



# Decolonizing the Mind: Black Ways of Knowing and Translanguaging

(Black Studies, 9th-12th, Systems)

## **Purpose (What will students learn from this lesson?):**

Students will understand the relationship between imperialism, colonization, language, and the hegemony of English. Students will also understand Black linguistic forms of resistance and how hybrid identities are formed and reformed.

## **Unit Enduring Understandings Alignment:**

- We understand and critique the relationship between white supremacy, racism, anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, xenophobia, patriarchy, cis heteropatriarchy, capitalism, ableism, ageism, anthropocentrism, and other forms of power and oppression.
- We understand and challenge all forms of oppression and their manifestations by conceptualizing and enacting transformative projects of agency and resistance.
- We understand that while studying forms of oppression, it is also critical to engage ourselves in developing critical consciousness, reclaiming hope, and healing.

## **Lesson Guiding Questions:**

- What is the relationship between language, imperialism, and resistance
- How colonial histories have affected our storytelling and artmaking.

**Essential Skills:**

- Students will work collaboratively to analyze, synthesize, and create a piece using elements of African call-response-chorus linguistic forms.
- Students will be able to (neo)colonial or colonizing ideas around the English language and actively work to affirm and assert their own rich linguistic repertoire in the classroom.

**Cultural Wealth (Yosso, p. 78):**

- Students will draw on their familial capital by describing the ways their communities find joy in their linguistic expressions in the face of linguisticism, regional discrimination, anti-immigrant hate, and anti-immigrant hate.
- Students will activate their resistance and navigational capital as they develop skills and abilities to maneuver within unsupportive or hostile environments and assert their entire linguistic repertoire.

**Ethnic Studies Principles Alignment:**

- Cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native People/s and people of color (POC);
- Center and place high value on pre-colonial, ancestral, indigenous, diasporic, familial and marginalized knowledge;
- Critique empire and its relationship to white supremacy, racism, patriarchy, cis heteropatriarchy, capitalism, ableism, anthropocentrism and other forms of power and oppression at the intersections of our society;
- Challenge imperialist/colonial hegemonic beliefs and practices on the ideological, institutional, interpersonal and internalized levels

**Standards Alignment:**

- CCSS Speaking and Listening 6-12 Standards 1, 2, 3,4
- CCSS Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6-12 Standards 1,4, 9, 10

**Materials:**

<a href="#">Slide deck</a> Internet access Classroom set of Ngugi wa Thin'go's <a href="#">Decolonizing the Mind</a>	Writing Instruments Paper LCD projector & screen Computer
--	---

**Modifications, Accommodations, and Resources for Multilingual Students:**

<p>Encourage students to communicate (in writing, speaking, listening, and reading) in the language(s) that make the most sense to them.</p> <p>Encourage students to play with and experiment with language and explore meanings.</p> <p>Encourage students to present materials orally, with performance, and with visuals.</p> <p>Encourage peer-to-peer interactions bilingual students sit next to monolingual students to translate as needed.</p>	
--	--

**Critical Vocabulary:**

<b>CRITICAL VOCABULARY</b>	<b>Definition and Rationale for choosing this word, phrase, or concept</b>	<b>Idea for pre-teaching or front-loading the concept.</b>
Identity	The qualities, expressions, beliefs, physical traits, cultures, and social statuses that comprise a person and/or group of people.	
Hybridities	A term used to describe the crossing, intersection, and mixing of two or more distinct cultures, often to form new identities.	
Translanguaging	is the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential. Ofelia García (2009: 140)	<a href="#"><u>Multilingualism and Translanguaging in the 21st Century</u></a>

## C1: Cultural Ritual and/or Energizer

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Step 1	<p>Land Acknowledgement</p> <p>Recognize the land in which we live and its original native inhabitants. Give respects to the ancestors and gratuity because of the continual repercussions of colonialism.</p>	4 min
Step 2	<p>Ancestor Acknowledgement</p> <p>We carry our ancestors in us, and they're around us. Acknowledgment is a simple, powerful way of showing respect toward our ancestors who have survived and a step toward celebrating and correcting their stories and practices.</p> <p>Students may do this orally or through written prompts.</p>	4 min
Step 3	<p>In Lak'ech: You are my other Me</p> <p>By Luís Valdez and Domingo Martinez Paredes</p> <p><u><a href="#">In La'Kech insights from Lupe Cardona</a></u></p>	2 min
Step 4	<p>Cultural Energizer</p> <p>Students will interact with an image that demonstrates how our visual perception is influenced by hegemonic Western and Eurocentric standards.</p> <p>Students may think that the persons in the photograph are sitting in a corner indoors. When this image was presented to groups who live out most of their daily activities outdoors in Malawi, the community assumed that the photograph was taken outside under a tree.</p>	10 min

## C2: Critical Concepts

Title of Lecture, Slidedeck/Presentation, and/or Activity:

Decolonizing the Mind: Black Ways of Knowing and Translanguaging [Slide deck](#)

Description:

The Critical Concepts will be presented as an interactive lecture.

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Step 1	Slide 7-8 What is translanguaging?	15 min
Step 2	Slide 9 Translanguaging where bilingual speakers strategically use their linguistic repertoire to make meaning is the normal and natural state of affairs as can be seen in translanguaging advertisements.  Students will be given everyday examples of translanguaging and be asked to provide with their own examples.	10 min
Step 3	Slide 10 Discuss non-western knowledge paradigms	5 min
Step 4	Slide 11-17 Discussion and video on hybrid language identity formation - <a href="#">codeswitching</a> -Pidgins and Creoles -Ubuntu -Rebellion through Hybridity  Students will be asked to share examples of hybrid language identity and code-switching from their own experiences	30 min
Step 5	Slide 18  Students will read and discuss <a href="#">Ngugi wa Thion'go biography</a> and the preface to the book <a href="#">Decolonizing the Mind</a> in groups. Reflection question: <i>What are the major themes you anticipate will be explored in this book?</i> <i>Apply your new knowledge of hybrid language development and the hegemony of English to answer this question.</i>	30 min

<b>Step 6</b>	Slide 19	<b>45 min</b>
	<p>Students will read subsections of the book in groups and report back to the entire class. Students will be reflecting on the same question.</p> <p><i>What are the major themes you anticipate will be explored in this book?</i></p> <p><i>Apply your new knowledge of hybrid language development and the hegemony of English to answer this question.</i></p> <p>Responses will/should be the following</p> <p>Chapter 1: The relationship between language, imperialism and resistance (section IX)</p> <p>Chapter 2: How colonial histories have affected our storytelling and artmaking. ( section IV)</p> <p>Chapter 3: Artists and writers can transform the images that African peoples come to identify with by producing works of art and literature in their native tongue. (section III)</p> <p>Chapter 4: Our Black and African languages need to be centered in institutions with a focus on the lived experience of African peoples. (Section IX)</p>	

**C3: Community Collaboration and/or Critical Cultural Production**

**Title of Main Activity(ies):** *Call-response-chorus poem and performance*

**Description:** *Students will learn about the elements of African call-response-chorus oral tradition, use excerpts from wa Thion’go’s Decolonizing the Mind to create a call-response-chorus poem/performance together.*

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
<b>Step 1</b>	<p>Slide 21</p> <p>Students will be introduced to the call-response-chorus linguistic form ( See below)</p> <p>In this style, the audience participates by responding to a given statement from the <b><u>initiator (caller)</u></b> with a unanimous or individual expression <b><u>(response)</u></b>. Words are believed to have the power to move and transform so the style in which they are spoken is very important <b><u>(spiritual element)</u></b>. Folklore, riddles, sayings, proverbs, metaphors among many other literary styles are often utilized in delivering <b><u>the word</u></b> effectively. The caller is not considered to be a solitary voice. <b><u>The chorus</u></b> involves several individuals who encourage, motivate and in some cases anticipate words of the caller. This is done verbally through expressions such as “Yes!”, “Speak to us”, “Say it again!”</p>	<b>10 min</b>
<b>Step 2</b>	<p>Students will create a call-response-chorus in their groups using wa Thingo’s text as the caller for the book chapter they read. Students will propose the response and chorus roles.</p> <p>During the presentation, the whole class will act as the chorus as each group shares their insights.</p> <p>See format below as an example:</p> <p><b><i>Caller: "We must be careful with the vocabulary that defines us ... to not internalise the negativity."</i></b>  Response: _____  Chorus: _____</p> <p><b><i>Caller: "In colonial conquest, language did to the mind what the sword did to the bodies of the colonised"</i></b>  Response: _____  Chorus: _____</p> <p><b><i>Caller: "What is translated from English and into English - and in what quantities - is a question of power."</i></b>  Response: _____  Chorus: _____</p> <p><b><i>Caller: "'Language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history.'"</i></b>  Response: _____  Chorus: _____</p>	<b>20 min</b>

## C4: Conclusive Dialogue/Critical Circular Exchange

**Connection:** How is this relevant to students? How is it relevant to the unit? How do you bring back to the PURPOSE of the unit?

### Slide 23-25 15 min

Students will watch [Three ways to speak English by Jamila Lyiscott](#) after which the lesson will close out with the following critical reflection questions which connect back to the purpose of the lesson.

1. What important metaphors emerge for you when you think about our discussion on:

- Hegemony of English
- Embracing indigenous non/western language forms
- Black oral language traditions
- Hybridization of language

2. What might healing from **linguicism** and embracing translanguaging look like for you?

3. Is it possible to heal a perpetually open wound?

“How might we understand mourning, when the event has yet to end?” - *Saidiya Hartman*.

**Assessment:** How will the students be assessed?

Student notes, presentations, and their group call-response-chorus poems will be assessed for understanding of lesson vocabulary and concepts.

**Evaluation:** How will the effectiveness of this lesson plan be evaluated?

Design a rubric that fits the key objectives and goals that are the focus of our subject matter. Here is a rubric template that can be modified for evaluative purposes.