

Reading Questions on Anzaldua and Salais

Answer the first 5 questions on your own or in pairs, and then stop to discuss these with the class.

1. Using Anzaldua's essay and a dictionary, define "patois" (8), "Chicano/a" (8,11), and "Latino/a" (8,11).
2. What were Anzaldua and Salais's language experiences growing up?
3. As adults, what are Anzaldua and Salais's views on being bilingual (being able to speak Spanish and English)?
4. Why do you think that Salais says she was afraid she did "irreversible damage" to her seven-year old son by not teaching him Spanish (181)?
5. What do you think Anzaldua means when she says, "Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself" (11)?

On your own, respond to these next questions. Remember you can use these responses next week as part of the first draft of your essay, so take your time on them.

6. Anzaldua makes a list of eight languages that speaks (8), including standard English and standard Spanish as well as slang and dialect (a form of everyday speech that a particular community speaks and understands). Make a list of the languages you speak. Of course you will include standard English, but also include any slang you use with friends, any texting/online languages you use with friends, any "accents" you have, any languages you speak at home or in your workplace.
7. Describe a time when you felt proud or powerful because of language. Maybe you felt proud because you stood up to someone with your words or powerful because you said something important. You might have even felt proud of something you wrote.
8. Describe a time when you felt powerless or frustrated or ashamed because of language. Think about why you felt this way and who made you feel this way. How did you fight these feelings?