Questioning the Universality of Storybook Reading: Examining Diversity in Family Literacy Practices

Laura Teichert


University of British Columbia
l_nichols6@yahoo.com



Tess Prendergast


University of British Columbia
bxbtessa@yahoo.ca


Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to present a critical review of the literature documenting literacy related practices other than childhood storybook reading. The data sources were key studies of young children's literacy practices within the contexts of home and community. A critique of the ongoing privileging of storybook reading over other literacy practices as the most important component in children's literacy development is presented. Although storybooks are part of an overall literacy-rich environment, they are but one piece of a much larger puzzle that includes home literacy practices as well as scool literacy practices. In today's world, there is a need to re-evaluate this privileging in the course of becoming a reader.


Introduction

Many Canadian adults will recall growing up around books and being read storybooks by their parents and grandparents. For several, this experience was happy and has naturally become a ritual with their own children. Research about adults reading to children reveal that children who are read to become very definite in their preferences and routines when it comes to reading and this book behaviour is noted even in very young children (Wilkinson, 2003). For many homes, the bedtime story represents a treasured and even archetypal notion of a good childhood.  What is a storybook? In a classic sense, it is a story for young children told with words and pictures (Johnston, Johnston & Frazee, 2011). Following this definition, storybooks generally fit the narrative genre or contain literary conventions, such as 'once upon a time' or document a hero/heroine and villain. Even books for very young children, such as "Dear Zoo" by Rod Campbell, usually seek to solve a problem, and typically conclude with a satisfactory solution that makes everyone, especially the child, very happy.

In this paper, however, we seek to challenge our own positive biases towards the value of storybooks and bedtime reading in childhood. In doing so, we acknowledge that other paths to literacy exist even though they may seem very different from our own Western childhoods that were admittedly filled with books and reading. We seek to challenge our taken-for-granted assumptions about storybook reading and fully recognize, celebrate, and legitimize other paths to literacy that are experienced in many families.

Romanticism often follows the notion of storybook reading that, "when read aloud, [a storybook] will cast a spell over all who are present to hear it and look at it; and, with luck, it will go straight into their hearts and never be forgotten" (Johnston, Johnston, & Frazee, 2011, p. 1). The reading of storybooks is promoted as being enjoyable for all, adults and children, along with presenting many educational benefits, such as enhancing young children's language skills (Senechal, 1996). Programs operating in the fields of early literacy and family literacy often place a strong emphasis on storybook reading by promoting these texts as the best method of literacy development (Pellegrini, 1991). Similarly, children's librarians emphasize reading aloud as one of the best ways to support early literacy skill development in preschool age children. (ALA, 2011).

While storybooks may have a role in children's literacy acquisition, the need for a language-rich environment and secure attachment to caregivers in ways that are culturally meaningful to families is of utmost importance (Mui & Anderson, 2008). We believe that a review of the literature highlights a missing piece in the conversation about early literacy: Why is shared book reading privileged in academic and professional literature despite not being a universal literacy practice in many settings, societies, and cultural groups? This issue is relevant to us as Canadian researchers, since Canada continues to become a more diverse and multicultural country. For example, Canada's many refugee families may be understandably unfamiliar with the picture book as a specific tool to support their child's learning. Recent research from Australia (a similarly diverse nation to Canada) suggests that refugee newcomers may experience 'information overload,' and many refugee newcomers feel overwhelmed (Lloyd, Kennan, Thompson, & Qayyum, 2013). Additionally, Canada's Indigenous cultures emphasize oral methods to teach cultural practices including, "speech, story, and song" (Archibald, 2008, p. 4). Early literacy practitioners' approaches to supporting early literacy vary widely. Some approaches take prescriptive "deficit" approaches to try to fix or remediate families' literacy behaviours, while others take respectful, strength-based approaches to help families build on what they are already doing with their children. For an example of the latter in practice, the Vancouver Public Library's Early Years Community Program nests five full-time professional librarians within a variety of community programs across the city. Working alongside program staff, like family support workers and nurses, and collaborating directly with participants, these librarians build family literacy programs that reflect the unique needs and characteristics of each group. Storybooks comprise only part of their program offerings, which also include singing, sharing food, art activities, discussion circles, and workshops (Prendergast, 2010).

## Theoretical Framework

For this paper, we draw on a range of sociocultural theories about literacy in general, as well as key sociocultural theories concerned with early literacy in the lives of young children. Sociocultural theory emphasizes the roles of "social, cultural, and historical factors in the human experience" (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 45), and perceives literacy to be deeply entrenched within human culture, enacted by and within human relationships as "social practice" (Street, 2003). Because we are considering the literacy experiences of children in their early years, we also draw on Vygotsky (1978) and Bronfenbrenner (1986) who similarly considered all learning to both emerge from, and be intricately enmeshed within, a child's sphere of social relationships. We, therefore, consider that family members and others enact early literacy in various and culturally-specific ways to help young children develop into "literate" persons who use a variety of symbol systems and modes in their social interactions, whatever they may be (Dyson, 2003; Marsh, 2004). A sociocultural view of literacy argues that "literacy learning cannot be abstracted from cultural practices in which it is nested" (Razfar & Gutierrez, 2003). Li (2010) notes that "language and literacy practices do not exist in isolation from one another just as cultures and communities do not exist as discrete entities, but rather interact with one another in various degrees of complementarity or conflict" (p. 143). Finally, as our study progressed, we came to view "third space theory" as explored by Moje et al. (2004) to be particularly helpful in this scholarly exploration. As we explored some of our own and others' fairly entrenched notions of early childhood literacy, and the privileged place that storybook reading occupies in this sphere, we found that this concept of third space as "a way to build bridges from knowledge and discourses often marginalized in school settings" (p. 45) to be very helpful. Therefore, building a bridge between home and school and creating a new space for knowledge to exist places a value on knowledge previously considered below standard. We believe that this practice will allow children a congruent flow between home, where storybook reading may not take place,  and school learning, which values storybook reading, referring to third space as "a 'navigational space' providing students with the means to cross and succeed 'in different discourse communities'" (Moje et al., 2004, p. 44). Thus, third space theory underpins our review of this topic and allows us to consider a range of literacy experiences in early childhood that contribute to the development of a literate person.

What Do We Mean by Literacy?

Literacy is necessary for success throughout formal schooling and life-long learning. While the current definition of literacy has evolved to include linguistic diversity, digital media, and visual images, the teaching of reading and writing traditional print remains central to literacy instruction for all ages.

Sociocultural theory emphasizes the roles of "social, cultural, and historical factors in the human experience" (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 104). Literacy is part of the culture children "learn as they grow up" (Heath, 1982, p. 49), which means children learn appropriate "ways of taking meaning" (Heath, 1982, p. 49) from their environment by their families and communities. As Heath (1982) notes, these practices are learned, not natural, and therefore taking meaning from books is a learned behaviour. As societies become increasingly diverse and global, our conceptions of literacy evolve, and we acknowledge multiple forms of literacy. Therefore, we believe it is imperative that educators recognize and build on the diverse literacy practices that are enacted at home and in communities, and that educators go beyond the prescriptive admonition to engage in shared book reading in early childhood (Mui & Anderson, 2008). To do this, however, we must contend with the fact that educational institutions emphasize what Street (1984) has termed, the 'autonomous model of literacy.' As defined by Street (2005):

> [t]he "autonomous" model of literacy works from the assumption that literacy in itself- autonomously- will have effects on other social and cognitive practices. It is assumed that the acquisition of literacy will in itself lead to, for example, higher cognitive skills, improved economic performance, greater equality, and so on. It is in this sense that literacy is seen as having such effects "autonomously", irrespective of the social conditions and cultural interpretations of literacy associated with programmes and educational sites for its dissemination. (p.417)

This places a Western notion of literacy as the dominant approach to reading instruction, and as Street (2005) has argued, it becomes an imposition onto other cultures. This ideological view describes "its view of what literacy counts and its view of how this literacy should be acquired" (Street, 2005, p.418). The effect of this type of model becomes the:

> categoriz[ation of] one type of family and child (e.g., those who attend to letter and words on the page) from another (e.g. those who don't love books)….the tools and techniques needed to hold a book or recite a story appear as more important, more successful, or more appropriate than the tools and techniques needed to engage in other social and cultural life experiences (Hassett, 2006, p. 84).

Ready for School? Ready to Read?

Informed by mainly Western definitions of literacy, many family literacy programs develop and promote programming designed to improve print-based literacy skills as a measure of school readiness for families with young children. The dominant image used to advertise these kinds of programs is usually a mother reading to her young child (Anderson, Streelasky, & Anderson, 2007) alongside descriptions of storybook reading as the strongest and "best" method to achieve literacy success in childhood (Pellegrini, 1991).

Family literacy and Early Years programs in Ontario routinely use the Early Development Instrument (EDI) to target 'at risk' groups and to strongly promote school readiness programing in those regions. At risk generally describes families with less formal education, those that have lower income, or those that are single-parent homes. The children from these families are perceived to be less prepared to enter formal schooling because they do not possess the necessary skills to thrive academically (Nichols, 2009). This practice of identifying families promotes dangerous assumptions that families choosing to live in neighbourhoods designated as 'at risk' are illiterate or alliterate (McTavish, 2007). Misinterpretation of local EDI scores may lead to agencies heavily promoting programs in certain geographic areas or physically bringing programs, such as story times, to regions displaying low EDI

scores. The importance of storybook reading remains *the* key literacy message directed at parents and caregivers who participate in these programs. The elevation of particular practices most relevant to one cultural group over others creates a dichotomy between cultural groups and leads to deficit stereotypes. The result of this perception in family literacy programs has been the creation of programs promoting activities that aim to change the literacy environment of homes, and those that strongly encourage storybook reading practices above all other practices. And yet, research of children's media literacy practices and involvement in these practices has shown some parents feel more confident with popular narratives, such as television or film, than those contained in unfamiliar storybook texts (Marsh, 2004, 2005; Marsh & Thompson, 2001).

As mentioned earlier, we view literacy from a sociocultural lens, emphasizing the social, cultural, and historical nature for literacy development. However, once children enter formal schooling the emphasis on reading and writing as literacy may alienate some children's pre-school experiences with literacy and literacy-like practices. For example, the British Columbia Ministry of Education's *Kindergarten Curriculum Package* (2010) cites storybook reading- like behaviour as indicators for the prescribed learning outcome of "oral language and extended thinking" (p. 9). The document suggests that students will demonstrate the learning outcome by showing how they "use story language in imaginative play (e.g., 'Once upon a time…,' 'Long, long ago…')" (p. 9), or how they "assume the voice of a character(s) in role play (e.g., using puppets, retelling *The Three Little Pigs*)" (p. 9).

Storybook Reading

As noted earlier, we seek to challenge our positive bias towards storybook reading. We do not aim to diminish storybook reading as many studies suggest the benefits of parent-child reading while in the home (Mol, Bus, de Jong, & Smeets, 2008). Toomey's (1993) review of studies, for example, noted that providing parents with easy, but specific, techniques provided a greater benefit to children at risk for reading failure. Topping and Lindsay (1992) examined studies using the 'paired reading' technique and reported positive effects. Studies have also reported positive child outcomes when parents listened to children reading when books are sent home with children accompanied by general information for parents about how to encourage children to read. However, we still question the privilege provided to storybook reading and the benefits often prescribed to the practice by early learning practitioners.

In an attempt to understand the role of parent-child reading, Senechal and Young (2008) conducted a meta-analysis review of studies published in peer-reviewed journals on the nature of parent involvement in children's reading acquisition. From the studies reviewed, they concluded that, "parents of children in kindergarten to Grade 3 can help their children learn to read" (p. 897). However, despite the general acceptance of the recommendation that parents should read "to their children [as] the best way to ensure eventual success in reading" (p. 900), the authors reported little intervention research on the topic for this young age group. Of the sixteen studies reviewed by Senechal and Young, only three studies reviewed were interventions where parents read to their children. And most importantly, the three studies "failed to show that a parent reading enhanced reading acquisition" (p. 900).

Reading aloud, or "shared reading," to children is another typical adult-child interaction promoted by many educators and practitioners as a method to help improve comprehension in young children. Yet, Ostrosky, Gaffney, and Thomas (2006) observed teacher-children interactions during read aloud sessions and noted only a thirty percent increase in "fostering comprehension moves" (p. 183), in comparison to use of informational text which netted seventy percent comprehension. This suggests that although storybook reading is not a negative practice, it is not necessarily the best method to foster emergent literacy or comprehension on its own. Similarly, Baker, Mackler, Sonnenschien, and Serpell (2001) found that talk during shared reading was not strongly related to children's reading achievement. The authors also noted that parent-child interactions during storybook reading did not lead to improved comprehension. The study concluded that, "if parents are to read to their children, then they should feel comfortable in that role and should have some knowledge as to what kinds of interactions are likely to be beneficial" (p. 433), since uncomfortable interactions in the literacy practice may void any potential benefits the literacy practice may have attempted to make. This finding is also noted by Marsh and Thompson (2001) in their investigation of families' narrative practices in the home. Baker et. al. (2001) argue that recommendations should be "congruent with parental beliefs, practices, and competencies. Communications between home and school must move beyond the one-size-fits-all exhortation, 'read to your child'" (p. 434). Rather than solely promoting storybook reading as the only model for parents to use in literacy-interactions with their children, the promotion of

popular narratives, such as those contained in children's television or film, as legitimate for parents to use during dramatic or narrative play interactions with their children (Marsh & Thompson, 2001).

Another study contrasting traditional promotions of storybook reading as a universal practice for literacy skill development examined 7,566 children under the age of 6 years and not yet enrolled in kindergarten. Yarosz and Barnett (2001) analyzed data from the U.S. National Household Education Survey of 1995. Findings revealed that, at every educational level, Caucasian parents read to their children more frequently than visible minority parents (i.e., Hispanic or African American). Homes speaking more than only the English language report a lower frequency of parents reading to their children, thus "parent–child reading is not a universal literacy practice, even though educators fervently remind parents of the importance of the bedtime story and probably overlook other family literacy practices" (Mui & Anderson, 2008, p. 240). Li (2010) describes "read with your child" as a literacy fracturing practice. The Ton family, a Vietnamese immigrant family in the United States of America, was unable to engage in the practice of reading to their children because they did not speak English. The Tons were "unable to 'read' in the way the teachers implied- in the form of Eurocentric, parent-child shared-reading" (p. 153). Rather, "read to your child" became adult- supervised reading practice.

The Indo-Canadian family, the Johar family (Mui & Anderson, 2008) provides many learning opportunities for their children, yet explains that although constantly reminded by teachers of "the importance of reading to her child, neither [mother] nor Genna enjoys this activity" (p. 237). Genna's mother expounds, "I tried reading to her, but when I try to read to her, I fall asleep, so she hates it when I read to her" (p. 237). It is worth noting that the mother was not read to as a child, meaning this practice is foreign to her. And yet, despite the lack of storybook reading, literacy is highly valued and Genna, along with her siblings, is considered a top student by her teacher, exceeding grade levels in terms of the standards prescribed by the Provincial Ministry of Education. The children engage in play school opportunities and the home is "inundated with print" (p. 235), while Genna reports that "at night, her mother sings Punjabi and English songs to her brother, George, when he has trouble sleeping" (p. 237). Homes, such as the Johars, promote literacy skill development in many ways, and one could argue they have been successful in teaching their children these skills, while neglecting to engage in storybook reading.

In some situations, the use of storybooks may differ depending on cultural beliefs about literacy and literacy development. In 1990, Goldenberg developed a quasi-experimental design that included two types of classrooms: a bilingual kindergarten classroom that used and sent home language and meaning-based literacy materials ('Libros') and a classroom that used readiness and phonics materials to inform Spanish literacy instruction. Phonics materials and Libros were sent home approximately once every three weeks. The study aimed to examine whether children receiving language and meaning-based instruction and materials would outperform those receiving traditional readiness and phonics instruction. As well, the researchers sought to discover the influence of contrasting literacy materials on children's home literacy experiences and literacy development (Goldenberg, Gallimore, & Reese, 2001). It was noted that libros use at home was "un-related to literacy achievement in kindergarten" (p. 12), but the use of "phonics worksheets was strongly and positively associated with kindergarten literacy achievement" (p. 12). These findings were surprising given that libros students out-performed phonics students during classroom evaluation. Findings indicated that parents used Libros in the home like phonics worksheets. For example, children were "encouraged to repeat or sound out words; sometimes they were told to copy sections of the books in order to practice them" (p. 13). Although each book contained questions for parents to ask children, parents were never observed engaging in discussing of "text meaning or pictures" (p. 13). These findings suggest that parents may be more successful in their use of phonics materials because "they conform more closely to the parents' beliefs about literacy development" (p. 13).

Although program intentions are positive, disconnection between home-school literacy practices may result in parents leaving programming all together. As noted by Perry, Kay, and Brown (2008), Hispanic adults often "walk away from programmes that do not correspond to their values and beliefs regardless of the benefits the programme might provide them or their children" (p. 101). In 2000–2001, 46% of Even Start Family Literacy parents in the US were identified as Hispanic or Latino. Of the families that participated in programmes between 1997–1998 and 2000–2001, 28.4% left the programme within six months (St. Pierre et al., 2003).

However, it is worth noting that parents' views change over time. Reese and Gallimore (2000) found that Mexican American and Central American parents' views towards literacy evolved as a result of being exposed to the differing views of the U.S. educational system.

Regardless, it is important to remember that to retain multicultural families in programming aimed to improve school literacy success it is important to understand and acknowledge the valued home literacy practices of the cultures participating in programming. Valuing home literacy practices will allow parents to feel acknowledged as they are introduced to the literacy practices valued by North American school systems.

## What is literacy-rich?

As noted earlier, of key importance to young children's literacy development are their experiences in literacy-rich environments. Literacy-rich environments can involve print-based texts, but they can also include multiliteracies, multi-lingual, and multimodal literacy. This means literacy resources now include multiple languages and symbols, internet, television, music, or comic books (Rowsell, 2006). Literacy also happens during peer play, in forest exploration, recipe experimentation, or back yard fort building. Simply put, literacy can be "viewed as taking place everywhere all of the time guided by social context and practices that take place in that context; e.g., the language and practices of skateboarding" (Rowsell, 2006, p. 148).

In supporting a child's emergent literacy development, the need for "rapport and the building of relationships with adults and peers through interactions around literacy activities" (Ostrosky, Gaffney, & Thomas, 2006, p. 175) is primary. However, this process cannot be built through storybooks alone, but rather, is sustained through authentic conversations between adult and child. These interactions provide children the opportunity to build productive literacy connections. Most importantly, these interactions occur in activities that are meaningful for that child and family. Examples include children and parents drawing together or parents and children engaging in musical activities together (Ostrosky, Gaffney, & Thomas, 2006). Li (2010)'s ethnographic study displays literacy-rich environments that do not prioritize storybook reading above other practices. In one instance:

> Anne played card games with Irene to teach her numbers, colors, animals, and fruits. She also played Scrabble, a word game, with her to increase her vocabulary. Sometimes Anne and Irene invented new games to play. For example, one day Irene pretended that her mother was not there and she had to take care of all her young siblings. Anne wrote down Irene's story about her taking care of her brothers and sisters, and they read it together. (p. 148)

Storybook reading is noticeably absent, however; plenty of literacy learning is occurring, and it is obvious, through this vignette, that literacy is highly valued and encouraged within this home. Another example is found from participant Loraine, who was training to be a nurse. She "studied and did her homework together with the boys. She read her textbooks and did homework, writing reports and research papers in the evenings, and thus was 'on the computer all the time'" (p. 150). Although Loraine was not reading stories to her children, she was modelling literacy practices, and she was showing how literacy development leads to an end goal, giving motivation and purpose. Li also shows examples of families engaging in newspaper reading in first languages and the use of the internet to maintain ties to home countries and other parts of the world. These families lived on smaller budgets and engaged in "reading flyers and looking for coupons for groceries or everyday necessities" (p. 151) and other documents, such as "immigration papers, birth certificates, mortgage or insurance papers, bank statements, and application forms for housing and welfare support" (p. 151).

As reported by Hammer, Rodriguez, Lawrence, and Miccio (2007), Mexican parents' maintain beliefs that schools are responsible for children's education. This belief is built on the idea that "schools, not parents, have the knowledge and expertise required to teach children" (p. 217). Parents also generally believe that teachers are "individuals whose authority must be respected [and] parents should not interfere with their children's schooling [or] ask questions of the children's teachers" (p. 217). This contrasts with U.S. schools that are based on a cultural model that values "independence and critical thinking in children and active parental involvement in children's education, including parental teaching of children's academic skills and parental engagement in the children's school" (p. 216).

However, as noted above, parental views change once introduced to North American schooling cultural norms. In Hispanic or Latino homes, school-related literacy activities are incorporated into home practices when parents believe it will best help their children succeed academically, but they modify school practices to reflect existing cultural beliefs and practices (Perry, Kay, & Brown, 2008). Of note is the importance placed on literacy as a pleasure, or 'aficion'. Parents characterize home literacy practices as "'fun activities' that 'connect the family'" (p. 104) through active participation by all family members in games, storytelling, and valued literacy practices.

Siblings played an important role in creating an "affective learning climate" (p. 104) through participatory roles, such as playing on teams, imaginary play, and making items together. Interactive literacy activities were important to families as a means to encourage family bonding and as an opportunity for moral education. Also, literacy games provided moments to improve children's dual-language proficiency and academic content.

Spanish language maintenance was highly valued and used environmental print and artefacts to recognize words in English and Spanish. For example, Serefina, Luis's mother, encouraged him to "look at the visuals and read the labels on the game in order to correctly identify the parts of the body" (p. 109). Bilingual materials provided by family literacy programme were used extensively in homes in an effort to maintain the children's first language of Spanish.

## Conclusion

Although storybooks are part of an overall literacy-rich environment, they are but one piece of a much larger puzzle. As we have shown, many studies report home literacy practices which differ from print-based practices valued in school, such as, families singing in their heritage languages. For some families, storybook reading is secondary to other school-like print forms of reading and writing (Li, 2010; Mui & Anderson, 2008), while other families maintain first language literacy practices (Perry, Kay, & Brown, 2008). This is not to dissuade the promotion of storybook reading. Rather, to follow Senechal and Young (2008), to:

> be careful about *the claims they make regarding the benefits of parent book reading.* Reading books to children can be encouraged because it is a wonderful sharing time; it exposes children to ideas, concepts, and language that can be novel, more varied, and more complex than those introduced during parent-child conversations.  (p. 901, emphasis added)

Reminding ourselves of the multiple and varied pathways people take in developing literacy skills may help practitioners to better relate to all families participating in their programs. For example, practitioners may find it beneficial to ask what types of activities already occur in participant families' homes, and to share in conversations about why such activities are valued and important. Fathers are possibly sharing their interest in video gaming with their children by allowing their children to sit in their laps and pretend-play the game with an unplugged game controller (Marsh, 2004). Rather than dismiss this practice, practitioners can focus on the bonding and interaction of this form of literacy development, not to mention the environmental literacy children are exposed to. Parents are possibly engaging with informational texts, both traditional and digital, because their children are interested in fact-finding about a favourite animal, like six-year-old Matthew searching from the "green basilisk lizard" (Davidson, 2009). The issue may also be that families are not familiar with Western storybook texts, and they do not possess the necessary language skills to read to their children, as Li (2010) indicated with the Ton family.

By acknowledging both home and school literacy practices, families unfamiliar with school-based practices will not feel marginalized by their unfamiliarity with new practices, and they will not feel as though their values and beliefs are meritless. As mentioned, a helpful theoretical framework from which to build is found in "third space theory" (Moje et. al., 2004), which aims to "build bridges from knowledge and discourses often marginalized in school settings" (p. 45) by providing spaces for recognition of those practices not typically valued in school settings. The autonomous view of literacy places literacy in a hierarchy, and those practices not meeting this standard are marginalized and disregarded. However, by incorporating third space theory into practice in diverse family literacy settings, a new context will emerge that will allow children a congruent flow between home and school learning. While many practitioners who work in communities are already doing this kind of work, it is helpful for us as researchers to conceptualize this adaptive, flexible, and respectful approach to family literacy work as "third space," wherein a blend of literacy practices are acknowledged and built upon. For example, refugees who lack experience with books may share their oral stories; sing songs from their culture, and share recipes while learning how to negotiate their new communities.

Providing families with opportunities to become aware of school-based practices, while continuing to value and use home practices, will provide children with a navigational space to comfortably move between both home and school literacy discourses while acknowledging and understanding the value and practices within each domain.

References

American Library Association. (2011). Every child ready to read: Teaching parents and    caregivers how to support early literacy development. Retrieved from: http://www.everychildreadytoread.org/

Anderson, J., Streelasky, J., & Anderson, T. (2007). Representing and promoting family literacy on the world wide web: A critical analysis. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 53(2), 143-156.

Archibald, J. (2008). *Indigenous storywork: Educating the heart, mind, body and spirit*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Baker, L., Mackler, K., Sonnenschein, S., & Serpell, R. (2001). Parents' interactions with their first-grade children during storybook reading and relations with subsequent home reading activity and reading achievement. *Journal of School Psychology*, 39(5), 415-438.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2010). *Kindergarten Curriculum Package (September 2010).* Retrieved from: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/curric_grade_packages/grkcurric_req.pdf.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the Family as a Context for Human Development: Research Perspectives. *Developmental Psychology, 22*(6), 723-742. doi: 10.1037/0012-1649.22.6.723

Davidson, C. (2009). Young children's engagement with digital texts and literacies in the home: Pressing matters for the teaching of English in the early years of schooling. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 8*(3), 36-54.

Dyson, A. H. (2003). *The brothers and sisters learn to write: popular literacies in childhood and school cultures*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Goldenberg, C., Gallimore, R., & Reese, L. (2001). *Using mixed methods to explore Latino children's literacy development*. Paper presented at the Conference on Discovering Successful Pathways in Children's Development: Mixed Methods in the Study of Childhood and Family Life by MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Successful Pathways through Middle Childhood, Santa Monica, CA

Hammer, C., Rodriguez, B., Lawrence, F., & Miccio, A. (2007). Puerto Rican mothers' beliefs and home literacy practices. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in School, 38*, 216-224.

Hassett, D. (2006). Signs of the times: The governance of alphabetic print over 'appropriate' and 'natural' reading development. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 6(1), 77-103.

Heath, S. B. (2010). Family literacy or community learning? Some critical questions on perspectives. In K. Dunsmore and D. Fisher (eds.), *Bringing literacy home.* (pp. 15-42). Newark, DEL: International Reading Association.

Levy, R. (2008). 'Third Spaces' are interesting places: Applying 'third space theory' to nursery-aged children's constructions of themselves as readers. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 8(1), 43-66.

Li, G. (2010). Race, class, and schooling: Multicultural families doing the hard work of home literacy in American's inner city. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 26, 140-165.

Lloyd, A., Kennan, M. A., Thompson, K. M., & Qayyum, A. (2013). Connecting with new information landscapes: information literacy practices of refugees. *Journal of Documentation, 69*(1), 121-144. doi: 10.1108/00220411311295351

Marsh, J. (2004). The techno-literacy practices of young children. *The Journal of Early Childhood Research, 2*(1), 51-66. doi: 10.1177/1476718X0421003

Marsh, J. (2005). *Popular culture, new media and digital literacy in early childhood*. London; New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Marsh, J., & Thompson, P. (2001). Parental involvement in literacy development: Using media texts. *Journal of Research in Reading*, *24*(3), 266-278.

McTavish, M. (2007). Constructing the big picture: A working class family supports their daughter's pathways to literacy. *The Reading Teacher*, *60*(5), 476-485.

Moje, E. B., Ciechanowski, K. M., Kramer, K., Ellis, L., Carrillo, R., & Collazo, T. (2004). Working toward third space in content area literacy: An examination of everyday funds of knowledge and discourse. *Reading Research Quarterly, 39*(1), 40-70.

Mol, S. E., Bus, A. G., de Jong, M. T., & Smeets, D. J. H. (2008). Added Value of Dialogic Parent-Child Book Readings: A Meta-Analysis. *Early Education and Development, 19*(1), 7-26. doi: 10.1080/10409280701838603

Mui, S. & Anderson, J. (2008). At home with the Johars: Another look at family literacy. *The Reading Teacher*, 62(3), 234-243.

Nichols, L. (2009). *Early years' educators' perspectives on family literacy programs and readiness for school*. Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada.

Ostrosky, M., Gaffney, J., & Thomas, D. (2006).  The interplay between literacy and relationships in early childhood setting. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 22, 173-191.

Pellegrini, A. (1991). A critique of the concept of at risk as applied to emergent literacy. *Language Arts*, *68*(5), 380–385.

Perry, N., Kay, S., & Brown, A. (2008).  Continuity and change in home literacy practices of Hispanic families with preschool children. *Early Child Development and Care, 178*(1), 99-113.

Prendergast, T. (2011). Beyond storytime: Children's librarians collaborating in communities. *Children & Libraries: The Journal of the Association of Library Service to Children*, 9(1), 20-26.

Razfar, A., & Gutierrez, K. (2003).  Reconceptualizing early childhood literacy: the sociocultural influence.  In N. Hall, J. Larson, and J. Marsh (Eds.), *Handbook of early childhood literacy*  (pp. 34-47). London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Reese, L., & Gallimore, R. (2000). Immigrant Latino's cultural model of literacy development: An evolving perspective on home–school discontinuities. *American Journal of Education, 108*, 103–133.

Rowsell, J. (2006).  *Family literacy experiences: Creating reading and writing opportunities that support classroom learning*.  Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers.

Senechal, M., & Young, L. (2008). The effect of family literacy interventions on children's acquisition of reading from kindergarten to Grade 3: A meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(4), 880-907.

Senechal, M., LeFevre, J., Thomas, E., & Daley, K. E. (1996).  Early exposure to storybooks as a predictor of reading in grade 1. Poster presented at the Biennial Meeting of ISSBD, Quebec City, August, 1996. Retrieved from: http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED415486.pdf.

St. Pierre, R., Ricciuti, A., Tao, F., Creps, C., Swartz, J., Lee, W., et al. (2003). *Third national even start evaluation: Program impacts and implications for improvement.* Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service, Elementary and Secondary Education Division.

Street, B. (2003). What's "new" in New Literacy Studies? Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. *Current Issues in Comparative Education, 5*(2), 77-91.

Street, B. (2005). Recent applications of New Literacy studies in educational contexts.  *Research in the Teaching of English*, 39(4), 417-423.

Toomey, D. (1993). Parents hearing their children read: A review. Rethinking the lessons of the Haringey Project. *Educational Research*, 35, 223-236.

Topping, K. J., & Lindsay, G. A. (1992). Paired reading: A review of the literature. *Research Papers in Education*, *7*, 199-246.

Tracey, D. H., & Morrow, L.M. (2006).  *Lenses on reading: An introduction to theories and models*.  New York: The Guilford Press, a division of Guilford Publications.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wilkinson, K. (2003). Children's favorite books. *Journal of early childhood literacy, 3*(3), 275-301.

Yarosz, D., & Barnett, W. (2001). Who reads to young children?: Identifying predictors of family reading activities. *Reading Psychology*, *22*(1), 67–81.