



Researching Literacy Lives: Building communities between home and school

Teresa Cremin, Marilyn Mottram, Fiona M. Collins, Sacha Powell, Rose Drury

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‘A ground-breaking book. For years educationists have sought evidence of genuine partnerships between schools and homes – reciprocal partnerships where schools are as keen to foster home practices relating to literacy and learning as they are to tell families ‘this is what we do’ and ask that they should do the same.’ Eve Bearne, Cambridge University, UK

In this new media age the potential for mismatch between children’s literacy practices at home and at school is considerable. Tensions exist between school conceptions of literacy as a set of self-contained skills and competences, and literacy as social practice. In indicating what families can do to support school literacy, schools often fail to recognise or build upon children’s lived experience of literacy, or available parental support for wider learning in the home and community.

Based on the findings of a research project developed in partnership busy schools, *Researching Literacy Lives* explores how teachers, positioned as researchers, developed an understanding of the cultural, linguistic and social assets that children bring with them from home. It examines how the practitioners widened their conceptions of literacy, built new relationships with parents and children and sought to develop two-way communication between homes and schools. Key ideas and challenges explored include:

- positioning teachers as learners and researchers;
- understanding children’s everyday literacy lives and funds of knowledge;
- examining teachers’ own literacy histories, practices and identities;
- creating culturally responsive curricula;
- contesting implicit assumptions and deficit discourses about children and families;
- developing less school-centric ways of working with parents;

- constructing more equivalent, personal relationships with parents, families and children.

Illustrated throughout with examples and case studies of the project teachers, *Researching Literacy Lives* challenges the profession to think more critically about children's out-of school literacy lives and funds of knowledge, and to invest in cultural change such that curriculum and pedagogy build upon children's assets for learning and new home-school communities are created.

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