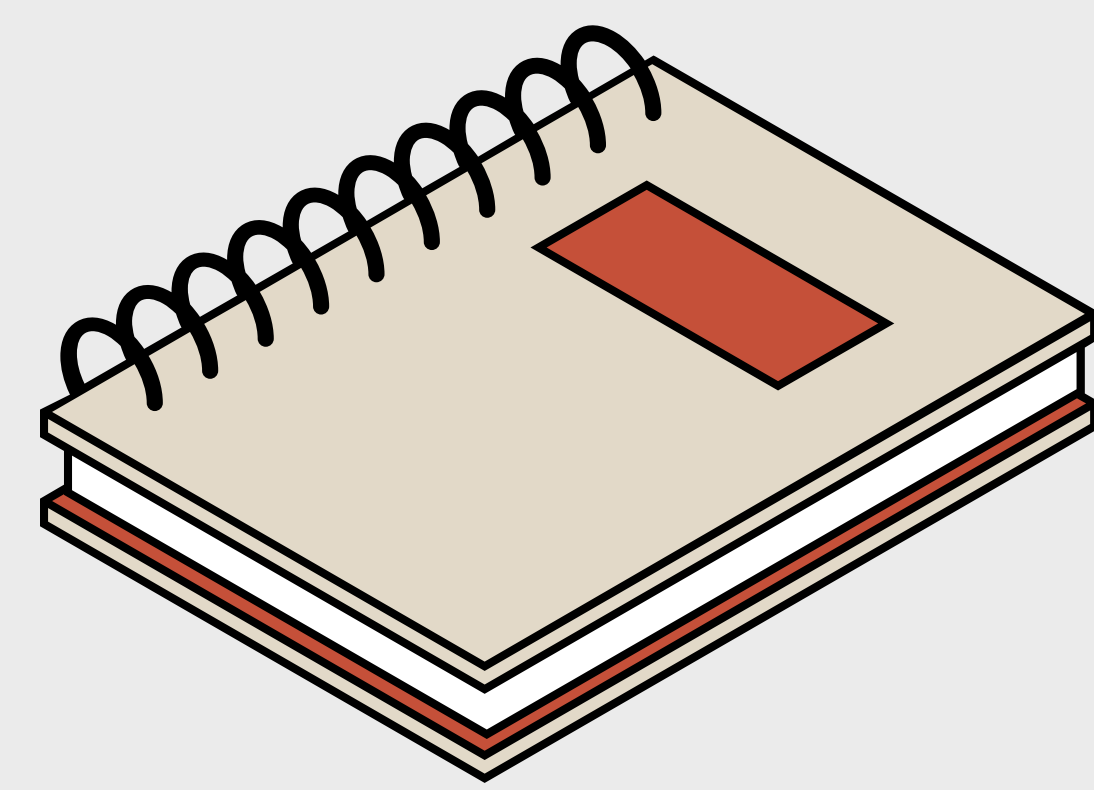


SUPPORTING AND UPLIFTING AAVE IN WRITING



AFRICAN AMERICAN VERNACULAR ENGLISH (AAVE) OR BLACK ENGLISH

- Likely formed through creolization or a combining of dialects, debates over its origins
- Not a dialect, but a language with a distinct set of grammar rules
- Five verb tenses: “I been seen that movie” and “I seen that movie” mean two different things.
- Use of double negatives
- Often dismissed in academia as “broken English”
- Verb “to be” is often dropped
- Can be code-meshed with SAE for a more expansive method of communication (translingual approach)
- Nuanced and expressive in ways that SAE is not

STANDARD AMERICAN ENGLISH (SAE)

- Historically, it is the language of the dominant culture—that is, those who hold privilege in society and/or academia
- Typically representative of White middle and upper class citizens
- Deemed “proper English” by many and upheld as the standard in most academic spaces today

OUR JOB

- Focus on the writer, not just the writing
- Accept and welcome diverse identities
- Offer students tools to succeed, including support and open-mindedness
- Encourage peers and faculty members to educate themselves on linguistic justice
- Restorative Justice: Lean into discomfort

IMPLEMENTATION IN THE WRITING CENTER

What we do:

- Inclusive literature in TPW including excerpts by April Baker-Bell
- Slide in classroom presentations affirming inclusivity of ESL and other LEP students
- International Café and Writer’s Café
- Insightful discussions and open dialogue at biweekly staff meetings

What we could do:

- Language Statement on the website
- Discussion(s) centered on AAVE, dismantling implicit bias, ways to navigate its use and discouragement from professors
- Professional development workshops
- Give students examples of texts and writers that utilize code-meshing or other non-traditional English writing

Read my paper:



Contact me:

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IMPACTS

- Some students that use AAVE participate less in class because “the teacher will get confused” (NY Times)
- Validating identity boosts confidence and self-esteem, whereas putting down language leads to negative self image
- Studying both SAE and AAVE improves correct use of both languages in writing (Rickford)

“IT IS TERRIBLE TO THINK THAT A CHILD WITH FIVE DIFFERENT PRESENT TENSES COMES TO SCHOOL TO BE FACED WITH BOOKS THAT ARE LESS THAN HIS OWN LANGUAGE. AND THEN TO BE TOLD THINGS ABOUT HIS LANGUAGE, WHICH IS HIM, THAT ARE SOMETIMES PERMANENTLY DAMAGING.”

--TONI MORRISON

