

We Do Language!



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A Little More About Anne:



8th year Associate Professor of English and Education and Director of the William and Mary Scholars Program



Grew up in Henrico County, VA; family from Charles City, VA



PhD 2005 University of Pennsylvania, Linguistics (Sociolinguistics); BA & MA 1998 Harvard University, Linguistics; 1994 St. Catherine's School, Richmond VA



Cross-disciplinary projects: Linguistics, Psychology, Anthropology, & Education

What is Linguistics?

- Scientific study of language
- Descriptive examination of languages
- Many branches and fields (that overlap)
 - Sociolinguistics
 - Descriptive Linguistics
 - Syntax
 - Phonology
 - Computational Linguistics
 - Historical Linguistics
 - Psycholinguistics



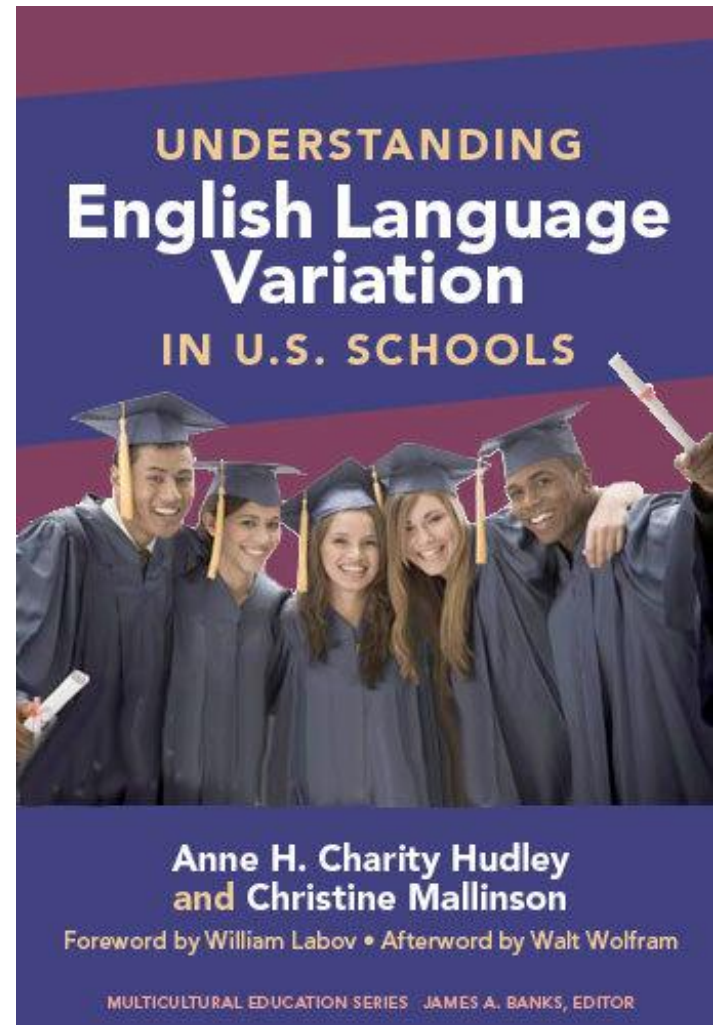
My Version of Linguistics

- Hands-on mixed model examination of language variation and change
- Integration of linguistic and social theory
- Application to actual community challenges



Variations on a Research Question

How do we value the home language and build on it while learning standardized English, without demeaning the student's linguistic and cultural background?



A Framework for the Scholarship of Dissemination: Language Policy in Action

- **partner** academics with educators in linguistically and culturally diverse schools, districts, and communities,
- **disseminate** accurate linguistic knowledge to educators of linguistically and culturally diverse students,
- **explore** best practices for communicating linguistic information to educators,
- **assess** the results of providing linguistic training to educators, and
- **apply** these findings to educational policy

National Science Foundation Minority Research Postdoctoral Fellowship & Starter Grants



- **An Examination of Effective Methods of Communicating About Language Variation to Educators**
- Results from this project will help linguists refine and implement future workshops to similarly connect with educators on the topic of language variation.
- The study lays the groundwork for sociolinguists and educators to work together in a more collaborative fashion to promote the educational attainment of nonstandardized English-speaking students.
- As the PI teaches in an undergraduate department, the award will also support the participation of undergraduate students in every aspect of the research.



Capstone English Academy

“Not your parents’ English class”

“We Do Language”: English Language Variation in the Secondary English Classroom

When author Toni Morrison gave a Nobel Lecture after accepting a Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993, she chose to focus on how language is essential to humanity. “We die. That may be the meaning of life,” Morrison said. “But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives.”



(“Nobel lecture,” para 21).

We Do Language”: English Language Variation in the Secondary English Classroom

Building on Morrison’s themes, our book,
**“We Do Language”: English Language
Variation in the Secondary English
Classroom**, presents specific strategies and
models for the greater integration and
application of language variation-related
concepts, skills, and strategies in the
secondary English classroom.

“We Do Language”: English Language Variation in the Secondary English Classroom

The true strength of the book are the vignettes and materials that in-service secondary English educators have developed and shared with us through:

- ✧ Interviews
- ✧ focus groups
- ✧ other correspondence

These vignettes and materials will directly attest to the value of infusing language variation into secondary English classrooms.

Chapter One: We Do Language

- Delineate who we are as authors, why we decided to write this book, and what needs of which populations will be served by this book
- Includes quantitative and qualitative findings from:
 - Virginia Capstone English Academy secondary English educators
 - Middle Grades Partnership secondary English educators

Chapter Two: Having the Conversation

- Educators will show strong ideological support for multiculturalism and diversity
- On a practical level, educators may exhibit distinct bias against non-standardized varieties of English and may even forbid students from using non-standardized English in their classrooms.
- We present our model for an interweaving of approaches to language that build students' capabilities in standardized English varieties while also **supporting** and **valuing** the languages and language varieties they bring with them from home.

Chapter Three: Language Varies

- Introduce the idea that language variation is all around us
- Present three core sociolinguistic axioms, with careful attention to providing clear, real-world examples to back up our claims:
 - (1) All language occurs in social context
 - (2) All languages are variable and change over time
 - (3) Language differences are not language deficits

Chapter Four: Language Variation in Literature

- Demonstrate the need for more explicit teaching about language variation to understand literature, both classic and contemporary
- Model how understanding language variation in these texts can help students scaffold their own language onto academic and literary language.
 - Our modeling will be a key innovative feature of our book, as it will complement existing teaching guides, and teachers will be able to use our models in class to foster dialogue and understanding

Chapter Five: Linguistic and Literary Transition to College

- Note the transition from the high school canon to the variety of college English offerings across fields including:
 - Africana, Women's Studies, LBQT studies, Film Studies, Literary and Cultural Studies, and Latin@ Studies
- Provide linguistically informed approaches to using the texts in the classroom to reveal what aspects related to language, language variation, and literature are emphasized in secondary English *and* college English environments with a focus on writing to specific readers and audiences in addition to foci on both grammar and style

SCHEV College to Career Initiative

- With support from the State Council of Higher Education for the Commonwealth of Virginia (SCHEV) we are examining the transition experiences of William and Mary Students from High School to College and Careers.
- **Q.) Who helped you with your college applications?**
- **A.) 9 out of 68 students & alumni reported no one.**

My Personal Impact: I Always Take My Students With Me

At the College:

- Recruitment and retention of underrepresented students
- Creating the future professoriate and researchers

Across the Country:

- Recommendations to Virginia Language Arts Standards, Multicultural Education, and Speech and Hearing Sciences
- Associate editor of *Language*, the main journal in the field of linguistics
- National Academy of Arts & Science
- National Academy of Education

SERVICE-LEARNING AS AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND LINGUISTIC EQUALITY



Charity, Harris, Hayes, Ikeler, and Squires
The College of William and Mary

What if someone showed you an injustice in the world? Showed you a societal wrong, which holds children back and denies them the opportunity to succeed in life. And then, what if that person gave you the opportunity to right that wrong? This situation is the opportunity we have... We have a chance to educate and aid these kids in their struggle.

—Joe Hayes, Class of 2011

All co-authors were undergraduate students

Contact Me!

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