

Simple Ways to Include Inclusive Grammar in Your Lesson Plans



6-8

To help develop your own lessons and build upon topics discussing linguistic inclusivity and dialect diversity check out this template for research and ideas!

Topic

Speech, Writing, and Identity

Research

“The Re-Education of Neisha-Anne S Green: A Close Look at the Damaging Effects of “A Standard Approach,” the Benefits of Code-Meshing, and the Role Allies Play in this Work”
[Neisha-Anne S. Green - The Re-Education of Neisha-Anne S Green A Close L.pdf](#)

- Neisha-Anne S Green describes her experience with code-meshing and the effects of when she does not engage in the practice. Code meshing allows her “to be able to self-consciously and un-self-consciously blend (her) own accent, dialect, and linguistic patterns as they are influenced by a host of folks, environments, and media” (Green 2006). Engaging in code meshing allows the author to retain her identity in how she communicates with all people. When she does not she compares the experience to physical symptoms such as dry mouth from being unsure what voice or accent will come out when she begins to speak. Ultimately, she concludes that “language and identity are directly connected and rather intertwined” (Green 2006).

Classroom Implementation

Grammar Detectives:
Invite students to notice patterns in their own writing and in authentic, representative literature (check out the booklist)

- Provide students with a one page piece of writing or have students write a short story about their identity
- Ask students to circle all the verbs
- Invite students to share patterns they see throughout the sentences
- Continue this process by identifying different grammatical constructions (eg. *nouns, direct objects, apostrophes, adjectives*)
- Ask students how these patterns or word choices can reflect a person's identity

Grammar in Communities:
Students create projects that explore their neighborhoods and communities

- Have students write a greeting that they would say to a member in their community
- Students share their greeting with the teacher and class
- Students then write three questions that they would like to ask their chosen community member about themselves (eg. *where did you grow up, what was your favorite subject in school, what language(s) do you speak or have learned*)
- Have students record their conversation and reflection or present on their experience



Topic

Speech, Writing, and Identity

Research

Lisa Delpit's “The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children”
[Lisa D. Delpit - 1988 - The Silenced Dialogue Power and Pedagogy in Educa.pdf](#)

- Delpit identifies five aspects of power: “issues of power are enacted in classrooms, there are codes or rules for participating in power, the rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power, if you are not already a participant in the culture of power being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier, and those with power are frequently least aware or least willing to acknowledge its existence whereas those with less power are often most aware of its existence”. This article provides insight into the common phrases and perspectives of middle class teachers and how because of alternative worldviews, people of color do not engage in the same practices, thus influencing the success of students of color in the classroom. Through examples and scenarios, this article discusses code switching, moralization of language, and contrastive analysis from the perspective of Black and White students and teachers.

Classroom Implementation

Linguistic Autobiography:
Students write their own autobiography about how they learned to write and how they write

- Invite students to write their autobiography as entries in a journal
- Provide students with prompts
 - Reflect on a time when your writing was graded and it made you feel positively or negatively
 - Write about how you learned how to write and what your experience was like
 - Write about who you feel most comfortable with reading your writing and in what setting you feel most comfortable writing



Topic

Code Switching and Code Meshing

Research

“I'll speak in proper slang: language ideologies in a daily editing activity”
[Godley et al. - 2007 - “I'll speak in proper slang” Language ideologies.pdf](#)

- A common practice among English educators is “daily oral language,” or “daily language practice.” These quick daily editing activities are used as tools to sharpen student editing skills and aide in grammar practice. This research study evaluates the prevalence of linguistic discrimination through these types of daily language practice. This source is a classroom account of how grammar practice praises certain dialects (Standard Written English) and diminishes other dialects (such as African American English). This source provides an interesting first-hand account of the inside perspective of a grammar classroom (Godley et. al, 2007).

“We been knowin’: toward an antiracist language and literacy education”
[Baker-Bell article.pdf](#)

- Baker-Bell challenges the position of classroom teachers and the inherent support of linguistic discrimination and anti-black linguistic education. This piece provides several tangible and concrete steps to combat the type of linguistic discrimination and racism that we've been seeing in classrooms for years. The issue of avoiding black language in the classroom and instead continuing to force the white language narrative in the classroom as a source of linguistic superiority. This piece is essential in challenging educators as to why they have resisted the implementation of culturally responsive and responsible instruction that includes not only linguistic diversity, but also dismantles the systems of power that are inherently upheld in every classroom that does not overtly call out the presence of power.

Classroom Implementation

What Do You Say Where?
Introduce students to the idea that people speak in different ways (in dialects) often when they are in different settings and talking to different people

- Have students draw pictures of formal versus informal places and audiences
- Have students share what they drew to create a class list of different places people have conversations with each other (Eg. *classroom, at the dinner table, at the library*)
- Add to the list the people they usually talk to in these places
- Have a discussion about how some people have to change the way they talk depending on where they are and who they are talking to whereas for other people the way they talk at home and at school is the same (consider looking at our lesson plan for Grades 6-8 regarding code switching)



Topic

The Power of Standard English

Research

[Anna Babel's TED Talk “Who counts as a speaker of a language?”](#)

- Social categories, languages, and people's assumptions impact the lives of multilingual students. If people are not aware of their biases related to language and social categories, multilingual students will continue to be judged on their ability to use Standard English and are more likely to be racially profiled. This has implications in areas such as college admissions and job interviews (Babel, 2020).

[Patricia Ryan's TED Talk “Don't insist on English!”](#)

- English classes and teachers have become gatekeepers to higher education and the advancement of knowledge. When we equate intelligence with English we diminish the possibility of new ideas because each language possesses the ability to express concepts differently. The purpose is not to discourage people from speaking English, but from emphasizing it at the expense of other languages (Ryan, 2011).

Alison Sealey's “Teaching Primary School Children about the English Language: A Critique of Current Policy Documents”
[Sealey - 1999 - Teaching Primary School Children about the English.pdf](#)

- Despite policy's attempts to institute Standard English as the main dialect to be taught and used in schools, the social and political meanings that are attached to each dialectal meaning that are attached to each dialect will win. The article questions the interactions, power, and social resources found in the texts students are presented and the language they are taught to use when writing or writing for an audience (Sealey, 1999).

Classroom Implementation

Let's Talk
Engage students in a conversation about the concept of language and words having power

- In pairs have students share a time when someone judged them based on what they said
- Have students find a passage with dialogue from a book and reflect on their own judgments and evaluations of the character based on the way the character speaks
- Discuss the language we use determines how other people view us
 - What aspects of your identity are shown through the way you speak? (Eg. *think about how (where you live might give you an accent or you might say pop while others say soda)*)
 - What are the benefits of having different dialects?