

The Power Of Teacher Language in Shaping Student Learning

Mary Rosser, Director
Reading Recovery UTC
University of Maine



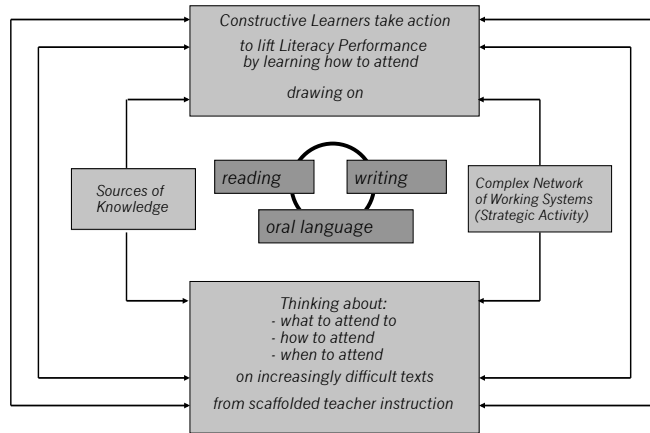
Session Overview

In this session participants will have the opportunity to:

- Survey the common ground for literacy learning
- Explore conditions for successful learning
- Discuss the connection between conversation and comprehension
- Share a teacher's reflections on introducing a new book to maximize comprehension
- Consider the power of teacher language in prompting for strategic activity
- Examine language as a tool for learning
- Identify qualities of intentional teaching

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Surveying the Common Ground for Literacy Learning



Mary Rosser, 2014

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Helping Students Become Active, Constructive Learners

Note specific examples from the teacher's language and teacher-student interactions to discuss the following:

- ❖ How is the teacher helping this child to become constructive?
- ❖ How is the teacher helping this child think about
 - What to attend to?
 - How to attend?
 - When to attend?

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Helping Students Become Active, Constructive Learners

Note specific examples from the teacher's language and teacher-student interactions to discuss the following:

What knowledge is the teacher helping the child build about:

- ❖ Texts and how texts work
 - Sources of information in texts: meaning, structure and visual information
- ❖ The reading process
 - How to anticipate, process and respond to texts
- ❖ The literate practices of a society
 - What readers and writers do when they approach texts

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Helping Students Become Active, Constructive Learners

Note specific examples from the teacher language and teacher-student interactions to discuss the following:

How is the teacher helping the child to:

- ❖ Build competencies in reading and oral language?
- ❖ Build reciprocal understandings between reading and oral language

How is the teacher's language helping the child build strategic processing competencies (strategic activity)?

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Helping Students Become Active, Constructive Learners

Note specific examples from the teacher language and teacher-student interactions to discuss the following:

As a result of the teacher's intentional teaching and specific use of language:

- What has the child learnt?
- Learnt how to do?

How has the teacher taught for self-regulation and transfer of learning?

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Conditions for Successful Learning

Teacher Language Creates Conditions for Successful Learning. Successful learning is enhanced by:

- ❖ A happy, active learning environment
- ❖ Shared expectations of success
- ❖ An environment where mistakes are regarded as insights into literacy understandings and competencies
- ❖ An enthusiastic, informed teacher

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Conditions for Successful Learning

Successful learning is enhanced by:

- ❖ Positive relationships nurtured by **trust**
- ❖ Interactions which foster enjoyment, self confidence and the feeling of being valued
- ❖ Evidence of enjoyment with children as avid motivated readers
- ❖ An emphasis on intrinsic motivation where children read because **they** want to read

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Teacher Language and Student Motivation

How does teacher language, verbal and non-verbal, affect student motivation and learning?

- ❖ Body language
- ❖ Proximity
- ❖ Gestures, facial expressions
- ❖ Tone, cadence, volume, pausing, pace, pitch of voice in verbal language
- ❖ Wide or narrow spaces for learning
- ❖ Tenor – roles and relationships between teacher and student

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The Importance of Motivation

Intrinsically Motivated Readers View reading as

- ❖ Meaningful
- ❖ Enjoyable
- ❖ Personally significant
- ❖ Self-enhancing pursuit

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The Importance of Motivation

Extrinsically Motivated Readers

- ❖ Use superficial strategies
- ❖ Rarely gain deep understanding
- ❖ Aim only to complete the text, finish the book, or answer the questions
- ❖ View reading as a way of obtaining a reward or incentive provided by a significant other, such as a parent or teacher

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The Importance of Conversation

Humans need to talk

- ❖ Talking is our greatest resource for expanding our knowledge about the world
- ❖ We learn through conversation with more knowledgeable others

Dorn, Linda (2006) Keynote presentation at the Arkansas Comprehensive Literacy and Reading Recovery Conference. Little Rock: Arkansas

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The Importance of Conversation

Lyons contended that,

Social Interactions provide the platform for learning how to learn and for the development of:

- self-reflection
- responsibility
- cooperation
- effective problem solving

It is through social interactions that children develop and expand their capacity to learn.

Lyons, Carol (2003). *Teaching Struggling Readers: How to Use Brain-Based Research to Maximize Learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann (p. 136)

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The Importance of Conversation

Language is a tool for encoding ideas and thoughts

- ❖ Collaborative talk about books becomes the tool for expanding our knowledge
- ❖ Discussion of texts deepens comprehension as teachers and students build upon one another's contributions to the discussion.

Dorn, Linda (2006) Keynote presentation at the Arkansas Comprehensive Literacy and Reading Recovery Conference. Little Rock: Arkansas

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The Importance of Conversation

During discussions around the text with students, teachers:

- ❖ Activate relevant prior knowledge
- ❖ Demonstrate knowledge and strategic activity necessary for effective processing and the comprehension of texts

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The Importance of Conversation

During discussions around the text with students, teachers:

- ❖ Promote complex language and expression
- ❖ Ensure that texts provide opportunities for students to engage in authentic literacy events (purposeful, relevant reading)

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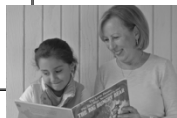
The Importance of Conversation

Conversation helps us to search for meaning, to view it through a variety of lenses reflected by others in the discussion, and to synthesize our understandings....

Conversations that take learners from surface recall to deeper explorations can create inspiration, motivation and insight.

Dona McIvian in Hoyt, L. (2005) *Spotlight on Comprehension: Building a Literacy of Thoughtfulness* Portsmouth: Heinemann p41

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The Importance of Conversation

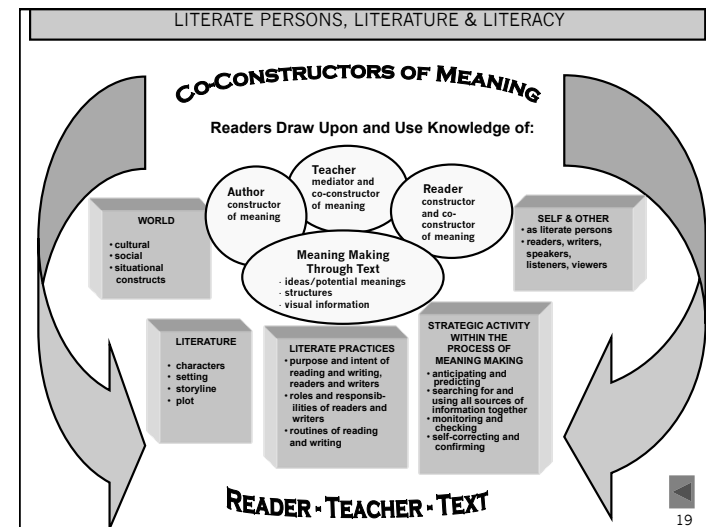
Teachers play a critical role in arranging the discursive histories from which children speak.

Talk is the central tool of their trade.

With it they mediate children's activity and experience, and help them make sense of learning, literacy, life and themselves.

Johnson, P. (2004) *Choice Words*. Portland: Stenhouse p4

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Conversation and Comprehension

Meaningful talk is what makes it possible for children to:

- ❖ Interact in productive ways
- ❖ Be in control of learning
- ❖ Integrate the connections among thinking, acting, and feeling

Johnson, P (2004) **Choice Words** Portland: Stenhouse p84

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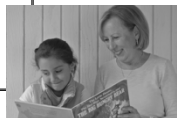
A Teacher's Reflections on Introducing the New Book

Selection

Consider:

- ❖ What opportunities for literacy experiences exist in this book for this child?
- ❖ Why would I choose this book for this child?

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A Teacher's Reflections on Introducing the New Book

Introduction

While looking at the cover and stating the title, position the illustration on the cover in relation to the whole story, e.g.

"In this story ... this picture shows the beginning/middle/end of the story. Let's find out what happens before/after this happens."

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A Teacher's Reflections on Introducing the New Book

During the overview of the text

Co-construct meaning, helping the child think about:

- ❖ What to attend to
- ❖ Where to attend
- ❖ When to attend
- ❖ Why to attend

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A Teacher's Reflections on Introducing the New Book

During the overview of the text

Use invitations to stretch the child's thinking, e.g.

- ❖ "What are you noticing here?"
- ❖ "What are you thinking about this?"
- ❖ "Did you notice this?"
- ❖ "I'm thinking...what are you thinking?"

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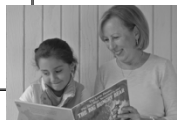
A Teacher's Reflections on Introducing the New Book

During the overview of the text

Scaffold and support processing by:

- ❖ rehearsing something unusual
- ❖ giving something unusual a 'label'
- ❖ locating a known or unknown words

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A Teacher's Reflections on Introducing the New Book

During the first reading

Think about the Scale of Help to assist the child to problem solve (LLDI Pt 2, p.132)

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A Teacher's Reflections on Introducing the New Book

After the first reading

Praise strong processing points:

- ❖ interesting voice
- ❖ phrased reading
- ❖ strategic, problem solving activity

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A Teacher's Reflections on Introducing the New Book

After the first reading

Foster Comprehension through:

- ❖ Conversation
- ❖ Questioning
- ❖ Retelling
- ❖ Using characters' names

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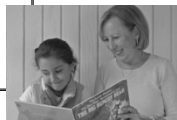
A Teacher's Reflections on Introducing the New Book

After the first reading

Foster Comprehension through:

- ❖ Discussing problem/solution
 - “Was there a character that saved the day?”
 - “Oh, I agree. Why do you say he/she saved the day?”

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A Teacher's Reflections on Introducing the New Book

After the first reading

Foster Comprehension through:

- ❖ Attending to structure and the patterning of language
- ❖ Attending to visual information – taking words apart

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A Teacher's Reflections on Introducing the New Book

After the first reading

Foster Comprehension through:

- ❖ Posing inviting questions
 - “It seems to me there's a problem in this story. Do you agree?”
 - “Can you talk about that problem?”
 - “Did they solve that problem?”
 - “What was the solution?”

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A Teacher's Reflections on Introducing the New Book

Foster Comprehension through:

- ❖ Posing inviting questions
 - "Is there a character that saved the day? I agree...what are you thinking..."
 - "Can you make a connection to any of the characters in this story?"
 - "If you could be a character in this story, who would you be? Oh, I'd like that, too...tell me more about that..."

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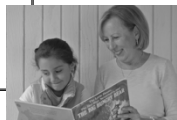


A Teacher's Reflections on Introducing the New Book

Foster Comprehension through:

- ❖ Posing inviting questions
 - "If there was another page at the end of the story, do you have any ideas about what it would show?"
 - "What it would say?"
 - "Who would be in it?"

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A Teacher's Reflections on Introducing the New Book

Foster Comprehension through:

- ❖ Posing inviting questions
 - "How did the character's personality change?"

If a child responds to anything with "I don't know," the teacher could say, "Well, what would you say, if you did know?"

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Introducing the New Book

Did you notice teachers use of language as she helped the child to:

- ❖ Connect to the book
 - "Have you ever had a time when?"
 - "What kinds of things did you put in.....?"
 - "Well, you 'll be able to connect with the little girl we're going to read about in this book"
 - "Well just like you"
 - "it's almost like she was like you"
- ❖ Predict
 - "Well, let's look at the pictures and see what's happening....."
 - "Over here I noticed"

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Introducing the New Book

- ❖ Check and Confirm
 - "What do you think?"
 - "Were you right?"
 - "Do you think so? Let's see."
 - "Why don't you turn the page Let's see what's happening next."
 - "What do you think is going on here?"
 - "What do you think this part's about?"
 - "I wonder what's going to happen next?.... Let's turn the page and see ... Were you right?"

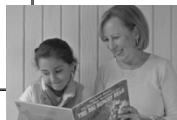
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Introducing the New Book

- ❖ Analyze characters
 - "What I'd like you to notice first is her face....."
 - "How's she feeling?"
 - "How would you feel?"
- ❖ Reflect upon the text
 - "What are you thinking?"
 - "Why do you think she wants him to stop?"
- ❖ Engage with and Enjoy the text
 - "I like your thinking."
- ❖ Read with Phrasing in Fluent reading
 - "Ooh, I liked your voice and I liked how you sounded. That was terrific."

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The Power of Teacher Language In Prompting for Strategic Activity

Crucial to the learning process is teacher language and use of prompts.

- ❖ A prompt is a call for action to do something within his control
- ❖ Prompts are not just talk

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals, Part One*. Auckland, NZ: Heinemann. pp. 39, 44

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The Power of Teacher Language In Prompting for Strategic Activity

When children are learning a new task, teachers should use clear and precise language for directing the children's thinking to the task at hand.

In contrast, excessive teacher talk can muddy the meaning and overload the child's working memory.

Dorn, L. & Soffos, C. (2001) *Shaping Literate Minds: developing self-regulated learners*. Portland: Stenhouse. P.5

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The Power of Teacher Language In Prompting for Strategic Activity

The goal of the teaching is to assist the child to construct effective networks in his brain for linking up all the strategic activity that will be needed to work on texts.

Clay, Marie M. (2005). *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals, Part One*. Auckland, NZ: Heinemann. pp. 39, 44

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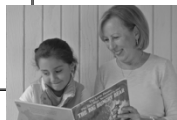


Intentional Teaching and Student Learning

Intentional teaching is inextricably linked to, and a product of, teacher knowledge.

Intentional teaching is enacted through teacher dialogue and the specific language choices teachers use to promote powerful, self-regulated literacy learning.

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Language as a Tool for Learning

As adults and children engage in interactive oral discussions about written language, children acquire important tools of the mind.

Dorn, L. & Jones, T. (2013). *Apprenticeship in literacy: Transitions across reading and writing*. (2nd ed.). Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

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Language as a Tool for Learning

Vygotsky emphasized the importance of using language as a tool for learning.

He felt that language is instrumental in restructuring the mind and in helping learners develop self-regulation.

Berk and Winsler, (1995), quoted in Johnson and Keirer (2010) *Catching Readers Before they Fall*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse (p. 44)

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Language as a Tool for Learning

Vygotsky used the terms *social speech*, *private speech*, and *inner speech* to describe what happens with language during a teacher/student interaction.

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Language as a Tool for Learning

Social Speech:

The language the teacher uses as he or she models and also the language between teacher and student as they negotiate the task together.

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Language as a Tool for Learning

Intentional language to prompt for strategic problem-solving during reading and writing

A: I'm going to show you how our eyes can start seeing and our ears can start hearing larger chunks. Watch what I'm going to do.

A: (Demonstrates breaking the word)

A: What two parts do your eyes see?

C: scur-ried (points with finger)

A: Absolutely, I broke that word right between those double consonants.

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Language as a Tool for Learning

Intentional language to prompt for problem-solving during reading and writing

A: When you come across these action words in this book, or larger words in text, your eyes need to look for the larger parts, the natural breaks in the syllables.

So in your writing when you're hearing words, you can hear the syllables and begin to write those words by syllables so that you're solving words much more quickly.

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Language as a Tool for Learning

Private Speech:

the language used by the child to direct himself or herself to do the reading or writing strategic action;

this is not an exact imitation of the teacher's language but the child's own abbreviated version of that language

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Language as a Tool for Learning

Later in the lesson, Clarence wants to write the word **middle** in his sentence.

C: (says the word *middle* and looks up)

A: *Clarence, what can you do to help yourself?*

C: *I know it starts with m i d* (writes mid)

C: Says slowly *dle* (writes dle)

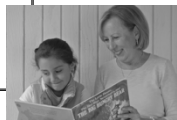
C: (checks with his finger and says out loud *middle middle*)

A: *Clarence, in your writing, when you're listening for syllable breaks to help you solve new words, you're going to often hear those two consonants broken in the middle.*

C: *Double consonants!* (and continues to write)

A: (smiles and nods silently as she continues to observe)

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Language as a Tool for Learning

Inner Speech:

The language the child has going on in his or her head to help plan actions and self-regulate literacy behaviors;

Eventually inner speech turns to thought.

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Learning: A Vygotskian View

Keeping learning easy within a contingent, supportive learning environment



- Observe
- Design instructional interactions to activate processing/ learning action
 - Prompt
 - Invite
 - Question
 - Discuss
 - Demonstrate
- Observe responses
- Affirm/validate
- Monitor

A cyclic, ever-expanding process of growth in language, literacy and learning competencies

Mary Rosser 2013



Teacher Language and Student Self-Regulation

It is the teacher's intentional language, used during instruction, that prompts students to engage in the intentional thinking associated with secure, self-regulated processes.

Dorn, Linda J., & Soffos, Carla. (2012). *Interventions that Work: A Comprehensive Intervention Model for Preventing Reading Failure in Grades K-3*. Boston, MA: Pearson p.2

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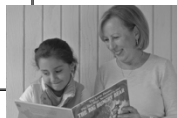
Qualities of intentional Teaching

Teachers who teach with intent

provide highly-tailored support, precision teaching, and expert scaffolding to the student.

Dorn, Linda J., & Soffos, Carla. (2012). *Interventions that Work: A Comprehensive Intervention Model for Preventing Reading Failure in Grades K-3*. Boston, MA: Pearson p.4

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Qualities of Intentional Teaching

Intentional teachers are thoughtful, reflective people who are conscious of the decisions they make and the actions they take: they live and teach by the principles and practices they value and believe in.

Miller, D. (2008). *Teaching With Intention: defining beliefs, aligning practice, taking action*. Portland: Stenhouse. P.4

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Qualities of Intentional Teaching

If we aren't thoughtful, reflective, and strategic teachers, how can we expect our children to be thoughtful, reflective and strategic readers, writers, and thinkers?

Miller, D. (2008). *Teaching With Intention: defining beliefs, aligning practice, taking action*. Portland: Stenhouse. P.4

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The Power of Teacher Language in Shaping Student Learning

Thinking is an active process and learning is co-constructed during meaningful interactions with more knowledgeable persons.

The teacher is the most critical person in shaping the student's literate knowledge

The teacher is the heartbeat of instruction.

Dorn, Linda J., & Soffos, Carla. (2012). *Interventions that Work: A Comprehensive Intervention Model for Preventing Reading Failure in Grades K-3*. Boston, MA: Pearson. Preface xv

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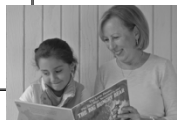
The Power of Teacher Language in Shaping Student Learning

Language has the power to shape our consciousness;

and it does so for each human child, by providing the theory that he or she uses to interpret and manipulate their environment.

Michael Halliday quoted in Johnston, Peter H. (2012). *Opening Minds: Using Language to Change Lives*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse

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The Power of Teacher Language in Shaping Student Learning

The goals children choose, what they value, the feelings they experience, the identities and relationships they take up, the theories they hold about learning, ideas, and people, are all touched by (our) choice of words.

(Our) words change the life of the classroom.

Johnston, Peter H. (2012). *Opening Minds: Using Language to Change Lives*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse

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Acknowledgement

My sincere appreciation goes to Mary Fritz and the many children whom she has taught.

Mary's powerful language and artful teaching provide the rich tapestry from which we learn, daily.

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The Power of Teacher Language in Shaping Student Learning

Video Analysis Guide

Note specific examples from the teacher's language and teacher-student interactions to discuss the following:

- How is the teacher helping this child to become a constructive, independent, self-regulating learner?
- How is the teacher helping this child think about
 - What to attend to?
 - How to attend?
 - When to attend?
- What knowledge is the teacher helping the child build about:
 - Texts and how texts work
 - Sources of information in texts: meaning, structure and visual information
 - The reading process
 - How to anticipate, process and respond to texts
 - The literate practices of a society
 - What readers and writers do when they approach texts
- How is the teacher's language helping the child to:
 - Build competencies in reading and oral language?
 - Build reciprocal understandings between reading and oral language
- How is the teacher's language helping the child build strategic processing competencies (strategic activity)?
- As a result of the teacher's intentional teaching and specific use of language:
 - What has the child learnt?
 - Learnt how to do?
- How has the teacher taught for self-regulation and transfer of learning?