ASSISTING CREOLE-ENGLISH AND NON-STANDARD DIALECT SPEAKING STUDENTS IN LEARNING STANDARD ENGLISH

A Plan B Paper

Presented to the

University of Wisconsin-River Falls

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of TESOL

by

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February, 2010
Students in Hawaii often find themselves in baffling situations at school. They are constantly corrected in their speech, and often stereotyped as apathetic or unintelligent. Their contributions to class are disregarded because of the way they phrase their comments. Newspapers publish letters to the editor deriding their language, saying it “should become a thing of the past….There are some things that deserve to die” (Honolulu Advertiser 9/4/02, qtd. in Siegel Creoles and Minority Dialects in Education: An Update 66). The public disdains these students’ languages because they don’t understand them. These students, like their families, speak Hawaii Creole English (HCE). People all over the world speak Creole Languages similar to HCE, not only linguistically, but also in terms of negative public perception.

English Creole Languages are derived from English and share a majority of their vocabulary with English. However, the grammar and pronunciation can be very different and can make Standard English and Creole Englishes mutually unintelligible. English Creoles are widely spoken throughout the world, including Central America (Belize), the Caribbean (Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and more), Africa (Sierra Leone and Liberia), and Australia. English Creoles are also spoken in the United States, for example: Village English, spoken by Native communities in Alaska (Wong), the Gullah language spoken in South Carolina and Georgia, and Hawaii Creole English. The people who speak Creole Languages share many things in common with people that speak African American Vernacular Dialect (AAVE), including linguistic features as well as social, economical, and educational similarities.

For hundreds of years, people have looked at Creole speakers as having less value than Standard Language speakers. “Creoles and creolized varieties of English are associated with low ethnic, social, political, and economic status” (Nero ESL or ESD? 7). People have believed that the people who spoke such languages were inferior to those that spoke Standard English. More
recently, people believe that it is Creole Languages which are actually causing poverty and low educational-success rates. However, there is a vocal minority of people who are changing attitudes for the better. More people are celebrating their native Creole language as rich in diversity and cultural history. A small percentage of schools are now embracing Creole languages rather than trying to stamp them out.

There is a great divide between the public’s opinion of Creole languages and linguists’ opinion of Creole languages. If the majority of the public were to hear a Creole language, they might think, uneducated or broken. They may even believe the following: “Pidgin ranks right up there with Ebonics. It’s broken English. And when something is broken, you fix it” (Honolulu Star-Bulletin 12/10/99 qtd. in Siegel Creoles and Minority Dialects in Education: An Update 66). However, when linguists hear a Creole language they may think different or complex. To linguists, all languages are equally complex and equally valid. They believe that a Creole is a language, and because no language is superior to any other, an English-Creole is not something that should “die” or be “fixed.”

Only in the past two or three decades have Creole studies flourished, and the information gathered from these studies can help us better understand and respect various Creoles around the world. These studies also give society a better understanding of how to educate Creole-speaking students while facilitating their acquisition of Standard English. Almost everywhere that English-based Creoles are spoken, it benefits the people to be bidialectical or bilingual in both their native Creole and Standard English.

There are now more Creole Speaking students in the USA than ever, and educators need to be prepared to teach in this unique educational situation. These students should not be placed
in ESL classrooms, nor should they be placed in mainstream English classrooms, as both of these choices are disadvantageous for the student. I propose that a specified curriculum must be used in order to help these Creole-speaking students retain pride in their native language while they acquire Standard English and begin to break down the negative stereotypes surrounding their language.

In this paper I will more fully explain the history of Creole languages, describing in detail the most common Caribbean English Creole Language, Jamaican Creole, in addition to describing the various Creole Languages spoken in the United States. I will also explain the educational system in both Jamaica and the United States as pertaining to Creole English speakers. Next, I will illustrate the differences between Standard English and Creole Englishes while highlighting the similarities between African American Vernacular English and Creole English. I will clarify AAVE’s relevance to this study of “Assisting Creole-English and Non-Standard Dialect Speaking Students in Learning Standard English.” Then I will discuss more specifically the number of students who speak non-standard dialects of English or English Creoles, and the inadequate education these students receive. Finally, I will address encouraging changes in education and helpful teaching trends which should be shared and applied in other instructional settings.
Creole Languages

A pidgin is often formed when two or more cultures whose members don’t speak the same language come into contact with each other. A pidgin is a type of communication created so that those different communities can converse. This has happened throughout the world and throughout history, most often for purposes of trade. More specifically, the slave trade in the past 500 years has greatly increased the number of pidgins throughout the world. The slaves needed to communicate with the slave owners and traders, and so the numbers of pidgins greatly increased as people from many different cultures were forced into slavery throughout the world. A pidgin is a simplified version of a language, often taking vocabulary from the socioeconomically dominant language, but retaining the pronunciation and syntax from the non-dominant culture’s language or languages. Pidgins are not fully developed languages; they have a limited vocabulary, they may have a limited ability to express complex or abstract thoughts, and most importantly, they have no native speakers.

However, when children grow up in an environment where a pidgin is spoken, they begin speaking a form of the pidgin as a first language (Singh 7). This change, from being a learned second language, to an acquired first language transforms the pidgin. This transformation creates a Creole. The Creole language is now equal to any other language in complexity, expression of meaning, grammatical rules, expansive vocabulary and any other method of differentiating what constitutes a language.

Exactly how and why a pidgin changes into a Creole language is currently under debate. Some linguists believe that a language acquisition component of the brain is at play. This part of the mind assists humans not only in acquiring language as toddlers and children, but would also
assist children in formulating the necessary grammatical rules to convert a pidgin language into a Creole language. The theory is that the children use the language acquisition component of their mind to instinctively alter, expand, and develop the pidgin into a Creole. Other linguists believe that Creole creation is the result of natural language adaptation: that languages naturally develop to become more stable over time. However, while linguists can’t agree as to how Creoles are created, they do not contest the validity of Creole languages.

A Creole language can be made from any combination of languages. The most common base languages are English, French, and Portuguese (Singh xii), no doubt because of these countries’ strength during the conquest of “new worlds” and the slave trade. Haiti, for example, has two official languages: French and Haitian Creole. Haitian Creole has French as a lexical base with assorted other languages combining with it to produce the Creole language. Although French and Haitian Creole have many similarities, and draw largely from the same vocabulary, the people of Haiti make a clear distinction between the two languages. The fact that both languages have dictionaries and both languages have been designated as official languages is an important milestone for Creole-speakers everywhere in substantiating the legitimacy of Creoles as languages.

In this paper I will concentrate on students who speak English-based Creoles. An English-based Creole draws its vocabulary heavily from English, yet may have multiple other languages influencing it. There are English-based Creoles spoken throughout the world. They are spoken by people in African nations such as Cameroon, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria. In Australia, many aboriginal Australians speak Australian Kriol. In Central America, countries such as Belize, Panama, and Nicaragua have populations who speak English-based Creoles. In this paper I will focus on the Creoles most largely represented in the United States educational
systems. Therefore my emphasis will be on Caribbean Creole English (CCE), (focusing mainly on Jamaican Creole English), and Hawaii Creole English (HCE). I will also discuss the many similarities which can be drawn between these Creoles and African American Vernacular English (AAVE), also called Black English.

**Jamaican Creole English**

The largest population of CCE speaking students in the United States has emigrated from Jamaica. Jamaican Creole English (JC) was created by abducted African slaves who were forced to work in Jamaica. Their various West African languages blended with the different dialects of English from the United Kingdom (Bryan, *Jamaican Creole* 642). As a result, Jamaican English has strong similarities to English and West African languages. These similarities to African languages include syntactic (grammatical), phonological (pronunciation), and lexical (vocabulary) similarities. While most of the original African languages very quickly fell out of use in Jamaica, Twi was one West African language which managed to survive longer than the others. Because the Twi language subsisted alongside English for some time, some characteristics of the Twi language can be found in Jamaican Creole. For example, in the Twi language, it is acceptable to list many verbs alongside each other, *carry go bring come* (Bryan, *Jamaican Creole* 645). In Standard English (SE) this manner of listing multiple verbs is unacceptable, but JC allows this particular grammatical usage. The serial verbs might be used in a JC sentence such as, *He go run bring flowers*. In SE this would be phrased, *He goes running to bring the flowers*. Another example is the phonetic rule from Twi
which requires that a vowel be inserted between consonant clusters which end in nasal consonants (Bryan, *Jamaican Creole* 644). A consonant cluster is two or more consonants in a word without a vowel between them. English is full of these clusters, as in the words, *SPLatter, Broken, coMPuter*, and so forth. Nasal consonants in English are \(/n/, /\text{ŋ}/\) and \(/m/\) (\(/\text{ŋ}/\) is the -ng sound in words like *sing* or *reading*). In Jamaican Creole words such as *snake* or *small* must be pronounced with a vowel between the initial consonant sound and the nasal sound following it, creating *sinake* and *sumall* (Bryan, *Jamaican Creole* 644).

Throughout the world non-standard dialects or languages have long been held in contempt. People in power (educational, governmental, occupational, etc) look down on Creole speakers and chastise their language as “broken” or “undeveloped.” It is important that the public becomes aware of the history and richness of Jamaican Creole so that speakers of JC are not subject to ridicule because of their language. Once people are aware of the reasons behind the differences between SE and JC, they are less likely to believe the non-standard variety is “wrong” or “bad English.”

Especially in education, students who speak Creole languages have faced significant obstacles. In Siegel’s article, “Creoles and Minority Dialects in Education: An Overview,” he quotes Edwards, who states that there is a “vicious circle of prejudice: teachers mistaking language problems of creole-speaking children for stupidity, then stereotyping, and eventually lowering expectations, leading to lower student performance and thus reinforcing the stereotype” (510). In the United States, this sort of prejudice is visible every day with regard to AAVE. People who speak AAVE are often stereotyped as less intelligent, less educated, poor, or lazy. With any effort, anyone who visits a
school in the United States can notice teachers constantly correcting students who speak AAVE and berating them for speaking “incorrectly.”

Although public perception of Creoles throughout the world is one of dismissal and contempt, that perception is beginning to change, not only due to Creole speakers’ cultural pride, but also because of an increase in linguistic studies on Creole Languages. Godley et. al. argues that, “Scientific research on language demonstrates that standard dialects are not linguistically better by any objective measures; they are socially preferred simply because they are the language varieties used by those who are more powerful and affluent in a society” (30). The black slaves in Jamaica were clearly lower-class citizens at the time of JC creation, and their language, though linguistically equal, was scorned because of their social standing. Though Jamaica outlawed slavery in 1834 and gained its independence from England in 1962, the social standings for Standard English and Jamaican Creole English were strongly instilled in people’s minds. This social bias against non-standard dialects and Creoles is prevalent today in the United States and the rest of the world as well.
The Education of English Creole Speakers in the United States

In a perfect educational system, all students would be able to achieve academic success regardless of their upbringing. Teachers in the United States would like to be able to tell their students that no matter who they are, no matter how poor or uneducated their parents and ancestors were, they can be anything they want to be. It is a sad fact, however, that “speakers who have inherited nonstandard varieties of plantation English continue to face special literacy barriers in schools, where Standard English proficiency correlates closely with academic success” (Bough 468). These barriers occur all over the world as well as in the United States.

It is regretful to note that this worldwide divide between Standard English speakers and Creole speakers is often a divide of race, education, and urban vs. rural living as well (Nero, Changing Faces 488). It is generally the case that people who speak a non-Standard language or dialect of any country have a harder time getting a good education and finding employment. In fact, even students who have been born and raised in the United States face significant challenges. “The vast majority of African American and Hawaiian students who lack Standard English proficiency have fared poorly in our schools, and, unfortunately, they continue to rank among the least capable readers and writers in the country” (Baugh 467). Baugh adds that Black and Hawaiian people are not the only ones to face discrimination based on their speech, but also people who speak the Appalachian dialect in the Eastern United States. “They too fall prey to misguided linguistic stereotypes that falsely equate their vernacular dialect with diminished intellectual prospects” (Baugh 467). These discrepancies in education can be greatly lessened if educators in the United States can help people to reduce discrimination
and understand non-standard dialects and languages better, as well as enable students to learn Standard English.

There are also numerous people suffering from discrimination who speak non-standard dialects living in Alaska. In Alaska, there are many native communities living in rural areas of the wilderness and they face many challenges, one of which is education. Teachers throughout Alaska and the rest of the United States often have inaccurate pictures of the children in “bush Alaska,” as it is called. People believe that these children have high levels of fetal alcohol syndrome or negligent parenting, which simply isn’t true (Fillmore 2). One of the reasons for negative stereotypes is that the children in these rural Alaskan villages speak what is called Village English. Village English was created in the 1820s when the Federal Government required all native Alaskan children to attend boarding schools. While at these boarding schools the native children were forbidden from speaking their indigenous languages. (This type of language extermination has also taken place throughout the continental 48 states.) The Alaskan children developed Village English at these boarding schools, “a dialect that gradually became the everyday language of native communities of Alaska” (Fillmore 1). Village English is still spoken today throughout Alaskan villages as the main language.

In rural Alaska, when a required high school exit exam was proposed, it was initially estimated that as many as 90% of students would not receive a high school diploma due to failing that exit exam (Fillmore 1). This is due in part to the language differences between Standard English used on the exams and the Village English spoken in those rural areas. It was not that the children were in any way less intelligent than other students. Fillmore concluded that the children were, “crackly bright” (2), and added
that while “their dialect of English is certainly different from Standard English, they were no less competent in expressing complex ideas…” (4). The exit exams have been mired in controversy since their inception. Initially set to begin in 2002, they were pushed back to 2004 after over half of the students failed the math portion of the test in 2000 (School Reform News Staff), and in 2007, a judge ruled that the exams were unfair and failing them could not keep students from earning diplomas (Exit Exam Update).

Almost 3,000 miles away in Hawaii, another Creole language developed 150 years ago which is also still in use today. Beginning in the 1850s, workers from various countries traveled to Hawaii to work on the plantations. Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese, and people from many other countries worked together with the Hawaiian people and with Caucasians living on the island (Siegel, Recent Evidence 53-54). Hawaii Creole English (HCE) developed in the same way JC and other Creoles did, evolving from a pidgin which was used by speakers of different languages to communicate. By 1910, children were speaking Hawaiian Creole English and ever since then, people in power have tried to stamp it out.

As recently as 1987 in Hawaii, the state school board voted to ban HCE from the classroom. The school board stated that Hawaii Creole English was “an ‘impediment to a sound education,’ a ‘demonstration of illiteracy,’ and a cause of learning disabilities” (Tamura 450). Due to a large public outcry, the vote was eventually overturned, but the fact that the board members originally unanimously voted to pass it is a telling glimpse into their attitudes toward the language of their students (Tamura 450). The HCE ban is one example of how leaders in education have disparaged students’ native languages, and by default, disparaged the rest of students’ culture, family and experiences.
Jamaican Educational System

The reputation of Jamaican Creole has risen significantly from what it was in the 60s. DeCamp, a speaker at the 1968 International Creole conference held in Jamaica argued that, “The creole is inseparably associated with poverty, ignorance, and lack of moral character” (qtd. in Bryan, Jamaican Creole 647). However, nowadays fewer people agree with DeCamp’s view. For example, in Jamaica the Creole is used, “on radio, television, in Parliament, and in church” (Bryan, Language and Literacy 89). Evidenced by its use in government offices, religion, and in all areas of life, one can see that the respectability of JC has increased significantly. The Jamaican school system supports this recent rise in cultural pride by using Caribbean stories, proverbs and dialect poetry in the curriculum (Bryan, Jamaican Creole 653).

In 2001, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Jamaica began to use “transitional bilingualism” in the elementary years of schooling (Bryan et al.). Although Standard English is still the preferred method of instruction and expression with the students, this is beginning to change. Whereas in the past, teachers often forbade students from speaking their native Creole language, instead constantly correcting their students and requiring standard English, now teachers are encouraged to use any language at their disposal to help students learn. When students are not only allowed to use whichever language they need to express themselves, but the teacher is also using both Standard English and Jamaican English, then students will learn more easily how to appropriately change from one language to another depending on the situation. This capability to switch from one language to another depending on the changing social environments is called code-switching and is an important skill for bilingual or bidialectical people to
In order to build this ability to code-switch, students must be able to comfortably and fluently speak Standard English in addition to their native language. The ability to speak SE is a skill which all students in the USA need in order to succeed. In fact, Brown-Blake states, “Competence in English is indicative of upper and middle class social status…Language today, more so than race and color which historically have been indices of social stratification, remains an overt marker of social class” (43). This social stratification can be minimized by educating teachers, school administration and the public as to the equality of the languages while assisting students in learning Standard English.

While the Ministry of Education and Culture was deciding upon which of many options to choose in terms of how to organize their educational system, one option suggested proclaiming Jamaica a bilingual country, which would make Standard English and Jamaican Creole English equal (Brown-Blake 69). This same proposal would also have advocated Creole literacy (Brown-Blake 69). However, the department decided against this choice because of a “lack of agreed orthography for Creole, lack of funding for literacy materials, and political and social attitudes to Creole as a medium of instruction” (Brown-Blake 69). Although it was perceived as impracticable in 2001, hopefully very soon that may not be the case.

One of those reasons cited for refusing to declare Jamaica a bilingual country is currently being addressed. The Jamaica Language Unit, a committee set up by the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica has taken the job of formalizing and
popularizing a “standard writing system for Jamaican Creole” (Brown-Blake 49). As of right now, in Jamaica, as in other Creole and non-standard dialect educational contexts, almost all reading is in Standard English. Although Jamaican Creole English has a writing system which can be used to write in JC rather than SE, it is rarely used (Brown-Blake 48). It is important that students are able to read in the language they feel most comfortable with, and Jamaica will soon have a stronger support for native language reading. With this Unit’s help, hopefully in the future more books will be available in students’ native language of JC.
Other Educational Systems with English Creole Speaking Students

There are many countries besides Jamaica in the Caribbean, and in these countries (Barbados, Trinidad, etc.) many children suffer from an insufficient education. Siegel’s article, “Creoles and Minority Dialects in Education: An Update,” refers to Craig’s data which states that the percentages of students who are able to attend secondary school, much less pass the Caribbean Examination councils in English is a tiny percent of the population (67). For years, people have disparaged CCE, and pushed for its exclusion from schools, as has happened with other Creole or non-standard dialects.

All throughout the world, in Australia, Latin America, and so forth, where Creole languages are spoken, those Creole speakers suffer from an insufficient education either from poverty, civil unrest or other educational challenges. In addition to assistance in all other areas of education, these students will require assistance learning Standard English just as any other English Creole Speaker would.
**How English Creole Differs from Standard English**

It is sometimes hard to tell when someone is speaking an English Creole or when someone is speaking Standard English with an accent! What makes this difficult is something called a *Creole Continuum*. The Creole Continuum is a way of measuring how far the speaker’s language is from the Standard Language of the country. There are three different levels of Creoles: the basilect, the mesolect, and the acrolect. These terms are used throughout Creole studies, no matter where the language is spoken. To describe the purest Creole, the term basilect is used. This variety is characterized as being the farthest from the Standard variety and is also often associated with the lowest socioeconomic and political standing (Nero *ESL or ESD?* 7). The mesolect refers to the way of speaking which falls between the basilect and the final variety, the acrolect. The acrolect is closest to the Standard Language. All Creoles have this continuum and these levels are vague and undefined, as the continuum is a true range without distinct changes from basilect to mesolect to acrolect. Brown-Blake describes the difference between Jamaican Creole and Jamaican Standard English in *The Right to Linguistic Non-discrimination and Creole Language Situations: The Case of Jamaica*. The basilect is the Jamaican Creole, while the acrolect is the Jamaican Standard Variety of English, which is intelligible to speakers of many other varieties of English, but with its own phonological uniqueness (Brown-Blake, *The Right to Linguistic* 34). An example of this continuum is seen in the following Creole sentences, all of which mean in SE, *I am singing*: “Mi a sing. ~ Mi da sing, (basilect)…Mi singin. ~ A singin. (mesolect)…I’m singin. (acrolect)” (Clachar, *Creole English Speakers’* 8). From this example, it is obvious that there is a great variety in how one person can convey the idea, “I’m
singing.” Any Creole speaker will shift from one type of speech to another, perhaps from mesolectal to basilectal, when speaking to the same person, within the same context, or even within the same conversation (Clachar, *Creole English Speakers’ 7*).

Hall-Alleyne offers the following examples of a continuum from basilect to Standard English: “im a nyam in dinna / im a it im dinna / im itting im dinna / him is eating him dinna / he is eating his dinner” (32). All of the sentences above express the same idea: *He is eating his dinner*. What is interesting is that Creole speakers will often use sentences from different ends of the spectrum in the same conversation or expression. Clachar describes how a person might say any of the following at one time, *mi ben kom, mi did kom, mi kyem* for what would be said in Standard English as *I came*. These three phrases range from basilect, *mi ben kom* to acrolect, *mi kyem*. While at one point a speaker may use the basilectal form, *mi ben kom*, at another time they may chose any of the following, which also range from basilectal to acrolectal, *mi da kom, mi komin, aim komin* (I’m coming.) (*Creole English Speakers’ 7*).

A speaker of the acrolect from Jamaica might be compared to a Standard British English speaker from London. This Jamaican or British international student studying in the United States would most likely face minimal challenges in education. This student would need to compensate for some different spellings and a different accent, but would have few other issues in academics. However, Creole basilect speakers will face many more challenges and will need to learn Standard English in order to be successful academically and economically inside and outside of school.

While Creole speakers, especially those who speak mainly in the basilectal
sphere, will need a significant amount of assistance in learning Standard English, teachers should take care not to imply that SE is in any way linguistically superior to the students’ native dialect. There is nothing primitive, broken, or incorrect about Creole Languages. It is clearly visible, from even a brief look at Creole Languages that they have deep, organized grammatical structure, just as any other language has. Caribbean Creole English, for example, has the following characteristics compared to Standard American English. The table found on the following page illustrates some of those characteristics.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactic CCE Feature</th>
<th>CCE Form</th>
<th>Corresponding SAE Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero Copula if predicate is an adjective</td>
<td><em>He strong.</em></td>
<td><em>He is strong.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Zero inflection for subject-verb agreement</td>
<td><em>She tell me everything.</em></td>
<td><em>She tells me everything.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Zero inflection for tense</td>
<td><em>Yesterday I wash the clothes.</em></td>
<td><em>Yesterday I washed the clothes.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero use of passive structure</td>
<td><em>Eggs selling today.</em></td>
<td><em>Eggs are being sold today.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of <em>does</em> (unstressed) to indicate any habitual action with any person or number.</td>
<td><em>He does go to church every week.</em></td>
<td><em>He goes to church every week.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero inflection for plurals if plurality already indicated</td>
<td><em>My father work two job.</em></td>
<td><em>My father works two jobs.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The previous table is reproduced from Nero’s adaptation of Allsopp (1996), Rickford (1987) and Robert’s (1988) information (*Changing Faces* 488). In the same way, Nero compiles information below in a table showing the differences in pronunciation between CCE and Standard English.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Caribbean Creole English</th>
<th>Standard American English</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Initial Consonants</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Final Consonants</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Vowels</strong></td>
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<td>fadda</td>
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</table>

(Nero, *Changing Faces* 487).

Some things become apparent through looking at this table. The first is the way in which there is often a clear replacement of one phoneme for another in changing from Standard English to CCE. Therefore, when teaching CCE speakers to pronounce words
in a SE fashion, there are rules to follow, which is more understandable than simply correcting single words as they come up in conversation. One example of a rule which may be confusing to a Creole English speaker is the /th/ sound in Standard English. This sound in Standard English is replaced with the /d/ or /t/ in CCE. The /th/ sound is actually two separate phonemes represented in IPA as voiceless (spoken without vocal chord vibration, as in the word *three*) /θ/, and voiced (spoken with vocal chord vibration as in the word *the*) /ð/. Both /θ/ and /ð/ are relatively rare phonemes outside of the English Language and are often difficult for English Language Learners to pronounce correctly. Therefore, it is not surprising that CCE replaces /θ/ with /t/ (voiceless) and /ð/ (voiced) with /d/. After reading through this chart and understanding the changes, a teacher can be better prepared to teach clear lessons helping students pronounce Standard English more comprehensibly.

Creoles, while they all share many similarities (especially Creoles which have the same lexical base), will have many differences. For example, a grammatical rule which is unique to Hawaii Creole is the use of *wan* (one) and *da* (the) as indefinite and definite articles in contrast to SE’s use of *the* as the sole definite article. Bickerton explains,

“The definite article *da* is used for all and only specific-reference NPs [noun phrases] that can be assumed to be known to the listener…The indefinite article *wan* is used for all and only specific reference NPs that can be assumed unknown to the listener (typically, first mention use)…All other NPs have no article and no marker of plurality…” (28)

What this means is that whereas in Standard English, the article *the* is used with
definite noun phrases, or a specific person place or thing, in Creole English, both *da* and *wan* are used instead. *Da* is used when the listener knows what the speaker is talking about while *wan* is used when it is assumed the listener is unfamiliar with the noun phrase in question. All other noun phrases do not use articles.

Here are two examples to show how the articles *wan* and *da* are used or excluded:

“Spkr 1: *Hu stei upsteaz?* ‘Who lives upstairs?’

Spkr 2: *Wan wahine,* [asserted specific] *shi wrk ap in da nrs ples.* [pre-supposed specific] ‘A woman, she works up in the nursing home.’” (Bickerton 227)

In the above example, the speaker assumes that the listener does not know the woman who lives upstairs, but does know the nursing home, thus the two different articles.

“Bat nobadi gon get jab. [nonspecific—unmarked] ‘But nobody will get a job’”

(Bickerton 24). In this case, the job is vague, so no article is needed.

There are many more ways in which Creole Languages differ from Standard English, but they cannot all be listed due to space constraints. The final distinction I will explain here is the presence of serial verbs. Serial verbs allow two or more verbs to be used consecutively, like, “The girl ran skipped picked berries.” This type of verb sequencing is unacceptable in Standard English, but is used in Caribbean Creole English (Clachar *Creole English Speakers’ 7*). Clachar compiles the following Guyanese and Jamaican Creole examples of serial verbs from two different sources,

*Di pikni ron kom hoom.*
The child run come home [The child ran home] (Winford, 1993, p. 184)
Dem ky ai kom gi wi.(FN6)
They carry it come give we. [They brought it to us.] (Alleyne, 1980, p. 12)…
Dem ron go lef im.
They run go leave him. [They ran away from him] (Alleyne 1980, p. 12).

(qtd. in Clachar, Creole English Speakers’ 7)

When people understand the grammatical complexity and guidelines which control Creole languages, they will understand more clearly the legitimacy of the languages. Once a teacher understands and respects the students’ language, he or she will better understand and respect the students themselves. While no one teacher can be expected to become familiar with all the rules of the various Creole languages, a teacher with a large amount of Jamaican Creole Speakers, or a teacher working in Hawaii should be familiar with many of the differences between Jamaican Creole or Hawaii Creole and Standard English, or any other native language of the students.

Teachers in the continental United States may not have any Hawaii Creole English or Village English speaking students, and they may not have any other Creole English speaking students, but there is a great possibility that they will have students who speak non-standard dialects. Non-standard dialects share many linguistic, social, and educational aspects with Creole Languages. The most common non-standard dialect spoken in the United States is African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and it is important that teachers are well aware of this widespread dialect.
Similarities between AAVE and English Creole

There are multiple similarities between AAVE and Creole Languages. These similarities fall into two main categories, societal/cultural similarities between the speakers and similarities between the syntax and pronunciation of the languages.

Social and Cultural

In his article, “At Last, Plantation English in America: Nonstandard Varieties and the Quest for Educational Equality,” John Baugh relates a conversation he had with some fellow college students who were from Hawaii and spoke what they referred to as HPE (Hawaii Pidgin English), while John Baugh speaks AAVE. “Despite having grown up in very different surroundings, we soon discovered striking similarities in the ways that many teachers chastised our (mis?)use of English, admonishing that those of us who failed to master Standard English would be doomed to dismal employment prospects and stereotyped as unintelligent because of our nonstandard speech” (467). This type of chastisement for speaking a native dialect is all too common in schools around the world.

In the article, “Respecting Black English as a Style of Discourse,” Kavatus describes teachers’ bias against students who speak AAVE (89). She also explains how youth from lower socioeconomic communities use AAVE more often than middle-class youth (89). This leads to the faulty assumption that speaking AAVE is inseparably linked to poverty. This is exactly what happens to many youths speaking other Creole Languages or non-standard English Dialects! Their speech is stereotyped and because of their non-standard speech, they face extra challenges especially in the educational setting.

Not only does society look down on their speech, but soon they learn to look
down on their own speech as well. Nero describes four students she studied from the Caribbean who describe their own speech as “broken English” (*Changing Faces* 493). She states “the students…were aware that they were bidialectal, that their private language was different enough from their public language to be stigmatized, and that being a speaker of broken English was not an acceptable public linguistic identity (*Changing Faces* 493).

In 1996, the Oakland California school district attempted to redefine Ebonics as a second language. "The goal is to give African-American students the ability to have Standard English proficiency in reading, writing and speaking," said Sherri Willis, a spokeswoman for the Oakland district. "To do that, we are recognizing that many students bring to the classroom a different language, Ebonics” (Applebome). Due to miscommunication, media hype and public disbelief that Ebonics was a real language, the community and people across the nation were outraged. There were many protests and speeches deriding the school district's decision to equate Ebonics with Standard English. However, the school district never backed down from its decision to recognize the dialect of its students and later stated, “Oakland school officials said all along the controversial policy was misunderstood. By recognizing Ebonics, the district said it hoped to improve the way black students were taught to read and write Standard English” (*School District Elevates Status of Black English*).

In response to Oakland's decision, the Board of Directors of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) issued a statement in regard to AAVE, its use in classrooms, and its credibility as a language. It stated,
...the variety of English known as African American Vernacular English, Black English, Ebonics and sometimes by other names, has been shown through research to be a rule-governed, linguistic system, with its own lexical, phonological, syntactic and discourse patterns and, thus, deserves pedagogical recognition.

The Board notes that effective educational programs recognize and value the linguistic systems that children bring to school. Their programs use these linguistics systems as an aid and resource to facilitate the acquisition of Standard American English. Research and experience have shown that children learn best if teachers respect the home language and use it as a bridge in teaching the language of the school and wider society. Likewise, if the children's cultural and social backgrounds are valued, their self-respect and self-confidence are affirmed and new learning is facilitated. (Policy Statement)

Six years after the Oakland school district's decision to recognize Ebonics, people were calling for the death of Hawaii Creole English, “For the benefit of Hawai’i children, pidgin should become a thing of the past…there are some things that deserve to die” (Honolulu Advertiser, 9/4/02 qtd in Siegel, Creoles and Minority Dialects in Education: An Update 66). These are the same things many people say every day about AAVE. Children who grow up reading opinions such as that about the language they grew up with or hearing people discuss their native dialect in that way suffer greatly because of it.

In 2004 at a NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored
People) conference, the well-known comedian Bill Cosby spoke in a now-famous speech urging Black people to change many aspects of their lives. He discussed such issues as parenting, clothing, teen pregnancy, and gangs. He also discussed the prevalence of AAVE,

> It [black youth] can’t speak English. It doesn’t want to speak English. I can’t even talk the way these people talk: “Why you ain’t where you is go, ra.” I don’t know who these people are. And I blamed the kid until I heard the mother talk. Then I heard the father talk. This is all in the house… Everybody knows it’s important to speak English except these knuckleheads. You can’t land a plane with, “Why you ain’t…” You can’t be a doctor with that kind of crap coming out of your mouth.” (Cosby)

Bill Cosby’s argument that children must speak SE to succeed academically in school and economically in life is valid. However, his attitude towards the language children speak with their families is similar to the attitude many educators hold. When a teacher disrespects the language a child uses and the language his or her parents use, this is very detrimental and can make the child feel unwelcome at school, leading to a lack of motivation and an increase in drop-outs.

Lisa Delpit, who holds a Ph. D from Harvard, disagrees with Cosby about AAVE. After the Oakland School Board's Ebonics issue, Lisa shared her views,

> “I can be neither for Ebonics nor against Ebonics any more than I can be for or against air. It exists. It is the language spoken by many of our African-American children. It is the language they heard as their mothers nursed them and changed
their diapers and played peek-a-boo with them. It is the language through which they first encountered love, nurturance, and joy.” (17)

These two people represent the spectrum of paradigms in which AAVE and other non-standard dialects exist. The majority of people (including educators) hold with Bill Cosby’s opinion while much fewer people believe Lisa Delpit’s viewpoint. It is the duty of trained and knowledgeable linguists, educators, and the public to speak out against damaging viewpoints like Bill Cosby’s and support the legitimate language that children speak in the home.

**Linguistic Similarities between AAVE and Creole Languages**

There are a surprising amount of linguistic similarities between Creole languages and AAVE. “Both AAVE and CCE have zero inflections for subject-verb concord, tense, plural, and possessives, and both use zero copula in sentences that include predicate adjectives” (Nero, *Changing Faces* 501). “Zero copula in sentences that include predicate adjectives” means that AAVE and CCE speakers leave out the verb *to be* when there is an adjective in the predicate of the sentence. For example, Standard English would say, “The bag is red,” whereas AAVE and CCE would phrase the same idea as, “The bag red.” The next chart shows some other examples in similarities in the grammatical structures which Nero explained above.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zero Inflection for subject-verb concord</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>AAVE and CCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zero Inflection for tense</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>AAVE and CCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yesterday, I ran four miles.</td>
<td>Yesterday, I run four miles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zero Inflection for plural</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>AAVE and CCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My cousin has seven cats.</td>
<td>My cousin has seven cat.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zero Inflection for possessives</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>AAVE and CCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where is Susan’s toy?</td>
<td>Where is Susan toy?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zero Copula in Sentences with predicate adjectives</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>AAVE and CCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That car over there is black.</td>
<td>That car over there black.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pronunciation between Creoles and AAVE are also similar. For example, in the SE phrase, *They are finishing*, AAVE would be, *Dem Fishin* (McWhorter 354). In the previous CCE pronunciation chart on page 18 in this paper, it showed that the /ð/ phoneme in SE changes to a /d/ phoneme in CCE, just as it has here in AAVE. The same lessons which could be used to improve SE pronunciation for English Creole speakers could be used with AAVE speakers.

One more similarity between AAVE and English Creoles includes the vocabulary. While all English-based Creoles and AAVE have their own slang and specialized words which are very distinct from one another, they both still have English as their lexical base and therefore will share the vast majority of their vocabulary in common.
There are a High Number of Such Students in America’s School Systems and the Current Method of Instruction is Insufficient for These Students’ Needs

Some instructors or college students in education may be reluctant to study non-standard dialects or English-Creole Languages. They may not believe that the numbers of those students is high enough to warrant the special study. They may also feel that the students, because their understanding of English is so high, will be able to get by without special instruction. These teachers, however, are wrong.

Some areas of the United States have a very limited number of students who speak Creole languages, and many areas have none at all! However, according to the Caribbean Research Center at City University, Florida and New York have roughly one million immigrants from the Caribbean. In Florida and New York, people from Jamaica alone make up 5.3 and 5.9 percent of the total foreign born population (Foreign Born Population Born in Jamaica). Immigration from the Caribbean region shows no sign of slowing down. From 1991 to 2001, there were 978,800 people who emigrated from the Caribbean to the United States (Immigration by Leading Country or Region of last Residence: 1901 to 2001). As an example of the recent increase in immigration and naturalizations, Jamaica had 21,243 people becoming naturalized citizens of the US in 2008 compared to 12,314 in 2007 (Caribbean World News). This number doesn’t reflect any of the people who are in the USA illegally, or who did not complete the naturalization process that particular year. These new citizens may also have children who are born in the USA, but who speak their parents’ language. Nero states in regard to United States schools, “given that migration from the region, particularly from Jamaican and Guyana, shows little sign of abating (Foner, 1987; Kainitz, 1992; Palmer, 1995),
English teachers are likely to encounter an increasing number of these [English-Creole speaking] students in their classes" (*Changing Faces* 489).

In the United States, this is an issue that is new to many teachers in the public school system, and one that is becoming more prevalent. “In North America, Caribbean Creole English is the second highest spoken variety of English (the first most common is African American Vernacular English) due to the increasing rate of migration from the Caribbean (Nero, *Changing Faces* 490). When these children attend public schools, teachers and administrators are often unsure of where to place them. Should they be placed in ESL classes? Maybe they would improve more quickly in a mainstream English class? Perhaps a third option is in the students’ best interest?

Placement in mainstream English classes is often detrimental to the students’ education. Students are looked at as native English speakers who are lazy, or who speak “bad English.” In this type of mainstream English class, students are not given the explicit grammar lessons that they need and the teachers are unprepared to assist them with their unique language needs. Because Canada has the same educational situation regarding students emigrating from the Caribbean, teachers in the US can learn more about how to adapt to this changing language environment from Cuelho’s book, *Caribbean Students in Canadian Schools*. In this book, she states,

Divergence from Standard English usage by Caribbean students is usually not regarded with the same tolerance as errors made by students who are learning English as a Second Language, because Caribbean students are generally not regarded as language learners. They are regarded as English speakers who are
careless with the language. (144)

Therefore, a mainstream English class is not the best choice. However, is an ESL class best for Creole-speaking students? While an ESL class is often the decision administrators make, this is not a perfect fit either. When “Creole-speaking students are misplaced in ESL classes designed for nonnative speakers of English…this misplacement is one of the main factors that have contributed to their low academic achievement” (Pratt-Johnson qtd. in Clachar Construction of Creole-Speaking Students’ 153).

Not only may Creole-speaking students find this ESL placement offensive, they do not need the same lessons and education that ESL students need. The Creole-speaking students’ understanding of Standard English is often almost on par with native English speakers—much higher than the majority of students in ESL classes. Also, Creole-speaking students have a much higher vocabulary than most ESL students have, and they need specific lessons targeting the contrasts between the languages which were outlined previously. Creole speakers often feel that they are speaking the same language as everyone around them. They may be confused why people have difficulty understanding them, and don’t understand why their language is constantly corrected in school. In Nero's study involving four Creole-speaking college freshman, "The Changing Faces of English: A Caribbean Perspective," she describes a Jamaican student's thoughts. She says, he “expressed surprise at being placed into an ESL class, for, as he put it, such classes are meant for “dem students dat don’ speak English” (Nero 497). This is another example of Creole-speaking students having difficulty seeing the differences between their native speech and writing and Standard English speech and writing. Students like this one may “have difficulties building a separate mental representation for Standard
English because of the blurred boundaries between Standard and Creole-English” (Clachar *Construction of Creole-Speaking Students’* 163). There are so many similarities, including lexical and syntactical, between the languages, that slight differences between them may not be noticed. For example, in CCE *hand* denotes the entire appendage from shoulder to fingertips, whereas in SE *hand* applies only to the portion from the wrist to the fingertips (Allsopp (1996), Rickford (1987), and Roberts (1988), qtd. in Nero, *Changing Faces* 488). The continuum from basilect to acrolect, which was mentioned earlier, often presents unique challenges for students who are not accustomed to analyzing their speech and language in order to learn which portions of their language are the same between SE and CCE.

Students have two main difficulties stemming from these hazy boundaries and lack of clear ESL versus Creole classes. First, they may not feel motivated to study or use Standard English, as they feel that they already know it (Clachar *Construction of Creole-Speaking Students’* 163). Second, they may not recognize the new grammar they are taught, and then they may neglect to implement the new knowledge (Clachar *Construction of Creole-Speaking Students’* 163).

Teachers must be aware of the different problematic issues facing Creole English speakers that do not occur with students who are learning English as a second language. Students may speak any range of English Creole, from the basilect to the acrolect variety of the Creole, and students may shift from one variety to another between their speech and writing. This is an issue which most ESL learners do not encounter.

After studying how Creole-speaking students learn how verbs change tense and
aspect in Standard English, Clachar concluded that since the Creole's uses of past tense and Standard English do not exactly coincide in terms of meaning, Creole speakers “have difficulty inferring the meaning and function for the English past and progressive inflections and associating their affinities with the corresponding semantic properties inherent in the lexical classes of verbs” (Creole English Speakers' 23). This means that because the Creole speakers have such a wide variety of ways of expressing meaning through a variety of pasts tenses (as evidenced above, \textit{mi da kom, mi komin, and aim komin}) they have difficulty understanding the subtle meaning behind Standard English inflections. Therefore they have difficulty using Standard English inflections correctly. Clachar concludes by saying, “The fact that the creole-speaking students in the study exhibited a pattern of use of tense-aspect morphology that was not congruent, in some instances, with that evidenced by noncreole learners’ raises concerns about education practices that may place speakers of English-based creoles in classes with speakers of English as an L2” (Creole English Speakers' 23). Teachers who are accustomed to teaching students who do not speak an English-based Creole will be unfamiliar and unprepared to deal with this continuum between varieties of Creole.

Students who speak a language which has a writing system are often accustomed to reading in their native language. In fact, most students who are learning English as a Second Language learn to read first in their native tongue. It has been proven that literacy and the skills which come with literacy transfer across language barriers (Cummins, qtd. in Freeman and Freeman 45). Therefore, a student who can read and write well in his or her first language will be better prepared to read and write well in a second language. Students who speak an English Creole are at a major disadvantage.
Clacher writes in, *Paratactic Conjunctions in Creole Speakers’ and ESL Learners Academic Writing*, about the difficulties students face in writing in Standard English and the way that their speech habits interfere with writing. She states, “It is also important to emphasize the fact that creole-English speakers come from an oral tradition and there is no standardized orthography for their native English-based creoles (as exists for the ESL students who speak Arabic, Russian, and Spanish); therefore, creole-English-speaking learners come to school with no written frame of reference for their native languages” (287). AAVE also lacks this “standardized orthography.” This lack of ability to read in their native language or dialect is a hindrance to students’ academic achievement.

After a study of Creole students’ written discourse, Clachar argues, “Creole-English students…would greatly benefit from an awareness program that would help them increase their perceptions of the differences between the English input they receive and their own written productions” (*Creole English Speakers'* 23). She also notes that there is a strong need for teachers who are trained in Creole languages rather than ESL teachers. These Creole-speaking students need a qualified teacher and this need “takes on heightened significance for Creole speakers because of the blurring of the distinction between the English based creole and the standard” (Clachar, *Creole English Speakers'* 23).

There have been instances of educators and school boards working together to help Creole speakers learn Standard English and the results of well-planned, informed curriculums have been promising.
Positive Teaching Trends regarding English Creole Speaking Students.

The future is promising for Creole speaking students, especially if the changes to attitudes and curriculum continue to expand. Many schools, communities, and governments are changing their perspectives towards Creoles. This means that schools are not requiring solely Standard English in their schools, nor are they discouraging the use of non-standard dialects or languages. The results are encouraging. When schools value non-standard English in an academic setting, it re-poses the questions, “Which English is correct? Is there a preferred English and who decides which variation is preferred?” “Could an English Creole be used academically?”

Although it seems unlikely that English Creoles will be used anytime in the near future for publishing academic articles or scientific research, the fact that students are able to use their preferred language in an academic setting is a significant step forward. When a Creole is revalued as more than a means of communication, but as a way of expressing knowledge and learning in an academic setting as well, children’s academic development improves faster (Fox 278).

There are programs aimed at assisting students who speak Creole languages. One such program is the Caribbean Academic Program (CAP) now taking place in the United States. “The CAP aims to raise students’ awareness of the differences between CCE [Caribbean Creole English] and SAE [Standard Academic English], and both varieties are used in the classroom for speaking, reading, and writing (Nero, Changing Faces 502).

A representative from the University of Hawaii visited a CAP school in Illinois. She was surprised and pleased to see the educational system there. At the school there
was a mixture of Standard English speakers, AAVE speakers and CCE speakers. The CCE speakers comprise 10% - 15% of the student body and are mostly from Jamaica, but include students from Belize and Barbados as well. This school initially had a high drop out rate and a high proportion of students in special education in regards to the CCE speakers. However, now that the school has changed to a “language awareness approach,” the number of drop outs and students in special education has dropped and there are a higher number of students in honors classes and attending college. The language awareness approach promotes,

“positive student attitudes towards CEC [Caribbean English Creole] while making salient the differences between CEC and Standard English. Students learn about the histories of both CEC and SE with attention to relevant issues of language and power. They use a contrastive analysis approach (focusing on pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar) to promote separation of CEC and SE within the students’ verbal repertoires. Readings in CEC are incorporated into the curriculum, and students engage in translation activities from CEC to SE and visa-versa. CEC is also used in oral discussion by students and CEC-speaking instructors” (Manecker 2).

Manecker was pleased to notice through her observation of the school and discussions with the students that there was a mutual respect between the speakers of various dialects and languages, that the students were having highly developed linguistics discussions, and that the teachers were bilingual, bicultural, and highly knowledgeable about the Creole languages the students spoke (3).
If these pilot CAP programs continue to be successful in improving students’ scholastic skills, their format could be reproduced into other districts’ curriculum around the rest of the United States and perhaps the world. Hopefully by copying the language awareness approach, other schools can achieve the linguistic respect between students and improvement in educational achievement that the CAP schools have achieved.

Recently (2001) Jamaica’s Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) redefined the word *literacy*. Literacy now is now seen as a complex set of skills involving critical thinking, community development, and problem solving skills (Bryan, *Language and Literacy* 89), rather than the ability to recognize the connection between letters and sounds. Jamaica is also instituting a new policy involving Jamaican Creole English. While Standard English is still the target language, the MOEC “recognizes ‘transitional bilingualism’ as a legitimate learning strategy…This means that teachers are encouraged, in the early period in school, to use whatever language is needed so that the child can understand them” (Bryan, *Language and Literacy* 89). Various schools throughout Jamaica use different methods to teach Standard English, and there are a variety of pedagogical methods practiced, including: Immersion, Practice, Structured Support, and Contrasts. *Immersion*, in this case, refers to the teacher providing the intensive exposure to SE that students need if they are to fully acquire a language which they do not hear at home (Bryan, *Language and Literacy* 91). *Practice* involves interactions in a number of different contexts which allow the student to perform language tasks confidently and without hesitation (Bryan, *Language and Literacy* 92). *Structured Support* works with providing the structures and guidelines for students to produce unique work on their own (Bryan, *Language and Literacy* 89). *Contrasts* means providing opportunities for
children in early grades (one through three) to notice the differences between the two languages (Standard English and Jamaican Creole English), and see them as two separate entities (Bryon, *Language and Literacy* 93).

Using the native dialect is a great way to keep students proud of their linguistic heritage and consequently, proud of their family and themselves and also content to return to school day after day. Commins and Swain state,

To be told, whether directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, that your language and the language of your parents, of your home and of your friends is non-functional in school is to negate your sense of self. One can imagine any number of responses on the part of the children who hear this message. They could accept the school’s dictum and reject their families; they could feel anger and frustration towards their teachers and school, which could lead to hostility and aggression and eventually dropping out of school, or to a denial of the value of school (101).

Ohama et. al. takes it a step further, stating than moving away from using one’s native dialect or language towards using the Standardized form, “can lead to low self-esteem, behaving in an inferior manner, or becoming confused about personal identity” (374).

For many years in Hawaiian schools students were not allowed to speak Hawaiian Creole English. Although many people criticized HCE as the reason for low test scores and a lack of academic excellence, Siegel determines, “Unlike education officials in Hawai’i and elsewhere, linguists, myself included do not believe that this failure is a
result of their being excluded from the classroom and from the education process in general” (Creoles and Minority Dialects in Education: An Update 67). Siegel believes that integrating the native language, students will overcome academic challenges.

Many linguists theorize that through using the native language, students will succeed faster and in the 80s, a small-scale study tested that very assumption. In 1982 through 1984 a small group of children who had failed to become competent readers (they were 12 years old at the time), were taught to read using Creole English texts (Kephart).

The research showed that reading Creole English neither confused nor impaired the children’s reading of English, as predicted by some educators. While it was not possible to prove conclusively that reading Creole English helped the target population’s reading of English, the enjoyment and enthusiasm displayed by all children in reading the Creole materials strongly imply that West Indian children should be allowed to read and write Creole as part of their language arts programs. Other children and adults who were already relatively literate were able to read the materials with no difficulty. Finally, the reading materials were prepared at very low cost with technology available to most schools, refuting the claim that provision of materials in minority languages such as Creole English is too expensive. (Kephart)

Although this is not the result linguists would hope for in a perfect world, its results are important. Even though a school desires to improve its students’ reading proficiency, it is also important to increase students’ enjoyment of school and education
as a whole. Students are more likely to drop out of school is they are minority students, live in poverty, or speak a non-standard dialect. The fact that these students express enthusiasm at school is a strong step in the right direction in keeping students actively engaged in school and may prevent students from dropping out of school later in life.

Communities too, are attempting to do what they can to accept Creole-speaking societies in their midst. Toronto, Canada has a large Caribbean population and the film, *How She Move*, was released in 2008 which highlighted Caribbean youth and their dialect (Misani). Movies and books which represent intelligent, hard-working, dynamic, and fun Caribbean Creole Speakers are important to youth who may look to pop culture for their heroes.

For teachers who do not work in schools like the CAP school mentioned previously, or teachers who are not familiar with Creole languages, there is still a way to effectively assist students in learning Standard English. There is a wealth of information on Creoles’ history, syntax, lexicology and methods for teaching Creole-speaking students. However, there is a major gap in the information in regards to practical education. There is a lack of tangible lesson plans for Creole-speaking students. There are many ideas, theories, and methods, but no specific classroom activities or demonstrations of grammar explanations. I plan to help fill that gap.

I will set up a sample curriculum of one semester, a sort of survival Standard/Academic English Unit for Caribbean Creole speaking students. This would be the sort of program of study that a University Professor teaching Creole-speaking freshman would use, or a high school teacher with a class of Creole-speaking students
eager to attend college. This teacher could use my semester plan to prepare Creole-speaking students (specifically Caribbean Creole English) for a University environment requiring academic Standard English. Although most of the lessons will be for students age 16 and older, I will include some elementary and middle school lesson plans for teachers with younger students. I will include many lesson plans for classroom with non-standard dialects, such as AAVE as well. In addition, teachers who have non-standard dialect speaking students could also adapt all of the English-Creole activities with minimal effort. I want this to be adaptable to match many different teachers’ needs, including, but not limited to:

- High school teachers or University Professors
- ESL teachers with Creole-Speaking students
- Mainstream English teachers with a mixture of AAVE, English-Creole speaking students and Standard English speaking students

I have chosen to include complete lessons plans, which include all of the procedures and materials, as well as lesson summaries which briefly outline lesson plan ideas. Educators will find it uncomplicated to create lessons from the summaries as well as modify lesson plans to match their particular classroom demographics. I have also chosen to include pedagogy for a variety of age levels in addition to the main focus on the age group 16-20 years old. Specifically, I have added one lesson appropriate for an elementary classroom and one lesson for a middle school class. I have chosen to do this because I want to provide teachers of all grade levels at least one tangible lesson plan to begin their new method of study with their students. Teachers always need to adapt
course work to their students’ particular needs, so a rigid pre-constructed syllabus would not be useful. I feel that providing a majority of teachers with a starting point in pedagogy rather than providing a specialized and fewer numbers of teachers with a comprehensive curriculum will prove to be more in the students’ interest.

The lesson plans will focus on four main areas; first, fostering an atmosphere of respect and acceptance for Caribbean Creole English, AAVE, and Standard English. Secondly, providing students with contrastive analysis including rules of syntax, phonetics, and vocabulary as well as examples and practice in distinguishing between the two languages. Thirdly, this curriculum will provide exercises allowing students the input, the time, and the feedback in discriminating when to use one language versus another. While no student could fully learn to use Standard English in one semester, the goal is to provide a foundation for their learning and offer them the tools to continue improving their Standard English while retaining their Caribbean Creole English or native dialect once the semester is over.

Through the study and achievement of these goals, students will see that all languages and dialects are equal in complexity, ability to express meaning, and beauty in speech. Students will no longer feel the need to feel self-conscious or ashamed of their speech. They will have the ability to use Standard English while continuing to positively impact public opinion of their native language.
Sample Curriculum and Pedagogical Methods

There are three common types of Creole or Non-Standard Dialect (NSD) education programs in use throughout the world. Those programs are: instrumental, accommodation, and awareness (Siegel 515). I have focused on the awareness program, but a short look at all of the programs is worthwhile as a teacher can transition from one program to another depending on the needs of the students. Depending on the educational environment, concepts from all three programs could be used at different times and with different students. Jeff Siegel describes the different programs in his article, “Creoles and Minority Dialects in Education: An Overview.” He explains how instrumental education uses the students’ native language or dialect at school. The teacher will speak the students’ native language in order to teach reading and other crucial concepts and in later years introduce and then use increasingly more of the Standard Language (515). In the accommodation style of education, the teacher allows, but does not use the students’ language. The teacher will teach the standard language, and once the students have mastered the standard, the teacher may use local Creole literature and music in the classroom (Siegel 515). Finally, the awareness program makes explicit the study of the non-standard and standard language. The focus is on “helping students acquire the standard by focusing on how its structure and use are different from their own varieties” (Siegel 515). All three of these programs have the same goal, to help “students acquire the standard language while maintaining their own way of speaking, and thus their linguistic self-respect” (Siegel 515).

I have chosen to focus on the awareness program because the explicit teaching of grammar assists students in recognizing the differences between their native
language/dialect and the Standard. (I discuss this language awareness approach earlier in the paper on pages 41 through 42 in connection with the CAP schools.) An additional reason is that the awareness program does not require a teacher’s fluency in the students’ native language as an instrumental program does. The following curriculum is usable by any teacher with a minimum of Creole or dialectal training who has a strong desire to learn more about his or her students’ specific language needs. However, for those teachers who are bidialectal or bilingual, that special skill should surely be used in the classroom. A teacher’s bilingualism can facilitate understanding and showcase the teacher’s pride in his or her linguistic heritage.

The content is organized in a specific order designed to maximize learning. The final concepts will be very difficult to practice unless the initial concepts are mastered. However, teachers can use all of the content in its order or they can pick and choose which lessons are applicable to their classes, depending on their students’ fluency in SE. Many of the activities and lessons which I have presented for Creole speakers are interchangeable with NSD speakers, specifically, AAVE speakers. Nero states, “the linguistic and affective issues related to Anglophone Caribbean students are equally relevant to African American Vernacular English speakers” (10).

In the course of a fifteen week semester, the following curriculum is possible. After this sample curriculum, detailed lesson plans and activities will be provided.

**Weeks 1, 2 & 3**

The students will study and appreciate their native language through poetry, creative writing or films written in a non-standard dialect or language. The students will
also study the history of their and others’ native languages and noteworthy people who speak those languages. The teacher will lead classroom and group discussion on language and power. These discussions should focus on the issues of language hierarchy, usage of Creole at school, at work or at home and any other language issues relevant to students’ lives. Finally, the students will practice writing in their Creole language or NSD, focusing on learning or reviewing the basics of writing: brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, researching information, peer review, and so forth.

This study of the historical and social issues related to language issues is important to learn before studying linguistic issues. London, quoted in Nero states, “U.S. educators, in planning for and interacting with Caribbean students, will require, among other support systems, a sense of Caribbean history and a sensitivity to the backgrounds of students, their values, culture patterns, environment, and the specific influences that impinge upon them” (10). Students will learn the history of Creole languages and NSD as well as researching more information themselves. The writing and research skills they build during this unit will be used throughout the rest of the semester and can be easily transferred from their Creole or NSD to Standard English.

It is also important that students are given a chance to discuss openly about the issues of language and power. They should begin to think about why some languages are valued over others, how they feel about that, and what they can do about it. This unit will conclude with students producing creative writing in their native language or dialect.
Weeks 4 & 5

The goals of these weeks is to instill a motivation to learn SE—firstly, through providing proof that their language IS different from SE, and secondly through proving the importance of being proficient in SE. As mentioned previously, many students express surprise at being told they aren’t fluent in Standard English. Therefore, before any teaching can be done, the students must recognize that there is a difference between SE and the language they speak. They should also begin to acknowledge their limitations in speaking or writing Standard English. Students may also lack motivation to learn SE. Finally, as discussed previously, because many people who speak Creole languages or non-standard dialects are in lower socioeconomic class, they may not believe they have the ability to aspire to higher education or professions which require knowledge of SE.

Weeks 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10

During these weeks the students will begin to master the grammar, spelling, pronunciation, and vocabulary of SE. Students will be encouraged to read habitually because of the increased level of vocabulary, improvement in spelling ability, and grammatical knowledge that comes from free reading. Through contrastive analyses of grammar and contrastive analyses of pronunciation, students will be able to see the rules and patterns of both their native language and Standard English. Finally students will be encouraged to teach SE speaking classmates the rules and history of their language.

Weeks 11, 12, & 13

During this time, students should become adept at code-switching. Code-switching is the ability to change from language to language, dialect to dialect, or casual
to formal registers depending on the situation and environment. For example, it may be appropriate to speak one’s native dialect when chatting with co-workers, but Standard English should be used when speaking with customers or during a job interview. Firstly students will study, and discuss when it is appropriate to use one language or dialect as opposed to another. Then they will study and practice the different registers of formality that Standard English has. After practicing the differently varieties of formal versus casual speech, students will practice through role-plays, dialogues or drama how and when to code-switch. If possible, there should be some real-world integration at this point, a guest speaker who can share their examples of how they code-switch at work or at home, or a field trip to a professional work place or University to practice their formal Standard English registers.

**Weeks 14 & 15**

At this point there is extra time in case any previous lessons go long and more time is needed than expected. The teacher is always encouraged to follow the students’ needs rather than a pre-prescribed curriculum. This time is also available for students to review previously learned concepts, research an extra area of study or prepare for a final paper or assessment.

Now I would like to present specific examples of classroom activities and lesson plans which can be used in the classroom throughout the curriculum. I won’t be able to provide enough examples for a complete semester, because I will include ideas for many different age and academic levels, as well as materials for different Creoles and dialects.
There should be enough information for a teacher to have a good foundation in preparing for a class.
Weeks 1, 2 & 3 Appendix I

During the initial weeks of school, teachers must work to create an atmosphere of trust. Students need to trust the teacher not to constantly correct their “bad English,” as so many teachers constantly do. Students need to trust the teacher, and they also need to trust each other to provide support and prevent the teasing that often follows academic achievement. “Many educators lament the fact that some African American students seem to reject literacy and, in Franz Fanon’s terms, to equate “talk(ing) like a book” with “talk(ing) like a white man” (Meier 99). Because of the desire to avoid losing friends and losing touch with their community, some students will studiously avoid learning and using SE.

During these beginning weeks of the unit, students should be encouraged to speak in the same dialect they use with family or friends. This is important because it fosters acceptance within the classroom and shows that the teacher values every part of the students’ life, especially language. This also encourages unrestricted participation in the classroom. In Janna Fox’s “Revisiting the Storied Landscape of Language Policy Impact Over Time: A Case of Successful Educational Reform,” she describes the transformation of an unnamed country’s educational system. Initially this Creole-speaking country forbade the use of Creole in the classroom. However, after an educational reform, the use of Creole was encouraged by both students and instructors. Researchers found that after the educational transformation, a group of fourth grade students who now received less time exposed to Standard English than a control group still remained about even in terms of story comprehension and re-telling the story. However, the educational reform group improved greatly in interest and curiosity in the tasks presented. Whereas before the
education reform took place, out of 100 students, “only one student asked a question. Remarkably, 40 students in the Reform group asked a range of spontaneous and varied questions about the story…” (Fox 271). This sort of involvement, curiosity, and connection with school tasks is what keeps children enjoying and attending school. One of the results of the research included, “All students appear to have benefited from the Reform, but particularly those students at the lower end of the attainment scale” (Fox 278). This is especially important because Creole and NSD speaking students traditionally have higher drop-out rates at school and lower academic achievement. “The revaluing of Creole as an academic language positively affected the Reform children’s confidence in their first language as an organizing tool of experience and promoted their development” (Fox 278).

It must be noted that the addition of Creole as an academic language was not the only change to the educational curriculum, and that the gains noted here must be weighed with other positive educational reform strategies such as “teacher development…new materials, and a new language program based on communicative approaches, with a focus on meaningful and active learner participation” (Fox 270).

Through reading poetry, short stories, and books and watching films with non-standard dialects and Creole languages students will be able to build their linguistic self-esteem. In the following list, unless otherwise notes, all resources are educationally appropriate for ages 16 and older.
Children’s Books (for children age seven through ten years old)

She Come Bringing Me That Little Baby Girl by Eloise Greenfield, Illustrated by John Steptoe. This book is written in AAVE and sample pages are found in Appendix I pages 87-89.

Fruits by Valerie Bloom, Illustrated by David Axtell. This book is written in Creole English and contains fun, colorful images and rhymes, “Seven Mangoes! What a find! The smaddy who left them really kind. One fe you an’ six fe me. If you want more, climb the tree.” This book could be read aloud to a class with students who speak both Standard English and Creole English. This book would be a great way to help elementary students understand each other’s different languages and encourage multicultural acceptance.

Poetry

Nathaniel Talking by Eloise Greenfield Illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist. This is a book of poetry which would be appropriate for students in third through eighth grade. Sample poems from the book are found in Appendix I, pages 90 and 94-97.

Saturday Night at the Pahala Theatre by the Hawaiian Creole Poet Loise-Ann Yamanaka is a book of poems about Hawaiian teens.
Colonization in Reverse, a poem about Jamaicans in London by Louise Bennett is written in Jamaican Creole. Louise Bennett is a popular and prolific poet whose other poems would also be appropriate for study.

A Boy’s Mother, by James Whitcomb Riley, about the love a mother has for her son and husband is written in AAVE. James Whitcomb Riley has many fun and playful poems appropriate for elementary and middles school students as well as more mature poems suitable for high school or older readers.

An Ante-Bellum Sermon by Paul Laurence Dunbar. Although An Ante-Bellum Sermon (written in AAVE) is arguably Paul Laurence Dunbar’s most popular poem, he is also a very critically acclaimed and prolific poet whose other poems would be appropriate for study. He wrote poetry in both AAVE and Standard English.

Born to Slow Horses is a book of poetry by Kamau Brathwaite. Kamau Brathwaite is a Caribbean Creole English speaker whose poetry integrates Caribbean and African history.

A lesson plan using audio readings of Kamau Braithwaite and Paul Laurence Dunbar’s poetry for high school students is found in Appendix I page 71-79.
**Short Stories**

“Da Word” by Hawaiian Creole author Lee A. Tonouchi. This short story is about high school and college students.

“The Lesson” by Toni Cade Bambara is written in AAVE and is about a confident twelve year old girl.

**Films**

“How She Move” produced by Paramount Vantage. This movie is appropriate for a high school class. I would not advise having students watch the entire film, as very little of the film deals with language issues. However, choosing a few clips which showcase the main characters speaking with each other would be inspiring for students who look to pop culture for their heroes. The main character of this film is a poor Caribbean young woman whose parents don’t have the money for college tuition. However, she is smart, hard-working and dedicated and through the movie accomplishes her goal of attending medical school. When students see so many non-standard dialect or Creole speaking people stereotyped negatively, this positive role model will be inspiring.
Readings

The Prism of a Grammar by Tom Rueper  Chapter 11” The Riches of African American English” pages 227 - 242

”At Last. Plantation English in American: Nonstandard Varieties and the Quest for Educational Equality” by John Baugh

The Real Ebonics Debate Edited by Theresa Perry and Lisa Delpit.

“Black English/Ebonics: What it be like?” by Geneva Smitherman  pages 29-37

“Black English: Stepping up? Looking Back” by Beverly Jean Smith pages 197 - 204

The preceding readings are used in a lesson plan in Appendix I, pages 80-83.

It is important that students feel open to share relevant issues from their lives and that there is a feeling of community in the classroom. The issues that educators will ask students to discuss openly and frankly are difficult ones, to ask “students to think about the connections between language attitudes and other societal systems of power (e.g. racism) and to reflect on their own beliefs about language” (Ball &Muhammad and Okawa qtd. in Godly et. al. 33). Hopefully during these discussions students will, “begin
to see the motivation for acquiring the dialect of economic and political power” (Newell 95).

There are many negative issues with education that students need to overcome, especially at the high school level. Once students are in high school, it is no longer cool to try hard at school, so many students are proud of their ability to sleep through classes and skip homework. It is also embarrassing for students to try diligently at a task, yet still fail. To avoid this embarrassment, students will avoid putting any work into schooling, knowing that if they don’t do the work, there will be no opportunity to look bad in front of friends or look like a failure. Instead they will look cool and rebellious. These discussions are one way to try and break through students’ protective shell, to try to interest them in academics and school by applying it to their life and giving them the opportunity to discuss the challenges and hierarchy at school. Once students have shared together their issues with school, they will feel more like a community because not only does everyone know their feelings, but they will realize that other people feel the same things they do. They will also feel inspired to work harder at school because they know that everything they said in discussions will be used by the teacher and applied to future lessons to design a curriculum tailored to their exact academic challenges and future needs.

A lesson plan involving discussions at an elementary school level is found in Appendix I, pages 84-86. A lesson plan involving discussions at a middle school level are found in Appendix I, pages 91-93.
Teacher Preparation

Teachers should use the first five weeks to get to know their students and create a community of learning. They should also be using this time to study their students’ native dialects or languages. In order to prepare the contrastive analysis needed for Weeks 6 – 10, the teacher must have a good knowledge of how his or her students speak and which specific aspects of language they will need more study time with. If the students, for example, have a clear and understandable pronunciation in Standard English, there is little need to spend class time studying that particular language point.

Teachers who are working with Creole speaking students for the first time, or who are trying to improve their relationships with their Creole speaking students should use the first few weeks of the semester to not only learn about their students but also to look inside themselves for any racial or linguistic bias they might not be aware of.

For example, although teachers may feel that they treat all of their students the same, they may unconsciously adapt their teaching style differently for different students. Delpit describes a study by researcher Patricia Cunningham who “found that teachers across the United States were more likely to correct reading miscues that were “dialect” related (“Here go a table” for “Here is a table”) than those that were “nondialect” related (“Here is a dog” for “There is a dog”). Seventy-eight percent of the former types of miscues were corrected, compared with only 27% of the latter” (Cunningham, qtd. in Delpit 4). This is an activity which teachers would most likely be unaware of. As teachers ask students to look explicitly at their language, teachers should also consider
looking explicitly at their teaching. It might be a good idea for teachers to video record themselves and take notes on the types of corrections made, which students are called on to answer questions, and how students are disciplined to see if there are any subtle differences between students who speak SE and students who speak another language or dialect.

The teacher should also be careful to note that there are many cultural differences even between people who may live only a few miles apart. For example, Mary Rhodes Hoover describes a scenario wherein a picture of a man wearing a suit and carrying a briefcase is shown to a child. If you ask where the man is going, most White children will say *to work*. However, most Black children will say, *to church*. Hoover explains the reasons that most Black children will say *church*, “Economically, because 90 percent of Blacks are not white-collar workers, that is a correct answer for the Black child. If he’s got on his suit, he’s going to church” (127). There may be many more instances where slight cultural differences can cause misunderstandings between classmates or student-teacher relationships. Teachers should become more aware these types of instances, and consider teaching the students about cultural misunderstandings as well, so that students are prepared outside of class for misinterpretations to occur and how to remedy them.

At this point the students have been encouraged to use their natural manner of speaking through all the discussions, homework assignments, presentations and so forth. The students will feel validated and comfortable discussing language after seeing the teacher’s interest and endorsement of their language, culture, and self. Because the teacher has been able to listen, read, and converse with the students, he or she has by now gotten a good idea of the way they speak. This time also gives the teacher a chance to
prepare graphs, charts, or other materials appropriate to his or her students’ personal language needs. Now the teacher is well prepared to provide support in learning Standard English.

**Weeks 4 & 5 Appendix II**

As stated before, students often feel offended at the idea of studying Standard English. In “ESL or ESD[English as a Second Dialect]? Teaching English to Caribbean English Speakers” Nero states, “Their [Caribbean Creole speaking students] receptive knowledge of English far exceeds that of true non-native speakers of English; hence, traditional ESL classes do not address their linguistic needs” (10). Because of that high receptive knowledge of English, students are often reluctant to study SE. They believe they already know English, so why would they need to study it? Nero continues, “Whenever possible Anglophone Caribbean students should be placed into language arts or writing classes with instructors who are appropriately trained to address their linguistic needs” (10). Teachers must show the students that they understand their students’ unique linguistic needs and that studying SE will prove a meaningful use of their time before students will put forth effort in the classroom.

One way to prepare students to hear the differences between SE and the students’ language or dialect, is to have students become language detectives. This activity is described in Lisa Delpit’s “Ebonics and Culturally Responsive Instruction.” Delpit writes, “Mrs. Pat, a teacher chronicled by Stanford University researcher Shirley Brice Heath, had her students become language “detectives,” interviewing a variety of
individuals and listening to the radio and television to discover the differences and similarities in the ways people talked” (2).

It is a well-known fact in education that when students discover something for themselves, they often remember it much better than having someone tell it to them. Students also remember and study personally discovered information with more vigor than information they receive passively. With this idea in mind, having students create their own Creole-English dictionary will help them notice the differences between their native language and SE. Delpit offers this dictionary idea in “Ebonics and Culturally Responsive Instruction” (2).

A lesson plan for this topic follows the detective work and is found in Appendix II pages 99-100.

**Weeks 6, 7, 8, & 9 Appendix III**

During these weeks the students will begin to master the grammar, spelling, pronunciation, and vocabulary of SE. Through extensive reading, contrastive analyses of grammar and pronunciation, students will be able to see the rules and patterns of both their native language and Standard English. And finally, they will have the chance to teach their SE speaking classmates the rules and history of their language or dialect.

Donalyn Miller’s The Book Whisperer is an insightful book which shows just how teachers can encourage students to love reading. She explains how to transform even struggling readers into proficient and confident readers who love to read. Reading is one of the most important things students can do to improve their ability to read, write, understand and speak Standard English, in addition to performing well at school. At one
point, Miller describes how Stephen Krashen (the well-known linguist and second language researcher) feels about reading. She writes, “In the Power of Reading, his meta-analysis of research investigating independent reading over the past forty years, Stephen Krashen reveals that no single literacy activity has a more positive effect on students’ comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, spelling, writing ability, and overall academic achievement than free voluntary reading” (Miller, 51). Miller goes on to say, “The question can no longer be “How can we make time for independent reading?” The question must be “How can we not?” (51).

Students must be allowed, encouraged, supported, required, and compelled to read books on their own time for fun in Standard English! Donalyn Miller’s book is full of ideas, theories, and concrete lessons detailing just how to get students to find a book they love, enjoy reading it, finish it, and find another. One of her main ideas is that there must be time available in class for students to read. Teachers are generally loath to spend twenty minutes in class reading. The teachers may think that the students aren’t working hard enough, that the principle or other administrators will think that the time is “wasted” reading, or the teacher may feel that he or she is being lazy by reading with the students instead of lecturing. However, if any time during class (even a few minutes at the beginning of class as students are arriving, roll is being taken, and other matters are being attended to) can be used for reading, it should be!

Although reading is a great way to absorb an extensive amount of knowledge about a language, students still need explicit grammar instruction to complement the information they learn while reading. Contrastive analyses tailored to students’ specific language needs are a great way to help students learn the exact grammar and
pronunciation of Standard English. I offer these analyses with a few caveats. Students should not be required to use the new rules in speaking immediately. Students should be given time to practice using the new information in writing, with time to check their work before being asked to speak using the information from contrastive analysis. This will give them practice and confidence before asking them to speak, which can be a very stressful and difficult experience, as anyone who has tried to communicate in a second language knows! Also, a students’ pronunciation is a large part of who they are. Students should not be asked to speak with complete SE pronunciation. As long as their speech is understandable to SE speakers, students’ should be encouraged to take pride in their roots and retain as much of their native pronunciation as possible. An activity to reinforce the grammar that students are learning is found in Appendix III, pages 102-104. This activity has students create crossword puzzles from an internet website.

A lesson summary which requires students to “translate” famous speeches from history into their native language or dialect is found in Appendix III, page 105. At the end of this lesson, students will be required to trade their final speech, completely translated into Hawaiian Creole, with a classmate. The classmate will then (without the assistance of the original speech) translate it back into SE.

Finally students will be encouraged to teach SE speakers the rules and history of their language. This can happen in a few different ways. The teacher can set up times with other teachers when pairs or groups of students can come into their classes and teach a lesson on the rules and history of AAVE or Creole. History classes or English classes would be the most appropriate classes for these students to present their information, but there may be difficulties in excusing students from one class in order to visit another
class. Another difficulty is matching the other teachers’ schedules. A second method would be to have the students video record themselves teaching friends or family members the syntax and history of their language or dialect. For the education of the other students at the school and the inclusiveness of the students, a presentation to their peers is a better choice. This will also encourage students to put forth their best effort and create the best presentation they can.

The CAP (Caribbean Academic Program) schools in Illinois create an inclusive community through candid and recurring education on students’ languages. Menecker describes a visit to a CAP school where she saw students interviewing each other about their knowledge of Caribbean Creole English. She states, “CAP students seemed to be well aware of the type of misunderstandings about language that were common in the general population and took pride in their own grasp of the issues” (2).

While some people may think that studying linguistics and advanced grammatical concepts may be beyond the grasp of high school students, especially students who speak non-standard dialects and Creole languages, Merecker found that wasn’t the case. After observing the CAP school, she states, “Some of the discussions I participated in with the CAP students about sociolinguistic issues were at a level at least as sophisticated as those that take place in university-level linguistics courses” (3).

A lesson plan outlining the preparation for presenting the rules a history of the language or dialect to SE speaking classmates, including requirements, assessment scales, and organization is found in Appendix III pages 106-110.
At this point, students are prepared to practice code-switching. Code-switching is the ability to change from language to language, dialect to dialect, or levels of formality depending on the situation and environment. For example, it may be appropriate to speak one’s native dialect when chatting with co-workers, but Standard English should be used during a job interview. Firstly students will study, and discuss the importance of being able to code-switch. Next they will study and discuss when it is appropriate to use one language or dialect as opposed to another. Then they will study and practice the different registers of formality that Standard English has. After practicing the different varieties of formal versus casual speech, students will practice through role-plays, dialogues and drama how and when to code-switch. If possible, there should be some real-world integration at some point during this presentation, for example, a guest speaker who can share their examples of how he or she code-switches at work and home, or a visit to a professional work place or University so students can practice their formal Standard English registers.

In Godley et al.’s article, “Preparing Teachers for Dialectally Diverse Classrooms,” the authors cite a study which found that, “Over a 2-year period, the students of one teacher who extensively implemented this code-switching method significantly improved in their overall pass rate on the state’s standardized writing assessment from 60% to 79% to 94%” (35). Not only will it help students as they interreact verbally, but it will also help students in their written work!
Delpit describes how role-playing can help students practice Standard English. She states, “memorizing parts for drama productions will allow students to practice and “get the feel” of speaking standard English while not under the threat of constant correction” (3). Delpit adds, “playing a role eliminates the possibility of implying that the child’s language is inadequate and suggests, instead, that different language forms are appropriate in different contexts” (3). She describes how some students would use specific newscasters, such as Tom Brokaw, to emulate in a practice new report which was then shown to the entire school on a daily basis. A lesson summary replacing weather reports for newscasts is found in Appendix IV, page 112.

Another way to help students become more aware of their own speech,(self awareness being critical to effective code-switching), is self-critique using tape recordings of the students’ speech. Delpit cites Etta Hollins who discovered, “just by leaving a tape recorder on during an informal class period and playing it back with no comment, students began to code-switch—moving between Standard English and Ebonics---more effectively. It appears that they may not have realized which language form they were using until they heard themselves speak on tape” (3).

I recommend giving students a chance to first read and practice dialogues. Once students have done that, then they can move on to writing their own dialogues, while using the contrastive analysis charts, grammar worksheets, and so forth to write their dialogues before performing them to the class. And only once they feel comfortable with that, do I encourage having students practice impromptu conversations in SE. Because SE is so different from students’ native dialect or language, an immediate attempt to have spontaneous conversations will lead to halting, incorrect phrases, lapses back into the
native language or dialect, a hesitancy to express complex ideas or use advanced vocabulary and so forth. Students must have a strong foundation before being asked to put everything they have learned together and speak in a confident, fluid manner.

A lesson summary spanning three class periods is found in Appendix IV, page 113. This lesson summary includes students reading prepared role-plays and then writing and performing their own dialogues which use code-switching.

**Weeks 14 & 15 Appendix V**

At this point most teachers want to include some sort of semester or unit review and assessment. Various methods of assessment are found in Appendix V, page 115.

One particular way which could sum up everything the students have learned up to this point is to have students make a public service announcement. A lesson plan on how to make a public service announcement is found in Appendix V, page 115.
Conclusion

Already teachers, school districts, parents, and students are beginning to see the change that embracing one’s native language and dialect through education can make at school, home, and work. Through using the pedagogical materials explained and provided here, teachers will have the resources to begin teaching a specialized curriculum to students whose English needs differ from those of SE speaking students.

Students who speak non-standard varieties of English are in need of a specialized curriculum because a greater percentage of these students experience low achievement in schools, low socioeconomic status, and disenfranchisement with the educational system. This disenfranchisement is perpetuated by teachers, school boards, and the public, all of whom may be ignorant of linguistic complexity, or hold language and dialect stereotypes. These negative consequences affect Creole speaking students and NSD students, the largest group of NSD students being AAVE speaking students. Creole and NSD speaking students can overcome their reduced academic accomplishments and achieve mastery of SE, retain pride in their native language/dialect, and succeed academically and socioeconomically. Through becoming bilingual or bidialectal, these students can also feel more comfortable participating at school, be less likely to drop out, and gain the skills and confidence needed to succeed with higher education. These students will also have the tools at their disposal to change public perception of their language and feel a stronger connection with their culture and ethnic history.

Although validating Creole languages and non-standard dialects is an educational practice still in its infancy, there is enough research and information for educators to
learn how to assist speakers of any language or dialect. Through acceptance of students’
native language/dialect, educators can learn more about the best ways to reach this
segment of the population. Hopefully, the future will see an educational system which
accepts all varieties of languages and which builds upon the pedagogical foundation
introduced here in order to fulfill its responsibility to all students, regardless of
differences in linguistic background.
Appendix I

Weeks 1, 2 & 3

Native Dialect Appreciation
Spoken Poetry Lesson Plan

Classroom:

This classroom has both AAVE and English Creole Speakers. This is a high school remedial English class made up of students age 16 to 18. It meets every day for 50 minutes.

Objectives:

Students will listen to two readings by famous poets.

Students will be able to express their feelings about poetry.

Students will be able to link the ideas expressed in the two poems to their lives.

Materials Needed:

- Projector
- Computer with internet access
- Speakers
- Handouts with poems

Procedures:

10 Minutes

Teacher will open class by explaining that today the class will listen to two very famous poems, one written by Kamau Brathwaite from Barbados who speaks Barbados Creole
English, and another by Paul Laurence Dunbar who writes in AAVE. The teacher will then pull up photos of both men on the projector from the websites, http://www.dunbarsite.org/sites.asp and http://post.queensu.ca/~varadhar/eng%20384/brathwaite.jpg.

5 Minutes
Teacher will hand out copies of the two poems and invite students to look over them. The students won’t have time to read them through, just skim them.

5 Minutes
Then the teacher will go to Youtube and play the following clip of Kamau Brathwaite reading his poem, 21 Days. Because of time constraints, the class will only listen to the first half of the poem. The teacher will ask students to close their eyes and just listen to the poem, not read along with it.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbHQAK2J7NA

5 Minutes
The teacher will ask students to keep their eyes closed for a minute and think about the poem and their thoughts. Then, the students will be asked to turn over the sheet of paper and on the blank back side, write their reactions to the poem. They can just free write without worrying about punctuation or spelling.

5 Minutes
The teacher will go to the website, http://www.dunbarsite.org/gallery/AnAnte-BellumSermon.asp and play An Ante-Bellum Sermon. The teacher will explain this is a very religious poem, specifically Christian. It is a very famous poem, not only for its ideas, but for the beauty of the words. Many people are not Christian or even religious, and that’s fine! If the student is not religious, he or she should still listen to the poem and
find the beauty it. The teacher will again ask students to close their eyes and just listen to the poem, not read along with it.

5 Minutes

The teacher will ask students to keep their eyes closed for a minute and think about the poem and their thoughts. Then, to turn over the poem and on the blank back side, write their reactions to the poem. They can just free write without worrying about punctuation or spelling.

15 Minutes

The teacher will head a discussion about the students thoughts on the poems. Firstly, the teacher will ask students to summarize 21 Days in their own words, then share their opinions and feelings about it. Then again with An Ante-Bellum Sermon. The discussion about An Ante-Bellum Sermon needs to be handled very carefully. If students feel comfortable discussing religion, then the teacher should allow it, being careful to avoid making any other students feel comfortable. If the students dislike the religious aspect, they should also be encouraged to share their point of view. All students must remain respectful of other students’ beliefs. If the teacher suspects this may not be possible, then another poem should be chosen. Although An Ante-Bellum Sermon is Paul Laurence Dunbar’s most famous poem, he has written many other beautifully written poems, and they can be listened to at the same website as listed above.

Finally, the teacher will ask students to write up four short paragraphs for homework. The students should write a summary and reaction to each poem, drawing on their freewriting notes they jotted down immediately following each poem.

Closure: The teacher will collect the paragraphs the following day.
**Assessment:** The teacher will not grade the summaries and reactions to the poems, instead he or she will simply give a grade for having completed the assignment or not. If the teacher were to grade the reactions to the poetry, it would inhibit students in the future from freely expressing themselves. Students are allowed to like or dislike poetry!
the 21 days

on the first day
of yr death it is quiet it is dormant like a doormat
no one-foot touch its welcome its dust on the floor
is not disturb nor are the sleeping spirits of this house

i sit here in this chair trying to unravel Time so that it wouldn't happen twine

on the second day
of yr death. i break a small
bread

i can still smell the sweet flour of yr firstborn flesh

on the third day
of yr death. the water in my urine turn to blood
i cover the waterfront of the mirror w/a blue cloth where yr face stood

on the fourth day

yu shd be rising. knocking at the door of darkness. coming back to me

i do not hear yr call

on the fifth day
after yr death. a young white rooster. white white white feathery & shining tail & tall
neighbour of sound from miles away in the next village
stands in the yard & from his red crown crows & crows & will not go away

he struts round to the back-a-wall
his one eye clicking clicking as he crows
comes to the glissen of my window & he crows
loud like the overflowing voice of my Trelawny waterfall

on the sixth day
after yr death. there is this silence of flowers
their petals say their shining needs
soft water needs
sweet showers needs
sweet rain from heaven

i see them once again inside the chapel of my funeral

on the seventh day
after yr death. the yellow flour
in the cup-cakes in the kitchen have gone sour
there is an eye of rancid in the middle of their meal

i am unhappy like the wind & tides are restless rivers
i can't find you. i can't find you. i cannot cannot cannot be console to dreams

the mad dogs of the pasture kill the cock & pillage
it. madwoman wind is scattering white screaming feathers' petals' pedals over all
the brunt & burnin ochre-colour land

on the eiate day
after yr death
me do nothin. nothin. nothin. i can't even get yr inglish 'eighth' spelt streight

This poem was found at http://www.griffinpoetryprize.com/brathwaite-sycorax-text.html
An Ante-Bellum Sermon

WE is gathahed hyeah, my brothahs,
In dis howlin' wildaness,
Fu' to speak some words of comfo't
To each othah in distress.

An' we chooses fu' ouah subjic'
Dis -- we'll 'splain it by an' by;
"An' de Lawd said, ' Moses, Moses,'
An' de man said, 'Hyeah am I.'"

Now ole Pher'oh, down in Egypt,
Was de wuss man evah bo'n,
An' he had de Hebrew chillun
Down dah wukin' in his co'n;
'T well de Lawd got tiahed o' his foolin',
An' sez he: "I'll let him know --
Look hyeah, Moses, go tell Pher'oh
Fu' to let dem chillun go."

"An' ef he refuse to do it,
I will make him rue de houah,
Fu' I'll empty down on Egypt

All de vials of my powah."

Yes, he did -- an' Pher'oh's ahmy
Was n't wuth a ha'f a dime;
Fu' de Lawd will he'p his chillun,
You kin trust him evah time.

An' yo' enemies may 'sail you
In de back an' in de front;
But de Lawd is all aroun' you,
Fu' to ba' de battle's brunt.

Dey kin fo'ge yo' chains an' shackles
F'om de mountains to de sea;
But de Lawd will sen' some Moses
Fu' to set his chillun free.

An' de lan' shall hyeah his thundah,
Lak a blas' f'om Gab'el's ho'n,
Fu' de Lawd of hosts is mighty
When he girds his ahmor on.

But fu' feah some one mistakes me,
I will pause right hyeah to say,
Dat I'm still a-preachin' ancient,
I ain't talkin' 'bout to-day.

But I tell you, fellah christuns,

Things'll happen mighty strange;

Now, de Lawd done dis fu' Isrul,

An' his ways don't nevah change,

An, de love he showed to Isrul

Was n't all on Isrul spent;

Now don't run an' tell yo' mastahs

Dat I's preachin' discontent.

'Cause I is n't; I'se a-judgin'

Bible people by deir ac's;

I'se a-givin' you de Scriptuah,

I'se a-handin' you de fac's.

Cose ole Pher'oh b'lieved in slav'ry,

But de Lawd he let him see,

Dat de people he put bref in, --

Evah mothah's son was free.

An' dahs othahs thinks lak Pher'oh,

But dey calls de Scriptuah liar,

Fu' de Bible says "a servant

Is a-worthy of his hire."

An' you cain't git roun' nor thoo dat

An' you cain't git ovah it,

Fu' whatevah place you git in,

Dis hyeah Bible too 'll fit.

So you see de Lawd's intention,

Evah sence de worl' began,

Was dat His almighty freedom

Should belong to evah man,

But I think it would be bettah,

Ef I'd pause agin to say,

Dat I'm talkin' 'bout ouah freedom

In a Bibleistic way.

But de Moses is a-comin',

An' he's comin', suah and fas'

We kin hyeah his feet a-trompin',

We kin hyeah his trumpit blas'.

But I want to wa'n you people,

Don't you git too brigity;

An' don't you git to braggin'

'Bout dese things, you wait an' see.
But when Moses wif his powah
    Comes an' sets us chillun free,
We will praise de gracious Mastah
    Dat has gin us liberty;

    An' we'll shout ouah halleluyahs,
    On dat mighty reck'nin' day,
    When we'se reco'nised ez citiz'--
    Huh uh! Chillun, let us pray!

This poem was found at http://www.dunbarsite.org/gallery/AnAnte-BellumSermon.asp
Presentation on Creole/AAVE Lesson Plan

Classroom:

This English classroom has a mixture of Creole speaking, AAVE and Standard English speaking students who are all in danger of dropping out of school. This is a remedial senior high school class which meets every day for 50 minutes. This project will take place of the course of two weeks. Once the initial introduction to the project is spent only two further class hours will be provided to work on the project. The teacher will allow a few minutes every class period for students to ask questions, to ask students for updates on their progress and so forth. One final class period will be used for students to present their work for their classmates.

Objectives:

Students will be able to work outside of class to complete a project.

Students will be able to apply their schoolwork to their personal life.

Students will be able to share information in an organized way to their classmates.

Students will be able to express their opinions about non-standard languages/dialects.

Students will be able to express the opinions of the experts on non-standard languages/dialects.

Materials Needed:

- Creole/AAVE Presentation Assignment Sheet

- A few children’s books in AAVE or English Creole
Copies of the following articles,

“The Riches of African American English” by Tom Rueper

“At Last. Plantation English in American: Nonstandard Varieties and the Quest for Educational Equality” by John Baugh

“Black English/Ebonics: What it be like?” by Geneva Smitherman

“Black English: Stepping up? Looking Back” by Beverly Jean Smith

Procedures:

Teacher will disperse the “Creole/AAVE Presentation Assignment Sheet” to the students and read through it as a class, answering any questions. The teacher can then model a shortened version of a presentation or (if possible) show a videotape of a student’s presentation from the year before. Throughout the following week, the teacher will set aside two non-adjacent class periods to be used for working on the project.

During the class periods when students are working, the teacher should be circulating and helping students find materials, organize their presentations and stay on task. During class periods when students are not working on the project, the teacher should set aside a few minutes every day to keep the project in the students’ minds by asking question about progress, praising students whose work is outstanding, and encouraging students to ask questions.

On the day of the presentations, a video camera should be placed at the back of the room. The recording of the presentation can be sent home with the students to show their family, can be used by the teacher when assessing the presentation, or can be saved to model particularly good presentations for next year’s students.
Creole/AAVE Presentation Assignment Sheet

- Choose an appropriate song by Bob Marley or Tupac Shakur, (or other musician) with lyrics in Creole English or AAVE. Read and interpret the lyrics, research the history behind the song and artist, and explain your findings and then play the song for the class

- Memorize a poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar, James Whitcomb Riley, Louise Bennett, or Kamau Brathwaite and read it aloud to the class with emotion

Start your project by going to one of the following websites.

- [http://www.dunbarsite.org/](http://www.dunbarsite.org/)


- [http://louisebennett.com/](http://louisebennett.com/)

- [http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/brathwa.htm](http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/brathwa.htm)

- Find two children’s books in AAVE or English Creole and read them aloud to siblings, cousins, or other youth. Talk about the books with the children. Bring the books into class and talk about your experience.

- Read one of the five articles or chapters listed below and teach your classmates the important points in them. I will provide you with copies of the article or chapter you choose. You may create a handout or a PowerPoint presentation.

  1) *The Prism of a Grammar* by Tom Rueper  Chapter 11 “The Riches of African American English” pages 227 – 242
2) “At Last. Plantation English in American: Nonstandard Varieties and the Quest for Educational Equality” by John Baugh

3) The Real Ebonics Debate Edited by Theresa Perry and Lisa Delpit.

4) “Black English/Ebonics: What it be like?” by Geneva Smitherman
   pages 29-37

5) “Black English: Stepping up? Looking Back” by Beverly Jean Smith
   pages 197 - 204

- Another related language activity of your choice, pass it by the teacher first.

Things to Remember

- You cannot leave a project like this to the last minute. You need time to find children’s books to read, a poem you like enough to spend time memorizing, and so forth. If you begin one project and decide that you don’t like it, you can switch to a different one. You won’t have time to switch if you leave it to the last minute!

- Use the internet, your family, the librarian, myself, or your classmates to help find information or practice your presentation.

- You will have about two class periods to work on this, which will not be enough time. You should plan to spend time outside of class on this project.
Language Discussion Lesson Plan (Elementary)

Classroom:
This lesson plan is for a third grade class with Creole speakers, AAVE speakers, and SE speakers.

Objectives:
Students will be able to recognize that different people speak in different ways.

Students will understand that all the different ways that people speak are equal.

Materials Needed:

- The book, Nathaniel Talking by Eloise Greenfield Illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist.

- A chalkboard and chalk

Procedures:
The teacher should pull the students who are AAVE or Creole speaking aside before the lesson and tell them in advance that there will be a lesson on how they speak. The teacher will make it sound exciting and fun and encourage them to tell their parents about their special day and try to participate during the class. The teacher may also choose to send a note home inviting the parents to come to class that day.

10 Minutes

The teacher will begin by reading the short story, “She Come Bringing Me That Little Baby Girl.” The teacher should also read the poem, “Who the Best?” from Nathaniel Talking by Eloise Greenfield Illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist. This will get students thinking about how certain people talk differently than other people. The teacher should point out places in the book or ask students to point out places where the language is different from SE. The teacher needs to be very careful throughout the conversation to
keep students from describing the phrasing as wrong or bad. The teacher should positively describe the way the book uses language.

20 Minutes

The teacher will then ask the following questions

“Does anyone in your family speak differently than you do?”

-Hopefully this will elicit responses from the students, but the teacher can urge students on by asking, “Do people talk differently in the city or the country? Do people from other countries talk differently than we do in the USA? Do rich people talk differently from poor people?”

“Do people sometimes look down on people who speak differently?”

If the students say no or don’t know what to say, the teacher should offer some personal examples of times people have been treated poorly because of the way they spoke. The teacher shouldn’t force the non-SE speaking students to talk in front of their classmates in case they are too shy, but can encourage them to tell stories or give examples to the class.

“How do YOU feel about speaking differently?”

The teacher can ask students how they would feel if they lived somewhere where their language was in the minority.

“How should we treat people who speak differently than us?”

Students may be tempted to say things like, “Help them learn English.” The teacher can use a comment like that to reinforce language equality and emphasize that no language is better than another.

15 Minutes

The teacher will then teach a very simple linguistics lesson by creating the following diagram on the board.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standard English</th>
<th>AAVE and Creole English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>I play with my friends.</td>
<td>I play with my friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td>You play with my friends.</td>
<td>You play with my friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td>We play with my friends.</td>
<td>We play with my friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td>They play with my friends.</td>
<td>They play with my friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>He plays with my friends.</td>
<td>He play with my friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>She plays with my friends.</td>
<td>She play with my friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It (The Puppy)</td>
<td>The puppy plays with my</td>
<td>The puppy play with my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>friends.</td>
<td>friends.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This very simple diagram can introduce students to one very simple aspect of language and show them that the differences in language follow rules.

**Closure:**

The teacher may want to arrange for a parent volunteer to visit the. The teacher should explain to the parent the goals of the class (to increase linguistic awareness and acceptance) and ask the parent to speak in AAVE or Creole English and tell a story or read a book from home which uses the native dialect or languages. The teacher and students will be prepared to listen attentively and ask the guest speaker any additional questions they may have.
SHE COME
BRINGING ME
THAT LITTLE
BABY GIRL

by
Eloise Greenfield
Illustrated by
John Steptoe
I asked Mama to bring me a little brother from the hospital, but she come bringing me that little baby girl wrapped all up in a pink blanket. Me and Aunt Mildred were looking out the window when Daddy brought them home.
It was making me sick to see them crowding around that ugly old baby and making those stupid noises. And presents all over the place. It was really making me sick.
Who the Best

People always fussing about
Who the best
Who the best
This drummer or that one
This singer or that one
Making a big fuss about nothing
I say
What's the use of choosing
When we got 'em all
Anyway?
Language Discussion Lesson Plan (Middle School)

**Classroom:** This class has both AAVE speakers and SE speakers. It is an eighth grade class that meets every day for fifty minutes.

**Objectives:**

Students will listen and discuss a poem and their thoughts about the poem.

Students will know a brief life history of the famous poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar.

Students will be able to recognize that different people speak in different ways.

Students will understand that all the different ways that people speak are equal.

**Materials Needed:**

- Speakers

- Computer with internet access


- A chalkboard and chalk

**Procedures:**

10 Minutes

The teacher will begin by having students listen to a reading of Paul Dunbar’s poetry from the website, http://www.dunbarsite.org/gallery/Opportunity.asp. The teacher should remain neutral as to his or her attitude toward the poem. Although I have included the lyrics at the end of the lesson plan for the teacher’s benefit, the students should just listen
to the poem, not receive handouts with the lyrics printed. The teacher will explain that
today’s focus is the beauty of the spoken language and reading the poem may take away
from the listening aspect of the poem.

10 Minutes

The teacher will then ask the following questions

“What did you think of the poem?”
“If you had to guess at the life story of the person who wrote the poem, what
would you think?”
“If you had to guess as to the educational level, intelligence, and wealth of the
person who read the poem, what would you guess?”

At this stage in the classroom experience, the students may have negative
stereotypes towards the poem and the reading, they may suppose that the writer is
uneducated or that the reader is poor or unintelligent. The teacher should allow students
to express their point of view, as long as the comments aren’t too out of line.

15 Minutes

The teacher should tell the students about Paul Laurence Dunbar and his man
accomplishments. Information can be found at the following website,
http://www.dunbarsite.org/biopld.asp

10 Minutes

The teacher will ask the students to listen to the poem again, this time with a handout of
the poem in front of them. The teacher will ask the following questions.
“What is the poet trying to say?”

“Does this poem have any connection to your life?’’

“Do you feel any connection to the narrator?”

“What do you think about your earlier guesses about the life story of the author?

“Do you still think the narrator is __________________________(fill in the blank with whatever the students had said previously?)”

5 Minutes

The teacher should end by reading some more modern AAVE poetry from the book, *Nathaniel Talking* by Eloise Greenfield Illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist.

**Closure:**

The teacher may want to ask a parent volunteer to come to the class and visit. The teacher should explain to the parent the goals of the class (to increase linguistic awareness and acceptance) and ask the parent to speak in AAVE and discuss their difficulties with prejudice or stereotypes in his or her life.

GRANNY’S gone a-visitin’,
  Seen huh git huh shawl
W'en I was a-hidin’ down
  Hime de gyahden wall.
Seen huh put her bonnet on,
  Seen huh tie de strings,
An' I'se gone to dreamin' now
  'Bout dem cakes an' t'ings.

Mussy, w'en I gits in daih,
  I'll des sholy dance.
Lemon pie an' gingah-cake,
  Let me set an' t'ink--
Vinegah an' sugah, too,
  Dat'll mek a drink;
Ef dey's one t'ing dat I loves
  Mos' pu'ticlahly,
It is eatin' sweet t'ings an'
  A-drinkin' Sangaree.

Lawdy, won' po' granny raiah
  W'en she see de she'f;
W'en I t'ink erbout huh face,
  I's mos' 'shamed
myse'f.
Well, she gone, an' h'yeah I is,
  Back behime de do'--

Look h'yeah! Gran' 's done
  'spected me,
  Dain't no sweets no mo'.
Evah sweet is hid erway,
  Job des done up brown;
Pusson t'ink dat someun
t'ought
  Dey was t'eves erroun';
Dat des breaks my heart in two,
  Oh how bad I feel!
Des to t'ink my own gramma
  B'lieved dat I 'u'd steal!
Nathaniel Talking
by Eloise Greenfield

illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist
Nathaniel's Rap

It's Nathaniel talking
and Nathaniel's me
I'm talking about
My philosophy
About the things I do
And the people I see
All told in the words
Of Nathaniel B. Free
That's me
And I can rap
1 can rap
I can rap, rap, rap
Till your earflaps flap
I can talk that talk
Till you go for a walk
I can run it on down
Till you get out of town
I can rap

I can rap
Rested, dressed and feeling fine
I've got something on my mind
Friends and kin and neighborhood
Listen now and listen good
Nathaniel's talking
Nathaniel B. Free
Talking about
My philosophy
Been thinking all day
I got a lot to say
Gotta run it on down
Nathaniel's way
Okay!
I gotta rap
Gotta rap
Gotta rap, rap, rap
Till your earflaps flap
Gotta talk that talk
Till you go for a walk
Gotta run it on down
Till you get out of town
Gotta rap
Gotta rap
Rested, dressed and feeling fine
I've got something on my mind
Friends and kin and neighborhood
Listen now and listen good
I'm gonna rap, hey!
Gonna rap, hey!
Gonna rap, hey!
I'm gonna rap!
When I Misbehave

when I misbehave and have to stay after school
my teacher don't like it
my grandma don't like it
my daddy don't like it
and when they get to talking neither do I
I'm ready to cry
Appendix II

Weeks 4 & 5

Motivation to Learn SE
Creole Dictionary Lesson Summary

For this lesson, the teacher will ask students to begin to notice differences and similarities between their speech and the speech of their peers, teachers, family, and people on television or radio. The teacher should provide a chance for students to write down some examples of differences in class in groups. Then the teacher will have students listen or watch a ten minute recording of a person speaking SE while students (as a class or in small groups) find phrases or vocabulary that are different. For example, in JC, the word for a very young person is *pickiney* while in SE the word is *child*. This initial practice should prepare students to find more words on their own. The teacher should then give students a few days, at least a weekend or more, to collect vocabulary to add to their dictionary. The teacher should explicitly address some good places to find words, for example, from books, magazines, and television, or while listening to people at work, at the bus stop, or with their family. The students should compile a list of at least 20 words or phrases that are different between the languages.

Then the teacher should ensure that all students have a strong understanding of verbs, nouns, adjectives, and so forth so that they can appropriately label their words. If necessary, the teacher should teach these concepts. The teacher should also have students look through dictionaries and list characteristics of dictionary definitions. These characteristics should then be clearly posted in the room. The teacher will then model writing a definition and have students break into groups of two to four students. The students should pool their words and choose the best 30 words to define (less words should be required in a group of two, more words in a group of four). The students will then have time to work together, and they should take this time to divide up the words and complete definitions as homework. Finally, the students should then have one more class period to compile their words, check each other’s work, create a dictionary cover, and assemble their dictionary.
The teacher should provide time for students to share their dictionaries with other students, not just their classmates. One good way would be to create a display at the school library, where students from all over the school can see their classmates’ work.
Appendix III

Weeks 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10

Grammar/Spelling/
Pronunciation/Vocabulary
Crossword Lesson Plan

Classroom: This senior high school classroom is made up of sixteen English Creole Speaking students from Jamaica and Trinidad. This class meets every day for fifty minutes. This particular activity would occur in the second half of a class period and the first half of the next day.

Objectives:

Students will be able to target their own deficiencies in knowledge concerning recently studied grammatical concepts.

Students will be able to use advanced vocabulary words to create a crossword puzzle. The words will be spelled correctly.

Students will be able to use the computer to create crossword puzzles.

Students will be able to solve and critique a classmate’s crossword puzzle.

Materials Needed:

-A SMART board
-Access to the school’s computer lab with one computer per student
-Printer

Procedures:

10 Minutes

The teacher will review recently studied SE grammatical concepts such as subject-verb agreement, plurality, use of the verb to be, and article usage.

10 Minutes
The teacher will explain that the students are going to make a crossword puzzle today. The teacher will show an image of a crossword puzzle on the SMART board and explain how they work. Important concepts include

- Words must be spelled correctly
- Usually there are one-word answers. When there are two-word answers, no space is needed
- Every clue should be specific enough that only one answer will work

10 Minutes

The teacher will go to the website, http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/crossword/ and explain how the students will make a crossword puzzle themselves. The students will write out sentences which use any of the grammatical concepts recently studied, and then choose one word to be the clue. For example, the sentence, “The book is on the table,” uses the verb to be correctly. The students would then make the clue portion of the crossword the sentence “The book _____ on the table.” The answer is the verb “is.” The students provide the clues and answers and the website will put the crossword puzzle together.

The teacher will provide more examples as needed, depending on the students' familiarity with crossword puzzles and comprehension of the task.

The teacher will ask students to write out their sentences as homework. The teacher will also ask students to think for themselves which parts of grammar are the most difficult for them. Is it usage of the verb to be? Is it subject-verb agreement? Is it article usage? Is it academic vocabulary? The students should really try to challenge themselves to create difficult crossword puzzles, and if they have questions, they can consult their contrastive analysis charts, classmates, and teacher for help.

CLASS DISMISSED

CLASS RETURNS THE FOLLOWING DAY

15 Minutes

The class immediately goes to the computer lab and students log on to the computers and go to the website, http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/crossword/. The students begin to type in
their crossword clues and answers as the teacher walks around, answers questions, and keeps students on task.

10 Minutes

Students should be able to finish their crosswords and print them off in fifteen to twenty-five minutes. The students who finish quickly can read books until the others have finished.

10 Minutes

Students return to the classroom and the teacher explains the next portion of the assignment. The students have already given their crossword puzzles to the teacher, and now the teacher shuffles the puzzles and hands each student a crossword puzzle a classmate made. Their homework for tonight is to complete their classmate’s puzzle and bring it in the next day.

AT THIS POINT, THE TEACHER WILL MOVE TO A DIFFERENT TOPIC FOR THE REST OF THE CLASS PERIOD.

CLASS RETURNS THE FOLLOWING DAY

Closure:

10 Minutes

Students return with the crossword puzzles and the teacher instigates a short discussion. Did they like the activity? Did they feel like they learned a lot? Did they push themselves to think of personally challenging sentences?

Assessment: Teachers will correct the crossword puzzles, giving students two grades, one grade for creating the puzzle and one grade for completing a classmate’s puzzle. The creation of the puzzle will be worth more than the completion of a classmate’s puzzle.
Speech Translation

In this classroom, there are 21 students, all speakers of Hawaii Creole English (HCE). This can be used during a History or English class for sophomores in High school. For this lesson, introduce the idea of famous speeches, perhaps by having students watch Martin Luther King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech. Then help students to find and choose a famous speech which can be from a local, national, or worldwide speaker. It can be a recent speech or one far in the past. Students will then read the speech, summarize it in their own words, and hand it in to the teacher. The teacher will add personalized notes to the summary, ensuring student comprehension.

The following class period the teacher will read a short section of Martin Luther King’s “I Have A Dream” speech translated into HCE. Afterward the teacher will explain that students are to translate the speech they chose into HCE. The teacher will hand back the students’ summaries and the students will begin translating the original speech into HCE. Once the students are finished translating their speech, students will be required to trade their speech, completely translated into Hawaii Creole with a classmate. The classmate will then (without the assistance of the original text) translate it back into SE.

The SE translations from the students should be checked for grammatical accuracy and spelling. This activity should be completed with a class discussion on the historical significance of HCE and people’s perceptions of HCE. The final translations will no doubt be very different from the original and these differences could be the impetus for a discussion on miscommunications between people who speak SE vs. HCE.
Syntax and History of Your Language/Dialect Lesson Plan

Classroom:

This classroom has both AAVE and English Creole Speakers. This is a high school remedial English class made up of students age 16 to 19. (Some students have been held back from graduating on time.) It meets every day for 50 minutes. This lesson will span two weeks, but only four class periods will be spent on the project.

Objectives:

Students will be able to use books and the internet to research information.

Students will be able to equally share work in a group and stay on task.

Students will be able to complete a project utilizing time outside of class.

Students will be able to organize a language lesson.

Students will be able to speak confidently to a classroom.

Materials Needed:

-Access to computers with internet connection

-Access to the library

-Access to a printer and copier

-Poster board, markers, glue, scissors

-A video recorder

-Speakers
**Procedures:**

5 Minutes

Teacher will explain that the students are going to teach their classmates about their language/dialect. Not in this class, but in another class! They will research the history and rules of their language/dialect or another language or dialect and proudly teach a class all about it. The teacher will emphasize that this is a chance to begin to change public opinion about languages, and show people the pride that they have in their heritage. The students can ask one of their other teachers (preferably a History or English teacher) if they can give the presentation in their class. If the students can’t procure a classroom on their own, a classroom with an accommodating teacher will be provided. The teacher will then hand out the Assignment Sheet.

20 Minutes

The teacher will go through the Assignment Sheet with the students and answer any questions that they have. The teacher will also add that the students will be required to come in at least once after school or during lunch to present their project to the teacher as a dress rehearsal. The teacher will then approve the presentation or require revisions and another dress rehearsal. The teacher will emphasize that these rehearsals are for the students’ benefit! They want to look good for their classmates, don’t they?

20 Minutes

Teacher will give students time to get into groups and choose their dialect and begin to set up times to meet outside of class. The teacher will also encourage students to begin breaking the research up into groups and assigning research to certain people. For example, one student will research pronunciation, anther students will focus on history, another on grammar, another on finding visual or audio additions. Students will be given the rest of the class time to plan.

**THE FOLLOWING TWO WEEKS**

Over the next two weeks, the teacher should set aside four class periods for students to work on their project, providing computer lab hours, materials to create posters for visual effect and so forth. During work hours, the teacher should constantly be interacting with the groups, providing support, research assistance, and so forth. During the class periods not spent on the project, the teacher should explicitly models different methods of teaching (using PowerPoint, creating a handout, etc), asking students to pay attention and take notes if they particularly like any style of teaching. The teacher should openly discuss and model how to keep students attention, and how to ensure comprehension from the class. The teacher should also teach presentation skills such as speaking at an appropriate speed, looking towards the audience, techniques for dealing with nervousness, and so forth.
The teacher should also arrange the dates and times for the classes to present their lessons, ensuring enough time for students to complete a dress rehearsal and possibly revisions.

**Closure:**

The teacher will write our extensive responses for the students as to what they did well and what needed improvement.

Once the presentations are all completed, the teacher will discuss with the class how they felt about the presentations. He or she will ask how the students felt about the research aspect, the group work, the actual presentation, the difficulty of the project, the grading, and anything else that they feel the need to talk about.

**Assessment:**

The teacher will watch in person whenever possible the presentations; otherwise, the teacher will record the presentations. The teacher will grade on the following scale

35% Accuracy and completeness of the information

20% Organization and Professionalism

20% Teamwork and attitude during preparation and presentation

15% Visual and Audio additions to the presentation

10% Interest and effectiveness of your presentation
Assignment Sheet for Language/Dialect Lesson

For this assignment you will teach your classmates the syntax (grammar rules) and history of your dialect/language or another dialect if you chose. You can work with a partner or in a group of three or four. You must share the work equally. Your presentation should last between five and ten minutes per person.

First - Choose who you want to work with and decide if you will study your own dialect/language or another dialect/language. Take into account if you live near each other or have similar study halls to make it easier to work together outside of class. We will have three class periods to work on the presentation, which will not be enough time. You should plan to put time outside of class into this project.

Second – Use any of the charts or graphs we used in class, or look on the internet or in the library for information on the dialect. You can use some of the techniques we used in our classroom study of dialects during your presentation. Ask me for electronic or paper copies if you need them. You may want to use the following website to get you started, but you should also look elsewhere on the internet or other books.


Third – Put your information together in an organized way. You may use PowerPoint, create a handout, or plan another way to present your information. Your presentation should be clearly understandable, professional, and interesting. Don’t forget to cite all the sources you use!

Fourth—You must present your project to me during lunch or after school before you present to another class. I will offer suggestions for improvements. If your presentation needs too many improvements, you will need to make the improvements and have another lunchtime/after school presentation before you can show it to your class.

Fifth—This should be a chance for you to showcase your knowledge. This should be exciting and fun! This will be something your classmates will talk about later with their friends, something that they will remember for years, and something you can be very proud of.
Include:

- Either perform a reading yourself in the dialect/language you chose or include a short recording of a famous person who speaks a non-standard dialect or Creole language, a song sung by an artist who sings in a non-standard dialect or Creole language or another audio clip of your choosing

- Interesting visuals such as photos, charts, maps, graphs, and so forth

Assessment:

Your presentation will be recorded. Whenever possible I will attend your presentation, otherwise I will watch the recording.

35% Accuracy and completeness of the information

20% Organization and Professionalism

20% Teamwork and attitude during preparation and presentation

15% Visual and Audio additions to the presentation

10% Interest and effectiveness of your presentation
Appendix IV

Weeks 11, 12, & 13

Code-Switching
Weather Reports Lesson Summary

During this lesson, students will be given different handouts with images of weather scenes on them. Students will describe the weather with a partner and write down vocabulary they use. As a class, the teacher will have them listen to various weather reports on the radio as well as watching forecasts on television or internet. Students will write down new vocabulary they hear that they think is particularly common or useful. The teacher may assist at this point with vocabulary which may be unfamiliar to students, such as low pressure zone or meteorologist. Students will also discuss or write down other aspects of the forecast they feel is important, such as the clothing worn by the forecaster, his or her posture and facial expressions, speed of speech and so forth.

Students are then encouraged to work in groups to compare their first forecast with the professional forecasts. Did they use many of the same words? What should they change? They will then be given time to practice forecasting the weather again. This time, they will use new vocabulary, and adopt the speech and mannerisms of the forecasters. As a group they should write one complete weather report. Finally, the teacher can choose to have students research and prepare more weather reports for exotic, unique, or local climates; or the teacher can ask students to give impromptu weather reports with images and information the teacher provides.

This lesson would most likely take two to three class periods.
**Code-Switching Practice**

The teacher begins by having students get into groups and read prepared role-plays in which the characters code-switch between speaking SE and their native language. The teacher asks students as a class what they noticed about the role-plays in terms of code-switching. Depending on the particular role-plays, the students might say something like, “The lady spoke JC at home, and she spoke it when she got on the bus, but at work, she spoke SE with her boss.” The teacher will then encourage students to think about where they and their family should speak SE and where SE is not necessary.

The teacher will then ask students to get into groups of two or three and choose three different locations: one location where SE would be preferred, one location where either SE or the native language/dialect would be fine, and one where the native language/dialect would be preferred. The students will then write a role play involving a character that visits all three locations in a day. The students may write many characters, which may result in some students playing more than one role. The students should focus not only on reading the lines, but also on spelling, grammar, and vocabulary. Once this is completed, all the role-plays are handed into the teacher. The teacher will photocopy the role-plays for the following day.

The following class period, the students will then have a writers’ workshop where each group gets together with another group to read their role-plays aloud. The students can read from their original paper to perform their role-play while their partnering group can follow along with the photocopy and make constructive notes. After critiques, the students have the rest of the hour to edit their role-plays and practice.

The following day, the students will perform their role-plays for their classmates.
Appendix V

Weeks 14 & 15

Wrap up and Review
Final Assessment Ideas

A final assessment is common in most school when a semester or unit ends. Teachers have very different systems of assessment, but almost any method would be appropriate here. A final exam, a written paper (either research based or personal—including one’s personal thoughts on language, future goals, and so forth), a group discussion, or final project of the students’ choosing would be appropriate. It should be kept in mind that all aspects of the curriculum should be reviewed at this point, the native language appreciation, history, famous writers, code-switching, grammar/spelling/pronunciation/vocabulary, and so forth.

Public Service Announcement Lesson Plan

A Public Service Announcement (PSA) is a great way to get people in the school talking about different ways of speaking, different languages, and non-standard dialects. At this point the students’ should have the ability to clearly and confidently explain the history of their language/dialect and what makes it different from Standard English. Through working in a group to plan a PSA, students will learn organizational and team-work skills. Through creating the announcement, students will build crucial technological skills which are used more and more often in schools and jobs throughout the world. The PSAs should definitely be shown to the rest of the school. Many schools have televisions in each classroom and students watch student news channels on a daily basis. The PSAs could be added to these daily shows and the entire school could learn more about their Creole speaking or non-standard dialect speaking classmates. Another idea would be to have the rest of the school watch them before a whole-school assembly, as a sort of a “movie trailer.”
Works Cited


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