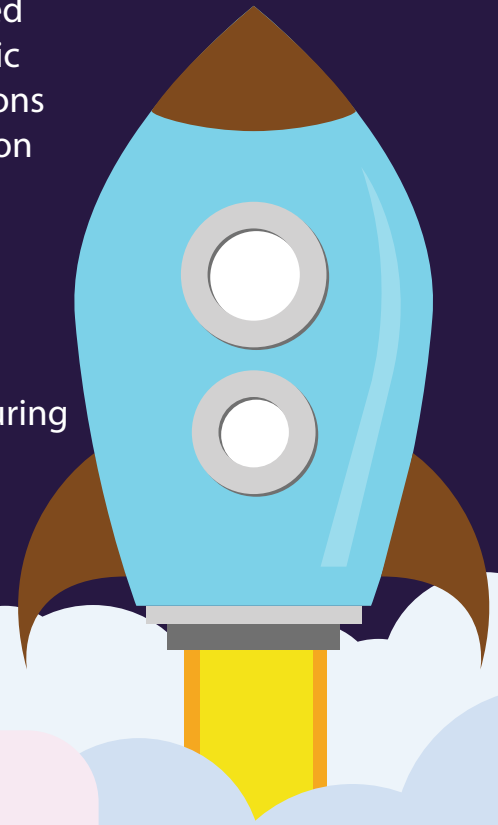


Supporting Success for African American Students: The Importance of Language Development and Reading Skills

Johnson, L., & Gatlin-Nash, B. (2020). Evidence-based practices in the assessment and intervention of language-based reading difficulties among African American learners. *Perspectives of Language and Literacy*, 46, 19-25.

Despite the disparities in education, research has demonstrated that all students, regardless of background, ethnicity, economic status, or learning differences, can meet grade-level expectations for reading achievement with systematic and explicit instruction (e.g., National Reading Panel, 2000).

The oral language and linguistic differences of African American students should be viewed positively in the classroom and may be used as a launching pad to teach target skills. A variety of practitioners play a critical role in ensuring success.



Specific recommendations include:

L

Learn the characteristics of students' dialects and appropriate teaching strategies that recognize and value their backgrounds, languages, traditions, and beliefs.

E

Engage students in conversation during literacy instruction to boost reading performance.

A

Accommodate for language variation and students' background knowledge when assessing students.

D

Do NOT Assume! Consider student's background knowledge when assessing students and do not make assumptions about their abilities based on their background.