



# Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning

By Peter H. Johnston



**Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning** By Peter H. Johnston

In productive classrooms, teachers don't just teach children skills: they build emotionally and relationally healthy learning communities. Teachers create intellectual environments that produce not only technically competent students, but also caring, secure, actively literate human beings.

*Choice Words* shows how teachers accomplish this using their most powerful teaching tool: language. Throughout, Peter Johnston provides examples of apparently ordinary words, phrases, and uses of language that are pivotal in the orchestration of the classroom. Grounded in a study by accomplished literacy teachers, the book demonstrates how the things we say (and don't say) have surprising consequences for what children learn and for who they become as literate people. Through language, children learn how to become strategic thinkers, not merely learning the literacy strategies. In addition, Johnston examines the complex learning that teachers produce in classrooms that is hard to name and thus is not recognized by tests, by policy-makers, by the general public, and often by teachers themselves, yet is vitally important.

This book will be enlightening for any teacher who wishes to be more conscious of the many ways their language helps children acquire literacy skills and view the world, their peers, and themselves in new ways.



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### Editorial Review

#### Review

'This small book is packed with big ideas about the importance of teacher language.' - *Instructor*

'Not only is the information important, but reading *Choice Words* will make you a better communicator with anyone, anywhere.' - *Language Arts*

'This slim book will provoke conversation and question in professional development discussions and serves as a beginning for inquiry into vocabulary as cultural practice.' - *NERA Journal*

'In this accessible, exciting, and important book, teachers will find rich examples of ways to consciously use language to build classroom communities.' - *Voices from the Middle*

'This is a powerful book, one that will reinforce the language thoughtful teachers employ to help students become independent active learners.' --*English Journal*

'Teachers can use this book as a guide to enhancing the climates in their classrooms, and encourage their students to development agency.' --*Education Book Review*

'Now, when someone asks me 'What is your favorite book?' I must say, 'Considering all the fiction, non fiction, books, articles, children's books, magazines, and professional texts I have read over almost forty years, my favorite piece of writing is *Choice Words*.' --LiteracyHead blog

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##### Millard Espinoza:

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**Clarissa Holland:**

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