

Oct 6th 4:30-6:00pm
Porter Hall 100

Dietrich College
Modern
Languages



Learning language the meandering way: Three instances to ponder

Shirley Brice Heath
Stanford University

Shirley Brice Heath has for more than three decades led groundbreaking research in learning environments that appear to have little in common. These include children's play, everyday project work, science laboratories, and the rehearsal zones and studios of the arts. As a linguistic anthropologist, she has spent extensive time in these environments, recording language, uses of props and gestures, and reliance on visual discernment and movements of the hand and forearm. Her work argues that ways of learning across these settings draw language development and artful thinking together toward what often evolves into thinking like a scientist. As a standing

member of the board of science advisors for the NSF Center on Learning in Informal and Formal Environments for the past decade, she has drawn the Center's research in the neurosciences into her own thinking to reinforce linguistic anthropological studies of learning. Heath is the author of several books, most recently *Words at work and play: Three decades in family and community life* (Cambridge, 2012), and more than 100 articles and book chapters. She has taught at universities throughout the world, most notably Stanford and Brown. She holds honorary degrees from several universities, including Carnegie Mellon.