

# 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?”*

## THE TEACHER’S GUIDE

**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 De Gruy, Dr. Deborah Willis.

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

**Question Bridge: Black Males** is a fiscally sponsored project of the Bay Area Video Coalition and supported in part by a grant from the Open Society Institute: Campaign for Black Male Achievement, the Tribeca Film Institute, the LEF Foundation, the Center for Cultural Innovation, and the California College of the Arts.

**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.

**Important:** Your feedback on these materials is essential. Please forward comments and suggestions to the appropriate designated administrators of your school and directly to the Question Bridge Education Initiative at the following email address: [feedback@questionbridge.com](mailto:feedback@questionbridge.com)

## 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.

### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Composition notebook for journaling
- A Module 4 print out for each student
- Computer projector with the ability to: play video from a video file downloaded or played from the “Question Bridge Curricular Tools” Dropbox Folder: QBCTModule 4,

Use either of these links to access all of the Question Bridge Modules:

<https://showcase.dropbox.com/doc/Question-Bridge-Curricular-Modules-Y051KDxi4ct9AchAmC9OL>

<https://showcase.dropbox.com/doc/Question-Bridge-Curricular-Modules-Y051KDxi4ct9AchAmC9OL>

## PRE-WORK FOR EDUCATORS

- View recommended videos:
- What Matters - Code-Switching: Communication That Matters  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R\\_WC9PM6S0Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_WC9PM6S0Q)
- The Cost of Code Switching | Chandra Arthur  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bo3hRq2RnNI>
- The Prep School Negro (trailer), Andre Robert Lee.  
<http://www.theprepschoolnegro.org/>
- TED Talks. Stew says "Black Men Ski"  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/stew\\_says\\_black\\_men\\_ski.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/stew_says_black_men_ski.html)
- View recommended visualart:
  - *Mirrors*, Bayete Ross-Smith [http://bayeterossmith.com/section/153317\\_Mirrors.html](http://bayeterossmith.com/section/153317_Mirrors.html)
  - Ross-Smith, Bayete. *Our Kind of People*, Bayete Ross-Smith [http://bayeterossmith.com/section/5278\\_Our\\_Kind\\_Of\\_People.html](http://bayeterossmith.com/section/5278_Our_Kind_Of_People.html)

## ACTIVITIES

**Activity 1** (Observe) – Share 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 and “Activity Extra” instructions 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? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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2. What is a social code? What is code switching? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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*ACTIVITY EXTRA*

Ask the students to break up into groups of three or four. Instruct them to create a Code Glossary of five terms they use among peers in verbal conversation, text, or email. Each term should list the word type (e.g. noun, verb, adjective) and a definition in “proper English.”

For Example:

1. **LOL** (verb): An abbreviation of the statement “Laugh out loud,” used in describing behavioral responses to a text message, email, or instant message.
2. **Reppin’** (verb): the act of representing the qualities of the place or group one is affiliated with.

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)** – Facilitate an in-class improvisation around code-switching behavior:

1. Invite volunteers to improvise three scenes:
  - a. The Office
    - i. Assign students the following roles: the job applicant, the receptionist, the boss, the mailroom clerk, and the other applicants. Ask them to create a name for their character, a background, and an objective in the scene.
    - ii. Set up the scene at the front of the classroom. Allow the students to select items of clothing or props from a costume and prop box (if you can create one from items at home or in the school).
    - iii. Play out the scene of the applicant entering the lobby area of the office, letting the receptionist know he/she is there for their interview, waiting with other applicants, the boss conducting the interview, and talking with the mail clerk delivering documents during the interview.
  - b. The Nightclub
    - i. Assign students the following roles: the bouncer, the bartender, the drunken

- person, the DJ, and the other club goers. Ask them to 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. Setup the scene at the front of the classroom and select clothes and props from the box.
  - iii. Play out the scene of the applicant coming into a club to have a good time.
- c. The Funeral
- i. Assign students the following roles: the clergy, the widow, the parlor owner, the son or daughter, and the other attendees. Ask them to create a name for their character, a background, and an objective in the scene. The “job applicant” remains the same character, just in a different environment.
  - ii. Setup the scene at the front of the classroom and select clothes and props from the box.
  - iii. Play out the scene of the applicant coming to a funeral to pay respect to the deceased and the family members.
2. Ask the students in the audience 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 art work) and write a report or make an oral presentation in class.

## MODULE 5 RESEARCH RESOURCE LIST

### VIDEO LECTURES AND DISCUSSION

- TEDTalks. *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](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](http://bayeterossmith.com/section/153317_Mirrors.html)
- *Our Kind of People*, Bayete Ross-Smith. [http://bayeterossmith.com/section/5278\\_Our\\_Kind\\_Of\\_People.html](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](http://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 School 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](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9fmJ5xQ_mc)
- Sorry to Bother You | Movie Trailer
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XthLQZWlshQ>

- Lakeith Stanfield & Boots Riley Act Out Code-Switching | TRL  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLwew-eD\\_IA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLwew-eD_IA)
- *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/](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

**CodeSwitching** (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

[www.QuestionBridge.com](http://www.QuestionBridge.com)

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