



# **African American Literacies Unleashed: Vernacular English and the Composition Classroom (Studies in Writing & Rhetoric (Paperback))**

*Arnetha F. Ball, Associate Professor Ted Lardner*

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This pioneering study of African American students in the composition classroom lays the groundwork for reversing the cycle of underachievement that plagues linguistically diverse students. *African American Literacies Unleashed: Vernacular English and the Composition Classroom* approaches the issue of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in terms of teacher knowledge and prevailing attitudes, and it attempts to change current pedagogical approaches with a highly readable combination of traditional academic discourse and personal narratives.

Realizing that composition is a particular form of social practice that validates some students and excludes others, Arnetha Ball and Ted Lardner acknowledge that many African American students come to writing and composition classrooms with talents that are not appreciated. To empower and inform practitioners, administrators, teacher educators, and researchers, Ball and Lardner provide knowledge and strategies that will help unleash the potential of African American students and help them imagine new possibilities for their successes as writers.

*African American Literacies Unleashed* asserts that necessary changes in theory and practice can be addressed by refocusing attention from teachers' knowledge deficits to the processes through which teachers engage information relevant to culturally informed pedagogy. Providing strategies for unlearning racism in the classroom and changing the status quo, this volume stresses the development and maintenance of a real sense of teaching efficacy—teachers' beliefs in their abilities to connect with and work effectively with all students—and reflective optimism—teachers' informed expectations that all students have the potential to succeed.

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