Lost in Translation:
Using Poetry to Find Cultural Representation

Learning Objectives	Evidence	Assessment Strategy
Participate in an introductory group discussion in which they'll be introduced to the concept of **code-meshing** by exploring examples in music, literature and poetry.	**Participants will be able to:** ➢ Use the examples to inform their understanding and application of code-meshing ➢ Understand the value of code-meshing in the context of Anzaldua's "Borderlands"	**Group Discussion & Checklist** **Participant has:** ➢ Interact with the examples of code-meshing ➢ Use the examples to inform their understanding and application of code-meshing ➢ Understand the value of code-meshing in the context of Anzaldua's "Borderlands"
Discover new foreign-language words/phrases and their definitions.	**Participants will be able to:** ➢ Use at least one foreign-language word or phrase ➢ Use the foreign-language word correctly in appropriate contexts.	**Checklist - Participant has:** ➢ Reviewed the twelve-page packet of foreign-language words from the facilitator ➢ Included and/or responded to at least one word from the packet in their poem ➢ Discussed the word(s) definitions in the context of their poem.
Learn the basic components of **hybrid poetics**, experiment with creative writing and create their own hybrid poem using the provided foreign-language words/phrases as inspiration.	**Participants will be able to:** ➢ Construct *hybrid* poems by experimenting with style and content. ➢ Make sense of foreign-language words in terms of how they enrich meaning in the context of their poems.	**Checklist - Participant has:** ➢ Created a hybrid poem, meaning it experiments with code-meshing with foreign-language words and other aesthetics.
Read aloud their poems to the group and **share insight on the cultural and creative process.**	**Participants will be able to:** ➢ Recognize the value of code-meshing & the power of hybrid poetics as a framework to represent the globalized world we live in.	**Read Aloud:** Participants will read their poems to the group. **Talk Back/Closing Discussion:** The facilitator will guide the group discussion, asking participants to share some insight on the creative process.

<u>Workshop Overview</u>

This workshop invites participants to construct a poem using foreign-language words and phrases, most of which do not translate to English because their meaning is contextually specific to a cultural temperament. This workshop is a hybrid poetic exercise with *code-meshing*: the act of combining local, vernacular, colloquial, world dialects of English as well as other languages on formal assignments and in everyday conversation, in an attempt to embrace the globalized and diverse world we live in. Combining two or more languages within a space allows for the infusion of an individual's native language or "mother tongue," which inherently has the potential to enhance our understanding of specific and meaningful ideas, especially because this infusion aids in the expression of particular ideas whose meaning, authenticity and/or significance is lost in other languages.

<u>Participants</u>

This workshop is designed for 15-20 undergraduate college students between the ages of 17 and 23 years of age. No extensive knowledge is required to thoroughly participate and engage with the workshop activities. Participants solely need to be open-minded, comfortable around others, and maintain a strong level of respect for diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic experiences outside their own.

<u>Setting</u>

The workshop environment must be inclusive. Desks and chairs will be set up in a circle so that all participants can see each other. The workshop facilitator will be part of the circle as well.

<u>Materials</u>
- Copies of Gloria Anzaldua's poem "To Live in the Borderlands"
- Computer, speakers, projector
- Copies of "Mi Gente" lyrics
- Copies of Code-Meshing Handout
- Copies of Poetic Arts Handout
- Copies of 12-page foreign-language words/phrases packet
- Paper & writing utensils
- Examples of code-meshing poems
- Positive attitude!

<u>Warm Up [20 minutes]</u>

The workshop facilitator will hand out copies of the poem <u>To Live in the Borderlands by Gloria Anzaldua</u> to each participant. (This poem is an example of code-meshing.)
- Participants will first read the poem to themselves, then we will go around the circle so that each participant reads a verse of the poem aloud together.

- The workshop facilitator will guide the group conversation asking for thoughts, comments, reactions to the poem.
  - What stands out to you?
  - What do you think Anzaldua means by "The Borderlands"?
  - Do you think her use of Spanish is effective or ineffective? Why?
  - What effect/value is added with Spanish?
  - What effect/value is lost when we remove the Spanish?

The workshop facilitator will then play the song [Mi Gente (My People) by J. Balvin, Willy William, Feat. Beyonce](#) and handout the lyrics translated in English.
- The workshop facilitator will guide the group conversation asking for thoughts, comments, reactions to the song (in relationship to the poem).
  - What similarities can you identify between the poem and the song?
  - When looking at the lyrics, what stands out to you?
  - Do you think the use of Spanish and English are effective or ineffective?
  - What effect/value is added with Spanish?
  - What effect/value is lost when we remove the Spanish?

The lyrics begin with "my music doesn't discriminate against anyone" - This should influence the group discussion from the start.

*If participants are having trouble answering/understanding the discussion questions/intended learning outcomes, they will break into small groups for discussion [5 minutes]. After participants return to the larger group, the workshop facilitator will answer any remaining questions.

Introduction & Arts Content [25 minutes]

Lesson on Code-Meshing: The workshop facilitator will introduce the concepts "code-meshing" and "code-switching" on the board and with a [handout](#) *(See Additional Resources & Materials).

Group Discussion: After unpacking these concepts, participants will make connections as to how code-meshing functions within both warm up examples and how code-switching functions in day-to-day life.

Intro to Hybrid Poetics: The workshop facilitator will identify how code-meshing in poetry is a form of "hybrid poetics."
- Hybrid poetics, when performed appropriately, is an implicit political strategy used to interrupt mainstream American language, literary genres, and visual culture; the nature of learning the rules of writing in order to break them and do away with convention in itself contests against dominant cultural order.

- "Learn the rules to break the rules" - Participants are encouraged to think outside the "traditional" box of writing standardized poems and embrace *hybridity* (similar to Anzaldua's hybrid/border identity)

Experiential Exploration [45 minutes - 1 hour]
Materials: The workshop facilitator will provide participants with 1) paper, 2) writing utensils, and 3) a twelve page packet that defines words and phrases from languages belonging to a variety of racial and ethnic groups.

Application of Arts Content: Participants will experiment with creative writing/hybrid poetry and build their own poem using the provided words and phrases as inspiration. The workshop facilitator is available to answer questions.

Examples: The workshop facilitator will handout 3 examples of poems that came out of this workshop to showcase a variety of different ways to go about creating their poem. For example, they can use a foreign-language word as the poem's title and respond to it, or they can intersperse the words throughout the poem. The poem can rhyme or it can be free verse. It can include visuals or not, etc. *(See Additional Resources & Materials)

Once participants are feeling confident with their work, the group will rejoin and read our work aloud. Participants who are not comfortable reading their work are still encouraged to read one line. The workshop facilitator will also read their work aloud.

Talk Back/Closing Discussion:
The facilitator will guide the group discussion, asking participants to share some insight on the creative process. The facilitator will pose questions about:
- The creative and artistic value of the process
- what is lost/gained by using these cultural and poetic strategies to contest against dominant discourses?
- who benefits from such "political strategies"?

Participants' comments and questions will showcase their receptivity to the information and what aspects need more clarification in the future.

Additional Resources & Materials

- Workshop Program
- To Live in the Borderlands by Gloria Anzaldua
- Mi Gente by J. Balvin, Willy William, Feat. Beyonce Music Video
- Mi Gente English Translation Lyrics
- Code-Meshing Handout
- Foreign Language Words Part I
- Foreign Language Words Pat II