

English teacher, why you be doing the things you be doing? Smitherman

This essay is meant to introduce the idea that black students in urban areas need a different focus in their English classes. Smitherman feels English teachers focus on grammar to missing the point of the rhetoric. The essay purposefully employs the use of what can be described as ebonics to taunt and make a point to the reader. The point being that grammar does not necessarily hinder communication.

The writer explains her own research of readings and speaking of inner city children. She then uses her research to explain that grammar is not what is necessary to improve the children, it is language skills. The ability to convey their ideas they state so well aloud as opposed to when they write them down. The goal seems to be to explain to teachers that instead of pushing sentence structure, they should push

the ideas their students have she feels  
this is where the skill is, and what is  
necessary to take the students further.

4/5