

QUESTION BRIDGE

QUESTION BRIDGE CURRICULAR TOOLS FOR GRADES 9-12

MODULE 4 – CODE SWITCHING

“TO SUCCESSFUL BLACK MEN, WHO SPEAK AND DRESS DIFFERENTLY, IS THAT WHO YOU ARE?”

STUDENT WORKBOOK

Question Bridge: Black Males was conceived by Chris Johnson. The project was *created by* Chris Johnson and Hank Willis Thomas, in collaboration with Bayete Ross-Smith and Kamal Sinclair. The Executive Producers are Delroy Lindo, Jesse Williams and Deborah Willis.

Question Bridge Curriculum written by Kamal Sinclair in consultation with Question Bridge Collaborators, Education Consultant Jinan Sumler, and scholarship advisors Dr. Joy Angela DeGruy, Dr. Deborah Willis.

The **Question Bridge Curricular Tools** were updated by Chris Johnson and James E. Ford.

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Note: If you encounter a broken link in our suggested readings you may still be able to find those resources by searching for the relevant titles with your internet browser.

MODULE 4: CODE SWITCHING

ART PROJECT QUESTION: “TO SUCCESSFUL BLACK MEN, WHO SPEAK AND DRESS DIFFERENTLY, IS THAT WHO YOU ARE?”

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

“How do we create equitable environments of inclusion in a diverse society, both within and between identity groups?”

LEARNING GOALS

- Students will explore the dynamics of familiarity among members of a demographic group.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Analyze the representation of their identity in media.
- Engage in weekly dialogue with their peers.
- Apply critical thinking skills to daily routines.
- Write about complex issues related to race, gender, and class.

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 (Observe) – View [Module 4 Video: Code Switching](#).

Activity 2 (Reflect/Discuss) - Engage in dialogue about video.

Discussion questions:

Please Note: space is for personal notes. The “Deep Dive” questions are **optional**.

1. Describe one answer in the video that resonated with you. Explain why. _____

DEEP DIVE DIALOGUE

A. Is this an important dialogue to have among Black men in America? Why? _____

B. Does this dialogue create familiarity and lower the barriers between the men of different backgrounds? Why is it important to lower these barriers? _____

2. What is a social code? What is code switching? _____

3. What are some ways you observe people code switch? In their dress? Language? Behavior? _____

4. How does your perception of people change when they switch codes, if at all? _____

DEEP DIVE DIALOGUE

C. Is it necessary to switch codes? If so, when and why? Can it be destructive to switch codes? If so, when and why? _____

D. Evaluate how economics affect people's social behavior and perceptions of others. _____

Activity 3 (Reflect/Discuss) – Participate in an in-class improvisation around code-switching behavior:

1. Students volunteer to improvise three scenes:
 - a. The Office
 - i. Students take on the following roles: the job applicant, the receptionist, the boss, the mailroom clerk, and the other applicants. They create a name for their character, a background, and an objective in the scene.
 - ii. Students set up the scene at the front of the classroom and select items of clothing or props from a costume and prop box (if one is provided)
 - iii. The students act out the following scene: the applicant enters the lobby area of the office, lets the receptionist know he/she is there for their interview, has a conversation with other applicants, then has an interview with the boss, and talks with the mail clerk delivering documents during the interview.
 - b. The Nightclub
 - i. Students take on the following roles: the bouncer, the bartender, the drunken person, the DJ, and the other club goers. They create a name for their character, a background, and an objective in the scene. The “job applicant” from the last scene remains the same character, just in a different environment.
 - ii. Students set up the scene at the front of the classroom and select items of clothing or props from a costume and prop box (if one is provided)
 - iii. The students act out the following scene: the applicant comes into a club to have a good time.

- c. The Funeral
 - i. Students take on the following roles: the clergy, the widow, the parlor owner, the son or daughter, and the other attendees. They create a name for their character, a background, and an objective in the scene. The “job applicant” from the last scene remains the same character, just in a different environment.
 - ii. Students set up the scene at the front of the classroom and select items of clothing or props from a costume and prop box (if one is provided)
 - iii. The students act out the following scene: the applicant coming to a funeral to pay respects to the deceased and the family members.
2. The audience describes what they observed in terms of the “job applicant’s” code switching.

Activity 4 (Write) – Write a summary: *What did you learn today?*

- a. Return to the art project question when writing your summary: ***To successful Black men, who speak and dress differently, is that who you are?***
- b. Return to the essential question: ***“How do we create equitable environments of inclusion in a diverse society, both within and between identity groups?”***

TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT

Choose at least one at-home assignment to complete over the next week:

1. DESIGN – Create two self-portraits that represent contrasting roles you perform in your social sphere (e.g., athlete, church member).
2. WRITE – Write an essay or poem that explores the contrasts between two sub-cultures within your demographic.
3. READ/WRITE – choose an item from the module research resource list (e.g. book, article, film, song, or visual/performing artwork) and write a report or make an oral presentation in class.

MODULE 5 RESEARCH RESOURCE LIST

VIDEO LECTURES AND DISCUSSION

- TED Talks. *Stew says “Black Men Ski”* What happens when a Black man visits Aspen? Singer/songwriter Stew and his band are about to let you know. http://www.ted.com/talks/stew_says_black_men_ski.html
- What Matters Video Podcast: Code Switching <http://www.podcast.tv/video-episodes/code-switching-communication-that-matters-13900663.html> (<http://www.whatmatters.tv/>)

VISUAL ART

- *. Mirrors*, Bayete Ross-Smith. http://bayeterossmith.com/section/153317_Mirrors.html
- *Our Kind of People*, Bayete Ross-Smith. http://bayeterossmith.com/section/5278_Our_Kind_Of_People.html

MUSIC

- *Kick Push*, Lupe Fiasco
Lyrics: <http://www.metrolyrics.com/kick-push-lyrics-lupe-fiasco.html#>
Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GI83ml69nX4>

FILMS

- *The Prep School Negro* (trailer), Andre Robert Lee. www.theprepschoolnegro.org
- *The Two Nations of Black America*, Frontline <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/race/audio/>

ARTICLES

- The Case for Black English
- <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/05/15/the-case-for-black-english>
- Julie Washington’s Quest to Get Schools to Respect African-American English
- <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/04/the-code-switcher/554099/>
- Understanding the ‘cultural not remedial’ aspect of Black Vernacular English
- <http://blackyouthproject.com/understanding-the-cultural-not-remedial-aspect-of-black-vernacular-english/>
- 3 ways to speak English | Jamila Lyiscott
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9fmJ5xQ_mc
- Sorry to Bother You | Movie Trailer
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XthLQZWishQ>
- *Is Barack Obama a Sellout Or Not?* ThyBlackMan.com Staff , May 30, 2011 <http://thyblackman.com/2011/05/30/is-barack-obama-a-sellout-or-not-valerie-jarrett-michelle-obama-ella-baker-jim-crow-oprah-sean-puffy-combs-clarence-thomas-condoleezza-rice-and-colin-powell/>
- *Code-switching*, , Heather Coffey. Learn NC <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/4558>
- *African-American Culture, Identity and the Corporate World*, , Linda Bates Parker, BNET.com http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3628/is_199802/ai_n8804372/

WEBSITES

- *Code Switching: How to Talk So Men Will Listen* <http://www.codeswitching.biz/index2.html>

BOOKS

- *Am I Black Enough for You? Popular Culture From the 'Hood and Beyond*, Todd Boyd. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon, Trans Richard Philcox. Grove, 2008.
- *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, Barack Obama
- *Psychology and African-Americans: A Humanistic Approach*, Adelbert H. Jenkins
- *Code-Switching in Conversation: Language, Interaction and Identity*, Peter Auer (Editor)
- *Code-Switching: Teaching Standard English in Urban Classrooms*, Rebecca Wheeler, Rachel Swords.

MODULE 4 GLOSSARY

Code Switching (noun): the alternate use of two or more languages or varieties of language, especially within the same discourse.

Familiarity (noun): thorough knowledge or mastery of a thing, subject, etc.; friendly relationship; close acquaintance; intimacy; an absence of ceremony and formality; informality; freedom of behavior justified only by the closest relationship; undue intimacy.

Perception (noun): the act or faculty of apprehending by means of the senses or of the mind; cognition; understanding; immediate or intuitive recognition or appreciation, as of moral, psychological, or aesthetic qualities; insight; intuition; discernment: an artist of rare perception; *Psychology*. a single unified awareness derived from sensory processes while a stimulus is present.

Representation (noun): the expression or designation by some term, character, symbol, or the like; action or speech on behalf of a person, group, business house, state, or the like by an agent, deputy, or representative

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