



# Writing in Rhythm: Spoken Word Poetry in Urban Classrooms (Language and Literacy Series)

*Maisha T. Fisher*

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“In this book, Maisha Fisher invites us to pull up a chair and listen in as young people insert their own rhythms into school life. . . . But this book is not a simple celebration of student voice. It is an ethnographic account of the teaching and learning processes through which lived (or longed-for) experience was disciplined into verbal rhythms.”

—From the Foreword by **Anne Haas Dyson**, University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign, author of *The Brothers and Sisters Learn to Write*

“Prepare to rethink the role of popular youth culture in the classroom. This work demonstrates some of the most respected theories of learning put into action through the roles and rules of young people's poetry. We leave this work alive and alert to ways that youth culture can transcend generations, everyday identities, and life disruptions.”

—**Shirley Brice Heath**, Professor at Large, Brown University

This dynamic book examines how literacy learning can be expanded and redefined using the medium of spoken word poetry. The author tells the story of a passionate Language Arts teacher and his work with The Power Writers, an after-school writing community of Latino and African-American students. Featuring rich portraits of literacy in action, this book introduces teaching practices for fostering peer support, generating new vocabulary, discussing issues of Standard American English, and using personal experiences as literary inspiration.

Drawing from literature in both literacy research and cultural studies, this book:

- Provides a model for incorporating “open mic” formats and the public sharing of reading and writing in literacy classes with urban youth.
- Shows how teachers can approach teaching with profound respect for student cultures, languages, and life experiences.
- Offers a new way of talking about literacy with urban high school students, including new terminology generated by the teachers and students.
- Explores what it means for Language Arts teachers to be “practitioners of the craft.”

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