

Beyond Bilingual:

Translanguaging Experiments in a Reading & Composition Course at an Aspiring HSI

Experiment 1, Day 1

Colorful Analysis: *Borderlands/La frontera* & *The Undocumented Americans*

In your group, engage the excerpts with colors to chart key words and themes in the passages. As you do this together, think about the words themselves but also try to identify and interpret the larger language patterns both in each passage and across the two texts.

Note: This isn't a grammar test! Whether or not you know how to categorize each word, be sure to think about its function in the passage. What does it add? What is it in tension with?

Color Code Guide:

Nouns → blue. Mark and group the nouns. What kinds/categories of objects and subjects (people) are prevalent in the passage? What/who does the text emphasize? What tensions or problems does it highlight by using different kinds/categories of nouns?

Verbs → green. Mark and group the verbs. What kinds of verbs do you notice? What tense(s) does the text use, and does it shift? Are the verbs mostly passive or active? Who/what is the subject of the active verbs? How do the verbs impact the perspective or point of view of the text?

Descriptive words (Adjectives & Adverbs) → orange/yellow. Mark and group descriptive words. How do these words shape the way you read the text's nouns and verbs—the objects, subjects, and actions? Does the text contain many descriptive words? Few?

Step 1: Have two members of your group work with the Anzaldúa excerpt and two with *The Undocumented Americans* passage. Have each pair color code their excerpt, noting key elements, themes, and patterns, as well as tracking ideas below.

DESCRIPTION
pattern/theme/tension we noticed is. . .

→

ANALYSIS
This implies/could mean that. . .

→

→

Step 2: Still in your pairs, discuss your overall impressions of the passage.

- What do the 'color coded' items suggest or imply?
- How do you see the text using the patterns/themes/tensions that you've mapped out to construct meaning? How are they working in the passage? How do they relate to broader themes and ideas in the text?
- What does the passage help you better understand about the text? What questions does it raise for you?

Step 3: Come back together to discuss the two passages with your full group. Have each pair share out responses to Steps 1 and 2, and discuss the questions below. Everyone should contribute!

- How do these texts present experiences of borders, movement, and migration? What points of connection and disconnection do you see between the two texts? Between the experiences Villavicencio describes and the ones Anzaldúa highlights?
- What questions of "home" and "homeland" do these texts evoke? How and why?
- What do you make of the way these texts move across different borders—of voice, register, genre, and even English and Spanish? How do these movements and crossing make you feel as a reader? (Be honest!) What's at stake for you in these texts' many movements and crossings?

Experiment 1, Day 2

Getting from Observations to Claims: *Borderlands/La frontera* & *The Undocumented Americans*

Instructor Overview:

- Think-pair-share: What's the difference between an observation and a claim? How can you tell the difference? (2 min)
- Report back, trace student responses on board (3-5 min)
- Activity with groups of 3 or 4 students: Read over 2 sets of sample Observation and Claim sentences on handout, noting differences between each Observation sentence and the corresponding Claim sentence. Mark the specific words/phrases in the Claim sentences that help the writer demonstrate that they are getting beyond observation (8 min)
- Report back, paying special attention to particular phrases and verbs that students can use to bring out claims in their own writing (reference examples on handout)
- Activity with groups of 3 or 4 students: Complete chart (included below) on handout, extending discussion of Anzaldúa and Villavicencio passages from last class. Send 1 group rep to write a favorite claim on the chalkboard.
- Ask volunteer students to read at least two example claims from the board, explain 1) how they know they've stated a claim not a mere observation, and 2) how they'd support and develop the claim with textual evidence

Chart it Activity: Getting from Observations to Claims

Your turn! Transform your group's observations about the Anzaldúa & Villavicencio passages into claims:

TEXTUAL EVIDENCE

OBSERVATION

CLAIM ("We can argue that...")

TEXTUAL EVIDENCE	OBSERVATION	CLAIM ("We can argue that...")

Thanks to Tara Phillips, GSI in Comparative Literature and Spanish, for creating the initial framework for this activity.

Experiment 2

Unbordering 'Mother Tongues': Denise Frohman's "Accents"

Chart at least **three of the figures of speech** that the speaker uses to describe her mother's voice and accent and discuss these questions:

What do these similes and metaphors imply individually and collectively about the mother's voice and accent?

What's at stake in the poem's moves:

- across English and Spanish?
- across registers and into the 'accented' language that's presented as the mother's own?

<u>FIGURE OF SPEECH</u>	→	<u>FUNCTION(S)</u>
	→	
	→	
	→	

Instructor Recommendations:

- Assign a follow-up activity. Have students begin in the classroom, then work through the project over at least two weeks. (This could involve a combination of in-class and at-home work.) If possible, have students share their final projects in a gallery-walk class.
- Initial prompt: Write a poem or paragraph describing your 'accent' or that of a person close to you. Where does this 'accent' come from and what does it show? Make a comic strip, slide show, or visual representation to accompany your writing.

Note: My full bibliography for this project is available upon request. Please email me at krpalau@berkeley.edu ¡Mil gracias!

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