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An Intersection of Theory and Practice: Accepting the Language a Child Brings into the Classroom

“The intimate and interwoven nature of language and language use is also entangled in beliefs, values, and perceptions held by individual stakeholders” (Isenbarger 125).

“To reject a person’s language can only feel as if we are rejecting him” (47).

These quotes can be used to show why teachers and other students should be aware of other languages in the classroom. This is because language is part of a culture, and it helps them define who they are. By having awareness, the students will have more of a confidence with them and be able to learn better in the classroom.

“Neither she nor her husband were happy with the fact that the English in Steve’s written work was not SAE. They were very concerned about the grammar he was using in his pieces and wanted me to work with him on it” (Isenbarger 127).

This could go with the part of the prompt that says that teachers need to teach their students SAE, even though they are aware of AAE and other languages in the classroom. This teacher in the article thought that she was helping her student by not correcting his grammatical errors and took them as part of his culture. However, she later found out that the parents weren’t happy about this, and that they knew that for the child to excel well in his future he need to be able to write in SAE.

“Although all languages should be accepted and considered equal, the reality is that SAE is what is expected by society. For example, would my principal agree that this was good teaching? How about the parents who read what my students wrote—would they understand why I was allowing what appeared to be less-than-perfection? Would my teaching methods be challenged and questioned”(Isenbarger Willis 127)? This quote can be used in your essay to go with the argument that all students should leave school being able to recognize and communicate in SAE. In society this is the type of English that executives will look for. This will go along with the accomplishment of goal A because they are showing that students should leave school knowing how to write and affectively communicate in Standard American English. This quote can also work for the accomplishment of goal C because it also shows how the teacher was allowing for her students to write in their own dialects, however parents are taking that as letting their children’s errors pass, when she was just allowing her students to freely express themselves.

“From Steve’s parents’ perspective, though, it appeared that I might have inadvertently lowered my expectations and accepted less than he was able to do (and certainly less than his parents wished for him) by not requiring him to use SAE” (Isenbarger Willis 128). This is an example of a parent’s commentary about over looked grammatical mistakes due to language variations.
“Children have the right to their own language, their own culture. We must fight cultural hegemony and fight the system by insisting that children be allowed to express themselves in their own language style. It is not they, the children, who must change, but the schools (p. 291)” (Isenbarger Willis 128). This quote is good because it too goes with the accomplishment of the Grammar Alive goals because it shows that children in the classroom should be able to use their own languages and dialects and schools should change and except that children come from different cultures and they should be accepted in the classroom. (Maybe once the schools change so will corporate America.)

“1) Children will need Academic English for job applications, at the doctor’s office, and in other situations in order to present themselves well; 2) It is most definitely not a rejection of culture to reject Black Standard English; 3) Ebonics is a barrier to African Americans (in her opinion): “Teach them proper English”; 4) Poor speaking can go back generations in the black community. Have ESL classes for Ebonics speakers if need be.” This part of the article was great because it talks about reasons why SAE should be taught to children. There are reasons besides just speaking correctly that fall into the teaching of SAE. If a child home dialect is AAE it s ok to speak that way at home and with their friends, however when it comes to getting a job or making a professional speech, students need to know how to speak in the SAE dialect.

Rickford and Rickford (2000) write that many African Americans speak a language that is distinctive, whether it is labeled African American English, African American Vernacular English, Black English, Black Vernacular English, or Ebonics, and “are fluent speakers of Standard English” (p. 1). (7)

This quote explains that it is possible to be able to be fluent in Standard English and also in your own form of AAE etc. No matter what the label of the AAE is, being fluent in both is possible and common.

To deny students the opportunity to express themselves freely, openly, honestly is ill-conceived policy and practice. (7)

This is a strong quote because it’s basically what our essay is about. It’s stating that all students should be able to express themselves and live as they feel needed.

All students should have opportunities in school to experience such peace when reading and writing in their own language. (7)

Basically this quote is stating that if students feel that they are more comfortable in experiencing things in their life in a specific language, whatever that may be, then they should be able to do so.

1) all students have the right to use their own language, a right that is not limited to non- English speakers but one that extends to students who speak varieties of English; 2) teachers should be informed about the history of language use in schools and knowledgeable about the varieties of English; 3) classrooms should offer opportunities for students to use multiple forms of English for oral and written purposes; and 4) SAE and SWE are forms of English that are associated with power and domination, but are not superior.

These are basically the rules that are essay is about. This quote states that students should be able to use their own language, which they should know about their history of language, classrooms should also have oral and written purposes, and lastly that standard forms are powerful but not dominating.
AAE plays “an essential role in African American life and culture, and by extension, in American life and culture.”

This is basically stating that everyone who lives in America is American; therefore AAE is a part of life and culture here in America. I think this is important because it says it incases everything together.