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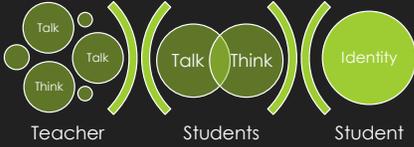
Your Words, My Meaning
The powerful impact of language use with young children



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What's the big deal?



Teacher Students Student

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Two BIG questions to consider:

- Why does my use of language matter?
- How can I do it better?

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Q1: Why does my use of language matter?

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Mother and baby construct together the baby's linguistic and social development and lay the foundation for future interactions with others—how the baby expects to be treated and to interact.



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Just like a mom helps a baby make meaning, a teacher is helping a student make meaning.



Teacher Students Student

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Language bears information about the speaker and how she/he views the listener and their assumed relationship.

A Quick Peek

As children in the classroom settled into their morning playtime, Mami, the classroom teacher, noticed Stefan reaching for the puppets that he loved. "I see you found something fun to do this morning, Stefan," Mami commented. Stefan said, "I have puppets!" Then Mami replied, "Yes! You have two puppets!" Stefan held a puppet out to her, and Mami looked at him expectantly. "Will you make a puppet show for me?" asked Stefan. "Let's make a show together," Mami said. As they played, Mami asked questions, encouraging Stefan to have his puppet tell about what he had done that morning and what was going to happen in the afternoon. As the two puppets sang a song together, Mami paused to have Stefan complete phrases and rhymes in the song. Shortly, Mami said, "Do you think anyone else would like to play with the puppets too?" Stefan nodded, took the puppets, and said, "We can have a big show!" Mami knew that Stefan loved putting on puppet shows with his friends, and said, "What fun!" Stefan called, "Show time!" to his friends Julian and Miguel. They gathered the puppets around the puppet theater and planned how they would have the puppets sing the song Stefan had just practiced.



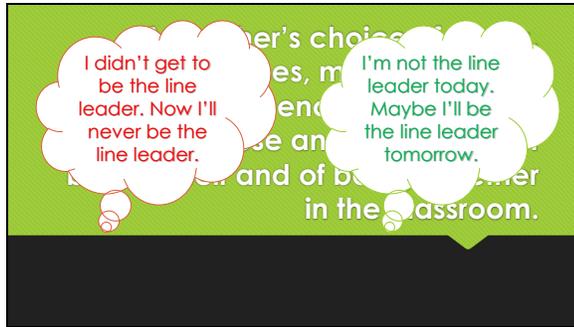
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Language is not just representational; it is constitutive. It creates realities and invites identities.

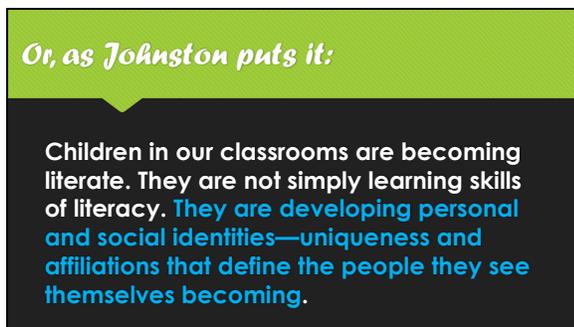
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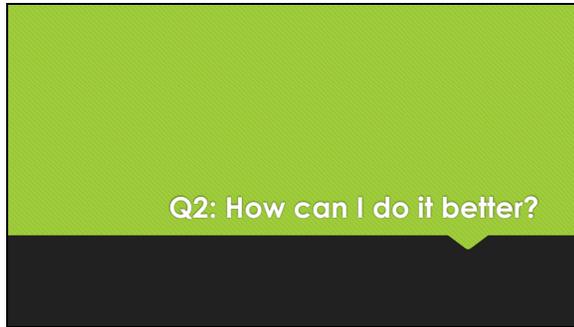
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Through our noticing and naming language, children learn the significant features of the world, themselves, and others. These understandings influence how they treat each other and their environment.



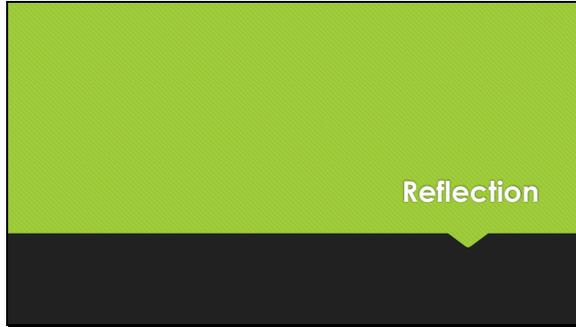
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Talk is the central tool of their trade. With it they mediate children's activity and experience, and help them make sense of learning, literacy, life, and themselves.



~Johnston says of teachers

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