

Drawn from a larger study of African American children's writing that provided nine urban elementary teachers with sociolinguistic training and the opportunity to implement dialect-based language arts lessons, this research illustrates that classroom interventions can make a measurable impact on teachers in a relatively short period of time. Over the course of ten weeks, partner teachers' self-reported attitudes toward AAVE grew significantly more positive: the median score on the Language Attitude Scale developed by Taylor (1973) rose from 57 to 70, with individuals gaining as much as 22 points on the 110-point instrument. In this paper, I draw on interviews with teachers and classroom observations to describe the process by which such changes emerged. Teachers' comments and critical teaching incidents illuminate several specific intervention strategies that supported teachers' growth. These included:

- Connecting the 'linguistic agenda' of fostering greater respect for linguistic diversity to existing concerns in the schools such as writing attitudes and achievement.
- Capitalizing on the educative potential of curricular materials; that is, taking advantage of the fact that teachers learn what they have to teach.
- Finding ways to make the message of linguistic equality less threatening--without compromising its central insights.

The implementation of these strategies in real classrooms with real teachers vivifies and validates the wisdom of previous scholarly recommendations regarding the response to sociolinguistic diversity in the classroom. By taking the difficult step of translating theory into practice, this research builds on the long and respected tradition of sociolinguistic concern with supporting greater educational achievement for speakers of AAVE and other vernaculars.