



Developing Unity in the Colorful Classroom

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iMeck @ Cochrane Collegiate Academy

This curriculum unit is recommended for:
12th grade English and Language Arts (ELA)
Advanced Placement (AP) Language and Composition

Keywords: unity, hate, ignorance, misinterpretation, minority, unity, poverty, enlightenment, segregation, stereotypes, discrimination, racism, prejudice, apartheid

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: The purpose of this unit is to unify all races within any given classroom for a more conducive environment to learning and growing within. Under the overarching theme of unity, it is my intent to desegregate students culturally, religiously, socially, and mentally in order to begin to unify as one and implement how the human race is one race. We will use an in-depth reading of Trevor Noah's memoir, *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* (Spiegel & Grau, 2016), to examine other cultures, challenge imposed narratives, understand the history of different races, and evaluate the social construction of race. We will discuss the following essential questions: What is race? Do you know your history? What is modern day slavery? How has America divided people of color as a whole? In what ways are all people relatives? Why is race such a big issue? What is the social construction of race?

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 80 students in 12th grade Advanced Placement Language and Composition at iMeck at Cochrane Collegiate Academy.

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Developing Unity in the Colorful Classroom

Denatia Palmer

Rationale

This unit will serve the purpose of uniting all students of color as one, being sure not to exclude white students. My goal is for all students from low socio-economic backgrounds to come together as one. People of color need to progressively work together by combining all educational skills and talents to better serve the community around them. If people of color unite they have the potential to change negative perspectives of the human race, eliminating stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination.

The goal is to teach all people of color that they are one, undivided. Together humanity can change the world and that is what is important. Together the colorfulness of these single groups of people has the ability to create everlasting happiness. If I can change the climate within my classroom and bring together all students of color, it is my hope that if all teachers begin this process it could potentially impact the world. Specifically, the focus will be on the relationships between Africans and African Americans and what can be done to bridge that gap. Then after uniting the two it is my intention to then unite Africans and African Americans with my Latino students to slowly bridge the gap. It is my intent to be a mirror and a window for my students, to show how other components of one's life could be different and how other aspects of people's lives can have tremendous comparisons and similarities to theirs.

The ultimate goal here is to work towards unity by comparing and contrasting race and racism in two different contexts: South Africa and the United States. I will attempt this change of mindset by using novels that students can relate to and focus specifically on the matter at hand. The memoir that I decided to use for this unit is Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*. This book will embark students on a journey of self-love, self-discipline, and self-discovery. These three themes are imperative if my goal is to begin to unify the races; before coming together as one, students must first love themselves. Self-hate plays a major role in the decisions one makes in life; eliminating hate within oneself while discovering love and discipline will allow this generation to defy the odds and embark on this journey in life as one unified race. It is important for my students to understand that racism isn't just an issue in the U.S., but it is everywhere in different forms.

Many often complain with intentions of fleeing the U.S. in order to avoid racism or live in peace, but one should consider trying to de-escalate the problem rather than running. In this unit, I have high hopes of opening up their minds in acceptance of new information within my classroom about different races here in the U.S. At the end of this unit, students should have a different view on unity and creating change within their current circumstances. I know this will not change the world immediately, but it has the potential to begin change if teachers all around the world take this approach. Before expecting my unit to be effective, I plan to test it out myself. It is my plan to equip students with information that will allow them to overcome the odds and achieve success. This unit will explore racism in the world but before any changes can

be made in accepting other cultures and embracing other races, students must first discover themselves.

Demographics

Cochrane Collegiate Academy is a 6-12 school with a traditional middle school 6-8 and a Blended Learning Magnet High School called iMeck Academy. During the past four years that I have been at iMeck at Cochrane Collegiate Academy, not much about the demographics has changed. iMeck is currently an “F” school; however, the grade doesn’t mean a thing because iMeck is by far the best school at which I have ever had the pleasure of teaching. Another issue when it comes to delegating grades for schools is the fact that we are housed in the same building as Cochrane Collegiate Academy. I do believe if iMeck was its own separate entity then the grade may be different. I believe that “bad” grades are often handed out due to test results, when it has indeed been proven that exams don’t make a student. If iMeck was graded on honor, integrity, and talent, it would definitely deserve an “A” rating.

With respect to the statistics of the school, 12.2% of the students entering 9th grade across the school are proficient, and 52.2% of the students are economically disadvantaged. Our current total enrollment is 920 students: 220 (23.9%) in 6th grade, 205 (22.3%) in 7th grade, 209 (22.7%) in 8th grade, 109 (11.8%) in 9th grade, 87 (9.5%) in 10th grade, 58 (6.3%) in 11th grade, and 32 (3.5%) in 12th grade. Our demographics are 52.3% Hispanic, 39.3% African American, 2.8% Asian, 2.8% White, and 2.7% other. We have 9.2% students with disabilities, 1.1% AIG, 2.7% McKinney-Vento, and 19.9% ELL. Our school is currently a Title I school as defined by the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Content Research

History of Humankind

Throughout my studies as a student in the course “Africa Beneath the Headlines,” it was clear how marginalized black and brown students are, how it is a significant part of history, and how it still contributes to society today.¹ Black and brown students have begun to feel as though they are a separate race that exists outside of that of a “black” student. Yet, as shown in the documentary “The Real Eve,” the first human remains were found in East Africa. Most of the Mitochondria found during the process of researching the origin of human history has been proven that each and every human DNA can be traced back to that of one woman called Eve. Eve was not the original name of the woman, but a name assigned to her by scientists. In other words, the first human remains were found in Africa, further proving that Africans were the first to walk the Earth and therefore should all be treated as humans because we are all one.²

Many years ago, East Africans migrated from Africa in order to progress as a whole and survive as a people. Once these early Africans crossed the Red Sea and over to the Arabian Peninsula known as Yemen. Yemen is the single most important contribution to the human population. Our ancestors split up to continue their journey from Africa, with some going North,

¹ “The Real Eve.” Discovery Channel, 2002.

² “The Real Eve.” Discovery Channel, 2002.

South, East, and West. Eventually Africans found their way to Malaysia, leaving Yemen behind and then Australia. As Africans traveled along the coast, their bodies began to adapt to the many different conditions; their skin became lighter and their stature reduced by lack of meat. Our DNA shows that we come from one very small gene pool. If people of all colors don't begin to reunite as one anytime soon that they will become endangered species just as they were some 150,000 years ago. Over 150,000 years ago, they may have been a maximum of 10,000 people living; this is a situation to which we should fear returning.³

History of Apartheid

For years on end, the effects of Apartheid had a lasting impact on South Africa.⁴ The events that occurred during Apartheid caused whites and blacks in the country to develop hatred towards one another and as that tension grew, blacks were restricted from political, social, and economic power, resulting in anger, hatred, abuse, neglect and in some cases death. It was not long after that what was occurring in South Africa made international news; it is imperative that the world learn about the nature of society under Apartheid and the long-term impact of that system on the country.

Africa is one of the world's most ingenious continents, and South Africa is blessed with many resources, including farmlands, diamonds, gold, and platinum metals.⁵ Once the supply of resources was discovered, foreigners began to move in, using forceful tactics like brutality and newly developed laws to gain control of South Africa's most prized possessions. The indigenous (black) people of the land were forced to submit to the Dutch and English settlers under a new government. Shortly after the new government was developed, Apartheid was created to help gain control of African goods. Apartheid is a term that is universally recognized, but when spoken of it is most often associated with South Africa. Although separation between races was not new to South Africa, in 1948 Apartheid was formally adopted.⁶ Specifically in South Africa, Apartheid required blacks and whites to be segregated from the Dutch and English settlers. "In 1948, 4.5 million whites, 11% of the population governed the country of 40.9 million, whereas the 2.5 million Coloreds (people of mixed ancestry) and the 900,000 Asians had no parliamentary representation during the period of Apartheid, and the 33 billion blacks had no voice whatsoever inside the government according to *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*."⁷

Afrikaners are Dutch descendants who had taken power and implemented Apartheid. Afrikaaners lived with far less than the English population and they were generally poorer than the English. The descendants of the Dutch settlers eventually found themselves competing for jobs with Africans. Many English were less supportive of Apartheid, because where blacks were permitted to reside was far from businesses and it had an impact on their factories and homes because blacks weren't nearby to do the labor. Afrikaners accounted for 55% of the white population, and the remaining 45% of South Africa's white population was almost entirely English speaking. The

³ "The Real Eve." Discovery Channel, 2002.

⁴ Warnsley, Johnnye R. *Reflections on Apartheid in South Africa: Perspectives and an Outlook for the Future. A Curriculum Unit. Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar Abroad 1996 (South Africa)*, 1996.

⁵ Carter, Cale Daniel. "The History of Apartheid in South Africa." (n.d.).

⁶ Brokensha, David. "Book Review of David Welsch's *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2009)." *Journal of International and Global Studies* 2, no. 1 (November 2010).

⁷ Brokensha, David. "Book Review of David Welsch's *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2009)." *Journal of International and Global Studies* 2, no. 1 (November 2010).

Dutch and English then built their own government (The National Party). The National Party was created in order to maintain white dominance while implementing racial separation.

Immediately after Afrikaners built a government system, they then released their ideals of decolonization in an attempt to undo colonization.⁸ Government released their ideas amongst the people in three phases. The first phase sought to increase the European power and solidify segregation from 1948-1959. The first phase took some time and immediately after the second phase began in 1959 demonstrating control of survival and providing blacks with limited resources to live. By the third phase of Apartheid, the government had succeeded in segregation and nationalism was as strong as it would ever be.⁹

As Apartheid came to an end in the early 1990's with the support of Nelson Mandela, who won the democratic elections in 1994, things began to change for the better. Although Apartheid was concluding, parts of it remained and discrimination is still a major issue in South Africa. South Africa and the U.S. share similarities in regards to racism. Jim Crow laws in the U.S. caused African Americans life-long suffering by implementing systematic racism. One of the ways the U.S. is able to discriminate systematically within schools is by a "zoning" system. Zoning has been used to draw a line between blacks and whites, and between upper- and lower-class citizens. Since Apartheid and Jim Crow, people of color in South Africa and the U.S. have been economically and socially disadvantaged. The United States and the Republic of South Africa certainly are not the only two countries that employed legal segregation at some point in their histories, but they are the two most talked about. Although the way segregation came about in these countries is different, the effects that we are seeing today are more alike than different.¹⁰

History of Jim Crow

Formal Jim Crow laws have faded but there are still parts of it that exist today. Jim Crow laws were put in place around from 1877 to the mid- 1960's right after slavery ended. Jim Crow laws were intentionally put in place to keep blacks and whites separate just like Apartheid. This made it hard for blacks to survive as they were forced to live in separate parts of town, use different public spaces, and limited education.

Although not as strong as they once were these same limitations can be seen today in the U.S. In South Africa, as discussed above, similar segregation laws were put in place from around 1950 until the early 1990's under Apartheid. Apartheid has come to an end in South Africa and Jim Crow laws have come to an end in the U.S., but the remnants of these painful past experiences can still be seen throughout both countries. Many black and brown people are still struggling to be treated equally today which is an example of how big the impact of such racist movements can

⁸ Brokensha, David. "Book Review of David Welsch's *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2009)." *Journal of International and Global Studies* 2, no. 1 (November 2010).

⁹ Brokensha, David. "Book Review of David Welsch's *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2009)." *Journal of International and Global Studies* 2, no. 1 (November 2010).

¹⁰ Morris, Lauren. "How Does Racism in the US Compare with an Apartheid South Africa." Learning Help Centers of Charlotte, August 6, 2018.

negatively impact generations to come.¹¹ Many believe this mental damage can be undone and that this change must start within the classroom.

Instructional Implementation

Lessons at a Glance

Unit Activity #1: The History/Origins of Humankind (Human Evolution)

Warm up: [10 of the Most Beautiful and Developed Cities in Africa Clip \(2019\)](#)

Lesson Objectives:

Students will understand where humans were first identified.
Students will understand the historic migration of humans from Africa.

Instructional Materials and Activities:

Discovery Channel. [“The Real Eve.” \(2002\)](#).
Discussion Questions (below) “Who is the Real Eve?”

TEN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE FILM “THE REAL EVE”

1. Who is the Real Eve? A woman who is a descendent for all humankind.
2. Where and when did she live? Africa about 150,000 years ago
3. What is the scientific basis that a Real Eve existed? Genetic tracking through mitochondrial DNA
4. How is mitochondrial DNA passed through generations? Humans inherit it from their mothers
5. How many years ago did the first hominids appear? 3.5 million
6. When did this group of hominids migrate out of Africa? 80,000 years ago
7. What was their migration route? across the Red Sea into what is now Yemen
9. What were the primary causes of the migration of hominid groups? Climate and geography, such as polar caps, deserts, and volcanic eruptions
10. What caused humans to evolve into different races with unique characteristics? adaptations to different climates

¹¹ Morris, Lauren. “How Does Racism in the US Compare with an Apartheid South Africa.” Learning Help Centers of Charlotte, August 6, 2018.

Unit Activity #2: Pre-Reading Activity

Lesson objectives:

Students will learn about Apartheid system and historical contexts.

Students will learn how race and racism functioned in South Africa during the 1900s.

Instructional Materials and Activities:

KWL brainstorming session. Explain to the students that this activity is designed to help them to learn about the country of South Africa. Introduce the novel and the many different themes. Ask students the following questions: What do you know about the country of South Africa and Apartheid? What do you want to know? What would you like to learn?

Name: _____ Topic: _____		
K What I already knew about my topic!	W What I want to know about my topic!	L What I learned about my topic!

2. Ask the students if they are familiar with the following terms/concepts: Apartheid, Systematic Racism, The National Party, Dutch, English, Expatriate, Shaman, and the Afrikaans, African National Congress (ANC).

3. Lead the students into a discussion. Have students write the terms in their google keep notebook. Explain to the students that each of these terms will be discussed later.

4. View video of Trevor Noah speaking to his grandmother about Apartheid. This video will touch upon Self-Deportation as Noah shares a moment returning back to South Africa, tours the neighborhood he grew up in, talks to his grandmother about Nelson Mandela and Apartheid, and gives an “MTV Cribs”-style tour of his grandma’s home.

[The Daily Show: Trevor Chats with Grandma \(2018\)](#)

Follow up questions:

1. In the beginning of the video, Trevor Noah attempts to make light of Apartheid by stating the reason he believed whites wanted blacks to come to their homes. What was that reason?
Answer: Whites loved the food that blacks cooked.
2. What shipped the people between Soweto and Johannesburg back and forth to the white neighborhoods?

Answer: Taxis and buses shipped the people on connecting roads back and forth to white neighborhoods.

3. Trevor Noah states “That’s what we do in South Africa, we don’t have road rage we have road joy.” When he arrived to New York what surprised him about U.S drivers?

Answer: What surprised him was the road rage, in the U.S drivers are more aggressive. He thought everyone was his friend because in his country people smile and honk while driving.

4. What is found to be amazing about Trevor Noah’s hometown?

Answer: He found that nothing had changed in a good way, he referred to his home as a museum.

5. What did he use as an intruder defense mechanism as security for his home?

Answer: Broken glass bottles were used to prevent home invasions.

6. What event was occurring that made Trevor Noah return to his home in South Africa?

Answer: He was there to celebrate 100 years of Nelson Mandela.

7. What nickname was given to police during Apartheid?

Answer: The police were nicknamed “Black Jacks.”

8. Why did Trevor Noah’s grandmother say he worried her?

Answer: He worried her because he wanted to play in the streets and she was afraid the Black Jacks would take him away.

9. What excuse did Gogo give for not watching her grandson’s show?

Answer: Gogo does not watch the tv show because the electricity goes out.

Unit Activity #3: Introducing Trevor Noah’s “*Born a Crime*”

Lesson Objectives:

Students will evaluate their knowledge of South African society.

Students will understand literary text about Apartheid offering readers a contemporary outlook.

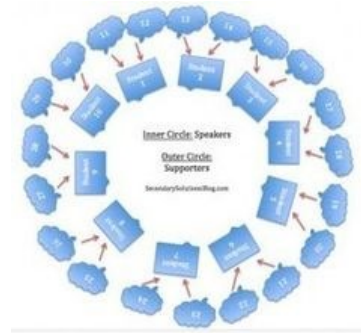
Lecture Notes:

Trevor Noah was born a crime during Apartheid. Noah is a South African comedian and political commentator. He is currently the host of The Daily Show and makes appearances on Comedy Central. Trevor Noah grew up in South Africa during Apartheid. *Born a Crime* shares with students how Noah himself recalls his experience from Apartheid. Noah’s mother was black Xhosa and his father was Swiss. Noah’s comedic style does a great job at making his painful past a joy to read. Explore the differences between continents, and countries.

Pre-Reading Activity:

1. Students will complete a Think-Pair-Share activity and ask students to consider the stereotypes they may have about the continent of Africa or the stereotypes they hear or see on television.
2. How Big is Africa activity will allow students to understand Africa is not a country, but a continent. Share approximate square miles between Africa, China, Europe, and the U.S. Use a document camera to project a map of Africa colored in with China, Europe, and the U.S. on the board and have students use their blank charts to color in the map according to yours. Discuss how all of those places fit into the entire African continent.
3. Examine maps of South Africa and share the names of cities and key areas in order for students to be able to understand Noah's references made throughout the text.

Unit Activity #4: Socratic Seminar Student Led Discussion



Lesson objectives:

Students achieve a deeper understanding of ideas and values in a text.
Students will systematically question and examine issues through different point of views.
Students will engage in discussion-based questions reflecting knowledge and understanding of content.
Students will use accountable talk to stimulate higher order thinking.

Lecture Notes One:

Accountable talk is a way for students to communicate effectively and appropriately. Accountable talk stimulates higher order thinking and provides clarifying information for students who may struggle with content. It allows students to reflect on their learning and communicate with others without tension. Students will then participate in a Socratic Seminar that allowing them to have appropriate discussions. There are other activities that require accountable talk, such as Turn and Talk and Fishbowl. Accountable talk requires specific ways for students to communicate effectively.

Accountable Talk:

I wonder why...

I would like to add to what ... was saying because...

I have a question about...

That reminds me of...

Can you please clarify what you mean when you say...

I came to this conclusion because...

Socratic Seminar:

A Socratic Seminar will allow for one to defend, refute, and qualify and of the principles and values within a given system. Before Socratic Seminar begins, hand out a passage for students to read that relates to the topic at hand. There will be two circles of students. The first circle is the inner circle and the second circle of students is the outer circle. The student-led discussion begins by the inner circle debating for 10 minutes or so on the material presented. The outer circle observes and records what they hear and see. It is also important for students to switch places with one another, some may want to be a speaker and not a recorder. A practice seminar can be held by giving students a general statement to discuss (for example, school uniforms).

Discussion Board:

The discussion board is an online forum created in Google classroom. Go to Google classroom and post a question in the classwork section. Advise students to post via the comments and not as a private comment. If the comments are private, other students will not be able to view other participants' posts in order to generate a discussion. Padlet is also another web-tool that can be used to create posts and discussions. The discussion board allows students to have a follow up conversation about the memoir. Some students may prefer not to verbalize their opinions and contributing through a discussion board will assure that all students can participate. The total of participation for a single discussion board will be graded on a ten-point scale. Students are expected to respond to any given prompt in three different days. One initial response is required and three posts are required in response to participants. Students posts should be a minimum of one paragraph and a maximum of two paragraphs. Whether students agree or disagree, they should be able to support how they feel with evidence from the literature. Responses should have organized and well thought out responses while using proper etiquette. Participating is measured by posting on three different days. Students should make a minimum of four postings in total: one new thread and three thoughtful responses to different members. Participation will be graded on a ten-point scale.

Rubric:

[Discussion Board Rubric](#)

Instructional Steps:

1. Discuss the rules of accountable talk with students.
2. Review rules and rubrics for Socratic Seminar.
3. Review rules for discussion board participation.
4. Show students how to post to a discussion on google classroom.
5. Read passage to students in order to have student-led discussions.

Discussion question(s) for Socratic Seminar:

What was Trevor's father like and how did you view him as a person? What did you think about Trevor's relationship with his biological father, Roberto? How has your life been impacted by your biological father, stepfather, or father figure? Is it important to have a father figure during childhood?

Unit Activity #5 Project Based Learning Activity

Lesson Objectives:

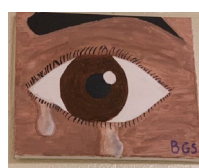
Students will analyze the text and implement project-based learning.
Students will create a physical representation to enhance comprehension of findings and reasoning throughout the memoir.

Instructional Steps:

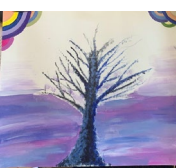
1. Review themes in the memoir.
2. Show students a few examples of project-based creation.



Tactile



Visual



Visual

Lecture Notes:

Students can choose something that represents Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* and design a representation that analyzes the themes. Students should be able to complete one project-based learning activity per quarter. Students will first choose an activity that represents their strengths by taking a learning inventory quiz which will help the student determine what type of learner they are. By using this inventory, students are simultaneously provided with personalized learning and project-based learning. After completing the project students will then write a 2-3 paragraph response answering the who, what, when, where, why and how in regards to their project creation.

This submission must be typed in Times New Roman font, single-spaced using 12" font size. Below is a chart for students to use and determine what project best fits their learning results from the learning style inventory. If there is a project that a student may want to complete that isn't listed as an option the student can come to you and ask for permission to complete an alternative representation of their choice. Please use the choice board below as a guide to complete projects. Sometimes students have ideas that you as the teacher may not have considered. Project based learning allows students to display their comprehension skills and knowledge by researching and building their own representation.

[Choice Board Rubric](#)

Appendix 1: Implementing Teaching Standards

I will be using the North Carolina Common Course of study to evaluate student mastery.

RI.11-12.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RI.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including technical meanings.

RI.11-12.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text.

RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RI.2: Identify extraneous information, identify central idea or theme and how it is supported by clear descriptions and extended detail

RI 3: Retell using complete sentences

RI 5: Recognize multiple perspectives and points of view on any given issue, organize information that shows logical reasoning.

RI. 6 Analyze how the author/main characters language contribute to the power of persuasion and the beauty of the text. Share the possibly multiple perspectives of the novel and its theme.

SL.5: Digital Media presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence.

W.3 Share an experience, either real or imagined. Stories can be novels, plays, personal accts, memoirs, anecdotes, and autobiographies.

L.1 Demonstrate command of standard English when writing or speaking.

Annotated Bibliography for Teachers

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This source can be used to set a foundation for understanding the rise and fall of Apartheid.

Discovery Channel. "The Real Eve." (April 2002) Retrieved October 10, 2019, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ca1AC5hVtE>.

This film is a great source to educate students on the origins of humankind.

Displora. "10 Most Beautiful and Developed Cities In Africa" (June 2019) Retrieved November 12, 2019, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0Uaa-enhPg>

This source explores the unique infrastructures of the African Continent and refutes any claims of Africa as being a poor continent.

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<http://www.blackagenda.com/content/blacks-and-latinos-us-still-evolving-relationship>. This source explains why the disconnect between Latinos and Blacks and how there is still a need to build relationships with one another.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1s5iz6ml-qA>

This clip will allow students to see a side of Trevor Noah that makes him appealing to young people as a result developing mere excitement to read his novel.

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