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| Trevor Munhall | [CHALLENGING COMMON NARRATIVES ABOUT BLACKNESS](https://youtu.be/M3TJyGvfwUU)  Trevor Munhall  8th Grade English Teacher | UP Academy Leonard  Video URL: <https://youtu.be/M3TJyGvfwUU> |
| *This lesson is an important part of my Black Writers unit, in which I ask students to consider the contexts in which Black literature and art is often placed by challenging students to disrupt common narratives of suffering and oppression. Nearly all of the students in this class identify as Latinx and many also identify themselves as Black or as having African ancestry. This lesson led to profound realizations for many of my students about their own schooling and the messages they have unconsciously internalized about Black history and culture. It also was instrumental in laying groundwork for students to critically engage in textual analysis by providing them more equitable and historically accurate lenses through which they might consider the work of Black writers.* | |

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| Learn more about this video and Trevor’s culturally responsive teaching (CRT) journey: | |
| **What are you proud of and excited to share from this video? Why do you think this is a strong example of culturally responsive teaching?** | *This lesson was designed to engage students in challenging the dominant narratives about Blackness that they learn in school and media. In order to achieve this, I reframed their own ideas and asked them to consider the proverbial lens through which all see Black culture and history as shaped by these dominant narratives. The aims of the lesson were to give them space to identify their own internalized biases and to examine the ways white supremacy affects the stories they have been told about themselves and/or Black people.* |
| **Describe your journey to becoming a more culturally responsive, anti-racist educator. What has helped you grow your CRT practice?** | *My students themselves have been most significantly instrumental for me in shaping the way I structure the content and pedagogy in my classes. Observing and listening to their responses to my curriculum over the years has taught me that mere representation is not enough. Education should empower students, which means not only exposing them to sources of power that are culturally relevant to them, but also offering them the tools to engage critically with the corrosive sources of power in the world such as white supremacy, and even more so, the pervasive banal gestures of representation, tokenism, and historical misrepresentation.* |
| **What are some of the most valuable resources you’ve come across to support your CRT learning journey?** | *I can’t emphasize enough the importance for educators (especially white educators) to just begin anywhere. My starting point is always acknowledging that my own education did not adequately equip me to effectively teach students of color and moving forward from there. The good news is that countless brilliant thinkers, writers, historians, and artists have done so much of the work already; it’s just a matter of going out and finding it. When I wanted to create a unit focused on the ingenuity and tropes of Latin American writers, I went and read those writers’ works and the relevant scholarship. It’s all available to us but we have to be humble enough to know that the education we received won’t usually help us when it comes to disrupting narratives for our students.* |