"Outside Encounters" Assignment

Sometimes, school can feel distant from your everyday life. In this class, I hope it becomes apparent that the issues we discuss not only matter in the classroom but outside of it as well. This assignment will better help you connect what you learn in the classroom to your life and your lived experiences.

Over the course of the semester, you need to submit 3 "Outside Encounter" write-ups, one for each unit.

Instructions for submissions: You need to fully describe what you "encountered"—a song, film, tweet, video game, Instagram post, book, conversation with a friend or parent, etc. You must, for credit, clearly connect this to some theme in our course—this means linking it to questions or ideas about the "Banking" or "Problem Posing" models of education, examining framing being used, discussing the politics of language practices, etc. When applicable, provide a link to whatever you're discussing. Post your encounter on Slack under "Outside Encounters." You can submit your encounter at any point, after the central text is introduced, during that unit.

There isn't a specific word count I'm looking for here; instead, I want to see a thoughtful attempt to connect to the content from class. While this assignment is fairly open-ended, I do still want to provide an outline for your submission.

Section 1: Background of unit—provide a brief overview of the unit we are on

Section 2: Outside Encounter—provide your outside encounter that relates to the unit

Section 3: Analysis—provide what you believe to be the significance of this encounter

Look below to see student examples

Assignment adapted from a Tweet by Dr. Gibson

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This unit was focused on literacy and how it ties into culture. The unit started with framing and the class read "The Power of Framing" where Rathje describes how framing can be used in arguments to make it more powerful toward a targeted audience. The example that was given in the text was the political parties and their different ideas and in order for one party to try to get the other to see their side they must use framing and frame their argument in their way of thinking. We also dove into something called code-switching. This essentially means changing yourself in order to fit in with others. It can be in the way you talk or in the way you dress, etc. In the TED talk, "The Cost of Code-Switching," Arthur talks about her own experiences and how she code-switched in order to fit in with a new crowd at a new school. In an article that also discusses code-switching, "Should Writers Use They Own English," Young uses his own dialect of English as well as what most people would think of as proper English while talking about code-switching. He also mentions code-meshing, which is when people combine two dialects or two ways of speaking. It brings a part of your culture into your writing or speech.

I had originally gone to a Montessori when I was younger where we only had a small group of kids and all of them were fairly nice. However, when I moved to a public school and came with my ethnic food which nobody had ever seen before, kids would judge and make me feel out of place. So one day I didn't bring food to school and I bought lunch. I didn't know it cost money, I just thought you put in your ID number and it was free. When I ran out of money, which was practically the next day, the lunch lady had told me to bring a check next time. That night I went home to my parents and had them write a check. I ended up eating school food for the rest of my elementary years. And to be honest, I did fit in, but the food, the food sucked.

I definitely relate to Young and Arthur when they talk about code-switching and code-meshing. I have done both but my experience mainly focuses on code-switching. I think this is a common experience for a lot of ethinic people where they would bring their ethnic food to school and kids would judge and make comments. I switched up what I ate in order to fit in with the kids at school, but looking back I should have just brought my own food, it was nothing to be embarrassed about. It took me a long time to realize that I shouldn't have to code-switch to fit in with others. It wasn't until highschool that I started standing up to those who judged me for something that shouldn't be judged in the first place. I didn't make fun of their nasty school food, not to their face, they liked it so why should I care?

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This unit focused on how language and identity go hand in hand. We've examined how framing, ideologies, and code-switching affect our perceptions. In America, people that either don't speak or struggle speaking English are looked down upon. This ideology makes it difficult for those that speak other languages to fit in and be respected. I found an example of a character experiencing this while watching TikTok. I came across a clip from the TV show Modern Family, posted by Prime Video UK. In the video, Gloria (the character speaking) expresses her frustrations with constantly having to speak English, even to her family. She tells her husband, "You should try talking in my shoes for one mile". He then tries to correct the phrase and leads her to exclaim, "Do you even know how smart I am in Spanish". Everyday Gloria has to speak in a language that is not her own, a language that she is learning. And she is ridiculed for saying things that aren't the traditional way of speaking. Her expression "You should try talking in my shoes for one mile" fits perfectly with the situation. It is difficult for anyone to speak a different language, and unfair for others to ridicule them for not speaking perfectly. Gloria knows that others do not view her as intelligent because she struggles to find the right words to say something in English. People perceive her as "less than" simply because of the way she speaks.

Here's the video:
https://www.tiktok.com/@primevideouk/video/6899066588121713921?sender_device=pc&sender_web_id=7014184624931980806&is_from_webapp=v1&is_copy_url=0

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Unit Theme: In 'Should Writers Use They Own English', the author Vershawn Young discusses the outlook and biases against foreign dialects/languages in academic settings, especially how in America, unintelligence equates broken English. He encourages those of ethnic backgrounds to incorporate their language and terms in western capacities -- whether it be in classrooms or essays/papers. Moreover, in an introduction to the idea of "framing", George Lakoff talks about how this concept is the backbone of our beliefs and a basis for the way we think. Not only is framing the way someone utilizes words to back up a certain bias, but it is also a method for those in power to persuade massive audiences that they care about something, just to seem favorable. Lastly, there is code-switching which is how those who speak different dialects alternate their language depending on who they are with. Code-switching is a method to assimilate into western culture, to avoid being outcasted by the way they may have been raised to normally speak. Both framing, code-switching, and the use of language in academic settings are examples of the ways language plays a role in the way we think and how we perceive others.

Outside Encounter/Analysis: The unit theme has made me reflect on my own experiences, being raised with relatives who did not speak strictly English. Namely, it made me think about my mother and how her English was the only "acceptable" form of speaking, compared to her parents who spoke with a mix of Cantonese and English. Growing up, I remember how she constantly had to make calls, read their mail, go to appointments, etc for them because of how institutions and businesses here could not "understand" my grandparents. For a long time, this was just normal to me. However, I picked up on how my grandparents relied heavily on my mom/aunt to get basic care. It made me realize that America solely operates on those who conform to their system. There really is no room for speaking/appreciating your own language, no matter how talented or smart you may be. For a country that is built from all sorts of ethnic backgrounds, there is very little tolerance for it in our institutions.

Assignment adapted from a [Tweet](#) by Dr. Gibson