

## Building Awareness of Language and Reading Development in African American Students Growing Up in Poverty



**Julie Washington, Ph.D.**

University of California, Irvine

Use this webinar companion document to further explore the webinar topic with colleagues. Below is a list of discussion prompts and resources to guide conversation and deepen your understanding of the topic.



- How did Dr. Julie Washington's discussion about language development in African American students growing up in poverty add to your understanding of how to support students in your classroom?
- What more would you like to know about language variation and its connection to reading acquisition?
- What instructional strategy, assessment, or tool mentioned in the webinar will you try to implement in your classroom moving forward?

### More to Explore



Read the **ARTICLE** *Teaching Reading to African American Children: When Home and School Language Differ*.

- In what ways does understanding language variation from a linguistic science perspective prepare educators to support their students in both teaching and assessment?
- What are the personal costs to students who have succeeded in becoming bidialectal to manage educational demands? Why are they important to consider, and how can they be mitigated in the classroom?
- How will you apply the six recommendations to help school systems and educators begin reconsidering how they engage African American students who are becoming bidialectal and learning to read?



Listen to the **PODCAST** conversation with Dr. Julie Washington titled *Language Development in High-risk Populations*.

- Dr. Washington discusses the cognitive demands at play when students are asked to translate linguistic material to and from their home dialects. How might this cognitive demand contribute to some of the reading difficulties seen in high-risk student populations?
- How does explicitly teaching students about home dialect encourage metalinguistic understanding known to contribute to literacy proficiency?
- What is the research-based correlation between bilingualism and executive function skills?



Watch the **VIDEO** featuring Dr. Julie Washington on *The Early Literacy Trifecta: Language, Print and Executive Function in African American Students*.

- What does Dr. Washington refer to when she talks about “environmental literacy”?
- How can “toxic stress” impact executive functions like inhibition, self-regulation, planning, working memory, and impulse control? What effect can it have on students dealing with poverty and trauma?
- What does research say about explicit instruction in self-regulation skills, and what are the implications for early childhood instruction?
- How can teachers use games to teach the executive function skills that are so critical to academic success?

