

New Resource for Educators

Language Differences and Special Education

Your Involvement Needed!

We created a website called the *Language Differences Media Lab* to host multimedia resources to promote teacher learning and enhance the quality of education offered to African American English (AAE) speakers and English Language Learners (ELLs). A key focus is to provide teachers with resources that enhance ELLs' and AAE speakers' learning. This media lab is an innovative tool for professional learning activities with groups of practitioners in formal short-term events or in long-term efforts of professional learning communities. Visitors to this website are able to explore multimedia tools to understand how student's linguistic and cultural practices can be used as assets and resources to support student learning. In addition, visitors are able to post, watch, and comment on multimedia artifacts about best practices for ELLs and speakers of AAE. The Language Differences Media Lab, in this way, generates ongoing conversations about how to best serve these populations. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs¹, this website will be a living archive of current practices.

What do we need?

We need you to submit examples of best practices to educate students who are (1) struggling academically and/or behaviorally, or students who are gifted and (2) use AAE or are ELLs. Selected submissions will be featured on the *Language Differences Media Lab* that offers resources for practitioners working with speakers of AAE and/or ELLs. The selected examples will be clearly attributed to their authors on the website. To submit a media artifact and check our site, please visit us at <http://equityallianceatasu.org/ell>

Who are the Target Student Groups?

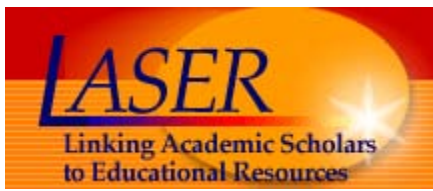
English Language Learners: an English language learner is a student whose home language is other than English and who is in the process of learning English.²

African American English Speakers: students who engage partially or fully in a set of communication patterns and practices, which have linguistic features that make AAE a language in its own right, distinguishing it from "Standard English."³

¹ NCCREST, and LASER have collaborated in this project with the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), and the University of South Florida.

² Ovando, C. J., Collier, V. P., & Combs, M. C. (2003). *Bilingual & ESL classrooms: Teaching in multicultural contexts*. New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

³ African American language derives from the interaction of Niger-Congo and/or Creole languages and European American English. Smitherman, G. (2000). *Talking the talk: Language culture, and education in African America*. New York: Routledge. We acknowledge that the term "Standard English" is problematic because it suggests that European American English is the normative language, which is not the case in many schools. However, we use this term because it is the most commonly used.



What can you submit and what are the selection criteria?

We need you to submit examples of best practices that you have used or are currently using to serve students who are (1) struggling academically or behaviorally, or gifted students and (2) use AAE or are ELLs. You will be asked to identify the domain in which your submission fits best (see domain description above). **We are particularly interested in video and audio clips that illustrate specific examples of context-rich learning environments that scaffold language learning and support the development of multi-lingual proficiencies.**

The content in each of these domains will include a variety of resources and types of evidence such as student work samples, curriculum samples, video clips of lesson segments, administrator, teacher, student, and parent interviews, assessment tools and rubrics, lesson plans, teaching strategies, behavioral support techniques, teacher written or oral reflections about the issues addressed in the domains, or other relevant practices.

These resources can be related to various topics germane to the education of ELLs and speakers of AAE such as multi-tiered instruction, social relationships, discipline referrals, family communication, parent-teacher conferences, collaboration among education professionals, special education assessment, identification, placement, and IEP development. The website will be full of detailed information to improve the learning experiences of ELLs and AAE speakers and the knowledge and skills of teachers and other practitioners.

Submissions will be considered for publication on the site by a team of practitioners and researchers. Please be aware that not all submissions will be included in the website. The decision to include a practice in the website will be based on several criteria. Specifically, a practice **must** fulfill the following four criteria:

Target Student Groups: Focus on improving outcomes for students who are ELL and/or AAE speakers. The examples may also target students that may no longer be considered ELLs by the school but still have limited English language skills.

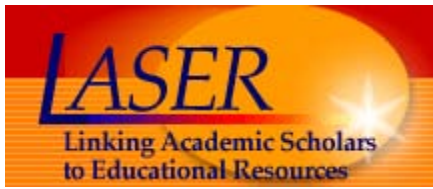
Settings: Submissions should provide examples of practices used on or off school campuses as well as during the school day or in after-school programs.

Evidence-based: The practice should be supported by clear outcome evidence. For example, you may submit documentation of students' work before using the target practice, a video clip of the practice implementation, and student work after the target practice. Alternatively, charts with ratings of student performance in tasks or assessment results covering a period of time to reflect the impact of the practices are other examples of evidence.

Replicability: The practice has a clear structure and/or procedures that would allow other practitioners to use it in their schools. The submitted examples must describe details about the practice such as the duration, directions, curriculum materials, procedures, sequences, and supplemental resources.

Other Desirable (though not required) Features of Practices

Inclusivity: Practices demonstrate results with learners with a variety of abilities, languages, gender, and/or grade levels.



Multiple Audiences: Your submission should be conscious of audience, targeting a variety of school professionals. For example, a practice that is relevant and clear not just for teachers, but also for principals and literacy coaches.

To submit an artifact please visit our website at www.equityallianceatasu.org/ell

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