

Children, Language, and Literacy: Diverse Learners in Diverse Times (Language & Literacy Series) (Language and Literacy (Paperback))

By Celia Genishi, Anne Haas Dyson

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"Contemporary early childhood educators find themselves in contexts that are fundamentally inimical to the time-honored wisdom in our field. Children, Language, and Literacy speaks to all of us with a commitment to the very young and strengthens our collective resolve to work in increasingly more effective ways with children, families, and the next generation of teachers." -- Mary Renck Jalongo, Editor, Early Childhood Education Journal

"Genishi and Dyson animate sociocultural theories of language learning by inviting us into the intimacy of children's worlds. This book will become a treasure on the required reading lists for early childhood, ESOL, and language arts courses." -- JoBeth Allen, University of Georgia, Athens


"If our standards-based economy requires us to make all children the same, to drain the joy out of learning, and to move lockstep through a set curriculum, we have forgotten what early childhood classrooms are all about. Genishi and Dyson remind us." -- Beth Graue, Interim Director, Wisconsin Center for Education Research

"Celia Genishi and Anne Haas Dyson call on us to rethink children's language and literacy instruction in the changing and diverse landscape of U.S. education. That call must be answered, and they help us immensely understand how to do so." -- Eugene Garcia, Vice President, Education Partnerships, Arizona State University

In their new collaboration, Celia Genishi and Anne Haas Dyson celebrate the genius of young children who are learning language and literacy in our diverse times. Despite burgeoning sociocultural diversity, many early childhood classrooms (pre-K to grade 2) offer a one-size-fits-all curriculum in which learning is too often assessed by standardized tests. In contrast, Genishi and

Dyson proclaim diversity as the new norm. They feature stories of children whose language learning is impossible to standardize and teachers who do not follow scripts. These master teachers observe, informally assess, respond to, and grow with their students -- some of whom are rapid language learners and some of whom become speakers, readers, and writers at "child speed." Much of this learning, regardless of tempo, is found within the language-rich contexts of play.

Chapters focus on children's ways of communicating through varied modes, including the use of nonverbal expression; languages such as Spanish, English, and the variant of English known as African American Language; and multiple media. Throughout the text there is a resistance to labels such as "at risk" and a much-needed advocacy for child-sensible practices in a world where diversity is indeed the "new norm."

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Celia Genishi is a professor of education and chair of the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University. Anne Haas Dyson is a professor of education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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