Strategy Tool: Code-switching
Contrastive Analysis

Contrastive analysis is a technique used to compare similarities and differences between a language and its dialects. Using contrastive analysis in the classroom builds on what students already know about their home language or dialect to help them better understand the rules of Standard English and code-switching. Students should never be asked to discontinue use of their home language or dialect and they should not be penalized for it. Rather, they should learn about appropriate contexts for different types of verbal and written communication.

NEW WAYS OF TALKING ABOUT LANGUAGE FROM "ERROR" TO "PATTERN"	
Instead of	**Try this**
Thinking in terms of • proper or improper • good or bad	See language as • appropriate or inappropriate • effective or ineffective in a specific setting
Talking about • right or wrong • correct or incorrect	Talk about • patterns • how language varies by setting
Thinking that students • make mistakes, errors • have problems with plurals, possessives, tenses, etc. • leave off an *-s, -'s, -ed*	See your kids as • following the grammar patterns of their home language
Saying to students • "should have," "are supposed to," "need to," "should correct"	Invite students • to code-switch (choose the language pattern to fit the setting)
Red notes in the margin • correcting students' grammar	Lead students to • compare and contrast language • build on existing knowledge to add new knowledge - Standard English • code-switch to fit the setting

(Wheeler & Swords, 2010)

1 Identify common phrases that students use in your classroom that reflect a regional or cultural dialect. Alternatively, you can find examples in written assignments.

1.
2.
3.

2 Circle the words that deviate from the patterns of Standard English and then write a Standard English version.

3 Plan a lesson to introduce students to code-switching using the familiar statements that you identified. Consider selecting a book from the list of Code-switching Resources to introduce the topic.

- **Direct Instruction:** Explain code-switching to students. If you selected a book from the list of Code-switching Resources, use it to provide examples of code-switching.

- **Guided Practice:** Use two of your examples from above to show students the similarities and differences between Standard English and local dialects using a t-chart.

Informal	Formal

- **Independent Practice:** Allow students to use contrastive analysis on the third example. Also, see if students are familiar with other words or phrases that reflect home dialect.

It is important that when you are teaching this concept to students that you do not tell students that informal ways of speaking and communicating are wrong or incorrect. This will devalue something personal to them and send the message that the parts of their personal identities that they bring with them to the classroom are wrong.