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Adopting Home Language and Multimodality in Composition Courses

Mack Curry

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by

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Under the Direction of Mary Hocks, PhD

ABSTRACT

Over the years, language has been a major issue in teaching composition courses, specifically when discussing African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and Standard English (SE). Concepts such as Students Right to their Own Language (SRTOL), culturally relevant pedagogy, and code-switching have been introduced as ways to be more receptive to home language in the classroom. However, many students still lack feeling confidence to expressing themselves in their natural voices. I conducted this study to examine and tests how well AAVE, SE, code-meshing, and multimodality work together to help students better understand linguistic and rhetorical principles. This study found that teacher efficacy works to teach students how to comfortably and confidently navigate different communication spaces and

help them to retain their home identities. My study bridges the gap in research by connecting home language studies, rhetoric and composition, and multimodal assignments in the composition classroom.

Using teacher research in my Composition II classroom at CAU, a Historically Black College and University in Atlanta , I conducted a mixed methods case study using code-meshing, sonic rhetoric, remix theory, and multimodal assignments in the classroom.
The study answered the following questions: 1) can multimodal assignments be used to teach students to think more about how they use Standard Written English (SWE)? 2) Does code-meshing assist students with using SWE more in assignments or in other contexts? and 3) can auditory rhetoric and techno-inclusionism impact how students approach composition? My study's purpose was to see how students' comfort, confidence, and concepts of race, language, identity, and fluency were impacted by the methods used. This dissertation explores the surveys and assignments used to collect data and the results that culminated from it.

INDEX WORDS: Race, Language, Identity, Comfort, Confidence, Soundscape, Code-meshing, African-American vernacular english, Standard written english, Standard spoken english, Multimodality, Low-bridge assignments, Sonic rhetoric, Remix theory, Techno-inclusionism, Anti-racist classroom ecology, Teacher efficacy, HBCU

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DEDICATION

To you, Dad. You told me to go study, and I did.

To Black students everywhere, you are appreciated.

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I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge my family, friends, and loved ones. First, I want to thank my parents for teaching my brother and I about the importance of education. They always encouraged me to look up anything I wanted to know, and I've used this same strategy in my research. My mom constantly gives me words of encouragement, which was important for my success every step of the way. Next, I would like to thank my brother, Thomas, for being someone that I can set an example for while still learning from him. Being the older sibling means setting the bar, so I need to set it high enough to challenge him for greater. Last and most importantly, I would like to thank my wife-to-be, Amber, for loving me throughout this entire PhD process. She has tolerated my late nights of typing and researching, and she, like my mother, speaks life into me whenever I'm feeling down or doubtful. I'm forever indebted to her for this, and I'm now looking forward to spending more time with her and less time with my laptop and library books.

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INTRODUCTION/WELCOME TO MY RESEARCH

When conducting this research, I used the following questions: 1) how can multimodality coincide with AAVE and Standard English; 2) how do students feel about both AAVE and Standard English; and 3) how can code-meshing and AAVE use help increase confidence and comfort in the classroom? These questions were significant because they addressed issues students have with comfort and confidence in language and technology use along understanding of AAVE, SE, and code-meshing. This research took place at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia with a class of 23 students. Throughout this work, I will present information that will give insight for instructors to properly address home languages in the classroom. This conversation will also contribute to the conversation of how multimodal composition and home languages should function in composition courses.

My study blends concepts and theories from scholars such as Vershawn Young, Geneva Smitherman, Asao Inoue, Arnetha Ball and Ted Lardner, Michelle Comstock and Mary Hocks, and Virginia Kuhn. My hope is to provide a blueprint for how to combine linguistic and rhetorical theories and practices to better service students in composition classrooms. These practices worked together to increase comfort and confidence levels with students' language use while introducing assignments that allowed students to both retain their identity and demonstrate their knowledge and proficiency with using both using SSE and SWE. My biggest takeaway from the data analysis was how spoken and written language were viewed in different lights regarding preferences. For instance, students in my course preferred spoken AAVE over written AAVE because spoken AAVE was easier to understand. Also, my study worked to develop an anti-racist classroom ecology that appreciates all forms of English in their own right.

These finding would not have been possible had students not been introduced to both traditional and multimodal assignments.

RESEARCH INTEREST RATIONALE

My interest in this study came from the fact that I use African American Vernacular English (AAVE) on a daily basis. It also stems from the fact that I am an alum of Hampton University, which is a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). Since schools such as Hampton University and Clark Atlanta University (CAU) are HBCUs, they attract and are primarily attended by black students from all over the country. These students each bring unique forms of slang, accent, and pronunciation that is representative of their upbringing because it is a part of who each student is. Serving in academic spaces as a student and adjunct faculty member has shown me how to establish balance in using AAVE and Standard English (SE). I have found this balance to be essential for developing communication skills while being able to identity with and connect to different audiences. Therefore, I attempted to use code-meshing as the catalyst for teaching my CAU students about the need to recognize and understand both AAVE and SE.

Some of the issues that have occurred over time is what Dr. David Green's essay, "Expanding the Dialogue on Writing Assessment at HBCUs:", has named the "push-pull legacy of HBCUs." Geneva Smitherman has defined "linguistic push-pull" as "Black folk loving, embracing, using Black Talk, while simultaneously rejecting and hating on it-the linguistic contradiction is manifest in both Black and White America" (Smitherman). In his essay, Green mentions how many African-American professors at HBCUs struggle with assessing Black English. He suggests that the solution to this issue is "to move away from considerations of language as correct or incorrect, and toward a view of language as experiments in

communicating across linguistic borders" (156). Green's essay also mentions how HBCUs are the ideal places to implement this recommended shift in language perception.

I agree with Green on this issue, and I hope that my study and its findings will serve as a model for how to integrate this theory into composition classes at HBCUs across the world. This rationale is based on the high level of diversity amongst African American students, which is the primary demographic at most HBCUs. The issue, however, is that students at HBCUs are often taught to put AAVE and other home languages behind them, even though many literary works are taught that incorporated AAVE in the writing. Therefore, my study worked to help students take pride in their home languages while being comfortable with crossing linguistic and compositional borders.

SRTOL, AND CODE-MESHING

Scholars such as Geneva Smitherman worked with the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) since the 1970s to implement changes in how composition instructors approach teaching students how to use language in the classroom. Smitherman's push for recognition and inclusion of AAVE comes from an understanding of duality many Black people feel on a regular basis. For instance, she says "On the one hand, Blacks have believed that the price of the ticket for Black education and survival and success in White America is eradication of Black Talk. On the other end, Blacks also recognize that language is bound up with Black identity and culture" (129). As a black man who has and currently does work in a primarily white space, I have faced this conflict firsthand. I have been in situations where being taken seriously meant putting AAVE on the backburner. This connection between survival and success in White America and eradication of Black Talk demonstrates how AAVE is often not considered valuable or correct. However, African Americans know the

importance of maintaining culture and identity with language. The struggle comes in changing

mindsets to see how survival and success can be achieved without eliminating home language.

   This resolution, known as Students Right to Their Own Language (SRTOL), has become

well known and it has pushed for instructors to have the proper training for respecting and

upholding the rights of students to their home languages. Failing to do so causes issues regarding

seeing one language as inferior to others. This is exemplified by CCCC in the following excerpt

from an early version of their SRTOL statement: "The claim that any one dialect is unacceptable

amounts to an attempt of one social group to exert its dominance over another" (Perryman-Clark

et. al 65). Such dominance reinforces power constructs based on race and economic status. I

agree that looking over certain forms of English promotes a concept of dominance, which is why

my study worked to develop an anti-racist classroom ecology that appreciates all forms of

English in their own right.

   Scholars such as Vershawn Young and Suresh Canagarajah have theorized about using

code-meshing to help students find balance in using both Standard Written English and AAVE.

Young defines code-meshing as "blending vernacular language and dialects of English in

speaking and writing" (Young 76). Code-meshing pedagogies work to teach students how to use

home language and standard language together to relay ideas. They also cross lines between

traditional and creative speech to promote critical analysis of language used and the impact the

language will have on the audience or reader. It also encourages students to work with academic

and professional language while being able to use their own home language.

   Code-meshing is important to composition practice because it teaches students to think

multi-dimensionally about writing and language. In Vershawn Young and Aja Martinez's book,

Code-Meshing as World English: Pedagogy, Policy, Performance, Dr. Theresa Malphrus

Welford discusses how code-meshing has impacted her students. She says "In my experience, students write confidently and enthusiastically when they are allowed to mesh academic language with their own language. Best of all, this combination helps their writing crackle with energy" (30). I experience this same feeling when students code-mesh in various English classes I teach. Students in my course seemed to enjoy the assignments more when they were given the opportunity to express themselves in their own language. Code-meshing can help with teaching composition because it gives students more opportunity to communicate in their own words, which ultimately makes them want to put more thought and effort into completing assignments.

Code-meshing practices are also significant because they work to teach students about acceptance and change in communication. Assignments such as video blogging, group tweeting, and video narratives have been used to help students gain more experience with crafting language. The push was for students to write in a voice they are comfortable with. Instructor feedback also worked to teach students about formation, sound, and communicative rhetoric. This type of feedback lets students maintain their original voice while helping them establish the most rhetorical power.

Students can use composition in ways that showcase abilities to manipulate and blend languages to effectively relay different messages. One instance of code-meshing is demonstrated in the 2019 Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) Call for Papers (CFP). In this CFP, Professors Vershawn Young and Elaine Richardson implement code-meshing to explain and model performance rhetoric. They each used parts of AAVE and SWE to highlight the power performance rhetoric holds. In the CFP, Young says the following:

> We in the discipline wanna take our two peas and pick them outa they one pod, where
>
> rhetoric be in the mind, while composition be the written manifestation of that internal

work…we gon show up, show out, practice, and theorize performance-rhetoric and performance-composition. Ahm talkin bout buttressing the public good and engaging communication pedagogies that open possibilities… (cccc.ncte.org/cccc/conv/call-2019)

This CFP represents the potential rhetorical power students tap into. Young's use of the "be" variant and Consonant Cluster Reduction (removal of suffixes) demonstrate functions of AAVE, which is blended with Young's use of SWE. This blending of linguistic concepts exemplifies how code-meshing promotes proficiency and understanding of multiple language forms. Students can hopefully achieve success with code-meshing without having to neglect part of their linguistic identity.

It is important for students to be able to learn other languages without feeling the need to neglect their home languages. In the book titled *Other People's English: Code-Meshing, Code-Switching, and African American Literacy,* Young, along with Rusty Barrett, Y'Shanda Young-Rivera, and Kim Lovejoy discuss how switching and meshing languages helps students to grasp how to use each language in various contexts. Throughout the text, the authors provide definitions for concepts such as code-meshing, code-switching, and self-directed writing. Of these concepts, code-meshing was viewed as the most effective teaching strategy because it shows the need for bi-dialectalism in both school and the workplace. Code-meshing is preferred over code-switching because it teaches students how languages work together to get certain messages across. In *Other People's English,* Young references Suresh Canagarajah's methods when he says the following: "Canagarajah reveals that code-switching causes linguistic division because students must separate their dialect registers from their academic registers. He also shows that it breeds racial tension among African Americans and encourages them to view each other in racially suspect ways, producing charges of acting White" (Young et. al. 68).

Young's excerpt on Canagarajah implies that code-switching promotes keeping languages separate from one another, which plays into the idea of one language being viewed as dominant over another. The idea of dominant languages can be challenged with critical pedagogy. In *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies,* Ann George describes critical pedagogy as one that "engages students in analyses of the unequal power relations that produce and are produced by cultural practices and institutions (including schools), and it aims to help students develop the tools that will enable them to challenge this inequality" (77). I agree with George's statement and found that teaching code-meshing through critical pedagogy can work to show students how different languages can be used in both casual and professional settings.

One way I taught students about AAVE and code-meshing is with self-directed writing. Self-directed writing allows students to write freely, so they can respond to prompts in whatever form of English they feel comfortable using. Instructors can use this knowledge of code-meshing and self-directed writing to teach students how to blend AAVE and SWE together naturally. This process is a part of expressive pedagogy, which "employs freewriting, journal keeping, reflective writing, and small group dialogic collaborative response to foster a writer's aesthetic, cognitive, and moral development" (Ogbu 113). Dr. John Ogbu attempted to use a variation of expressive pedagogy in the 1990s in black middle-class schools in Oakland, California. Although the strategy helped determine that students felt they would be elevated scholastically, these students believed that their instructors were prejudiced against them. Despite this setback, Dr. Ogbu was able to determine that community forces play a role in how language is used and interpreted. Ogbu's study served as a great model for observing AAVE and SWE practices for students, which helped me determine how to go a step further with my study.

Ogbu's study highlighted how African-American students viewed AAVE as language used for informal conversations with friends, yet they recognized SWE as the proper language to use when speaking to a teacher. This mindset is detrimental because it encourages a need for students to conform to succeed. Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* reads "Indeed, the interests of the oppressors lie in 'changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppresses them, 'for the more the oppressed can be led to adapt to that situation, the more easily they can be dominated'" (Freire 55). I agree with Freire here because Standard English is seen as a dominant language. Instructors can heavily influence students' perceptions of themselves by projecting belief that societal value lies in only using one form of English. Instructors can be seen as the "oppressors" here because they often enforce the need to conform and adapt on to students. If a student is constantly told that their form of speech is wrong, then they may either give up or disregard their home language in attempts to meet the dominant success standard. Students should never feel pressured to trade their identity for success.

Composition instructors need to find a way to critique writing and language without eliminating the student's voice. This process must take place in a way that eliminates what Condon and Young's *Performing Antiracist Pedagogy in Rhetoric, Writing, and Communication* calls "Dysconscious racism" (Condon and Young 14). Dysconscious racism is a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges. It is not the absence of consciousness but an impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race. The assignments I taught for this study focused on eliminating dysconcious racism by teaching students how to view language outside of a normal lens. This allowed students to view language from multiple angles while deconstructing racial stigmas regarding language that cause discomfort, identity crisis, and lack of confidence. In addition to race, teaching writing also deals with analyzing rhetoric. By

having students view rhetoric as a whole-body experience, Jacqueline Royster was able to get her students to think more in-depth about writing, reflection, and speculation. This rhetorical approach also allowed Royster's students to improve their critical thinking and rhetorical decision-making skills. These sentiments are expressed when she says the following:

> When I teach writing, I do so using a rhetorical approach. Early in my teaching experience, I learned that students don't always take easily to the traditional jargon of the field… I thought about my own rhetorical decision-making process and the ways that I might connect the concepts to lived experience. I began asking students in my course to think of rhetoric as a whole-body experience" instead of a set of disembodied practices for composing or analyzing a text as an academic exercise. (Royster 96-97)

I agree with Royster's push for considering rhetoric in this manner because people receive communication in different ways. This is why it is important to discuss the factors that play into miscommunication and not understanding language. Students must first understand why people respond to language in certain ways before they can improve their own language use.

MULTIMODALITY, SONIC RHETORIC AND REMIX THEORY

In addition to SRTOL and code-meshing, linguists and rhetoricians have been advocating for academia to focus on how multimodality, sonic rhetoric, and remix theory can help students display their identities while learning how to compose messages in various technological formats. These new methods also gained students' interest by moving away from the traditional handwritten or typed essay.

Multimodality is a term that brings two concepts to life: techno-comp and techno-inclusionism. Techno-comp is the use of technology as a form of composition, and techno-inclusionism is the drive to include the new information and communication technologies in the

composing process and in our curricula (Alexander and Rhodes 45-46). Techno-inclusionism promotes the use of technology in place of print-based activities. This concept works to garner student interest while teaching students how to go about critical thinking and analysis when composing. Also, techno-inclusionism focuses on audience, argument, and other key concepts when considering persuasion, sound, and imagery, and persuasiveness in composition. Alexander and Rhodes mention real-world value for techno-inclusionism when they reference Carolyn Handa's *Visual Rhetoric in a Digital World: A Critical Sourcebook*. Handa's introduction explains:

> Students who possess a high degree of technological skill may see the value in knowing how to create a document using the latest digital tool but not understand the importance of thinking carefully about rhetorical questions such as the appropriate audience, purpose, tone, and argument…Preparing students to communicate in the digital world using a full range of rhetorical skills will enable them to analyze and critique both the technological tools and the multimodal texts produced with those tools. (Handa 48-49)

To attempt to prepare students to communicate in the digital world, the instructor must understand the value of using techno-inclusionism in the classroom. When designing assignments for this study, I prioritized incorporating oral and visual communication into the students' assignments. This helped students to learn more about language and how to navigate conversations while understanding how language can impact people.

Another way to potentially teach students about techno-inclusionism is through sonic rhetoric. Sonic rhetoric, also known as auditory rhetoric, involves looking at how sound plays a role in how a student receives and interprets a message. It also looks at use of sound within

writing and composition projects and classes; these types of assignments can assist students in finding innovative ways to show their knowledge in composition classrooms. Sonic rhetoric would also work with techno-comp. Soundscapes and other assignments can create parallels between how words are written, how they are spelled, and how they sound. The term soundscape is credited to Canadian composer, R. Murray Schafer, who described it as "introducing his concept of the soundscape: the acoustic structure of an environment – whether urban or rural; man-made or wild – and all its audible elements" (Budzinski). Seeing Schafer include all sorts of environment in mention of soundscape elements inspired me to create a multimodal assignment that embodied that same openness while introducing students to sonic rhetoric.

In "Tuning the Playing Field: Teaching Ways of Knowing Sound in First Year Writing," Katherine Ahern introduces the idea of tuning as a pedagogical approach for introducing students to sonic rhetoric. Tuning is described as a process that "focuses the listening of the performers to find agreed upon values, as much as it sets those values" (Ahern 82). This process of focusing listening requires the person speaking to consider how a listener will receive and interpret their message. Ahern's article discusses how she assigned her students to do musical ethnography; she had her students reflect on how classmates from other cultures and communities would receive the music encompassed in their musical ethnographies. I agree with the idea of focusing listening, which is why I incorporated soundscapes as one of the assignments for this research. Having students create soundscapes and record the expectations and actual responses of their listeners taught them to reflect on the sounds and responses as a whole. This reflection worked as part of getting students to analyze the impact certain sounds can have on how someone interprets a form of language.

Another theory that involves techno-comp and techno-inclusionism is remix theory. Virginia Kuhn defines remix theory as "a digital utterance expressed across the registers of the verbal, the aural, and the visual" (Kuhn). This type of instruction involves recreation of a song, video, or another form of media, can show students the importance of arrangement with regards to a strong and convincing message. Remix theory has been demonstrated in video parodies and mashups such as Bleacher Report's "Game of Zones" and "NFL Bad Lip Reading." Each of these examples uses altered sounds and images to recreate recorded moments with new messages. I thought it was important to introduce these concepts to students in my courses to show them how forms of media can and have been altered and manipulated over time.

One critical aspect of both sonic rhetoric and remix theory is resonance. In "Composing for Sound: Sonic Rhetoric as Resonance," Hocks and Comstock introduce the concept of resonance as "an umbrella term for the intimacy, presence, and movement (the 'verb-ness') created by a sound's qualities, like tonality, amplitude, or cadence." Dealing with resonance involves reviewing how listeners connect certain components of sound with a text, place, idea, or thing. Also, "In our classrooms, resonance becomes both a physical phenomenon and metaphor for a sonic rhetorical engagement, an approach that takes into account how a listener's auditory system, as well as the shape of a particular space, will allow her to vibrate at particular frequencies over others" (Hocks and Comstock 138). Understanding how sound can impact a person's reaction to language will help to accurately assess students' responses to AAVE and SWE in multiple capacities. It is important to consider these elements of sound when teaching composition because composition is a full-body experience. I say this because classroom and societal experience has shown me how harsher criticisms are often given of an individual's

spoken English than their written English. This understanding is also why I incorporated multimodal listening into my rhetoric and multimodality class discussions.

Multimodal listening is the approach discussed in Steph Ceraso's essay "(Re) Educating The Senses: Multimodal Listening, Bodily Learning, And the Composition of Sonic Experiences." Like Royster, Ceraso mentions multimodal listening as a concept used "to expand how we think about and practice listening as a situated, full-bodied act" (Ceraso 103). Royster and Ceraso each examine rhetoric and composition as a full-body experience. This approach to sound and composition is used to teach students about the impact it has on their feelings and behaviors in different circumstances. I approve of these ideas, which is why I had students address the full-body experience of listening in their Evaluation and Rhetorical Analysis essays. Assessing the resonance of sound has helped students to understand how rhetoric and composition practices require full embodiment, which includes voice inflection, word usage, and other key factors. Multimodal listening is a component of critical pedagogy that pushes students to take a closer look at connections between sound, language, and identity.

MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION

Multimodal composition is not just an extension of traditional composition, and we cannot simply overlay traditional frameworks onto composing with multiple modes. Alexander and Rhodes define multimodal composition as "communication using multiple modes that work purposely to create meaning" (Alexander and Rhodes 3). It is imperative that students become more familiar with multimodal composition because it is arguably the most liberating form of composition. Also, in *On Multimodality: New Media in Composition Studies,* they argue that "students increasingly need to be versed in a variety of textual, visual, and multimodal formats if they are to participate as literate citizens and workers in an increasing multi-mediated world"

(Alexander and Rhodes 11). I agree with this statement, which is why I developed a study based on exact principles for using multimodal composition. By introducing technological, and multimodal methods of composition to my students, I created a space for students to embrace writing as a full-body experience.

Sound and technology in the classroom can be utilized through assignments that incorporate oral communication and music. Code-meshing pedagogies are beneficial for studying multimodal assignments within your newly proposed curriculum in order to see if they facilitate or enact the goals of code-meshing from students' reflections. This idea is exemplified in Turner, Hayes, and Way's article "Critical Multimodal Hip Hop Production: A Social Justice Approach to African American Language and Literacy Practices." In their article, a case study was conducted that taught students to embrace their skills in both AAVE and Critical Multimodal Hip Hop Production (CMHHP).

The critical components of this study came when the instructor had the students develop surveys for people in their community to see what improvements needed to be made. In addition to collecting this data, students also learned how to produce music and videos. Once students had a grasp on media production, they used their home language of AAVE to create songs and music videos expressing their views on social issues in their communities. Students were able to use language they were familiar with, which allowed them to be more comfortable expressing their viewpoints to other people. This is declared in the following statement: "By having teachers and students collaborate in CMHHP or by showing teachers the multimodal hip hop productions their students have produced, teachers can appreciate and understand the sociocultural background of their students" (Turner et. al. 352). Similar to this study, I introduced code-meshing as an acceptable speech practice within the courses analyzed for this research. Such acknowledgement

and allowance of different Englishes encouraged students to create similar assignments that allowed them to use their home language(s) to convey various messages.

Instructors should step back and examine the expectations they have of their students. Research has shown that stereotypes impact teaching and learning. This impact has been termed stereotype threat by Claude Steele; Steele defines stereotype threat as the threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm that stereotype (Poe 96). Mya Poe's essay titled "Reframing Race in Teaching Writing Across the Curriculum" further explains this issue and offers a remedy to stereotype threat with the following statement: "If the goal is to help prepare students for real-world rhetorical situations, then teaching writing across the curriculum means preparing students for the multilingual spaces in which they will be writing and working" (Poe 99-100). Such a statement suggests that instructors and administrators amend their teaching of writing to have a more authentic real-world focus. I agree with amending composition instruction because our lessons mean nothing if they do not prepare students for real-world situations.

There are many studies that deal with teaching SWE to AAVE-speaking students, but there is a lack of literature that focuses on using AAVE to teach SWE in composition classes. My research works to fill that deficiency in Rhetoric and Composition scholarship by showcasing parallels between the languages, focusing on the rhetorical choices students make in their writing, and demonstrating how to best utilize code-meshing in academic and professional settings.

In the book titled *Multimodal Composition: A Critical Sourcebook,* one case study mentioned how students submitted digital playlists and collages to express their understanding of literacy. These types of assignments are viewed as "low bridge technologies." (Anderson). By

providing innovative alternatives to composition assignments, students were able to critically analyze texts and find new ways to effectively communicate their interpretations of certain historical and cultural texts. This type of instruction requires hands-on work between students and teachers as they each develop technical skills and understanding of multiple literacies (Lutkewitte 377-379). Implementing low-bridge technologies (assignments that emphasize hands-on experiences working with technologies as part of classroom activities) in the classroom showed me how comfortable and fluent students were with language use and multimodal activities.

Giving multimodal assignments also got students acquainted with more modern presentation methods. Jason Palmeri reinforces this ideology in *Remixing Composition: A History of Multimodal Writing Pedagogy.* Palmeri writes,

> … it is not enough just to add print literature by African Americans to the canon; if only teachers truly wish to engage deeply with African American cultural production, they must also make a space for auditory communication. In addition to teaching students about the usefulness of print writing, English teachers must also ask students to critically consider the ways that 'written documents are limited in what they can teach about life and survival in the world. (Palmeri 73-74)

I agree with this statement because limiting students to written documents can hinder a student's technological proficiency. This knowledge will be essential when it comes time to presenting information to different audiences. By learning how to infuse their identities into multiple forms of communication, students can improve their literacy skills and awareness of language. When teachers expose their students to devices such as soundscapes, sound-mapping, and Photoshop, they are showing confidence in the class's ability to express themselves.

REAL-WORLD PEDAGOGICAL EXAMPLES

Teaching students about AAVE through sonic rhetoric can help to decrease language bias in composition. AAVE-speaking students are often forced to move away from their home language in composition classrooms because of the perceptions people have made about a language that sounds unpleasant to them. Discomfort can cause students to feel like outcastes, which is why we instructors must teach students new listening practices while influencing them to appreciate both AAVE and SWE. Instructors must first learn to eliminate any negative perceptions they have of AAVE and increase their awareness of the language and its purposes in communication. Appreciation also requires an in-depth discussion and analysis of syntactical and phonetic choices one can make in each language. Proper training is imperative for educators, because without it, the cycle of language bias and discrimination will continue.

Ascribing to a real-world focus means educators must step back to recognize the detrimental effects of previous teachings that have solely pushed for Standard Written English. In Pablo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he says "The oppressed suffer from the duality which has established itself in their innermost being. They discover that without freedom they cannot exist authentically. Yet although they desire authentic existence, they fear it. They are at one and the same time themselves and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalized" (Freire 30). I believe Freire's point correlates with that of what an AAVE-speaking student faces. Students who struggle with Standard Written English may feel as if they need to leave their home languages and identities behind to succeed in life.

Students with diverse backgrounds often come into composition classes with difficulty speaking and/or understanding SWE. While the student should be exposed to SWE and how it is used, they must determine how the voices of their home languages will be heard. From a

rhetorical standpoint, composition pedagogy has previously been structured to emphasize SWE, which can appear oppressive to some students. Unfortunately, this oppression teaches students to either conform to dominant linguistic practices, or risk being ridiculed for using rhetorical techniques of an oppressed people. This sentiment is expressed in the following statement: "In a humanizing pedagogy the method ceases to be an instrument by which the teachers can manipulate the students, because it expresses the consciousness of the students themselves" (Freire 51). Freire's depiction of a humanizing pedagogy is one that allows students to retain their identities while being aware of different rhetorical choice they can make. I understand the importance of identity retention and rhetorical awareness, which is why my class discussions and assignments worked together to help students with their retention and awareness skills. Teaching students about code-meshing and code-switching in composition classes can provide them with awareness of how to express themselves through communication.

In William Labov's *Dialect Diversity in America,* he provides a lesson on the history of AAVE and how it has been perceived by academia and society over time. In many of his examples, Labov mentions that disapproval usually encompasses the entire language instead of one or two components. Despite the backlash AAVE has received, Labov makes the following statement: "I hope to have shown also that African American Vernacular English is not itself the cause of the educational problem. It is a faithful reflection of the deep divisions in our society. It is also 'the eloquent and versatile tool that speakers of the language use to give voice to their view of reality" (Labov 97). Labov's statement implies that AAVE is authentic because it empowers the natural voice. I agree here because AAVE is an authentic language that can difficult to initially understand when spoken if the listener is unfamiliar with it. Also, I believe

part of the educational problem is the following: people often fear and discount things they do not understand.

My experience with students enrolled in the courses for this research study suggests that they continually grew comfortable around me, and, thus, they used their natural choices of oral and gestural communication at times. This was always interesting to observe because of the sonic and visual impacts certain terms had on them. As entertaining and intriguing as I usually find students' authenticity to be, people may consider some styles of student speech to be slightly abrasive and threatening. Such fear and misunderstanding can be resolved with a phrase Dr. Graff coined as "teaching the conflicts." In Dr. Graff's book chapter titled "Code-Meshing Meets Teaching the Conflicts," he suggested that teaching the conflicts could benefit students by showing them how code-meshing works and teaching them to navigate through argument and debate in conversation. This was crucial to developing our rapport as a class. Students such as T. E. and K. P. were two of the main ones to incorporate significant components of gestural communication with their oral responses.

In Graff's continued explanation for "teaching the conflicts," he builds on Vershawn Young's ideas by stating the following: "[teaching the conflicts] can also provide an arena or workshop where debatable questions can be aired and negotiated about *how* to mesh vernacular and standard dialects—about which particular meshings are effective with which audiences and which are not" (Graff 13). In other words, classes would get the opportunity to have difficult, yet essential, conversations about race, language, identity, and power. For instance, my class discussed power regarding race relations between Caucasians and African-Americans. One time, this type of conversation stemmed from reading James Baldwin's essay "If Black English Isn't A Language, Then Tell Me, What Is?" We read the essay in-class, which most likely caused

some to distract themselves. The essay revealed a viewpoint where white people ridicule black people's speech and language practices simply because of their skin color.

RACE AND IDENTITY

Auditory rhetoric and remix theory can be used in conjunction with written communication. These techniques assist students in looking past writing constraints and better understand how to best utilize multimodal code-meshing. It is also important to enact color-attentive approaches to teaching writing in the classroom, such as the diversity approach and the anti-racist approach. Diversity approaches involve the infusion of non-White European American (WEA) texts into an already existing WEA writing curriculum. The approach helps to eliminate color blindness, but it may also influence "othering".

While code-meshing and code-switching are possible alternatives, students should never feel like they must relinquish their identities to succeed in commonplaces. Instructors who implement color-attentive approaches to teaching composition may play on stereotypes to reinforce the power of SWE. To implement the necessary change in composition, students should also be taught about race relations. If students never learn how to embrace other languages and cultures when learned how to communicate, then they may repeat the cycle of viewing certain languages as dominant over others, thus re-establishing privilege in some communities. In Young and Martinez's *Code-Meshing as World English*, Asao Inoue says "…code-meshing is worth the effort. Academia is big enough-or should be-to allow for the incorporation (not just the accommodation) of currently non-hegemonic Englishes" (98). I agree with Inoue that non-hegemonic Englishes should be discussed, but they need to be introduced

and discussed in a way that is transparent and mindful. Having said that, incorporating AAVE and other Englishes relies heavily on teacher efficacy and unlearning certain listening practices.

Condon and Young's *Performing Antiracist Pedagogy in Rhetoric, Writing, and Communication* discusses the importance of anti-racist approaches to teaching composition. Anti-racist approaches focus on racism and insist on criticism of racist domination and its impact on education, including composition curricula. This approach allows those involved to evaluate their places of privilege or non-privilege in society while trying to displace instances of racism both in the composition classroom and in the larger society. Color attentive pedagogies require inclusion of texts that showcase cultural and linguistic knowledge from all students while analyzing how race is embodied in discourses and practices students and instructors produce in the classroom. It is important to recognize that it is impossible to eliminate racism in the classroom, but great progress can be made once colorblindness is done away with (Pimentel et. al. 109-122).

Teaching African American discourse requires students and instructors to focus on race relations and the rhetorical messages implied with certain actions. In Dr. Calvin Logue's chapter, "Teaching African American Discourse: Lessons of a Recovering Segregationist," he discusses his experiences with race relations as a white man in Alabama during the Jim Crow era. Logue mentions how segregation and racism in the deep south and the military showed him how certain rhetorical choices can result in learned behavior. With regards to composition and discourse in the classroom, it is up to instructors to make sure learned behaviors of communication are positive.

Within the present research study, race played a key role in assignment results because each student's assignment responses were racially motivated, which was my intention. My goal

with each assignment was to have students critically think and analyze the impacts race and language had on different circumstances in their lives. Since the class was primarily comprised of black students, stories of feeling left out and irrelevant were common. Students expressed how this feeling of misplacement and irrelevancy results from being pressured to adjust parts of their identity to be somewhat considered on a level playing field. Both the traditional and multimodal assignments were designed to highlight societal issues regarding language and gather perspectives on preferred language practices from the students themselves. Part of the issue I noticed in researching AAVE use in the classroom is that students are usually given limited say in what teaching strategies are most effective.

When considering race and identity in the classroom, it is important to view AAVE within what is known as the African-American jeremiad (AAJ). Willie Harrell Jr.'s *Origins of the African American Jeremiad* attests to there being multiple definitions for the African-American jeremiad. However, Harrell iterates that this type of jeremiad used oral traditions as a way of resisting the dominant customs and elevating black consciousness and uplifting marginalized people. This awareness is significant to identity because the African-American jeremiad has been used over time as a form of protest against oppressive systems and beliefs. Since the AAJ has roots in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is not surprising that it stands against everything the American jeremiad stood for.

The AAJ has long included rhetoric stemmed in religious, political, and economic principles. As instructors, we need to nurture AAVE within the AAJ because the rhetoric itself is what sets the tone for how people will be impacted. The same can be said for any form of spoken language. Instead of quickly identifying students' rhetoric as wrong or unclear, we should take a

step back to determine how valuable certain parts of AAVE are important to them and why. A deeper look into the origin of the AAJ give us the following statement from Harrell:

> To the architects of this rhetoric, the African American jeremiad served a threefold purpose: 1) to expose traditional white Christian convictions, 2) to emphasize the inhumanness of slavery and its effect on both the oppressed and the oppressors, and 3) to develop a socio-political consciousness among black that would be used to forge a unified black self. (Harrell 10)

Harrell's statement here emphasizes the resistant and revolutionary nature of the African American jeremiad. I concur with Harrell here and feel that like AAJ, AAVE should be recognized as a form of English that can unite people from multiple types of backgrounds. We must focus on linguistic and spatial similarities between the American jeremiad then and now. This should be done to help promote the shift in academic climate toward dialects.

In connection to the jeremiad, we must acknowledge how AAVE has been used in black literacy and positivity. Carmen Kynard's *Vernacular Insurrections* discusses how AAVE promotes the idea of Black freedom. Black Freedom works to encourage "literacy and educational changes that radically alter the meanings of language, reading, and writing" (Kynard 111). Like the AAJ, AAVE and Black Freedom all work to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, power struggles in language between SE and other Englishes. Overall, students need to be taught how to view all languages as equal, and we must remove linguistic, racial, and political bias in the classroom to do so. My research worked to eliminate these issues while imparting valuable knowledge about language, composition, and communication.

TEACHER TRAINING

Training teachers to use AAVE in their composition classes is a process that may involve partnerships between institutions and professional organizations. This is exemplified in the following statement from Ball and Lardner: "It is often the case that a composition teacher's sense of efficacy is linked to professional identity, location in an institution, and membership as a credential participant in professional organizations" (Ball and Lardner 17). Ball and Lardner's statement shows that teacher efficacy does not generally happen on its own. Teacher efficacy is known as attempting to understand and empathize cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students. This concept should be paired with vicarious experience, which involves modeling certain skills. In other words, someone who has had experience teaching AAVE-speaking students can serve as the educator who models how teacher efficacy takes place. For this study, I utilized teacher efficacy and vicarious experience by learning about students in my course and sharing my own experiences with language. This worked to establish a rapport that helped them feel more comfortable completing the required assignments.

In addition to teacher efficacy training, instructors also need a strong understanding of multimodality in the classroom. Research and teaching experience have shown that there is somewhat of a divide between instructors and the methods they choose for having students complete assignments. Although more instructors are moving toward digital assignments and class activities, there are some teachers who are set in their ways and only wish to give assignments dealing with print. The inability to change their approach to assignments is problematic due to certain restrictions that print assignments can present. Traditional essays and writing assignments tend to only focus on written communication and the message conveyed from the words on the page. Multimodal assignments, on the other hand, can use written, oral, visual, linguistic, and gestural communication to create more open-ended ideas about the

author's intentions and how the message is received. Taking a different approach to teaching language also allows for more classroom discussion about the purpose of certain words and phrases.

Teachers with AAVE-speaking students should show more efficacy and optimism in the classroom. Chastising a student for not using SWE sets a bad example for what they should expect in the workplace. Teaching students to embrace home language while understanding how to use SWE works to promote a needed combination in Rhetoric and Composition. In Ball and Lardner's book, *African American Literacies Unleashed: Vernacular English and the Composition Classroom*, they mention how teachers who lack efficacy for their students also tend to have lower expectations of them. Once the student realizes the teacher's low expectations, the student may then start to feel defeated and less confident in their literacy and communication skills. Empathy is the major component of teaching and allowing AAVE in the classroom. This is noted when they say, "Teachers and researchers need to stop being silent and practice skilled empathy" (Ball and Lardner 195). I agree that silence is getting us nowhere, and I made good use of teacher empathy every chance I got. Students need instructors' and researchers' help in getting their true voices to be heard and recognized. Teachers and researchers need to employ empathy in the classroom as this could help code-meshing, AAVE, and techno-inclusionism to collectively fill a major gap in teaching composition.

CONCLUSION

Because of my research, I believe that AAVE, code-meshing, and multimodal assignments should be used together to teach SWE in composition classrooms. Code-meshing and multimodal composition assists instructors with acknowledging these students' literacy skills

while providing newer and more relatable platforms for students to express themselves. This change, however, must first start with teacher efficacy and optimism.

Teacher training helped me throughout this study by showing me how to adjust to students and their home language(s). Part of my teacher training included the survey instruments used throughout the semester. I attempted to use their responses and in-class discussions to gauge levels of familiarity with my main talking points, assess the top concerns they have regarding language and composition. By addressing students' concerns and referencing familiar topics, I was able to use teacher training to create a rapport with the class. This rapport helped students to be receptive and appreciative of the class lessons.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will discuss my strategies for using teacher research and assignment analysis to measure variables for my study. This discussion includes explanation of the qualitative and quantitative approaches I used to gather and examine data, rationale for the foundational components of my study, and a breakdown of how my methods connect back to my hypothesis.

The importance of teacher training and multimodality come into play from chapter one when considering my hypothesis. My assignments were designed to be relatable, understandable, and relevant. Also, this rhetoric, language, and multimodal approach to my study involved collecting both quantitative and qualitative data from assignments and observations simultaneously to determine if a connection occurs between them (Creswell 213). I used a mixed methods research design for this study. Qualitative research was used to assess the impact of my variables on students in my course. Quantitative research was used to assess sample size and assignment response numbers. I used a series of reflection assignments to examine my hypothesis. This qualitative approach assessed how students complete and respond to these assignments. My assignments were controlled variables because students were given specific prompts to respond to for each major activity.

Although students were able to fully express their views regarding language, race, and identity, their assignments were designed to focus on how these concepts work within the confines of conversation, classrooms, and media. Qualitative data served my case study well because it investigated the connection between teaching, assignment format, and a student's understanding and comfort levels. I conducted this study at Clark Atlanta University (CAU) in Atlanta, Georgia. It is worth noting that CAU is a historically black college and university (HBCU), which means that the school population is primarily made up of African-American students. We started with one class of 24 students (one withdrew); each student identified as either being solely African-American or being mixed with African-American heritage.

I attempted to teach students about AAVE, SWE, code-meshing, and multimodal assignments while inquiring about their levels of comfort and familiarity with these theories and forms of language. Through this case study, I intended to address issues with diversity of expression, confidence, fluency, cultural awareness, and identity for students.

MIXED METHODS RATIONALE

I used a mixed methods research design because my hypothesis was best examined through survey and essay responses. Qualitative research was used to assess the impact of my variables on students in my course, and quantitative research was used to assess sample size and assignment response numbers.

Combining the two forms of research helped me to adequately analyze how the theories I have researched worked in practice. With a class size of 24, the quantitative components of my study provided a sufficient sample size for response analysis. Using my assignments as instruments, I was able to pinpoint how many students were and were not impacted by select variables. These variables were the following: comfort, confidence, race, language, identity, and

understanding of code-switching, code-meshing, AAVE, and SE. This study triangulated the data by examining the relationships among the following data sets: daily class observations from the instructor-researcher, assignment responses from student participants, and a student reflection survey to assess comfort and understanding.

A mixed methods approach was also important to this study for validity purposes. Since studies have already been done on language's influence on a student's identity, understanding, and participation, I needed to ensure that my modifications yielded valuable information regardless of the outcome. Having students provide their unfiltered viewpoints and experiences in assignment responses establishes validity by evaluating understanding, interpretation, and rationale outside of the academic grade they receive for it. Although there were six major assignments given, they were all connected in the way they related back to the topics of language, race, identity, and impact. Building the assignments on one another was one of the methods used for triangulating my data; the other method was coding.

Coding was an integral part of my data analysis and variable measuring. Assessing the positive and negative themes and trends from assignment and survey responses allowed me to determine how accurate my hypothesis was to the study's actual results. Also, lining up a colleague's coding results next to mine aided in triangulation while adding objectivity to my study's observations and overview.

TEACHER RESEARCH

My research included code-meshing African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) and Standard Written English (SWE) in multimodal assignments. My choice for this research idea was based partly on my familiarity with both forms of English. Staci Perryman-Clark's *Afrocentric Teacher-Research: Rethinking Appropriateness and Inclusion* discusses the

purposeful use of AAVE syntax and phonology in students' writing. Focusing on African-American students writing displays how students can go about style switching "between different styles and phonological and syntactical patterns" (Perryman-Clark 58). The assignments I developed deal with students addressing the impact AAVE, SWE, and code-meshing can have on rhetoric and composition. Code-meshing was used with digital collages, video narratives, soundscapes, and other multimodal assignments to reinforce principles for how Standard Written English can be used to formulate and express ideas. It was also important to analyze work from non-AAVE speaking students to determine how they can benefit from purposeful phonological and syntactical choices with language. Work from non-AAVE speaking students was analyzed using the same measures to determine how well they understand AAVE and code-meshing along with SWE.

This research also analyzed the impact techno-comp and techno-inclusionism have on students' understanding of multimodality, rhetoric, and code-meshing. It is important to consider rhetorical impact of visual, verbal, and auditory rhetoric. Low-bridge technologies – such as video narratives, digital playlists, and soundscapes were used by students to demonstrate their understanding of language. These assignments were used to connect students' technical skills to the rhetorical literacies they will learn throughout the semester (Anderson 52). Video narratives, in particular, can serve as essays or work with essays to demonstrate solid abilities to compose, communicate, and convey messages in media. Video narratives also utilized multiple pedagogical approaches to teaching composition such as remix theory and sonic rhetoric.

Connecting sound to language and identity had much to do with determining the influence an environment can have on how someone perceives a sound. Digital tools such as sound maps and soundscapes worked to provide setting and timeframe information to associate

with certain sounds. This additional information caused the listener to take multiple variables into account. These variables include the following: 1) what may have been happening at the time, 2) what type of setting the sound is occurring in, 3) how the sound makes them feel, and 4) how the sound could possibly be reinvented. Students in my study were expected to take these variables into account in their soundscape assignments. These variables were also assessed in a case study conducted in the article titled "Reactions to African-American English: Do Phonological Features Matter."

In this article, three Communication Studies professors at California State University decided to use soundscapes to test how sound can influence judgment. For this study, six young women were "recorded reading a brief definition of the term "academic motivation" (Rodriguez et. al. 409). Four of the women were African-American, and the other two women were Anglo-American. Each of the African-American women spoke using a feature of AAVE; two of them used a moderate amount of AAVE, and the other two used a strong amount of AAVE. The two Anglo-American women spoke in Standard English. After having participants listen and respond to the recordings, the results found that participants viewed everyone speaking AAVE to have an accent. They also considered the women who spoke SE to be more attractive than the women who used AAVE.

Rodriguez's article on sounds and judgment showcases how dominant language ideology influences perception. His research also highlighted the negative connotations and affiliations given to AAVE and those who use it. Like Rodriguez's study, my research also focused on speech standards and negative stigmas placed on AAVE and other home languages. However, instead of attraction, my instruments worked to explore why certain languages use causes certain reactions from listeners. This exploration ultimately led to assessing the impact these reactions

left on students' views of their identities. We constantly participate in the erasure of oppressed

languages, which has been demonstrated in cases of linguistic push-pull. This still happens today

as some African Americans still reject AAVE. I witnessed this in class when some of the

students in my course said that AAVE should not be allowed in the classroom. Geneva

Smitherman's *Word from the Mother* mentions how some "upper economic" black people have

had negative perception of AAVE over time due to belief that using AAVE may "set black

people" back in a way. I second this notion because I have experienced questioning and puzzled

faces from some upper-class black people when mentioning AAVE. .

Like Smitherman, Jane Bowman Smith's *The Elephant in the Classroom* also addressed

issues some instructors have with addressing AAVE speaking students. She recognizes this issue

and makes the following statement: "Students may not voice the problem in so many words, but

when their language is shunted off to the side with remedial implications, they are left wondering

if they will be valued and respected for who they are and where they hail from, if they will be

valued for the potential of their intellect, or if they will be the object and victim of stereotypes

that lower expectations" (Smith 53). Smith stated how this was the current situation in 2010, and

I believe the same can be said a decade later. Assignment responses and class discussions from

my study further confirm Smith's sentiments when they discussed the judgments and negative

reactions they receive when using certain vernacular.

As part of Smith's ideas for negotiating dialect issues when instructing students. One

significant idea is to teach students that Standard Written English is a dialect. This is important

because students are often taught to see Standard Spoken English and Standard Written English

as the dominant, and usually only, forms of English allowed in scholarly and professional

settings. Therefore, it is important that we examine the procedures we have used over time to teaching language to our composition students.

METHODS

My research proposal was submitted and approved by the IRBs from both Georgia State University (GSU) and Clark Atlanta (CAU). Although this study was only conducted at CAU, I needed IRB approval from GSU because I am pursuing this research as GSU doctoral student. In the Spring 2019 semester, I taught a Composition II class at Clark Atlanta University that highlighted multimodal composition, SWE, and code-meshing. The syllabus maps out how students learn about low-bridge technologies, multimodal literacy, and code-meshing. This process considers the following statement from Daniel Anderson: "Motivation becomes not just an effect of integrating low-bridge technologies into the classroom, but a necessary ingredient of conceptions of critical literacy meant to promote agency and change" (Anderson 45-46). This integration worked to showcase how students demonstrate multiple forms of literacy and topical understanding. Low-bridge technologies ultimately worked to display how students perceive use, receive, and interpret AAVE and SWE in technology.

Participants were given an informed consent form that outlined what was expected of them if they agreed to be in the study. Students were given the opportunity to sign and return the consent form to participate in class activities. Completed assignments were to be a course requirement for all students, but data for my study was only collected from students who consented to have their work used. Consent forms were distributed and collected during the semester, but only independently reviewed after final grades have been submitted at the end of the semester. Students were educated on significant phonological features of AAVE and SWE.

Students were taught how to utilize multimodality to develop writing that fuses SWE with AAVE or another non-Standard form of English. This teaching was broken up into three units.

The first unit focused on code-meshing. I introduced students to various principles and guidelines for SWE, AAVE, and code-meshing. I also discussed how each form of English works separately while also discussing and modeling how code-switching works. This unit involved the creation of Cause-and-Effect and Persuasion mini essays and a Soundscape assignment. Students were introduced to the platforms called Voice Memo, Audacity, and iMovie. Voice Memo was used for soundscapes because they are compatible with all devices, and iMovie was used to make video narratives. All students had free access to these platforms. Based on the Soundscape and Video Narrative write-ups, Voice Memo and iMovie were also main choices because they were easy to use. The soundscape assignment served as the midterm assignment for the semester. It allowed students to consider the cause and effect of language use and sound on how a message is received. It also reflected on how effective certain sounds and language works in persuasion.

The second unit focused on multimodality. In this unit, the soundscape assignment then led to the video narrative by determining how sound and language can work when paired with video and gestural communication. The evaluation and rhetorical analysis essays coming between the soundscape and video narrative focused on the impact altered sounds, images, and language has on their reception of someone or something. Students also reflected on how sounds, images, and language influence their perceptions of race and identity. Each assessment leading to the video narrative allowed students to critically think about how to best utilize code-meshing, technology (sound and images), and written composition together to create a persuasive message.

Throughout the semester, I taught students about SWE and different forms of digital multimodal literacy. I first also introduced students to rules and linguistic features for AAVE. These lessons included discussion of subject-verb agreement, prefixes and suffixes, visual rhetoric, auditory rhetoric, and remix theory. Students created digital multimodal assignments throughout the semester. Journaling of my observations took place after each class meeting as part of the concurrent triangulation research strategy. At the end of the semester, I analyzed students in my course students' assignments and reflections to see if they align with my observations. This process included reviewing responses for key words and phrases, how accurately students responded to the prompts, and what connections their responses had to the measured variables. Measuring was done through daily observations during the study and instrument assessment and response coding done after the study.

I primarily looked for parallels in discussion of behavior, understanding of topics and assignment instructions, and student interpretations of AAVE, SWE, identity, and language. Putting each set of data with the others was done to pinpoint various comfort levels for language use, diversity of expression, cultural awareness, and identity retention. These variables were measured with nominal scales of home language use, race, identity, and confidence. These scales were physically present on demographic and reflection surveys, and additional measures were determined based on rationales and explanations provided in assignment responses. Therefore, the six major assignments served as instruments for assessment and variable measuring. Responses were also reviewed and coded individually and collectively to examine how impactful and successful my proposed methods were for proving or disproving my hypothesis.

I worked with a colleague at Clark Atlanta University to review assignments and come to a consensus about how to interpret the data collected from students. This process involved my

colleague and I each reviewing codes with assignments to determine what main themes came about. Each of us reviewed students' assignment responses separately while examining keywords and phrases that connected to the coding questions developed. I completed my coding process first before sending my colleague the assignment responses. This was done as a way of modeling the process to provide my colleague with a better understanding of what I needed her to do.

Our joint coding process took roughly two-to-three months; this included examining responses, filling in the necessary details, and revising coding tables and questions, and comparing our analyses of the data to determine how compatible our results were. This process was done as a way to ensure that my findings and determinations were valid and credible. Since my colleague worked at CAU with me, she was familiar with my study, its purpose, and the student demographic used for my sample size. Her understanding our student population was significant for reviewing and accurately interpreting their statements.

A great benefit tied to multimodality was the introduction of the Soundscape assignment. Although there were Canvas submission issues, the assignment itself worked to open students' eyes (and ears of course) to how sound impacts judgment and perception. The goal for this assignment was to have students create a soundscape in the Atlanta area, have someone listen to their soundscape that was not included in it, and have the listener answer questions regarding what they believe is taking place in it and why they feel that way. Students were then instructed to listen to the soundscape themselves and share their thoughts as well as their outside listener's responses.

CLASSROOM MEDIA

Although I did not have to face this challenge with students in my course, I am interested to see what will happen when attempting to teach these concepts with more white students in the

class. I'm not sure if it will be a major issue, but it is something to consider. However, the

plethora of resources I was able to utilize this semester should make this potential challenge less

of an issue. Aside from my initial research and proposed methodology, I was able to locate Ted

talks, essays, YouTube videos , and other sources of info that showcased concepts I was teaching

to the class. Videos watched in class included a three-minute video of Vershawn Young talking

about code-meshing; a Ted talk of Jamila Lyiscott discussing when and how she uses AAVE,

SE, and Jamaican Patois; a news report on AAVE being used at a Minnesota school named Lucy

Laney Elementary, and a YouTube video called "Dooly Hood Dice Game."

The video on code-meshing was beneficial in giving students a first-hand definition of

the term from the person who coined it. Also, providing an explanation of code-meshing helped

students determine whether or not they use it in daily conversation. Lyiscott's Ted talk worked to

establish relatability with students regarding multilingualism. Her linguistic knowledge and

societal awareness are both characteristics that I attempted to impress on students in my course.

Next, the Lucy Laney Elementary video presents a view of how AAVE should be received and

addressed by instructors. The instructors accepted AAVE use in the classroom while

demonstrating how SE should be used in academic and professional settings. Each of these

videos was beneficial in getting students more acclimated with the study of code-meshing.

Like its counterparts, the "Dooly Hood Dice Game" video dealt with code-meshing and

AAVE use. However, it also demonstrated the locational differences in words and phrases used

by AAVE speakers. In the video, the main speaker is pretending to play the card game, uno, and

he imitates how uno players from Atlanta, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and other metropolitan

areas would sound in their response. This video was representative of my class in how it

presented words and phrases that many of the students used regularly. Another similarly

beneficial YouTube video focused on the multiple ways that someone can say the word "bitch." In this video, the speaker, a black woman, says the word "bitch" in different ways to show how the visual and sonic factors play into how it is received. Students connected with the "bitch" video by stating how they have used the word these different ways with the connotation of its use being understood every time.

In addition to code-meshing and AAVE-based videos, I also showed students soundscape examples, sound map examples, and YouTube parody videos to familiarize them with sonic rhetoric, visual rhetoric, and remix theory. This media included British library sounds and a YouTube video titled "Drip Too Hard (Parody)." The British sounds website included a plethora of soundscapes from 1960s interviews in London. I used these soundscapes to practice showing students how to complete their soundscape assignments. The "Drip Too Hard (Parody)" was created by Emmanuel and Phillip Hudson as a remake of the song "Drip Too Hard" by rappers Lil' Baby and Gunna. In the remake, the Hudson brothers flipped the song from talking about money and flashy clothes to music video about cheating on a test in a high school class. Despite the video being seen as "corny" by some students, it was helpful in showing how remix can be used to recreate something with a new message.

ASSIGNMENT ANALYSIS

Conversations about authenticity and identity were important when discussing AAVE, SE, code-switching, and code-meshing. One of my daily goals was to ask a question that would challenge students to question the status quo. These questions also worked to pick the students' brains about their feelings regarding home language and the supposed standard. Many of them expressed disapproval for having to switch up how they talk in different situations, but they acknowledged that it was necessary for success and survival.

Reviewing linguistic principles of AAVE and SE was a solid setup for introducing the Persuasion Mini-Essay Final prompt, which reads as follows: One of biggest pros to the class was that students felt comfortable expressing their views on AAVE, Standard English, and regulations regarding who should use a language and how it should be used. Most students vocalized their distrust in white people using AAVE, even going as far as saying that white people should not be allowed to use AAVE at all. Their rationale behind this is that the language may sound forced and unnatural coming from a white person, causing the student to question the instructor's authenticity. Most of these responses came about in the Persuasion Mini-Essay, and these results are detailed and explained thoroughly in my Appendix sections C and J.

Connecting the mini essays to one another was helpful in seeing students' thought processes in action. For instance, having them discuss moments when they used either AAVE or SE and were ridiculed or judged for it may explain their rationales for their positions for or against using AAVE in the classroom. Also, evaluating original and remade forms of media and literature were useful in seeing how each form impacted the student differently.

In order to properly analyze the data collected, I first had to code it. My initial coding process started with an attempt to set certain variables as codes to determine what themes were most recurrent. I determined codes by analyzing certain words and phrases that appeared frequently throughout the students' assignments. Further determination of codes was based on what was being measured and for each type of assignment and the semester as a whole. For instance, codes such as *comfort, confidence,* and *identity* came about as variables that were measured throughout my study. The first set of codes are presented in the following table:

Codes	
Written AAVE	Spoken AAVE

Code-switch	Code-mesh
Comfort	Confidence
Culture	Expression
Identity	Language
Motivation	Race

These specific keywords were set as codes based on the frequency with which they were referenced in student responses. For instance, when a student mentioned "identity" or "expression" in a response, I would reference this word to see how it was used and the theme it was connected to. Some keywords such as "motivation" and "confidence" were not used within responses themselves, but they were selected as codes due to the connections they had to student responses. For example, "motivation" was considered when a student would mention inspiration for learning how to code-mesh, code-switch, or better understand AAVE or SE. This process allowed me to establish categories for each assignment. Doing so worked to improve my coding attempts and pinpoint certain themes and variables within the student's assignments. The final codes and main themes coming from the coded data were the following:

My data coding highlights certain themes while working to solve a dilemma at hand. These ideals were connected to the assignment format. For instance, cause and effect essays dealt with certain situations and results, so the main themes were 1) what was the situation, 2) what was the result, and 3) what variables were included. Acknowledging the situations where AAVE was and was not accepted assist in promoting situational awareness for language use. Assessing the results of each situation helps to show how students developed their code-meshing and code-switching abilities. Since some of them expressed how their AAVE use was not

initially accepted by those they were conversing with, coding this data confirmed positive and negative results of the students' respective situations. Also, the majority of these results were in dating structure, especially when analyzing exact statements. The third and final table examined what variables were included. This is important for measuring students' pre-existing confidence and comfort levels with AAVE and standard spoken English.

For the persuasion essay data coding tables, I focused on the following themes: 1) why AAVE should be allowed in the classroom, 2) why AAVE should not be allowed in the classroom, and 3) on what occasion(s) should AAVE be allowed in the classroom. Assessing students' rationales for why AAVE should or should not be used provided an avenue to learn the students' linguistic values. Students' views on home language use in the classroom highlighted what they considered to be beneficial in learning. Also, having a table for occasional AAVE use allowed me to see how controversial AAVE use can be in the classroom.

The main themes examined in the evaluation essay coding tables were 1) what's the theme of how the students were impacted by their selections and 2) what is the theme for how the students' selections may impact others. Since these responses dealt with forms of media, it was pivotal to see how sonic and visual rhetoric components impacted students' perceptions. The rhetorical analysis coding main themes were 1) what is the main theme for how students felt and 2) what is the main theme for how the students' perceptions of race, language, and identity were impacted. Students' responses dealt with how a revised form of media or literature impacted them, so these questions were great for categorizing their views and perceptions.

For the soundscape assignment coding tables, I analyzed the responses students expected from the person listening to their soundscape, the listener's actual response, and where the soundscape recording took place. Analyzing these three tables helped to show how sound

impacts judgment, how perception of others can influence expectations of them, and the effects the environment had on the sounds heard. For the video narrative assignment coding tables, I focused on the spoof or parody the student used for their activity and what learned aspect the students were demonstrating in their spoof or parody. Examining these two aspects helped to measure how well students learned SE and code-meshing along with their comfort levels regarding identity and linguistic fluency. (See Appendices B-G)

SAMPLE AND RESEARCH DESIGN

For the quantitative approach to my study, it was important to collect data from students at an HBCU because HBCUs can sometimes be disregarded as center of learning. Such disregard may possibly be tied to academia sometimes disregarding African-American students completely. Also, collecting viewpoints and opinions from an adequate size class of AAVE-speaking students helps eliminate fictitious assumptions about how Black people's stances on things. I appreciated the various answers given because they show how diverse African-American students and their experiences are. Their diverse answers were representative of how environment and language use make up a major portion of a student's identity. My students were diverse individuals who used different forms of AAVE and other languages, so they needed activities that were promoted individually and expression instead of conformity and a limited scope.

Another reason I conducted this study at CAU is because it is an HBCU where black women are usually the majority in the classroom. When analyzing scholarship about language, even AAVE, most of the conversation comes from male scholars. Hearing more of the black women's view on language was important because language is both racialized and gendered. It

also helps to get a clearer perspective on how black women use and receive certain words and phrases differently than black men.

In *Black Perspectives in Writing Program Administration,* chapter six highlights black student success models within writing programs. Although multiple models were presented, their success was based on the following three principles: "1) Afrocentric pedagogical materials are placed at the center of the curriculum, 2) Programmatic assessment measures are designed with black student success in mind, and 3) Successful writing programs understand that they can implement Afrocentric pedagogy and antiracist writing assessment practices can do to ensure that all students succeed" (Perryman-Clark and Craig 107-111). Each principle mentioned is significant because they all consider their specific audiences. Despite the simplicity of this concept, some instructors still struggle with catering their instruction to their students. Perhaps one of the most prominent examples of successful models is Alexandria Lockett's contribution to the revised layout of Spelman College's first-year composition student learning outcomes (Perryman-Clark and Craig 111-112).

Spelman's first-year composition program works to help students prepare goals for their writing while teaching them to craft persuasive arguments. Also, students are being introduced to multimodal composition and oral and visual components of argument, which allows for better understand of how composition works from a holistic standpoint. With regards to Lockett, the incorporation of Afrocentric pedagogical materials highlights the need to adjust teaching approaches to teaching students more about themselves through race-based commonalities. Students tend to respond better to instruction when they can find comfort in knowing their identities and values and being considered.

It is also important to note that like Clark Atlanta, Spelman College is an HBCU. With African-American students making the majority of the population at most HBCUs, it is easier to develop and display a successful model for integrating black perspectives into writing programs. Perryman-Clark and Craig, then mention how models at HBCUs can serve well for showing Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) how to adjust their writing programs. I plan to take my study's results with me any and everywhere I am teaching. As stated in this chapter, Afrocentricity can be replaced with whatever necessary teaching tool to reach all types of students.

Asao Inoue's *Labor-Based Grading Contracts* confers how racial habitus works through and within linguistic/discursive, material/bodily and performative dimensions. He continues on to mention how all writing teachers take on some part a white racial habitus, intentionally and unintentionally (Inoue 27). It is important to not force a white racial habitus on students as a way of being oppressive. Inoue argues against notions of slavery within writing assessment programs. He also references how Foucault mentioned using "classroom assessment ecologies" as disciplinary and chastising systems for students. This paired with his reference to Farber's views of "The Student as Nigger" exhibit how a forced racial habitus can promote oppressive and unfair ideals on students, especially students of color. I agree with an unintended white racial habitus taking place at times, which I why it was important for me to discuss AAVE and other home languages in class as much as possible. I wanted to constantly reiterate how my classroom was an inclusive space that accepted all forms of English.

I, like Inoue, worked to develop an antiracist assessment ecology by teaching students how to take control and power in language without diminishing the habitus they come in with. Therefore, discussions of race, language, comfort, confidence, and identity in the classroom

paired with soundscapes, video narratives, and other low-bridge assignments can assist in catering to students' home languages and identities. Therefore, my study was pivotal to bridging the gap in research on connecting home language studies, rhetoric and composition, and low-bridge assignments in the classroom. By considering the differences in classroom ecologies, instructors will need to use unconventional and creative ways to reach students with various racial and economic backgrounds. Unconventional teaching methods, such as using rap and art to educate students on language as well as oral and visual communication.

The traditional assignments were used to ease students into multimodality. Students learned about the theories of code-meshing, sonic rhetoric, and remix theory and multimodal platforms such as iMovie, Voice Memo, Audacity, and the GNU Image Manipulation Program (GIMP) affiliated with soundscapes and video narratives while completing traditional assignments. This allowed students to gain more experience with composing messages and learning from modeled behavior. Early in the semester, students were given a survey to complete about their classification, gender, home language, and experience with AAVE, SWE, and multimodality. Thorough explanations of AAVE, SWE, code-meshing, and other concepts took place within the units leading to each major assignment. Figures one through five served as assignment prompts students completed after completing and submitting assignments.

TREND ANALYSIS

My analysis assessed the trends for students' proficiency levels in writing SWE over time. The analysis comes from low-bridge assignments the students completed throughout the semester. I measured 1) the amount of code-meshing used in the assignment, 2) how successful the student was in digital literacy, and 3) how much better students understand these concepts since the previous assignment. Focusing on code-meshing, comfort, and confidence for these

assignments helped to setup some of the keywords and phrases used as codes earlier in this chapter. For instance, measuring how much code-meshing was used is essential for seeing how comfortable students were incorporating part of their identity into their assignments. Also, assessing digital literacy proficiency helps to see how comfortable students were with the technology required to complete the assignment. Lastly, examining understanding throughout assignments worked to determine how comfortable and confident students were with properly completing assignments as the semester went on. Therefore, the significance behind each of the three terms is what allows them to serve as three of the major keywords used throughout my study.

Collected data includes essays, videos, and other multimodal assignments. The data collected measures how well students code-mesh, the rhetorical effectiveness of their project, and the amount of digital multimodality used. It also reviews the roles code-meshing and multimodal assignments have in helping students to better understand SWE. These instruments were put in place to help solve the following questions: Did the student effectively convey a message? Did the student improve their ability to use SWE?

One of the instruments I had students complete was the following Soundscape Assignment Reflection Survey. Having student participants complete their surveys anonymously allowed them to express their opinions on the assignment without worrying about being graded on their thoughts. Since this the first time I give this type of assignment, this survey also helped me to receive valuable feedback from them for the future.

Assignments given throughout the semester were paired with learning logs for tracking progress for code-meshing, SWE, and multimodality. Each assignment ad a specific prompt addressing a specific research reflection component. A Likert scale was used to assess how

comfortable students are at certain points in reflection assignments. one colleague was called

upon to distribute consent forms at the beginning of the course and assist with coding and

analysis at the end of the course. After receiving my colleague's coding results, I examined them

against mine to see if our interpretations and analysis produced similar results..

INSTRUMENTATION: WHAT DID I USE?

I decided to use a demographic survey, a reflection survey, traditional essay assignments, and multimodal assignments as my instruments. The demographic survey was given as the first part of the class study. This and the soundscape reflection survey primarily worked to collect quantitative data as I used the Likert scale and multiple choices to determine how many students fell under certain categories. The assignments, however, were meant to collect qualitative data through open-ended prompts. Using these instruments together allowed the mixed methods approach to take place, which is necessary to fully examine the impact my study had on the participants. The following table displays the instruments I used, the type of data each instrument provided, and the technique for how I went about analyzing assignment responses:

Instrument Used	Type of Data Collected	Strategy for Analysis
Demographic Survey: Open ended, Likert scale, multiple choices	Qualitative and Quantitative	Collect data on demographics to determine what key variables will be impacted.
Cause and Effect Essays	Qualitative and Quantitative	Statistics and textual analysis of essay documents using coded variables.
Persuasion Essays	Qualitative and Quantitative	Statistics and textual analysis of essay documents using coded variables.
Soundscape Projects	Qualitative and Quantitative	Textual analysis of written, sonic, and linguistic

		assignment responses coded variables.
Soundscape Reflection Survey	Qualitative and Quantitative	Collect viewpoints of soundscape assignment to measure related variables. using coded variables.
Evaluation Essays	Qualitative and Quantitative	Textual analysis of essay documents using coded variables.
Rhetorical Analysis Essays	Qualitative and Quantitative	Textual analysis of essay documents using coded variables.
Video Narrative Projects	Qualitative and Quantitative	Textual analysis of sonic and visual assignment responses using coded variables.

I felt that these were the best instruments for gathering the necessary information because they each promoted critical thinking and in-depth analysis of language and how students perceive it. Also, the variety amongst instruments allows for different aspects of my research to be examined separately. After examining the instruments separately, I was able to record findings both individually and collectively.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

There were many limitations to my case study that were caused by both the research atmosphere and the personal circumstances surrounding myself and my student participants. I have had little experience with creating surveys, so I did not account for making a reflection survey to follow each assignment. Those survey responses would have been good to add to the data from my observations and the students' responses. My study also had a limited scope since my sample size was only one class from one HBCU. The results of my study are valid for the sample size presented, but I acknowledge that a larger sample size at multiple HBCUs would account for a higher validity rate. Also, I believe that many composition classes at HBCUs would produce similar results from the assignments given.

Regarding assignment implementation, one limitation was that students were required to follow each essay rubric guideline to do well in class. However, certain aspects of their writing such as spelling and MLA format were not factored into data collection. Also, I removed personal bias when giving assignments to allow for consideration of each students' viewpoints. Removing personal bias also helped to adjust lessons and activities to better fit students' understanding. This ultimately helped to address questions regarding comfort with assignment types and language comprehension while utilizing action research to determine what pedagogical adjustments need to be made (Keheler).

Going back to my sample size, another limitation to the study was that one of the study participants withdrew from the class before the end of the semester. Also, one student did not give a response for one of the assignments. These combined factors may attribute to the results being less reliable than if the number of participants was consistent throughout the semester. Nevertheless, I was able to supply a summary of the participants' responses and implications at

different points in the course. Another limitation came from submission issues some students had for the low-bridge assignments. A few students' soundscape submissions did not appear, so I could only analyze the written component of their assignments. A similar issue occurred with a few of the students' video narrative submissions as they did not present the complete version of the students' assignment.

Taking a deeper look at Beard's methodology has also shown me what I was missing in my case study. For instance, Beard mentions using surveys and interviews along with her participants' essays for research. Looking back, including post-course interviews could have helped to provide a clearer view of my study's results. I did assign a Video Narrative final to serve as an assignment where students reflect on their growth or lack thereof. The final product was an overall success, but I will most likely add an interview portion the next time around.

For Daniel Keheler's case study, he implemented the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method for structuring his course curriculum, collecting data, and analyzing data as it comes in. The PAR method ultimately focuses on planning, action, and reflection. Keheler says the following:

> In all forms, action research begins with identifying a problem, planning an intervention to target that problem, observing its implementation, then collecting and analyzing data before the next, modified, iteration or 'step;…Often called 'situated learning,' action research seeks not only to assess and improve the experience for students, but also the instructor who is, through the action research cycle, refining pedagogy in a reflective process of teaching, data collection, and analysis, before starting the process all over again, (Keheler 94)

Since this was the first time I ever implemented my research into my teaching, conducting my study in a similar manner seemed like an ideal model or fit. I adopted this research method and altered it by documented by daily class observations. These observations allow me to reflect on the successes and failures that came about with each lesson, so I can make the necessary adjustments to teach the next lesson or reteach the current one.

Looking back at the semester, I often refined my teaching multiple times to maintain focus on language, race, and identity while not attempting to sound as if I was beating a dead horse. This consisted of implementing Ted Talks, parody examples, and revising essay rubrics. Students seemed to hang on every word of my instruction, so it was essential to make sure that my written and oral communication matched. A further look into Keheler's methodology has introduced me to Action Research and its push for change. Keheler states that "the primary goal of action research is to effect change," regardless of whether it is in a public, private, academic, or educational setting. This has been my initial goal throughout my time researching and conducting my study, so I am glad to have found another theory that correlates with my hypothesis.

The final limitation of the study was the time restraint of the semester. As mentioned before, the data collected is limited to one class at one HBCU, and it was collected over the course of one semester. Although I attempted to dedicate as much attention as possible to this one class, it is worth mentioning that I was also teaching other two sections as Clark Atlanta, teaching one section at Georgia State, working in Georgia State's Writing Studio, and tutoring during this same semester. The limitation of teaching six units (four traditional, two multimodal/low-bridge) in one sixteen-week semester may have impacted the quality of my research method designs. However, I am confident that the responses received are enough for

addressing the research questions from my hypothesis. Despite its given limitations, this mixed

methods study combines measures, characteristics, and observations to address issues with

comfort, race, language, identity, and familiarity with concepts of code-meshing, AAVE, and

multimodal composition. Lastly, my study will serve as a blueprint of sorts for measuring and

assessing comfort levels with identity, code-meshing, AAVE, SE, and multimodal composition

in composition classrooms at HBCUs.

CONCLUSION

Overall, my mixed methods approach to this study allows me to collect data based on the

participants' assignment and survey responses along with my class observations. The instruments

used during the semester served the key function of challenging students to become comfortable

discussion levels of comfort with their identities, language use, and other facets of who they are.

I acknowledge that proper delivery of my instruments would not have been possible without

necessary teacher training and research design. Paying attention to each detail, including race

and identity, has opened this study to supplying useful findings with longstanding implications in

the composition classroom at HBCUs.

CHAPTER THREE: EXCITING ASSIGNMENT DISCOVERIES

INTRODUCTION

Utilizing my assignment delivery methods and measures for this study was key for determining how I tested my hypothesis. In Spring 2019, I gave students in my English 1102 course at Clark Atlanta University six major assignments: four traditional essays and two multimodal assignments that use low-bridge technology. The students' responses from these assignments are serving as answers to many of my research questions. These questions include 1) how can multimodality coincide with AAVE and Standard English; 2) how do students feel about both AAVE and Standard English; and 3) how can code-meshing and AAVE use help increase confidence and comfort in the classroom? This chapter will present my assignment's results in a manner that can lead to logical suggestions and implications for the future of my study. These findings are also furthered detailed in appendices B-G.

TRADITIONAL ESSAY ASSIGNMENT FINDINGS

CAUSE AND EFFECT ESSAY FINDINGS

The research goal for the Cause and Effect Essay was to examine a correlation between positive and negative responses to code-meshing (See Appendix A for assignment sheet). I wanted to see how influential certain interactions were on how students view home language and AAVE versus SE. In their writing, the students did a wonderful job of painting the scenes when explaining the details surrounding the interactions that took place. This helped the situation to be more relatable as I was able to reminisce on similar moments to the ones the students described. One student, B. C. , made the following statement "Code meshing can bring diversity and a new understanding to a conversation, but it can also bring confusion or the appearance of lacking

intelligence." Her assessment of the pros and cons of code-meshing examines how this concept may not always work for all audiences.

I went about coding tables of findings to properly examine my students' responses. To protect students' identities, they were each identified by the first initials of their first and last names. For the Cause and Effect Essay main themes, I analyzed responses using the following three questions: what was the situation; what was the result; and what variables were included? The first question yielded the theme that many of the students receive negative judgments and reactions when they used their home language (AAVE). For the next theme, the result was that many of the students felt a need to adjust their speech and language for authority figures and white counterparts. The third and final theme showed that the responses primarily included the following variables: code-meshing, code-switching, comfort, and race.

I came to these conclusions based on statements made by the students themselves. For instance, in Y.M.'s response, she discusses her experience with a job interview for JCPenney. She asserts how "The interviewer was a Caucasian man and you can tell in his delivery who he was and who he was not pleased with as he asked questions." Her statement suggests that she felt compelled to appease the interviewer, which is why "When it came down to it being my turn and he asked me the questions I changed my voice to make it completely professional" (Canvas). She continues on to mention how she switched back and forth between SE and AAVE when talking to customers to make them feel more comfortable. This and other similar responses embodied code-meshing, code-switching, comfort, and race all at once. For Y.M. specifically, her ability to code-mesh and code-switching helped her to successfully navigate situations such as job interviews and customer interactions. Also, for the interview portion, she adjusted her way of speaking based on his race and comfort with SE.

When reviewing my colleagues' coding tables for triangulation, I found that she came to similar conclusions based on the students' responses. She identified the impactful variables as race, environment, whiteness, education, comfort levels, identity, self-expression, and region. My colleague's coding results also suggest that students adjusted their speech patterns based on their environments while grappling with multiple identities. Also, we both agree on race, environment, comfort levels, identity, and self-expression as significant factors for how students view and use language. African-American students are often more susceptible to judgment based on their language use, yet language use is shaped by factors such as environment, identity, self-expression.

Each of our coding table results suggests needs to adaptation out of necessity, ultimately making some students feel that part of their identity is undervalued or belittled. Another student, K.P., speaks directly on her discomfort yet having to code-mesh in conversations. She mentions how "With teachers not understanding the terminology I grew up hearing it felt as if I had to create a new identity for the comfort of other races. Dealing with this at a young [age] caused me to feel conflicted on who I am. Living with not being able to fully be who I am around anybody and everybody felt as a punishment" (Canvas). This data from Y.M., K.P., and the rest of the class shows how impactful language recognition in and out of the classroom can be for a student's comfort levels as well as their identity. These findings include a more in-depth analysis in appendix B.

For the question regarding situation, the situation involved students initially using their home language. In the student's responses, all but three of them referenced a negative reaction they received when using their home language instead of Standard English. For theme, students adjusting their speech implied that their AAVE was not accepted or understood by the

individuals they were interacting with. Therefore, people asked my students to primarily use Standard English because they are most comfortable with this language. These findings display how comfort had been taken from students in my course, which caused them to resort to code-meshing or code-switching. Also, since most of the students are African-American, them being forced to code-mesh or code-switch presents another obstacle in being accepted and recognized as people of substance with a speech variety comprised of principles and guidelines.

One unique student response came from A. D2., who explained how she and her black peers code-meshed and used AAVE amongst themselves Add a direct quote. As a result of this, her white peers ridiculed the black students' vernacular and emulated it. A.D. discusses how "In due time, the white kids not only judging us for how spoke through mocking us, but also tried to speak like us in order to feel "cool.". In addition to white peers, her instructors also made them feel uncomfortable using AAVE. She emphasizes this sentiment in the following statement: "Once other teachers would overhear us speaking, they would interact with us differently as if they had lost complete hope in us. If we were out of line, they would call us out firsthand, almost like they had tightened up on strictness based on the simple fact that we used slang within our group" (Canvas). This ridicule caused her and her classmates to nearly lose touch with their identities. The variables that come into play in this situation were difference in race and identity and lack of understanding of language and culture.

Another intriguing response came from A. M., who discussed how she switches between AAVE, SE, and Creole dialect depending on who she's conversing with. As a result of this, she speaks formally and refrains from using AAVE with her elder relatives out of respect for them. She also refrains from using Creole dialect to avoid questions and comments. The variables that came into play in this situation were code-meshing, multi-lingual, AAVE, Standard English,

Creole dialect. These were the top variables based on how the student describes her linguistic priorities in conversation. Code-meshing comes into play because A.M. mentioned her ability to blend the languages she knows when conversing with certain people. This also represents being multi-lingual since code-meshing requires the speaker to be multi-lingual to a certain extent. Suresh Canagarajah expresses this sentiment when he states how "Code meshing calls for multidialectalism not monodialectalism" (598). In A.M.'s case, if she didn't have proficient understanding of how to use AAVE, SE, and Creole dialect, then she would not be able to mesh two or more of the languages together in conversation.

A.M. references her use of code-meshing with regards to conversing with her sister. She states that "When talking to someone like my sister I can use all three dialects mentioned because I know she is capable of understanding (code meshing)" (Canvas). In other words, the student code-meshes with her sister and other people who have demonstrated understanding of the multiple languages used within her speech. However, she mentions how she switches to formal English with authority figures because they usually don't understand the multiple forms of dialect she can use.

Perhaps one of the worst impacts came from M. S.'s essay, in which she explains how she blended languages and used various slang and AAVE in a persuasive speech. As a result of this, her speech was received well by her English teacher, but it was highly scrutinized by judges in an oratorical contest. She explains how this made her feel when she says "The judges seemed to ask questions after the speech about my word choice. Their comments made it seems like they did not take me seriously. Even one judge commented and told me that it was a setback because I was not using correct terms." (Canvas) By not taking the student seriously based on her words, the instructors implied that her AAVE use is incorrect and should not be considered in academic

and professional settings. In both instances, everyone focused more on her vernacular than the content within her speech. The variables that come into play in this situation were code-meshing, natural voice, academic settings.

These results show that 83% (20 out of 24) of the students' received negative responses from other people when they used AAVE in conversation. While some of the negativity came from peers and co-workers, a few of the essays implied disapproval from family members as well. In some cases, the family members disapproved of AAVE's use as a way of preparing that student for survival in the "real world." The 17% (4 out of 24) who mentioned positive responses they had received were each primarily referencing peers who also spoke AAVE. Discussion of positive reactions mentioned how everyone involved in the interactions understood what was being said; this was not the case with many of the negative reactions. While some negative reactions were caused by misunderstanding, others were influenced by perceptions associated with those sounds. Many students cited feelings of judgment, scorn, and belittling.

Of the 23 responses recorded, 20 of them expressed how their use of home language was ridiculed and/or belittled. Only three of the students discussed a positive response to their home language use. The interactions they mentioned took place everywhere from school to their jobs to their households. The students' responses showcase how AAVE and SE are viewed in the world. The fact that most of my students felt compelled to switch up their speech shows how society views home language as unacceptable various settings.

Another significant find was that most of the negative interactions involving home language included authority figures and white counterparts. Authority figures are repeating the cycle of language rejection by imparting judgment on students who use AAVE. These types of judgments can be remedied with what Ball and Lardner refer to as teacher efficacy and vicarious

experience (Ball and Lardner). Ball and Lardner define teacher efficacy as "Attempting to understand and empathize cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students." I agree that if instructions took more time to examine how their students communicate, then they could have a better understanding of the students' home languages and identities. However, without these negative experiences, students may not have learned the importance of code-meshing.

PERSUASION ESSAY FINDINGS

When considering the main themes that came from the Persuasion Essay responses (see Appendix B for assignment description), I analyzed them based on the following questions: 1) why should AAVE be allowed/used in the classroom? 2) why shouldn't AAVE be allowed/used in the classroom, and 3) on what occasion(s) should AAVE be allowed/used in the classroom? For the first response, it seemed that allowing AAVE in the classroom would help to retain students' identities, help them feel confident and comfortable expressing themselves, and establish better relatability and connection between students and instructors. For the second question, the theme was that allowing AAVE in the classroom may lead to segregation amongst students. Also, using AAVE does not help students understand the importance of using Standard English. Lastly, the third question's theme was that spoken AAVE can be used, but written AAVE should not. Also, it depends on the instructor and their level of understanding of the language.

Of the different responses again, one that stood out was C. E. responses, in which she says that allowing students to use AAVE in the classroom helps them to retain their identities. However, she feels that using AAVE all the time does not allow for growth. She continues to say that there is a time and a place for using different dialects. Another captivating response came from J. Jackson, who said that Using AAVE in the classroom is good for helping students to

better understand speech concepts. When considering why AAVE shouldn't be allowed in the classroom, he says that students will have to understand and use standard English to get by in life and become successful. When mentioning the occasion for when AAVE in accepted, the student said that spoken AAVE would be necessary, but written AAVE is not.

One more response that stood out came from K. P., who feels that Allowing AAVE use in the classroom works to create a space where students can express themselves freely. When considering why AAVE shouldn't be allowed in the classroom, she says that using AAVE in the classroom could potentially cause segregation in the classroom. Her rationale for this standpoint reads as follows: "I understand that the use of AAVE can improve communication between teachers and students ultimately leading to a stronger relationship. But this can also make kids of other ethnicities feel left out or feel as though they have to conform to this way of dialect" (Canvas). When discussing the occasion for when AAVE in accepted, the students said that students should be allowed to speak in AAVE but should be required to write in Standard English.

There were a few different reasons for why written AAVE in the classroom was mostly frowned upon. For one student named J.J,, written AAVE should not be used in the classroom because "AAVE written to me is not needed nor beneficial to students once they get out in the world"(Canvas). While I disagree with J.J.'s view of how essential AAVE is in the real world, I understand his sentiments and desire for wanting to keep written Standard English in the classroom. J.J. follows up his initial comment by stating how "Students will have to understand and use standard English to get by in life and become successful." This realization implies that students will need to learn the dominant language in order to navigate a world outside of comfortable environments.

The Persuasion essays worked to answer the following question: Should AAVE be allowed in the classroom? This question generated a mixture of different viewpoints. The research goal for this essay is to see how students felt about using AAVE in the classroom while providing rationale to support their answer. This prompt pushed students to weigh the pros and cons of this language to decide if it can be useful in an academic setting. Each student's response, whether for its use or against it, helped to legitimize AAVE as a recognizable form of speech. This assignment promoted analytical skills while implementing discussion of persuasive, auditory, and visual forms of rhetoric.

Although the students appreciated being their natural selves, many of them surprisingly did not enjoy seeing AAVE in its written form. We read a few excerpts from Charles Chesnutt's "Po' Sandy", and students found the verbiage to be difficult and confusing. When I told them this was AAVE, they agreed that the written from of AAVE should be left out of the classroom (Daily Observation 2/7/19). This intrigued me because it shows how AAVE can be understood and misunderstood on different levels, just like any other language. Lessons on written and spoken AAVE were important for helping students determine how they truly felt about using AAVE in certain situations. During these discussions, we also went over multiple rules and principles for using AAVE, such as double negation, suffix removal, and copula absence. I went over these things with them to prove the legitimacy of the language.

One fascinating statement, made by M. S., says "AAVE should be used in the classroom because it allows students to be themselves in the classroom… Not only should AAVE should be used in the classroom, but it should be taught in the classroom." Spearmon and many of her peers expressed this notion of freedom and expression when advocating for allowing AAVE use

in the classroom. Her statement about teaching AAVE intrigues me because students are told that AAVE is wrong, but they aren't usually taught what AAVE is.

Forty-five percent of the class (11 out of 23) advocated for complete AAVE use in the classroom, but a combined 52% (12 out of 23) either say no to AAVE or have set guidelines for its usage. What intrigues me, however, is that only two of the 23 students are completely against AAVE in the classroom. This is less than 10%, which means that over 90% support AAVE in the classroom in some format. Some of the rationale supporting AAVE's use includes discussion of linguistic inclusivity, creative freedom, and better understanding of Standard English. This support correlates with ideals presented by AAVE scholars such as Inoue, Young, and Frankie Condon.

From code-meshing to antiracist assessment ecologies, scholars have developed a plethora of possible theories for eliminating issues with problems such as dyconscious racism, which is defined as "A form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges" (Condon and Young, 29). Another intriguing find is that some students felt that allowing AAVE in the classroom could lead to segregation. This is intriguing to me because Standard English is primarily the sole form of English that's fully accepted in the classroom. Having said that, the classroom already seems to be separated linguistically. I honestly was not expecting to receive that rationale, but I understand how some of them came to this conclusion.

Another interesting find was that some students were in favor of spoken AAVE but not written AAVE. This seems to go along with acknowledging Standard Written English (SWE) as essential in the classroom. It also highlights a difficulty with legibility of written AAVE that goes beyond race. Understanding the students' viewpoints and rationales for them help to set the tone for seeing how they evaluate and interpret literature and media rhetorically.

EVALUATION ESSAY FINDINGS

When considering the main themes that came from the essay responses, I analyzed them based on the following questions: 1) what's the theme of how the students were impacted by their selections? and 2) what is the theme for how the students' selections may impact others? For the first questions, I determined that everyone's media or literature selection seemed to either educate them on black and HBCU cultures, help them through a rough relationship, or motivate them to overcome various obstacles. For the second question, I found that the students mainly felt that other people interacting with their respective selections would be educated on racial issues, inspired to reach for greater in their lives, and overall entertained by their selections' various qualities.

For example, my student named B. C. described her evaluation of *Lilo and Stitch.* When discussing the movie's impact, she said "Lilo & Stitch gave me the love I have for Hawaii and their culture, cheers me up, and the soundtrack brings me relaxation" (Canvas). In terms of the movie's potential impact on others, she said that some people might think the movie was amazing with a great plot, characters, and themes. Others, however, may think the movie is boring or moves too slow. The student recommends this movie to anyone looking for Disney movies with main characters that are people of color. B.C.'s response demonstrates an appreciation and respect for a people and culture that are not her own. If students in my course and other African Americans are open to accepting other people's cultures and traditions, then why is it hard to people to accept African Americans and AAVE? When people accept AAVE in conversation, it allows the person using it to retain their authentic identity while exhibiting understanding of linguistic principles.

Another fascinating response came from A. D.2's evaluation of *The Hate U Give*. Regarding impact, the student said that *The Hate U Give* was relatable to the student because her and the main character both lived double lives to appease others. As far as the book and movie's impact on others, she mentioned that reading this book or watching this movie can help people of color (POC) find middle ground in being themselves around others. It can also help white people to better understand what POC go through. She continues on to recommend the book/movie for everyone, regardless of their race and background.

The last response that stood came from J. M., who evaluated *A Different World*. When evaluating the show's impact, the student said that this show helped introduce her to HBCUs and "shined a light on being young, black, and educated in America." She continues to say that other people can watch this show and learn life lessons. When considering recommending the show to others, J. M. recommended this show to HBCU students and black students in general. These responses demonstrate how exposure to different people's cultures and languages can help to gain an appreciation for them. Also, the media format used for displaying cultures and languages impacts how they are received. Nonetheless, these responses relate back to my hypothesis because my student responses showed more interest in evaluation multimodal forms of media (movies, tv shows, music) than traditional media (books). This implies that students were more comfortable working with non-traditional materials than written literature.

Of the 23 responses, two students used books to complete their assignments, eleven students used movies, three students used television shows, and seven students used songs. One student went against the grain and used a person, LeBron James, to complete their assignment. It does not surprise me much that only two of the twenty-three students chose a form of literature instead of media. This is, after all, the age of technology. Another significant find was that

students credited their selections with introducing them to aspects of black culture and overcoming obstacles. Such exposure and messages are essential for teaching students to embrace who they are while opening themselves up to new challenges, such as mastering code-meshing in a way that demonstrates awareness of how to best utilize AAVE and SE together. This data connects to my research question by assessing the process of using multiple languages together in conversation.

The data also worked to show connections between the students' home language use, comfort and confidence levels, and identity retention in the classroom. Student response coding showed that students care a great deal about being comfortable with who they are and how they talk. This concern goes further than their written work. For instance, responses from the Rhetorical Analysis essay assignment were used to learn how students felt about how they are visually and sonically represented in media. One student, B.L., focused on the 1997 adaptation of the movie *Cinderella.* When mentioning the movie's impact on her perception of race, language, and identity, B.L. made the following statement:

> This altered form of media did not change my perception of language, race and identity but officially confirmed it for me. Since the very beginning of history, we [black people] were always at a disadvantage compared to white people. To this day, we have to work twice as hard to achieve or come close to what they have. In society today we get looked at strangely for using AAVE or just simply speaking another language from a different country. (Canvas)

The research goal for this essay was to examine the impact media and technology can have on learning and understanding. This Evaluation Essay assignment addresses the concern of multimodal learning because it questions the effectiveness of media such as movies and songs. It

also serves as one of the assignments that introduces students to ideas of how technology and media can influence how someone receives a message. The forms of media and technology mentioned in students' responses are multimodal because of the accessibility they have to them and the functionality the technology possesses. By tapping into the multiple ways that students go about communication and expressing themselves in the modern era, instructors can learn to create assignments that are more geared to the students' interests.

By considering how certain forms of media have impacted them overtime, students would have a better sense of what to focus on when presenting their message in their video narratives. For instance, one student listed as T. D. said the following about her selection: "This video prompted me to see things through the perception of a white man." (Canvas) She is a black woman, so her seeing things from a white man's perspective instantly intrigued me. Further into her essay, the student mentions how the video she evaluated can be used to educate people on issues involving race. T. D. and her peers have all been impacted by whatever forms of media or literature they chose; while the hope is that everyone gained something positive from their observations, it is important to prepare for the adoption of negative judgments and attitudes toward race, language, and other concepts.

Another response that stood out came from B. L., who wrote her Evaluation about the movie *Nappily Ever After.* When considering how the movie impacted the student, she said that This movie impacted this student by showing her how to be confident and proud of her natural hair. Her response stands out to me because it represents how the movie provided the necessary representation for the student to feel comfortable in her own skin. The student's new-found pride also lets me know that this movie was a break from possibly being belittled and ridiculed for her natural appearance. As far as the movie's potential impact on others, the student said that other

people can watch this movie and receive positive vibes. She continued to recommend the movie to everyone.

The main themes for the Rhetorical Analysis were based on the following questions: what's the main theme for how students felt? and what's the main theme for how the student's perceptions of race, language, and identity were impacted? When assessing how the primarily felt, the students' positions about their selections varied. Some appreciated the relatability of their respective selection, and some had negative reviews of their work because it was either offensive or lack effort. When examining how the student's perceptions of race, language, and identity were impacted, most students were positively impacted by the relatability of their selection. In those cases, race, language, and identity presented situations they can connect to. On the flipside, those with negative perceptions from their selections felt that way because they either were offended or weren't represented.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS FINDINGS

Of the Rhetorical Analysis responses given, one significant response came from S. Owens, who analyzed *Scary Movie 2*. She expresses her feelings about the movie by saying that "The actual movie itself lacked stamina and didn't keep me intrigued until the very end." She continues to explain the movie's impact on her perception of race, language, and identity by stating how she feels that the movie did not include any Asian actors, so it wasn't diverse. Also, some of the language and gestures seemed offensive, which can take away some of the intended humor.

Another response that stood out came from L. G., who analyzed the movie *50 Shades of Black*. She states her feelings about the movie by saying that "From personal experience after

seeing both movies and getting a feel for them I would say that I prefer the parody over the real movie because every day we have to be serious and the parody gives off the vibe that we do not have to be serious all the time." Regarding the movie's impact on her perception of race, language, and identity, L. G. feels that the movie was relatable and comical through its use of AAVE and portrayal of black culture. She continues to say that "The whole point of the movie is for cringey laughs, and to lighten up the mood in a serious space" (Canvas)

Of the 23 rhetorical analysis essays, over half of them focused on movie remakes. Of the eleven remaining responses, ten of them were about song and television show remakes. Only one person wrote about a book remake, which lets me know that book remakes are either not that popular or very unheard of. Another intriguing fact about the responses is how some students alluded to the uniqueness of the parody or remake regarding *Kairos* (time, location, audience, and topic).

The research goal of the assignment was to examine how a parody or other altered form of media can impact someone differently than the original work. I also wanted to see how this altered form of media affected the students' perceptions of language, race, and identity. This was significant because I wanted to see what inspired their views on these concepts and how they matter from a societal standpoint. The final goal of this assignment was to establish a basis for when and how students became aware of how to classify components of their identity; this assignment also worked to showcase how remix theory works in media and literature and why it matters rhetorically.

L. G.s reflection on a parody stated that **"**"From personal experience after seeing both movies and getting a feel for them I would say that I prefer the parody over the real movie because every day we have to be serious and the parody gives off the vibe that we do not have to

be serious all the time." I appreciate L.G.'s assessment as it indicates how remix can provide humor and other unique concepts that can create a new message from pre-existing forms of media.

Despite their selections being remakes, most of the students noted relatability as a positive influence how they viewed students. The positive perceptions saw connections between their lives and the events that occurred in their respective selection. Negative perceptions came about from selections that misrepresented the students. This is significant because it shows how students, and people in general, tend to respond positively when they are properly represented and interpreted.

LOW-BRIDGE ASSIGNMENT FINDINGS

SOUNDSCAPE FINDINGS

The research goal of this assignment was to see how impactful sound can be in making judgments and assumptions about other people. The results show the students' expectations to be split between the listener relating to the soundscape and the listener being confused by it. Of the many responses, one significant Soundscape response came from R. D., who recorded her soundscape Robert W. Woodruff Library at the Atlanta University Center. For the student's expected responses from the listener, she said that "My listener is going to have a tough time due to the person I recorded having a thick accent and using cultural slang from where he is from but understand the AAVE he is speaking in the soundscape." However, the listener's actual response shocked her because the listener understood everything that was said, "especially the AAVE my speaker was speaking" (Canvas).

Another noteworthy response came from J. J., who recorded his soundscape in a classroom on Clark Atlanta's campus. For his listener's expected response, the student said, "I

think when the listener would have a half and half feeling only because of the quality of the recording." This expectation suggests that the listener would only struggle with the soundscape's sound quality and not what was actually said. When mentioning the listener's actual response, the student's listener said that the speaker in the soundscape sounded "old and white" because of the "professional language" they used.

Based on the Soundscape Reflection results, students were at least somewhat comfortable with AAVE, SWE, soundscape creation, and code-meshing. Also, almost everyone understood the assignment prompt well, which is great for me. Another finding that stands out to me is that most of the students were either very comfortable or extremely comfortable with both AAVE and SWE. This is wonderful news, but I wonder what factors impacted this answer. It is very likely that some students came into the semester already having proficient understanding of both languages. However, it is possible that class discussions of these and other linguistic and rhetorical principles have influenced the students as well. It is also pleasing to see that all but one student was very or extremely comfortable with code-meshing. Since many of the students are not from the Atlanta area and have a strong grasp on code-switching, it makes sense that students are also comfortable with code-meshing.

VIDEO NARRATIVE FINDINGS

The research goal for this assignment was to have students use movie spoofs and song parodies to demonstrate what they have learned this semester. The hope is that students can showcase understanding of remix theory, sonic and auditory rhetoric, and other concepts when highlighting what they learned. Of the twenty-two responses listed below, twenty of them mentioned including discussion of AAVE, Standard English, and code-meshing in their video

narrative write-ups. This stands out to me because many of them were unaware that their casual form of speech had an actual term.

22 of the 24 students submitted video narrative assignments. Of these, all but one of them consisted of movie spoofs, song parodies, and television show parodies. These spoofs and parodies covered a wide range of horror movie remakes and class African-American films such as *Friday* and *Waiting to Exhale*. Most of the videos were filmed on Clark Atlanta's campus, and almost everyone enlisted assistance from their friends and/or family members. I was hoping this would happen because students seem to be more innovative with the right help. Also, there is strength in numbers, and having their peers act helped to bring many of their themes and messages to life.

The students used a vast array of spoofs and parodies to display what they learned throughout the semester. While some of their responses went slightly off the rails, most of them highlighted learning about the difference between AAVE and Standard English. I also appreciated the main use of auditory and visual rhetoric to communicate their thoughts. The creation of their presentations demonstrates some learning and understanding of how these forms of rhetoric and multimodality matter regarding receiving messages. Students responses suggest that they seemed to have learned something about language, identity, and significance of AAVE, SWE, and spoken English existing simultaneously. This data shows that teaching code-meshing, AAVE, and multimodality can be used to promote critical thinking and analysis of facets of language, race, identity, and acceptance My hope is that students find this new information to empower and encourage them when conversing in professional and academic spaces.

SUGGESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the data presented, it can be determined that students have developed a new or better understanding what AAVE is and how it works in comparison to SE. This determination is based on how similar the students' responses are throughout their assignments. Most of the students' assignment responses promoted AAVE use in certain circumstances while recognizing SE as the perceived dominant language. In addition, students seem to have also developed a better understanding of SE and its purpose in society. This understanding translates to the students acknowledging the need for code-meshing in various situations while being comfortable with retaining their identity through AAVE use. These results also present multimodal assignments as innovative and inexpensive alternatives to traditional essays. With applications such as Voice Memo and iMovie already included on students' electronic devices, composition students have and can continue to create a wide range of assignments that highlight their unique identities and forms of expressions.

Between the traditional essays and multimodal assignments, students were comfortable with the ability to use AAVE in their assignments and during class discussions. This AAVE allowance created class dialogue that emphasized how diverse the language is. Such diversity suggested that more composition classes should have this discussion to properly address AAVE, other speech varieties, and how they can be embraced into composition instruction and writing assessment. It also implied that AAVE is a complex language to teach due to its significant acceptance of its spoken form than its written form. Lastly, the assignment results suggested that assessment adjustments may help students to be more comfortable providing more creative and thought-provoking responses that showcase parts of who they are.

Other People's English touches on utilizing approaches to teaching Standard English in the classroom. One particular note is to remember that SE is not the "language of wider communication" at all times. This means instructors should acknowledge that there are be times and places where home languages convey more of a message than SE. Also, Young mentions linguistic and phonological aspects of teaching SE and code-meshing. If a student can learn the differences in sound and grammar for languages, then they can learn to practice multilingualism and code-meshing. I share the same belief as Young here because AAVE, SE, and code-meshing are each learned behavior. Therefore, students can learn to practice multilingualism and code-meshing, but it primarily depends on environment the instructor creates in the classroom. I created a welcoming and comforting classroom ecology, and it helped students to be themselves while demonstrating linguistic fluency and willingness to learn more about composition practices.

Young continues by discussing how he has encountered people who want to learn AAVE as they have experienced it in music and cinema. When referencing Awad Ibrahim's experience with teaching English to African immigrants, he states that "Knowing that Black people would expect them to speak African American English, Ibrahim's students asked for special instruction in an undervalued English so that they would be better able to communicate within their (predominantly African American) communities" (Young 49). Young's statement exemplifies how students want (and need) realistic understanding of language and composition practices. Enforcing SWE as the only acceptable language at all times prevents students from getting a complete picture of how certain Englishes are to be used in different situations. This is why I took the time to question students on their linguistic choices while providing instruction on how to use language and multimodality to their advantage.

In Kim Brian Lovejoy's chapter on "Code-Meshing Through Self-Directed Writing," he highlights the use of self-directed writing for teaching about language. This theory focuses on giving students freedom to use home language and their own topics to complete required assignments. Lovejoy models this instruction with use of various forms of communication. I appreciate this multimodal approach because it showcases how culturally relevant pedagogy can be used in teaching communication. He mentions different modes of writing such as instant messages (IMs), cartoons, and dramatic dialogues to teach expressive writing for students. Lovejoy's college composition students responded positively to self-directed writing by saying how it taught them about the full art of writing. Young and Lovejoy's pedagogical approaches to teaching English emphasize the need for realistic language instruction. We must also not undervalue English varieties because of their rhetorical impact on how sonic and visual communication works in language.

Young, Lovejoy, and many others are using their teaching methods as a form of action research. Action research, coined by psychologist Kurt Lewin, is described as "a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action, and fact-finding about the result of the action" (Keleher 88). My case study was also established as a way to help adjust strategies college instructors use for going about teaching English to students. My traditional and low-bridge assignments each worked to teach SE writing practices while providing a realistic take on conversational language dynamics. By limiting the topic of conversation for assignments to AAVE and SE, I was able to gather more information about student's views on teaching language practices. Specifically, many of my students discussed learning written SE while retaining conversational AAVE, which demonstrates the value of English language varieties in different modes.

With regards to language, Asao Inoue proposes that code-meshing classroom policies allow for unique speech practices. He specifically states how "educators should expect and accept code-meshing language practices that bend the rules but do not get folks kicked out of the game" (Young and Martinez 97). Inoue continues on to mention how having good intentions will not be enough to provide the necessary linguistic classroom diversity. I agree with Inoue that certain rules regarding language and dialect use need to be adjusted for code-meshing to be accepted, but I know it is easier said than done. Complete teacher empathy and linguistic acceptance requires implementing policies and curriculums that promote individuality. If we want students to feel comfortable with learning while preserving their identities, then we as educators must practice what we preach and nurture their language use. This starts with policy, curriculum, and assignment adjustments that reflect the realistic modern-day conversations that take place in society.

CONCLUSION

This chapter presented findings of student reflections, demonstrating the that, in spite of negative bias, nearly all students have strong understanding and use of both code-switching and code-meshing The traditional and low-bridge assignment findings offered valuable evidence to support the claims made in my hypothesis. The essays and multimodal responses displayed the students' abilities to critically think, analyze, and reflect on key moments, ideals, forms of impactful media. In addition to demonstrating students' levels of comfort with code-meshing, AAVE, SE, and multimodality, these findings go hand-in-hand with my observation results (Appendix B) and the implications discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: IMPLICATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Before starting this semester, one main concern was how students would respond to various assignments. My solution to this was to create what Asao Inoue calls an antiracist writing assessment ecology. Asao Inoue's guidelines for creating an antiracist writing assessment ecologies includes consideration of purposes (course, teacher, student), processes (rubric building, feedback, reflection, labor monitoring), places (writing groups, failure and success, texts), parts (rubrics, discourse of assessment and judgment, texts), power (monitoring, student participation, difference, teacher power), people (interconnection, local diversity, inter-being as problem-posing), and products (discussion, products of other ecological elements). Because these classroom elements offer a rich picture, I decided to record daily class observations to see how well different assignments and activities were received.

In addition to tracking assignment reception, logging my daily class observations helped me to pinpoint issues with various components of the ecologies I was creating with them. It was important to be as descriptive as possible with my observations because it was my first time intentionally incorporating discussion of race and language into my teachings. Therefore, everything needed to be setup in a way where my teaching and the student's responses created opportunities for my research questions to be answered.

ECOLOGY COMPONENTS

Of many components within Inoue's proposed ecologies, the following four the following four components stood out during my study: feedback, writing groups, rubrics, and student

participation. For each essay, students were asked to submit rough drafts before completing final essays. I would review the rough drafts and have students bring the draft in some format to class for peer review. Of the 24 students in the class, I found that very few of them actually enjoyed or were excited about peer review day. This was measured through observations of the effort students put into reviewing and critiquing their classmates' assignments. Our designated class time was in the early afternoon, around the time when many of my students had just finished eating lunch. Having said that, part of the lack of enthusiasm was possibly exhaustion mixed with apathy. Some students would take the time to thoroughly critique their classmates' work, and others would merely look through the work without making any comments. One observation closer to the end of the semester highlights how their attention spans decreased over the course of the semester. (Daily Observation 4/23/19) Occasionally, a student or two would come to me after class was either and do one of two things: tell me that nobody gave them feedback or state how they have been doing the assignment wrong up to this point. This meant they were focusing on my feedback even more, which pushed me to make their feedback as detailed as possible throughout the rest of the semesters.

Writing groups worked well to provide the feedback that peer reviews would lack. It was important for students to be able to bounce ideas off one another on a regular basis, so I would often put in groups of two to four to help with the pre-writing and drafting processes. These groups were tricky because they depended on students' comfort and confidence levels (Daily Observation 2/21/19). Ironically, the students who had the clearest idea of how to complete the task set before them used up the shortest amount of time getting feedback from peers. On the flipside, those who were less prepared would spend more time discussing assignment instructions and requirements in addition to determine how they would complete the assignment.

Some students also fell in the category of working alone regardless of peer availability. Those who did this may simply feel more comfortable working on their own.

Rubrics were important to teaching the class because students hung on to each word of instruction I gave. I tailored the rhetoric of each rubric to them, but they would often pay more attention to in-class written and oral instruction than the assignment prompt. With regards to confidence, most of the students demonstrated enough to ask for assistance when necessary. This was significant because it shows that my teacher efficacy (the ability to empathize and relate to my students) worked in my favor. Proper instruction of each major assignment required some revision to each rubric, allowing for optimal clarity.

Regardless of my individual efforts, student participation was essential to developing a beneficial writing ecology. I presented all the necessary information, but it was up to the students to guide what direction our discussions and explanations. Once this took place, I simply took back control when it was time to re-iterate the activity's purpose. Student participation worked to emphasize individual cultural awareness and identity. Whether it involved regional terminology or cultural differences, there was an equal exchange of information that created a melting pot of shared and learned knowledge This exchange also allowed us to have a great deal of discussion about the how words can have different meanings depending on body language, voice inflection, tone, and location in which the word or phrase is being used. This awareness is highlighted in Appendix A.

Participation was also required in class discussions of gestural communication and AAVE-based terminology. The students also seemed to feed off one another by reconnecting to not only the lingo associated with their hometowns, but also the sights, sounds, and smells. Perception and judgment entered the conversation of language when the students were

introduced to the Soundscape assignment. This was the first eye-opening assignment of the semester for me because it was the first look into low-bridge assignments. After exposing them to platforms such as Audacity and myNoise, students found the easiest outlet to be Voice Memo on their phones. "In preparation for their Soundscape activities, students were asked to consider what platform they plan to use to record their soundscapes. So far, they have been introduced to Audacity, AudioJack, MyNoise, and Voice Memo. Based on class discussions, it is safe to assume that most students will use Voice Memo to record their soundscapes. (Daily Observation 2/26/19)" Looking back, my assumptions came to fruition based on Voice Memo being a free and easily accessible application that was came pre-installed on most, if not every student's phone. I was happy with the fact that everyone was able to create soundscapes with platforms that were free and easily accessible.

Unfortunately, I was not able to have reflection surveys given after the Video Narratives. This has a hindrance regarding the time constraints placed on teaching the final assignment. However, the reflections from the Soundscape assignments give me a good idea of how the students felt about the low-bridge assignments. I went into this case study assuming a high level of validity would take place. On the other hand, I was unsure of reliability levels because I figured the results would shift with various assignments over time.

Many, if not all, of my students understood what Standard English is and how it works. This is primarily because most of them have been taught that SE was a mark of success. Although proper English language is preferred in professional spaces, they were happy to learn that I accepted code-meshed words and phrases. Giving them a natural voice seemed to be beneficial because students enjoy the ability to be themselves and write how they talk. This can be both a gift and a curse at times.

Students may not have gotten better at using Standard English, but they should have, at least, gained more perspective on its SE and other speech varieties. Not only do they feel obligated to use it at certain times; they also think it is important to keep SE exclusive to professional communication. This is important for students to develop a sense of authenticity and comfort in using AAVE over SE in various settings. When students can develop a bilingualism based on Kairos and functionality, is it important to ensure that sound as natural as possible for efficacy and relatability purposes.

A major issue in composition classes is that students are often not taught about the differences in spoken English versus what is considered the Standard. In Jane Medwell's book titled *Primary English: Knowledge and Understanding*, there is a breakdown of both Standard English and what goes into spoken English. When defining Standard English, the book explains that "Standard English is largely a matter of using certain grammar, vocabulary and, when written, spelling. It can be spoken in most English accents and does not have a correct pronunciation" (Medwell 14). This statement implies that society has created some idea of what Standard English sounds like, and it has caused people to judge one another for not sounding like this perceived standard. They refer to this practice and ideology as received pronunciation, which happens when English language learners associate SE with an accent deemed as "The Queen's English." Like *Primary English,* I also refute the idea of their being one standard way of speaking English because it promotes conformity while prohibiting expression and uniqueness.

This determination of SE needs to be discussed in the classroom instead of having students believe they have to follow one standard. In *Primary English,* they mentioned how there are many Standard varieties of English and no actual standard accent. However, regional accents and variations are what people have often equated to SE. It is also important to note how spoken

English includes not just accents and dialects, but also social situation. Medwell uses the phrase "language register" to language register has been used to describe the way speakers (or writers} use different words and grammatical formations depending on the situation. I would argue that code-mesh, is in fact, a form of language registry in social situations. Therefore, instructors should not only acknowledge differences in how SE can be used, but also encourage code-meshing to promote multilingualism and social situation awareness.

It is also important to recognize how SWE and spoken English in the sense that SWE does not take accent and dialect into account. This subtle difference matters because SWE calls for visual understanding, while spoken English calls for auditory understanding. Students can come more comfortable and proficient in language use when they are taught this complete lesson in English. With regards to my study, most of my students came into the course already conscious of disparities between spoken and written English. I initially noticed this when reviewing their Persuasion Essay responses. Some students preferred using SWE with elements of spoken AAVE in the classroom. When they were exposed to both SWE and written AAVE, the consensus was that written AAVE was not as legible as SWE. However, they also mentioned how spoken AAVE is not as forced for them as spoken Standard English. That in itself represents the balance between English variety use.

The essay response results show that 83% (20 out of 24) of the students' received negative responses from other people when they used AAVE in conversation. While some of the Negativity came everywhere from peers and co-workers to family members. In some cases, the family members disapproved of AAVE's use as a way of preparing that student for survival in the "real world." The 17% (4 out of 24) who mentioned positive responses they had received were each primarily referencing peers who also spoke AAVE.

Students also seemed to have no issue with communicating through technology. In addition to contacting me through Canvas messages and emails for various issues, students considered visual communication to be a major component of understanding. For instance, despite the narrative write-ups, I'm sure a great deal of faith of confidence went into the audience's familiarity with the content. Most students were able to utilize sound and visual aspects of language with their phones. This makes me wonder how advanced, yet unprepared students may be for conversations about home language vs Standard English.

At first, this assignment seemed like a daunting task to some of the class. However, after much detailed visual and oral instruction, they were able to rise to the occasion and supply solid analysis of the various works (Daily Observation 4/18/19). Aside from the Video Narrative, this was probably the most challenging assignment they received all semester. It challenged them to not only focus on something that was remade but also to look past the surface to examine the messages the works presented. Some of the works discussed were *A Different World, Scary Movie 2, and Don't Be a Menace to South Central while Drinking your Juice in the Hood.*

Whether they evaluated a book, movie, song, or television show, each student articulated their positive and negative responses to stereotypes presented, representation (or lack thereof), relatability, and linguistic understanding. Students also expressed how comfortable or uncomfortable the selected remake made them based on race, language, and/or identity. Many of them also acknowledged that media impacts people different depending on multiple factors. One example of this understanding is seen in A. D.2's. essay about *Don't Be a Menace to South Central while Drinking your Juice in the Hood.* When describing the film, Dupree says "This film could have both a negative or positive impact depending on not just who is viewing it, but what race and background the viewer is from" (Canvas). She continues to explain how the

stereotypes and negative portrayals of the black community do not offend her because she is familiar with these circumstances, and she understands the film's comedic intent. In addition to media analysis, this assignment also helped to show how students consider race, language, and identity. Most of our semester conversations focused on AAVE and SE, but we often discussed race relations and identity as determining factors for whose language is acceptable and whose is unacceptable.

Before the semester started, I mistakenly assumed that assigning four mini essays and two low-bridge assignments whether write ups would provide quality data to record. However, I forgot to consider how significant timeframes are for allowing people to respond accordingly (Daily Observation 4/30/19). A great deal of solid responses came about, but it may be a good idea to eliminate one or two of the mini essays next time. Also, conducting the study at an HBCU made me consider how impactful combining teacher efficacy and culturally relevant pedagogy were for developing productive learning environments. We had conversations where students shared not being comfortable with most of white people using AAVE, so I can only imagine how receptive they would have been to my lessons if I didn't look like them. There's no doubt that my appearance, cultural awareness, and reduced age gap helped to raise students' comfort and fluency levels.

Teaching the conflicts can also help students to distinguish between efficacy and appreciation for a culture's customs and traditions, and flat out cultural appropriation. Such knowledge and awareness are displayed in this passage stating how "Folks that are hip to the history know that White participation in Black cultural forms has almost always been preceded by White abhorrence of the forms, followed by White appropriation (theft, as some call it)" (Alim & Smitherman 124). In this passage, the authors are alluding to white people initially

ridiculing components of Black Culture before embracing it, adopting it, and claiming it as their own. This is significant due to Black people constantly recreating ourselves in hopes of retaining our thoughts and ideas. It's interesting how people will embrace Black culture more than they do Black people.

Students with diverse backgrounds often come into composition classes with difficulty speaking and/or understanding SE. While the student should be exposed to SE and how it's used, they must determine how the voices of their home languages will be heard. From a rhetorical standpoint, composition pedagogy has previously been structured to emphasize SE, which can appear oppressive to some students. Unfortunately, this oppression teaches students to either conform to dominant linguistic practices, or risk being ridiculed for using rhetorical techniques of an oppressed people.

The harsh reality, however, is that some level of conformity will be necessary for my participants and other AAVE-speaking students to excel in their respective careers. Such realization correlates with the idea of black people and other people of color going out of their way to makes their white counterparts comfortable. Many of my students came to college, let alone my class, with this understanding that knowing Standard English will help them succeed. Conformity and knowledge of the "standard" have unfortunately become the key to being perceived as non-threatening. The right language use can positively impact a perception of someone.

Teresa Redd's "Interdisciplinary Explorations in Writing" also focuses on making sure students know how to articulate themselves and adjust perception using multiple forms of technology. Acknowledging the need for multimodal composition will help students to learn more about effective communication using handwritten, typed, oral, visual, and gestural speech

modes. "Expanding the repertoires of African Americans students is critical: Too often African American students enter college with a limited command of composing technologies because of unequal investments in technology in minority schools…Like Banks, I give African American students the opportunity to use technology 'to tell their own stories in their own terms and…to meet the real material, social, cultural, and political needs in their lives and in their communities" (Redd 152). Like Redd, my low-bridge assignments were implemented to measure different levels of comfort and language proficiency while broadening their horizons.

MULTIMODAL ASSIGNMENTS USING LOW-BRIDGE TECH APPROACHES

The soundscapes and video narratives were great introductions to non-traditional assignments. Once all initial questions were answered, students seemed to showcase a solid mastery of how to create these assignments. Teaching students about language and various communication modes works to show them how to become more comfortable and confidence using language. Also, incorporating the low-bridge assignments allows students to express themselves while eliminating opportunities for "white language privilege" to force sacrifices in identity and racial habitus (Inoue 48). In my study, I allowed more code-meshing within writing while focusing less on grammar. This adjustment gave students control over their language to place more focus on ensuring persuasive and compelling message delivery than Standard English use.

In John McWhorter's *Talking Back, Talking Black,* McWhorter touches on some of the issues regarding sound and race. In chapter two, "What Do You Mean 'Sounds Black?", he describes what makes up a "blaccent" and misconceptions people may have about differences between types of racial voices. One statement regarding Black people's supposed accents reds as follows:

This issue can be viewed as having two levels. The surface level, more easily perceptible, has been mined by linguists for decades and constitutes the "classic," obvious differences in sound between black and white American speech. The deeper level is the aspect of the sound that leads one to wonder why even if a person doesn't sound black in an immediately obvious way—for example, like the typical rapper—we can still somehow detect "blackness" in their voice. (McWhorter 66)

McWhorter's discussion of sound in connection to race and language leads into the conversation of sonic rhetoric. When people listen to a voice and attempt to determine the speaker's race strictly based on the sound, this brings up questions as to how and why a person came to and made this determination. It was this rationale that inspired me to have my students ask certain questions of their listener for their soundscapes. Having students ask these questions showed how people respond to sounds based on their familiarity and comfort levels.

McWhorter's work implies that black people distinctly sound different based on how they pronounce certain words. However, he also reiterates that all black people do not talk the same, and their experiences should not be lumped together based on sound. Also, suggesting that someone "sounds black" or "sounds white" can be detrimental regarding how we respond to different sounds and voices. For instance, as a black male scholar in academia, I have been accused of "sounding white" based the tone of voice at different times in professional settings. Since people can come from all walks of life, we should not assume positive or negative things about others because of how they sound. I thought it was important to impart this idea on my students through their soundscape assignments.

Jamila Lyiscott's Ted Talk titled "Why English Class is Silencing Students of Color," she emphasizes how we must create spaces in the classroom that promote critical awareness. This

awareness is of the social languages we navigate inside and outside of the classroom. It is important to understand your linguistic repertoire and its capabilities. Many students engage in AAVE practices with little understanding of its value. Her explanation behind this concept includes an example of how companies such as McDonalds utilize components of AAVE to appeal to and sell to the masses. This point is used to highlight how aspects of dialects and speech varieties have more power than people realize, mainly because they have been taught that said dialects have no power.

There should also be consideration of agency and access in the classroom. Next, actualization also comes into play when working to eliminate spatial oppression on campuses. This is followed by taking another look at the plans to achieve goals that positively transform students, instructors, and the educational spaces as a whole. Achievement speaks to challenging the standards we have. Finally, we must consider alterations and action.

Digital and multimodal pedagogy can allow for self-assessment and reflection to go along with an expressive pedagogy. This is because students in popular culture use digital and multimodal outlets to express themselves and build upon their sense of identity. Such expression in social media format includes daily activity on Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, and other platforms. Self-reflection was a major motivation for how I set up the major assignments. Each assignment intentionally required students to relate the necessary information back to themselves. The Soundscape Assignment seems to have been successful in showcasing how sound can influence judgment. This assignment had multiple purposes. The first purpose was to test the students' ability to record their own soundscape. The second purpose was to put our discussions of auditory rhetoric by examining responses to the soundscapes and the rationale for each response.

For this assignment, students were asked to create their own soundscape by recording a conversation for 3-5 minutes. They were to participate in the recorded conversation, and it was supposed to include use of both AAVE and SE. Students were then asked to ask someone they know who was not included in the soundscape to listen to it. Students were also to discuss their expectations for how the listener will respond to the soundscape. After the student's selected listener heard the soundscape, the student was to have the listener answer certain questions about it regarding the recorded conversation's topic, descriptions of the people conversing, and judgments the listener made about the people talking. This response was to be followed by the student's response to their own soundscape. When responding, students were asked to consider how they felt about the soundscape and why they felt that way.

Students' responses showed the importance of recognizing differences in regional AAVE use and overall speech variety. Many of the listeners' responses heavily based on accent use and clarity, which led to a few inaccurate assumptions. These assumptions represent how people tend to judge people based on how they talk. Therefore, this soundscape assignment can work to dispel misconceptions of people who use home languages and regional vernaculars. Lastly, listening to the multiple combinations of AAVE and SSE use, these assignments prove that there is no one set form of SSE. Since students in my course came from parts of the United States, they each use AAVE in a way that highlights their unique backgrounds. This is a common characteristic as people' language use is often acquired from their home environments . We may try to mask our true selves at times, but our true identities tend to come out in casual conversation. The soundscapes included conversations where people code-meshed effortlessly, which shows how forms of English can naturally blend together. In addition to showcasing judgments, the Soundscape Assignment also showed me how people react when someone or

something doesn't sound familiar to them. We had practice with this activity in class when they listened to a British soundscape I found (Daily Observation 3/7/19). Most of the class had a positive reaction to listening to their own soundscapes. In fact, one student named Y. M. mentioned how completing this activity showed her how differently people talk all over the world. R. D. also discussed how the assignment showed her the difference in accents and AAVE use of people from Detroit, Washington, D.C., and other cities nationwide.

The data collected from the Soundscape assignment shows an exact 50/50 split between recordings taking place in a public setting or a private setting (11 to 11). I appreciate this balance between public and private spaces used as it works to build a diverse set of responses. By recording conversations using AAVE and SE on and off campus, I was able to get a realistic sense of how the students naturally spoke. Another intriguing observation regarding soundscape assessment is how some students expected different responses from their listeners for different reasons. While a few expectations were based on how "professional" their language use sounded, other expectations were based on accents and where people were from. This represents how important is to not disregard home language use, especially home languages with slight difference in regional word and phrases.

It is also interesting to note how students were specifically concerned with older listeners, such as parents, understanding what was sound in their soundscapes. This points to a possible generational gap in understanding AAVE. Since students' older family members seemed to disregard AAVE, it is implied that they were taught to undervalue and not accept Englishes other than SWE and Standard Spoken English. Few issues came about regarding soundscape submission and sound clarity. However, the students' soundscapes were mostly clear and easy to understand. Also, each soundscape was created with Voice Memo, a free application

on most, if not all, cell phones today. Utilization of Voice Memo pleased me because none of

the students mentioned any issues with using the app to record, and there was no additional cost,

which is important when dealing with people in college. However, some students did experience

issues with submitting both their soundscape media file and their accompanying essay to Canvas.

For instance, of the 22 submissions received, only 14 of them discussed the types of

responses they anticipated from their proposed listener. On a positive note, 11 of the 14

assignment submissions expected positive responses from the listener; this is compared to only

three negative expected responses. When it comes to the listener's responses, 17 of the 22

submissions included their results. Of the 17 submissions, nine of them responded positively,

while eight responded negatively. A positive listener response means that the listener reacted

exactly how the soundscape creator expected them to. A negative response means that the

listener reacted differently than the creator expected them to.

Code-meshing was a major component of the assignment because I wanted to highlight

both AAVE and SE use. The goal was to have soundscapes created that capture natural voices

and languages in conversation. Natural voice worked to show and explain similarities between

AAVE and SE in oral communication that would not have worked out as well with written

communication. All but one soundscape included AAVE, and 16 of the 22 responses included

SE. Students were asked to end their assignment with discussion of their reaction to their own

soundscape. 18 of the 22 submissions supplied this information; 15 of them gave a positive

response, meaning that their soundscapes met their expectations. On the contrary, only three of

the 18 submissions displayed did not meet student expectations.

Based on all the compiled data, I would say that the Soundscape assignment was a

success. It worked to demonstrate how sonic rhetoric and resonance work to impact judgment,

understanding, and acceptance. Listening to languages being used in everyday conversation helps to highlight linguistic features that had been discussed in class. The assignment also worked to teach students to never assume how someone will receive a message based on the language used. Hopefully, this assignment helped someone to how to not associate someone's form of speech with their race, level of intelligence, and level of income.

The Video Narrative seemed to be an excellent assignment for demonstrating remix theory. Remix theory emphasizes recreating a form of media to orchestrate a new message. The following figure presents the prompt and instructions for the Video Narrative Final. Like the Soundscape assignment, the Video Narrative assignment served multiple purposes. The first purpose was to test how well the students could embody remix theory by recreating their favorite forms of media. The second purpose was to assess how well they could deliver a new message through their recreations.

The study has increased my confidence in my students knowing how to use multimodality to create audio, videos, and effectively communicate. For instance, most of them were able to demonstrate what they learned in this semester through multiple modes of communication. Despite understanding of AAVE and SE use in separate settings, some students seemed to struggle with email etiquette. What I mean is that some students would disregard greetings and formatting and simply write how they spoke. I am unsure as to whether this disregard was strictly based on not recognizing emails as formal conversation, or if my closeness in age to the students had anything to do with it. Nonetheless, my students definitely knew how to articulately get their points across. With this in mind, the word "articulate" itself came up in classroom discussion as well.

The word "articulate" came up in a Ted Talk by Jamila Lyiscott titled "3 ways to speak English." In this talk, Lyiscott discusses being called articulate for being able to use spoken Standard English well. She also mentions "composite linguistic power" in another Ted Talk. Lyiscott's discussion of being called articulate emphasizes lowered expectations for students of color in language. Through this talk, we see how the word "articulate" is belittling in the sense that it is primarily used as a back-handed compliment; in fact, I have never witnessed the word be used to describe how a white American student speaks. It may be safe to assume that white students do not hear phrases about being "articulate" and "speaking so well" because it is assumed that they have fewer issues using spoken English.

Although the Video Narratives was successful in producing their own results, it would be difficult to analyze their effectiveness without examining their required supplemental write ups. The writeups were meant to provide details explaining the actions within the video and their purpose. While most of the class was able to properly utilize the explanatory opportunity, there were a few here and there who bypassed how certain video components will showcase what they've learned. I am confident that each student learned something regarding race, language, identity, AAVE, code-meshing, and multimodality, but I'm not sure they fully knew how to articulate these ideas on paper. Therefore, each assignment given asked open-ended questions that allowed for complete and thoughtful responses.

The parodies and spoofs also covered a wide range of time between past and present media. For instance, T.R. used his video to serve as a parody of MTV Cribs, which is a show based in the 1990s and early 2000s. Other adaptations such as "His Eye is on the Sparrow" from *Sister Act 2* and The Isley Brothers' "Contagious" lets me know how influential their parents and grandparents' favorite songs and movie may have influenced the students' childhood.

The case study proved my hypothesis to be true in an unexpected way. Instead of merely instructing students on how to write in SE, my class lessons worked to show students SE's purpose and rules for how for how and when they're useful. Most of the students mentioned AAVE and SE within lists of things they learned about and discussed in their Video Narrative write-ups. Most of them mentioned not knowing that these common languages and interaction methods had actual names. Also, helping the students find their comfort levels and grow in their natural voices is essential for life in and past college days. As I continued introducing AAVE and its purpose, code-meshing, and multimodal assignments, students became more comfortable with using SE on their terms for their own benefit. Despite some imperfections, I would consider this study to be a success.

In Chapter five of Perryman-Clark and Craig's work titled *Black Perspectives in Writing Program Administration,* David Green discusses the idea of adopting hip-hop's concept of a "cypher" in a writing or composition classroom. He continues to endorse cyphers as ways to generation in-class interactions, critical thinking, and organization. Green further promotes the benefits of a cypher by stating how "the main push is for [writing instructors] to begin to consider imaginative writing, invention, and delivery with an eye toward the cultural identities and values that animate student discourse and informs the ways that they enter and exit various forms of language" (Perryman-Clark and Craig 59). This statement displays how Green understands the importance of cultural relevance and teacher efficacy in the classroom. His mention of faculty not having much experience in Rhetoric and Composition is important because it shows how some instructors may not understand the value in delivery and persuasion.

In Lee and Canagarajah's essay titled "Beyond Native and Nonnative," they discuss the importance of translingual disposition as a determiner for how instructors utilize their language

teacher identities. Translingual dispositions are defined as orientations, or feelings, toward language diversity and difference from a non-deficit perspective. Dispositions themselves are defined as a teacher's internal qualities and filter that affect their way of thinking and action. These identities, in turn, work to reveal how the instructor's experiences influence their pedagogical approaches to addressing language and literacy in the classroom. Lee and Canagarajah's study on an instructor named "Daphne" highlighted how a positive disposition toward diversity and language allows for negotiation in how to address issues with students' writing while giving students the tools to make the best rhetorical and linguistic choices.

This study also emphasizes how valuable it is for instructors to use reflective activities and student analysis to better understand their language and literacy practices. They state that "Activities such as these can encourage teachers to see how what seem to be 'normative' beliefs and attitudes towards language and literacy promote inequality in education, and therefore, help understanding the importance of building dispositions that disrupt such 'normative' discourses" (Lee and Canagarajah 361). This statement suggests that instructors should embrace their students' home language use as an essential part of their identity. There needs to be less of a focus on what is wrong with a student's language and more focus on how to help them get their points across in the best way.

It is important to note that throughout Lee and Canagarajah's study, there was never any disregard for Standard Written English. This is important because discussion of home language acceptance in the classroom is mentioned, there can be a belief that instructors will neglect the teaching of SWE. When Daphne negotiates language use "normalcy" with rhetorical impact, she is helping students learn how to find power in language while offering both standard and unconventional writing as options. Like Daphne, my study also worked to empower students

while ensuring that they understand SWE and its significance in professional and academic settings. Throughout the semester, some of my students expressed distaste for Standard English while acknowledging that it is not going anywhere anytime soon. Each student recognized how knowing SE is pivotal in advancing in their careers; however, teaching them to see SE as the only way can prevent students from practicing multilingualism and developing a mastery of SE, AAVE, and other English-based speech varieties. Therefore, I informed students of differences in language principles between AAVE and SE while allowing code-meshing and other linguistic and rhetorical choices in traditional and non-traditional assignments.

The language debate suggests that there is a slight difference in how composition instructors and other individuals respond to SWE and Standard Spoken English. Instructors can sometimes pay too much attention to the language used to deliver a message instead of the message itself. However, some people focus more on the delivery and message in the writing than the language used. This is a key quality to consider when analyzing rhetorical impact.

Implementing new classroom assignments partially requires going into instruction with a certain level of expectations for your students. In Teresa Redd's "An HBCU Perspective on Academically Adrift," Redd discusses how reports have shown a noticeable disparity between African-American students and non-African American students College Student Assessment scores. This disparity reflects how instructors have lower expectations of African-American students "because of the social stigma attached to African American Language (AAL) and stereotypical beliefs about African American intelligence. Redd's essay reveals a domino effect caused by instructors' lack of expectations. Lack of expectations and non-stimulating activities can lead to lack of confidence and comfort in students' abilities, which leads to lack of desire to utilize helpful resources, then leading to lowered performance levels (Redd 503-504).

ASSIGNMENT FINDINGS AND INSTRUCTION COMPARISONS

Asao Inoue mentions the impact a change in writing assessment ecology had on his students' achievements. His work focuses on the issue of power paired with racial stigmas associated with writing from students of color. This concept of an antiracist ecology is used to point out issues with what Inoue deems a white racial habitus while highlighting the components of dominant discourse that have been imposed on students by a seemingly dominant culture of people. In his work titled "Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies: Teaching and Assessing Writing for a Socially Just Future, Inoue discusses the impact of an environment how people work and live together. Inoue further explains "If our students' gifts of fortune are the racial *habitus* they bring with them, and some *habitus* provide students with an unfair inheritance in today's academy, then we must use system more ethical to assess them by, especially in writing classrooms. He supports this rationale with discussion of a student who particularly shed light on the lack of acceptance her writing has received in previous writing assessment ecologies. This sentiment is expressed in the following excerpt:

> Power is something, I'm guessing, Lyna has rarely felt or exercised in writing assessment ecologies, as suggested in her parenthetical aside about past English teachers identifying her writing as "not in a 'logical' order". Not so surprisingly, being able to exercise some degree of power is key to Lyna's success. …Her comment about past teachers judging her writing as illogically arranged is particularly interesting to me in the way it reveals the dynamics of past writing assessment ecologies, suggesting the paper as a place of norming and racing in writing assessment ecologies, particularly for multilingual students of color. (Inoue 206)

Like Inoue, my intention was to eliminate racial stigmas within the classroom. Similar sentiments of judgment were brought to light in my students' Cause and Effect essays. These essays asked them each to write about causes and effects code-meshing has had on your interactions with other people. Many of their stories alluded to being ridiculed or negatively critiqued by someone for using language that was not considered the standard. Since each student was of African-American descent, it is safe to say that the ridicule and critiques were stemmed from racial prejudice.

One student named T. E. reflected on her time working at McDonalds in Chicago. She says the following:

> "People watch you when you do not know it. This was the case with my one of my managers. She heard me talking to my black co-worker without knowing me yet; after that she assumed that I was ignorant and gave me funny looks whenever I was around. While the customers responded better with my slang. The regular customers loved me and related to me because of my slang. I do not only think it was my language that made my manager dislike, but I believe that was one of the reasons." (Canvas)

T.E.'s experience with being judged by her manager for how she spoke is representative of how judgment is placed on people who use AAVE. Perhaps the most significant part of her passage is when she mentions how language may not have been the only factor involved in her manager's judgments. T.E. is a black woman, so this judgment could very well be connected to skin color as well as language. This draws a correlation to James Baldwin's "If Black English Isn't A Language, Then Tell Me What Is." In this essay, Baldwin discusses how "It is not the black child's language that is in question, it is not his language that is despised: It is his experience" (Baldwin) Therefore, it is quite possible that the T.E.'s manager equated her entire

existence (language, skin color, and affiliates) as ignorant and unpleasing. However, the manager's ethnicity is not mentioned in the essay, so we cannot make any definite claims right now.

In addition to T.E., I had a student named M.S. who experienced a positive reaction in one setting and a negative reaction in another. M.S. discusses how she performed an autobiographical speech that included various AAVE terms. Although her English teacher received her speech well and encouraged her to compete in a statewide Oratorical contest, M.S. soon faced backlash from the oratorical contest judges. She said that "The judges seemed to ask questions after the speech regarding my word choice. Their comments made it seem like they did not take me seriously. Even one judge commented and told me that it was a setback because I was not using correct terms." This is troubling because it sounds as if the judges focused more on M.S.'s diction than the content within her speech. I am also personally puzzled by the mention of her word choice being a "setback." Unfortunately, this sentiment is shared by many people of all ethnicities.

Like Inoue, my students displayed their struggles with acceptance of AAVE use in various settings. Since T.E. and M.S. are both African-American women, the judgments placed on their forms of speech give reason to believe certain racial stigmas were implicated. Power dynamics also come into play based on what form of English is deemed acceptable. I would consider this assignment to be acceptable because it allowed me to gauge the students' awareness of judgment and perception regarding language. It also helped to examine the basis for students' confidence and comfort levels with AAVE as well as their feelings for or against using AAVE in certain settings.

Jeannie Beard describes her findings while discussing the correlations that occurred between experience with technology and multimodal assignment success. Beard's analysis of this trend introduces an issue that presents precautions that come with low-bridge assignments.

> As the data presented above shows, many of the students surveyed expressed some concerns about doing a multimedia project. According to the responses on the Pre-Survey, the main concern that most students had was due to a lack of experience with movie making software…For example, Brenda, a non-traditional student, expressed the most concern about the project because of her lack of experience with computers in general. (Beard 152)

This excerpt illustrates an issue with software experience, which must be remedied through instruction and modeling. Even though we are in the age of technology, we cannot assume that all students have access to certain tools. Therefore, instructors should either provide the necessary tools for assignment they introduce or survey their students to determine what multimodal access is afforded to their students. However, providing students with the tools and necessary knowledge for utilizing these tools can be difficult, as expressed in the continued excerpt from Beard's analysis of a student's progress through an assignment.

> As the semester progressed, Brenda's concerns proved to be warranted in that most of her frustrations were related to learning the software required and general technical difficulties. In the first survey, the students who stated that they had little concerns about completing the project also indicated that they had previous experience. (Beard 152)

I too ran into some issues concerning my students and their experience with certain technology. These issues primarily came about with the Soundscape assignment, which required students to recording a soundscape, play it for someone else, and describe the soundscape, their

expectations of the listener's response, the actual response, and the student's response to their own soundscape. A few students mentioned initial issues with volume and sound quality, but these problems were quickly resolved. However, the submission process was slightly chaotic because some students' submissions only showed one of the two mandatory part of the assignment. This caused a slight snag in soundscape collection and grading.

Another similarity between mine and Beard's research is that we each used a mixed methods case study. Like Beard, I collected surveys and essays to be able to assess quantitative and qualitative data together. This system was beneficial with regards to evaluating content while measuring confidence and language proficiency.

Teresa Redd developed a curriculum based in rhetorical analysis, cognitive psychology, social constructivism, sociolinguistics, and critical pedagogy. This combination created a First-Year Writing course that is dedicated to teaching African-American students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Students are meant to learn to how to develop their rhetorical knowledge, authorship, cultural awareness, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary writing, and the ability to compose in traditional and electronic formats. Redd mentions the importance of providing African-American students with the necessary tools to level the academic and technological playing field.

Redd states that "Given the mission of an HBCU, ENGL 101 should promote, above all, critical thinking and interdisciplinary learning about issues of concern in the African-American community." She continues to say, "I encourage students to write about issues of concern to the African American community so that they can confront and critique the dominant culture and rewrite the story of their own" (Redd 149). Her teaching strategy motivates students to find power in composition that can inspire and create change in perception, perspective, and other

concepts. I agree that students should be encouraged to write about their communities and subjects that will make them comfortable with critical thinking and composition. Also, we need students to find comfort in writing if we want to empower them to challenge problematic circumstances.

Like Redd's course, I developed my curriculum to promote students to find their voice and question the status quo. Redd and I also both allowed students to use AAVE, along with SE in their writing. Our end goals also met in ultimately helping students better understand how and when to academic and professional language. The teacher efficacy I exhibited also seemed to be a factor in getting students to be comfortable with me and my lessons.

Another similarity between mine and Redd's work is in the goals and objectives set for our courses. The course Redd developed highlighted five main goals. These goals enforced focus on developing students' rhetorical knowledge and authorship, stimulating critical thinking and interdisciplinary learning, equipping students with effective writing and research strategies, empowering students to use appropriate discourse conventions, and developing students' ability to compose in multiple environments. This list of goals pushes for students to understand the necessity of knowing how to navigate various spaces of thought and composition. This allows her African-American students to master use of AAVE and SE interchangeably to succeed in casual, academic, and professional settings.

Although the wording is different, the objectives I use in my syllabus connect to those used by Redd because they also focus on concepts such as critical thinking, research strategies, knowledge of language, and environment. In addition to incorporating Clark Atlanta University's curriculum objectives, I added a few of my own course objectives to place emphasis on identity, multimodality, and expression. My intention was for students to increase their knowledge of

AAVE, SE, and each language's principles. These teachings often led to discussion of acceptable and unacceptable language, which is a construct that I wanted students to be able to challenge throughout the semester. Like Redd's students at Howard, my CAU students had each been taught to see SE as the only acceptable language. However, I wanted students in my class to have knowledge that allows them to question this linguistic system of hierarchy in hopes of causing it to change.

Teaching students to question the status quo about language meant that their essays would serve as the basis for much of my research. One opportunity to question linguistic power constructs came with the prompt I created for their Persuasion essays. These essays asked students whether they think AAVE should be used in classroom with support for their position. Their responses varied regarding the stipulations for using the language. One student, K. P., demonstrates a position that is for using AAVE in the classroom to a certain extent. Her rationale for allowing AAVE use in the classroom is that it will "promote freedom of expression." She then follows up this statement by saying "Learning the balance in speaking freely and writing proper will advance students in places they may not achieve if they limit themselves with only knowing how to speak and write AAVE. Having AAVE used in the classroom can benefit all students but can also hold students back" (Canvas).

K. P.'s position showcases how AAVE use in the classroom can be beneficial for expressive freedom and harmful by possibly excluding non-African-American students. Her awareness of the irony within this scenario highlights the duality many African-Americans face daily. This consists of recognizing past and present linguistic rejection while understanding the necessity of inclusion for academic and corporate success. Her essay response also acknowledges how incorporating both home and professional language in the classroom breaks

down power and race barriers. Overall, K. P.'s position shows critical thinking abilities along with sense of identity and expression.

On the contrary, another student named J. M. argues that AAVE should not be used in the classroom due to it being improper and informal. She does, however, mention that AAVE may be acceptable in the classroom for class discussions. Her response portrays acceptance of oral AAVE but rejection of written AAVE. J. M. suggests that while AAVE use in the classroom can provide comfort for students, "when it comes to writing assignments, there is a certain way of writing standard English that every student should follow. That way, students are comfortable in the classroom and familiar with the proper forms and styles of writing" (Canvas) Like K. P., J.M..s response argues for a balanced use of AAVE and SE in specific oral and written class circumstances.

FUTURE ADJUSTMENTS AND IMPLICATIONS

Issues with Canvas itself were out of my control, but this setback showed me how to better prepare for multiple submissions when it came time for the Video Narrative. This reminds me of a statement Beard made when discussing her own findings for teaching multimodal assignments. She said "Teachers should consider how to make connections between their students and helpful support staff members at their institution. Multimodal communication is a community act and takes a support system of many people playing many different roles" (Beard 194). I agree with this statement because better communication between students and support staff may have prevented some of the submission issues that occurred.

Another issue was that some students did not fully respond to the questions asked of them on the rubric. With these adjustments and consideration of the findings, this study can work

as a model for composition instruction and writing assessment at HBCUs. Focusing on classrooms of primarily AAVE-speaking helped set the tone for how to address language, race, and cultural differences in composition. Also, switching up the types of assignments given can help to recreate the environment needed for students to thrive. In time, the idea of adopting home language and multimodality in composition courses can potentially extend to different types of institutions all over the world.

Based on how the students at CAU responded to the assignments given, I assume that this type of instruction would be beneficial at other HBCUs as well as PBIs such as GSU. GSU has a steadily rising African-American student population, so enacting this study there would help to kill two birds with one stone. First, it would help to determine how using AAVE, code-meshing, and multimodal assignments can help promote comfort and linguistic diversity at non-HBCUs. Second, since GSU is comprised of plethora of ethnicities and identities, conducting this study elsewhere could determine how effective my hypothesis is when teaching students who are not African-American.

Another implication from the data is that discussing home language and culture in the classroom helps to acknowledge diversity amongst AAVE-using students. However, AAVE is often treated as the one black student on a brochure for a PWI. In other words, it is referenced but not often discussed and fully explored as a language with rules, guidelines, and multiple variations dependent on regions, environments, and linguistic awareness. This study reminded me how complex of a language AAVE is and why students do not always feel comfortable using it around other people. This means that we must develop curriculums designed to thoroughly explore home languages, nurture their use in the classroom, and help students feel more comfortable sharing part of themselves with others. By diving deeper into home language

discussion, I gained a better understanding of the regional, environmental, and linguistic influences for each student, which then helped me adjust my teaching to cater more to them.

In Taylor Jones' "Toward A Description of African American Vernacular English Dialect Regions using 'Black Twitter'", he states the following:

> Because there has historically been no standard orthography for stigmatized dialects and because Twitter skews young, urban, and black, AAVE is particularly amenable to investigation on Twitter. Moreover, users are rapidly converging on conventional ways of writing AAVE, influenced by AAVE's phonology, rather than writing in eye-dialect or using de facto standard methods of writing nonstandard speech imposed in the classroom with varying degrees of success. (Jones 431)

I agree with this statement, which is why I implemented multimodal assignments that presented what these joint influences sound like. These assignments also produced responses that revealed real viewpoints for learning and beneficial language use. Since social media has heavy influence on language and culture trends, we should be utilized this and other multimodal formats when discussing AAVE and other home languages in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

A significant conclusion I reached that holds great potential for pedagogical improvement, is that multimodal composition enhances and fosters ways to innovate traditional composition and specifically, to focus on AAVE as a bridge for better use of spoken and written SE and also increased confidence and comfort in writers and their abilities. The students were very receptive to the plethora of lessons on code-meshing, AAVE, and multimodality that I gave, and they seem to understand how each term represents the potential to shift the narrative of

spoken and written SE being the only acceptable forms of English. Also, my findings help to improve pedagogy and teacher efficacy. I displayed this efficacy by examining language and environment in class discussions, which showed students that I care about their voices more than my curriculum agenda. This connection helped me to maintain relatability with them, which came in handy for instilling these newer concepts in them.

In this study, multimodal pedagogy looked like assignments that incorporated sound, imagery, and gestures along with written and oral communication to provide students with complete compositional experiences. Allowing students to utilize AAVE and other home languages created a point of connection for them in understanding code-meshing while gaining comfort with aspects of multilingualism. Overall, my biggest takeaway from the data analysis was how spoken and written language were viewed in different lights. This finding would not have been possible had students not been introduced to both traditional and multimodal assignments. I permitted students to use home languages comfortably when necessary while exhibiting awareness of when Standard English, spoken or written, was necessary.

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CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE SUGGESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will explain the trials and triumphs this case study brought along this semester. Conducting this study was truly a trial and error period because I have never taught any of these key terms and information before. Despite some setbacks and slight communication issues at times, I would consider this semester to be successful because I sacrificed my own comfort level to accommodate my students. This and other forms of teacher efficacy have been crucial for establishing essential connections and rapport with the class.

This study promotes language and identity retention, new approaches to multimodality, and more exposure to code-meshing. Students may acknowledge how techno-inclusionism can alter how they go about completing a literary assignment, and the rubric for each assignment has this goal in mind. Presenting composition in this format demonstrates the use of language that students should be prepared to use in professional settings. Students may also get a better view of how to communicate in academic, professional, and informal settings. Using techno-inclusionism also indicates a willingness to look past traditional forms of composition and become more familiarized with modern-day forms of composition and communication. Acknowledging home languages works to recognize diverse backgrounds students bring to composition classrooms. This research will showcase how instructors can adapt to different forms of communicating and presenting information.

The essential role of technology in the classroom is to help students understand what they are being taught. Many students in my course knew how to use technology for various purposes, and I believe composition instructors need to utilize modern technology to help students retain

and absorb the information they learn about language, specifically SWE and SSE. In addition to technology use, it is also pivotal to teach students to separate SWE from SSE. We must disprove the idea that students need to use formal language outside of academic and professional settings. Since written communication and verbal communication appeal to different senses, they should not be used the same way to get a message across. Some students in my course came in with the notion that there is only one standard way to speak English. However, all people have different backgrounds and different relationships with language, so it is impossible for there to one standard form of spoken English.

Despite their differences, AAVE, SWE, and SSE all worked together in my composition course. The students' multimodal assignment responses applied all three languages. Students' abilities to mesh the languages together comfortably allowed them to authentically express themselves. Students' language use and confidence levels have been discussed in previous studies, but my study's findings highlight how language, technology, code-meshing, comfort, and confidence all work together in the classroom. My study reiterates the importance of listening to students in our courses, learning about the students, and tailoring our courses and assignments to helping them communicate more effectively.

My research could present a model for how instructors can incorporate home language, race relations discussions, and multiple forms of technology into composition. The goal is to teach code-meshing and SWE in a way that moves away from the traditional essay style of writing. My research may also serve as a prototype for instruction through multimodal composition. Instructors may learn more about the impact written, visual, and auditory rhetoric can have on how students view literacy. These findings offer new ways to blend to multiple modes of communication into classroom assignments. My findings provide strategies for

teaching language as a full-body experience. This information combines linguistic and rhetorical theories and practices, which before now have mainly existed separately.

I hope this research shows scholars the importance of connecting language to rhetoric and composition. Also, this type of instruction highlights multiple forms of English and their use in rhetoric and composition. Home languages such as AAVE can receive more acceptance and respect as a credible language for composing. Lastly, this project may work to combine the approaches of assessing multimodality in the classroom, recognizing home language use in the classroom, and moving away from traditional forms of composition that work together that helps increase student confidence. Instructors and scholars alike can use such connectivity to teach students realistic approaches to navigating language constructs in the world.

SELF-EVALUATION: FLAWS AND ALL

Before analyzing the data collected, I must first mention my self-analysis of strategy for teaching this course. Looking back, I will most likely reduce the number of essays given to allow time for more clarity and terminology review. Although each of the major assignments were connected to one another, the students displayed many moments of confusion. However, some of this confusion was self-inflicted due to independent variables such as attendance and attentiveness. Teaching six different units within one sixteen-week semester caused some units to be discussed a tad less than others. For instance, during the last month of the semester, I taught both the Rhetorical Analysis unit and the Video Narrative Final to my students. Such teaching was tedious as time needed to be allotted for brainstorming, freewriting, outlining, class discussion, drafting, peer-review, and revision for each major assignment. This was a lot to ask students to do in two-to-three-week spans, but they rose to the challenge.

In addition to my teaching, this semester also impacted my grading. With all the tasks associated with completing each of the six major assignments, I found myself grading papers on a weekly basis. If I wasn't reading through outlines and rough drafts, I was grading final essays. The course had to be conducted at a faster pace to fulfill the obligations of my proposed study. In the future, I may combine the Evaluation and Rhetorical Analysis essays as they ultimately requested the same type of information.

Another realization I have come to is that self-directed writing can be a difficult task for instructing college freshmen on writing. Although the assignments I gave my students allowed for open-minded thinking and creativity, some students need more assistance with free thinking than others. Assistant certain students took up a bit more time than expected on some days, causing some self-directed writing activities to be delayed or shortened. Lack of creativity and open-mindedness can also be attributed to the class time. My class met on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:40pm to 2:55pm. Many students came to class having recently finished lunch, which can make anyone feel sluggish and uninspired.

Throughout the semester, one issue that was out of my control was difficulty with Canvas, Clark Atlanta University's learning management system platform. This platform created some problems when students attempted to submit various assignments, particularly their Soundscapes and Video Narratives. Occasionally, essays and media files would only appear on the student's side and not mine. This caused a tad bit of backtracking in making sure that every student's assignment was fully accounted for. Canvas would also remove some course and assignment info when logging into its' system. In fact, there were a few moments during the final grading process when a class or two would just randomly disappear and reappear either later that day or the next day. I was able to maneuver through these glitches for the most part, but they

have me considering utilizing an outside platform in addition to Canvas to prevent assignment submission and appearance issues in the future.

After reviewing the students' Video Narratives, I have mixed views of how effective it was as an assignment. The goal was for students to create a parody or movie spoof of sorts that demonstrated what they learned in class this semester. While I am pleasantly surprised at how skilled students were with creating and editing their videos, I am slightly disappointed that some of the videos did little to nothing to showcase their knowledge of concepts from the semester. Then again, I must take some blame for this because I may have expected too much from their assignments while giving them only about two weeks to learn how video narratives, parodies, and movie spoofs work; how to create videos with certain apps and software, consider a concept, write about how they'll bring it to life, actually bring it to life, edit it, and submit it as their final. Therefore, I can only be so judgmental when some videos did not seem up to par.

Despite these flaws with Canvas and some students slightly missing the mark on their prompts, I was pleased with their creativity and remix execution. By making the assignment more open-ended, students were able to express themselves in ways that I hadn't even imagined before. The students' applications of visual, oral, and gestural communication evoke many messages, some of which they may not even have realized. This assignment also helped some students to come out of their shells, showcase different talents, and embody some of their favorite people and ideals. Also, I would be lying if I said that I didn't find them to be quite entertaining. However, in the future, this assignment prompt will be modified for simpler understanding and a better way to prove that learning took place.

The most popular concepts referenced and used in the narratives were AAVE, SE, code-meshing, and code-switching. These seemed to be the hot topics of students' videos because they

were the terms that were the most relatable, revealing, and commonly understood. Although the terms were new, the ideas behind them were very familiar. For instance, not everyone had previously heard of AAVE and code-switching, but everyone was aware of speaking one way with friends and possible family and speaking another way in a class or job interview. We had many conversations about how they alternate between speech patterns in different settings; with everyone classifying as African American and other marginalized groups, it seems to be an unwritten rule for minorities to adapt to our surroundings, often without even thinking about it.

Since this was the first time I taught a composition course in this format, most of the experience is being treated as trial and error. Despite my syllabus and assignment preparation, it was somewhat challenging to implement assignments dealing with sound, remix, AAVE, and code-meshing while attempting to stay within the guidelines set by Clark Atlanta's English Department. Granted, I was able to successfully pull it off, but I will be the first to acknowledge that it was nowhere near perfect. One of the biggest internal challenges for me was determining how to properly critique the students' code-meshed writings. There was always a fine line between code-meshed words and phrases and incorrect use of grammar. These lines were often blurred when it came to grading students' essays. (Daily Observation 1/31/19)

This is ironic because I did not use a great deal of AAVE with them, but my ability to utilize teacher efficacy and code-meshing along with my young age helped me to gain their trust. Another intriguing discovery was the different viewpoints students had about language. While students such as A. D.1 and R. D. felt that AAVE should be accepted in all settings, others like J. J. and C. E. felt that there was a time and place for certain languages to be used. In fact, J. J, T.R., and others even mentioned that SE should be confined to professional settings such as the classroom and job interviews.

I appreciated the switch that allowed them to show what they learned instead of simply telling me. Also, their strong understanding of technology was key for encompassing visual, gestural, and oral communication. This was important because assessing students strictly on their written and linguistic communication skills is unfair. Some of my students struggled with writing and responding to certain prompts, but they shined when giving the chance to utilize audio and visual components.

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS FOR COMPOSITION PEDAGOGY

The most important takeaways from my study are that incorporation home languages in class discussions and assignments can improve a student's confidence and comfort levels. This also works to improve the student's perceptions of race, language use, and identity retention in both causal and professional settings. Each concept of language, rhetoric, code-meshing, and multimodality have each been studied separately, but my study presents possibilities for more modern and relatable classroom activities.

Another important takeaway was that spoken and written forms of language are viewed quite differently and that HBCUs are valuable in the discussion of language in academia. When asked about AAVE use in the classroom, my students were more receptive to spoken AAVE than written AAVE. This was primarily because the language was easier to understand orally than on a page. HBCUs are valuable to language discussion because their primarily African-American demographic allows for further exploration of the various ways AAVE is used.

Also, conducting this study in a classroom where students use similar home languages serves as a two-fold. First, classroom assignments and discussions can help to get a better understand of that language. Second, classrooms with similar students provide data comparable

to conducting this study in a diverse classroom. I can use my study's information in the future to see how it worked on one end and determine what adjustments need to be made in a diverse classroom. Also, using AAVE for this study helps me to get a feel for how to conduct a home language classroom discussion.

There also needs to be more discussion of English varieties in the classroom. Not talking about AAVE, Spanglish, and other form of English suggests to students that these dialects, some of which are their primary form of conversation, are unacceptable. Students are often only taught about Standard Spoken English and SWE, which can make some students of color feel inferior and uncomfortable with who they are. Such discomfort can then lead to student feeling a disconnect between themselves and people who use home languages in conversation. When the semester first started, my students seemed a bit reluctant and mystified when I introduced discussions of AAVE and other English varieties. However, the more we discussed these things in class, the more comfortable students were with participating in the conversation and offering their viewpoints.

The increase in class discussion led many students to mention certain words and phrases that are exclusive to their hometown area. This when I observed how words such as "son," "bruh," and "bro" can have similar and differing connotations depending on what part of the country the person is in and how the words are being used. Oral, visual, and gestural components come into play here because certain additional expressions such as "you good" and "hello" have different rhetorical impacts when factoring in all modes of communication. Prior research has alluded to instruction and assignments that value students' home language use, but there is a gap between these ideals and a complete look at how the five modes of communication all play into rhetoric and composition.

Before assigning the soundscape and video narrative assignments, I was not fully aware of how important it was to both see and hear the student's voices in their work. I have always been a strong believer in reading work aloud before submitting it, but even doing that does not fully help to hear how versatile students are linguistically. Hearing the various phrases, expressions, and dialects used in the two low-bridge assignments told me things about the students that I could not gather from traditional essay assignments alone. Therefore, I suggest that composition instructors take more time to discuss written, oral, visual, gestural, and spatial communication together when teaching students to better understand SE. We had these discussions throughout the semester, and they seemed to assist in gaining empathy and understanding for how and why the students talked how they talked.

Another takeaway from this study was that HBCU composition courses can set examples for how to establish Asao Inoue's antiracist classroom ecologies. These ecologies are pivotal to showing students that just because a language is considered standard does not mean that it is dominant. We need to show students how to use Standard Spoken English and SWE in addition to their own speech varieties, not in place of them. If students feel pressured or compelled to drop home languages completely, then they may not grasp the ability to code-mesh and be multilingual in preparation for all types of settings. We cannot continue to pass down the oppressive ideology of a monolingual society in the classroom. This will only work to enforce curriculums and theories that suppress students' home languages, and potentially cultures. My biggest takeaway, however, was how spoken and written language were viewed in different lights. These viewpoints may not have been accessed had students not been introduced to both traditional and multimodal assignments.

Conducting this study at an HBCU showed me how integral representation is in the classroom. Although I am a strong supporter of Kim Brian Lovejoy's idea of self-directed writing and other concepts from scholars such as William Labov and Jane Smith, there is still one flaw in their analyses. None of them were Black instructors. Labov, Lovejoy, and Smith each noted this issue in their respective works, but they did not mention the impact a relatable face can make on trusting the information given. My students and I discussed efficacy and my ability to relate to them on various levels. In addition to the language I used and gestures made, my students indicated that me being a young, black male with locs helped them to be more comfortable receiving the lessons I was given them. They mentioned how it can seem "forced and ingenuine" when white and other non-African-Americans attempt to use AAVE or make gestures associated with African-American culture.

While I consider this to be an important conclusion made from my study, I am not attempting to condemn white composition instructors for attempting to use AAVE to connect with their Black students. What I am saying, however, is that representation, stereotypes, and other aspects of race need to be considered when implementing certain theories for teaching language. More than anything, who is the information coming from. For instance, in A.D.2's rhetorical analysis essay response, she discussed the impact the movie *Don't Be A Menace to Society while Drinking your Juice in the Hood* has on her perception of race, language, and identity. In her response, she states how Student is not offended by the stereotypical characters because they are familiar to her because a Black person created them. The fact that the movie was "created by someone Black" served as a major factor in why A.D.2 had no issue with the code-meshing, visuals, and stereotypical gestures that were made.

The black creation and presence in many of the students' chosen works were key components in the impact made on that respective student. It is just as important to discuss students home languages in the classroom as it is to have someone who looks like them teaching it. This could potentially help to eliminate, or at least reduce, the linguistic push- pull that happens in composition. If students are learning more about SE, AAVE, and code-meshing from someone who looks like them with relatable experiences then they are more comfortable with showing their identity in their work. Their comfort comes in knowing that their home dialects are acknowledged. Inoue touches on this idea when he makes the following statement:

>…work done at an Historically Black College or University (HBCU) may be done very differently by a Black male student than if that same student was asked to do similar work at a mostly white college in the same state. Being the only student of color, or one of the only, in a classroom, school, or dormitory, can be unnerving, can affect one's ability to do the work asked, even when everyone around you is friendly. (Inoue 78)

Inoue's statement emphasizes how efficacy along with representation impacts the work that a student does. I agree with his viewpoint because I, too, have been in classes at Old Dominion University and Georgia State University where I was the only one or one of the only African-Americans in the class. I sometimes felt a need to distance myself from my classmates and instructors at those times because they could not relate to me regarding certain customs and phrases. However, my classroom experiences at Hampton University, an HBCU, were quite different because I did not feel like I had to conform or prove myself in any way. Since my classmates and instructors were primarily black, we could talk a certain way and discuss certain things without it feeling awkward or comfortable.

Unlike my Hampton experience, my time in graduate school was similar to Inoue's undergraduate experience. He mentions how "My experience as an undergraduate at a mostly white university in a mostly white state was filled with friendly teachers, eager to help, but I couldn't escape the feeling that when I wrote, I was writing at a deficit, that I always had to make up for where I came from and who I was" (Inoue 78). Inoue's mentions of feeling pressured to make up for his upbringing highlights the how environment is a major factor in students feeling comfortable showcasing their identity to others. In a nutshell, students can sometimes be more influenced by the messenger than the message itself.

Having said this, perhaps the next immediate step is to hire more instructors of color to serve as the necessary representation in the classroom. We cannot assume that more representation will equate to better instruction, but it is a positive step for helping students feel more comfortable in the classroom. Working at HBCUs such as Hampton University, Morehouse College, and Clark Atlanta University, a predominantly white institution (ODU), and a newly deemed predominantly black institution (GSU) has shown me that this disparity occurs throughout academia. Since HBCUs demographically are predominantly black, this is the first place where such suggested changes need to be made. I understand that some people may find it impossible for instructors to fully represent every speech variety that their students come in with, but it's better to try to better accommodate students than to completely disregard this issue as a whole.

In addition to representation, my study's results also show how low-bridge and multimodal assignments can help better accommodate students' speech varieties. Looking back at my students' responses to each of their six major assignments, one commonality was that people were impacted by how a language sounded; such impacts were based on how certain

sounds did not resonate well with the listeners. Comstock and Hocks provided definitions for multiple types of resonance, but I would like to emphasize how the word is defined in sonic pedagogy. Resonance is described as "an umbrella term for the intimacy, presence, and movement (the "verb-ness") created by a sound's qualities, like tonality, amplitude, or cadence" (Comstock and Hocks 138). This concept comes full circle as a showing of how students need to be taught to understand connections words and phrases have to people, so they can learn how to properly use SWE and other dialects to communicate effectively.

Although the term 'resonance' was not specifically mentioned in students' responses, the findings alluded to sounds and images having major impact on how race, language, and identity are perceived. When students evaluated and analyzed their media and literature choices, they highlighted their likes and dislikes and how that selected media or literature's message affected them. Their responses were based on realism and accuracy levels for certain statements, stereotypes, and depictions of black life and culture. The multimodal assignments used during this study taught students how to recreate sounds while assessing judgments made within language use. Therefore, more attention should be paid to sonic rhetoric, visual rhetoric, and remix theory when teaching principles of SWE, spoken English, and how language use resonates with students. The multimodal assignments used during this study taught students how to recreate sounds while assessing judgments made within language use.

Since media is constantly being reproduced and repurposed for different reasons, remix theory should be implemented in composition course instruction as well; students can use it to recreate messages that demonstrate their levels of language proficiency and understanding. This semester revealed to me how students showcasing their different Englishes through multimodal assignments helps to create antiracist assessment ecologies in the classroom. Although each of

my students identified to some extent as African-American, they all came in with dialects and accents from various places. Throughout the study, discussion of language led to students joking on one another at times, but overall, I would say that their dialectal differences were acknowledged and respected.

Another find from this study is that research on AAVE and SE in the classroom can be connected to research on sonic and visual rhetoric and multimodality to bridge the gap between the two fields. By connecting language with rhetoric and composition, instructors can receive a complete view of how to approach teaching composition to college students. We should start moving away from strictly giving writing assignments as soon as possible because it is outdated practice with limited learning objectives. Since race and identity are assessed and examined from multiple angles, we should treat language the same way and have assignments accurately reflecting variants in composition.

The video narrative assignment also produced major findings related to race, culture, and identity. These assignments allowed students to embody their full identities through their respective parodies. Each submission presented lessons learned in class in a manner that showcased their unique interests. Students submissions included reenactments of excerpts from "MTV Cribs," "ATL," and Ariana Grande's song and video for "Thank you, Next." These creative responses helped me draw connections between culture and language.

I have found that multimodal assignments benefit students by pushing them to think about different ways to present information. Also, there is a direct connection between comfort and identity in these responses. Therefore, students must find comfort in themselves in order to stand in the fight for using and accepting AAVE in the classroom.

One adjustment, however, would be to limit the amount of major assignments to four instead of six. Giving six major assignments on top of homework and in-class activities created a slight decrease in instruction and assessment time. Cutting it to four in the future will grant me more time to instruct, address questions and concerns, and make overall improvements from this study. Reducing the amount of major assignments also helps students to compose more thoughtful and developed responses. Adding multimodal assignments to a course curriculum is beneficial for learning composition, but these types of assignments can take more time to teach as they are unconventional and push students to break out of their comfort zone.

Although some improvements need to be made to the assignments I gave, my study's results imply that there is an urgent need for the pedagogy established through the assignments. These types of assignments are urgent for students because College Composition may be the last opportunity students have to learn how to use language before entering the "real world." In fact, such assignments should be offered in high school and college composition courses to promote linguistic awareness in secondary and post-secondary education. Implementing assignments that promote linguistic awareness helps to stop the cycle of judging language that is not considered standard.

My call is to use multimodal activities to promote code-meshing, home language use, rhetoric and remix, and anti-racist classroom ecologies. Each concept works well individually, but together, they work to teach students multiple approaches to composition and communication. With an anti-racist ecology, instructors can create a space where students feel comfortable discussing home language, regional vernacular, and code-meshing. Also, having students do multimodal activities helps them to become more technologically savvy, which is becoming more of a necessary today. With free applications like iMovie and Voice Memo, we

can help students to get the most out of their technical devices. Outside of academia, there needs to be more discussion about the five modes of communication. This is because people are too quick to judge others based on how they look and/or how they speak.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although my research worked to prove my hypothesis right, there are a few more tweaks I would make to the class in the future. In addition to reducing the amount of assignments given, I would like to add more group activities to the curriculum. Keheler's research on collaborative group projects produced results stating how students enjoyed learning about their classmate's culture while working together. This would be an excellent idea for the future as it could bridge regional and environmental dialect gaps while producing work demonstrating linguistic and cultural awareness. Group activities could also provide the first-hand educational experience that may have been lacking in this study. My study has solidified my beliefs in code-meshing, AAVE, and multimodality working to help students see how SE works, so creating group activities could help students learn SE and other Englishes while practicing using these learned Englishes in various modes of communication.

Another suggestion would be to do a better job of familiarizing myself with more modern and engaging resources for discussing language. Students seemed to participate more actively in discussions when presented with YouTube videos and energetic Ted talks than with older recordings and literature. They understood the sentiments being expressed, but the outdated resources caused the students to feel bored at times. I know boredom is unavoidable at times, but more engaging, updated resources can help remedy that issue. Looking back, the class met right after the lunch hour, so that is another aspect to look into for the future.

Lastly, I will work to make language, rhetoric, and remix discussions more balanced throughout the semester. My class observations and student responses imply that I spent an extensive amount of time teaching about language and not enough time discussing rhetoric and remix. Most of the student's video narrative responses alluded to learning about AAVE, SE, and code-meshing, but almost none of them mentioned learning about sonic and visual rhetoric, remix theory, and multimodality. I feel this is the case because the components of language were discussed ad nauseum, so it had been engrained in their minds. I would like for this to be the case about rhetoric and remix to see how much more impacted students' comfort levels would be regarding race, language, and identity.

I would also consider adding more surveys to this future research to gain a sense of how differently students went about planning their assignments. Such surveys and other instruments would be used to answer the following new questions: 1) how can group projects work to project multiple viewpoints regarding perceptions of race and identity, 2) how much impact does an instructor's race and ethnicity factor into how receptive students are of language instruction, 3) how will a diverse classroom respond to discussion of language, rhetoric, race, and identity, and 4) how comfortable are students with discussing home language use with students and instructors that don't look like them? Since I introduced students to traditional and multimodal assignments, it would be good to know how much effort went into each type of assignment to determine how beneficial it is in the long run. Having this knowledge in the future will help pinpoint any preparation issues that were not addressed during this study, and I can then make the necessary adjustments to address as many concerns as possible.

Based on my findings and results, I would suggest teacher efficacy, anti-racist classroom ecology, and presenting the spoken and written forms of language as my most successful

teaching methods. I say this because utilizing teacher efficacy helped me become more relatable to my students, creating an anti-racist classroom ecology helped students feel more accepted and open to sharing their views and concerns, and presenting language in spoken and written formats gave students a complete view of a language before determining how to use it in various settings.

To any teachers who wish to emulate my study, I suggest reviewing a school's student demographics and conducting a demographic survey to gain a better sense of the students you are dealing. This may determine what materials and resources are relevant to share, and which ones are not. For instance, AAVE may not be as prominent in a classroom made up of 15 Hispanic/Latinx students, 6 Asian/Pacific Islander students, and five Caucasian students. Thus, instructors need to assess the situation before confirming what specific home language(s) to highlight and how to present it to the classroom. Overall, I look forward to seeing how much this research grows overtime as I revise and administer my assignments to support my students while acknowledging linguistic diversity among them.

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SURVEY SAYS…(APPENDIX A)

Students completed demographic surveys on the first day of class. These surveys asked questions about gender, grade classification, most comfortable language spoken, ethnicity, experience using technology, experience with AAVE, and experience with SWE. The survey's results are listed below:

Demographic Survey Results						
Classification	Most Comfortable Language	Gender	Experience with AAVE	Experience with SE	Experience with technology	Race/Ethnicity
Freshman-22	AAVE-17	Male-3	None-0	None-0	None-0	Black/African-American-23
Sophomore-11	SE-5	Female-20	A little-2	A little-1	A little-0	White/Caucasian-1
Junior-0	Spanish-0	Other-0	Some-5	Some-1	Some-6	Latinx/of Hispanic descent-0
Senior-0	French-0	I'd rather not say-0	A lot-16	A lot-21	A lot-15	Asian or Pacific Islander-1

Graduate Student-0	Other AAVE and SE-0					Other-1 (Black and Cherokee)

AAVE, SWE, AND MULTIMODALITY DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY (APPENDIX B)

The following demographic survey was given to my students at the beginning of the study:

What is your classification?

1) Freshman	2) Sophomore	3) Junior	4) Senior	5) Graduate Student

Which language do feel most comfortable using in daily conversation?

1) African-American Vernacular English	2) Standard Written English	3) Spanish	4) French	5) Other: (Write in)

What do you identify as?

1) Male	2) Female	3) Other	4) I'd rather not say

How much experience do you have with using African-American Vernacular English?

1) None	2) A little	3) Some	4) A lot

How much experience do you have with using Standard Written English?

1) None	2) A little	3) Some	4) A lot

How much experience do you have with using technology?

1) None	2) A little	3) Some	4) A lot

What race or ethnicity do you identify as? Circle all that apply.

1) Black/African-American	2) White/Caucasian	3) Latino/ of Hispanic descent	4) Asian or Pacific Islander	5) Other (Write in)

CAUSE AND EFFECT ESSAY RUBRIC AND ASSIGNMENT RESULTS (APPENDIX C)

Students used the following prompt to guide them through completing the Cause and Effect

Mini-Essay.

Cause and Effect Mini-Essay Prompt by Mack Curry IV

Cause and Effect Mini-Essay (10%, 100 points)

Due: No later than 9:20am on Tuesday, February 5th, 2019

Submission Instructions: Assignments on Canvas

Introduction: For the past few weeks, we have been discussing symbolism, tone, and other various components that play into causes and effects of how messages are constructed and received.

Instructions: In a 2-3page (not including Works Cited) essay, write about the causes and effects code-meshing has had on your interactions with other people. Be sure to mention what linguistic, gestural, audio, visual, and written variables impact those causes and effects.

Essay Component	Function
Introduction Paragraph	Provide background information about your topic, what your purpose is with this essay, and why you think this information is important.
Thesis Statement	The thesis statement should also mention the main points (rationale). The thesis should be

	clear, easily identifiable, and preferably at the end of the introduction paragraph.
Body Paragraphs	Body paragraphs should contain supporting evidence for your thesis. The supporting evidence should be clear and detailed to accurately prove your points. Also, these paragraphs should start with topic sentences that set the tone for what information will be included in the remainder of the paragraph.
Conclusion Paragraph	Conclusion paragraphs restate your thesis statement. The conclusion paragraph should serve as a summary of what has already been stated, so no new information is allowed.
Works Cited page (starts on separate page from the essay)	A Works Cited page cites your research resources used to support your claims.
MLA Format	MLA format for the entire assignment (including the Works Cited page). This includes in-text citations, double spacing, and Times New Roman 12-point font.
Appropriate Length	When I say 2-3 pages, I mean TWO FULL PAGES. I will take points off for the essay not reaching the required length.

Your Cause and Effect Mini-Essay will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Evaluation Component	Point Value
Introduction	10 points
Thesis Statement	10 points
Supporting Evidence	40 points
Conclusion	10 points
Tone/Transitions/Grammar Punctuation Proficiency	5 points
Length (at least three FULL pages, NOT including Works Cited)	10 points
Works Cited (starts on separate page)	5 points
MLA Format	5 points
Peer Review Participation	5 points
Point Total	100 points

After each student's Cause and Effect Final Essay, the following results came about:

Category	Number/Total Responses
Student discusses positive times when they've code-switched/code-meshed	4/24
Student discusses negative times when they've code-switched/code-meshed with AAVE	20/24
Student discusses their positive reaction to code-switched/code-meshed AAVE	24/24
Student discusses their negative reaction to code-switched/code-meshed AAVE	0/24

PERSUASION MINI-ESSAY RUBRIC AND ASSIGNMENT RESULTS (APPENDIX D)

Students used the following prompt to guide them through completing the Persuasion Mini-

Essay.

Persuasion Mini-Essay Prompt by Mack Curry IV

Persuasion Mini-Essay (10%, 100 points)

Due: No later than 9:20 am on Tuesday, February 19th, 2019

Submission Instructions: Assignments on Canvas

Introduction

For the next few classes, we will be looking at how to effectively add support to an argument. We will also discuss the top ten persuasive writing techniques while reviewing the three rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, and logos). These techniques and appeals work together to convince or persuade someone of someone else's viewpoint. The purpose of a supported argument essay is to make a strong case for or against something you have researched and feel strongly about.

Instructions

In a 2-3page (not including Works Cited) essay, argue a position for or against the use of AAVE in the classroom. Also, explain whether race and identity have any influence on your position. **Use rhetorical appeals, persuasive techniques, and AT LEAST two sources within your essay to provide support for your claim**. This essay should include the following information:

Essay Component	Function
Introduction Paragraph	Describes your topic and leads to your opinion about it (purpose, audience, and context).
Thesis Statement	Clearly states your position for or against something. The thesis statement should also mention the main points (rationale) for your viewpoint. The thesis should be clear, easily identifiable, and close to the end of the introduction paragraph.
Body Paragraphs	Body paragraphs should contain supporting evidence for your thesis. The supporting evidence should be clear and detailed to accurately prove your points. Also, these paragraphs should start with topic sentences that set the tone for what information will be included in the remainder of the paragraph.
Conclusion Paragraph	Conclusion paragraphs restate your thesis statement. The conclusion paragraph should serve as a summary of what has already been stated, so no new information is allowed.
Works Cited page (starts on separate page from the essay)	A Works Cited page cites your research resources used to support your claims.
MLA Format	MLA format for the entire assignment (including the Works Cited page). This includes in-text citations, double spacing, and Times New Roman 12-point font.
Appropriate Length	When I say 2-3 pages, I mean two full pages. I will take points off your essay grade for not reaching the minimum length.

Your Persuasion Mini-Essay will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Evaluation Component	Point Value
Introduction	10 points
Thesis Statement	10 points

Supporting Evidence	40 points
Conclusion	10 points
Tone/Transitions/Grammar Punctuation Proficiency	10 points
Length (at least three FULL pages, NOT including Works Cited)	10 points
Works Cited (starts on separate page)	5 points
MLA Format	5 points
Point Total	100 points

Position/Argument	Number/Total Responses
AAVE should be allowed in the classroom	11/23
AAVE should not be allowed in the classroom	2/23
AAVE should be allowed under certain circumstances	5/23
Spoken AAVE should be allowed, but written AAVE should not be allowed	5/23

SOUNDSCAPE ASSIGNMENT PROMPT AND DATA (APPENDIX E)

Students used the following prompt to guide them through completing the Soundscape

Assignment.

Soundscape Assignment Prompt

Weight: 15% of your overall grade

Instructions

1. Record a soundscape of people speaking in AAVE and SWE and other sounds heard in a specific location within the Atlanta area.
2. Analyze the rhetorical impact the sounds play in your judgement of the speaker.
3. Consider the impact mixing soundscapes can have on how a message is received.
4. Use your Cause-and-Effect and Persuasion essays to consider the positive and negative influences your soundscape can have on a listener.
5. Soundscapes should be created with Audacity or another approved platform generating platform.

Guidelines

1. You must describe every sound in the soundscape and the judgment attached to it.
2. A written explanation for your soundscape should be two to three pages long.
3. Assignment must use multimodal pedagogy to be considered for a grade.

Soundscape Assignment Evaluation

Category	Points
Tone, Grammar, and Flow	10 points
Impactful Content (Intro, thesis, support, and conclusion)	30 points
Code-Meshing AAVE and SWE	10 points
Appropriate Multimodal Platform	15 points
Sufficient Written Essay Alternative	15 points
Meeting Length Requirements	10 points
Works Cited	10 points
Total	100 points

Students soundscape assignments produced the following results:

Category	Response Results
Type of Environment	Public-11, Private-11/22
Recording Platform Used	Voice Memo-22/22
Location	Clark Atlanta University Campus/Atlanta Area
Expected Positive Response from Listener	11/14 (Eight did not respond)
Expected Negative Response from Listener	3/14 (Eight did not respond)

Positive responses from listeners	9/17 (Five did not respond)
Negative responses from listeners	8/17(Five did not respond)
Soundscapes involving AAVE use	21/22
Soundscapes involving SE use	16/22
Positive response from student participant	15/18
Negative response from student participant	3/18

SOUNDSCAPE ASSIGNMENT REFLECTION SURVEY AND RESULTS (APPENDIX

F)

Students submitted their soundscape assignments before the start of spring break. These

reflection surveys included five questions that each required an answer from the 1-5 Likert Scale.

The reflection was set up in the following manner:

On a scale of 1-5, how comfortable were you using AAVE in this assignment?

1) Not comfortable at all	2) Slightly comfortable	3) Half comfortable, half uncomfortable	4) Very comfortable	5) Extremely comfortable

On a scale of 1-5, how comfortable were you using SWE in this assignment?

1) Not comfortable at all	2) Slightly comfortable	3) Half comfortable, half uncomfortable	4) Very comfortable	5) Extremely comfortable

On a scale of 1-5, how comfortable were you with creating a soundscape?

1) Not comfortable at all	2) Slightly comfortable	3) Half comfortable, half uncomfortable	4) Very comfortable	5) Extremely comfortable

On a scale of 1-5, how comfortable were with code-meshing in this assignment?

1) Not comfortable at all	2) Slightly comfortable	3) Half comfortable, half uncomfortable	4) Very comfortable	5) Extremely comfortable

How well did you understand the instructional prompt for this assignment?

1) Not at all	2) I slightly understood it	3) Half understood, half misunderstood	4) Very well	5) Extremely well

The survey responses produced the following results:

Soundscape Assignment Reflection Table				
Category				
Comfort with AAVE during assignment	**Comfort with SWE during assignment**	**Comfort with creating a soundscape**	**Comfort with code-meshing during assignment**	**Understanding of assignment prompt**
Not comfortable at all-0	Not comfortable at all-0	Not comfortable at all-0	Not comfortable at all-0	Not at all-0
Slightly comfortable-0	Slightly comfortable--0	Slightly comfortable-0	Slightly comfortable-0	I slightly understood it-0
Half comfortable, half	Half comfortable, half	Half comfortable, half	Half comfortable, half	Half understood, half

uncomfortable-3/21	uncomfortable-4/21	uncomfortable-4/21	uncomfortable-1/21	misunderstood-1/21
Very comfortable-4/21	Very comfortable-11/21	Very comfortable-8/21	Very comfortable-6/21	Very well-9/21
Extremely comfortable-14/21	Extremely comfortable-6/21	Extremely comfortable-9/21	Extremely comfortable-14/21	Extremely well-11/21

EVALUATION ESSAY RUBRIC AND RESULTS (APPENDIX G)

Students used the following prompt to guide them through completing the Evaluation Mini-

Essay.

Evaluation Mini-Essay Prompt by Mack Curry IV

Evaluation Mini-Essay (10%, 100 points)

Due: No later than 9:20am on Tuesday, April 9th, 2019

Submission Instructions: Assignments on Canvas

Introduction

For the past few weeks, we have been examining various strategies for going about evaluating and analyzing an image. We have discussed the importance of focusing on concepts such as *symbolism, inferences,* and *euphemisms* and how they align with the three rhetorical appeals (*ethos, pathos,* and *logos*). These concepts all work together to ensure that a strong analysis can be paired with a legitimate argument for how you and others interpret the message of the desired image.

In a 2-3page (not including Works Cited) essay, evaluate the rhetorical impact a movie, song, or other form of media's language use has had on your viewpoint of home language, and identity. Also, be sure to provide rationale to other possible interpretations of the image. Lastly, include the image at the end of the essay.

Essay Component	Function
Introduction Paragraph (3-4 sentences)	Describes the image you have chosen to analyze, along with your interpretation or opinion of the image and its message.
Thesis Statement (1 sentence)	Provides a clear viewpoint of the image's intention. The thesis statement should also mention the main points (rationale) for your viewpoint. The thesis should be clear, easily identifiable, and preferably at the end of the introduction paragraph.
Body Paragraphs (4-5 sentences each)	Body paragraphs should contain supporting evidence for your thesis. The supporting evidence should be clear and detailed to accurately prove your points. Also, these

	paragraphs should start with topic sentences that set the tone for what information will be included in the remainder of the paragraph. Also, be sure to include discussion of rationale for opposing viewpoints in the final body paragraph.
Conclusion Paragraph (2-3 sentences)	Conclusion paragraphs restate your thesis statement. The conclusion paragraph should serve as a summary of what has already been stated, so no new information is allowed.
Works Cited page (starts on separate page from the essay)	A Works Cited page cites your research resources used to support your claims.
MLA Format	MLA format for the entire assignment (including the Works Cited page). This includes in-text citations, double spacing, and Times New Roman 12-point font.
Appropriate Length	When I say 3-5 pages, I mean TWO FULL PAGES. I will take points off your essay grade for not reaching the minimum length.

Your Evaluation Mini-Essay will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Evaluation Component	Point Value
Introduction	10 points
Thesis Statement	10 points
Supporting Evidence	40 points
Conclusion	10 points
Tone/Transitions/Grammar Punctuation Proficiency	5 points
Length (at least three FULL pages, NOT including Works Cited)	10 points
Works Cited (starts on separate page)	5 points
MLA Format	5 points
Peer Review Participation	5 points
Point Total	100 points

Students' evaluation essays produced the following results:

Evaluation Essay Response Analysis	
Type of Selection	**Response Results**

Book	2/23
Movie	11/23
TV Show	3/23
Song/Album	7/23
Poem	0/23
Other	1/23

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS ESSAY RUBRIC AND RESULTS (APPENDIX H)

Students used the following prompt to guide them through completing the Rhetorical Analysis

Mini-Essay.

Rhetorical Analysis Mini-Essay Prompt by Mack Curry IV

Rhetorical Analysis Mini- Essay (10%, 100 points)

Due: No later than 9:20am on Tuesday, April 23rd, 2018

Submission Instructions: Assignments on Canvas

Introduction: For the past few weeks, we have been learning how to write a Rhetorical Analysis essay. This type of essay involves paying close attention to language, sound, race, and identity.

Instructions: In a 2-3page (not including Works Cited) essay, write a Rhetorical Analysis about a remake or parody of your favorite song, poem, or other form of media. Your analysis should include a description of the literary piece, a position regarding the work's message, and discussion of the impact the altered form of media had on your perception of language, race, and identity.

Essay Component	Function
Introduction Paragraph	Provide background information about the literary piece. This information should lead into your thesis.
Thesis Statement	The thesis statement should mention your viewpoint on the literary piece's message and your rationale. The thesis should be clear, easily identifiable, and close to the end of the introduction paragraph.
Body Paragraphs	Body paragraphs should contain supporting evidence for your thesis. The supporting evidence should be clear and detailed to accurately prove your points. Also, these paragraphs should start with topic sentences that set the tone for what information will be included in the remainder of the paragraph.
Conclusion Paragraph	Conclusion paragraphs restate your thesis statement. The conclusion paragraph should

	serve as a summary of what has already been stated, so no new information is allowed.
Works Cited page (starts on separate page from the essay)	A Works Cited page cites your research resources used to support your claims.
MLA Format	MLA format for the entire assignment (including the Works Cited page). This includes in-text citations, double spacing, and Times New Roman 12-point font.
Appropriate Length	When I say 2-3 pages, I mean TWO FULL PAGES. I will take points off your essay grade for not reaching the minimum length.

Your Rhetorical Analysis Mini- Essay will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Evaluation Component	Point Value
Introduction	10 points
Thesis Statement	10 points
Supporting Evidence	40 points
Conclusion	10 points
Tone/Transitions/Grammar Punctuation Proficiency	5 points
Length (at least three FULL pages, NOT including Works Cited)	10 points
Works Cited (starts on separate page)	5 points
MLA Format	5 points
Peer Review Participation	5 points
Point Total	100 points

Rhetorical Analysis Responses	
Type of Remake	**Response Results**
Book	1/23
Movie	12/23
Song	6/23
Poem	0/23

TV Show	4/23

VIDEO NARRATIVE ASSIGNMENT RUBRIC AND RESULTS (APPENDIX I)

Students used the following prompt to guide them through completing the Video Narrative

assignment.

Instructions

1. Create a song parody of movies spoof, preferably of your Rhetorical Analysis selection, to demonstrate what you have learned or better understood about language, race, identity, and other concepts from this semester.
2. Analyze the combined use of gestural, oral, and visual communication in your parody.
3. Review the rhetorical effect the combined modes of communication have on how the image is received. Use your written essays and soundscape assignment as references.
4. Create an alternative to a written essay when completing your analysis.
5. Parodies should be created with Photoshop, Movie Maker, GNU Image Manipulation Program (GIMP) or any other approved multimodal platform.

Guidelines

- You must describe the parody: what was the original, what is the parody's goal, and why is the parody's message significant.
- Parodies must be at least 3-5 minutes long.
- A written explanation for your parody should be two to three pages long.
- Parody and written explanation should demonstrate your understanding of aspects of language, race, identity, and other related concepts discussed throughout the semester.

Who is the student?	What was the spoof/parody?	What did the student learn?
A. D.	A Podcast	"This assignment shows my understanding of code-meshing and code-switching

		and their impact on speech and language."
J. M.	*Mean Girls*	The student learned about code-switching, AAVE, and Standard English.

Students submitted their Video Narratives as their final assignment for the semester. Their responses produced the following results:

Video Narrative Responses	
Type of Video	**Response Results**
Movie Spoofs	7/22
Song Parodies	8/22
TV Show Parodies	6/22
Other	1/22