative learning experiences in students, while maintaining the personal integrity and voice of Black professors." When Faculty of Color employ an engaged, Critical Race Pedagogy bravely and honestly, "teaching race becomes more critical and less dangerous" (87).

By virtue of where I was raised, where I went to college, and where I am probably going to be teaching, I know that I will be dealing with these issues regularly, but I am willing to do so. The work of engaging students in race talk, of providing students the opportunity to engage with literature by traditionally marginalized groups, and of being

the Black, female teacher in the classroom is important work. If, like hooks, I have to “surrender my need for immediate affirmation of successful teaching...and accept that students may not appreciate the value of a certain standpoint or process straightaway,” it will be worth it. I understand that it “takes time for students to experience that challenge as positive,” but involving diverse literature and poetry in the classroom is a challenge well worth the reward (Transgress 49). This is an important work, and I am grateful that I have made up my mind to be part of it.

PART II: THE POETRY OF RACE AND IDENTITY UNIT

In her book of essays entitled *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, bell hooks describes an experience she had during her first year of college when she was exposed to Adrienne Rich’s poem, “The Burning of Paper Instead of Children.” There is one line of the poem in particular that “moved and disturbed something within” hooks. The line reads: “This is the oppressor’s language yet I need it to talk to you.” hooks relates that she has never forgotten this line and could not have forgotten it even if she “tried to erase it from memory.” She writes: “Words impose themselves, take root in our memory against our will. The words of this poem begat a life in my memory that I could not abort or change” (167). Anytime hooks finds herself thinking about language, the words of Rich’s poem make their way to her lips: “This is the oppressor’s language yet I need it to talk to you.” The power and importance of poetry is not lost on those of us who love to read and write in the poetic form; however, to some of our students, poem is a four-letter-word. The incorporation of Poets of Color - -where the themes and topics will be difficult for students to discuss--into the classroom only serves to further complicate the issue because students are not only being asked to

participate in difficult race talk, they are being asked to do it while analyzing an unpopular literary form. In spite of these hurdles, I still feel like using poetry to navigate these discussions is a worthy endeavor.

On the topic of student disdain for poetry, Adrienne Rich remarked that, “students are encouraged to regard poetry ‘through a long and protective viewing tube’ that is as hierarchic as it is voyeuristic, ‘as an interesting object, and example of this style or that period’” (Beach 155). Beach et. al. points to the ironically named *cultural literacy* approach to poetry as the reason students regard poetry in this way --as an object to view from far away that they will never be able to understand let alone relate to. The cultural literacy approach “involves acculturation into poetic forms, terms, approaches to analysis, and certain poets deemed canonical or worthy of study (CRT prompts me to ask: Who gets to decide what is worthy of study?). Defenders of the *cultural literacy* approach contend that there are certain poets that all students should be familiar with before they are deemed worthy enough to share their own poetic responses (Beach 155). With these ideas about poetry circulating among educators, it is no wonder that students have a difficult time finding the beauty of poetry and its place in both their academic and non-academic lives.

In order to make poetry more accessible to students, Beach et. al. advocates for incorporating a *critical populist* framework when it comes to inviting students to engage with poetry. A *critical populist* framework envisions poetry as “something to be used, adapted, cut up, borrowed from, parodied, and played with in all sorts of ways” (Faust 117). Instructors will have more success in the classroom if they introduce poems to the students that they believe students will find engaging than by using canonical poems

from textbooks or anthologies. Encouraging students to find poems in their everyday lives to bring and share with the class that help explicate unit themes will also help with student engagement. I believe that students can connect with poems by People of Color just as easily as they can connect with poems by White authors; they just have not been given many opportunities to try. Appreciation for poetry “should promote active engagement and involvement on the part of the student” (Beach 156).

The study of poetry can also serve a political purpose in the classroom through “democratic engagements.” Valerie Kinloch argues that democratic engagements with poetry “can inspire all students, particularly those who have experienced prior school struggles, to develop...academic identities and build meaningful connections between the texts they encounter in classrooms and the contexts of their own lives” (Beach 156).

Thinking about the study of poetry through the lens of Critical Race Pedagogy reveals that poetry can help students engage with difficult racial topics in a way that they may have not encountered before. Delgado and Stefancic remind us that “well-told stories,” and I would argue, well-written poems, “describing the reality of black and brown lives can help readers to bridge the gap between their worlds and those of others.” They continue: “Engaging stories can help us understand what life is like for others and invite the reader into a new and unfamiliar world” (49). Poetry has this power.

Not only does poetry encourage students to interact with diverse perspectives, but it also allows them an opportunity to explore their identity. “Poetry encourages diverse students to explore their identities and articulate places and moments they feel are central to their lives...Encountering poetry that is grounded in students’ lives allows for them to engage critical in the world around them as well as to connect with their peers around

moments of joy and celebration” (Beach 160). The brevity of poems allows for a close read and a more thorough engagement with the language and themes than any other form of literature which provides more opportunities for these joyful and perhaps, uncomfortable, moments of connection.

Sue also recognizes the importance of literature and poetry for facilitating race talk. He writes: “For the average citizen...reading fiction, poetry or attending plays about the culture is one way to develop knowledge of it. Educators and teachers should...read literature written by or for persons of the culture.” Sue continues: “Writings from individuals of that group may provide richness based on experiential reality...Reading such literature makes it possible to enter the cultural world of minorities in a safe and nonthreatening way” (Race Talk 215).

The sympathetic and sympathizing power of poetry serves to “[empower] youth, [as] a means of inviting their lives and interests into the classroom, [and] building community” (Beach 166). Just as hooks was inspired by the line in a poem she read years ago to pursue her life’s work in education as a practice of freedom, students have the capacity to connect with poetry on this same level. My intention is to have this connection help expand their world views by serving as a vehicle for productive, thoughtful race talk. This unit on poetry is part of a larger Language Arts curriculum that features Authors of Color and Ethnic Literature.

Assessing and Evaluating Student Progress

A necessary, but often unwelcome, element of teaching is assessment. After identifying various objectives for a course or assignment, teachers then need to evaluate the ability of students to accomplish a desired objective. While “assessment plays a key

role in governing teachers' and students' practices in the classroom," it should not be the only motivating factor for student learning (Xerri 1). Assessment-driven classroom practices are particularly problematic in the Language Arts classroom. According to Daniel Xerri: "courses that are too heavily dependent on examinations do not provide students with sufficient training in the creative aspects of English." He continues, "if examinations undermine students' engagement with literature they are not genuinely contributing to the learning process" (2). Xerri is verbalizing how the many Language Arts instructors feel about assessment-driven practices.

While it is true that Language Arts instruction should not be centered around assessment, it is also true that assessment is a necessary part of the classroom. Teachers need to figure out if the desired outcomes of the course are being met and assessment -- Formative and Summative-- is the only way to make this happen. As discussed previously, poetry is a difficult area of literature to teach because it has traditionally been positioned as an area of writing only accessible to the very affluent thinkers who are thoughtful and mature enough to appreciate it (Faust 117). A sage-like teacher would stand in front of a room of students and dump their own wisdom about a poem into their students instead of engaging students in the exciting work of meaning-making. This method ends up with teachers who are frustrated with students for not analyzing poems correctly, and students who hate poetry. Unfortunately, "there are too many teachers who make poems look like a mathematical equation," as if there is no other way to "solve" the problem presented in a poem than the way the teacher dictates it should be solved (Xerri 7). These poor teaching practices lead students to believe that poetry is a genre to be

studied only academically with a teacher instead of a genre to be enjoyed on a personal level as well.

One of the beautiful qualities of poetry is that it speaks different things to different people at different stages in their lives. Fleming and Stephens reveal the characteristics of effective poetry pedagogy when they highlight the importance of engaging students with a variety of poems, allowing for flexibility in ways poems are read and studied, providing students with necessary background knowledge, allowing students to experience a poem before studying it in detail, and helping students recognize the characteristics of poetry in comparison to other genres (193). Employing these techniques will allow students a more holistic engagement with poetry where they experience the poems as an art form to be enjoyed and appreciated as well as analyzed and studied. Providing opportunities for students to read a poem multiple times and to craft personal responses to a poem will help assist in fostering this type of appreciation (Xerri 12).

The poetry unit included in this thesis grants students the opportunity to analyze poetry by People of Color. Students are also encouraged to write their own poetry to help them articulate their understanding of course themes as well as help them process all of the emotions that come with analyzing and discussion racially charged themes. Students will be assessed on how well they can interpret the underlying themes of a poem as well as on their ability to create poems that explore a provided theme. There will be two forms of Summative Assessment: 1) an essay assessment where students analyze “an unseen poem” (Xerri 14); 2) a poetry portfolio that includes three poems they have written centered on the themes of the unit.

Unit Plan Audience and Outline

The following unit plan is designed for High School Junior and Senior Language Arts students and will take place towards the last half of the school year. This unit plan was designed with high school students in the state of Utah in mind. To help provide some context for the students these lesson plans were designed for, I have provided the demographics of students in the state of Utah who enrolled in Utah schools in the 2019-2020 school year. According to the Utah State Board of Education, the total number of students enrolled in Utah K-12 schools in the Fall of 2019 was 658,952 students. 48,000 of those students enrolled in grade 11 and 46,785 of those students enrolled in grade 12. The Utah State Board of Education also reports the demographics of the students enrolled in the state K-12 schools. Their Data and Statistics Report outlines the following demographics for the total number of students enrolled throughout the state (658,952): 6,749 American Indian; 9,225 African American/Black; 11,062 Asian; 113,945 Hispanic; 18,742 Multiple Race; 10,441 Pacific Islander; 488,844 White (Utah State). I chose to keep these students in mind as I designed the unit because I will most likely be doing my own teaching in the state of Utah and I wanted to make sure these materials would be of practical use to me in my profession.

Knowing that over half of Utah's K-12 students identify as White greatly impacted the classroom activities, poems, discussion formatting, and questions utilized in the unit plan. As noted in the Thesis Introduction, "from a young age, we are taught that to acknowledge difference is to engage in deplorable social behavior" (4). Similarly, Sue reminds us that "the negative reactions of parents, relatives, friends, and peers toward issues of race...convey mixed signals" (Race Talk 192). These lesson plans are assuming

that the majority of students enrolled in this course were raised in an atmosphere where they were taught these things about racial conversations. It assumes that students do not have the opportunity to discuss issues of race, identity, and privilege in their own homes. With these considerations in mind, the overall objective of the unit is to get the students to listen, to seek to understand, and to confront their own biases surrounding race and identity. Recognizing that not all K-12 schools in the nation reflect these same demographics, these lessons were also designed to allow instructors freedom to modify and add as they see fit. In classrooms with a greater number of Students of Color, the discussions and activities might look completely different. The unit plan trusts that instructors are familiar enough with their students to recognize where they need to add and take away from the daily lesson plans in order to best accommodate the needs of their students.

The unit is part of an entire 11-12th grade Language Arts curriculum centered on empowering the voices of People of Color. By the time they begin this unit—towards the beginning of the second semester or latter part of the year—students will have had opportunities to read fiction and non-fiction texts written by Authors of Color and they will be used to my teaching style and philosophy as their instructor. Utilizing the advice from bell hooks discussed in the Thesis Introduction, I will have already worked to establish the classroom as a “community” with a “climate of openness and intellectual rigor” (Transgress 39-40). The activities on Week 1, Day 1 and Week 1, Day 2 of the unit may serve as more of a review for students than an initial introduction into Race Talk. Students will understand that I expect them to be active participants in in-class activities and discussions; however, students will also know that I respect their decision to remain

silent on certain topics. Because I am fully aware that the themes of this unit are difficult to confront and discuss, opportunities to write about individual feelings in a reflective writing journal are built in throughout the unit in order to help less-vocal students participate in the class in a way that makes them feel most comfortable.

The Poetry of Race and Identity Unit Plan is organized into 16 lesson plans taking place over three weeks and one day. The first two weeks of the unit invite students to engage with difficult topics surrounding race. Week one frames the unit and engages with the following themes: Implicit Bias, Brave Spaces, Identity, Code Switching and Code Meshing, and Racism(s). Week two of the unit discusses Privilege, Language and Power, Miocroaggressions, and Anti-racism. During the third week of the unit, students will participate in intense poetry writing workshops where they will draft, peer review, revise, and finalize their own poems centered on the unit themes. Students will author three poems that will be turned in with the Final Poetry Portfolio. In addition to pre- and post-assessments, the Final Poetry Portfolio will analyze the students' ability to read and analyze poetry while identifying issues of race articulated in the poems.

The pre- and post-assessments evaluate student ability to read, analyze, and discuss a poem centered around a racial theme. In addition to being able to identify the theme, or identify what they perceive is the theme using evidence from the poem and in-class discussions to back up their discoveries, the pre- and post-assessments also ask the students to take a closer look at the theme as it relates to society and to their own lives. The pre- and post-assessments are the exact same exam and ask students to answer questions about the exact same poem. I am looking to assess student progress on

identifying, analyzing, and discussing the themes of the unit. This progress can only be adequately measured through a pre- and post- assessment.

The final day of the unit is reserved for an in-class poetry reading where students have the opportunity to share their own poems or a found poem that centers around the main themes of the unit. This day is designed to be a party to celebrate student learning and creativity. While all students should be encouraged to participate, not all students should be forced to participate. The instructor can determine what is best for their students when designing the format for this poetry reading.

In addition to daily lesson plans, the unit also includes supplementary materials such as handouts of poems discussed in class, PowerPoint presentations that align with the lesson, assignment sheets and handouts, and links to video and audio materials. The unit plan also keeps in mind the various ways students learn and employs a variety of teaching methods and activities to adapt to different learning styles. The unit plan incorporates a lot of small and large group work and discussion and is aligned with the Utah Core Standards for English Language Arts Grades 11-12 in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language (Utah Education Network). The Utah Core Standards are very similar to the Common Core State Standards outlined by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers (Common Core).

Essay Assessment

The goal of the essay assessment is to see how well students can “identify with the texts they encounter and provide a personal response to them” (Xerri 14). Students will have multiple opportunities to practice participating in this type of assessment through the unit by writing personal responses to various poems on almost a daily basis.

They will have opportunities to discuss their responses with the whole class or in small groups throughout the unit.

Students will begin the unit with a **pre-assessment** I will provide them with a poem by an Author of Color and a prompt that outlines what I am looking for in their responses. They will be given class time to read and analyze the poem and offer their 250-500 word response. The goal of the pre-assessment is to learn about what themes students see in the poem. Perhaps they don't recognize the racial implications or feel like discussing issues of race in their initial responses, that is okay. Students will be assessed on their ability to provide evidence for their findings by using the poem to support their opinions. By the end of the unit, when they take this exact same exam looking at the exact same poem, I will assess their progress by how well they are able to articulate and engage with issues of race and apply what they have learned throughout the unit in their responses.

As mentioned, the **post-assessment** will be in the same format, use the same poem, and utilize almost the exact same prompt as the **pre-assessment**. I want to see how students have progressed in their analytical skills in addition to assessing how well their ability to articulate their claims using evidence from the text has improved. The Essay Exam is assessing the students' ability to:

- Read, analyze, and interpret a poem;
- Explicate and think critically about themes of race, privilege, and identity as discussed in a piece of poetry;
- Justify their perspective on a poem using evidence from the text and topics discussed in class.

Poetry Portfolio

Also included in the final assessment for this unit is a Poetry Portfolio. The Poetry Portfolio will consist of an Introductory Letter, three poems the students have written along with revisions and preliminary feedback for each poem, and a Reflection Letter. They will use their writing responses, the course content, in-class workshops and peer reviews, and our discussions about the poetic genre as tools to help them in their construction.

Because I want to enhance my students' attitudes about poetry, I will grade their poems using a growth-oriented approach as outlined by Serge Madhere in the *Journal of Negro Education* and Andrea Griswold in *The English Journal*. Each of these authors advocates for allowing students to create multiple drafts of a poem before submitting the final product. This teaches students to value the process almost as much as the product (Griswold 70). Assessments that focus on evaluating how well a student is able to accomplish a desired objective are important, but such assessments lack continuity and disregard the learning process. The challenge these issues present "can be met if grading practices are made more growth-oriented" (Madhere 292).

Students will have one peer reviewed and one instructor reviewed version of each of the three poems to use in helping them compose their final versions. Griswold introduces the idea of an Assessment List centered around three grading categories: Effectiveness, Process, and Mechanics. The Effectiveness category focuses on the students use of specific poetic devices that they are currently learning or have learned; the Process category focuses on effort as indicated by their writing over multiple drafts; and the Mechanics category that looks at poetry structure, form, and rhetorical grammar.

With each poem the student submits, they will receive revision-based feedback they are expected to apply to the next poem (Griswold 71). The Assessment Lists included in this unit are an adaptation of Griswold's list. Each student is at a different place in their poetry writing and the Assessment List will allow me to look at student's poetry from where they are instead of where I think they should be. Griswold explains it this way: "[Assessment Lists] allow me to differentiate according to the students' skill levels" and allow for grades to be provided based upon individual student growth (74). Students will submit each poem, it's drafts, and the Assessment Lists so that I can look at their progress and grade them on how their poetry grew and improved over the course of the unit. The Final Poetry Portfolio is assessing the students' ability to:

- Think critically about a piece of poetry;
- Accept and incorporate feedback about their poetry;
- Explore themes of poetry in their own writing;
- Incorporate elements of the poetic genre into their own writing.

These goals align with the Utah Core Standards that I include in the body of the unit plan.

APPENDIX

The appendix includes of the lesson plans and supplementary material for the Poetry of Race and Identity Unit Plan.

Unit Plan Overview

	Framing and Implicit Bias	Discussion/ Pre-Assessment	Identity	Code Switching / Meshing	Racism(s)
Week 1 -	<p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why should we talk about race in our classroom? How do my biases and experiences affect my views on race? What can I do to work on my own biases? In what ways can Poetry help us learn more about other races and ethnicities? <p>POEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How to Dismantle a Heart</i> by Rodney Gomez <i>Identity</i> by Juilo Noboa Polanco <p>UTAH CORE STANDARD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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. 	<p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can I participate in discussions about race and identity in a respectful, productive way? What is the appropriate terminology for various racial groups? How well can I analyze a piece of poetry to identify racial themes? <p>POEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Kid Next To Me At The 7pm Showing Of The Avengers Has A Toy Gun</i> By Ashley M. Jones <p>UTAH CORE STANDARD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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. 	<p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who am I? Who/What determines our identity? How does our environment shape our identities? How do stereotypes influence our identities? What choices do we make each day about how we want others to perceive us? <p>POEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>When I was Growing Up</i> by Nellie Wong <i>Sure, You Can Ask Me A Personal Question</i> by Diane Burns <p>UTAH CORE STANDARD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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.) 	<p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is Code Switching? How do I participate? How can code switching be helpful? Is all code switching created equal? What is Code Meshing? How can code meshing help with inclusivity? Who decides the codes? Why? Is that fair? <p>POEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>To Live in the Borderlands Means You</i> Gloria Anzaldua <p>UTAH CORE STANDARD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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. 	<p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is racism? How is it manifest? What did racism look like in the past (Individual/structural)? What does it look like now (individual/structural)? What does the term post-race society mean? Who does this term benefit? When do racisms develop? How can I counter my own personal racisms? <p>POEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Contract Says: We’d Like this Conversation to Bilingual</i> by Ada Limon <i>The Better Sort of People</i> by John Beecher <p>UTAH CORE STANDARD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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).

	Privilege	Language and Power	Language and Power	Microaggressions	Anti-Racism
Week 2 -	<p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What types of privilege are there (class, race, etc.)? What privileges do you have based upon things that you have no control over that other people do not have? Why is it difficult for people to discuss and own their privileges? What is the myth of meritocracy? <p>POEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Harlem</i> by Langston Hughes <i>Let America Be America Again</i> by Langston Hughes <i>Caged Bird</i> by Maya Angelou <p>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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. 	<p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is language? What is power? How are language and power related? How is language used to break down barriers? How is language used to create them? How do language and power function in your own communities? <p>POEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>If Black English isn't a Language, Then Tell Me What Is?</i> by James Baldwin (not a poem) <i>Let America Be America Again</i> by Langston Hughes <i>The Caged Bird</i> by Maya Angelou <p>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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. 	<p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did our class define Language and Power? 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.)? How are language and power manifest among traditionally marginalized communities? <p>POEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Parsley</i> by Rita Dove <i>To Live in the Borderlands Means You</i> Gloria Anzaldua (revisit) <p>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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. 	<p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is a microaggression? What is weathering? How does the use of a microaggression affect People of Color? 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? How can we combat our own use of microaggressions? Why should we? How can we offend someone without even knowing it, and why should we care? <p>POEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Citizen</i> by Claudia Rankine (a series of excerpts) <p>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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). 	<p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does it mean to be an anti-racist? Why is anti-racism important? What can I do in my own life to be an anti-racist? What did I learn during this unit that I will carry with me? <p>POEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Alone</i> by Maya Angelou (p. 69) <i>And Still I Rise</i> by Maya Angelou <p>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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.

	Unit Review	Workshop #1	Workshop #2	Workshop #3	Post-Assessment / Workshop #4
Week 3 - Poetry Portfolio Workshop Week	<p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the requirements for the Final Poetry Portfolio? How can I be a “good” Peer Reviewer? What are some of the themes we have discussed during this unit and what poems have informed them? What poems were particularly powerful for you? What is Figurative Language and how can I incorporate it into my poems? <p>HOMEWORK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Poem #1 and bring three hard copies of one complete draft of Poem #1 to class for a workshop <p>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing Standard 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. Writing Standard 5: 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.) Writing Standard 10: 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. 	<p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is sensory language and why is it useful in poetry? How can I be a “good” Peer Reviewer? <p>HOMEWORK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise Poem #1 and bring one hard copy of a <u>complete draft</u> to class to submit to instructor for feedback; Draft Poem #2 and bring three hard copies of one complete draft of Poem #2 to class for a workshop <p>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing Standard 4 Writing Standard 5 Writing Standard 10 	<p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can I be a “good” Peer Reviewer? What feedback does my instructor have about my poem? <p>HOMEWORK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete final revisions on Poem #1 and prepare a copy to submit with portfolio; Revise Poem #2 and bring one hard copy of a <u>complete draft</u> to class to submit to instructor for feedback; Draft Poem #3 and bring three hard copies of one complete draft of Poem #3 to class for a workshop <p>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing Standard 4 Writing Standard 5 Writing Standard 10 	<p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well can I analyze a piece of poetry to identify racial themes? <p>HOMEWORK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete final revisions on Poem #2 and prepare a copy to submit with portfolio; Revise Poem #3 and bring one hard copy of a <u>complete draft</u> to class to submit to instructor for feedback; Draft portfolio Introduction Letter and Reflection Letter; Select a poem to read for our In-Class Poetry Reading <p>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing Standard 4 Writing Standard 5 Writing Standard 10 	<p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students select poems to read in front of the class for a class poetry reading Debrief/discuss the unit as a whole <p>HOMEWORK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete final revisions on Poem #3 and prepare a copy to submit with portfolio; Compile <i>Final Portfolio</i> by staple or paper-clipping the following documents in the required order DUE NEXT CLASS PERIOD!; 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 <p>UTAH CORE STANDARDS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing Standard 4 Writing Standard 5 Writing Standard 10

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

Utah Core Standards Addressed in Poetry of Race and Identity Unit Plan

Listed below are all of the Utah Core Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language.

Utah Core Standards:

- Reading: Literature Standard 1: 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.
- Reading: Literature Standard 2: 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.
- Reading: Literature Standard 4: 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.)
- Reading: Literature Standard 6: 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).
- Reading: Literature Standard 10: 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.
- Reading: Informational Text Standard 7: 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.
- Writing Standard 4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
- Writing Standard 5: 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.)
- Writing Standard 10: 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.

- Speaking and Listening Standard 1: 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.
 - Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
 - Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
 - Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
 - Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

- Language Standard 5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
 - Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.
 - Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

Week 1

Poetry of Race and Identity Unit Plan Week 1

Week 1, Day 1: Framing	[75 minute class period]
Broad Topic: Framing and Implicit Bias	Questions to Consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why should we talk about race in our classroom? 2. How do my biases and experiences affect my views on race? 3. What can I do to work on my own biases? 4. In what ways can Poetry help us learn more about other races and ethnicities?
Objectives (SWBAT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ...articulate the “so what” for a poetry unit focused on race and identity; ★ ...define implicit bias and develop an understanding of their own implicit biases; ★ ...experiment with reading and analyzing poetry. 	Materials Needed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflective Writing Journals (each student keeps their own journal throughout the unit) 2. Computers (student supplied or classroom set) 3. Link to Harvard Implicit Bias Test: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html 4. Implicit Bias Tests Response Questions Worksheet (for display) 5. Implicit Bias - Poetry PowerPoint 6. Rhetorical Listening Questions Worksheet (prints for each student) 7. Poems (prints for each student): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>How to Dismantle a Heart</i> by Rodney Gomez b. <i>Identity</i> by Juilo Noboa Polanco

GETTING STARTED:

Harvard Implicit Bias Test - 15 minutes (This activity can also be done as a homework assignment prior to class.)¹

- Students use computers to take two of the following Harvard Implicit Bias Tests using the provided link above. Have students take the “Race IAT” in addition to another test of their choosing.
 - Native IAT;
 - Arab-Muslim IAT;
 - Asian IAT;
 - Race IAT.
- After completing each test, students take a moment to write in their reflective writing journals about their results using the Implicit Bias Tests Response Questions Worksheet as their guide.

DISCUSSION:

What is Implicit Bias? - 30 minutes

- Use the *Implicit Bias - Poetry PowerPoint* to help guide students in a lecture/discussion about implicit bias and the results of their Implicit Bias Tests.
- Terms for “*Reflect*” Slide. *What comes to mind when I mention these terms?* Students think about the terms but do not need to answer out loud:

Doctor	Nurse
Athlete	Beauty Queen
Gun Owner	Gun Control Advocate
Opioid Addict	Cocaine Addict
Pro-Choice	Pro-Life
Police Officer	Criminal
Immigrant	Citizen
Muslim	Christian
Racist	Unprejudiced/tolerant

- Give students opportunities to discuss their IAT’s and their feelings about their results in pairs and with the rest of the class.
 - **Students should NOT be required to share the results of their tests if they do not choose to do so!**²

¹ Nikol Alexander-Floyd points out that “it is necessary at the start of each course to establish the parameters and basis for the examination of racism.” Teachers should also provide information documenting the reality of racism (183). Beginning with a discussion about implicit bias is intended to help students recognize that everyone holds certain biases and that these biases can and should be actively combatted. Students will be able to figure out where these biases originate as well as learn strategies to help overcome them. This unit will also provide opportunities for them to confront and critically think about their biases while analyzing and studying poetry.

² As Rosemary M. Closson discussed, student resistance “takes the form of silence, challenges to the instructor, classroom disruptions, devaluation...and questioning the professor’s integrity” (83). Students may feel uncomfortable about their newly-discovered biases and they need time to process and consider this information. Requiring students to share their findings might only increase their resistance; however, teachers should be ready and willing to share the results of their implicit bias tests. hooks notes that teachers “who expect students to share confessional narratives but who are themselves

Full-Class Discussion - 5 minutes

- Ask - Write student answers on the board:
 - How can we overcome an implicit attitude or bias?
 - How can talking about issues surrounding race in our classroom help us?
- Remind students that it is OKAY and perfectly NORMAL to have biases whether explicit or implicit. Encourage students to be honest with themselves about their biases throughout the poetry unit and to think critically about how their biases and prior experiences might affect the way they feel during some of the discussions taking place during class.

POETRY ANALYSIS:

Analysis Prep - 5 minutes

- Use the final slide on the *Implicit Bias - Poetry PowerPoint* to help students frame their analyses of the provided poems.
 - This slide provides questions to help students participate in Rhetorical Listening. Students do not need this vocabulary to participate in the exercise
 - Emphasize that students are being asked to *listen* to what the poem is saying. They are *not* being asked to offer commentary about whether or not they like the poem, instead, they are being asked to consider how their biases, experiences, and backgrounds might influence the way they respond to the poem.³
- Students write their responses to the questions about the poem on a provided handout to be turned in at the end of class.

Small Group Analysis - 10 minutes

- Divide students into groups of 3. Give each student a copy of both poems and the *Rhetorical Listening Questions Worksheet*.
- Each group member should assume one of the following roles:
 - **Reader** - reads the poem out loud 2 or 3 times to the group and any time the group wants a section or line reread;
 - **Summarizer** - articulates what the poem is literally saying or what they think the poem is about;
 - **Refocuser** - helps the group stay on task by focusing their discussion on the questions provided in the worksheet and refocusing the group when the discussion gets off track.⁴
- Assign each group one of the poems to critically read and consider.
 - Provide a short Bio of each of the authors (noted at the end of the *Implicit Bias - Poetry PowerPoint*)
- Groups read and analyze the poem, recording their answers to the questions on the *Rhetorical Listening Questions Worksheet*.

DISCUSSION:

Small Groups Share Analyses - 5 minutes

- What is this poem saying? What is it about?

unwilling to share” are exercising an oppressive form of power over their students. “If professors take the first risk” students are more-likely to follow suit (Transgress 20).

³ Encouraging students to practice Rhetorical Listening as outlined by Kirsta Ratcliffe will help students choose to assume “a stance of openness...in cross-cultural exchanges” (1). Students need to recognize that “just as all texts can be read...all texts can be listened to” (24). Providing questions to help students rhetorically listen to a text promotes understanding of self and others, accountability logic, identifying commonalities and differences, and analyzing not only claims, but the cultural logics that surround those claims (37).

⁴ Assigning roles to group members helps students stay on task and makes each member of the group feel like they are participating in a meaningful way.

- Go through questions on the *Rhetorical Listening Questions Worksheet*
- Did you learn or realize anything new while studying this poem?
- Why are we using poetry to help us discuss race and identity?
- In what ways can poetry help us learn more about other races and ethnicities?⁵

NEXT CLASS:

Homework, Reflective Writing:⁶

- Answer the following question in your writing journal:
 - What have you learned about yourself or others after today's discussion of Implicit Bias and your opportunity to analyze a poem by an Author of Color?

In-Class Topics:

- Rules for discussion and engagement;
- Terminology discussion;
- Poetry Pre-Assessment

⁵ "Teachers need to be careful not to become angry with students for engaging in the brave space with information that might be difficult to digest, nor should they look to the Students of Color in the room to be the resident race experts (Sue B 188). Race talk is for everyone regardless of race or identity" (39).

⁶ "Participating in reflective writing is also important for students and teachers at any phase of race talk. 'Allowing time to reflect on new or differing viewpoints will give students the opportunity to process what has been said in the classroom' (Flanagan 66). Any genre of writing is conducive to reflection. Students could even be encouraged to draw pictures of their thoughts and feelings after engaging in a particularly emotionally draining topic" (38).

Implicit Bias Test Response Questions

Instructions: Respond to the following questions after taking two of the IAT provided to you in class your reflective writing journal. Label your responses with the title of the IAT to which you are referring.

Questions:

1. Which IAT did you take? What were your results?
2. Were you surprised by the results of your test? Why/Why not?
3. What did your test reveal to you that you already knew?
4. What did your test reveal to you that you did not know?
5. How do you feel about your test results? Why?

Rhetorical Listening Questions Worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: After receiving your group's assigned poem, the group **Reader** should read through the poem out loud at least twice before the group begins their discussion. The group **Summarizer** articulates what the poem is literally saying or what they think the poem is about using evidence from the poem to help them. After the summary is provided, the group should discuss and answer the following questions. The group **Refocuser** is in charge of keeping the group on task by focusing the discussion on the questions provided in the worksheet. The **Refocuser** also is responsible for refocusing the group back to the questions when the discussion gets off track.

*Write the answers to the questions in the space provided below each question. This worksheet will be handed in at the end of class. **Please be open and honest with your answers! These worksheets are graded for completion ONLY.**

****As you read, do so with a sense of openness. You may agree or disagree with the themes, but don't worry about that initially. Instead, think about what is happening to you as you engage with the text.****

1. What do I notice, appreciate, and/or wonder about the reading? What about my history/background draws me to these parts of the reading?

2. What definitions, principles, or theories do I hold that are shaping my understandings of these ideas, questions, or issues?

3. What do I think is the bias of this reading?

4. How do my implicit biases affect how I internalize the information presented in the reading?

5. Did I learn or realize anything new while studying this poem?

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 through trash and tired runaways as if tearing a window's curtains. We were barred from entry but repeatedly returned, each time becoming a darker part of a tunnel or a truck bed. The sky was so still the stars flickered like carbide lamps. We told time through the landmarks of the dead like cataphiles—the warren of a little girl's murder, the wolf's irrigation pipe. When you see enough unwinding, beating is replaced by the safety of wings. This isn't goodness. The voiceless are never neutral. Bones sway to elegy. Ebony burrows into the earth as a refugee. I grew up, eventually, but the sun was like a cliff with a false bottom: you'd drop and come out the top again. Enough carcasses draped over the dry brush. Enough water towers empty as busted rattles. When you're a child, the heart has a stiff neck and demands to be played. Later, it limps. Before my knees could begin to ache, I crawled to the levee looking for a broken string. Some wayward zil. I stretched my heart over a manhole and drummed it with broken pliers. It wouldn't even quaver. It snapped back into a seed, dry and shriveled and blank.

Source: <https://poets.org/poem/how-dismantle-heart>

Identity

Julio Noboa Polanco

Let them be as flowers,
Always watered, fed, guarded, admired,
But harnessed to a pot of dirt.

I'd rather be a tall, ugly weed,
Clinging on cliffs, like an eagle
Wind-wavering above high, jagged rocks.

To have broken through the surface of stone,
To live, to feel exposed to the madness
Of the vast, eternal sky.
To be swayed by the breezes of an ancient sea,
Carrying my soul, my seed,
Beyond the mountains of time or into the abyss of the bizarre.

I'd rather be unseen, and if
Then shunned by everyone,
Than to be a pleasant-smelling flower,
Growing in clusters in the fertile valley,
Where they're praised, handled, and plucked
By greedy, human hands.

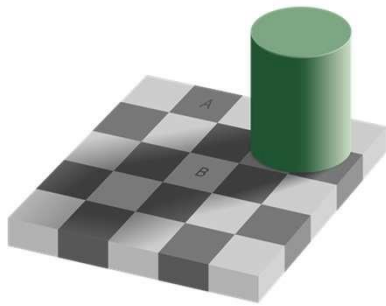
I'd rather smell of musty, green stench
Than of sweet, fragrant lilac.
If I could stand alone, strong and free,
I'd rather be a tall, ugly weed.

Source: <https://genius.com/Julio-noboa-polanco-identity-annotated>

Implicit Bias

Now you know, what do you do about it?

1. What is implicit bias?
2. How do my own biases and experiences affect my views on race?
3. What can I do to work on my own biases?



Objective

- not influenced by personal feelings, interpretations, or prejudice; based on facts; unbiased:
 - an objective opinion.
- intent upon or dealing with things external to the mind rather than with thoughts or feelings, as a person or a

Source:

Subjective

- existing in the mind; belonging to the thinking subject rather than to the object of thought (opposed to objective).
- pertaining to or characteristic of an individual; personal; individual:

Implicit Attitude

"An implicit attitude is defined as a memory that serves as a connecting link between an object (like a product) and feelings or thoughts toward that object."

Source:
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/sold/201210/implicit-attitudes-predict-impulsive-behavior>

Implicit

Source: American Psychological Association

"Implicit biases are attitudes or stereotypes that can influence our beliefs, actions and decisions, even though we're not consciously aware of them and don't express those beliefs verbally to ourselves or others."



Harvard Implicit Bias Test: What did you learn about bias?

Reflect:

What person comes to mind when I mention these terms?

How can we overcome an implicit attitude or bias?

- Exposing people to counter-stereotypic examples of group members.
- Consciously contrasting negative stereotypes with specific counter-examples.
- Rather than aim to be color-blind, the goal should be to "individuate" by seeking specific information about members of other racial groups. This individuation allows you to recognize people based upon their own personal attributes rather than stereotypes about their racial or ethnic group.
- Another tactic is to assume the perspective of an outgroup member. By asking yourself what your perspective might be if you were in the other's situation you can develop a better appreciation for what their concerns are.
- Making more of an effort to encounter and engage in positive interactions with members of other racial and ethnic groups. Put simply, the more time spent enjoying the company of members of other racial groups, the more that racial anxiety and stereotyping seem to dissipate.

How can talking about issues surrounding race in our classroom help us?

Having a bias is NOT a bad thing!

We ALL have them and they CANNOT be avoided!

What is bad:

1. pretending like you have no bias;
2. not acknowledging the effect your bias might have on the way you read and internalize information;
3. not acknowledging the way your bias might affect how you choose to interact with others;
4. not actively seeking out ways to better inform your bias or
___debunk problematic biases

Poetry Analysis

In your group, read and analyze one of the two provided poems.

1. As you read, do so with a sense of openness. You may agree or disagree with the themes, but don't worry about that initially. Instead, think about what is happening to you as you engage with the text.
2. Answer the following questions about each text:
 - a. What do I notice, appreciate, and/or wonder about the reading? What about my history/background draws me to these parts of the reading?
 - b. What definitions, principles, or theories do I hold that are shaping my understandings of these ideas, questions, or issues?
 - c. What do I think is the bias of this reading?
 - d. How do my implicit biases affect how I internalize the information presented in the reading?



Rodney

"Rodney Gomez is a member of the Macondo Writers' Workshop. His poetry has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies including Denver Quarterly, Barrow Street, Blackbird, Salt Hill, and RHINO, where it was awarded the Editor's Prize. He is the author of Mouth Filled with Night (Northwestern University Press, 2014), winner of the Drinking Gourd Chapbook Poetry Prize; Spine (Newfound, 2015), winner of the Gloria Anzaldúa Poetry Prize judged by Ada Limón; and A Short Tablature of Loss (Seven Kitchens Press, 2016), winner of the Rane Arroyo Chapbook Prize judged by Eduardo C. Corral. Gomez has been awarded residencies to the Atlantic Center for the Arts and the Santa Fe Art Institute. Originally from the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, he has also served on the board of Migrant Health Promotion, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of migrants, immigrants, and related populations. He earned a BA in

Sorry, I couldn't find any information on this poet.

- How does a lack of background information affect your reading of the poem?

Week 1, Day 2: Framing Continued	[75 minute class period]
Broad Topic: Framing and Rules for Discussion and Engagement	Questions to Consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can I participate in discussions about race and identity in a respectful, productive way? 2. What is the appropriate terminology for various racial groups? 3. How well can I analyze a piece of poetry to identify racial themes?
Objectives (SWBAT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ...articulate ground rules that help establish our classroom as a brave space where discussions about race and identity can take place in a respectful, productive way; ★ ...develop an understanding of appropriate terminology for various racial groups; ★ ...participate in a pre-assessment that evaluates their ability to identify racial themes in a work of poetry. 	Materials Needed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Poetry Unit Pre-Assessment</i> (prints for each student) 2. White Board and Markers 3. <i>Brave Space Discussion Questions PowerPoint</i> 4. <i>Terminology Handout</i> (prints for each student) 5. Digital copy of <i>The Kid Next To Me At The 7pm Showing Of The Avengers Has A Toy Gun</i> By Ashley M. Jones (post for end of class discussion)

GETTING STARTED: Pre-Assessment - 30 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administer the <i>Poetry Unit Pre-Assessment</i>.⁷ Students complete the assessment to the best of their ability within the allotted time frame. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emphasize that this is a pre-test meant to help the instructor gain a firm understanding of where students sit with regards to identifying racial themes in a work of poetry. ○ The assessment is graded for completion only, but students should devote their best efforts.
DISCUSSION: Review - 10 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invite students to share final thoughts about the previous day's discussion on implicit bias and the poems. ● Ask:

⁷ "The goal of the pre-assessment is to learn about what themes students see in the poem. Perhaps they don't recognize the racial implications or feel like discussion issues of race in their initial responses, that is okay. Students will be assessed on their ability to provide evidence for their findings by using the poem to support their opinions" (58).

- Why are we using poetry to help us discuss race and identity?
- In what ways can poetry help us learn more about other races and ethnicities?

Rules for Discussion and Engagement - 20 minutes

- Remind students that Race Talk can be difficult and help them understand why⁸.
 - Race as a Taboo topic;
 - Media portrayals of racial groups;
 - Implicit Bias;
 - Fears.
- Tell students that the classroom should be a **“Brave Space”**⁹ where students feel that they can share their ideas and thoughts in a generous environment.
- Small Groups:
 - Put students in groups of 3 - 5 and have students discuss the following questions:
 - How can our classroom be a Brave Space?
 - What does the term Brave Space mean to you?
 - What is a generous environment?
 - How can the instructor and students in our classroom be generous with each other?
 - Groups then come up with a list of ground rules for establishing the classroom as a Brave Space where thoughts and ideas can be shared in a generous environment
- Come back together as a full class and have groups share what they discussed
 - Give each group the opportunity to share
 - Write student answers on the board
 - Work together with the students to establish 5 or so ground rules for discussion in the classroom.
 - Give students opportunities to vote and discuss the rules.
 - **After class, print the ground rules on a poster that can be posted in the classroom for the duration of the unit.**

LECTURE:

Terminology - 5 minutes

- Briefly discuss the terms students will hear in the class;
- Provide the appropriate terminology for students when discussing various races and racial issues.
 - Write terms on board and discuss them as a class;
 - Allow students to provide and discuss terms as well.
- Give each student a copy of the *Terminology Handout* after talking to students about

⁸ “Honest race talk is one of the most powerful means to dispel stereotypes and biases, to increase racial literacy and critical consciousness about race issues, to decrease fear of differences, to broaden one’s horizons, to increase compassion and empathy, to increase appreciation of all colors and cultures, and to enhance a greater sense of belonging and connectedness” (Race Talk, x).

⁹ Brave spaces “foster respectful but challenging dialogue in the classroom” where “students are willing to ‘risk honesty’ so that an authentic exchange of ideas becomes possible (Ali 6). When teachers choose to acknowledge cultural diversity or engage students in race talk, the idea of the classroom as a safe, harmonious place is challenged. It is difficult for teachers and students to “fully grasp the idea that recognition of difference might also require of us a willingness to see the classroom change, to allow for shifts in relations between students” (Transgress 30).

the terms.

- Students can reference the *Terminology Handout* ¹⁰ throughout the unit to help gain a better understanding of concepts being discussed in class

IF TIME:

Pre-Assessment Poem Discussion - 5 minutes

- Look at the poem used in the pre-assessment. Have students articulate their initial thoughts about the poem. Invite students to Rhetorically Listen to each other as they express their ideas and thoughts about the poem.
 - Post the Poem for all students to look at
 - *The Kid Next To Me At The 7pm Showing Of The Avengers Has A Toy Gun* By Ashley M. Jones

NEXT CLASS:

Homework, Reflective Writing:

- What is my role in creating a Brave Space where thoughts and ideas can be shared in a generous environment?
- What is the difference between a Brave Space and a Safe Space?

In-Class Topics:

- Introduce Poetry Portfolio;
- Identity;
- Environment;
- Stereotypes

¹⁰ Students will be able to use the *Terminology Handout* throughout the unit to help them better understand the themes discussed during the unit.

Terminology Handout

De jure	“By law”
De facto	“In reality”
Tokenism	
White Supremacy	
American Exceptionalism	The belief that the United States is a nation unlike any other nation and that whatever the US does is good because the US is inherently good
Privilege	
Microaggressions	
Code Switching	
Code Meshing	
“Racial Expert”	
Racism(s)	
Individual Racism	
Structural Racism	
Racist	
Anti-Racist	Individuals, societies, or structures that are against any marginalizing policies, participate in active opposition to marginalizing policies, and push for social justice
Assimilation	The “subordinate” culture adopts the traits of the “dominant” culture; melting pot; one, uniform culture
Segregationist	Separation of races physically and socially
(myth of the) Meritocracy	People who deserve success are successful; people can succeed based upon merit alone; those who are unsuccessful are unsuccessful because they don’t try hard enough
Intersectionality	

Hegemony	Coercive, societal structures; a mode of social control; society teaches us how to do things, what to do, what not to do without saying anything; subtle codes; not forced, but reinforced; de facto methods of control
Implicit Bias	attitudes or stereotypes that can influence our beliefs, actions and decisions, even though we're not consciously aware of them and don't express those beliefs verbally to ourselves or others
Standpoint Epistemology	Beliefs and opinions developed based upon an individual's stance or paradigm
Racial Formations	Race is not solid or static, it moves with the times; race as a social construct
Racial Categories https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html	People of Color African American/Black Latinx/Chicanx/Hispanic Asian American Native American/indigenous/American Indian White/Caucasian/anglo/Euro-American
Ethnicity	Cultural identifier; “countries of origin;” familial culture; religion; political ideologies; language
Model Minority	
Gaslighting	Making someone believe that what they are experiencing isn't real or true

****Knowingly uttering racial epithets and slurs will not be tolerated in this class!****

I invite you instead to examine why those epithets and slurs enter your thoughts in the first place. Consider what about your background and previous understandings might make you want to address a certain group in this way. Why do racial epithets and slurs exist in the first place? Why do you, personally, feel the need to use them?

Poetry Unit Pre-Assessment

Instructions:

1. Use the attached poem to respond to the prompt below.
2. Your response should be 250-500 words and should offer commentary on the themes you see represented in the poem.
3. All of your observations should be accompanied by evidence you find directly from the text.
4. Please be sure to write legibly! I cannot award credit for responses that I cannot read:)

Prompt:

Read the following poem carefully. As you read, look for what you feel is the central theme of this piece. After reading, craft a well-organized response in which you reveal the theme of the poem using specific examples from the poem to help support your assertions.

- *What is the central theme(s) of the poem? Why do you think this particular theme(s) is the theme of the poem?*
- *What is the author trying to get their readers to recognize? What lines in the poem send this message to you?*
- *If possible, relate this poem to other poems you have read that address similar themes or subjects.*

Poem:

The Kid Next To Me At The 7pm Showing Of The Avengers Has A Toy Gun

By Ashley M. Jones

: and is wearing black flip flops
: has commented, loudly, for the entire feature presentation
: is pointing it at his mom
: is clicking the plastic hinges on its expanding arm—fist for a bullet—so it sounds like scissors
: is still salty around the lips from his movie popcorn
: will later regret this tub of movie popcorn, intestine-bound
: is pulling the trigger over and over and maybe once in my direction
: is shooting up this whole theatre to the tune of this dramatic and opulent theme song
: is restless, but what else will boys be
: chatters about sequels, every word a click click triggerpull triggerpull
: is, incidentally, about the size of Tamir Rice
: is alive and will keep living
—and wait

do I need to tell you the color of his skin?

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Brave Space

How can I participate in discussions about race and identity in a respectful, productive way?

Brave Space

Defined

- "Controversy with civility,"
 - where varying opinions are accepted
- "Owning intentions and impacts,"
 - in which students acknowledge and discuss instances where a dialogue has affected the emotional well-being of another person
- "Challenge by choice,"
 - where students have an option to step in and out of challenging conversations
- "Respect,"
 - where students show respect for one another's basic personhood
- "No attacks,"
 - where students agree not to intentionally inflict harm on one another

A Classroom as a Brave Space

- The classroom is a space where:
 - Education can occur;
 - It is okay to not know things;
 - Interpersonal outcomes are just as important as learning outcomes;
 - We are all smarter together.

Discuss

1. How can our classroom be a Brave Space?
2. What does the term Brave Space mean to you?
3. What is a generous environment?
4. How can the instructor and students in our classroom be generous with each other?

Develop a list of ground rules for establishing our classroom as a Brave Space where thoughts and ideas can be shared in a generous environment.

PLEASE be on board with these conversations.

I need you to be open to the possibility that these conversations are important.

Week 1, Day 3: Identity	[75 minute class period]
Broad Topic: Identity as a Social or Individual Construct	Questions to Consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who am I? 2. Who/What determines our identity? 3. How does our environment shape our identities? 4. How do stereotypes influence our identities? 5. What choices do we make each day about how we want others to perceive us?
Objectives (SWBAT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ...ponder about and articulate elements of their own identity. ★ ...consider the role society plays on the construction of identity. ★ ...analyze poems written by authors of color who seek to explore how society has influenced their identity construction. ★ ...begin drafting their own poems about their individual identities. 	Materials Needed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Final Poetry Portfolio</i> assignment description (prints for each student) 2. <i>Terminology Handout</i> (de jure, de facto, hegemony, intersectionality, standpoint epistemology, racial formations, racial categories, ethnicity) 3. Poems: <i>When I was Growing Up</i> by Nellie Wong; <i>Sure, You Can Ask Me A Personal Question</i> by Diane Burns (prints for each student) 4. Large Piece of Butcher Paper (enough for each student) 5. Markers (enough for each student) 6. Video Clip - <i>Geneva Gay, Length: 2:44</i>. https://vimeo.com/71925737 7. <i>Wong Response Question Worksheet</i> (prints for each student) 8. <i>Identity Statements Worksheet</i> (prints for each student)

<p>GETTING STARTED:</p> <p>Introduce Final Poetry Portfolio - 10 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hand out copies of Final Poetry Portfolio assignment description ● Go through the description with students and answer questions and concerns <p>Review - 5 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post class-created ground rules for creating a Brave Space and review rules for clarity and understanding ● Reiterate the importance of a generous classroom environment

- Revisit *Terminology Handout* and answer clarifying questions for students

Introduce/Review Terms of the Day - 5 minutes

- Write the terms from the *Terminology Handout* on the board:
 - de jure, de facto, hegemony, intersectionality, standpoint epistemology, racial formations, racial categories, ethnicity

ACTIVITY:

Identity Map - 15 minutes

- Ask students: What determines your identity? What makes you who you are? Write student answers on the board.
 - Possible Answers - sex/gender; racial category; family/upbringing; community/town; school; clubs/hobbies; religion/cultural background; mental health; physical (dis)ability, etc.
- Hand out Large Pieces of Butcher Paper and markers to each student.¹¹
 - Students use these materials to create their own Identity Maps. They write their full name and age in the center and circle it. They then draw lines and circles off from that center circle (much like Spider Chart or Graph). Inside each circle is a short identity descriptor.
 - Have students put a **star** by identifiers that are “invisible”
 - Invisible identifiers = characteristics that someone wouldn’t be able to identify simply by looking at them
- Consider posting student Identity Maps around the classroom

DISCUSSION:

Poetry Reading and Analysis, Diane Burns - 10 minutes

- Hand out copies of the poems for the day (listed in “Materials Needed” box above)
- Read the author bio.
- Students follow along as the teacher reads *Sure, You Can Ask Me a Personal Question* by Diane Burns.
 - Students write thoughts and impressions in the comments (tone, subject, etc.)
 - Consider Rhetorical Listening questions posed previous lessons¹²
- Students discuss their notes with a partner.¹³
- Students share their discussion with the class. Ask: **Who is Burns talking to? Why is it so important for us to know people’s racial identities? What is Burns trying to**

¹¹ “Talking about race in the classroom can take on multiple forms: teacher lecturing, student reflective writing, full-class discussions, small-group dialogues, through art, and through quiet pondering” (35).

¹² Encouraging students to practice Rhetorical Listening as outlined by Kirsta Ratcliffe will help students choose to assume “a stance of openness...in cross-cultural exchanges” (1). Students need to recognize that “just as all texts can be read...all texts can be listened to” (36). Providing questions to help students rhetorically listen to a text promotes understanding of self and others, accountability logic, identifying commonalities and differences, and analyzing not only claims, but the cultural logics that surround those claims (37).

¹³ “Paula Allman discusses the difference between discussion and dialogue: “Discussions, although often harmonious, actually involve a sharing of monologues that often bear no relation to one another except that they address the same topic or question.” Teachers are responsible for connecting student comments together and then tying the comments back to the theme of the day. Allman continues: “In dialogue, the members of the group share their thinking about the theme or issue that they are investigating...in order to help the group members think critically about the theme or issue they are investigating (Allman). The goal of dialogue is to get students to talk with each other about an issue instead of to or at the teacher” (36).

say about her identity in this poem?

- **Be sure to have students cite evidence from the poem!**
- Consider asking students what about their background or previous experience do they think makes them draw their conclusions.
- Have students keep the Burns poem and discussion in mind while watching and discussing the video clip.

Video Clip, Geneva Gay - 15 minutes

- As students watch the clip, have them look at their Identity Maps. On the map, students take note of which elements of their identity were **socially constructed** and which elements they feel were **individually constructed**.
- After the clip:
 - Ask students about their thoughts. Students share elements of their Identity Maps.
 - Which elements do they feel are socially constructed? Why/How?
 - Which elements do they feel are individually constructed? Why/How?
 - Look at the Burns poem: is this a commentary on socially constructed or individually constructed identity? How can you tell?

SMALL GROUP ANALYSIS:

Wong - 10 minutes

- Hand out copies of *When I Was Growing Up* by Nellie Wong
- Hand out copies of *Wong Response Questions Worksheet*
- Divide class into groups of 3 (these can be the same groups or new groups based upon the teacher's discretion). Be sure groups read the author bio included with the poem.
- Each group member should assume one of the following roles:
 - **Reader** - reads the poem out loud 2 or 3 times to the group and any time the group wants a section or line reread;
 - **Summarizer** - articulates what the poem is literally saying or what they think the poem is about;
 - **Refocuser** - helps the group stay on task by focusing their discussion on the questions provided in the worksheet and refocusing the group when the discussion gets off track
- Students consider and answer questions from the *Wong Response Questions Worksheet* as a group. Worksheet is handed in at the end of class.
 - What identity does Wong want in the poem? Why? How can you tell?
 - What choices does Wong make in the poem that help her shape her identity?
 - How is Wong's identity hegemonically shaped?
 - How is Wong's identity influenced by stereotypes?
 - What does being white mean for Wong? Can you relate? Why or Why not?¹⁴

¹⁴ "The goal of dialogue is to get students to talk with each other about an issue instead of to or at the teacher. The teacher introduces the topic, setting, and method for the dialogue, but then they step aside and let the students discuss and learn together. In dialogue, "the objective is to use the knowledge or thinking of each member of the group...in order to investigate critically the theme or issue that is the real focus of the group's attention" (Allman). This type of dialogue is not easy to achieve, but with patience and practice dialogue between students can be a very positive way to engage in meaningful race talk" (36).

NEXT CLASS:

Homework, Poem Drafting:

- Using the Wong and Burns poems as a guide, complete the *Identity Statements Worksheet*
- Use this worksheet to begin drafting your first poem for the Final Poetry Portfolio

In-Class Topics:

- Identity Continued;
- Code Switching;
- Code Meshing.

BIO

Nellie Wong

b. 1934



Poet and activist Nellie Wong was born in Oakland, California. She is the daughter of Chinese immigrants, and in her poetry and through her community activism, she confronts social problems such as racism, sexism, and labor issues. Her collections of poetry include *Dreams in Harrison Railroad Park* (1977), *The Death of Long Steam Lady* (1986), *Stolen Moments* (1997), and *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner* (2012). With Merle Woo and Mitsuye Yamada, Wong coauthored *3 Asian American Writers Speak Out on Feminism* (2003). She is one of the founding members of the writing collective *Unbound Feet*, and her poems have been installed in public sites in the San Francisco area.

Wong is a member of various literary, artistic, and political groups, including *Radical Women*, the *Freedom Socialist Party*, and the *National Asian American*

Telecommunications Association. In 1989, she received a *Women of Words* award from the *San Francisco Women's Foundation*. With Yamada, she was the subject of the documentary *Mitsuye & Nellie, Asian American Poets* (1981). In 2011, a building at *Oakland High School* was named after Wong.

WHEN I WAS GROWING UP

By Nellie Wong

I know now that once I longed to be white.

How? you ask.

Let me tell you the ways.

when I was growing up, people told me
I was dark and I believed my own darkness
in the mirror, in my soul, my own narrow vision.

when I was growing up, my sisters
with fair skin got praised
for their beauty and I fell
further, crushed between high walls.

when I was growing up, I read magazines
and saw movies, blonde movie stars, white skin,
sensuous lips and to be elevated, to become
a woman, a desirable woman, I began to wear
imaginary pale skin.

when I was growing up, I was proud
of my English, my grammar, my spelling,
fitting into the group of smart children,
smart Chinese children, fitting in,
belonging, getting in line.

when I was growing up and went to high school,
I discovered the rich white girls, a few yellow girls,
their imported cotton dresses, their cashmere sweaters,
their curly hair and I thought that I too should have
what these lucky girls had.

when I was growing up, I hungered
for American food, American styles
coded: white and even to me, a child
born of Chinese parents, being Chinese
was feeling foreign, was limiting,

was unAmerican.

when I was growing up and a white man wanted
to take me out, I thought I was special,
an exotic gardenia, anxious to fit
the stereotype of an oriental chick

when I was growing up, I felt ashamed
of some yellow men, their small bones,
their frail bodies, their spitting
on the streets, their coughing,
their lying in sunless rooms
shooting themselves in the arms.

when I was growing up, people would ask
If I were Filipino, Polynesian, Portuguese.
They named all colors except white, the shell
of my soul but not my rough dark skin.

when I was growing up, I felt
dirty. I thought that god
made white people clean
and no matter how much I bathed,
I could not change, I could not shed
my skin in the gray water.

when I was growing up, I swore
I would run away to purple mountains,
houses by the sea with nothing over
my head, with space to breathe,
uncongested with yellow people in an area
called Chinatown, in an area I later
learned was a ghetto, one of many hearts
of Asian America.

I know now that once I longed to be white.
How many more ways? you ask.
Haven't I told you enough?

Wong Response Questions Worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: After receiving your group's assigned poem, the group **Reader** should read through the poem out loud at least twice before the group begins their discussion. The group **Summarizer** articulates what the poem is literally saying or what they think the poem is about using evidence from the poem to help them. After the summary is provided, the group should discuss and answer the following questions. The group **Refocuser** is in charge of keeping the group on task by focusing the discussion on the questions provided in the worksheet. The **Refocuser** also is responsible for refocusing the group back to the questions when the discussion gets off track.

*Write the answers to the questions in the space provided below each question. This worksheet will be handed in at the end of class. **Please be open and honest with your answers! These worksheets are graded for completion ONLY.**

****As you read, do so with a sense of openness. You may agree or disagree with the themes, but don't worry about that initially. Instead, think about what is happening to you as you engage with the text.****

1. What identity does Wong want in the poem? Why? How can you tell?
2. What choices does Wong make in the poem that help her shape her identity?
3. How is Wong's identity hegemonically shaped?
4. How is Wong's identity influenced by stereotypes?
5. What does being white mean for Wong? Can you relate? Why or Why not?

BIO

Diane Burns

1957-2006



Poet Diane Burns was born in Lawrence, Kansas, to a Chemehuevi father and an Anishinabe mother. She grew up in Riverside, California, where her parents taught at a Native American boarding school. When she was ten, her family moved to the Lac Courte Oreilles reservation in Wisconsin and later to Wahpeton, North Dakota, where her parents taught at another boarding school.

Burns was educated at Barnard University. In the 1980s, she became a member of the Lower East Side poetry community, reading her work at the Bowery Poetry Club, the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, and the Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church. Along with Allen Ginsberg, Joy Harjo, and Pedro Pietri, she was invited by the Sandinista government to visit Nicaragua for the Ruben Dario Poetry Festival.

In her direct, wry poems, Burns engages themes of Native American identity and stereotypes. She published a single volume of poems during her life, *Riding the One-Eyed Ford* (1981). She lived in New York City until her death at the age of 49 from liver and kidney failure.

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 those high
cheekbones.

Your great grandmother, huh?

An Indian Princess, huh?

Hair down to there?

Let me guess. Cherokee?

Oh, so you've had an Indian friend?

That close?

Oh, so you've had an Indian lover?

That tight?

Oh, so you've had an Indian

servant?

That much?

Yeah, it was awful what you guys

did to us.

It's real decent of you to apologize.

No, I don't know where you can get

peyote.

No, I don't know where you can get Navajo rugs real cheap.

No, I didn't make this. I bought it at

Bloomingdales.

Thank you. I like your hair too.

I don't know if anyone knows

whether or not Cher is really

Indian.

No, I didn't make it rain tonight.

Yeah. Uh-huh. Spirituality.

Uh-huh. Yeah. Spirituality. Uh-huh. Mother

Earth. Yeah. Uh'huh. Uh-huh. Spirituality.

No, I didn't major in archery.
Yeah, a lot of us drink too much.
Some of us can't drink enough.

This ain't no stoic look.
This is my face.

Identity Questions Worksheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Using the Wong and Burns poems and your Identity Map as a guide, complete the tables below. You will use this worksheet to begin drafting your first poem for the Final Poetry Portfolio. Please begin drafting your poem on a separate piece of paper *after* you complete the tables below.

Table #1

Identity Category	Description
Gender	
Ethnicity	
Race	
Socioeconomic Status	
Language	
Marital/relationship status	
Parent or childless	
Family size and composition	
Sexual Orientation	
Education	
Career (aspirations)	

(See next page for table #2)

After completing Table #2, look through the “My Answers” column. Write “Visible,” “Invisible,” or “Both” to identify how these pieces of your identity are perceived by outsiders.

Table #2

Statement:	My Answers
I am...	1. 2. 3.
I can...	1. 2. 3.
I have...	1. 2. 3.
I remember...	1. 2. 3.
I like...	1. 2. 3.
I will...	1. 2. 3.
I believe...	1. 2. 3.

Week 1, Day 4: Code Switching	[75 minute class period]
Broad Topic: Code Switching	Questions to Consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is Code Switching? How do I participate? 2. How can code switching be helpful? 3. Is all code switching created equal? 4. What is Code Meshing? 5. How can code meshing help with inclusivity? 6. Who decides the codes? Why? Is that fair?
Objectives (SWBAT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ...define Code Switching and Code Meshing; ★ ...discuss the pros and cons of Code Switching; ★ ...recognize how they use Code Switching and Meshing in their own lives; ★ ...recognize that Code Switching has greater implications for minorities; ★ ...practice Code Meshing by working in small groups to write a poem that integrates two languages. 	Materials Needed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Terminology Handout</i> (Code Switching, Code Meshing, Racial Formations, de jure, de facto, White Supremacy, Structural Racism) 2. Code Switching - Poetry Unit Powerpoint 3. Intersectionality Info Graphic <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. https://stavvers.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/301969_452534864833450_34072018_n.png 4. Dr. Vershawn Young Clip <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. https://www.pbs.org/video/connections-dr-vershawn-young/ 5. Copies of poem <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>To Live in the Borderlands Means You</i> by Gloria Anzaldua

GETTING STARTED: Review - 15 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Put students into the same groups of 3 from yesterday. Give them 5 minutes to review the Wong poem and their commentary on the discussion questions. ● Discuss Wong poem and questions from previous day as a class. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What identity does Wong want in the poem? Why? How can you tell? ○ What choices does Wong make in the poem that help her shape her identity? ○ How is Wong's identity hegemonically shaped? ○ How is Wong's identity influenced by stereotypes?

- What does being white mean for Wong? Can you relate? Why or Why not?
- Reflective Writing Journal¹⁵
 - Give students 10-15 minutes to reflect upon and write about the following questions. They can consider both the Wong and Burns poems in addition to their remarks on the *Identity Statements Worksheet* as they do so.
 - **Prompt:** Think about the Wong and Burns poems in relation to your Identity Map and your responses on the *Identity Statements Worksheet*. What identity do you want to create for yourself? What choices do you make every day in order to shape that identity? How is your identity hegemonically shaped? How is your identity influenced by stereotypes? What does being [insert your racial identification here] mean for you? Why?

LECTURE/DISCUSSION:

Code Switching - 20 minutes

- Transition Activity - Four Corners
 - Set up the following signs, one in each corner of the room: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
 - Ask the following questions. Students move into the corner under the sign that represents their stance on the question posed. Students in various groups should be given opportunities to explain their stance. **No student should be forced to disclose their opinion.**¹⁶
 - 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.
 - After asking each question, give students in the group a chance to discuss their feelings. Randomly call on an individual from each group to explain their position.
 - Tell students the rest of the class will be focused on discussing Code Switching. Have students take their seats and begin the powerpoint.
- Use *Code Switching - Poetry Unit Power Point* to lead a discussion/lecture on Code Switching
 - We present ourselves differently in different places with different people.
 - Key & Peele Video

¹⁵ "Participating in reflective writing is also important for students and teachers at any phase of race talk. "Allowing time to reflect on new or differing viewpoints will give students the opportunity to process what has been said in the classroom" (Flanagan 66). Any genre of writing is conducive to reflection. Students could even be encouraged to draw pictures of their thoughts and feelings after engaging in a particularly emotionally draining topic" (38).

¹⁶ "hooks reminds us that "it is difficult for individuals to shift paradigms and...there must be a setting for folks to voice fears, to talk about what they are doing, how they are doing it, and why" and then to have those revelations discussed, pushed, and challenged by their teachers and peers (Transgress 38)" (35).

- Obama video
 - Rewrite sentences - split class into thirds, each third responds to a different audience
- What else do you code switch?
- Ask: Is all Code Switching is created equal?
 - Encourage students to think about situations where code switching might give some advantages over others
 - Discuss who picks the codes and why
 - What happens when a person doesn't code switch well enough?

DISCUSSION:

Small Group - 5 minutes

- Put students in groups of 5. Have groups consider the following questions:
 - Does racism play a role in code switching? How?
 - How is code switching related to the issue of who holds power in a community or society?
 - Who has to code switch in order to succeed or be accepted at our school?
 - What's the difference between students who are code switching between, say, being with parents and being with peers (which everyone does) and students whose code shifting requires them to hide parts of their cultures or identities?
 - What is the relationship between code switching and school success?
 - What assumptions do you make about people based on the way they speak, dress, etc.?

Large Group - 5 minutes

- Go over the questions as a class. Have each group share their insights.¹⁷
- What is Code Meshing?
 - Dr. Vershawn Young *Video* @ 10:00 - 13:20 (3 min and 20 sec)
- Transition into the discussion of the *Bilingual Poem Assignment*.

ACTIVITY:

Bilingual Poetry - 20 minutes

- Hand out copies of Gloria Anzaldua's *To Live in the Borderlands Means You*
- Divide students into groups of 3.
- Each group member should assume one of the following roles:
 - **Reader** - reads the poem out loud 2 or 3 times to the group and any time the group wants a section or line reread;
 - **Summarizer** - articulates what the poem is literally saying or what they think the poem is about;
 - **Refocuser** - helps the group stay on task by focusing their discussion on the questions provided in the worksheet and refocusing the group when the discussion gets off track.

¹⁷ "One common recommendation is setting up a classroom climate that cultivates the level and type of participation you are expecting from your students. Alexander-Floyd details that it is important to emphasize that since every student has something to offer "that is both necessary and important, the success of the class requires active participation" (183). If students recognize from the beginning that participation is important and are shown what that participation looks like, they will rise to meet instructors' expectations." (33).

- Provide a short Bio of Gloria Anzaldua (at the end of the *Code Switching - Poetry Unit Power Point*)
- Groups read and analyze the poem. Students ponder and answer the following questions in their Reflective Writing Journals:
 - For students who do not speak Spanish, how did you feel reading this poem? Did the bilingual nature of the poem add to or take away from it's meaning? What did it feel like to be left out of some of the language?
 - For students who do speak Spanish, how did you feel reading this poem? How did understanding the Spanish portions help enhance your understanding of the content? What did it feel like to have another language that you speak included?
 - Is this an example of Code Switching or Code Meshing? What do you think about that?
- Discuss group conversations as a whole class
- Rework students into groups of 2
 - Possible groupings:
 - In a bilingual classroom, pair native English speakers with native speakers of another language so that they can help each other with the language they are learning.
 - In an ESL classroom, group students of different English proficiency levels together to support each other.
 - In a foreign language classroom that contains both native speakers and non-native speakers, intermix them and suggest that they collaborate.
 - In a linguistically diverse classroom that contains students who speak another language beside English, pair students who speak only English with students who speak another language and have them collaborate, each writing a portion of the poem.
- Pairs work together to craft their poem.¹⁸
 - Possible Structures (adapted from: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/crossing-boundaries-through-bilingual-30525.html?tab=4>):
 - **Code-switching:** Code-switching means going back and forth between two languages depending on which one best expresses what you are trying to say. This format integrates Spanish and English fluidly and works well for beginner-level students, as they can select key words and phrases to use in Spanish while maintaining a structure in English. Explain to students that this should be spontaneous and stream of consciousness. If students are struggling, tell them to just start writing the first thing that comes into their minds; the important thing is to start recording ideas and keep the pencils moving! Beginning students may have to start primarily in English and then go back and translate some portions into Spanish. Or they can pick a key Spanish phrase or word and keep repeating it, weaving it into their poem.
 - **Diamante:** This poem uses a traditional “diamond” format, beginning with a one-word line at the top, with each subsequent line getting

¹⁸ Working together to author poems about in-class topics is another form of reflective writing incorporated throughout the unit.

progressively longer. The longest line is in the middle. After that point, the poem repeats itself in reverse order, however this time in Spanish. This poem provides good practice with translation.

- **Poema en Dos Voces (poem in two voices)**: This model consists of two parallel lines in each stanza, one in Spanish and one in English. The idea is that it is written in two voices, from the perspective of different people. The lines should be similar, but not exactly the same, and can show contrasting perspectives. This can be a very effective way to express two sides of an issue or to collaborate in a performance that would involve two or more people speaking different parts of the same poem.

- Poems should be read out loud in the next lesson.

NEXT CLASS:

Homework, Poem Drafting:

- Continue drafting your first poem;
- Consider beginning work on your second poem.

In-Class Topics:

- Racism(s)



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.
Copyright © 1987, 1999 by Gloria Anzaldúa.
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Drawing by Héctor Ponce de León.

is no longer speaking to
you, that *mexicanas* call
you *rajetas*,
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*, *buey*, 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.



gabacha: a Chicano term for a white woman
rajetas: literally "split," that is, having betrayed your word
burra: donkey
buey: ox
sin fronteras: without borders

Four Corners Activity

Code Switching

From NPR...

- “So you’re at work one day and you’re talking to your colleagues in that professional, polite, kind of buttoned-up voice that people use when they’re doing professional work stuff. Your mom or your friend or your partner calls on the phone and you answer. And without thinking, you start talking to them in an entirely different voice -- still distinctly your voice, but a certain kind of your voice less suited for the office. You drop the g’s at the end of your verbs. Your previously undetectable accent -- your easy Southern drawl or your sing-songy Caribbean lilt or your Spanish-inflected vowels or your New Yawker -- is suddenly turned way, way up. You rush your mom or whomever off the phone in some less formal syntax (“Yo, I’mma holler at you later”), hang up and get back to work. Then you look up and you see your co-workers looking at you and wondering who the hell you’d morphed into for the last few minutes. That right there? That’s what it means to code-switch.”



Code Switching

How do you talk to your:

- Parents
- Teachers
- Boss at work
- Friends
- Grandparents

Rewrite this sentence:

*Scenario:

You have just finished working on some homework and are about to head into work.

Write the sentence for your:

- Parent
- Boss
- Friends

What do you switch besides language?

*How does Code Switching help you?

*What do you gain by code switching?

Is all Code Switching created equal?

Discuss in Small Groups

1. Does racism play a role in code switching? How?
2. How is code switching related to the issue of who holds power in a community or society?
3. Who has to code switch in order to succeed or be accepted at our school?
4. What's the difference between students who are code switching between, say, being with parents and being with peers (which everyone does) and students whose code shifting requires them to hide parts of their cultures or identities?
5. What is the relationship between code switching and school success?
6. What assumptions do you make about people based on the way they speak, dress, etc.?

*What assumptions do we make about people based on the way they speak?



Gloria Anzaldúa

Source: The Poetry

Gloria E. Anzaldúa was a queer Chicana poet, writer, and feminist theorist. Her poems and essays explore the anger and isolation of occupying the margins of culture and collective identity. Anzaldúa has been awarded the Lambda Lesbian Small Book Press Award, a Sappho Award of Distinction, and an NEA Fiction Award, among others. She is the author of several books of poetry, non-fiction, and children's fiction. Her book, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) and her essay, "La Prieta," are considered to be groundbreaking works in cultural, feminist, and queer theories. With Cherrie Moraga, Anzaldúa co-edited the landmark anthology *This*

Write a Bilingual Poem

1. Get into groups of 2
2. Work together to draft a version of your own bilingual poem
 - a. This can be a poem in two languages, such as Anzaldúa's, or it can be a poem that incorporates all of the different Englishes you use throughout the day.
3. Group members take turns writing portions of the poem in their assigned language or "English"
4. Talk through the poem with each other. Use our conversations from today about Code Switching and Code Meshing to guide you.

Choose one of the following structures, or pick your own.

- Go back and forth between two languages**
depending on which one best expresses what you are trying to say:
- Integrate the two languages fluidly;
 - Select key words and phrases to use in the less-dominant language while maintaining a structure in English (or vice versa);
 - This poem should be spontaneous and stream of consciousness;
 - One thing you could try is to pick a key word or phrase in the less-dominant language and keep repeating it.

Diamante:

- with each subsequent line getting progressively longer;
- The longest line is in the middle;
- After that point, the poem repeats itself in reverse

Poema en Dos Vozes (poem in two voices)

- This model consists of two parallel lines in each stanza, one in the less-dominant language and one in English;
- The idea is that it is written in two voices, from the perspective of different people;
- The lines should be similar, but not exactly the same, and can show contrasting perspectives;
- This can be a very effective way to express two sides of an issue or to collaborate in a performance that would involve two or more people speaking different parts of the same poem.

Week 1, Day 5: Racism	[75 minute class period]
Broad Topic: Racism(s)	Questions to Consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is racism? How is it manifest? 2. What did racism look like in the past (Individual/structural)? 3. What does it look like now (individual/structural)? 4. What does the term post-race society mean? Who does this term benefit? 5. When do racisms develop? 6. How can I counter my own personal racisms?
Objectives (SWBAT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ...define racism. ★ ...articulate the difference between individual and structural racism. ★ ...discuss the danger of believing in a post-race society. ★ ...interrogate their own racisms and set goals to counter them. ★ ...analyze poems that discuss both individual and structural racism in small and large groups. 	Materials Needed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Racism PowerPoint</i> 2. Census Questions 2010 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. https://www.census.gov/2010census/pdf/2010_Questionnaire_Info.pdf 3. Census Questions 2020 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/2020/operations/planned-questions-2020-acs.pdf 4. Poems: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>The Contract Says: We'd Like this Conversation to Bilingual</i> by Ada Limon b. <i>The Better Sort of People</i> by John Beecher

GETTING STARTED:

Review - 10 minutes

- Students get in pairs from yesterday and continue working on their Bilingual poems.
- Poems can be read during the final week of the unit as part of the in class Poetry Reading (see final lesson plan of the unit).

Census Question Activity - 15 minutes¹⁹

- Show students the *Census Questions from 2010*. What would you mark when filling out this question?

¹⁹ "I find it somewhat comical that the institutions responsible for inventing, implementing, and enforcing racial categories are the ones that want People of Color to ignore that those categories exist for the sake of "civility." People of Color are expected to mark their racial category on a census, but are often gaslighted when trying to confront the consequences of that category in public and private conversations" (8).

- What do people do when they personally identify with more than one racial group, but when society sees them as one thing?
- For example, if a person knows they are bi-racial (with one black parent and one white parent) do they mark both? Nobody sees them as white (de facto), so why should they mark that category on the census?
- Show students the *Census Questions from 2020*. How would students fill out this question?
 - What does this question offer that the 2010 census didn't?
 - What if an individual identifies as "White," but does not know their ethnic background?
 - What if an individual identifies as "Black or African American" but does not know their African country of origin?
 - What does the formatting of these questions say about our society today?
- Teacher shares how they would fill out these questions.
- Highlight these terms: Racial Formations, de jure, de facto, White Supremacy, Structural Racism, Individual Racism
 - How do these terms map onto society today? How do these terms map on to the census? How do these terms map onto identity?

BRIEF LECTURE

Racism - 20 minutes²⁰

- Create a class definition of **Racism**.
 - Hand out slips of paper to each student. Write the word *racism* on the board. Give students time to think about the definition of this word. Students write their definition on a slip of paper and then put it in a box at the front of the room.
 - Instructor draws out slips of paper and writes the definition on the board. Students are then given an opportunity to clarify their definition or add to the definition on the board.
 - Read students the following definition from the Anti-Defamation League:
 - "Racism is the belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person's social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics."
 - Give students time to think about how the class definition and the ADL definition are similar.
- Most likely, the students view racism as an individual matter. Using the *Terminology Handout* help students understand the definitions of **Structural Racism** and **Individual Racism**.
 - Divide the class in half. One class works together to define **Structural Racism** the other **Individual Racism**.
 - Definition, Examples, Non-Examples, Questions
 - Students can write their thoughts on whiteboard space or on paper taped to the wall.

²⁰ "Honest race talk is one of the most powerful means to dispel stereotypes and biases, to increase racial literacy and critical consciousness about race issues, to decrease fear of differences, to broaden one's horizons, to increase compassion and empathy, to increase appreciation of all colors and cultures, and to enhance a greater sense of belonging and connectedness" (*Race Talk x*).

- Encourage students to use the internet to help them along in their discussion.
- Remind students of the Ground Rules they established at the beginning of the unit. Encourage them to be brave and generous in the space. Remind students that racial slurs are not allowed in class. Help them understand that racism is much more than a slur.²¹
- Give each group time to explain their definition to the class.

POETRY ANALYSIS

Overt Racism vs. Microaggressions - 30 minutes

- Hand out copies of the poem: *The Better Sort of People* by John Beecher
 - Tell the students about John Beecher:
 - “John Beecher was born in New York, the great-great-nephew of Abolitionists Harriet Beecher Stowe and Henry Ward Beecher; it was a heritage his life would honor. He grew up in Birmingham, Alabama, where his father was a U.S. Steel executive, but Beecher entered the industry at the bottom. From age 16, he worked twelve-hour shifts on the open hearth furnaces. Educated at Cornell, Alabama, Harvard, and North Carolina, Beecher worked eight years during the New Deal era as a field administrator of social programs devoted to sharecroppers and migrant workers. He then took up a teaching career. But when he refused to sign California's unconstitutional "loyalty" oath in 1950, he was fired and blacklisted. He began ranching in the redwoods, and, along with his wife Barbara, founded a press to publish himself and other blacklisted writers. During the civil rights movement he became a Southern correspondent for Ramparts and the San Francisco Chronicle. In 1977, nearly 30 years after being fired, he was reappointed to the San Francisco State University faculty. See his *Collected Poems 1924-1974* (1974).” -Source: modernamericanpoetry.org
 - Instructor reads the poem out loud. While the instructor reads, have the students circle examples of racism (phrases, words, etc.)
 - Discuss the following:
 - What examples of racism did you find?
 - Is this an example of individual or structural racism?
 - From the bio, we know Beecher is a Civil Rights Activist, what do you think motivated him to write this poem?
 - How would this poem be different if it was written by a Black author instead of a white author?
 - Do you see any parallels between the type of racism expressed in this poem and the microaggressive behaviors we discussed earlier?²²

²¹ Brave spaces “foster respectful but challenging dialogue in the classroom” where “students are willing to ‘risk honesty’ so that an authentic exchange of ideas becomes possible (Ali 6).

²² “Critical Race Theory indicates that “minority status...brings with it a presumed competence to speak about race and racism,” but just because a Student of Color has this competence doesn’t mean that they want to be the sole communicator to their “white counterparts matters that whites are unlikely to know” (Delgado 11). When put on the spot, many Students of Color might shy away from this opportunity especially if they

- Hand out copies of *The Contract Says: We'd Like this Conversation to Bilingual* by Ada Limon.
 - Tell students a bit about Ada Limon:
 - “Born March 28, 1976, Ada Limón is originally from Sonoma, California. As a child, she was greatly influenced by the visual arts and artists, including her mother, Stacia Brady. In 2001 she received an MFA from the Creative Writing Program at New York University. Her first collection of poetry, *Lucky Wreck* (Autumn House Press, 2006), was the winner of the 2005 Autumn House Poetry Prize. She is also the author of *The Carrying* (Milkweed Editions, 2018); *Bright Dead Things* (Milkweed Editions, 2015), which was a finalist for the National Book Award; *Sharks in the Rivers* (Milkweed Editions, 2010); and *This Big Fake World* (Pearl Editions, 2006), winner of the 2005 Pearl Poetry Prize. Of Limón's work, the poet Richard Blanco writes, "Both soft and tender, enormous and resounding, her poetic gestures entrance and transfix." A 2001-2002 fellow at the Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center, she has also received a grant from the New York Foundation for the Arts and won the Chicago Literary Award for Poetry. She splits her time between Lexington, Kentucky, and Sonoma, California. Source: poets.org
 - Remind students that Beecher wrote his poem during the Civil Rights Movement about the Civil Rights movement while Ada Limon is a modern poet writing about today's society.
 - Read the poem out loud to the students. While instructor reads, students circle examples of racism (phrases, words, etc.).
 - Discuss the following questions. Students can talk in small groups and then share their ideas with the class:
 - What examples of racism did you find?
 - Is this an example of individual or structural racism?
 - From the bio, we know Beecher is a Civil Rights Activist, what do you think motivated him to write this poem?
 - Do you see any parallels between the type of racism expressed in this poem and the microaggressive behaviors we discussed earlier?
 - Is it possible to be a racist and not even know it?

Combating Our Own Personal Racisms - 5 minutes

- Use the *Racism PowerPoint* to guide this portion of the discussion
- Explain the term **post-race society**.²³ Why is this problematic?

feel like the course content is not about them or doesn't really speak to them or their experience (Aleman 139)" (29). No student should be forced to be the resident expert on a topic. Each student should be able to choose when they want to speak up and when they want to remain quiet.

²³ "Another reason Students of Color might be resistant to race talk is that they buy into the white-supremacist notion that we live in a post-race society. hooks details that "groups where white folks are in the majority often insist that race and racism does not really have much meaning in today's world because we are all so beyond caring about it" (Community 28). How can a nation who elected a Black President be a racist, white-supremacist nation? To answer this question I invite people to see who this nation elected in response to that Black President's election. Constantly experiencing a "denial and invalidation of their racial realities" causes Students of Color to second guess situations where racism is taking place --dismissing is as something that is all in their head" (30).

- When people state that race doesn't exist and that they don't see racial differences what they are really doing is refusing to face their own biases.
- Remind students about the Implicit Bias tests they took at the beginning of the unit.
 - Ask: When does racism develop? Where do our ideas about race and stereotypes come from?
 - Derald Wing Sue: Studies have shown that racial awareness and the "burgeoning social meanings" occur around the ages of three and five years. "The negative reactions of parents, relatives, friends, and peers toward issues of race, however, begin to convey mixed signals" (Sue 192).
 - Ask: How do we combat our own personal racisms?
 - Remind students of strategies to combat Implicit Bias.
 - Students talk with a partner about how they can adapt these strategies to apply to combating personal racism
 - Students offer up suggestions. Instructor types student suggestions into the slide.
- Invite students to identify one of their own personal racisms to work on. Have them write in their Reflective Writing Journal about those racisms as well as a goal they have to help them overcome it.²⁴

NEXT CLASS:

Homework, Poem Drafting:

- Finish Reflective Writing Journal Response
- Work on First and Second Poems

In-Class Topics:

- Privilege

²⁴ "White people in general tend to have a very difficult time engaging in racial dialogues. They become overwhelmed with a host of emotions such as "anxiety, fear, anger, betrayal, or defensiveness." Some may even begin to cry as a result of this swirling of emotions (Racial Microaggressions 187). The fear "that they might be misunderstood or unjustly accused" keeps them from participating in the discussion in meaningful, productive ways (*Race Talk* 16). This fear of being misunderstood seems to be the most pervasive. Instead of risking saying the wrong thing, they tend to try to avoid the conversation by remaining silent, diverting the conversation elsewhere, dismissing the importance of the topic, speaking about race as a global issue and not a local issue, or tabling the discussion hoping to never return to it again (*Race Talk* 30)" (26).

The Contract Says: We'd Like the Conversation to be Bilingual

BY ADA LIMÓN

When you come, bring your brown-
ness so we can be sure to please

the funders. Will you check this
box; we're applying for a grant.

Do you have any poems that speak
to troubled teens? Bilingual is best.

Would you like to come to dinner
with the patrons and sip Patrón?

Will you tell us the stories that make
us uncomfortable, but not complicit?

Don't read the one where you
are just like us. Born to a green house,

garden, don't tell us how you picked
tomatoes and ate them in the dirt

watching vultures pick apart another
bird's bones in the road. Tell us the one

about your father stealing hubcaps
after a colleague said that's what his

kind did. Tell us how he came
to the meeting wearing a poncho

and tried to sell the man his hubcaps
back. Don't mention your father

was a teacher, spoke English, loved
making beer, loved baseball, tell us

again about the poncho, the hubcaps,
how he stole them, how he did the thing

he was trying to prove he didn't do.

Ada Limón, "The Contract Says: We'd Like The Conversation To Be Bilingual" from *The Carrying*. Copyright © 2018 by Ada Limón. Reprinted by permission of Milkweed Editions.

The Better Sort of People

By John Beecher

Our Negroes here are satisfied
They don't complain about a thing
except the weather maybe
whenever it's too cold to fish
for a cat along the riverbank
But when they get away from here
up to Chicago or Detroit
and stay awhile and then come back with notions
about the right to vote
or going to school with white folks
we sometimes have to get it through their heads
who runs this country
They're better off down here
or why don't they stay up yonder?
A lot of them keep coming back
but somehow they've been spoiled
and need the fear of God
thrown into them again
Mind you I'm against the kind of thing
the ignorant rednecks do
I think it was unnecessary
to beat that little Negro boy to death
and throw his body in the Tallahatchie
He was uppity
No doubt about it
and whistled at a whie woman
He probably learned that in Chicago
so we ought to make allowances
A good horsewhipping should have been enough
to put him back into his place
and been sufficient warning to him that
if he ever got fresh again
he wouldn't live to see Chicago
Those rednecks that abducted him
I doubt if even they
really meant to kill him when he started
working on him
They just got too enthusiastic
Like I say the better sort of people down here in Mississippi
we love our Negroes
We wouldn't harm them for the world
This violence you hear so much about
is all the fault of low-down rednecks
poor white trash

2010 Census

How would you answer this question posed by the 2010 Census?

For all the people on this address, please indicate your relationship to the householder.

1. Please check appropriate boxes for each person living here. Start with a person living here permanently or for most of the year, regardless of their date of birth. If the person is under 18 years old, start with any adult who is related to the person. If the person is related to the householder, check the box for the person's relationship to the householder.

2. What is Person 1's race? Mark ☐ ONE race.

3. What is Person 1's age and sex? Mark ☐ AGE and ☐ SEX.

4. What is Person 1's date of birth? Mark ☐ DATE OF BIRTH.

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2020

How would you answer this question posed by the 2020

Is this person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

☐ No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.

☐ Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano

☐ Yes, Puerto Rican

☐ Yes, Cuban

☐ Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — Print, for example, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, Guatemalan, Brazilian, Ecuadorian, etc.

What is this person's race?

Mark ☐ ONE or more boxes **AND** print origins.

☐ White — Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, etc.

☐ Black or African Am. — Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or principal blood, for example, Navajo Nation, Shoshone Tribe, Mohawk, Arapaho, Navajo Village of Bitter Springs Traditional Government, Navajo Eastern Community, etc.

☐ Asian Indian ☐ Vietnamese ☐ Native Hawaiian

☐ Chinese ☐ Filipino ☐ Korean ☐ Samoan

☐ Asian Indian ☐ Japanese ☐ Chamorro

☐ Other Asian — Print, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc.

☐ Other Pacific Islander — Print, for example, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.

☐ Some other race — Print race or origin

Terminology

- Racism
- Racial Formations
- Individual Racism
- Structural Racism
- De jure
- De facto
- White

What is the definition of Racism?

Anti-Defamation League

"Racism is the belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person's social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics."

Structural and Individual Racism

- Work with your group to define your assigned term
- Provide: Definition, Examples, Non-Examples, Questions
- Remember:
 - We established Ground Rules at the beginning of the unit. Be brave and be generous with each other. Racial slurs are not allowed in class. Racism is much more than a slur.

Structural Racism vs. Individual Racism

STRUCTURAL

INDIVIDUAL RACISM

Poems

The myth of the “post-race society”

Derald Wing Sue:

- Studies have shown that racial awareness and the “burgeoning social meanings” occur around the ages of three and five years. “The negative reactions of parents, relatives, friends, and peers toward ~~issue of race, however, begin to convey mixed signals~~” (Sue 192).

How do we combat implicit bias?

- Exposing people to counter-stereotypic examples of group members.
- Consciously contrasting negative stereotypes with specific counter-examples.
- Rather than aim to be color-blind, the goal should be to “individuate” by seeking specific information about members of other racial groups. This individualization allows you to recognize people based upon their own personal attributes rather than stereotypes about their racial or ethnic group.
- Another tactic is to assume the perspective of an outgroup member. By asking yourself what your perspective might be if you were in the other’s situation you can develop a better appreciation for what their concerns are.
- Making more of an effort to encounter and engage in positive interactions with members of other racial and ethnic groups. Put simply, the more time spent enjoying the company of members of other racial groups, the more that racial anxiety and stereotyping seem to dissipate.

Source: Psychology Today <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/sound-science-sound-policy/201501/overcoming-implicit-bias-and-racial-anxiety>

How do we combat our individual

Reflective Writing Journal

My Personal Racisms

- What personal racism(s) do I have?
 - Where do I think they came from?
 - How have I acted in the past because of them?
 - How do I feel about that?
- What is one personal racism that I can work on?
 - Why do I want to work on this one?
 - How am I going to combat this personal racism?

Poetry of Race and Identity Unit Plan Week 2

Week 2, Day 6: Privilege	[75 minute class period]
Broad Topic: Privilege	Questions to Consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What types of privilege are there (class, race, etc.)? 2. What privileges do you have based upon things that you have no control over that other people do not have? 3. Why is it difficult for people to discuss and own their privileges? 4. What is the myth of meritocracy?
Objectives (SWBAT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ...come to terms with their own privileges. ★ ...develop and understand the definition of Privilege. ★ ...articulate why meritocracy is a myth and what that means for them and others. ★ ...analyze poems that discuss privilege and make comparisons to today's society. 	Materials Needed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Privilege Walk Questionnaire</i>; 2. <i>Terminology Handout</i>; 3. Link to a word map or slips of paper for one word answers; 4. <i>Privilege Powerpoint</i>; 5. Copies of poems (prints for each student) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Harlem</i> by Langston Hughes b. <i>Let America Be America Again</i> by Langston Hughes c. <i>Caged Bird</i> by Maya Angelou

GETTING STARTED:

Privilege Walk - 40 minutes²⁵

- Move all desks to the outskirts of the classroom (this activity could also take place in a gym or room with more space). Desks could be arranged in a large circle where students can sit for the **Debriefing** portion of the activity.
- Students form a straight line across the room about an arm's length apart.
- Read/Summarize the following Purpose statement to help provide context:
 - "The Privilege Walk is designed to provide students with an opportunity to understand the intricacies of privilege and to explore the ways that we enjoy privileges based on being members of social identity groups in the United States. Please note that this exercise is not meant to make anyone feel guilty or ashamed of her or his privilege or lack of privilege related to any social identity categories. Rather, the exercise seeks to highlight the fact that everyone has

²⁵ This activity is a great opportunity for students to practice Rhetorical Listening as outlined by Krista Ratcliffe. She points out that "the goal of Rhetorical Listening is not consensus or agreement. The goal is for participants to "appreciate that the other person is not simply wrong but rather functioning from within a different logic" (33). We learn by listening to those whose opinions differ from our own as long as the listening "occurs in the context of genuine conversation...where there is a desire for all parties to move [their] understanding forward" (36)" (15). The Privilege Walk helps students see the different standpoints or logics from which their peers are operating in society.

SOME privilege, even as some people have more privilege than others. By illuminating our various privileges as individuals, we can recognize ways that we can use our privileges individually and collectively to work for social justice. The purpose is not to blame anyone for having more power or privilege or for receiving more help in achieving goals, but to have an opportunity to identify both obstacles and benefits experienced in our lives.”

- Remind students of the class Ground Rules and encourage them to be honest, open, and generous with each other.
- Provide Instructions:
 - Listen to the following statements and follow the instructions given.
 - Ex. “If you have blue eyes, take one step forward.” Only people with blue eyes will move and everyone else will stand still. Each step should just be average length.
 - This is a silent activity. If anyone feels uncomfortable moving according to the statement read, you are invited to stand still, but please remember the statement and where you would have moved if you had chosen to.
 - You do not have to share anything that you do not wish to share.
- Instructor reads all of the statements from the *Privilege Walk Questionnaire* one at a time and allows students to take a step.
- Once all statements have been read, students participate in either a verbal or non-verbal reflection exercise.

Debrief

- Give students 2-3 minutes of silence to look around the room and see where they stand in relation to their peers.
- Remind students that the position in which they stand does not reflect their individual capacity to be successful. Their location in the room reflects their position in society without taking individual free will or work ethic into account. Society values certain characteristics, and individuals who do not have these things are at an automatic disadvantage to those who do through no fault of their own.
 - The instructor could reference the *Terminology Handout* and remind students of the words **hegemony, Privilege, De jure, De facto, Standpoint Epistemology.**
- After students have been given a chance to look around; invite them to take a seat somewhere in the circle with a pen and their Reflective Writing Journals.²⁶
- Ask students to anonymously provide one-word that captures the way they are feeling right now.
 - Options:
 - Write on a slip of paper to be turned in;
 - Write their word on the whiteboard;
 - Use cellphones to submit a one-word answer to a word map.
 - Provide students the opportunity to explain the word they chose, or another word that shows up on the map or whiteboard.
- Ask students the following questions. If students are reluctant to answer in front of the whole class, give them an opportunity to write their answers down in their Reflective

²⁶ “Participating in reflective writing is also important for students and teachers at any phase of race talk. “Allowing time to reflect on new or differing viewpoints will give students the opportunity to process what has been said in the classroom” (Flanagan 66). Any genre of writing is conducive to reflection. Students could even be encouraged to draw pictures of their thoughts and feelings after engaging in a particularly emotionally draining topic” (38).

Writing Journals before sharing.

- How did it feel to be one of the students on the “back” side of the line?
- How did it feel to be one of the students on the “front” side of the line?
- What was it like looking at your friends, classmates, and teammates either “in front” of you or “behind you?”
- What is something new you learned about your friend, classmate, or teammate and how does this shape your perception of them?
- What were your thoughts about “Privilege” before this activity?
- How have those thoughts changed?
- What did you learn about “Privilege” from this activity?
- Were their certain statements used during the activity that hit you particularly hard? Which ones? Why?
- Give this conversation time to develop. Some students will be more willing to share than others. Don’t force any students who would rather remain silent to speak up.²⁷

BRIEF LECTURE

What is Privilege? - 20 minutes

- Ask students to identify various types of Privilege as highlighted by the activity.
 - Examples: gender identity, class/money, home language/dialect, access to health care, inheritance, race/ethnicity, citizenship status, sexual orientation, age, body type, hobbies/clubs
- Knowing that Privilege can mean any of these things, What is Privilege?
 - Turn students towards the *Terminology Handout*
 - Miriam-Webster Definition: a right or immunity granted as a peculiar benefit, advantage, or favor; especially : such a right or immunity attached specifically to a position or an office
 - Questions to Consider:
 - In what ways in this privilege still manifest in society today? What is the **myth of the meritocracy**?
 - Help students recognize that there is more to success than merit alone. Consider incorporating examples of individuals who were less successful than others in spite of hard work compared with those who did not work very hard but have a lot of success.
 - Example: Inherited wealth vs. blue collar workers

POETRY ANALYSIS

What do these poets have to say about Privilege? - 15 minutes²⁸

²⁷ “Of course, with any new practice mistakes can be made. Teachers need to be careful not to take a passive approach when it comes to discussing race either dismissing the issue as if it is unimportant, tabling the discussion with no intention to return to the topic at a later date, or ignoring the dialogue in order to avoid confronting the issues. Teachers need to be careful not to become angry with students for engaging in the brave space with information that might be difficult to digest, nor should they look to the Students of Color in the room to be the resident race experts (Racial Microaggressions 188). Race talk is for everyone regardless of race or identity” (38-39).

²⁸ “The study of poetry can also serve a political purpose in the classroom through “democratic engagements.” Valerie Kinloch argues that democratic engagements with poetry “can inspire all students, particularly those who have experienced prior school struggles, to develop...academic identities and build meaningful connections between the texts they encounter in classrooms and the contexts of their own lives” (Beach 156). Thinking about the study of poetry through the lens of Critical Race Pedagogy reveals that poetry can help students engage with difficult racial topics in a way that they may have not encountered before. Delgado and Stefancic remind us that “well-told stories,” and I would argue, well-written poems, “describing the reality of black and

- *Harlem* by Langston Hughes
 - Hand out copies of the poem. Use the *Privilege PowerPoint* to provide students with a brief biography of Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou
 - Instructor reads the poem out loud to the students; students keep in mind the theme of “Privilege” as the poem is read
 - Students can discuss the questions in small groups or write about the questions in their Reflective Writing Journals before answering as a whole class.
 - Questions:
 - What is a “dream deferred?”
 - What parts of this poem can you visualize? Why?
 - We know the time period in which Hughes was writing this poem, what dream is he referring to?
 - What do you think of the last question posed by Hughes?
 - What is a modern day societal example of a deferred dream exploding?
 - Students can take notes in the margins of the poem during the discussion
- Discussion and Analysis continued tomorrow

NEXT CLASS:

Homework, Poem Drafting:

- Draft Second Poem
- Begin Drafting Third Poem

In-Class Topics:

- Privilege Continued
- Language and Power

Privilege Walk Questionnaire

Purpose:

“The Privilege Walk is designed to provide students with an opportunity to understand the intricacies of privilege and to explore the ways that we enjoy privileges based on being members of social identity groups in the United States. Please note that this exercise is not meant to make anyone feel guilty or ashamed of her or his privilege or lack of privilege related to any social identity categories. Rather, the exercise seeks to highlight the fact that everyone has SOME privilege, even as some people have more privilege than others. By illuminating our various privileges as individuals, we can recognize ways that we can use our privileges individually and collectively to work for social justice. The purpose is not to blame anyone for having more power or privilege or for receiving more help in achieving goals, but to have an opportunity to identify both obstacles and benefits experienced in our lives.”

Instructions:

1. Remind students of the class Ground Rules and encourage them to be honest, open, and generous with each other.
2. Students listen to the following statements and follow the instructions given.
 - a. Ex. “If you have blue eyes, take one step forward.” Only people with blue eyes will move and everyone else will stand still. Each step should just be average length.
3. This is a silent activity. If anyone feels uncomfortable moving according to the statement read, you are invited to stand still, but please remember the statement and where you would have moved if you had chosen to.
4. You do not have to share anything that you do not wish to share.
5. Instructor reads all of the statements from the *Privilege Walk Questionnaire* one at a time and allows students to take a step.
6. Once all statements have been read, students participate in either a verbal or non-verbal reflection exercise.

Statements:

- If English is your first language take one step forward.
- If either of your parents graduated from college take one step forward.
- If you have been impacted by divorce take one step backward.
- If there have been times in your life when you skipped a meal because there was not food in the house, take one step backward.
- If you have visible or invisible disabilities take one step backward.
- If you were encouraged to attend college by your parents and family members take one step forward.
- If you grew up in the city (urban setting) take one step backward.
- If your family had/has health insurance (not medicaid) take one step forward.
- If your world and school holidays coincide with religious holidays that you celebrate take one step forward.
- If you studied the culture or the history of your ancestors in elementary school take one step forward.
- If you have been bullied or made fun of based on something you cannot change (gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability) take one step backward.
- If you have ever felt passed over for membership in a club or group based on your gender, ethnicity, age or sexual orientation take one step backward.

- If you were ever offered membership into a club or group because of your association with a friend or family member take one step forward.
- If you were ever stopped or questioned by police, store clerks/employees, teachers, principles, school resource officers because they felt you were suspicious, take one step backward.
- If your family has ever inherited money or property take one step forward.
- If you came from a supportive family environment take one step forward.
- If one of your parents was ever laid off or unemployed not by choice, take one step backward.
- If you are a citizen of the United States take one step forward.
- If you are a member of a mixed-status family, take one step backward.
- If you were ever uncomfortable about a joke or statement you overheard related to your race, ethnicity, gender, appearance, sexual orientation, or disability but felt unsafe to confront the situation take one step backward.
- If your ancestors were forced to come to the United States not by choice, take one step backward.
- If you will need to take out loans in order to attend college, take one step backward.
- If there were more than 50 books in your house growing up take one step forward.
- If you have ever felt unsafe walking alone at night take one step backward.
- If you are a white cis-male take one step forward.

Harlem

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Langston Hughes, "Harlem" from *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes*. Copyright © 2002 by Langston Hughes. Reprinted by permission of Harold Ober Associates, Inc.
Source: 1990

Privilege

Poetry Unit

Questions to Consider

- How did it feel to be one of the students on the "back" side of the line?
- How did it feel to be one of the students on the "front" side of the line?
- What was it like looking at your friends, classmates, and teammates either "in front" of you or "behind you?"
- What were your thoughts about "Privilege" before this activity?
- How have those thoughts changed?
- What did you learn about "Privilege" from this activity?
- Were their certain statements used during the activity that hit you particularly hard? Which ones? Why?



Langston Hughes
1902-1967

Langston Hughes was a central figure in the Harlem Renaissance, the flowering of black intellectual, literary, and artistic life that took place in the 1920s in a number of American cities, particularly Harlem. A major poet, Hughes also wrote novels, short stories, essays, and plays. He sought to honestly portray the joys and hardships of working-class black lives, avoiding both sentimental idealization and negative stereotypes. As he wrote in his essay "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," "We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too."



Maya Angelou
1928-2014

An acclaimed American poet, storyteller, activist, and autobiographer, Maya Angelou was born Marguerite Johnson in St. Louis, Missouri. Angelou had a broad career as a singer, dancer, actress, composer, and Hollywood's first female black director, but became most famous as a writer, editor, essayist, playwright, and poet. As a civil rights activist, Angelou worked for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. She was also an educator and served as the Reynolds professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University. By 1975, wrote Carol E. Neubauer in *Southern Women Writers: The New Generation*, Angelou was recognized "as a spokesperson for... all people who are committed to raising the moral standards of living in the United States." She served on two presidential committees, for Gerald Ford in 1975 and for Jimmy Carter in 1977. In 2000, Angelou was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Bill Clinton. In 2010, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the U.S., by President Barack Obama. Angelou was awarded over 60 honorary degrees before her death.

...Angelou's poetry often benefited from her performance of it, and during her lifetime Angelou recited her poems before spellbound crowds. Indeed, Angelou's poetry can also be traced to African-American oral traditions like slave and work songs, especially in her use of personal narrative and emphasis on individual responses to hardship, oppression and loss. In addition to examining individual experience, Angelou's poems often respond to matters like race and sex on a larger social and psychological scale. Describing her work to George Pimental, Angelou said, "Once I got into it I realized I was following a tradition established by Frederick Douglass—the slave narrative—speaking in the first-person singular talking about the first-person plural, always saying I meaning 'we.' And what a responsibility. Trying to work with that form, the autobiographical mode, to change it, to make it bigger, deeper, finer, and more inclusive in the twentieth century has been a great challenge for me."

Week 2, Day 7: Language and Power	[75 minute class period]
Broad Topic: Privilege Con't; Language and Power	Questions to Consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is language? What is power? 2. How are language and power related? 3. How is language used to break down barriers? How is language used to create them? 4. How do language and power function in your own communities?
Objectives (SWBAT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ...define language. ★ ...define power. ★ ...make the connection between language and power and their function in society. ★ ...discuss the role language plays in creating and breaking barriers. ★ ...analyze the role of language and power in their own communities. 	Materials Needed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poems: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Let America Be America Again</i> by Langston Hughes b. <i>The Caged Bird</i> by Maya Angelou 2. Butcher paper; 3. Markers; 4. Reading: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>If Black English isn't a Language, Then Tell Me What Is?</i> by James Baldwin 5. <i>Language and Power in My Community</i> Homework assignment description 6. Examples of Concrete, Acrostic, and Found poems for the poetry writing activity

PRIVILEGE POETRY ANALYSIS - from yesterday

Continue analysis and study of poems from previous lesson on Privilege - 20 minutes²⁹

- *Let America Be America Again* by Langston Hughes
 - Hand out copies of the poem.
 - Divide students into groups of three. Feel free to use the assigned group roles outlined in Week, 1 Day 1 (Reader, Summarizer, Refocuser)
 - Have students reflect upon the following questions as a group and then write their thoughts in their Reflective Writing Journals:
 - What are your initial impressions of this poem? What about your background influences the way you feel about this poem?
 - What does the speaker in parentheses mean when they say "America

²⁹ "No only does poetry encourage students to interact with diverse perspectives, but it also allows them an opportunity to explore their identity. "Poetry encourages diverse students to explore their identities and articulate places and moments they feel are central to their lives...Encountering poetry that it grounded in students' lives allows for them to engage critical in the world around them as well as to connect with their peers around moments of joy and celebration" (Beach 160). The brevity of poems allows for a close read and a more thorough engagement with the language and themes than any other form of literature which provides more opportunities for these joyful and perhaps, uncomfortable, moments of connection" (51).

never was America to me?” Can you think of a person or group of people who might have these same feelings today?

- This poem seems to be a response to President Trump’s “Make America Great Again” campaign, yet it was written over 50 years before Trump took office in January 2017. What does this poem add to the conversation about America being great like it used to be or getting back to the “good old days?”
- Where is Privilege discussed in this poem? What types of Privilege do you feel Hughes is addressing?
- *The Caged Bird* by Maya Angelou
 - Hand out copies of the poem.
 - Remind students of the brief biography of Maya Angelou.
 - Instructor reads the poem out loud.
 - After the reading, the class considers the following questions:
 - Who would be considered the “free bird” in this poem?
 - Who could be the caged bird?
 - Can you think of a real-world free bird-to-caged-bird comparison?
 - Why is the caged bird singing?
 - What Privileges await the free bird that the caged bird does not have access to?
 - If the caged bird does become free, will it then be on an equal plan with the free bird?

LANGUAGE AND POWER

What is language? What is power? - 20 minutes

- Tape four large pieces of butcher paper in four corners of the room.
- Divide the class into four groups. Give each group a marker and send them to one of the four corners in the room.
- Assign each group a term: two groups have Language, two groups have Power. Make sure groups with similar terms aren’t sitting next to each other.
- Before reading the Baldwin piece, have groups work together to define their assigned word. They should create:
 - Definition;
 - Examples;
 - Non-examples;
 - Synonyms;
 - Anonyms;
 - Draw a picture that represents their word
- One student acts as scribe while they work together to define their assigned word.
- Bring the class back together to discuss. Write group’s thoughts on the board. It might be helpful to organize their thoughts as a T-chart or series of circles.
 - Ask questions to help the groups articulate their definitions
 - Type their definitions into the *Language and Power PowerPoint*

How Does Baldwin Define it? - 20 minutes

- Provide each student with a copy of *If Black English isn’t a Language, Then Tell Me What Is?* by James Baldwin. Provide a short bio using the *Language and Power PowerPoint*

- Groups work together to read and annotate the reading. When they are finished, they look back to their definitions on the wall.
 - How does James Baldwin define language? How does he view the relationship between language and power?
- Groups add this information, in a different color, to their papers.
- Bring the class together to discuss the definitions. Rework the definitions and type the new ones into the *Language and Power PowerPoint*.
- Work to help the students make the connection between Language and Power and how our access or lack of access to language hinders our ability to be powerful.
 - A connection can also be made to grammar and “Standard English” conventions;
 - Access to language gives us access to power because we are able to understand and use that language to gain power in society.

Introduce *Language and Power in My Community* Homework Assignment - 10 minutes

- Use the *Language and Power in My Community* assignment description to explain the homework assignment to the students
- Remind students that they will be asked to share their observations during class tomorrow³⁰

IN-CLASS POETRY WRITE

Draft a Poem about Language and Power - 15 minutes³¹

- Provide students with the following prompt:
 - *Keeping in mind our discussion on Language and Power, draft a poem of your own that illustrates your understanding of the connection between Language and Power and the role it plays in your own communities.*
- Students can draft the poem in their Reflective Writing Journal.
- Consider challenging students to draft their poem in one of the following formats:
 - Concrete Poem: Concrete poetry is designed to take a particular shape or form on the page. Poets can manipulate spacing or layout to emphasize a theme or important element in the text, or sometimes they can take the literal shape of their subjects.
 - Acrostic: An acrostic poem is a poem where the one letter in each line spells out a word or phrase vertically that acts as the theme or message of the poem. The word used for the acrostic can be the name of the person you are writing the acrostic about, a message such as Happy Birthday or a theme such as Acceptance, Love or Hope.
 - Students can use the words “Language” or “Power” as the word for their “Acrostic” poem
 - Found: Poetry created by taking words, phrases, and passages from other sources and re-framing them by adding spaces, lines, or by altering the text with additions or subtractions.

³⁰ The goal of this assignment is to help students take their learning beyond the classroom. This is just one more way for them to take what we are learning in class and extend it beyond the classroom.

³¹ “Participating in reflective writing is also important for students and teachers at any phase of race talk. “Allowing time to reflect on new or differing viewpoints will give students the opportunity to process what has been said in the classroom” (Flanagan 66). Any genre of writing is conducive to reflection. Students could even be encouraged to draw pictures of their thoughts and feelings after engaging in a particularly emotionally draining topic” (38).

- Students can use the James Baldwin reading to help them with their “Found” poems
- These poems can be revised during the workshop week for the *Final Poetry Portfolio*

NEXT CLASS:

Homework, Poem Drafting:

- *Language and Power in My Community* - Observation Assignment
- Draft Second Poem
- Begin Drafting Third Poem

In-Class Topics:

- Language and Power Continued

Language and Power in My Community

Homework Assignment | Due TBA | Name: _____

Purpose

We have discussed how Language and Power function in our classroom and in society, but how do these two realities exist in your own community? This short assignment asks you to consider how Language and Power intersect in a community of your choosing and reflect on why you think they function in that manner.

You must be a valued, integral member of the community you choose to observe! Write a brief synopsis of the community you chose to observe in the space provided below:

My Community:
My Role:
Why I Chose This Community:
My Predictions:

Product

Use the table below to record your observations. Offer a brief (1-2 sentence) reflection on your observations. We will use these charts for an in-class activity tomorrow (table continued on the other side).

Speaker	Message	Observation/Thoughts

Let America Be America Again

Langston Hughes - 1902-1967

Let America be America again.
Let it be the dream it used to be.
Let it be the pioneer on the plain
Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—
Let it be that great strong land of love
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,
But opportunity is real, and life is free,
Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me,
Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")

*Say, who are you that mumbles in the dark?
And who are you that draws your veil across the stars?*

I am the poor white, fooled and pushed apart,
I am the Negro bearing slavery's scars.
I am the red man driven from the land,
I am the immigrant clutching the hope I seek—
And finding only the same old stupid plan
Of dog eat dog, of mighty crush the weak.

I am the young man, full of strength and hope,
Tangled in that ancient endless chain
Of profit, power, gain, of grab the land!
Of grab the gold! Of grab the ways of satisfying need!
Of work the men! Of take the pay!
Of owning everything for one's own greed!

I am the farmer, bondsman to the soil.
I am the worker sold to the machine.
I am the Negro, servant to you all.
I am the people, humble, hungry, mean—
Hungry yet today despite the dream.
Beaten yet today—O, Pioneers!
I am the man who never got ahead,
The poorest worker bartered through the years.

Yet I'm the one who dreamt our basic dream

In the Old World while still a serf of kings,
Who dreamt a dream so strong, so brave, so true,
That even yet its mighty daring sings
In every brick and stone, in every furrow turned
That's made America the land it has become.
O, I'm the man who sailed those early seas
In search of what I meant to be my home—
For I'm the one who left dark Ireland's shore,
And Poland's plain, and England's grassy lea,
And torn from Black Africa's strand I came
To build a "homeland of the free."

The free?

Who said the free? Not me?
Surely not me? The millions on relief today?
The millions shot down when we strike?
The millions who have nothing for our pay?
For all the dreams we've dreamed
And all the songs we've sung
And all the hopes we've held
And all the flags we've hung,
The millions who have nothing for our pay—
Except the dream that's almost dead today.

O, let America be America again—
The land that never has been yet—
And yet must be—the land where *every* man is free.
The land that's mine—the poor man's, Indian's, Negro's, ME—
Who made America,
Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,
Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain,
Must bring back our mighty dream again.

Sure, call me any ugly name you choose—
The steel of freedom does not stain.
From those who live like leeches on the people's lives,
We must take back our land again,
America!

O, yes,
I say it plain,
America never was America to me,
And yet I swear this oath—
America will be!

Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death,
The rape and rot of graft, and stealth, and lies,
We, the people, must redeem
The land, the mines, the plants, the rivers.
The mountains and the endless plain—
All, all the stretch of these great green states—
And make America again!

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Caged Bird

BY MAYA ANGELOU

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn
and he names the sky his own

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

Maya Angelou, "Caged Bird" from *Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?* Copyright © 1983 by Maya Angelou. Used by permission of Random House, an imprint and division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

Source: *The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou* (Random House Inc., 1994)

July 29, 1979

If Black English Isn't a Language, Then Tell Me, What Is?

By JAMES BALDWIN

St. Paul de Vence, France--The argument concerning the use, or the status, or the reality, of black English is rooted in American history and has absolutely nothing to do with the question the argument supposes itself to be posing. The argument has nothing to do with language itself but with the *role* of language. Language, incontestably, reveals the speaker. Language, also, far more dubiously, is meant to define the other--and, in this case, the other is refusing to be defined by a language that has never been able to recognize him.

People evolve a language in order to describe and thus control their circumstances, or in order not to be submerged by a reality that they cannot articulate. (And, if they cannot articulate it, they *are* submerged.) A Frenchman living in Paris speaks a subtly and crucially different language from that of the man living in Marseilles; neither sounds very much like a man living in Quebec; and they would all have great difficulty in apprehending what the man from Guadeloupe, or Martinique, is saying, to say nothing of the man from Senegal--although the "common" language of all these areas is French. But each has paid, and is paying, a different price for this "common" language, in which, as it turns out, they are not saying, and cannot be saying, the same things: They each have very different realities to articulate, or control.

What joins all languages, and all men, is the necessity to confront life, in order, not inconceivably, to outwit death: The price for this is the acceptance, and achievement, of one's temporal identity. So that, for example, though it is not taught in the schools (and this has the potential of becoming a political issue) the south of France still clings to its ancient and musical Provençal, which resists being described as a "dialect." And much of the tension in the Basque countries, and in Wales, is due to the Basque and Welsh determination not to allow their languages to be destroyed.

This determination also feeds the flames in Ireland for many indignities the Irish have been forced to undergo at English hands is the English contempt for their language.

It goes without saying, then, that language is also a political instrument, means, and proof of power. It is the most vivid and crucial key to identity: It reveals the private identity, and connects one with, or divorces one from, the larger, public, or communal identity. There have been, and are, times, and places, when to speak a

certain language could be dangerous, even fatal. Or, one may speak the same language, but in such a way that one's antecedents are revealed, or (one hopes) hidden. This is true in France, and is absolutely true in England: The range (and reign) of accents on that damp little island make England coherent for the English and totally incomprehensible for everyone else. To open your mouth in England is (if I may use black English) to "put your business in the street": You have confessed your parents, your youth, your school, your salary, your self-esteem, and, alas, your future.

Now, I do not know what white Americans would sound like if there had never been any black people in the United States, but they would not sound the way they sound. *Jazz*, for example, is a very specific sexual term, as in *jazz me, baby*, but white people purified it into the Jazz Age. *Sock it to me*, which means, roughly, the same thing, has been adopted by Nathaniel Hawthorne's descendants with no qualms or hesitations at all, along with *let it all hang out* and *right on! Beat to his socks* which was once the black's most total and despairing image of poverty, was transformed into a thing called the Beat Generation, which phenomenon was, largely, composed of *uptight*, middle-class white people, imitating poverty, trying to *get down*, to get *with it*, doing their *thing*, doing their despairing best to be *funky*, which we, the blacks, never dreamed of doing--we *were* funky, baby, like *funk* was going out of style.

Now, no one can eat his cake, and have it, too, and it is late in the day to attempt to penalize black people for having created a language that permits the nation its only glimpse of reality, a language without which the nation would be even more *whipped* than it is.

I say that the present skirmish is rooted in American history, and it is. Black English is the creation of the black diaspora. Blacks came to the United States chained to each other, but from different tribes: Neither could speak the other's language. If two black people, at that bitter hour of the world's history, had been able to speak to each other, the institution of chattel slavery could never have lasted as long as it did. Subsequently, the slave was given, under the eye, and the gun, of his master, Congo Square, and the Bible--or in other words, and under these conditions, the slave began the formation of the black church, and it is within this unprecedented tabernacle that black English began to be formed. This was not, merely, as in the European example, the adoption of a foreign tongue, but an alchemy that transformed ancient elements into a new language: *A language comes into existence by means of brutal necessity, and the rules of the language are dictated by what the language must convey.*

There was a moment, in time, and in this place, when my brother, or my mother, or my father, or my sister, had to convey to me, for example, the danger in which I was standing from the white man standing just behind me, and to convey this with a speed, and in a language, that the white man could not possibly understand, and that, indeed, he cannot understand, until today. He cannot afford to understand it. This understanding would reveal to him too much about himself, and smash that mirror before which he has been frozen for so long.

Now, if this passion, this skill, this (to quote Toni Morrison) "sheer intelligence," this incredible music, the mighty achievement of having brought a people utterly unknown to, or despised by "history"--to have brought this people to their present, troubled, troubling, and unassailable and unanswerable place--if this absolutely unprecedented journey does not indicate that black English is a language, I am curious to know what definition of language is to be trusted.

A people at the center of the Western world, and in the midst of so hostile a

population, has not endured and transcended by means of what is patronizingly called a "dialect." We, the blacks, are in trouble, certainly, but we are not doomed, and we are not inarticulate because we are not compelled to defend a morality that we know to be a lie.

The brutal truth is that the bulk of white people in American never had any interest in educating black people, except as this could serve white purposes. It is not the black child's language that is in question, it is not his language that is despised: It is his experience. A child cannot be taught by anyone who despises him, and a child cannot afford to be fooled. A child cannot be taught by anyone whose demand, essentially, is that the child repudiate his experience, and all that gives him sustenance, and enter a limbo in which he will no longer be black, and in which he knows that he can never become white. Black people have lost too many black children that way.

And, after all, finally, in a country with standards so untrustworthy, a country that makes heroes of so many criminal mediocrities, a country unable to face why so many of the nonwhite are in prison, or on the needle, or standing, futureless, in the streets--it may very well be that both the child, and his elder, have concluded that they have nothing whatever to learn from the people of a country that has managed to learn so little.

Week 2, Day 8: Language and Power Con't	[75 minute class period]
Broad Topic: Language and Power Con't	Questions to Consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did our class define Language and Power? 2. How did Baldwin define it? 3. What did you learn about how language and power are manifest in your own communities (home, friends, clubs, sports, work, our classroom, etc.)? 4. How are language and power manifest among traditionally marginalized communities?
Objectives (SWBAT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ...discuss how language and power intersect in their own communities. ★ ...review class and Baldwin definitions of language and power. ★ ...confront how language and power are manifest among traditionally marginalized communities? 	Materials Needed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Language and Power in My Community Homework Assignment</i> 2. <i>Language and Power Con't</i> Powerpoint 3. Poems: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Parsley</i> by Rita Dove b. <i>To Live in the Borderlands Means You</i> Gloria Anzaldua (revisit) 4. Optional Clip: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_BdYDrGIl0

GETTING STARTED Work on Poems from Yesterday - 15 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Give students time to continue drafting and working on their poems from yesterday that look at the connection between Language and Power
DISCUSSION Language and Power in My Community Homework Assignment - 25 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students take out their <i>Language and Power in My Community Homework Assignments</i> ● Put students into groups of 5 and give them time to discuss their observations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who holds the power in your community? Why? How can you tell ○ What type of language did you observe in your community? How did others in your community react to this language? How did you react? ○ In what ways do language and power intersect in your community? ○ Did anything strike you as strange or interesting? ○ What connections can you make to our discussion yesterday about Language and Power? ● Students select a spokesperson for the group to report to the rest of the class on what

they discussed

- Help students come to the conclusion that those who speak the most, or who have the best mastery of a language or vocabulary are usually the ones who wield most of the power.

LECTURE

Language as Marginalization - 35 minutes

- Use the *Language and Power* Con't PowerPoint to guide students through this portion of class
- Read and discuss bell hooks' quote about language being a tool for the "oppressor" to oppress.
- Read *Parsley* by Rita Dove - (copies can be handed out to students or the poem can be posted on a slide)³²
 - Tell students this might seem like an extreme example of using language as oppression, but encourage them to think about how language is used to oppress people today (the instructor may have to provide some context for this poem).
 - Also tell students that what Dove describes in the poem really did happen and language has been used as a weapon against minorities and is still used that way today.
 - Consider drawing a connection to what hooks writes about African Slaves being forced to adopt the language of the "oppressor" in order to communicate with each other.
 - Consider reminding students of the lesson on Code Switching and Code Meshing.
 - Questions to consider:
 - Summarize: What happened in this poem?
 - What areas of this poem stood out to you?
 - How are language and power connected in this poem?
 - In what way did the "oppressor" in this poem use language against a minority group?
 - Talk a bit about Spain's colonization of the western world to help students navigate why Spanish is being used to oppress in this situation.
 - What connections can you make between what happened to the people in this poem who "couldn't speak an r" and people in society today who lack "appropriate" English speaking skills?
 - Revisit the powerpoint and look at the second bell hooks quote
 - Summarize what bell hooks details about how African Americans have reclaimed the "oppressor's" language and made it their own.
 - Transition into the Anzaldua poem by talking about how other minority groups--not just African Americans-- have "transformed the oppressor's language" to forge a space for alternative "ways of thinking and knowing that were crucial to creating a counter-

³² "Sue also recognized the importance of literature and poetry in helping facilitate race talk. He writes: "For the average citizen...reading fiction, poetry or attending plays about the culture is one way to develop knowledge of it. Educators and teachers should...read literature written by or for persons of the culture." Sue continues: "Writings from individuals of that group may provide richness based on experiential reality...Reading such literature makes it possible to enter the cultural world of minorities in a safe and nonthreatening way" (*Race Talk* 215)" (51).

hegemonic worldview” (hooks 171).

- Have students take out their copies of *To Live in the Borderlands Means You* by Gloria Anzaldua. They looked at this poem earlier on the Code Switching and Code Meshing Day.
 - Reread the poem
 - Questions to consider:
 - In what ways has Anzaldua “transformed the oppressor’s language?”
 - How do language and power work in this poem?
 - To those in the room who cannot speak or understand Spanish, how do you feel? What about those who do speak and understand Spanish?
 - What is Anzaldua doing here?
 - Help students recognize that Anzaldua is trying to empower minorities. She is creating a way for minorities to use their language to assert more power.
 - What connections can you make between what Anzaldua does in this poem and society today?
 - Why is it important for people to feel powerful?
 - Why are people so intimidated by a language they cannot understand?
- Show Optional Clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_BdYDrGll0
 - Consider inviting students to think about or write about their experiences with language.
 - How come monolingual individuals (such as English-only speaking Americans) get so upset when people are speaking another language or aren’t speaking English in a way they understand?
 - What biases do we hold against people who don’t speak English the way we think they should?
- As the discussion finishes up, invite students to respond to the following prompt in their Reflective Writing Journals in preparation for tomorrow’s class:
 - *Is it possible to insult or hurt someone’s feelings unknowingly? Who should apologize when something offensive is said --the person who says it, or the person who was offended by it? What do you think of when you hear the phrase “death by 1000 cuts?”*

NEXT CLASS:

Homework

- Answer prompt in Reflective Writing Journal
- Draft poems

In-Class Topic:

- Microaggressions

Parsley

BY RITA DOVE

1. The Cane Fields

There is a parrot imitating spring
in the palace, its feathers parsley green.
Out of the swamp the cane appears

to haunt us, and we cut it down. El General
searches for a word; he is all the world
there is. Like a parrot imitating spring,

we lie down screaming as rain punches through
and we come up green. We cannot speak an R—
out of the swamp, the cane appears

and then the mountain we call in whispers *Katalina*.
The children gnaw their teeth to arrowheads.
There is a parrot imitating spring.

El General has found his word: *perejil*.
Who says it, lives. He laughs, teeth shining
out of the swamp. The cane appears

in our dreams, lashed by wind and streaming.
And we lie down. For every drop of blood
there is a parrot imitating spring.
Out of the swamp the cane appears.

2. The Palace

The word the general's chosen is parsley.
It is fall, when thoughts turn
to love and death; the general thinks
of his mother, how she died in the fall
and he planted her walking cane at the grave
and it flowered, each spring stolidly forming
four-star blossoms. The general

pulls on his boots, he stomps to
her room in the palace, the one without
curtains, the one with a parrot
in a brass ring. As he paces he wonders
Who can I kill today. And for a moment
the little knot of screams
is still. The parrot, who has traveled

all the way from Australia in an ivory

cage, is, coy as a widow, practising
spring. Ever since the morning
his mother collapsed in the kitchen
while baking skull-shaped candies
for the Day of the Dead, the general
has hated sweets. He orders pastries
brought up for the bird; they arrive

dusted with sugar on a bed of lace.
The knot in his throat starts to twitch;
he sees his boots the first day in battle
splashed with mud and urine
as a soldier falls at his feet amazed—
how stupid he looked!— at the sound
of artillery. *I never thought it would sing*
the soldier said, and died. Now

the general sees the fields of sugar
cane, lashed by rain and streaming.
He sees his mother's smile, the teeth
gnawed to arrowheads. He hears
the Haitians sing without R's
as they swing the great machetes:
Katalina, they sing, *Katalina*,

mi madre, mi amor en muerte. God knows
his mother was no stupid woman; she
could roll an R like a queen. Even
a parrot can roll an R! In the bare room
the bright feathers arch in a parody
of greenery, as the last pale crumbs
disappear under the blackened tongue. Someone

calls out his name in a voice
so like his mother's, a startled tear
splashes the tip of his right boot.
My mother, my love in death.
The general remembers the tiny green sprigs
men of his village wore in their capes
to honor the birth of a son. He will
order many, this time, to be killed

for a single, beautiful word.

Notes:

On October 2, 1937, Rafael Trujillo (1891-1961), dictator of the Dominican Republic, ordered 20,000 blacks killed because they could not pronounce the letter "r" in *perejil*, the Spanish word for parsley. Rita Dove, "Parsley" from *Museum* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon University Press, 1983). Copyright © 1983 by Rita Dove. Reprinted with the permission of the author.

"This is the oppressor's language yet I
need it to talk to you."

-Adrienne Rich

bell hooks:

"Reflecting on Adrienne Rich's words, I know that it is not the English language that hurts me, but what the oppressors do with it, how they shape it to become a territory that limits and defines, how they make it a weapon that can shame, humiliate, colonize. Gloria Anzaldua reminds us of this pain in *Borderlands/La Frontera* when she asserts, "So, if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language." We have so little knowledge of how displaced, enslaved, or free Africans who came or were brought against their will to the United States felt about the loss of language, about learning English. Only as a woman did I begin to think about these black people in relation to language, to think about their trauma as they were compelled to witness their language rendered meaningless with a colonizing European culture, where voices deemed foreign could not be spoken, were outlawed tongues, renegade speech" (*Living on the Border* 168).

Parsley Rita Dove

bell hooks:

"For in the incorrect usage of words, in the incorrect placement of words, was a spirit of rebellion that claimed language as a site of resistance. Using English in a way that ruptured standard usage and meaning, so that white folks could often not understand black speech, made English into more than the oppressor's language..."

...the rupture of standard English enabled and enables rebellion and resistance. By transforming the oppressor's language, making a culture of resistance, black people created an intimate speech that could say far more than was permissible within the boundaries of standard English. The power of this speech is not simply that it enables resistance to white supremacy, but that it also forges a space for alternative cultural production and alternative epistemologies—different ways of thinking and knowing that were crucial to creating a counter-hegemonic worldview. It is absolutely essential that the revolutionary power of black vernacular speech not be lost in contemporary culture. That power resides in the capacity of black vernacular to intervene on the boundaries and limitations of standard English" (*Living on the Border* 170-171).

To Live in the Borderlands Means You Gloria
Anzaldua

Week 2, Day 9: Microaggressions	[75 minute class period]
Broad Topic: Microaggressions	Questions to Consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is a microaggression? 2. What is weathering? 3. How does the use of a microaggression affect People of Color? 4. 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? 5. How can we combat our own use of microaggressions? Why should we? 6. How can we offend someone without even knowing it, and why should we care?
Objectives (SWBAT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ...define a microaggression and distinguish a racial microaggression from other forms. ★ ...define the term weathering and recognize how it is harmful to the physical and mental health of minority groups. ★ ...consider their own usage of microaggressions. ★ ...develop a plan for addressing microaggressions when they hear them or when they find themselves using them. 	Materials Needed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. YouTube Videos: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3LFB4mJ0DI b. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1zLzWtULig (optional, there are some sexual euphemisms in this video) 2. Poems: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Citizen</i> by Claudia Rankine (a series of excerpts) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. pp. 44, 46, 54, 63, 148 b. <i>Citizen.Microaggressions Worksheet</i> 3. NPR Audio Clip: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. https://www.npr.org/transcripts/576818478 4. <i>Microaggressions PowerPoint</i>

GETTING STARTED

Language as Marginalization Reflective Writing Journal Discussion - 10 minutes³³

- Put students in groups of 2. Have them discuss their responses to yesterday's prompt:
 - *Is it possible to insult or hurt someone's feelings unknowingly? Who should*

³³ "Teachers who are able to get students to listen to and hear one another in addition to acknowledging and validating the strong feelings likely to arise in a difficult dialogue, are going to be more successful in facilitating race talk in their classrooms (Racial Microaggressions 189). hooks details that "to engage in dialogue is one of the simplest ways we can begin as teachers, scholars, and critical thinkers to cross boundaries, the barriers that may or may not be erected by race, gender, class, professional standing, and a host of other differences" (Transgress 130)" (39).

apologize when something offensive is said --the person who says it, or the person who was offended by it? What do you think of when you hear the phrase "death by 1000 cuts?"

- Give students an opportunity to share what they have written about.
- Have you ever been offended by something someone said without intending to offend you? What did you do?
 - Examples:
 - "I tried to talk to her, but she's just pissed. She must be PMS-ing or something"
 - "Wow, you are really smart for a football player."
 - "This girls basketball team is actually exciting to watch."
 - "Are you sure you're old enough to drive?"
 - "You look really cute today."
 - "I didn't know someone your size could move so quickly!"
 - "Who are you are you rooting for? Pete Buttigieg? I really like that guy, don't you?"
 - Students can also provide some examples of what could be termed "backhanded compliments"

LECTURE:

What is a Microaggression? - 30 minutes

- Define the term **Microaggression**:
 - Merriam-Webster Dictionary: a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group (such as a racial minority)
 - Derald Wing Sue, PhD:
 - Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, **whether intentional or unintentional**, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. In many cases, these hidden messages may invalidate the group identity or experiential reality of target persons, demean them on a personal or group level, communicate they are lesser human beings, suggest they do not belong with the majority group, threaten and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment.
 - Explain to students that even though this course is looking specifically at racial microaggressions, microaggressions are NOT confined to race alone. They can be directed at women, members of the LGBTQI+ community, people with disabilities, religious minorities, etc.
- Microaggressions send a hidden or "coded" message to a member of a minority group that makes them feel like they are less-than or like they don't belong.
- Most microaggressions are delivered by well-intentioned individuals unaware that what they say can have a harmful effect on the person receiving the message.
- Show the following video. Set up the video by telling students it provides examples of racial microaggressions experienced by minorities everyday. Ask them to consider whether or not they have said or heard someone else say these things.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3LFB4mJ0DI>

- After viewing the video, invite students to share their thoughts. Remember: Students should be invited to share, not forced to share!
- Optional Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1zLzWtULig>
 - This video requires a bit of set up. Students need to be reminded that the phrases used in this video are things white people say to Black people on an almost regular basis.
 - The creators of this video are trying to help white people see how problematic racial microaggressions can be.
 - This video has a couple of sexual euphemisms that might not be appropriate for all audiences.
- Questions for class to consider:
 - Think back to the Implicit Bias tests from the first day of the unit. How do our biases against a minority group impact the way we interact with them?
 - What should we take into consideration before we speak to a member of a minority group?³⁴

POETRY ANALYSIS

Citizen by Claudia Rankine - 20 minutes³⁵

- Hand out copies of the excerpts from *Citizen* to each student.
- Put students in groups of 3.
- Give each group a copy of the *Citizen Microaggressions Worksheet*
 - Students work in groups to read and analyze the excerpts. On the excerpts that outline a microaggression, students identify the stereotypes or biases that are behind the aggressions and discuss ways the aggressor could work to overcome these stereotypes.
 - Groups can work their way through each poem or each group can get a different poem with a different set of questions to consider.
- Questions to consider:
 - What stereotype is behind this microaggression?
 - What message is being received by the narrator?
- Bring the class together to discuss the excerpts.

REFLECTION

So Now What? - 15 minutes

- After students share their impressions of the *Citizen* excerpts, ask the students to vocalize what they learned today about microaggressions.
- How does the phrase “death by 1000 cuts” relate to microaggressions?
 - Define the term **weathering**
 - *CodeSwitch* Podcast 16:20 - 21:05

³⁴ “Asao Inoue challenged teachers to take Rhetorical Listening a step further and employ the teachings of Tich Nah Hanh when he wrote about “seeing the suchness of a person.” We should “listen to others without trying to control or change them.” Tich Nah Hanh discussed that we should sit close to those we care about and ask: Do I understand you enough? Am I making you suffer? Please help me to read your language properly? (Inoue). Teachers can teach, practice with, and encourage students to practice this type of listening when engaging with the literature used in the course as well as in their race talk among each other” (38).

³⁵ “[hooks] writes: “Words impose themselves, take root in our memory against our will. The words of this poem begat a life in my memory that I could not abort or change” (167). Anytime hooks finds herself thinking about language, the words of Rich’s poem make their way to her lips: “This is the oppressor’s language yet I need it to talk to you.” The power and importance of poetry is not lost on those of us who love to read and write in the poetic form” (48).

- <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/576818478>
- Select appropriate places to pause the clip to ask comprehension and discussion questions of the students
- Questions to Consider:
 - What is weathering? What are the two aspects of weathering?
 - Can you think of any real-life examples of experiences that would “pull out...pieces” of the Jenga tower in a person of color’s life?
 - What role do social and environmental factors play in the expression of certain genes?
 - What contributes to the general health vulnerability of people of color?
- Define **Gaslighting** from the *Terminology Handout*
 - Stress the importance of people believing minorities when they say they feel they have been racially profiled or discriminated against. Their stories matter and their experiences should not be ignored.

Possible Reflective Writing Journal Prompt:

- Some people will argue that minority groups are being too sensitive and they shouldn’t be offended by everything all of the time. The era of “political correctness” makes it so people can’t say anything anymore. They accuse individuals who ask for people to consider how their language could hurt someone else of infringing on their rights to free speech. After participating in our discussion today and in our unit so far, what would you answer to someone who expressed these feelings to you?

NEXT CLASS:

Homework

- Answer prompt in Reflective Writing Journal
- Draft poems

In-Class Topic:

- Anti-Racism

Citizen, Microaggressions Worksheet

Due TBA | Points TBA

Name: _____ Class: _____

Instructions

Work with your group to read and analyze the following poems from Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*. Each of these poems articulates a situation during which the author received a hidden or "coded" message from another individual. Answer the questions about each poem provided in the box next to the poem.

Page 44

At the end of a brief phone conversation, you tell the manager you are speaking with that you will come by his office to sign the form. When you arrive and announce yourself, he blurts out, I didn't know you were black!

I didn't mean to say that, he then says.

Aloud, you say.

What? he asks.

You didn't mean to say that aloud.

Your transaction goes swiftly after that.

1. What assumption is being made manifest by the "manager" to the "speaker" in the coded language used in this poem?
2. How can you tell (be specific)?
3. What is the "speaker" trying to point out to the "manager" when they say *You didn't mean to say that aloud*?
4. Does what we think matter as much as what we say? Why or why not?

Page 54

The man at the cash register wants to know if you think your card will work. If this is his routine, he didn't use it on the friend who went before you. As she picks up her bag, she looks to see what you will say. She says nothing. You want her to say something—both as a witness and as a friend. She is not you; her silence says so. Because you are watching all this take place even as you participate in it, you say nothing as well. Come over here with me, your eyes say. Why on earth would she? The man behind the register returns your card and places the sandwich and Pellegrino in a bag, which you take from the counter. What is wrong with you? This question gets stuck in your dreams.

1. What assumption is being made manifest by the “man at the cash register” to the “speaker” in the coded language used in this poem?
2. How can you tell (be specific)?
3. Take a closer look at the line *She is not you; her silence says so*. What is the author trying to convey about individuals who witness something problematic but do nothing?
4. Nobody asked the speaker, *What is wrong with you?*, but the question came to their mind anyway. Where do you think this question came from? Why does the speaker feel like there is something wrong with them?

1. What role does our memory play in keeping us from “putting the past behind us?”

Page 63

The world is wrong. You can't put the past behind you. It's buried in you; it's turned your flesh into its own cupboard. Not everything remembered is useful but it all comes

from the world to be stored in you. Who did what to whom on which day? Who said that? She said what? What did he just do? Did she really just say that? He said what? What

did she do? Did I hear what I think I heard? Did that just come out of my mouth, his mouth, your mouth? Do you remember when you sighed?

2. Pick one of the questions posed in the poem and think of a time you asked that question either in your own head or out loud. Summarize the situation below. Did you do something about the situation? Why or why not? Will you in the future? Why or why not?

3. What does the line *Not everything remembered is useful but it all comes from the world to be stored in you* mean to you? What things have come to be stored in people of color through their interactions with racial microaggressions?

When the waitress hands your friend the card she took from you, you laugh and ask what else her privilege gets her? Oh, my perfect life, she answers. Then you both are laughing so hard, everyone in the restaurant smiles.

1. What assumption is being made manifest by the “waitress” to the “speaker” in the coded action used in this poem?
2. How can you tell (be specific)?
3. Why are the speaker and her friend laughing about what transpired in this poem?
4. Why do you think laughter is one of the ways we code our frustrations, discomfort, etc.? What is it about laughter that makes it the perfect cover-up?

What is a microaggression?

Microaggression noun

mi·cro·ag·gres·sion | \ ,mī-krō-ə-ˈgre-shən \

Definition of microaggression

: a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group (such as a racial minority)

Source: Merriam-Webster Dictionary (Online)

Microaggression

"Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. In many cases, these hidden messages may invalidate the group identity or experiential reality of target persons, demean them on a personal or group level, communicate they are lesser human beings, suggest they do not belong with the majority group, threaten and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment."

-Derald Wing Sue, PhD and scholar on racial bias

Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/microaggressions-everyday> - 06/2010 11 microaggressions=more-quietness

Remember...

- Microaggressions are not confined to race alone.
- Microaggressions send a hidden or "coded" message to a member of a minority group that makes them feel like they are less-than or like they don't belong.
- Most microaggressions are delivered by well-intentioned individuals unaware that what they say can have a harmful effect on the person receiving the message.

HOW DO YOU RESPOND?

Increasing Understanding



What is weathering?

“Death by 1000 Cuts”

Microaggressions

Weathering

Reflective Writing Journal

So, now you know. What are you going to do about it?

Some people will argue that minority groups are being too sensitive and they shouldn't be offended by everything all of the time. The era of "political correctness" makes it so people can't say anything anymore. They accuse individuals who ask for people to consider how their language could hurt someone else of infringing on their rights to free speech.

After participating in our discussion today and in our unit so far, what would you answer to someone who expressed these feelings to you?

Week 2, Day 10: Anti-Racism/Unit Wrap Up	[75 minute class period]
Broad Topic: Anti-Racism/Unit Wrap Up	Questions to Consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does it mean to be an anti-racist? 2. Why is anti-racism important? 3. What can I do in my own life to be an anti-racist? 4. What did I learn during this unit that I will carry with me?
Objectives (SWBAT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ...define anti-racist. ★ ...consider why anti-racism is important and how they can become anti-racists in their own lives. ★ ...reflect on unit themes. 	Materials Needed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poems: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>And Still I Rise</i> by Maya Angelou b. <i>Alone</i> by Maya Angelou 2. White Paper 3. Coloring/Drawing Materials 4. <i>Anti-Racism/Wrap Up PowerPoint</i> 5. YouTube Video: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqOqo50LSZ0 6. Colorful Paper cut into rectangles 7. Markers

GETTING STARTED:

Review the Reflective Writing Journal Prompt from Yesterday - 10 minutes

- The Prompt:
 - *Some people will argue that minority groups are being too sensitive and they shouldn't be offended by everything all of the time. The era of "political correctness" makes it so people can't say anything anymore. They accuse individuals who ask for people to consider how their language could hurt someone else of infringing on their rights to free speech. After participating in our discussion today and in our unit so far, what would you answer to someone who expressed these feelings to you?*
- Put students into groups of 3 and post the following for them to consider:
 - Does "free speech" have it's limits?
 - Is there a danger in censoring speech?
 - How can speech be used to empower instead of belittle?
 - Who should be responsible for monitoring speech? Individuals? Churches? The Government? Nobody?

POETRY ANALYSIS:

***Alone* by Maya Angelou - 20 minutes³⁶**

- Put students in groups of 3 and hand out copies of the poem.
- Students should read their poem out loud a few times before discussing the poem and its potential meanings.
- Questions to Consider:
 - What lines or words in the poem stand out to you? Why?
 - When you read the line “The race of man is suffering” in the context of what we have studied during this unit, what does it signify to you?
 - What do you think Angelou means when she says “Nobody, but nobody can make it out here alone?”
 - How does this relate to our school?
 - How does this relate to our town/city?
 - How does this relate to our homes/communities?
 - How does this relate to us as individuals?
- After students discuss the poem in small groups, invite groups to share their thoughts.
 - Consider the question: If nobody can make it out here alone, what can we do to better help each other, or individuals who have not taken this class, be more considerate of issues surrounding race and identity?

ACTIVITY

Drawing Activity -30 minutes

- Have students consider the following in their Reflective Writing Journals:
 - Think about your ideas surrounding race at the beginning of the unit;
 - Think about conversations, topics, or comments that challenged your views and opinions, why;
 - Think about the moment you realized the importance of these conversations;
 - Think about the poems that meant the most to you throughout the unit and why.
- Students write for 8-10 minutes responding to the above prompt.
- Hand out a piece of paper to each student. Provide coloring and drawing materials to each group of 3.
- Invite the students to draw a picture that represents their growth throughout the unit.
 - They are welcome to discuss their thoughts and what they wrote in their Reflective Writing Journal with their group.
 - Consider playing music to help the students get into the mood of drawing, thinking, and discussing.
- Students can draw from 25-30 minutes. Invite students to share their drawings and thoughts with the whole class.

REFLECTION

What does it mean to be an anti-racist? - 15 minutes³⁷

³⁶ “There is power in poetry it serves as a way to “[empower] youth, a means of inviting their lives and interests into the classroom, [and] building community” (Beach 166). Just as hooks was inspired by the line in a poem she read years ago to pursue her life’s work in education as a practice of freedom, students have the capacity to connect with poetry on this same level” (51).

³⁷ “As mentioned earlier, CRT places emphasis on “stories as a means of communicating views to those who hold very different views on the emotionally charged subject of race” (Bell 80). CRT takes those stories and uses them in the classroom to help students engage with race in a more critical way. hooks

- Use the *Anti-Racist/Wrap Up PowerPoint* to guide this portion of class.
- Share a bit about the historian and leading anti-racist voice Ibram X. Kendi.
 - “IBRAM X. KENDI is one of America’s foremost historians and leading antiracist voices. He is a *New York Times* bestselling author and the Founding Director of **The Antiracist Research & Policy Center** at American University in Washington, DC. A professor of history and international relations, Kendi is a contributor at *The Atlantic* and CBS News. He is the author of *THE BLACK CAMPUS MOVEMENT*, which won the W.E.B. Du Bois Book Prize, and *STAMPED FROM THE BEGINNING: THE DEFINITIVE HISTORY OF RACIST IDEAS IN AMERICA*, which won the National Book Award for Nonfiction. At 34 years old, Kendi was the youngest ever winner of the NBA for Nonfiction.”
(<https://www.ibramxkendi.com/about>)
- Kendi reminds us that:
 - “Being an antiracist requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination.”³⁸
- Remind students that one of the great things about being anti-racist is that you don’t have to go around pretending that you do not possess problematic biases or “racisms.”
 - Being an anti-racist means that you seek to understand your own biases and actively work on them while encouraging others to do the same.
- In an interview with NPR
(<https://www.npr.org/local/309/2019/10/30/774704183/historian-ibram-x-kendi-on-how-to-be-an-antiracist>), Kendi stated:
 - “I think when people think about race and racism, it's a deeply personal affair. ... Many people are very, in many ways, closed-minded or even defensive, especially when they're charged with being racist. In many ways, we're taught to close up and to feel as if we're being attacked and to sort of not confess and not admit when we're being racist. I knew that the heartbeat of anti-racism itself is confession, and so I wanted to model that in sharing my own personal story.”
- Ask: What have we learned?
 - Students provide answers and instructor types them into the slide.
 - Remind students that they were being very brave in this class in allowing themselves to recognize and address their own biases. We learned to be generous in this classroom and they can carry that generosity with them when they leave.
- Share Kendi’s tips for “how to live as an anti-racist” (also from the above NPR linked interview):
 - 1) **See Racial Groups as Equal** - “I think the first thing is an antiracist is looking out upon their society, in their everyday life, and seeing the racial groups as equal. Someone who is not denigrating or lifting up any particular racial group. Someone who as they see racial inequity, they're not stating that's

reminds us that students “want an education that is healing to the uninformed, unknowing spirit...knowledge that is meaningful...[and connects] what they are learning and their overall life experiences” (Transgress 19)” (20).

³⁸ “Delgado and Stefancic remind us that CRT “tries not only to understand our social situation but to *change it*, setting out not only to ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies but to transform it for the better (8, emphasis added). Giving voice to the experiences of People of Color also looks like allowing their stories and narratives to shape classroom conversations in the form of productive race talk” (18).

the result of a particular racial group's inferiorities, but that's the result of racist policies.

- 2) **Figure Out Your Passions** - “And then that person is seeking to say, “OK, you know what area am I most passionate about? Or what place am I most passionate about reforming?” And then they follow that passion or that area.
- 3) **Join The Movement** - “They become part of that struggle to challenge racist policies, and they either become part of that struggle through donating their time ... [or] they donate and finance those campaigns and movements and organizations. ... Fundamentally, an antiracist is a part of the struggle that is challenging racism on an everyday basis.”
- Invite students to make a commitment to anti-racism.
 - Hand out rectangular pieces of colorful paper. These pieces can match the size and shape of bricks on the classroom wall.
 - Have students articulate their own commitments to anti-racism on the paper.
 - Students can sign their commitments on the back of the paper.
 - Collect the papers and tape them to the classroom wall.³⁹

And Still I Rise by Maya Angelou - 2:52

- Play the following clip for students and ask them to think about how this poem relates to the overall themes of the course.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqOqo50LSZ0>
- Unit Themes:
 - Brave Spaces, Generosity, Implicit Bias, Identity, Code Switching/Meshing, Racisms, Privilege, Language and Power, Microaggressions, Anti-Racism

NEXT CLASS:

In-Class Topic:

- Poetry Writing Workshop

³⁹ “CRT gives power to these voices by employing the use of “counterstories to challenge, displace, or mock pernicious narratives and beliefs” (50). Narrative helps lesson the differend. It helps teachers recognize “how damaging ‘official knowledge’ can be to students of colour [sp] when their life experiences and perspectives are erased from the curriculum” by allowing the students the opportunity to express their own narratives or analyze the narratives of traditionally marginalized populations (Powers 152)” (18).

Alone

Maya Angelou - 1928-2014

Lying, thinking
Last night
How to find my soul a home
Where water is not thirsty
And bread loaf is not stone
I came up with one thing
And I don't believe I'm wrong
That nobody,
But nobody
Can make it out here alone.

Alone, all alone
Nobody, but nobody
Can make it out here alone.

There are some millionaires
With money they can't use
Their wives run round like banshees
Their children sing the blues
They've got expensive doctors
To cure their hearts of stone.
But nobody
No, nobody
Can make it out here alone.

Alone, all alone
Nobody, but nobody
Can make it out here alone.

Now if you listen closely
I'll tell you what I know
Storm clouds are gathering
The wind is gonna blow
The race of man is suffering
And I can hear the moan,
'Cause nobody,
But nobody
Can make it out here alone.

Alone, all alone
Nobody, but nobody
Can make it out here alone.

From *Oh Pray My Wings Are Gonna Fit Me Well* By Maya Angelou. Copyright © 1975 by Maya Angelou. Reprinted with permission of Random House, Inc. For online information about other Random House, Inc. books and authors, visit the website at www.randomhouse.com.

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
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

Maya Angelou, "Still I Rise" from *And Still I Rise: A Book of Poems*. Copyright © 1978 by Maya Angelou. Used by permission of Random House, an imprint and division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

Source: *The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou* (1994)

Anti-Racism

Unit Wrap

Alone

By Maya Angelou

- Questions to Consider:
 - What lines or words in the poem stand out to you? Why?
 - When you read the line "The race of man is suffering" in the context of what we have studied during this unit, what does it signify to you?
 - What do you think Angelou means when she says "Nobody, but nobody can make it out here alone?"
 - How does this relate to our school?
 - How does this relate to our town/city?
 - How does this relate to our homes/communities?
 - How does this relate to us as individuals?

Reflective Writing Journal

What have I learned during this unit?

Consider the Following:

- Think about your ideas surrounding race at the beginning of the unit;
- Think about conversations, topics, or comments that challenged your views and opinions, why;
- Think about the moment you realized the importance of these conversations;
- Think about the poems that meant the most to you throughout the unit and why.

Draw a Picture

What does it mean to be an anti-racist?

"Being an antiracist requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination."

-Ibram X. Kendi

"I think when people think about race and racism, it's a deeply personal affair. ... Many people are very, in many ways, closed-minded or even defensive, especially when they're charged with being racist. In many ways, we're taught to close up and to feel as if we're being attacked and to sort of not confess and not admit when we're being racist. I knew that the heartbeat of anti-racism itself is confession, and so I wanted to model that in sharing my own personal story."

-Ibram X. Kendi

What have we learned?

1. Be generous;
2. Be brave;
3. Be honest;
4. Do something.

How to Live as an Anti-Racist (Ibram X. Kendi)

1. See Racial Groups As Equal
2. Figure Out Your Passions
3. Join the Movement

Unit Themes

- Brave Spaces
- Generosity
- Implicit Bias
- Identity
- Code Switching/Meshing
- Racisms
- Privilege
- Language and Power
- Microaggressions
- Anti-Racism



Week 3

Poetry of Race and Identity Unit Plan Week 3

Week 3, Day 11: Workshop Set Up/Review	[75 minute class period]
<p>Broad Topic:</p> <p>Poetry Workshop Set Up/Review</p>	<p>Questions to Consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the requirements for the Final Poetry Portfolio? 2. How can I be a “good” Peer Reviewer? 3. What are some of the themes we have discussed during this unit and what poems have informed them? 4. What poems were particularly powerful for you? 5. What is Figurative Language and how can I incorporate it into my poems?
<p>Objectives (SWBAT):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ...discuss and understand the requirements for their Final Poetry Portfolio. ★ ...review the themes of the unit and poems used in the unit. ★ ...create examples of Figurative Language. 	<p>Materials Needed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Copies of <i>Final Poetry Portfolio</i> (enough for each student) 2. <i>Poetry Workshop PowerPoint</i>

<p>GETTING STARTED:</p> <p>Introduce the Final Poetry Portfolio - 20 minutes⁴⁰</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pass out copies of <i>Final Poetry Portfolio</i> assignment sheet. ● Describe the purpose of the project and the product the students will be generating ● Students can ask questions about the project ● Describe the Poetry Writing Cycle and why it is important <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revision is essential to the writing process; ○ Reflection helps us gather our thoughts and make possible changes ● Direct students attention to the “Meta-Question(s)” heading. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students do not need to answer all of these questions in their poems, these questions are there to help them think and reflect upon course themes before drafting their poems.
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⁴⁰ “[Students] will use their writing responses, the course content, in-class workshops and peer reviews, and our discussions about the poetic genre as tools to help them in their construction...[students will] create multiple drafts of a poem before submitting the final product. This teaches students to value the process almost as much as the product (Griswold 70)” (59).

- Briefly go through the Portfolio Grading Rubric

UNIT REVIEW

Reflective Writing Journal Prompt - 15 minutes

- What are some of the unit themes? Why do these particular themes stand out to you? What did you learn about this topic and what helped you learn it?
- Name a few poems that stood out to you. Why did these particular poems stick with you? What were the themes of those poems?

Unit Themes - 5 minutes

- Students share the Unit Themes that stood out to them and why.
- Instructor types student comments into the *Poetry Workshop PowerPoint*

Poems to Remember - 10 minutes⁴¹

- Students share the poems they enjoyed. Instructor works with students to look up the poems to discuss why the students liked them, what the themes of those particular poems were, and any other elements of the poems that the students liked.

POETRY WRITING MINI-LESSON:

Figurative Language - 20 minutes

- Provide a list of common Figurative Language terms:
 - Simile, Metaphor, Personification, Hyperbole, Understatement, Paradox, Oxymoron, Pun, Allusion, Analogy
- Assign terms to groups of students and have them come up with an example of the term.
- Students come and write their examples on the board.
- Point out that “good” poems use figurative language to help reinforce the meaning of the poem.
- Encourage students to consider intentionally using Figurative Language in their poems as they draft.

IN-CLASS POETRY WRITING - If Time

- Students can use the remainder of class time to review some of the poems they have already started drafting as part of the unit or to work on drafts of their first poem for an in-class workshop the following day.

NEXT CLASS:

Homework

- Draft Poem #1 and bring **three hard copies of one complete draft** of Poem #1 to class

⁴¹ “In her book of essays entitled *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, bell hooks describes an experience she had during her first year of college when she was exposed to Adrienne Rich’s poem, “The Burning of Paper Instead of Children.” There is one line of the poem in particular that “moved and disturbed something within” hooks. The line reads: “This is the oppressor’s language yet I need it to talk to you.” hooks relates that she has never forgotten this line and could not have forgotten it even if she “tried to erase it from memory.” She writes: “Words impose themselves, take root in our memory against our will. The words of this poem begat a life in my memory that I could not abort or change” (167)” (48).

Unit Review

Final Poetry Portfolio

1. Purpose
2. Product



Reflective Writing Journal Prompt

What are some of the unit themes?
Why do these particular themes stand out to you? What did you learn about this topic and what helped you learn it?

Name a few poems that stood out to you. Why did these particular poems stick with you? What were the themes

Unit Themes

Figurative Language

- Simile
- Metaphor
- Personification
- Hyperbole
- Understatement
- Paradox
- Oxymoron
- Pun
- Allusion
- Analogy

Poetry Workshop



What makes a “good” Peer Reviewer?



Process

- Review your Reflective Writing Journal
- Look at some of the poems you have already written and complete them or make adjustments
- Bring 3 hard copies of your poem to class
- Put an Assessment List with each copy
- Get into groups of 3 and give one copy of your poem and one Assessment List to each
- Author reads the poem out loud while everyone takes notes on the poem
- Spend 10-15 minutes on each poem and work together as a group
- All group members fill out the Assessment List. Self-Evaluation is reserved for the author of the poems
- Repeat the process
- Complete the Reflective Writing Journal Prompt
- Begin revising your poem



Reflective Writing Journal Prompt

Take a look at the advice you were given during the in-class workshop. Which advice did you find particularly helpful? Which advice was less-than helpful? What revisions do you think would help improve the quality of your poem?

Final Poetry Portfolio

Due TBA | Points 100

Purpose

We have been learning about race and identity through our study of poetry. You have had practice engaging with difficult topics through productive Race Talk and analyzing various Poets of Color's commentary on those topics through their poetry. Now it is your turn to engage with the unit themes through your own poetry. This project asks you to write three reflective poems that center around the major themes of the unit. Your three poems can look at one central theme that sticks with you the most, you can write two poems with the same theme and a third with a different theme, or all three poems can look at three different themes. You will have opportunities to draft, peer review, submit your poems for feedback, and revise them at least twice before final portfolios are due.

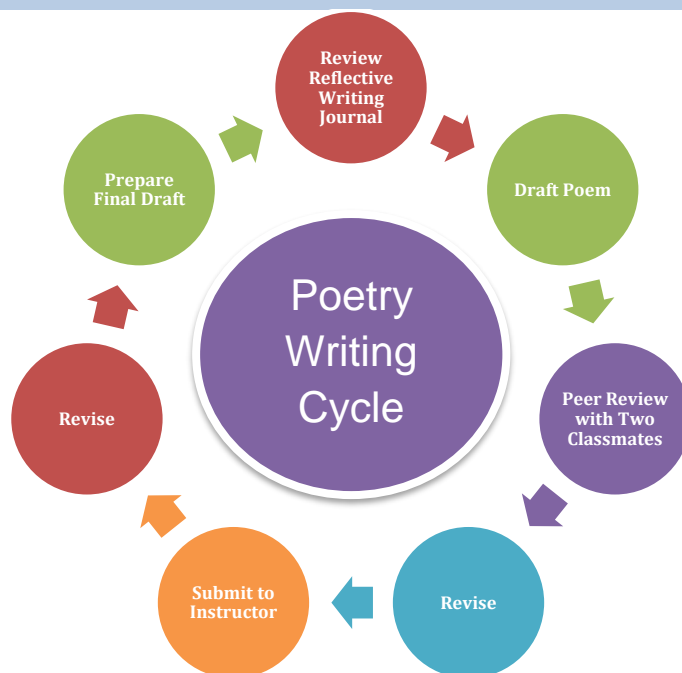
Product

- ✓ Three poems that center around the themes of this unit;
- ✓ Two preliminary drafts of each poem with provided score and Assessment List feedback;
- ✓ A portfolio introduction letter (300-500 words) describing the purpose of the portfolio and the themes you chose and why;
- ✓ A portfolio reflection letter (300-500 words) describing what you learned about race and identity overall and how reading and writing poems helped you in your learning.

Unit Themes

Implicit Bias	Rhetorical Listening	Privilege
Brave Spaces	Generosity	Microaggressions
Identity	Code Switching	Language and Power
Code Meshing	Racism(s)	Anti-Racism

Process



1. Complete the Poetry Writing Cycle for each poem;
2. Draft Portfolio Introduction Letter (instructor as audience);
3. Draft Portfolio Reflection Letter (yourself as audience);
4. Submit on time😊

Meta-Question(s)

Experiencing writer's block? Feel free to use some of the following questions as writing prompts to help get your brain moving. These questions are here to help you and do not need to be used unless you would like to use them.

- Why is Race Talk important?
- How do my biases and experiences affect my views on race?
- Who am I? What determines my identity? What choices do I make each day about how I want others to see me?
- What is Code Switching? What is Code Meshing? Who decides the codes? How do these codes help or hurt me?
- What is racism? What are some of my personal, individual racisms? How has structural, institutional racism hurt or helped me?
- What types of privilege are there? How do I access certain privileges? Is this fair? How can my privilege be used to hurt or help myself or others?
- What is the relationship between language and power? How is language used to oppress or empower? What power do I have access to because of the language learned in my individual communities? How are language and power manifest among traditionally marginalized communities
- What is a microaggression? What is weathering? What is my experience with these things? Why do they matter? How can I offend someone without even knowing it, and why should I care?
- What does it mean to be an anti-racist? What does anti-racism look like? What can I do in my own life to be an anti-racist? How can I use anti-racism to help build myself and others?

Assessment List (For Poems)

Criteria	Possible Points	Self-Evaluation + Comments	Peer/Instructor Evaluation + Comments
Effectiveness (My Poem...)			
1. Has an compelling title;	1		
2. Has at least 20 lines;	1		
3. Uses figurative language to help reinforce the meaning of the poem;	3		
4. Uses sensory language that reinforces the meaning of the poem;	2		
5. Uses space/formatting to impact/strengthen the meaning;	2		
6. Is centered on a theme of the course; Poem's theme:	3		
7. Conveys a meaning or purpose. Poem's meaning or purpose:	3		
	15	Additional Comments:	

Portfolio Grading Rubric

Criteria	Description	Total Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Portfolio contents should be typed and printed in a read-able font. ✓ Portfolio order: 1) Title Page with your name, the date, and class period; 2) Introduction Letter; 3) Poems, drafts, revisions, and Assessment Lists; 4) Reflection Letter. ✓ Compile all of the portfolio parts and staple them together before turning them into your instructor. 		
Introduction Letter		15 points
Content	<p>Answers the Following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the themes you explore through your poems? 2. Why did you pick these themes? 3. Which poets inspired you as you wrote? 4. Identify the central theme and overall purpose for each of your three poems. 5. What are you hoping the readers of your poems will take away from them? 	/10
Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 – 500 words; • Formatted like a letter; • Addressed to your instructor as the audience; • Included as the first page of the portfolio after the Title Page 	/5
Poems		50 points
Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three drafts of each poem included (in this order: first draft, peer review revision, final/instructor review revision); • Assessment lists for each poem included with “Self-Evaluation” category filled out (nine lists: 6 peer, 3 instructor). 	/5
Assessment List Score	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See individual Assessment Lists for each poem for the criteria upon which your three poems were graded; • This score is the combined final score of your three poems. • 	/45
Reflection Letter		35 points

Content	<p>Answers the Following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What did you learn about race and identity from this unit overall? 2. Which of the poems that we read most helped you in these realizations? 3. How did writing poems help you think through your own thoughts and feelings about the unit themes? 4. Which in-class discussions and activities are sticking with you the most and why? 5. What about your background prepared you for this unit? How do you think you could have been more prepared? 6. Moving forward, how do you think you will apply what you learned from this unit into your daily life? 	/30
Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 – 500 words; • Formatted like a letter; • Addressed to yourself as the audience; • Included as the last page of the portfolio 	/5
		<p>Total Score:</p> <p>/100</p>

Week 3, Day 12: Workshop #1	[75 minute class period]
Broad Topic: Poetry Workshop #1	Questions to Consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is sensory language and why is it useful in poetry? 2. How can I be a “good” Peer Reviewer?
Objectives (SWBAT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ...identify and create examples of sensory language. ★ ...work together to read, analyze, and review each others poems. 	Materials Needed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Copies of <i>Assessment List</i> (3 copies per student) 2. <i>Poetry Workshop PowerPoint</i>

GETTING STARTED: Reminders - 5 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post the Poetry Writing Cycle graphic for the students and remind them of the process.
POETRY WRITING MINI-LESSON: Sensory Language - 15 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post the image on the <i>Poetry Workshop PowerPoint</i>. ● Divide the room into groups and have each group write individually about the image using only <u>one</u> of the following senses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sight ○ Smell ○ Sound ○ Touch ○ Taste ● Students can write about the image according to their assigned sense in any way they would like, but they can only describe the image according to that sense. ● Instructor draws a table on the board with the five senses listed across the top, and columns with room to write student descriptions. ● Call on students to share how they described the image according to their assigned sense. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Write what they say on the board in the appropriate column ● Discuss the importance of sensory language in poetry. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why would it be important to include sensory language in your poems? ○ What purpose does sensory language serve? ○ Can you think of any of the poems we have studied that use sensory language particularly well? ● Encourage students to incorporate sensory language into their poems as they revise

POETRY WORKSHOP #1:⁴²

Peer Review Guidelines - 10 minutes

- Have students point out the qualities of a good peer reviewer and type their ideas into the *Poetry Workshop PowerPoint*
- Tell students that the Peer Review and Poetry Workshops will be as good as they make them

Process/Procedure - 30 minutes

1. Students review their Reflective Writing Journal entries for ideas on what to write about
 - Throughout the unit, students were given opportunities to begin drafting a few poems (they are welcome to use those poems in their portfolio)
2. Students bring **3 hard copies** of their poem to class for the workshop.
3. Students are given 3 Assessment Lists (see *Final Poetry Portfolio* for a copy of the Assessment List) and match one list per copy of their poem.
4. Place students in groups of 3. Each group member has a copy of each poem with an accompanying Assessment List.
 - Each poem should have it's own Assessment list. The author of the poem conducts a Self-Evaluation of their own poem in addition to filling out the Peer/Instructor Evaluation column of the Assessment List
5. Each group member's poem gets **10-15 minutes** of the peer review time. Groups should work together on each poem.
 - Author reads the poem out loud while group members make marginal comments;
 - All group members fill out the Assessment List;
 - Group comes together to discuss the Assessment List and any other feedback they have for the author of the poem;
 - Process repeats with a new poem.
6. Students collect their poems and Assessment Lists and use them to help revise their poem.
7. If the peer review portion of the workshop finishes early, students can work alone on their poetry revisions. They then take the poems home and re-type them with revisions in mind.
8. Poems are submitted to the instructor the following day.

REFLECTIVE WRITING JOURNAL - 5 minutes

- Take a look at the advice you were given during the in-class workshop. Which advice did you find particularly helpful? Which advice was less-than helpful? What revisions do you think would help improve the quality of your poem?

NEXT CLASS:

Homework

⁴² "Students will have one peer reviewed and one instructor reviewed version of each of the three poems to use in helping them compose their final versions. Griswold introduces the idea of an Assessment List centered around three grading categories...With each poem the student submits [and discusses during peer review], they will receive revision-based feedback they are expected to apply to the next poem [or draft] (Griswold 71)" (59-60).

- Revise Poem #1 and bring **one hard copy** of a complete draft to class to submit to instructor for feedback
- Draft Poem #2 and bring **three hard copies of** one complete draft of Poem #2 to class for a workshop

Week 3, Day 13: Workshop #2	[75 minute class period]
Broad Topic: Poetry Workshop #2	Questions to Consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can I be a “good” Peer Reviewer? 2. What feedback does my instructor have about my poem?
Objectives (SWBAT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ...work together to read, analyze, and review each others poems. ★ ...discuss their poems with the instructor and receive instructor feedback. 	Materials Needed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Copies of <i>Assessment List</i> (3 copies per student) 2. <i>Poetry Workshop PowerPoint</i>

GETTING STARTED: Reminders - 5 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post the Poetry Writing Cycle graphic for the students and remind them of the process. ● Students submit revised draft of Poem #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This draft should incorporate revisions recommended by their Peer Reviewers
POETRY WORKSHOP #2: Peer Review Guidelines - 5 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remind students of the Peer Review Guidelines they created previously Process/Procedure - 60 minutes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students review their Reflective Writing Journal entries for ideas on what to write about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Throughout the unit, students were given opportunities to begin drafting a few poems (they are welcome to use those poems in their portfolio) 2. Students bring 3 hard copies of their poem to class for the workshop. 3. Students are given 3 Assessment Lists (see <i>Final Poetry Portfolio</i> for a copy of the Assessment List) and match one list per copy of their poem. 4. Place students in the same groups of 3 from before. Each group member has a copy of each poem with an accompanying Assessment List. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each poem should have it’s own Assessment list. The author of the poem conducts a Self-Evaluation of their own poem in addition to filling out the Peer/Instructor Evaluation column of the Assessment List 5. Each group member’s poem gets 10-15 minutes of the peer review time. Groups should work together on each poem. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Author reads the poem out loud while group members make marginal comments; ○ All group members fill out the Assessment List; ○ Group comes together to discuss the Assessment List and any other feedback they have for the author of the poem;

- Process repeats with a new poem.
- 6. Students collect their poems and Assessment Lists and use them to help revise their poem.
- 7. If the peer review portion of the workshop finishes early, students can work alone on their poetry revisions. They then take the poems home and re-type them with revisions in mind.
- 8. Poems are submitted to the instructor the following day.

POETRY MICRO CONFERENCES

Discuss Student Poems - 60 minutes

- While students begin the Poetry Writing Workshop, instructor reads through student poems by group.
- Call groups up one at a time and discuss poems with the students during the Poetry Workshop.
 - Students should have one question prepared to discuss briefly with the instructor about their poem⁴³

REFLECTIVE WRITING JOURNAL - 5 minutes

- Take a look at the advice you were given during the in-class workshop. Which advice did you find particularly helpful? Which advice was less-than helpful? What revisions do you think would help improve the quality of your poem?

NEXT CLASS:

Homework

- Complete final revisions on Poem #1 and prepare a copy to submit with portfolio
- Revise Poem #2 and bring **one hard copy** of a complete draft to class to submit to instructor for feedback
- Draft Poem #3 and bring **three hard copies of** one complete draft of Poem #3 to class for a workshop

⁴³ "Each student is at a different place in their poetry writing and the Assessment List will allow me to look at student's poetry from where they are instead of where I think they should be. Griswold explains it this way: "[Assessment Lists] allow me to differentiate according to the students' skill levels" and allow for grades to be provided based upon individual student growth (74). Students will submit each poem, it's drafts, and the Assessment Lists so that I can look at their progress and grade them on how their poetry grew and improved over the course of the unit" (60).

Week 3, Day 14: Workshop #3	[75 minute class period]
Broad Topic: Poetry Workshop #3	Questions to Consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can I be a “good” Peer Reviewer? 2. What feedback does my instructor have about my poem?
Objectives (SWBAT): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ ...work together to read, analyze, and review each others poems. ★ ...discuss their poems with the instructor and receive instructor feedback. 	Materials Needed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Copies of <i>Assessment List</i> (3 copies per student) 2. <i>Poetry Workshop PowerPoint</i>

GETTING STARTED: Reminders - 5 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post the Poetry Writing Cycle graphic for the students and remind them of the process. ● Instructor returns Poem #1 and Assessment List to each student ● Students submit revised draft of Poem #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This draft should incorporate revisions recommended by their Peer Reviewers
POETRY WORKSHOP #3: Peer Review Guidelines - 5 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remind students of the Peer Review Guidelines they created previously Process/Procedure - 60 minutes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students review their Reflective Writing Journal entries for ideas on what to write about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Throughout the unit, students were given opportunities to begin drafting a few poems (they are welcome to use those poems in their portfolio) 2. Students bring 3 hard copies of their poem to class for the workshop. 3. Students are given 3 Assessment Lists (see <i>Final Poetry Portfolio</i> for a copy of the Assessment List) and match one list per copy of their poem. 4. Place students in the same groups of 3 from before. Each group member has a copy of each poem with an accompanying Assessment List. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each poem should have it's own Assessment list. The author of the poem conducts a Self-Evaluation of their own poem in addition to filling out the Peer/Instructor Evaluation column of the Assessment List 5. Each group member's poem gets 10-15 minutes of the peer review time. Groups should work together on each poem. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Author reads the poem out loud while group members make marginal comments; ○ All group members fill out the Assessment List; ○ Group comes together to discuss the Assessment List and any other feedback

- they have for the author of the poem;
 - Process repeats with a new poem.
- 6. Students collect their poems and Assessment Lists and use them to help revise their poem.
- 7. If the peer review portion of the workshop finishes early, students can work alone on their poetry revisions. They then take the poems home and re-type them with revisions in mind.
- 8. Poems are submitted to the instructor the following day.

POETRY MICRO CONFERENCES

Discuss Student Poems - 60 minutes

- While students begin the Poetry Writing Workshop, instructor reads through student poems by group.
- Call groups up one at a time and discuss poems with the students during the Poetry Workshop.
 - Students should have one question prepared to discuss briefly with the instructor about their poem

REFLECTIVE WRITING JOURNAL - 5 minutes

- Take a look at the advice you were given during the in-class workshop. Which advice did you find particularly helpful? Which advice was less-than helpful? What revisions do you think would help improve the quality of your poem?

NEXT CLASS:

Homework

- Complete final revisions on Poem #2 and prepare a copy to submit with portfolio
- Revise Poem #3 and bring **one hard copy** of a complete draft to class to submit to instructor for feedback
- Draft portfolio Introduction Letter and Reflection Letter
- Select a poem to read for our In-Class Poetry Reading

Week 3, Day 15: Post - Assessment/Workshop Day	[75 minute class period]
Broad Topic: Post-Assessment/Workshop Day	Questions to Consider: 1. How well can I analyze a piece of poetry to identify racial themes?
Objectives (SWBAT): ★ ...participate in a post-assessment that evaluates their ability to identify racial themes in a work of poetry.	Materials Needed: 1. <i>Poetry Unit Post-Assessment</i> (prints for each student)

<p>GETTING STARTED:</p> <p>Reminders - 5 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instructor returns Poem #2 and Assessment List to each student ● Students submit revised draft of Poem #3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This draft should incorporate revisions recommended by their Peer Reviewers 	
<p>Post-Assessment - 45 minutes⁴⁴</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administer the <i>Poetry Unit Post-Assessment</i>. Students complete the assessment to the best of their ability within the allotted time frame. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emphasize that the post-assessment is the exact same as the pre-assessment ○ The assessment is graded upon: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How well did the student identify the central theme of the poem as it aligns with the themes of the unit? ■ What evidence does the student use to support their findings? ■ What other poems studied in the class are reflective of this theme? ■ Identify, with evidence, the poems meaning or purpose. 	
<p>WORKSHOP DAY - remainder of time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instructor reads Poem #3 and fills out Assessment Lists ● Instructor conducts micro-conferences with students about their poems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students should have one question on which to focus their concerns about their poem. ● Students use the remainder of class time to work on their Final Poetry Portfolio <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students can begin revising Poem #3 	
<p>NEXT CLASS:</p> <p>Homework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete final revisions on Poem #3 and prepare a copy to submit with portfolio 	

⁴⁴ "As mentioned, the post-assessment will be in the same format, use the same poem, and utilize almost the exact same prompt as the pre-assessment. I want to see how students have progressed in their analytical skills in addition to assessing how well their ability to articulate their claims using evidence from the text has improved" (58).

- Compile *Final Portfolio* by staple or paper-clipping the following documents in this order:
 - Introduction Letter, Poem #1 (draft 1 + Assessment Lists, draft 2 + Assessment List, Final Draft), Poem #2, Poem #3, Reflection Letter
 - **DUE NEXT CLASS PERIOD!**
- 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

In-Class Topic

- Poetry Reading + Party

Poetry Unit Post-Assessment

Instructions:

1. Use the attached poem to respond to the prompt below.
2. Your response should be 500 - 750 words and should offer commentary on the themes you see represented in the poem.
3. All of your observations should be accompanied by evidence you find directly from the text.
4. Please be sure to write legibly! I cannot award credit for responses that I cannot read:)

Prompt:

Read the following poem carefully. As you read, look for what you feel is the central theme of this piece. After reading, craft a well-organized response in which you reveal the theme of the poem using specific examples from the poem to help support your assertions.

- *What is the central theme(s) of the poem as it aligns with the themes of the unit? Why do you think this particular theme(s) is the theme of the poem?*
- *What is the author trying to get their readers to recognize? What lines in the poem send this message to you? Use evidence from the poem and our in-class discussions to identify the poem's meaning and purpose.*
- *What other poems studied in class are reflective of this theme?*

Poem:

The Kid Next To Me At The 7pm Showing Of The Avengers Has A Toy Gun

By Ashley M. Jones

: and is wearing black flip flops
: has commented, loudly, for the entire feature presentation
: is pointing it at his mom
: is clicking the plastic hinges on its expanding arm—fist for a bullet—so it sounds like scissors
: is still salty around the lips from his movie popcorn
: will later regret this tub of movie popcorn, intestine-bound
: is pulling the trigger over and over and maybe once in my direction
: is shooting up this whole theatre to the tune of this dramatic and opulent theme song
: is restless, but what else will boys be
: chatters about sequels, every word a click click triggerpull triggerpull
: is, incidentally, about the size of Tamir Rice
: is alive and will keep living
—and wait

do I need to tell you the color of his skin?

Week 4

Poetry of Race and Identity Unit Plan Week 4

Week 4, Day 16: Poetry Reading	[75 minute class period]
Broad Topic: Poetry Reading	Questions to Consider: 1. N/A
Objectives (SWBAT): ★ ...participate in an in-class poetry reading where they can showcase their own work or the work of others.	Materials Needed: 1. Stool 2. Lamp or spotlight 3. Snacks + Drinks 4. Music

<p>GETTING STARTED:</p> <p>Submit Final Poetry Portfolio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor Collects Final Poetry Portfolios while students sign-up in the order they would like to read their poems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage all students to participate, but not all students should be forced to participate if they wouldn't like to.
<p>POETRY READING</p> <p>Total of Class Time⁴⁵</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students come up one-by-one to share the poems they brought to the reading. • Students are encouraged to listen and snap for their peers upon the completion of their poem. • The instructor could also prepare a few poems to share if time permits.
<p>NEXT CLASS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of Poetry Unit

⁴⁵ "A critical populist framework envisions poetry as "something to be used, adapted, cut up, borrowed from, parodied, and played with in all sorts of ways" (Faust 117). I will have more success in the classroom if I introduce poems to the students that I believe they will find engaging than by using canonical poems from textbooks or anthologies. Encouraging students to find poems in their everyday lives to bring and share with the class that help explicate CRP themes will also help with student engagement. I believe that students can connect with poems by People of Color just as easily as they can connect with poems by white authors; they just haven't been given many opportunities to try. Appreciation for poetry "should promote active engagement and involvement on the part of the student" (Beach 156)" (49-50).

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