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Language difference among speakers of African American English (AAE) has often been considered language deficit, based on a lack of understanding about the AAE variety. Following Labov (1972), Wolfram (1969), Rickford (1999), Green (2002, 2011), and others, we define AAE as a complex rule-governed linguistic system and briefly discuss language structures that it shares with general American English (GAE) and others that are unique to AAE. We suggest ways in which mistaken ideas about the language variety add to children's difficulties in learning the mainstream dialect and, in effect, deny them the benefits of their educational programs. We propose that a linguistically informed approach that highlights correspondences between AAE and the mainstream dialect and trains students and teachers to understand language varieties at a metalinguistic level creates environments that support the academic achievement of AAE-speaking students. Finally, we present 3 program types that are recommended for helping students achieve the skills they need to be successful in multiple linguistic environments.

Keywords: African American English, multicultural, bidialectalism, pedagogical approaches for language difference, language attitudes

What knowledge do teachers and other professionals need to help them work effectively with children who are culturally and linguistically different from themselves? This question is especially critical for speakers of African American English (AAE), a nonmainstream variety[1] of English spoken in most regions of the United States. Despite extensive linguistic study and acknowledged literary excellence, the variety continues to be widely denigrated in popular culture (McWhorter, 2010; Morrison, 1993; J. R. Rickford, 1997). The resulting stigma associated with AAE complicates the task of educating its speakers. In order to prevent AAE-speaking children from suffering the effects of the stigma, their education must begin with recognizing their language and appreciating its value to them as a tool of thought, communication, and social identity (Delpit, 1998). As Delpit (1998) pointed out, it is not a question of being for or against the variety, "any more than [one] can be for or against air. It exists" (p. 17).

According to a broad consensus of linguists, educators, and social psychologists (Carter, 2010; Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2011; Smitherman, 1981; Stockman, 2010), the use of AAE itself is not a barrier to academic and social achievement, but it is a factor that must be accounted for in educating its speakers. This idea was the essence of the 1979 Ann Arbor *King* decision when parents sued their children's school district because it did not make resources available to take the children's language variety into account to aid instruction. Rather, the teachers were "against AAE," and they made setting AAE aside a condition for accessing the school's instructional programs (Smitherman, 1981). The judge for the case ruled that the plaintiffs' children had difficulty learning to read, not because of the children's language, but because of the institution's response to it (Joiner, 1981, p. 353). He directed school officials to submit to him within 30 days "a plan *defining the exact steps*" they would take to identify speakers of "black English" and then provide instruction that made use of the children's language variety to teach them to read standard English (p. 356). More than 30 years later, the debate about what those steps should be continues. What knowledge and awareness do teachers need to teach AAE speakers effectively? What kinds of knowledge and awareness should they foster in their students?

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A 122-page set of guidelines on multiculturalism by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2002) lays out six principles to help psychologists develop sensitivity to work with culturally and linguistically different clients, including AAE speakers. These principles encourage practitioners to become informed about how their own cultures differ from those of the individuals they serve. However, one cannot stop with just new knowledge. The APA guidelines warn that culturally learned systems of belief can create negative attitudes at a subconscious level. Negative attitudes, even among people who are not aware of having them, have the capacity to undermine intergroup relationships (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995).

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[1] Note that our preferred term is *variety,* as there is debate surrounding whether AAE should be called a dialect or a language. We also try to be consistent in the use of *AAE speakers,* but in reporting the work of others, we sometimes use the source's terms, for example, *Blacks* or *nonmainstream speakers.*

In the current article, we review principles from the APA (2002) guidelines and add our knowledge of AAE to make recommendations for positive interactions between children who speak AAE and clinicians and educators who speak the dialect of the "network news," or general American English (GAE).[2] In effect, we are responding to the questions posed by the Ann Arbor court. Our review is organized in the following sections:

1. Information about AAE to help recognize AAE and its speakers;

2. Materials for instruction and assessment based on knowledge of AAE;

3. Topics to help professionals understand language diversity and linguistic awareness; and

4. Specific program models of culturally responsive teaching that deliver engaging curricula, build awareness of AAE as a cultural asset, and in the process, teach AAE-speaking children to speak and read mainstream English.

We recognize that profound economic disparities are perhaps more instrumental than language structures and negative attitudes in perpetuating an "opportunity gap" (Hilliard, 2003) and persistent academic disparities between AAE and GAE speakers[3] (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2009). Nonetheless, we propose that professional training about AAE linguistic structures on the one hand and the effects of language attitudes on the other can contribute significantly to creating nurturing environments for young AAE speakers and fostering their optimal development.

Information About AAE and Its Place in the Broader Culture

What Is AAE? Who Speaks It? How Should It Be Described?

AAE is the native language variety of many, but not all, African Americans (AAs). Especially since the 1960s, linguists (Labov, Cohen, Robins, & Lewis, 1968; Mufwene, Rickford, Bailey, & Baugh, 1998; Wolfram, 1969) have recognized that AAE is not a haphazard or imperfect copy of GAE, as its name in popular culture, "Ebonics," has come to imply (J. R. Rickford, 1997). Rather, it is a complex, rule-governed linguistic system in its own right that has many elements in common with GAE and other elements that are unique to AAE. Although AAE's origin is debatable, it is generally considered to be a natural outgrowth of the mixing of West African and European languages that occurred during slavery. Unlike regional GAE varieties, AAE patterns are relatively uniform across the United States (Labov, 2010). Labov (2010) showed that AAE usage is most dense in groups that have little contact with other language communities and is least dense where there is less segregation between language subgroups, as in the West.

The majority of AA children use patterns of AAE in their speech when they enter school around age 5. The *King* decision cites 80% as the estimate of how many African Americans in the United States have used AAE at some time (Joiner, 1981, p. 342). To find the analogous estimate for schoolchildren, Jackson and Pearson (2010) used the dialect screener from the Diagnostic Evaluation of Language Variation-Screening Test (DELV-ST; Seymour, Roeper, & de Villiers, 2003) with two nationwide field tests involving more than 1,600 AA children, ages 4–12 years (Seymour et al., 2003; Seymour, Roeper, & de Villiers, 2005). They observed that fewer than 10% of the 4- to 6-year-old typically developing (TD) AA children scored in the GAE range on the screener portion of the DELV-ST. After age 7, almost 40% responded with primarily GAE patterns (see also Craig & Washington, 2004, 2006, for a similar decline with age of AAE use in spontaneous speech samples). Like Horton-Ikard and Miller (2004), Jackson and Pearson (2011) found middle socioeconomic status (SES) preschoolers used AAE patterns somewhat less frequently than low-SES children did, but average dialect density measures for the mid-SES children were only around 15% lower. So, even taking into consideration that AAE usage varies for the same individual at different times according to topic and context (DeBose, 1992; Renn, 2011), teachers and clinicians can expect the majority of AA children to exhibit some patterns of the AAE variety in their speech throughout elementary school.

At one time, AAE was described by prominent educators as a restricted, deficient code, unable to support logical thought (Bereiter & Engelmann, 1966). That view is discredited now (Green, 2002, 2011; Labov, 1972; Mufwene et al., 1998), but AAE is still most often characterized, not as a system, but as a list of 30 or more distinguishing features that focus on isolated properties of the variety (e.g., Craig & Washington, 2006; Hoover et al., 1996). Feature lists can be useful to provide a quick summary, especially of commonly used phonological and morphosyntactic elements that are most different from GAE. They also facilitate statistical comparisons between groups with respect to the frequency of AAE patterns in their speech (Craig & Washington, 2006; Oetting & MacDonald, 2002; Renn & Terry, 2009). However, according to Green (2011), feature lists and even other descriptions that are more linguistically based (e.g., Labov, 1969, 1998) are problematic because they suggest that AAE is not by itself an inherently complete system. She emphasizes that when children acquire language mostly from AAE speakers, they do not learn just pieces of a system that are defined by their difference from another variety. Rather, children learn a full system with some elements unique to AAE and others in common with GAE. When AAE speakers use shared structures, they do not step out of AAE, as the shared structures are also an integral part of AAE.

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[2] *General American English, network English,* and *mainstream American English* are used by different authors to replace the term *standard American English,* so that one can avoid the value judgment inherent in the word *standard.* We have selected *general American English* as the most neutral alternative.

[3] Many studies, including most of those based on national educational statistics, do not distinguish African American children who speak AAE from those who do not. We extrapolate back from the figures of prevalence of AAE usage in Jackson and Pearson (2010, 2011) reported in earlier in the Information About AAE and Its Place in the Broader Culture section but advise caution in interpreting figures based on race alone.

Overview of AAE as a Linguistic System

It is perhaps easier to appreciate AAE as a linguistic system by contrasting intelligible utterances generated by the AAE and GAE grammars with utterances that are ungrammatical regardless of variety. For instance, whether one says "there aren't any cookies" or "it ain't no cookies," both AAE and GAE speakers will understand that the number of cookies present is zero. However, if one were to say "got cookies no ain't," neither AAE nor GAE speakers would be able to interpret the utterance. In fact, it is not English, as it violates significant syntactic word order rules.

By contrast, AAE sentences obey orderly principles, just as GAE sentences do. They are the systematic output of rules in all four of the major domains of standard linguistic description: syntax, phonology, semantics, and pragmatics. Phonologically, AAE shares most vowel and consonant sounds with GAE, but differing syllable structure rules account for many differences in how words are pronounced in the two varieties (J. R. Rickford, 1999). For example, like Japanese and Spanish, AAE prefers open syllables to closed ones (*fo'* vs. *for*) and limits the number and variety of consonants and clusters that can occur at the ends of words. Therefore, *test* in many environments becomes *tes'*, *mind* becomes *min'*, and so forth. AAE also has distinctive intonation patterns, such as wide pitch variation, staccato rhythms in speech production, and level or falling intonation for questions (J. R. Rickford, 1999).

The grammar of AAE is complex, and children's developing knowledge of its abstract syntactic, semantic, and phonological relationships is amenable to analysis in contemporary theoretical frameworks, such as universal grammar (Chomsky, 1965, 1995). One project based on a Chomskian perspective, for example, explored how unique patterns of subject–verb inversion in AAE gave its learners an advantage over GAE first-dialect learners in correctly interpreting embedded questions (e.g., *When did he say how he hurt himself?*; de Villiers, de Villiers, & Roeper, 2011). **AQ: 4** Abstract rules also govern the behavior of multiple negative elements in AAE sentences with *negative concord* (e.g., *He don't have none* in AAE, whereas in GAE it would be *He doesn't have any*). Coles-White, de Villiers, and Roeper (2004) tested AAE-speaking children's emerging knowledge of grammatical restrictions on negative concord and showed that it developed in tandem with their command of restrictions on other structures that are common to GAE and AAE, like quantifier- and *wh*-clauses. Studies like these show the subtlety and complexity of what it means for a child to master AAE.

Examples of AAE syntactic patterns. In the following examples, we show how linguistic reasoning can reveal differences between patterns in AAE and GAE that may not be apparent from feature lists (Green, 2011).

Zero auxiliary/aspectual be. Compare the following examples of the verb *be* in AAE and GAE: **AQ: 5**

1. Jesse is swimming at the pool OR Jesse Ø swimmin' at the pool.

GAE gloss: Jesse is swimming at the pool.

2. Jesse be swimmin' at the pool.

GAE gloss: Jesse has the habit of swimming at the pool.

An uninformed GAE speaker might think that AAE speakers who use both variants in Example 1 are being careless when they sometimes use the auxiliary verb (*is*) expressing tense and sometimes do not. However, tag questions formed from these sentences show whether they are equivalent to the GAE gloss in Example 1 or not (Jackson et al., 1996). The rules for tag questions in both AAE and GAE produce a copy of the auxiliary verb from the main clause in the tag, as in the following examples. Thus, we see that both variants in Example 1 have the same underlying auxiliary.

3. Jesse is swimming at the pool, isn't he?

4. Jesse Ø swimmin' at the pool, isn't he?

As in other languages, such as Russian (but not GAE), the present tense is a default tense in AAE. When tense is not expressed, the sentence is in the present. On the other hand, if a nondefault tense such as past is required, it would be ungrammatical to omit the auxiliary. So, **Yesterday, Jesse Ø swimmin' at the pool*[4] is not **Fn4** meaningful in either GAE or AAE (Green, 2002).

The tag question also illustrates how the verb in Example 2, *Jesse be swimmin'*, has a different structure and meaning from the one in Example 1. The *be* in Example 2 does not carry the tense of the sentence as the auxiliary verb in Example 1 does. Rather, it is a main verb that gives information about grammatical *aspect*, the time course of the event, meaning that the swimming event does not have an end point, and it is habitual. To show that it is a main verb, we compare the sentence with other sentences without auxiliaries. As the following example shows, the main, or lexical, verb (*swim*) does not get copied in the tag. Instead, an auxiliary is inserted for it, as in Example 6.

5. *They swim every day, swimn't they?

6. They swim every day, don't they?

Likewise, the *be* in Example 2 is not copied, and an auxiliary is inserted for its tag, too, so only Example 8, the main verb interpretation, is grammatical.

7. *Jesse be swimming at the pool, be-n't he?

8. Jesse be swimmin' at the pool, don't he?

Subject–verb agreement in AAE. Uninformed GAE speakers may also think of AAE expressions like *they was* or *we was* as careless errors because in GAE, verb forms that do not "agree" with the subject are errors. However, invariant forms (*we, you,* and *they was*) are grammatical in AAE. In fact, English, even GAE, puts less emphasis on agreement than do other languages like Polish or Spanish, or even Middle English. Historical texts show that agreement forms, also called "inflections," used to play a larger role in the language (Roeper, 2007). Inflections that are now zero for second person (*you go*) were present in Middle English: *I go* but *thou goost*. Modern English speakers are not faulted for leaving off the /st/ in *you go* because those forms are no longer part of English grammar. Similarly, the infrequent use of agreement

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[4] An asterisk (*) is used in front of those sentences that are ungrammatical.

inflections by AAE speakers reflects the marginal role that agreement plays in the AAE system (de Villiers & Johnson, 2007). Absence of agreement inflections is the standard in the adult variety, and so it is not a sign of immaturity or disorder among children. It is a difference, however, and could pose a problem for the child in a mainstream environment.

AAE and the Law

The right of language minority students to special accommodations to ensure equal access to GAE school materials was officially established in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and affirmed by the Supreme Court in 1974 in *Lau v. Nichols*, a case involving Chinese American learners of English (Civil Rights Project, 2002). In the *Lau* case, the court argued that without linguistic accommodations for their different stages of learning the language, students were being denied their civil rights. As noted earlier, similar logic with respect to AAE was used in the 1979 Ann Arbor case (Smitherman, 1981, 2000). The federal judge in Michigan ruled further that the responsibility for active strategies of inclusion fell on the school system and the teachers.

Subsequent position papers from professional societies have also given official recognition to AAE as a legitimate, not deficient, variety of English. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association ([ASHA], 1983, 2003) guidelines on social dialects is unequivocal that AAE use is not an acceptable basis for a diagnosis of language disorder, and ASHA requires practitioners to use alternate assessments to distinguish language difference from disorder. The Linguistics Society of America (1997) and the National Council of Teachers of English (1974) were also emphatic in their official endorsement of nonmainstream dialects like AAE, characterizing them as communicative assets for learning the mainstream dialect and for learning in general. Likewise, as mentioned earlier, the APA's (2002) multicultural guidelines encourage its members to recognize the importance of "the constructs of multiculturalism and diversity" (p. 34) for research and practice. Guideline No. 1 of the document urges psychologists to examine their own unconscious and automatic judgments, and Guideline No. 6 encourages them to become leaders in advocating for social justice and inclusive practices in their field.

AAE in Popular Culture

Legal and professional endorsements of AAE notwithstanding, a large and vocal portion of the general public still associates AAE, or Ebonics, most closely with "slang" or broken English (Cosby & Poussaint, 2007; Raspberry, 1997). Seventeen years after the Ann Arbor decision, the Oakland (California) School Board adopted a resolution to do exactly what the Ann Arbor ruling required: recognize Ebonics as the primary language of AA children and take it into account in language arts instruction. Public outcry against the Oakland decision was instantaneous, even among Black leaders. Maya Angelou called it threatening; Jesse Jackson said, "You don't have to go to school to learn to talk garbage" (CNN, 1996). J. R. Rickford (1997) reported receiving hate mail over his essays defending Ebonics. In 2010, outrage against AAE came to the fore again when the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) advertised for Ebonics translators to help them eavesdrop on calls between AAE speakers that DEA workers were not able to

understand. McWhorter (2010) found himself repeating the same arguments from Oakland and Ann Arbor in defense of the DEA's advertisement. Indeed, invective against "the Ebonic plague" fills the Internet to this day, as 18,000 hits on Google show (January 1, 2012).

So, despite legal and professional acceptance of the legitimacy of AAE, its use continues to carry a strong stigma. Linguistically informed efforts are needed to break down the interpretation of AAE as defective GAE so it can be used as a springboard to learning.

Materials for Linguistically Informed Assessment and Instruction

Dialect-Sensitive Assessment

Overview of obstacles.   One area of difficulty for AAE speakers stems from assessment strategies that do not distinguish typical AAE from disordered GAE and AAE. Optional morphosyntactic inflections, such as zero third person singular agreement (e.g., *He go-Ø*) and zero past tense or past participle /*-ed*/ (*Yesterday, the dog was walk-Ø*) have been particularly troublesome for assessment. As we saw earlier with respect to subject–verb agreement, many sentences can be well formed in adult AAE with or without overt inflections. By contrast, in GAE, the expressed forms are obligatory, and sentences with zero third person singular /*-s*/ or zero auxiliary *is* are considered ungrammatical. Children who grow up in an AAE-speaking environment and faithfully reproduce alternations between the expressed and zero forms they hear in their input show that they are good language learners. However, the same forms realized as zero by children who hear primarily fully inflected GAE in their environment are markers of immature and/or disordered speech (Leonard, 1998; Rice & Wexler, 1996). It is, thus, diagnostic for GAE first-dialect children older than age 3 to note whether these inflections are absent. However, looking for a high usage of similar zero-marked forms is not an efficient diagnostic for AAE-speaking children (Jackson & Pearson, 2008, 2010). In Jackson and Pearson's (2008, 2010) field-testing data, levels of predicted differences from GAE among 4-, 5-, and 6-year-olds were not statistically different for AAE-speaking TD children and those with language impairment (LI), and both groups used zero-marking significantly more than did GAE speakers with LI.

Distinguishing dialect from disorder.   In that they differ between the dialects, features like zero-marking are considered "contrastive" (Craig & Washington, 2006; Seymour & Seymour, 1977; Stockman, 2008). Contrastive features have sometimes been used sensitively to diagnose LI in nonmainstream speakers (e.g., Oetting & MacDonald, 2001). However, they are more cumbersome for the purpose than are noncontrastive elements, those shared by the two varieties. As Oetting and McDonald (2001) found, different sets of features were needed for discrimination of LI in AAE and Southern White English (SWE; p. 217). One approach to accommodating contrastive features in assessment instruments has been to modify their scoring so that appropriate dialect responses would be accepted. However, this practice invalidates the test's standardization, and then results can only be used descriptively (Wyatt, 2002, p. 427).

To avoid difficulties involved with contrastive features, several researchers have advocated assessment strategies that use only noncontrastive elements. One path proposed by Stockman (1996, 2008) was to use criterion measures from language samples, choosing to inventory only elements that would be equally valid for AAE and GAE speakers. Another alternative is the battery of noncontrastive items for screening and testing developed by Craig and Washington (2000; Washington & Craig, 2004). Campbell, Dollaghan, Needleman, and Janosky (1997) proposed nonword repetition (NWR) as a processing-based assessment that distinguished LI equally well for AAE and other dialects. Oetting and Cleveland (2006) demonstrated further that Dollaghan and her colleagues' stimulus set was consistent with the phonology of AAE and SWE and that NWR contributed to discrimination of LI in both of those nonmainstream varieties.

Seymour and his colleagues also used the strategy of avoiding contrastive items for assessment when they produced the DELV-Norm Referenced (DELV-NR; Seymour, Roeper, & de Villiers, 2005), a dialect-neutral standardized test. The DELV-NR probes areas of language for which the form of the response—whether in AAE or GAE—is irrelevant. The structures tested in syntax included *wh*-question comprehension and production, quantifiers, and reversible passives. For lexical measurement, the test avoided acquired vocabulary and employed, instead, a dynamic form of assessment in which children show how well they can derive clues to the meaning of an unknown word or nonword from its use in a sentence. In pragmatics, the short narrative in the DELV-NR highlighted a standard theory of mind (ToM) task and requires children to demonstrate their use of ToM vocabulary and syntax. Thus, to do well on the DELV-NR, the child must demonstrate sophisticated language abilities that are central elements for both AAE and GAE development and are critical for success in school (Seymour & Pearson, 2004).

Importantly, the DELV-NR was normed on a 100% AA population, thus making it unique in standardized testing. A second standardization with a sample that represented a general U.S. population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2002) established that the norms were the same for AA children as for mainstream groups. Since all items were noncontrastive, TD AAE speakers did not score lower on the tests, and in some areas they were a little ahead of mainstream peers. In phonology, for example, some later developing sounds, like */r/* and */s/,* were acquired earlier by AAE speakers than GAE speakers (Pearson, Velleman, Bryant, & Charko, 2009). So, noncontrastive testing may help improve identification of typically developing AAE speakers and those with LI.

Dialect-Sensitive Literacy Instruction

Overview of obstacles. On the other hand, even if one recognizes the equal legitimacy of AAE and GAE and the equal native ability of AAE-speaking children given tasks appropriate for their language variety, a mismatch between home and school languages is hypothesized to delay AAE speakers in learning to read (Charity, Scarborough, & Griffin, 2004; Craig & Washington, 2004; Labov, 1995). The mismatch is thought to cause confusion when a word's spelling does not match the child's mental representation of it, or it might make some reading subskills, such as rhyme awareness, harder (N. P. Terry, 2006). Therefore, teaching

materials that accommodate specific differences between AAE and GAE have been proposed.

Dialect-sensitive reading curricula. To make materials that would be consistent with the distinctive phonological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic features of AAE, educators in the 1970s created Bridges, a reading curriculum that represented in writing how AAE speakers might communicate a story, and gradually introduced more GAE features in its texts (Simpkins & Simpkins, 1981). A test of Bridges involving 540 children in Grades 7–12 showed significantly greater gains over a 4-month period on the Iowa Reading Comprehension subtest for those using the dialect-sensitive readers than for the control group (6.2 vs. 1.6 months' gain, respectively; p. 238). However, despite their apparent effectiveness, the readers were rejected by both the GAE- and the AAE-speaking communities (Labov, 1995).

Revisiting the idea of dialect-sensitive readers in the 1990s, both J. R. Rickford and Rickford (1995) and Labov (1995) attributed the rejection of Bridges to the cultural misinterpretation of AAE as a defective language and not to defects in the program. They felt the logic behind the readers was still valid and called for further studies of the concept. Labov took on the task of creating new dialect-sensitive reading curricula (Labov, 2009; Labov & Baker, 2005). He identified phonetic contexts in AAE where a sound that is used variably was most likely to be represented. For example, since final consonants are more likely to be pronounced before a vowel (*test o*f rather than *test f*or), he used the former contexts to introduce the consonants' sound–symbol relationships. Because so many contrasts between AAE and GAE are found at the ends of words, he devoted more attention to structures in words' final position, which are not part of most other curricula. Labov's programs were strongly based on phonics, with the reading and writing rules embedded in stories. The readers were not written in AAE, but they used "city-smart" themes and raplike rhythm and rhyme intended to appeal to AAE-speaking children (Labov, 1995).

Distinguishing dialect influence from true reading errors. Another advantage of Labov's materials is that they help teachers distinguish apparent reading errors that are appropriate AAE pronunciations from true "miscues," or errors that stem from decoding problems (Labov & Baker, 2010). In the former, not all letters are decoded accurately, but meaning is preserved; in the latter, both form and meaning are lost. Listeners who are not able to make the distinction between true miscues and appropriate dialect patterns risk derailing children's efforts to read by constantly interrupting them, as in the following example reported by Delpit (1998, p. 23) concerning the sentence *Yesterday I washed my brother's clothes.*

Student's Rendition: Yesterday I wash my bruvver close.

Teacher: Wait, let's go back. What's that word again? [Points to washed.]

S: Wash.

T: No, look at it again. What letters do you see in the end? You see "e-d." Do you remember what we say when we see those letters on the end of the word?

S: "ed"

T: Ok, but in this case we say washed [washt]. Can you say that?

S: Washed.

T: Good, now read it again.

S: Yesterday I washed my bruvver . . .

T: Wait a minute what's that word again? [Points to brother.]

The example continues for several more turns. By the time they left that sentence, the class had forgotten what the lesson was about. The teacher never acknowledged that the student had understood the meaning of the passage (i.e., had read it). Her only concern was to "correct" the child's nonstandard pronunciation. The problem was not the child's understanding. Rather, the teacher's lack of awareness of typical AAE pronunciations took away the child's opportunity for learning. Later, in the Program Models for Culturally Responsive Teaching section, we present several alternatives to this "interfering" style for teaching language minority children. First, though, we turn to education for their teachers in the next section.

Education for Professionals: Enhancing Linguistic and Cultural Sensitivity

To this point, we have focused on AAE-speaking children's language and on efforts in teaching and assessment that accommodate their language differences directly. Another approach put forward by Charity Hudley and Mallinson (2011) and Green (2011), among others, places priority on teaching those who work with AAE speakers about AAE and, equally, about attitudes and beliefs about AAE. Following Charity Hudley and Mallinson (p. 141), we focus on two principal topics: (1) understanding language diversity and (2) developing linguistic awareness, especially awareness of one's own attitudes about language.

Overview of Obstacles

Why do we devote a full section of the article to learning about language diversity and awareness? In our introductory paragraph, we noted that the task of educating AAE speakers was complicated by the stigma associated with its use. The widespread stigma means that a large number of people are not predisposed to see advantages in AAE. Most people learning about AAE are not just learning something new: They are being asked to accept something new. As Mallinson, Charity Hudley, Strickling, and Figa (2011) found when they offered ongoing workshops on "Language Variation in the Classroom," even teachers who elected to participate in the workshop often needed to be convinced that the language variety was an asset to the child. Once teachers and clinicians acknowledged its value and agreed on the need to build instructional strategies around it, there was another potential obstacle to implementing their intention: unconscious dimensions to their own behavior, or covert biases, that have the potential to undermine their conscious efforts (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Preventing the negative consequences of covert biases requires developing awareness of them (Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004). So, Mallinson and colleagues' workshops were not one-time presentations but included follow-up sessions and individual coaching over several months. As workshop participants attested in reflective essays, the lessons of language awareness take time and effort to assimilate and implement (Mallinson et al., 2011).

Understanding Language Diversity

Resistance to language diversity as an obstacle. In our own teaching (in communication disorders), we have found that students who are reluctant to accept language diversity in relation to a particular language variety are more accepting of it when they view it in general terms. When we have shown that a variety reflects a system by comparing its intelligible utterances to disordered utterances that are unintelligible, the students are typically more willing to view what they thought of as errors as differences instead. Linguistic diversity refers to variations that are generated by a grammar and fit within the broad range of possible utterances of a language, as discussed earlier in the section Information About AAE and Its Place in the Broader Culture. The grammar referred to in that definition is a *descriptive* grammar. It is the abstract system used by linguists to define possible sentences and their interrelationships. By contrast, a *prescriptive* grammar is a social construction. It tells which words and sentences a particular group considers *socially* appropriate. Therefore, if expressions are grammatical descriptively but inconsistent with a prescriptive notion of grammar, there is no basis to say they are wrong, although they may be inappropriate.

It is not hard to see how AAE patterns came to be seen as problematic. Strong negative correlations have been reported between density of AAE patterns in a child's speech and achievement in literacy (Charity et al., 2004; Craig & Washington, 2004) and even mathematics (J. M. Terry, Hendrick, Evangelou, & Smith, 2010). As noted earlier, Charity et al. (2004) proposed that the mismatch between the AAE spoken at home and the GAE in school materials could make it harder for children to recognize written forms that did not match their mental representations of those words. J. M. Terry et al. (2010) added the suggestion that language mismatches led to a processing difficulty: The cognitive load of processing mismatched codes took away from AAE speakers' cognitive resources to solve the mathematics word problems.

Reasons to accommodate more than one language variety. As Connor and Craig (2006) pointed out, however, the correlation between AAE and literacy skills is a "complex relationship." They AQ: 6 argued that low dialect *awareness*, not dialect, was the problem. Connor and Craig studied AA low-SES preschoolers' performance on a series of language and literacy tasks. First, they measured the children's dialect density in a sentence imitation task where the expectation for GAE was high and in an oral narrative where the expectation for GAE was lower. Eighty-seven percent of the children used AAE features in the oral narrative, but only 27% used them in the sentence imitation task, indicating that many of the preschoolers already had an emerging awareness of which context required less use of AAE. Connor and Craig observed that literacy scores were higher for children who used very few AAE features but also for those who had used many AAE features in their informal narratives compared with those who had used a moderate amount. So, the authors concluded that "overall linguistic skill [was] a better predictor of students' reading than whether or not a child [used] AAE" (p. 781).

AQ: 7

N. P. Terry and Scarborough (2011) made a specific test of Connor and Craig's (2006) claim, which they called the *awareness/flexibility* hypothesis. Terry and Scarborough administered a series of phonological and grammatical tasks to 55 children 4–6 years old of white, AA, and other ethnicities. They first established the children's patterns of nonmainstream feature use. In addition to more typical production tasks, children were asked to demonstrate their ability to discriminate AAE and GAE productions of words and distinguish them both from disordered productions. For example, they were asked if "toothbrush" (GAE or AAE), "toofbrush" (AAE only), and "toothbuss" (LI) sounded "just like toothbrush." Children also did two subtests of the Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement 3 (Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather, 2001), Letter–Word Identification and Sound Awareness, that included standard phonemic awareness items like rhyming, deleting, adding, or reversing syllables and phonemes. As anticipated by the mismatch hypothesis, there was a significant negative association between dialect density and Letter–Word scores, tested both with analysis of variance and regression. However, when the regression was redone adding the phonemic awareness score before the dialect measure, the beta weight for the dialect measure, which had been -0.292 ($p < .05$) without phonemic awareness in the analysis, dropped to -0.092 (*ns*, p. 109). Thus, the result indicated that the dialect effect was almost entirely mediated by phonemic awareness.

N. P. Terry and Scarborough's (2011) finding showed more specifically than Connor and Craig's (2006) results that improving the child's phonemic or other linguistic awareness could be more effective than eliminating the native language variety. They proposed that young children may need explicit guidance and practice to learn how to use two varieties flexibly at different times for different purposes.

Analogy to additive bilingualism. For nonmainstream speakers, "language diversity" can mean speaking more than one dialect (i.e., being *bidialectal*). As one learns from the bilingual literature, more than half the population of the world can and does command more than one language, and on many tasks learning a second language brings cognitive and academic benefits that a monolingual does not have (Bialystok, 2010). Perhaps one might anticipate that future research will show that AAE-background learners of GAE develop the superior mental flexibility and executive function currently attributed to bilinguals (Bialystok & Viswanathan, 2009). Another lesson for bidialectals from the bilingual literature is the importance of adding a second language without subtracting the first. The dangers of *subtractive bilingualism* have been recognized since Lambert (1977) first proposed it. He argued, in particular, that it is important not to withdraw the first language at a time when the child needs language fluency for critical thinking and inquiry learning (see also Cummins, 1979).

Recent research in bilingualism has also established the negative socioemotional impact of replacing a first language and creating *second language (L2) monolinguals,* children who no longer speak their home language and are monolingual in the mainstream community language (Han, 2010). In a study of social adjustment with several thousand bilingual kindergartners in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (NCES, 2010), Han (2010) demonstrated that those with a good command of Spanish and English had the highest social adjustment scores and the fewest negative behaviors,

while L2 monolinguals had the lowest social adjustment scores and the most negative behaviors.

Carter (2010) has made a similar case that a more diverse ethnic composition in a school fosters cultural flexibility and leads to greater academic achievement in its minority students. For her study of identity formation, she compared AA students from integrated high schools where they were nonetheless the majority with those attending majority White schools (i.e., where they represented 15% or less of the student body). AA students in the "minority majority" schools earned higher scores on cultural flexibility and self-esteem scales and enrolled in more Advanced Placement and honors courses than did those in the more segregated contexts, where there was more pressure for them to assimilate (p. 1563). Carter's findings suggested that a learning environment in which the cultural identity of the student—including linguistic heritage—was supported by peers and teachers fostered positive attitudes about education and thus greater academic achievement. Though not specifically based on language difference, her work speaks to the deterrent associated with methods that teach GAE as a replacement for AAE. By contrast, if students can have both varieties and cultures, they can enjoy the unique benefits of each.

Linguistic Awareness for Professionals: Consequences of Attitudes About Language

Language variation workshops and research on the workshops by Mallinson and her colleagues (2011) underline the need to help teachers explore how their own language attitudes can either help or hinder their interactions with speakers of other varieties. These are not new ideas. In this section, we present studies spanning back 40 years that show (1) the power of teachers' underlying beliefs and expectations to influence student performance for better or for worse and (2) the specific role that language and language variety plays in giving rise to those beliefs. Finally, we show how to become aware of one's own covert beliefs in order to be prepared to counteract them if negative ones are revealed.

Understanding the consequences of expectations. The powerful effects of positive expectations have been well known since the "Pygmalion in the classroom" studies by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968). These researchers tested all the students in a school at the beginning of the year and randomly selected 20% of them for their "intervention." The intervention consisted of fictitiously reporting to the teachers that the randomly selected, average students showed "unusual potential for intellectual growth" and could be expected to "bloom" in their academic performance by the end of the year. When the researchers retested all the students 8 months later, those arbitrarily labeled as "intelligent" showed significantly greater academic gains than did children who were not singled out as promising. They were also described by their teachers significantly more often as more intellectually curious and better adjusted.

Negative expectations can be just as powerful as positive ones, but they are more dangerous for children because their consequences are also negative. Jussim, Eccles, and Madon (1996) studied how teachers' prejudgments disadvantaged minority sixth-graders over the course of a semester. They found that for 76 AA mathematics students, their final grades correlated closely with teachers' initial perceptions of the students' potential. The impact

of teachers' October perceptions on May math scores was more than twice as large for Black than for White students, with effect sizes of 0.37 and 0.17, respectively, even after controlling for past grades, students' current attitudes, and their self-reported effort. As Ferguson (2003) pointed out, teachers call on students they consider brighter more often; they give more positive feedback after correct responses, fuller helpful feedback after mistakes, and more "body language" and other unauthorized coaching in testing situations. Thus, if a larger percentage of AAE-speaking students are represented among students with lower initial grades, it can be seen how teacher perceptions based on previous scores could perpetuate lower scores in the future.

Another mechanism to explain how minority students can be disadvantaged by negative expectations is the concept of *stereotype threat* proposed by Steele and Aronson (1995). They tested groups of White and Black college students (see footnote 3) with a short test based on the Graduate Record Exam. It was presented to one group of participants as a diagnostic test that assessed their intellectual ability. The other students were told it was simply a laboratory exercise to explore problem solving. For the White students, the purported purpose of the test made little difference in their scores. By contrast, the Black students in the nondiagnostic condition did twice as well as those who thought their intellectual ability was being assessed by the examiner. Further experiments showed that priming the stereotype by just mentioning it in the header of a survey could bring about an effect (p. 808). (Educational programs based on the implications of Steele's findings are found later in the Program Models for Culturally Responsive Teaching section, the subsection on Model 1.

The influence of language on expectations. As early as 1969, Tucker and Lambert used the "matched guise" technique to find evidence of negative attitudes evoked specifically by AAE patterns in a person's speech. The matched guise asks listeners to make judgments about different speakers who are often the same speaker acting two different roles, even using the same words. On this task, Tucker and Lambert's participants rated AAE speakers as less intelligent based solely on speech form differences. In addition, as is often the case, AA raters, many of them AAE speakers themselves, judged peer speakers as significantly less intelligent and even less trustworthy than "network" GAE speakers. Follow-up experiments by Seligman, Tucker, and Lambert (1972) isolated speech differences as the strongest contributor to listeners' negative perceptions. First, independent judges ranked drawings, photographs, compositions, and voice recordings of 36 third-grade boys by general quality. Then, in experimental trials, individuals with more stigmatized speech were rated as less intelligent and less promising, even though they had been matched for nonverbal intelligence and their compositions and drawings had been highly rated in the independent judging.

More recently, Norton (2008) did a version of the matched guise technique with speech language pathologists (SLPs) who had different amounts of experience with AAE speakers in their caseloads. She asked the SLPs to judge oral stories from children of different clinical status and dialect densities. In particular, some children in the LI group used few AAE features, while some TD children used many AAE features. SLPs with less experience with speakers of AAE ranked the objectively better stories (i.e., those with more complex syntax and story structure) from TD speakers who used more patterns of AAE as lower than weaker stories from

children with LI who spoke with less difference from GAE. Thus, stories spoken in GAE were overvalued, and stories with more AAE patterns were undervalued.

An experiment by Robinson and Stockman (2009) also showed how familiarity played a role in judgments involving AAE speech patterns. The researchers asked European American SLPs to rate spoken sentences with AAE features on how comprehensible they were and how detectable they thought the AAE dialect of the speaker was. Participants with less familiarity with AAE speakers found sentences with more AAE patterns harder to understand. Thus, there was a perceptual cost to processing unfamiliar speech. In addition, dialect detection was inconsistent, indicating that the participants did not reliably recognize when they were hearing AAE as opposed to GAE. This work highlights the need for more familiarity with the variety in order to understand it and its speakers better.

Discovering one's own linguistic attitudes. In addition to suggesting more experience with AAE and its speakers in order to increase familiarity with it, the APA (2002) multicultural guidelines caution (p. 20) that most individuals living in a culture where dialectal variations like AAE, or Ebonics, have such strong pejorative connotations must guard against automatic, unconscious reactions by which they could unknowingly disadvantage AAE speakers (cf. Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004). Even without the overt institutional racism of previous generations, it is still the case that to the ear trained on GAE, many salient characteristics of AAE may be more strongly associated with forms that prescriptive habits identify as speech errors. It is a cognitive challenge for educated GAE speakers to break those associations apart.

The kinds of subconscious reactions the APA (2002) guidelines warn about are often in conflict with one's professed beliefs, so indirect means of accessing them are required. One way to reveal subconscious beliefs is with the implicit attitude test (IAT; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995), a tool from cognitive psychology that measures the relative strength of an individual's associations to paired stimuli. The basic principle of the IAT is that an individual will respond more quickly to a two-part stimulus that pairs concepts that are for him or her more closely associated than to paired concepts that are not as tightly associated. The difference in reaction time over many trials gives a rough measure for a given individual of which concepts are more closely related in his or her mental representations. No IAT has yet been devised to measure attitudes toward AAE speech sounds and structures specifically, but it is a technology that is under investigation for that purpose (N. Dasgupta, personal communication, December 9, 2011).

Since expectations and language patterns are so strongly implicated in practices by which teachers can unwittingly undermine their own educational goals, it will be important for culturally responsive teaching to begin by cultivating positive attitudes about language diversity as a cultural asset, not a deficit (Hoover, 1990).

Program Models for Culturally Responsive Teaching

The studies in the Education for Professionals: Enhancing Linguistic and Cultural Sensitivity section encourage teachers to learn about and monitor their own attitudes and expectations so they do not communicate negative messages to their students unconsciously. But educators still need to know what they should actually do to help the linguistically different student. In our survey of

educational programs that have been recommended for working with AAE speakers, three models stand out as responding to the needs expressed in the previous main section.

1. Programs that harness the power of high expectations. They present new and challenging materials, not remedial exercises that focus on making up a deficiency.

2. Programs that appreciate linguistic diversity. They use multicultural materials in curricula that resonate with the children's own experience and are designed to engage the students and motivate them to learn.

3. Programs that develop different kinds of linguistic awareness, especially dialect awareness. They give children tools to increase their awareness of what systematic changes are being asked of them when they learn the mainstream dialect.

AQ: 10   All three of the programs presented recognize the children's need to learn GAE. However, learning GAE is not their only goal to the exclusion of all other curricula. Model 1 programs do not single out language at all, but neither do they let it be a roadblock, like the interfering teacher in the example in the earlier Materials for Linguistically Informed Assessment and Instruction section. For Models 2 and 3, GAE is added to children's knowledge of AAE—it does not replace it.

Linguistic awareness and cultural diversity are laudable goals in their own right, but they will be more compelling if it can be shown that programs that incorporate them actually improve children's academic outcomes. Do they work? Do they improve AAE speakers' literacy skills? Do they ultimately help their students master the mainstream dialect? Empirical studies are relatively scarce, and as we note later in our concluding remarks, conclusive results are difficult to achieve. So, we present quantitative data on program outcomes—and in some cases surveys and other qualitative data—when they are available.

Model 1: The Power of High Expectations

Steele's University of Michigan experiment.   Steele's (1997) work illustrates how Black (see footnote 3) college students' grade point averages (GPA) were improved by a program based on high expectations. He argued that remedial interventions fail because they institutionalize the stereotype that caused student underperformance and "threat" in the first place. Therefore, he reasoned, improvement should be possible by making situational changes, analogous to the ones in his experiments. He proposed neutralizing stereotype threat by replacing remedial interventions, which address deficiencies, with what he called "challenge" pro-

AQ: 11 grams. He reported on one such program he organized with colleagues at the University of Michigan. They recruited first-year college students in what was presented to enrollees as a competitive program (whereas, in reality, acceptance into the program was random so that its evaluation would be more valid). The subject matter was very advanced, but the pace was set with the student's current level as the starting point and with a challenging but not overwhelming schedule for the curriculum. The student's eventual success was frequently talked about explicitly.

Among the 62 Black students enrolled during the years of program evaluation, 35 had also enrolled independently in a remedial program. So in addition to (1) the comparison of Black students in the challenge program versus the Black controls not in the program, one could also compare (2) the Black students in the challenge program who were also in the remedial program with challenge participants who were not in the remedial program. Controlling for entering admissions scores, the average advantage in first semester grades for the challenge students in the first comparison was about 0.35 points in GPA (on a 4-point scale; $p < .05$). The advantage was 0.5 points higher in GPA for those in the second comparison who were not in the remedial program.

Great Expectations initiative.   The Great Expectations (GE) initiative (Ferguson, 2003; Safer, 1979, 1995) for kindergarten through 12th grade is directly in line with the type of challenge program that was effective in the Steele (1997) experiment. It, too, was based on a rigorous curriculum, and it instilled in students the belief that they would, without any doubt, succeed in school and beyond. Begun in 1975 in founder Marva Collins' inner-city home, the GE program emphasized constant positive reinforcement for all children and a commitment that teachers would not let any students fail, no matter what previous learning difficulties or diagnoses may have been ascribed to them in public schools. Exposure to above–grade-level poetry and literature, such as Thoreau and Chaucer by the fourth grade, was a key component. The students were inspired by challenging and engaging projects (e.g., performing the plays they read) and by the constant progress they could see in themselves and others.

There are no randomized trials of the program, but evidence of GE's effectiveness was provided from a 1989 Harvard survey done when 25 Oklahoma schools adopted GE and organized a training institute to prepare their teachers for it. Ferguson (2003, p. 488) reported the survey of almost all those who had taken the training and were using GE in their classroom: 78% of the 76 teachers reported substantial academic progress, improved student attitudes, and greatly reduced absenteeism, as well as improved job satisfaction for themselves. Only two respondents said they saw no progress in their students after adopting the method.

Model 2: Linguistic and Cultural Diversity/Building on Children's Lives and Experiences

The following examples of culturally responsive teaching incorporate content lessons in projects that engage children's interests and imaginations and promote healthy social and emotional as well as academic development. They are not incompatible with a structured phonics approach like Labov's, but they put phonics in the service of increasing children's engagement with the material, so **AQ: 12** they will improve their reading fluency (Piestrup, 1973). Fluent reading then exposes the child to much more academic language in the texts they read, thus providing more of the input needed to learn it, and so on. (Note that neither of the contemporary examples of this model report empirical support, but they both lean heavily on the findings of Piestrup, 1973, which inspired them, and for which there are significant results.)

Culturally sensitive teaching in elementary school.   In her book on responsive teaching, Meier (2008) showed how to help

children see themselves in the curriculum and develop the tools for learning. She cautioned teachers not to focus literacy lessons solely on decoding text. She showed how emerging readers, even in preschool, can be helped to interact meaningfully with texts that are read to them. She illustrated activities like making connections to one's own experience and to other texts, visualizing, or making inferences and predictions based on the texts. Such activities, she proposed, not only enhance children's reading comprehension but also develop their higher order thinking for all subjects.

Meier's (2008) teaching suggestions are based in large part on a study by Piestrup (1973), whose goal was to distill the characteristics of teachers who worked well with AAE-speaking children and contrast them with those who did not work well with them. Piestrup observed AAE-speaking children in 14 first-grade classrooms for a year and recorded their grades on schoolwide testing. From transcripts of classroom interactions, she focused on teachers' reactions in 104 episodes when a child's vocabulary, pronunciation, or style of speaking diverged from GAE. Eight of the 14 teachers were observed to interrupt a child's reading out loud to the point that the goal of the lesson was lost, as in the Delpit (1998) example in the Materials for Linguistically Informed Assessment and Instruction section. Piestrup contrasted the interfering style **AQ: 13** with one she called *Black artful* (although one does not have to be a Black teacher to use it). These teachers incorporated verbal styles prevalent in AAE-speaking communities into the classroom, and they engaged in linguistically diverse exchanges with their students. Crucially, like the GE program described earlier, the Black-artful teachers praised children's efforts continually and communicated explicitly their confidence that students were doing their best.

Analyses of academic progress grouped by teacher style and student dialect density (Piestrup, 1973, p. 163) showed that for classes with an emphasis on remediation of word forms, standardized reading scores were well below average at the end of the year. The use of nonstandard linguistic patterns also remained high. Average reading scores for children in Black-artful classrooms, at all levels of dialect density, were higher than scores for children with lower dialect density in classrooms with "interfering" teachers. Levels of AAE patterns declined in classes where the use of nonmainstream patterns was less of a focus.

Culturally sensitive teaching at middle school. A. M. Rickford (1999) advocated goals and methods similar to Meier's (2008) but with older children. She reported on a yearlong ethnographic study of a classroom where she integrated culturally diverse literature into the language arts program. As with Piestrup's (1973) Black-artful teacher, her goal was generating fluent engagement with course materials and a strong commitment to achievement. She did not rigidly match every story to the ethnicity of the reader, but she insured that each student had some point of personal connection with at least some of the materials. Indeed, students did prefer the ethnically diverse stories. Rickford also found that more complex stories created more interest and motivation than did simpler stories and that children did better on higher order inference questions than on literal questions. Her model classroom environment was focused on building teacher–student and student–student relationships within a culture of cooperation and achievement.

Model 3: Explicit Attention to Language Differences

As we saw in the Education for Professionals: Enhancing Linguistic and Cultural Sensitivity section, it was not a lower use of dialect features that was associated with greater literacy achievement. Rather, it was children's awareness that use of dialect needed to respond to context (Connor & Craig, 2006; N. P. Terry & Scarborough, 2011). Therefore, those researchers recommended programs, like the ones in the next sections, that explicitly teach students about nonmainstream varieties using "metalinguistic" techniques. *Meta* is the Greek word for "beyond," so for metaskills, one moves outside the performance of the skill in question and looks back at it as an object of study itself. For "meta"-language, it is the transition from using sentences to talk about the world to using them to talk about words and other sentences. Similarly, "metacultural" awareness requires stepping out of one's own culture and examining it from an outside perspective.

The Academic English Mastery Program (AEMP). One program based on metalinguistic knowledge is the Academic English Mastery Program (AEMP; LeMoine, 2001). The language arts curriculum at AEMP elementary schools adopted methodologies from linguistics and anthropology, especially contrastive analysis, and focused in detail on points of difference between AAE and GAE and their patterns of use. Students were trained to "step away" from the act of speaking so they could get perspective on their two codes and could reflect on language forms and structures explicitly. Then they were given practice in going between their two language varieties. They were not pushed to monitor their speaking *while* they were speaking, which according to Delpit (1998, p. 18) typically ends in silence. Rather, they worked from texts that they or others had made and described and contrasted the language in them. The students determined for themselves which code they considered most appropriate for different contexts.

Effectiveness of the approach was shown in an internal evaluation conducted by their Los Angeles school district (Maddahian **AQ: 14** & Sandamela, 2000). A pretest/posttest design compared average gains on district writing and speaking tests for 200 students, 10 each at 16 AEMP schools and four matched control schools. Pretests at the start of the school year confirmed that the two samples were equivalent on the writing and speaking measures. By posttest at the end of the school year, the AEMP group had made significantly greater gains than the control group on the writing measure ($p < .001$), although there was a ceiling effect on the speaking measure. Significant correlations were also found between test scores and measures of linguistic awareness and literacy strategies recorded in the classrooms from an observation protocol (p. 18).

Other programs on a metalinguistic model. There have been a variety of related programs that incorporate metalearning about language in what Wheeler and Swords (2010), following the AEMP, called the "contrastive analysis and code-switching approach." Wolfram's (1999) program, for example, equipped mid- **AQ: 15** dle school students to be field linguists whose task was to use inquiry learning to discover regularities and interrelationships in their own code and in mainstream language patterns. Another program reported in Heath (1983) made elementary school students into "language detectives" to discover and describe **AQ: 16** differences in how people talked. Wheeler (2006) and Meier (2008) showed that even very young children could be helped to

code-switch, for example, with a story like *Flossie and the Fox* (McKissack, 1986), where each main character exemplified a different language variety. Children were able to role-play in a GAE or AAE variety, changing between the characters. These metalinguistic programs typically enlisted the students in making charts of "what Flossie would say" and "what the Fox would say," or, in terms reported by one of Mallinson et al.'s (2011, p. 448) workshop participants, "school English" and "the way we talk in Baltimore." With these lists, students could use their own materials to judge which forms to use, and they learned to make the observations for themselves.

Wheeler and Swords (2010, pp. 252–253) report on five studies that tested the effectiveness of the contrastive analysis and code-switching approach in classrooms from elementary school to college. The studies matched code-switching classrooms with comparable classrooms using "traditional" pedagogies, like those illustrated by Delpit (1998) earlier. The studies calculated a difference score by comparing the frequency of AAE and GAE patterns from pre- and posttests at the beginning and end of a school year. To the extent possible, the only difference between experimental classes and controls was the teaching method relative to when and how children used AAE. The code-switching approach showed increases between 32% and 60% in usage of mainstream patterns compared with traditional controls, whose reported "gains" were between –2% and 10%. A study of Swords' own class compared progress on year-end testing for No Child Left Behind. The percentage of students scoring as proficient or above in writing went from 40% before the code-switching program was instituted to 70% after just 1 year and to 100% after 4 years of using it (Wheeler & Swords, 2010).

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Concluding Remarks

We have proposed that teachers and students need both knowledge and awareness to keep the use of AAE from being an obstacle to academic and social achievement. We emphasized knowledge about AAE as a linguistic system and how it can be used as a foundation for learning the curriculum and learning standard English. We focused on three types of awareness: (1) linguistic awareness of the regularity and complexity in the AAE linguistic system, (2) metalinguistic awareness of how the AAE and GAE linguistic systems are the same and how they differ, and (3) metacultural awareness of how one's cultural lens can distort judgments about another's culture and how those judgments can have a measurable impact on children's academic performance.

We presented recommended teaching programs for AAE speakers in which transition to the mainstream dialect is a by-product of engaging and supportive teaching, not the sole focus of classroom activities. Multicultural materials in the classrooms permit students of all backgrounds to feel represented, and other specific materials like Labov's literacy curriculum and dialect-sensitive assessment instruments like the DELV-NR explicitly distinguish difference from disorder. In the programs recommended here, teachers' energies are focused on promoting higher order thinking and inquiry learning techniques that translate into higher test scores without "teaching to the test." As recommended by the APA (2002) multicultural guidelines, teachers and other professionals examine their own automatic subconscious attitudes about AAE and its

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speakers and move away from a mind-set of deficiency toward one of excellence.

But are appropriate materials and sensitive professionals sufficient? In preliminary validity testing of his new reading programs, Labov (2004) encountered such deficient schools that consistent application of *any* curriculum (as opposed to no curriculum) made greater pre- to posttest gains than did those that could be attributed to differences between his dialect-sensitive curriculum and control programs. In the face of an appalling lack of basic necessities such as paper, books, and a seat for every child, poverty continues to contribute largely to the underperformance of AAE speakers in the current educational environment (Hilliard, 2003; N. P. Terry, Connor, Thompson-Tate, & Love, 2010), and so a comprehensive response to promote achievement in language minority children needs to work to relieve the burden of poverty that falls disproportionately on their shoulders (Labov, 2010).

Language is only one piece of the puzzle, but we maintain that it is an important piece. Language provides teachers the means to build awareness, which is a key to creating academic progress for language minority speakers. Through language, children gain access to reading materials that greatly increase their exposure to the mainstream dialect. Through understanding and appreciating the role of language diversity, one finds the motive and the means to remove barriers to achievement so speakers of nonmainstream varieties can perform at their potential.

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