

**Date:** 2/1/2018

**Lesson:** #3

**Lesson Theme:** Exploring cultural and personal identity through spoken language

**Guiding Question(s):**

1. How can we use spoken language and poetry to explore identity and cultural connection?
2. What is the difference between hearing and reading colloquial language?
3. Who gets to define language? How has colonialism led to a shifting landscape of the English language?

**OPENING (5 Minutes)**

**Objective:** To energize and center the class.

**Activity Name:** Bouncing and balancing

**Brief Description:** Avi has everyone stand up and start hopping from one foot to the other (boxing-ish style), then rotate while bouncing, taking in the whole room. When done, he asks them to stand shoulder-width apart and focus ahead with soft gaze. Then raise their arms and move their head down to find a spot on the floor to focus on. Shift weight to left leg and raise right. Balance for 30 seconds. Avi tells the class:

- Try to notice when you're really on center and when you're not. If you are, try to move yourself off and see how little it can take to do that.
- Think about doing this last time. Are you more centered? Less? What could be the reason for either?

Put foot down. Look up straight again. Soften gaze. Take a breath.

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**INTRO ACTIVITY (10 Minutes)**

**Objective:** To understand colonialism and contextualize the role it has in the history and future of spoken and written language. To develop language surrounding spoken word writing, i.e. phonetics and colloquial language.

**Activity Name:** John Agard Poem - "Listen Mr. Oxford Don"

**Brief Description:** Chelsea tells the class that we're going to listen to a poet reciting his poem. She asks them to listen to the way he uses language. The audio from a YouTube video of Agard reciting his poem is played for the class. When it's finished, Chelsea leads a period of reflection, asking questions like:

- What did you notice about the way Agard uses language? About the way he spoke?
- Were there words or phrases you didn't understand? Did you understand the meaning even if you didn't understand the words? What are some examples?
- Agard is talking about where he comes from -- when you think about where you come from, are there specific words that come to mind? What do you call your neighborhood? Think of a phrase you hear every day. If you were writing it out, how would you spell it?

Avi then hands the poem out and has the class go one by one taking turns reading lines from the poem in their own voice. He then leads another period of reflecting on the language of the poem and the experience of hearing it vs. reading it. Questions like:

- Did anything surprise you about the way what you heard was written?
- What did you notice about reading the poem vs. hearing it read by the author?
- Why is it important the poem is written phonetically?

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**MAIN EXERCISE (25 Minutes)**

**Objective:** Write responses using poetics and spoken language to selected lines in John Agard's poem. These responses will then be built into a community poem, with individuals picking their favourite lines from their responses.

**Activity Name:** Written Response (15 minutes)

**Activity II Name:** Community Poem (10 minutes)

**Brief Description:**

1. **Written Response:** **Avi** gives individuals selected sections from the poem, such as

I don't need no axe

to split/ up yu syntax

I don't need no hammer

to mash/ up yu grammar

And asks them to rewrite the section in a line or two in their own words, using language that is personal to them and their voice. Groups will receive different sections to write responses to. We will encourage them to use poetics, such as simile and metaphor as discussed in previous classes, as well as building in new skills learned in this lesson, such as phonetics. We will emphasize using THEIR phonetics not Agard's when using similar words.

2. **Community Poem:** **Chelsea** will collect in student's favourite lines and put them together on the board, using the line "Listen Mr Oxford Don" to punctuate the poem. The lines will create a community poem.

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### **CLOSING (5 minutes)**

**Objective:** To reflect on the day's lesson and allow teaching artists to see what needs more time.

**Activity Name:** Color Reflection

**Brief Description:** In the activity, we see how the class feels about the material they have learned through a color system.

Green: I understand the material and feel great about today.

Orange: I need a bit more time, but I had fun and understood some parts more than others.

Red: I need a lot more time on this material, and didn't feel as good as I could have about what I achieved today.

As a class, we will have a brief reflection on what we covered that day. What did the students notice about the community poem? What did they notice about translating the language of John Agard's poem into their own voice? **Chelsea** will set out baskets as students leave, as per each lesson, labelled Green, Orange and Red. Students will return their notebooks/folders into the colour basket they feel most represents their understanding of the material covered that day.