An Exploration of Literacy Practices within Culturally Diverse Families

by

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B.Ed., University of Victoria, 1988

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies

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ABSTRACT

Family literacy is the reading, writing, drawing, and conversing that occurs incidentally and deliberately among all family members. This study explored the literacy practices of six families with a child between the ages of 1 and 4, from a country other than Canada. Emergent literacy (the first signs of abilities and knowledge with regard to written language) was the focus, as none of the children was attending school.

A Cultural Interview (CI), a questionnaire, was developed to determine each family's background, religious/spiritual beliefs, and the parents' level of education and employment. A journal was developed so that a parent could document her child's literacy practices. A Reading and Writing Inventory (RAWI), based on the work of Genisio (1998) was developed to determine the incidental/deliberate literacy practices of parents and child.

A purposive sample of 6 participants (mothers) was selected from the Inter-Cultural Association (ICA). During a 30- to 50-minute interview family practices and culture were explored.

The journal generated several recurrent themes: (a) morning ritual, (b) television, (c) playtime, (d) schedule of eating habits, (e) visiting friends, (f) learning, and (g) exercising and chores. The inventory provided examples of everyday literacy practices of both child and parent.

The three instruments provided evidence that literacy is occurring in each home, both in English and the first language. The instruments provide a format that may be used

by daycare workers, counsellors, and teachers, as they enable an exploration of a family's unique culture and daily literacy routines.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank my committee member, John Anderson, for his support and effort in helping me to complete this thesis. I would specifically like to express my sincere appreciation for the patience and understanding shown by my supervisor, Margie Mayfield, and co-supervisor, Jennifer Hill. I am especially grateful for their guidance and time.

I would like to thank the women from the ICA who participated in this study. I appreciated their openness, honesty, and willingness to share their experiences with me.

Chapter One

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The overall purpose of this study was to explore literacy practices within culturally diverse families and to make a series of recommendations for developing a family literacy program based on the results of this study. Family literacy is defined broadly as a concept, concerning not only reading between mother and child, but also including all of the ways parents, children, and family interact within a social context (Neuman, Caperelli, & Kee, 1998). This includes incidental reading and writing (e.g., reading a cereal box while eating breakfast) and deliberate reading and writing (e.g., making a weekly shopping list for groceries). Examples of family literacy might include using drawings or writing to share ideas, composing notes or letters to communicate messages; keeping records, making lists, reading and following directions; or sharing stories and ideas through conversation, reading, and writing. Family literacy may be initiated deliberately by a parent or family member, or may occur incidentally as family members and children are engaged in their normal routine (Commission on Family Literacy, 1994).

In the current family literacy literature, authors such as Gadsden (1994) and Auerbach (1989) have highlighted the need for researchers to look at families of different cultures and their literacy practices. Research to date has primarily focussed on one cultural group (African-American), one socio-economic level (low SES), and one type of literacy activity. This activity is book sharing, and often literacy is defined narrowly by this. Usually in these family literacy studies, the same two measures are used: (a) the number of books in the home, and (b) the number of minutes spent on shared book

reading. Many times, family literacy researchers have had this narrow focus and have not acknowledged or valued activities different from their own culture (Leseman & deJong, 1998). With this study, the author endeavoured to broaden and extend family literacy, and explore routines, customs, languages, and incidental and deliberate literacy practices within families. Language is a family's most precious and far-reaching contribution to their child's development, affecting all subsequent learning, social interaction, and communication. Our first language is so deeply embedded in the experience of family life that it is known by a familial phrase — mother tongue. Through language, families give their children a voice, as well as the fundamental skills for a lifetime of literacy. Values, attitudes, customs, and culture — all of these were first learned within our families and will be mediated by our families throughout our lives (Fallis, 1998).

There is a belief that learning only occurs from the parent to the child, but this is not so. Learning is reciprocal; parents learn lessons of love, patience, and playfulness from their children. In fact, the roles of teacher and learner are fluid, flowing both ways among all family members. To add to the complexity, family members move back and forth between the family culture and the outside world, bringing to each dimension the experience gained in the other. Society tends to believe that the formal educational structure is the place of learning (Sussell, Carr, & Hartman, 1996), without typically acknowledging the many contexts in which learning takes place — at home, with friends and neighbours, at the grocery store, and in nature.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) broadened the view on learning from the school context, and viewed the child's environment as a nested arrangement of interconnected settings

embedded in increasingly larger contexts. The relationship between separate settings, such as home and school, is important to the child's development. Traditionally, schools have tended to define a single reality, but learning can and should be a process of discovering multiple realities and literacies. Curriculum is influenced by the dominant society and does not include the view of all communities (e.g., First Nations, Chinese, and the Indo community), so the richness of each student's diversity and reality is not incorporated into the learning process. Each family is part of a culture, although not necessarily that of society's mainstream, and all families have their own expertise and lived knowledge. Furthermore, a family belongs to a larger culture, and because of this they will have their own religion, language, parenting practices, customs, and traditions. Culture is what makes an individual unique and each individual has a world view which is highly correlated with their cultural upbringing and life experiences.

Different cultures generate different concepts, values, and belief systems which are commonly reflected in language (Chomsky, 1977; Freire, 1970). Culture is a complex and dynamic construct, and may be defined in many ways, including language, gender, ethnicity, race, spirituality, and socio-economic class. Within the culture is a smaller culture — the family, with its own language, rules, habits, and practices. Gone are the days when families were defined by two parents, two children, a dog, and a cat. While the concept of family has changed over time, the belief in families is still popular in Canada today.

Families in Canada

The number of families in Canada has increased from 5.1 million in 1971 to 7.9 million in 1996 (Statistics Canada, 1996a). In addition, 87% of Canadians who took part in a national survey said that family was becoming more important to them (Vanier Institute of the Family, 1993). The statistics highlight the value of the family, and its place in the centre of learning and the community. The presence of a recognizable community is an absolute necessity for a learning and familial society. To achieve such a community, inclusion rather than exclusion must occur. While much of what happens in technological societies is individualistic (Swick, 1997), a decent and growing society requires the sense of community that can emerge through open and sensitive relationships that promote cultural and spiritual growth. By getting to know each other through personal relationships in various contexts, stereotypes can be broken down, and more productive ways of understanding each other can be created (Cohen, 1995). Caring for every child, celebrating cultural and religious beliefs, and taking an interest in the needs and strengths of all families is paramount. All families face special needs and risk factors at some point in their development, and early attention to family risk factors can prevent dysfunction and help families find ways to resolve their problems (Pipher, 1996).

However, not every family is defined by the dominant culture's standards; every family is diverse and will continue to change. According to Mayfield (1995), the following are the major demographic, economic, and societal trends that have defined families in recent years: (a) the decline in birth rates and family size, (b) the decline in marriage rates and the increase in divorce and remarriage rates, (c) the increase in

families in poverty, (d) the increase in lone-parent families, (e) the increase in the number of mothers in the paid labour force, and (f) the multicultural diversity of Canada's population.

Family Size in Canada

Over the next 20 years, families, population growth, and societal trends will change. In 1971 the average family size consisted of 3.7 persons, compared with an average of 3.0 in 1997. The number of lone-parent families living in British Columbia has increased from 107,010 in 1991 to 139,010 in 1996, an increase of 32,000 in just five years. In 1991 there were 18,830 single-male parent families and in 1996 there were 23,900, an increase of 5,070. There were a total of 79,085 families living in Victoria as of 1991, which increased to 82,875 in 1996, an increase of 3,790 in just five years. Lone-parent families in Victoria increased from 1,490 to 1,720 over the same period of time, of which 230 were male-parent families (Statistics Canada, 1996a). As shown by the above statistics, the best descriptor of Canadian families is diverse. Each family has their own language, traditions, and culture.

Immigration and Citizenship Trends

According to Statistics Canada (1996b), Canada was home to about five million immigrants in 1996, a 14.5% increase since 1991. This increase was slightly more than three times the growth rate (4%) of the Canadian-born population, the largest share in more than 50 years. Immigration, according to Statistics Canada, revealed that an average of 235,000 immigrants per year were admitted to Canada between 1990 and 1995, peaking at 256,000 in 1993. That compares with an average of around 150,000 during the

1950s, and less than 150,000 for the subsequent three decades. Hence, immigration is increasing, and this trend will continue well into 2016. Overall, immigrants accounted for 24% of BC's total population in 1996, compared with 22% in 1991. In the future, immigration will be necessary to maintain population levels as birth rates decrease in Canada (Statistics Canada, 1996c).

The sources of immigration to Canada have changed greatly. The European-born continued to account for the largest proportion of all immigrants living in Canada in 1996. However, for the first time this century, they accounted for less than half of the total immigrant population, due to a growing influx from Asia and the Middle East. In 1986, 67% of all immigrants living in Canada were born in Europe. By 1996, the proportion had declined to 47%. In contrast, the share of Canada's immigrant population born in Asia and the Middle East increased from 14% in 1981 to 31% in 1996. In 1996, just over one million persons in Canada (1,039,000) were immigrants who had arrived between 1991 and 1996. The Asian-born accounted for more than half (57%) of these recent arrivals, up from 33% of immigrants who came in the 1970s, and 12% of those who arrived in the 1960s. The Asian-born represented only 3% of those who arrived before 1961. Hong Kong, the People's Republic of China, India, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka topped the list for recent immigrants, with Hong Kong accounting for one tenth of these newcomers.

Ethnic Origins

After Ontario, British Columbia had the second largest immigrant population in 1996. With 903,000 immigrants, it had the largest increase (25%) among the provinces

since the previous census in 1991. Almost 217,000 (21%) of all recent immigrants to Canada chose to settle in British Columbia, a higher proportion than BC's 13% share of Canada's total population. As of 1996, one out of every three people (190,000) living in Vancouver was an immigrant. Victoria, which is also increasing its immigrant population, saw an increase of 8,390 people immigrating to the city within a 5-year time frame. Victoria is one of the cities in Canada that had higher proportions of immigrants than the national average. Of the 57,800 immigrants in Victoria, 5,895 were born in the United States, 1,330 arrived from Central and South America, and 11,055 originated from Asia (see Table 1).

According to the 1996 census, the total population of British Columbia is 3,689,755, with 515,495 people originating from Scotland, England, and Wales, while 543,100 originate from East, South, or West Asia. There are 76,430 Aboriginal people in British Columbia, compared with a total of 477,630 living in other parts of Canada. In Victoria, 535 people originate from West Asia, 3,740 originate from South Asia, and 11,875 originate from East and Southeast Asia. There are 3,285 Aboriginal people in Victoria (Table 2).

In British Columbia, 2,785,020 people speak English, and of those 6,035 also speak French; 252,405 people speak Chinese; and 96,220 speak Punjabi (Statistics Canada, 1996d).

Mother Tongue and Home Language

Statistics Canada (1996d) defines *mother tongue* as the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual at the time of the census. In

Table 1

Immigrant Population by Place of Birth: 1996 Census

	Canada	Vancouver	Victoria
		Number	
Total — Place of Birth	4,971,070	633,740	57,800
United States	244,690	22,685	5,895
Central and South America	273,820	17,200	1,330
Caribbean and Bermuda	279,400	5,930	790
Europe	2,332,060	190,680	36,060
United Kingdom	655,535	75,410	21,505
Other Northern and Western Europe	514,310	47,265	8,715
Eastern Europe	447,830	33,480	2,875
Southern Europe	714,380	34,525	2,960
Africa	229,300	21,805	1,675
Asia	1,562,770	355,270	11,055
West Central Asia and the Middle East	210,850	16,840	720
Eastern Asia	589,420	210,400	5,450
South East Asia	408,985	69,585	2,680
Southern Asia	353,515	58,445	2,200
Oceania and Other	49,020	20,165	995

Based on data from a 20% sample of the population. Non-permanent residents are not included in this table.

Source: Statistics Canada, 1996b Census.

Table 2

Single and Multiple Ethnic Origin Responses: 1996 Census

	Canada	Vancouver	Victoria
		Number	
Total Populations	28,528,125	1,813,935	300,030
Single origins	18,303,625	1,116,540	149,530
British Isles origins	3,267,520	225,780	64,055
French origins	2,683,840	18,825	3,890
European origins	3,742,890	230,805	29,510
Western European origins	1,126,095	75,290	12,530
Northern European origins	167,285	21,340	3,920
Eastern European origins	867,055	57,465	6,580
Southern European origins	1,376,935	66,640	5,535
Other European origins	205,525	10,065	945
Arab origins	188,435	4,660	370
West Asian origins	106,870	14,840	535
South Asian origins	590,145	107,560	3,740
East and Southeast Asian origins	1,271,450	352,560	11,875
African origins	137,315	6,095	680
Pacific Islands origins	5,765	4,010	30
Latin, Central and South	118,640	8,475	535
American origins			
Caribbean origins	305,290	3,995	330
Aboriginal origins	477,630	12,730	3,285
Canadian origins	5,326,995	123,285	30,200
Other origins	80,840	2,760	485
Multiple origins	10,224,495	697,395	150,500

(table continues)

Source: Statistics Canada, 1996e Census.

	Canada	Vancouver	Victoria
		Number	
British Isles only	1,606,459	121,100	33,120
British Isles and French	856,985	33,940	8,325
British Isles and Canadian	1,179,725	73,190	21,615
British Isles and other	2,217,365	201,385	42,520
British Isles, Canadian and other	598,635	49,080	11,225
French only	12,430	65	45
French and Canadian	597,605	5,305	1,205
French and other	435,200	19,150	3,030
French, Canadian and other	121,805	5,175	1,060
Canadian and other	579,050	37,585	6,145
British Isles, French and Canadian	280,595	10,810	3,340
British Isles, French and other	518,480	31,585	6,590
British Isles, French, Canadian and other	121,870	7,075	1,460
Other multiple origins	1,098,295	101,935	10,815

Source: Statistics Canada, 1996e Census.

Victoria, 35,520 people speak a non-official language (i.e., a language other than English or French) as their mother tongue, including 6,900 who speak Chinese, 5,155 who speak German, 2,395 who speak Punjabi, and 2,245 who speak Dutch. *Home language* is defined as the language most often spoken at home. In Victoria, 12,460 people speak a non-official language as their home language, including 4,515 who speak Chinese, 1,590 who speak Punjabi, 1,435 who speak French, and 690 who speak Portuguese.

Family Literacy

According to the Commission on Family Literacy (1994), family literacy involves the ways parents, children, and extended family members use literacy at home and in their communities. Family literacy activities reflect the ethnic, racial, or cultural heritage involved (Thomas, 1994); consequently, curriculum development in schools and literacy programs need to be guided by the understanding of literacy as an interactive, constructive process which takes place in a socially meaningful context (Auerbach, 1989; Wells, 1981). All that is known about a child's emerging literacy clearly points to the value of everyday home literacy-related experiences (Morrow, 1992; Salinger, 1988; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). To date, very few studies have investigated the everyday literacy practices of culturally diverse families in Canada.

The Purpose of the Study

The overall aim of this study was to address this gap in the literature by illuminating the varied literacy practices of culturally diverse families, within the context of emerging literacy of children between the ages of one and four. With the illumination

came an exploration of family literacy practices as related to the families' ethnicity, culture, and traditions, as well as their religious and spiritual beliefs.

The Overview of the Study

A case study design was utilized, allowing the families to provide their individual perspectives through the use of interviews, inventories, and journals. Specifically, the study looked at the literacy practices of six families. Each family had a parent who was born in a country other than Canada, and at least one child between the ages of one and four. The families were drawn from the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria.

Summary

Four instruments were used to gather data. First, the Personal Data Sheet, which detailed the participant and her partner's age, job and home language, as well as their children's names, ages, gender and participation in a daycare or Early Childhood Education Program (ECE). The sheet provided information on the parent to ensure that she met the specified criteria (i.e., was born in a country other than Canada and had at least one children between the ages of one and four).

The second instrument was the Cultural Interview, which consisted of 14 questions and was used to explore the family's home language, religion, spirituality, jobs and literacy practices. The interview questions were designed to obtain specific information to help understand the culture of each family.

Third, the Home Journal was designed to encourage parents to describe the daily activities of their child using simple words or sentences.

Fourth, the Reading and Writing Inventory (RAWI) recorded the reading and writing habits of the parent(s) and the child. The inventory was used to document literacy-related activities in the home and helped parents and other family members to identify both incidental and deliberate literacy-related activities.

There is a proliferation of family literacy programs being developed without much thought of an individual family's needs and unique literacy practices. There is a need for the family to be included in the planning and implementation of programs.

It is the intent of this researcher to highlight the "voices" and individual lifestyles and literacy practices of six families. The findings of the study will be used to make recommendations for a family literacy program for the Inter-Cultural Association.

Glossary of Terms

Cultural Sensitivity: The awareness and appreciation of the multiple factors that may influence the values and perspectives of individual families and children.

Emergent Literacy: The first signs of abilities and knowledge with regard to written language; the period between birth and the time when children conventionally read and write.

Family Culture: The collection of beliefs, practices, and approaches to which family members contribute and from which they extract, and which are modified over the course of the family.

Family Literacy: The ways parents, children, and extended family members use literacy at home and in their community. Family literacy occurs naturally during the routines of daily living and helps adults and children 'get things done.' Examples of family literacy might include drawings or writings to share ideas. Family literacy activities may also reflect the ethnic, racial, and cultural heritage of families involved.

Social-context: The social and cultural phenomenon that develops and is practised in the context of social interactions for social purposes.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a background, and overview of the literature and research relevant to culturally diverse families and family literacy. The literature was selected and reviewed for the following purposes: (a) to give an overview of family literacy programs, (b) to evaluate five relevant family literacy studies, (c) to examine international studies on literacy, (d) to summarize findings from culturally diverse studies related to the understanding of culture, and (e) to acknowledge existing gaps in the family literacy field. The chapter opens with a discussion of historical views of family literacy. Next, critical issues in the current research are highlighted, and the literature review concludes with a summary and critique.

Historical Views of Family Literacy

To a certain extent, young children acquire knowledge and skills spontaneously in constructive interactions with their environment, without explicit, intentional social mediation by a parent or teacher (Leseman & deJong, 1998). Literacy is in this respect a broad concept, concerning not only adult and child joint reading of high quality books, but other aspects such as interaction with all kinds of environmental print. The uses of literacy by a parent often depends on their education level achieved, job(amount of print used) and religious involvement (Leseman & deJong, 1998).

Early Research

The kind of apprenticeships that are provided to young children depend on the models or examples of literacy use, and on the behavioural roles offered in the diverse

context of literacy use within the family in which parents are involved. Home literacy is and needs to be considered a multifaceted phenomenon. However, a review of the literature reveals that many researchers (e.g., Durkin, 1966; Teale, 1978; Tizard, Schofield, & Hewison, 1982) imply that book reading is the only primary literacy event which occurs and should occur in a home, regardless of the class, gender, ethnicity, or culture of the family. For example, "read to your child is the most frequently requested parent involvement activity in schools, this directive cannot be effective until we shift from telling to showing 'non-mainstream' parents how to read to their children" (Vukelich, 1984, p. 474). Central to this idea is the school's expectation for all children to be able to participate in book reading discussions in a similar manner and to have experienced similar literacy events and practices with their parents (Mayfield, 1995).

As part of their literature review, Stuart, Dixon, Masterson, and Quinlan (1998) reported little direct evidence that the frequently repeated assertion 'read to your child' improves their reading, while evidence for the value of hearing children read is readily available. For example, the well-known study of Hewison and Tizard (1980) found a significant correlation between reading age and reports of parents hearing their children read at home. However, correlation is not equated with causation, and many studies focus on quantifying data without providing an in-depth examination of the participants. The underlying issue here is the reduction of home literacy to solely book sharing, and not acknowledging or accepting any other activity as literacy.

Past Research

According to Gadsden (1994), family literacy currently exists as an amalgamation of models and approaches, with varying levels of empirical evidence to support claims of success or failure, but few theoretical frameworks. Studies that explore the parameters of literacy programs are limited and have a particularly narrow focus. Specifically, many of the studies examine one particular ethnic group (African-American) or income level (low SES). Research on family literacy is a rather new area of literacy research. Therefore, it is not surprising that earlier reading studies are often used as prototypes for the research. Because there is less research available on family literacy, its effects are less well documented. Gadsden (1994) has claimed that:

> Few studies have been conducted that reveal the relative impact of the programs, that is, whether the learners and their families consider the programs effective, useful, or appropriate, how adult learners use literacy for their own development to help their children, and whether children's school performance improves. (p. 66)

According to Monaghan (1991), the focus on the family as a mediator for literacy predates the recent emphasis by almost 100 years. Current literacy programs span from K-12 to adult literacy and exists in a variety of forms. Some literacy advocates liken the recent research on family literacy to previous work on reading, which looked at the interaction of mother and child. It is argued that the focus of family literacy research needs to be a unique concept; unlike earlier models, it needs to be broadened beyond mother and child to look at and encompass the entire family (Teale, 1986). A mentor for a

young child might be a grandfather, older sibling, distant relative, or even a neighbour who is not related to the child. While family literacy as a research domain has existed for a number of years, the specific focus on relationships among all family members and literacy is quite recent. Family literacy has wide-scale implications for schools, practitioners, administrators, and family literacy programs. In order to develop a program that serves all family members, it is imperative to examine the family itself and to address the reality of their lives, including their culture, ethnicity, and traditions.

More recent research on family literacy has focussed on children and families learning literacy within a social context, or on conceptualization of family ecology, family within school contexts, and mother/child interactions (Gadsden, 1994). A relationship was found in the research between children's performance in school and parents' literacy levels, particularly the mother's education level (Leseman & deJong, 1998). That is, when a mother had a higher education level, more literacy activities were occurring in the home.

Early Reading and Emergent Literacy

Early reading and emergent literacy studies expanded the conceptualizations of literacy and focussed on a variety of human and environmental factors. For example, Teale and Sulzby (1986) examined children's uses for literacy and discussed the role of parents in the early developmental stage (e.g., child helps to make a grocery list), whereas Allen and Mason (1989) described how parents used print with children, applying different genres and strategies (e.g., using sandpaper letters to learn alphabet and words).

Studies in family literacy are often located in two dominant and overlapping positions. The first position suggests that the literacy of parents has a significant influence on a child's motivation to acquire, develop, and use literacy. Physical environments, such as a home where books are available, become a positive influence on a child's sense of efficacy with print. Consequently, parents are able to assume new roles to help their child acquire literacy and guide their learning. Parents and other family members/friends are role models for the child, who is encouraged to explore and interact with the environment. Rogoff (1990) observed that in cases where parents and children solve problems together with large amounts of verbal interaction, effective parent/child interaction existed in many domains.

The second position of studies in family literacy is based on the notion that literacy may serve a liberating and empowering purpose for children and parents. This position was developed around the view that parents have choices and can serve as role models for the importance of literacy. Children will become aware of the importance of reading and written language when they see people around them making use of print. Whether it is seeing a grandmother reading the newspaper, or a brother drawing, or neighbour Tom writing a grocery list, children will see the many uses of literacy. Book reading is no longer the primary literacy event; children see their relatives and friends engaged in real-life situations unique to their family and culture.

Gadsden (1994) and others have suggested that the development of literacy may be constrained in many homes by social distance between the family and program. This distance may be perpetuated by families who believe literacy is inaccessible for children

and adults because of social or cultural differences, institutional barriers within society, or the learner's own past negative experiences with literacy and learning.

Dichotomy of Literacy

Beginning with the work of Durkin (1966), reading research has supported the idea that the level and nature of the interaction between parents and children in the home setting is the most critical factor for literacy development. A core of researchers (Adams, 1990; Clark, 1984; Durkin, 1966; Morrow, 1983; Sutton, 1964; Teale, 1978; Wells, 1981) have suggested that young children who have access to reading materials and are read to have a decided advantage in later schooling. On the other hand, Williams (1997) found children learned to read without ever seeing their parents read and having reading materials in the home.

Much of the parent/child reading research has been American-based and has focussed on families in low-income homes. Parents in these homes have often been described as lacking the skills and knowledge to engage their children in the types of activities expected in school (e.g., Gadsden, 1994). School-related activities were narrowly equated with literacy, resulting in everyday literacy activities not being recognized or acknowledged in the school setting. Literacy-related activities already present in the home (e.g., using the *TV Guide*) were neither encouraged nor supported, as these were not regarded as mainstream activities, and were difficult to assess. Despite challenges to this view over the last 25 years, a disproportionate number of studies on family literacy still use a deficit model (literacy impoverishment), or take the approach that parents lack the skills to foster literacy development in their children.

Cochran (1987) noted that a number of researchers have challenged the deficit model. For example, Anderson and Stokes (1984) have suggested many literacy experiences occur in the homes of poor families, including paying bills and reading television guides or the Bible. These activities are often overlooked because they do not conform to mainstream, school-like events such as story reading. As a result, programs are often developed around a set of understandings, information, and assumptions that are as likely to misinform as inform the effort (Walker & Crocker, 1988).

Moreover, at the very centre of family literacy lie two different views. One interprets literacy as performing school-like academic activities within family contexts, while the other defines the family as a source of information and learning rather than a barrier to literacy. The second view is developed around the belief that literacy practices already used in the home should serve as the basis of instruction for family literacy. This study extended the premise, as most of the existing research focuses on developed theories and controlled studies of the mother/child dyad and their reading practices. This point in the history of literacy and family support is a critical and appropriate juncture to frame the issues in family learning and to investigate family literacy practice.

New Generation of Family Literacy Programs

Auerbach (1995) examined the current generation of approaches and places them into three categories. The three approaches are referred to as (1) Intervention-Prevention, (2) Multiple Literacies, and (3) Social Exchange. She argued this second generation of literacy programs, which claim to oppose deficit models, creates a new problem: the anti-deficit rhetoric which has become so pervasive that it masks fundamental underlying

differences in values, goals, ideological orientations, and pedagogical approaches. Auerbach believed that the rhetoric of deficits has been replaced with a rhetoric of strengths, and researchers are imposing their beliefs on families without truly understanding the family.

To avoid the pitfall of previous research described by Auerbach (1995), the present study attempted to explore each family's routine and unique family literacy practices without trying to impose a particular viewpoint.

Intervention-Prevention Approach

Posited in this approach, literacy problems are rooted in the "undereducated" parents' inability to promote positive literacy attitudes and interactions in the home. As such, proponents of this view support intervention programs aimed at changing the parents' beliefs about literacy and interaction with their children (Nickse, Speicher, & Birchek, 1988). This paradigm rests on a deficit perspective, both in terms of its analysis of the 'problem' and in terms of the 'solutions.' This approach is thought of as a single-bullet solution; for example, reading to your child will solve the problems of illiteracy in the home. Auerbach (1995) believed this focus on story reading may only promote one kind of literacy event at the expense of others, thereby undermining the integration of a range of literacy activities within family life, and ignoring the value of other positive culture-specific practices such as storytelling or reading religious texts. Further, it seems many programs intervene in the internal workings of family life to change behaviour and values. Such programs often include instruction in parenting skills. Two programs that build their rationale around the deficit model are outlined here.

The first program, The Parent-Assisted Reading Program (Lancy & Nattiv, 1992), which began in Utah, was designed for half-day kindergarten students and incorporated parent volunteers. Parents were given training as the belief was "popular opinion to the contrary, parents may not be naturally good storybook readers" (p. 209). Once trained, parents were placed in their own child's classroom and were paired with two children for 20-minute reading sessions, five times a week. Each volunteer was given a list of 16 "do's" and "don'ts" for reading to and with children (e.g., "read slowly and with feeling" as a do). It was hoped that these "uneducated" parents would be able to use these strategies in their home.

The second program, Friedberg's (1989) Beginning with Books program, began in Pennsylvania as a 2-year pilot project directed to 1,000 low-income families whose preschool children were patients at well-baby clinics. The first step of this program was to educate parents on the importance of books and reading aloud to the development of their young children. The second step was to give each family a packet containing four "high quality" books (e.g., *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown). In the third step, each family was given tips for success in sharing books with children, along with a flyer describing local library programs. Despite good intentions, Friedberg's (1989) program was developed around the premise that parents are unaware of the importance of talking to their children and need to be taught 'active' language. Friedberg stated that youngsters who enter school from homes with marginal literacy are at greater risk academically than peers who are more experientially prepared. In response to this premise, the author

targeted preschool children aged 1 to 5 who attended well-baby clinics with their parents. These children were given a literacy gift — five paperback books.

Like many other researchers, Friedberg (1989) believed that parents can be spurred on to literacy. Moreover, she believed parents from low-income families need to use story time as a regular part of the day's activities and that this practice will ultimately defuse explosive family situations and create readers. As argued by Auerbach (1989), any program which aims to change values, beliefs, or behaviours raises significant ethical questions. This is the case with many programs in the family literacy literature, which have the objective of changing parents' behaviours without identifying or valuing their existent skills and practices.

The Multiple Literacies Approach

Supporters of the multiple literacies approach defined literacy problems as a mismatch between culturally-variable home literacy programs and school literacies, and saw the solution as investigating and validating students' multiple literacies and cultural resources in order to inform schooling. The multiple literacies perspective promoted empowerment through affirmation of cultural identity and community building. An example of this is the Hmong Literacy Project (Auerbach, 1995) in Fresno, California, where the parents' main reason for attending literacy classes was to maintain their own history and culture for the sake of the children. An important aspect of the program was preserving the first language, and teaching it to the children.

Brock and Dodd (1994) saw the 'read to your child' paradigm as only one literacy event that could occur in the home. Contrary to interventionists, these authors believed

parents play a wider and key role in nurturing children's early literacy development through family literacy activities. Further, they encouraged community by suggesting that parents and teachers become collaborators in family literacy, so that home learning activities such as working in the kitchen or garden can become a special time for the parent and child to play and learn together. Brock and Dodd recommended an interest questionnaire be administered by the teacher to help tailor-make a family literacy program which will take the family's lifestyle, culture, and customs into consideration.

Much of the work done to develop this model is ethnographic and has focussed on immigrant or refugee families. The multiple literacies supporters posited that in addition to participants' beliefs and practices informing programs, they should have incorporated culturally familiar and relevant content. According to Ada (1988), curriculum materials for such programs often include genres such as folktales and fables from the home culture or language. Similar to Brock and Dodd (1994), Winter and Rouse (1990) and others believed parents are a child's first and most important teachers. These authors used the term *intergenerational* to describe the formal and informal literacy instruction that occurs between adults and children. They further believed that parents and other family members prepare their children for learning as they go about the daily activities and interactions of their culture. Winter and Rouse acknowledged culture by stating that all communication, including reading and writing, is cultural, and "without acknowledging the learning environment of the home and developing strategies to build on family strengths, we cannot hope to make a difference in a child's life" (p. 382). Proponents of the multiple literacies approach believe that reading or reciting rhymes to a child is not necessarily a

part of everyone's cultural heritage, but most cultures have other equally valid literacy experiences.

Winter and Rouse's (1990) example of a multiple literacies approach intervention is the Parents as Teachers (PAT) Program, which focussed on four areas of development: language, cognitive, social-emotional, and motor. With this approach, parent educators model meaningful learning activities for their children, and discuss concepts and practices with parents. PAT is seen as an ideal vehicle to promote activities recommended in the emergent literacy approach; in particular, being read to regularly, having a variety of printed materials in the home, and having people in the home stimulate the child's interest in reading and writing (Durkin, 1966; Goodman, 1986; Snow & Ninio, 1986; Teale, 1986). To explore literacy development, Winter and Rouse (1990) conducted a research project with 10 children, ranging in age from 2½ to 3 years of age, with all the families participating in the study residing in low-income neighbourhoods. Data were gathered in the homes through informal observation and by quantifying the number of literacy materials which were readily available. The authors found that parents who incorporated PAT exemplified more willingness to incorporate literacy experiences into their parenting practices. To support this, parent-educators taught parents how to write baby biographies, make books, and read appropriate books to their children.

Similar to Winter and Rouse (1990), Celano and Neuman (1995) believed the role of parents as their child's first teacher is important. In their study, the researchers targeted African-American adolescent mothers with the goal of enhancing communication between parent and child. The authors found that mothers did not have an opportunity to

interact with their children, because they both attended separate literacy classes. The researchers developed a conceptual framework based on the routine involvement of families in their cultural community, and focussed on adolescent mothers in daily language and literacy activities with their children. The goal of the researchers was to connect storybook reading to the family's daily routine and experiences in the home or community, with the implications being that parents convey meaning to young children through guided practice. Such programs can only be successful when there is acceptance of cultural variation, with some programs incorporating culturally familiar pedagogical practices even when they are incongruent with an educator's own pedagogical understandings or preferences (i.e., a morning prayer). Auerbach's (1989) position was also reflected in Celano and Neuman's research, namely existing family literacy programs are school-based and designed to mirror mainstream culture and have traditionally been insensitive to multiple literacies from a cultural perspective. Further, Rogoff's (1990) concept of guided participation, or how parents tacitly guide their children in the course of daily interactions (e.g., doing chores, making dinner), was reflected in this study.

Social Change Approach

The social change approach incorporated all of the principles of the multiple literacies, but went beyond them and placed emphasis on issues of power as well as culture. Examples of this approach were difficult to attain; however, Piper's study (1997) included some of the approaches. Piper recruited 13 low-income urban United States families for her study. This study was descriptive, using open-ended questions in

preliminary and post interviews. Field notes were gathered, and dialogue journals were used so that the parents and research could correspond in letter form. The findings indicated that the frequency of various types of literacy activities varied among and within the families, depending on their lives and needs at the specific time. The social-contextual factors of the family greatly influenced how and why they used literacy in their lives. Piper discussed two important issues: (a) First, the difference between home and school literacy may contribute to difficulties for some of the children in school, as they encounter literacy activities and uses that do not build upon previous experiences and backgrounds (Heath, 1983; Morrow, 1995; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988); and (b) second, based on the work by Auerbach (1989), Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) and Purcell-Gates (1993), teachers were urged to start where families are in terms of their literacy experiences and skills, building on what the children bring to the school situation rather than on what they lack.

This investigation widened the "lens" of family literacy, by stating that a future research goal was to involve programs, schools, and families in the exploration of meaningful literacy experiences and education for non-mainstream children. Piper's study may also provide insights on how programs can address and highlight the strengths, needs, and goals of participating families, and provide information on the impact of a social-contextual approach to family literacy. With this, Piper hoped that programs will move along the continuum from traditionally deficit-based to more family-centred perspectives. According to Piper, many family literacy programs are based on deficit views that blame low-income, non-mainstream families for not providing literacy

environments and support to their young children (Auerbach, 1989; Morrow & Paratore, 1993; Purcell-Gates, 1993). Piper argued that using a social-contextual approach to family literacy allows for the building of strengths already inherent in the families.

Summary of Programs

As profoundly stated by Auerbach (1989), researchers and teachers need to proceed with "caution and humility" rather than claiming to know what is best for others, Similarly, Celano and Neuman (1995) acknowledged that parents come to programs with rich histories and experiences that need to be honoured and used in program development. In each of these reviewed programs and studies, the common thread intertwined is the stance of expert and the emphasis on storybook reading as the single literacy event. As shown by a number of researchers (Leseman & deJong, 1998; Sénéchal, LeFevre, Thomas, & Daley, 1998; Stuart et al., 1998), there is little direct evidence for the frequently repeated assertion that reading to children improves their reading. Reading to children is correlated with spoken language development (Stuart et al., 1998). Storybook reading has received the most attention in the research, with the focus being frequency rather than quality, and modest associations have been found between storybook reading and later reading achievement (Sénéchal et al., 1998). These authors suggested future research is needed to provide detailed descriptions of when, how, and where parents teach reading and writing to their young children. In the following section, family literacy studies are discussed.

Five Family Literacy Studies

Parent Education in Washington State — Even Start Program (Ponzetti & Dulin, 1997).

The Even Start literacy initiative is one of the largest federally funded literacy initiatives in the United States. It is an outgrowth and extension of the Head Start Program. Even Start is an *intergenerational* approach designed to improve the literacy of both children and adults. The primary emphasis of Even Start is helping parents become more educated, followed by helping parents meet the needs of their children and increasing parent involvement in the child's education. On average, Even Start programs offer 8 hours of adult basic education each week, whereas only 3 hours are devoted to parent education. Educational services offered focuses primarily on parent education, adult basic education/General Education Diploma (GED) instruction, and adult literacy education. Many researchers have explored its programs as a result of the positive national evaluation it received in 1993.

The purpose of Ponzetti and Dulin's study was to identify and clarify parent education practices used in family literacy programs in both urban and rural settings in Washington State. The emphasis was to help parents become more educated, help them meet the needs of their children, and increase their involvement in their child's education. The researchers developed a questionnaire, which was completed by the program staff of 24 Even Start sites in Washington State. A checklist compiled from a literature review of parent education practices in the United States was given to educators to report the topics covered in their courses.

The results of this study highlighted the importance of state direction in order to promote equitable access to families in both urban and rural areas. The majority of the Even Start programs provided parent support, parent involvement opportunities, and formal education classes. Ponzetti and Dulin provided a composite picture of the typical Even Start parent education topics (e.g., guidance versus punishment, stress management, helping children with homework, spousal abuse, and budgeting). An implication of this study was that parent education was the focal point, as this is the component that makes family literacy programs different from other literacy events. In their study, the authors delineated family literacy into three key components: (a) early childhood education, (b) adult education, and (c) parent education. They believed family literacy needed to be clarified and integrated because studies that have varied missions, purposes, and objectives hinder the possibility of comparative research.

Even Start Family Literacy program (Yaffe & Williams, 1998).

Yaffe and Williams (1998) investigated reasons why women choose to participate in a literacy program. Issues such as the expectations of women were addressed and positive components of the program were identified. To answer these questions, the authors interviewed six women from the mid-western United States. The questions were open-ended and interviews ranged from 45 to 60 minutes. The interviews were audio-taped and the tapes were verified by making a transcript available to participants. A second part of the study involved a 26-question telephone interview by staff members. The data were analyzed using grounded theory analysis and patterns in answers were noted.

The six women who participated in the study connected with the female Even Start staff. Despite differences in age and race, a 'women helping women' theme emerged. Another important finding of this investigation was related to issues of culture and the social dynamics of families. In the parenting education classes, the Even Start staff emphasized the importance of positive interaction between parents and children. With this, the staff scheduled Parent and Child Time (PACT), with the intent that parents would engage in positive, playful interactions with their children. While the women who participated in this study clearly indicated that they wanted to improve their parenting skills, they were uncomfortable with, and thus avoided PACT sessions. Playing with children, particularly in a public forum, was culturally inconsistent with the women's typical patterns of family interaction. Finally, the six women who participated in this study enrolled in a family literacy program, but were not consciously thinking about family literacy when they did so. The women joined the Even Start program for themselves. At no time did the women indicate that they understood the connection between the adult literacy component and the Even Start program.

When designing and implementing family literacy programs it is very important to avoid models that simply transmit mainstream cultural practices to the homes of participants (Auerbach, 1989). Further, program developers and directors of family literacy programs must make the concept of family literacy explicitly clear, so that participants understand the benefits for both their own and their children's literacy development. Children learn a great deal about literacy in the context of the family-based

interactions and activities, and parents and family members perform an important role as their children's first teachers, long before children enter school.

Maternal reports of preschoolers' literacy as a predictor of early reading (Dickinson & DeTemple, 1998).

Emergent literacy researchers have demonstrated that children begin constructing notions of literacy during the preschool years, and that early experiences can support children's literacy growth. The authors of this particular study developed their hypothesis from the point of view that parents have valuable insight into their preschool children's literacy development and that parental reports from the preschool years could be good predictors of early literacy development once their children enter school. Eighty-three families were recruited through Head Start, a nation-wide early childhood program, and other preschool programs serving low-income families in the Greater Boston area. Parents were asked to participate in a 3-year study of child language development that would involve annual home and school visits. Families with the following characteristics were chosen: low SES, mothers had 12 years or less of formal education, English was the primary home language, and there was at least one child between the ages of three and four in the home. Twenty-three percent of the mothers were African-Americans, 71% white, and 6% Hispanic. Data were collected through interviews with the mothers during annual home visits. During the third year of data collection, children were individually administered tests of language and literacy skills. The specific questions and tests were included in the study and correlational and regressional analyses were used to report the descriptive patterns of the data.

After an examination of the longitudinal data, Dickinson and DeTemple (1998) found that parental reports were a strong predictor of a child's emerging literacy skills in kindergarten and of their literacy development as evaluated by their first grade teacher. The authors' data indicated that low-income parents were able to provide insightful responses on their child's literacy development. Parent reports provided a type of information that could not be obtained from tests and could be acquired by teachers only through extended contact with the child. Dickinson and DeTemple (1998) stated that developing an easily scored assessment tool for use with parents during the preschool years would provide valuable information for teachers. Such an instrument would be the catalyst for discussion between parents and teachers about literacy development and home practices for supporting children's literacy growth.

A family literacy program connecting school and home (Morrow & Young, 1997).

Unlike the previous three studies, the study by Morrow and Young (1997) included the school context. The focus was to involve parents in developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive literacy activities with their children by using the resources already within the family. The purpose of the program was to enhance children's achievement and interest in literacy and to approach literacy as a social activity by having children engage in reading and writing activities with family members. Fifty-four randomly selected children from African-American, Latino, and a small percentage of Caucasian families from grades two and three participated. The children were divided into a control and experimental group, with the latter group receiving both the school-

and home-based program. The school-based program included activities such as reading and writing activities and storytelling using felt characters.

The home program included all of the school activities, plus storytelling, journaling, and creating a dictionary. Parents told stories about family experiences and made up original stories with the help of puppets and props. The props included story boards made of cardboard, shelving paper to create roll stories, felt, and sticks. Children could write and drawn their own stories, or recreate stories they heard or read. Parents and children wrote in journals together, writing stories, describing things they did each day, making shopping lists, drawing pictures, copying excerpts from books, or writing about how it felt to work together. Parents helped children record their "very own words" on file cards. Children selected the words from print within the home and community, from school work, and from stories. Parents were instructed to point out print all around them, in and outside of the home (e.g., mail, road signs, store signs). Children and parents read the various file cards, copied them, and used them when writing in their journals.

Data were gathered using a variety of techniques, including (a) a rewriting test, (b) a comprehension test, (c) a test of basic skills, and (d) interviews with children. The data were analyzed using analysis of covariance with pre- and post-test scores, and interview answers were pooled, so all answers were listed without repetition. The researchers reported that parents stated they never knew how to help their children, but now realized how important it is to take an active role in children's literacy development. Some also said they did not like to do traditional homework, but found the family program fun. The authors believed the program was a success because the activities were

sensitive to the interests of the parents, as well as to the diversity of the family backgrounds. The authors believed future research should replicate the study in other grade levels and in other types of school environments. Implications are that parents, children, teachers, and family literacy programmers can work together and create literacy activities that are culturally sensitive to families of different cultural backgrounds.

Focus on research (Purcell-Gates, 1993).

Purcell-Gates (1993) raised many questions in her study about historical and current research. She strongly believed that practices today are only loosely related to research. Similarly, research into family literacy is neither "easy nor blithely undertaken," with issues of culture, class, and social dynamics of family and community integrally involved. Purcell-Gates believed that the results from good research could be used to create informed family literacy policy and practice that would improve the literacy abilities of children and adults. Like Auerbach (1989) and Gadsden (1994), she was concerned about the proliferation of programs that were developed without a concrete understanding of the individual participant, family, or community. More importantly, she believed it was timely for researchers to take a "stance of reflection." As depicted in the previous sections of this literature review, many programs and studies rely on historical research as a basis for the hypothesis; nevertheless, what is missing are the "voices" of participants.

In her study, Purcell-Gates (1993) hypothesized that the literacy levels of parents would closely relate to the amount and types of literacy used in the home. The study was restricted to low-income families, with the aim being to study the ways in which literacy

practices varied within this socio-economic group. Purcell-Gates stated that all too often, politicians and leaders assume that poverty results in low family literacy. Thus, one of the crucial issues for research into family literacy "is to describe better the separate and independent ways in which poverty, low literacy, and children's 'readiness' to learn in school interact" (p. 671). When researchers wanted to use direct observation, they were met with concerns from the families, including (a) invasion of privacy, (b) activities being reported to social services, and (c) lack of energy to work with researchers. When the families accepted the researchers into their homes, they were described as "unusually open, too trusting, and [having] friendly dispositions towards strangers" (p. 674).

Another problem with the study is the presence of the researchers, as this may alter the natural behaviour of the participants. Purcell-Gates (1993) recognized the family as a culture, and looked at family routines as well as specific literacy activities. This meant assuming a neutral, inquiring, and nonjudgmental stance, resisting an interventionist mode and a stance of arrogance.

On the other hand, using a nonjudgmental stance raises the question of how a researcher becomes a participant-observer if s/he does not completely know the culture, or lacks regard for the consequences or responsibility to the members of the culture. In other words, can a researcher participate in a culture without being a member of the culture? Purcell-Gates (1993) gathered researchers from diverse backgrounds, including African-American and Hispanic, as a way of acknowledging the problem of white researchers studying people of colour. Purcell-Gates hoped to find a relationship between family literacy practices and possession of this knowledge, so that the links between

home literacy and school success would become clearer. As this research was not complete at the time of publishing, not all information is provided. One implication of this study is that research into family literacy is crucial at this time of proliferating family literacy programs. The results of quality research can and should be used to inform family literacy policy and practice.

The next section of this literature review includes an examination of three international programs and studies. It is important to look at other countries to broaden one's lens and to enrich the background of a study. The first involves an Australian program, the second is a study of British parents, and the third is a longitudinal study from the Netherlands.

International Programs and Studies

Parent participation (Cairney & Munsie, 1995).

As stated earlier in this review, a number of programs focussed on parents as partners, a philosophy supported by Cairney and Munsie (1995). The program, Talk to a Literacy Learner (TTALL), was developed as a first step towards a collaborative partnership between teachers and parents. The TTALL program was developed in response to a New South Wales state government initiative as part of the International Literacy Year in 1990. It was designed to examine parent interactions with children and its focus was on the strategies that parents use to interact with their children as they read and write. Cairney and Munsie believed that most parent programs were initiated because of the needs of special children with literacy problems, revolved around these 'problems,' and led to the development of individual instructional programs for parents to follow.

Rather than simply providing an instructional program for individual children, the TTALL program aimed to achieve a lasting effect on the nature of parent/child interactions in order to offer long-term potential for learning growth. The major purpose of the project was to design and implement a specific education program to: (a) increase parental participation in the literacy activities of their children, (b) change the nature of the interactions adults have with children as they read and write, (c) introduce parents and their children to a range of literacy practices which are related to success in schooling, (d) train community resource people who could be deployed in a wide range of community literacy activities, (e) raise community expectations concerning literacy and education, and (f) serve as a catalyst for a variety of community-based literacy initiatives.

The project was designed to be completed in three distinct stages over a period of 18 months. The three stages were to: (a) identify and train 25 parents to interact with their own children (aged one to 12 years) as they engage in literacy events; (b) train 15 of the initial group of parents to acquire more advanced skills as literacy tutors, so they could work with other children; and (c) train selected parents from stage two to act as community tutors. Results of the qualitative data confirmed Cairney and Munsie's (1995) belief that children were more positive and confident about themselves as learners, and were better able to read regularly and more complex passages as a result of this program. A second result was the development of more positive attitudes of teachers towards parents. Most importantly, teachers began to listen to parents, accepted the views expressed, and engaged more regularly with parents in conversations about educational issues and concerns.

Learning to read at home and school (Stuart, Dixon, Masterson, & Quinlan, 1998).

In this study, Stuart and her colleagues (1998) investigated the social class differences in home literacy activities, including reading, hearing children read, and phonological awareness through nursery rhymes and games such as "I Spy." Raz and Bryant (1990) and their investigation into the possible links between social background and phonological awareness in 4- and 5-year-olds are cited in this study. The findings of Stuart et al. (1998) showed that social class differences in phonological awareness were apparent only after school entry and that middle-class children were significantly better readers than the working class. Interestingly, the social class differences in word recognition scores, but not text comprehension scores, no longer reached statistical significance when phonological awareness scores were controlled. It would appear from this study that middle-class parents spent more time reading to their children, owned more books and were frequently taken to the library, but none of these environmental factors explained a significant amount of variance in phonological scores. Raz and Bryant suggested there are other factors in the home environment which underlie observed social class differences in awareness, and thus, reading.

Data for the Stuart et al. (1998) study were analyzed using statistical measures such as ANCOVA. Results indicated that "middle class children knew significantly more letter sounds than the working class and letter sound knowledge but not social class was the significant predictor of reading achievement" (p. 12). Another SES-associated finding was that the game "I Spy" was used to entertain children from middle-class families on

long car rides to visit relatives or when going on holidays. Middle-class parents also appeared to possess more varied kinds of alphabet teaching materials. The researchers speculated that families who take holidays are wealthier, and thus buy more teaching aids, which in turn may influence their child's reading achievement.

Home literacy (Leseman & deJong, 1998).

The purpose of Leseman and deJong's (1998) study was to extend earlier studies on the relationship between home literacy and developmental and educational outcomes. Participants included eighty-nine 4-year-olds from 28 inner-city primary schools in the Netherlands. A longitudinal design was implemented and the prior language development variable was statistically controlled. The authors included four facets of home literacy as a theoretical framework: (a) literacy opportunity, (b) instruction, (c) cooperation, and (d) social-emotional quality. Further, they embedded home literacy in social and cultural contexts, and stated that the use of literacy depends on a number of factors (e.g., education). The data were measured using self-reports and a questionnaire, and the results concluded that home literacy is strongly determined by socio-economic, cultural, ethnic factors, and by the type of jobs parents held. That is, the social-emotional quality of literacy interactions is not a direct determinant of children's language and literacy development, but may be indirectly related to both opportunity and instruction quality. Regarding ethnic groups, Leseman and deJong believed that it seemed necessary to work with parents and other significant adults in the child's environment, and to include the influences of lifestyle, prevailing child-rearing beliefs, and available endogenous literacy models. The authors recommend that special attention should be paid to encouraging

literacy for pleasure, and that the four facets (literacy opportunity, instruction, cooperation, and social-emotional quality) described in this program be incorporated to enhance home literacy.

Summary of Literacy Programs and Studies

As shown here, there is divergent methodology among studies on family literacy, ranging from participant observation to experimentation. The field of family literacy is composed of multiple and sometimes confusing definitions, practices, and methods. Consequently, there is a need for guiding principles to aid in understanding how families across cultural and social backgrounds use literacy to make sense of the world, and how literacy assistance can help them do this effectively (Gadsden, 1994). It was the goal of this study to move away from the interventionist stance and prescriptive solutions — to explore the literacy practices of families by looking at their uniqueness and honouring their differences rather than defining a monoculture.

A summary of the culturally diverse literature is examined in the following section. It is important to include this in the review, as the constructs of cultural sensitivity, dominant culture, acculturation, and bias are highlighted.

Cultural Diversity

To possess cultural sensitivity, one needs to view each family as a cultural group with their own values, beliefs, and experiences. Further, it must be recognized that each family member has their own position, role, and experience. Professionals must also acknowledge their own cultural biases, requiring an examination of personal biases and prejudices (Dennis & Giangreco, 1996). Dennis and Giangreco suggested that one

recognize culture changes for individuals in order to avoid generalizing and stereotyping. Degangi, Wietlisbach, Stein, and Royeen (1994) believed it important to understand a family's customs, child-rearing practices, and routines, referring to this understanding as becoming "culturally competent" (i.e., showing respect for cultural differences and a willingness to learn and accept different ways of viewing the world). The authors suggested that: "Professionals need to use strategies to empower families, to provide nonjudgmental support for what parents are doing, acknowledging the parents' decisions focussing on the child-parent relationship" (p. 515). Danseco (1997) believed that professionals need to be knowledgeable of the parents' cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and practices. Hanson, Lynch, and Wayman (1990) stated that many education programs reflect the values and beliefs of the dominant group in society, and that there was a need for ethnic competence and behavioural change. *Ethnic competence* refers to acting in a manner congruent with the behaviour and expectations of the members of a certain culture; it does not mean conducting oneself as a member of that culture.

Learning about the history and current information pertaining to the ethnic group is helpful when trying to work effectively with a family. Determining the degree to which the family operates transculturally is another important consideration for ethnic competence. The ethnic competence focuses on the relationship between the larger society and the family within the ethnic group. It is important to understand the degree to which the family modifies its customs and activities to integrate into the dominant culture. Cultural integration occurs on three levels: *mainstreamers* (those who are fully assimilated); *bicultural* (those who participate in both dominant and nondominant

cultures); and *culturally contained* (those whose primary affiliation is with the ethnic group).

Hoffman (1996) suggested that researchers approach culture as children do, as natural and genuine explorers who are able to transform and be transformed by their encounters. Hoffman, who comes from an anthropological world view, believed researchers need to move away from an overly ideological perspective toward a more learned and knowledge-based perspective, where people move beyond fixed frames of reference to envision different views of self and social relations. Salend and Taylor (1993) believed educators need to acquire more diverse perspectives and expectations, and move away from viewing family and child behaviours different from those of their own culture as deviant, dysfunctional, or deficient. The authors suggested three categories to address when developing a more diverse perspective: (a) cultural considerations, (b) linguistic factors, and (c) socio-economic factors.

We must take caution not to ignore children's out of school experiences, even though they may be entirely different from those valued by teachers. According to Hayden (1997), the experiences of students need to be acknowledged, valued, and built upon. Wong Fillmore (1991) argued strongly for provision of home-language preschool programs that reinforce children's identity and conceptual foundation in their first language. Her data suggested that such programs could significantly increase academic achievement at no cost to English-language proficiency. Harris (1996) suggested that the twenty-first-century teacher must be prepared to accept, encourage, and perpetuate the values of a diverse and stratified society. Further, educators needed to ascertain the values

of children and families, and not just assume they identify with particular values because they belong to a particular ethnic group.

Rogler, Malgady, Costantino, and Blumenthal (1987), who come from a counselling world view, believed that intra-family tension and stress is greater when there is a disparity in acculturation between family members. Because of the uniqueness of families, an individualizing of the treatment process is thought to be by them. If the therapy is selected to fit the client, aspects of the therapy can also be adapted to fit the client's culture. An example of this would be to use 'folk' remedies to help counsel the client.

To conclude the literature review, the following studies were considered pivotal because of their acknowledgement of the complex and multifaceted phenomenon of cultural diversity and literacy. These studies were the catalyst to the present research, beginning the critical dialogue and alluding to what is missing in the current literature.

Pivotal Studies in Family Literacy

There are a number of authors who have considered the complexity of literacy within culturally diverse families. The authors who are reviewed in the following section have viewed literacy as multifaceted with many dimensions. It is their belief that these dimensions need to be identified and understood, as this will help with the development of family literacy programs. The ideas outlined in this section are important issues for this study, as they represent a broader way of thinking about literacy and culturally diverse families.

Neuman, Caperelli and Kee (1998) viewed literacy broadly as a cultural concept — a way of thinking, behaving, and responding to one's environment. Family literacy, according to these researchers, is not something that can be 'done' to people. Although parents may lack literacy skills, this does not mean they lack other skills or do not have a great diversity of talents in other areas, including parenting. According to Delpit (1988), children have the right to their own language and culture, so we must fight cultural hegemony and the system by insisting that children be allowed to express themselves in their own language style. She also suggested that "appropriate education for poor children and children of color can only be devised in consultation with adults who share their culture" (p. 291).

According to Gadsden (1996), family literacy programs serve populations who share common problems, such as reading, writing, and often poverty, but who sometimes differ greatly in racial, cultural, and religious affiliation, socio-political histories and ethnic connectedness, and socio-economic background and life views. The first task, she believed, is to reexamine purposes, to collect the different experiences of family members, and to integrate these beliefs and practices effectively and appropriately into the school curriculum. Work in family literacy, according to her, must unravel assumptions and encourage respect of the lived experiences and goals of parents, children, and other family learners. The focus on the family's cultural, social, and ethnic histories can be used as a beginning point to address the purposes, uses, and valuing of the learning between child and adult. Families need to see themselves and their familial and social history as critical domains within which literacy develops. Researchers need to

consider the learner sometimes as an individual, and at other times as a member of a cultural, ethnic, and social collective called the family.

Auerbach (1989) strongly advocated for educators to define family literacy more broadly to include a variety of activities and practices that are integrated into the fabric of daily life so that the social context becomes a rich resource that can inform rather than impede learning. Instead of starting with mainstream ways of using literacy and transmitting them to families, community practices are used as bases for informing and modifying school practices. A social-contextual model of family literacy looks at drawing on parents' knowledge and experience to inform instruction. Supporting the development of the home language and culture, parents building the foundation for their children's academic achievement, positive self-concept, and appreciation for their cultural heritage through their contributions to programs.

Summary and Conclusions

Family literacy research has bloomed with much enthusiasm and hope. While early research focussed on reading, parents as receivers of instruction, and the deficit model, today there is the desire to be culturally sensitive. Many of the studies reviewed in this chapter had varied missions and purposes, however, failed to add anything significant to the existent body of knowledge. Furthermore, fundamental constructs such as cultural sensitivity, acculturation, and bias were not addressed in many studies of family literacy. What is found in much of the research are ethnocentric and monolithic approaches to literacy for all families. However, all families are different, each one constructing and maintaining itself in a unique manner. What Neuman et al. (1998) and Auerbach (1989)

have stated is true, that, despite great enthusiasm, there is still room to expand our knowledge base of family literacy. What has typically been lost in the discussions is the family itself. Family members themselves need to be key players in determining their roles in their own literacy development, not simply defined as the product or recipient of an effort. There is a need to understand the diversity and complexity of working with families and literacy. Finally, the views and voices of culturally diverse families need to be illuminated and included in planning and implementing family literacy programs.

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to illuminate and explore the literacy practices of culturally diverse families within the context of emerging literacy of children between the ages of one and four. In this chapter, Kvale's (1996) conceptual framework for planning interview research will be discussed, and the purpose behind the development of the journal and inventory will also be included. Subsequently, more specific details about the sample, ethical considerations, instrument, data collection, and data analysis will be described.

Research Questions

The following focus questions were used as a guide throughout the research:

1. What literacy practices does the child see family members engaging in on a daily or weekly basis: (a) incidental; (b) deliberate?
2. What literacy practices does the child engage in on a daily or weekly basis: (a) incidental; (b) deliberate?
3. What are the common literacy activities among the culturally diverse families?
4. How does gender of both parent and child influence the types of activities a child engages in during the day?
5. What contextual variables (e.g., level of education, job, and religious involvement) of the parents and other family members affect literacy in the home?

6. Has the family previously been involved in a family literacy program? If so, what activities did they like/dislike? The common factors of the programs among each of the families in the sample group.

Location

The site of the study was the Inter-Cultural Association (ICA) of Victoria, BC. The ICA of Greater Victoria is in its twenty-seventh year of operation. It is a nonprofit society that is funded by the British Columbia government, the Capital Regional District of Greater Victoria, the United Way of Greater Victoria, and Citizen and Immigration Canada. It is also registered as a private training institute with the Private Post-Secondary Education Commission of BC. The mission statement of the association is as follows: (a) to encourage sensitivity, appreciation, and respect for individuals of all cultures in our changing community; (b) to assist newcomers to settle in the Greater Victoria area, and facilitate their inclusion and full participation in the community; (c) to advocate for the human rights of people of all cultures; and (d) to animate cultural awareness by promoting multicultural events within Greater Victoria. The primary goal of the Inter-Cultural Association is to assist immigrants in their settlement and integration into Canadian society.

This umbrella organization represents 34 ethno-cultural groups and provides front-line services to immigrants on both an individual and group basis. The association offers information and assistance to individuals on a variety of issues, including health, education, family concerns, and child care. Specially trained workers are able to provide such services as English interpretation, advice on legal rights and responsibilities, and

information on other resources in the Victoria area. Group programs include Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), citizenship classes and tutoring, prenatal classes, parenting programs for parents with children between the ages of 0 and 5, and an immigrant women's support group. The Inter-Cultural Association also hosts many multicultural events, including the annual Folkfest in downtown Victoria.

The Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria was selected as the site of this study for the following reasons: (1) it provides services to families from different cultures, (2) it has been operating successfully for many years, and (3) it has a good reputation among the residents of Victoria.

Participants

After receiving approval from the Ethics Committee at the University of Victoria, the purpose of the study was explained verbally to the director of the Inter-Cultural Association. At the same time the director was given a letter detailing the research (see Appendix A). After her approval, the researcher spoke with members of the association on several occasions to introduce herself and provide some personal background (e.g., place of birth, languages spoken, countries travelled to). In addition, a detailed description of the proposed study was provided (see Appendix B).

The criteria for selection of the participants were as follows: (a) participants must have been born in a country other than Canada, and (b) have at least one child between the ages of one and four. Children of this particular age were chosen because they are at the stage which is described as Preconceptual in Piaget's (1952) period of cognitive development. During this time, children begin to make sense of their world and are no

longer defined only by what they see, taste, and touch. Children at this age are able to think in images and symbols and elaborate on them. They are able to acquire language, play games of pretend, and mix reality with imagination.

After the verbal explanation, people who were interested in participating in the study were asked to fill out a letter of participation (see Appendix C). In all three classes, there were about 12 student, in only one of the classes was there a male, and the majority of students come from mainland China. Three mothers from the first class volunteered, two from the second, and one from the third. These volunteers participated in the study, thus forming a purposive sampling as they were interested and available. The sample include five participants of Asian descent and one of Latina descent.

The participants were asked to fill out a consent form, which emphasized the fact that their involvement in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without affecting their status at the Inter-Cultural Association (see Appendix D). All of the participants were able to fill out the form without assistance from a translator.

As the intent of this study was to look at each family as an individual case rather than to create laws or principles based on a large sample, generalizations were made on a case-by-case basis. Family routines change, even on a day-to-day basis, making it difficult for this study to utilize the positivist world view, as these researchers believe the features of the social environment retain a high degree of constancy. Each of the families in the study had their own language style, customs, beliefs, and literacy practices. It would have been impractical, and almost impossible, to have included every culture that is part of Victoria's many ethnic groups. Since research studies impose on an

association's staff and members' time and energy, it was decided that only 6 families would be asked to participate as using a large sample size would have placed a burden on an organization that is already busy with its programs and services to manage.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, approval was obtained from the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Committee. As previously mentioned, letters of information and consent were signed by the director. Before the interviews were conducted, participants were informed that the interview would be audio-taped and that the tapes would be burned at the completion of the study. Participants were also told they were free to discontinue involvement in the study at any time. Confidentiality was ensured by assigning a code number to each participant. This number was used on all reports, interview tapes, transcripts, and notes. The list of numbers, which identified the participants, was locked in a separate filing cabinet, along with the consent forms. Upon completion of the final research report, all identifying information and raw data were burned.

Design

In this study, a case study approach was utilized, as the objective was a focus or intensive study of specific instances. The four characteristics of the case study were: (a) the study of phenomena by focussing on specific instances (that is, cases); (b) an in-depth study of each case; (c) the study of a phenomenon in the natural context; and (d) the study of the ethnic perspective of case study participants. According to Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996), these characteristics suggest the following definition of case study

research: the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon. In a case study, a substantial amount of data is collected about the specific case or cases selected to represent the phenomenon. The participant's viewpoint is called the "emic" perspective and is an important part of case study. In this study, six cases were examined as a group and then on an individual basis, with each case representing a unique viewpoint and the participant's own voice or emic perspective.

Exploration is essential to any field, whether it is strictly quantitative or qualitative research. Advancements to the knowledge base begin with questions, curiosity, predictions, and discovery. The use of an exploratory case study was selected for the research on the everyday literacy practices within culturally diverse families for the following reasons:

1. It is appropriate for inquiry into contemporary phenomenon (Yin, 1994);
2. It allows very specific questions to be asked;
3. It allows the participants to answer questions in an in-depth, rich manner, and even to provide stories or anecdotes;
4. It provides stimulus for further inquiry and research into the family literacy field;
5. It allows for the discovery of new phenomena, which may be added to the existent body of knowledge;
6. It allows for a more complex picture of the family literacy field because of the richness and in-depth contributions of the participants;

7. It provides qualitative data, which provides a better match of context compared to laboratory data; and
8. It provides an avenue for the participant's voice to be heard (Adams, 1996), including daily practices and axioms.

Instruments

Four instruments were used to gather data in this study. The first was a Personal Data Sheet (see Appendix E), which detailed the participant and her partner's age, job, and home language, as well as their children's names, ages, gender, and participation in a daycare or Early Childhood Education (ECE) program. This sheet provided information on the parent to ensure that she met the specified criteria to be included in the study (i.e., was born in a country other than Canada and had at least one child between the ages of one and four).

The second instrument was the Cultural Interview (CI) (see Appendix F) which was used to explore a family's home language, religion, spirituality, jobs, and literacy practices. This instrument was developed by the researcher, as no other cultural practice measures were found in the literature. The interview protocol was designed after a thorough review of the literature on family literacy and the questions are based on the research of various authors (e.g., Auerbach, 1989; Gadsden, 1996; Leseman & deJong, 1998) who believe literacy achievement is influenced by socio-economic, cultural, and ethnic factors, and by the type of jobs parents held. The interview questions were designed to obtain specific information to help understand the culture of each family.

Interviews as a source of data collection were selected, as they enabled participants to use their own 'voice.' Open-ended questions were chosen as they allow for in-depth responses. Participants were encouraged to ask questions and to freely discuss their responses. The participants were given a choice of whether the interview would be audio-taped or the researcher would handwrite the answers.

Some of the interview questions are based on the work of specific authors, and are footnoted below.

1. Who lives in your home?
2. Where were they born? What language do they each speak? What is the language used most in your home?
3. What jobs does each of you hold?[1]
4. Why did you move to Canada?
5. Where did you do your schooling? What schooling have you completed in Victoria?
6. Are you and your family part of a family literacy program? Please describe and tell me in particular what activities you like/don't like? Why did you join the program?[2]

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[1] P. Leseman & P. deJong, "Home literacy: Opportunity, Instruction, Cooperation and Social-emotional Quality Predicting early Reading Achievement," *Reading Research Quarterly, 33* (1998), 294-318.

[2] E. Auerbach, "Toward a Social Contextual Approach to Family Literacy," *Harvard Education Review, 59* (1989), 165-187.

7. What clubs do you and your family belong to?[3]
8. What specific traditions, customs, and celebrations do you participate in?[1]
9. What are the religious/spiritual organizations you and your family attend?[1]
10. Do you keep in contact with family and friends from _____ (name of country from Q2)?
11. Are most of your friends in Victoria also from _____ (name of country from Q2)? If not, where are they from?
12. For you, what is the hardest part about living in Canada?[3]
13. If your child is learning to ride a bike, who will give the instruction and spend time teaching the skill?[2]
14. When you were a child, were you treated differently than your brother/sister? If yes, how?[3]

The third data collection instrument was the Home Journal (see Appendix G), which is often used with both young children and adults in research studies that examine family involvement in literacy activities (Adams, 1996; Morrow & Young, 1997). The journal was designed to allow parents to write simple words or sentences, depending on literacy level, to describe daily activities in the home. It was divided into sections following a timetable of a 'typical day' (e.g., waking-up time, breakfast time, midmorning, lunchtime, afternoon, etc.). The participants were asked to record all

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[3] V. Gadsden, *Designing and Conducting Family Literacy Programs that Account for Racial, Ethnic, Religious, and Other Cultural Differences* (available on-line: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Famlit/design.htm, 1996).

activities related to literacy that occurred in the child's day for a 7-day period (e.g., pointed to the letter 'c' on the Cheerios box, helped set table for lunch, played on swing in park, picked up toys).

The fourth and final data collection instrument was the Reading and Writing Inventory (RAWI), based on the work by Genisio (1998) (see Appendix H). This recorded the reading and writing habits of parent(s) and the child. The inventory was used to document literacy-related activities in the home and helped parents and other family members identify both incidental and deliberate literacy-related activities.

Procedure

The interviews were scheduled between Monday and Friday, occurred either in the morning or afternoon to accommodate participants' busy schedules, and lasted between 30 and 50 minutes. All but one interview (which took place in the participant's home, in her kitchen) took place in a tutorial classroom at the Inter-Cultural Association. The room consisted of a small, round table, two chairs, a small blackboard, and an electrical outlet. The researcher brought a tape recorder, blank tape, a copy of the RAWI, the journal and the CI to each interview. The interviews were held on an individual basis and the researcher and participant sat across from each other at the small table.

Before beginning each interview, the participants were given a choice of whether the interview would be audio-taped or the researcher would handwrite the answers. The participants were then reminded of the ethical considerations, namely confidentiality, anonymity, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Specifically, they were informed that all interview answers would be recorded either on tape or in handwritten

notes, and that all answers, notes, journal entries, and inventories would be coded with a number. They were further informed that the list of code numbers, tapes, and handwritten notes would be locked in a filing cabinet in the researcher's home office, and would be destroyed after completion of the final research. Finally, it was explained that pseudonyms would be used in the final report to ensure anonymity.

Each of the participants was asked the 14 questions one at a time and was given all the time she needed to respond to each question. At most, participants used 2 to 3½ minutes per question. The researcher took notes as the participant answered each question to provide further detail to the responses.

Following the interview, an example of how to complete the home journal was provided to the participant, and they were asked to record all literacy-related activities that occurred in their child's day for a 7-day period. The researcher met with each participant individually following the 7 days. Five of the meetings were held in the tutorial classroom at the ICA, and one was held in the participant's home. Each participant reviewed her journal with the researcher and clarification of writing was made (e.g., this does not say "Mike," it says "milk").

The transcript of the cultural interview was then reviewed with each participant to ensure that the intended meaning was accurately represented. The researcher read each question and the participant's response and invited the participant to revise or change their answers. None of the participants wished to alter their responses.

Next each participant was given the Reading and Writing Inventory to complete. The researcher read the list of materials and asked the participant to place a check mark

on the daily or weekly column, depending on how often they engage in the activity. An example from the inventory is: "Does your child see you or another family member doing any of the following writing activities: writing messages, writing letters, or preparing a grocery list?" This allowed for patterns to surface in each family's routine chores.

Finally, the participant was asked two follow-up questions (see Appendix I):

1. If I were planning a program about family literacy for _____ (country of origin) parents and children, what advice would you give me?
2. After answering interview questions, keeping a journal for 7 days, and filling out an inventory, how did this affect your daily lives? Did any of your routine habits change because of the study?

Responses to these questions were written verbatim by the researcher.

Reliability and Validity Issues

The traditional criteria for reliability and validity are not appropriate for research that involves the use of open-ended questions, take-home journals, and inventory responses. Instead, the criteria of credibility, confirmability, and transferability are applicable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility, which parallels internal validity, refers to the truth as it is known to the research participants. This was achieved through both in-depth interviews and almost immediate transcription of the taped interviews. Credibility is often established by reviewing research interpretation with participants. This was done during the initial interview and also in the follow-up after the participants had been away from the interview session for a 7-day period. Dependability, the qualitative correlation of

reliability, was achieved through consistent recording accuracy, data collection and analysis procedures, and confirmability or the authenticity of the inquiry was achieved by maintaining written notes of observations made during both the interview and inventory. Even with these considerations, one needs to be cautious with the transferability or generalizability to other populations. The purposive sampling was used under the best possible circumstances. The ability to generalize the findings to further settings will be left to other investigators reviewing the data base.

Data Collection

Pilot Study

After receiving permission from the human ethics committee in June 1999, two mothers who met the eligibility criteria and were separate from the Inter-Cultural Association were interviewed. The first participant, married to an Asian man, had a three-year-old little girl. The interview occurred in a classroom at her place of employment. The participant was asked all 14 questions, given the home journal (for 7 days), the inventory, and the two follow-up questions. The interview was audio-taped. The participant was asked if she thought anything needed to be clarified and she stated no, and that she had experience simplifying questions, as her mother-in-law speaks very little English. The second mother, married to a man born in the United States, had a two-year-old daughter. The interview took place in her home, and was also audio-taped. This participant was also given the cultural interview, home journal, inventory, and follow-up questions. She stated that the questions were clear and not too difficult and did not believe anything needed to be changed. After the 7 days, the home journals were

reviewed with the participants. Both of the participants had filled out the journals for 7 days, and had no suggestions to change the format. The researcher reviewed the tapes, journals, inventories, and follow-up questions, and no substantive changes were made.

The study.

In late June 1999, a letter with a description of the study was given to the Inter-Cultural Association's director. Written permission was obtained, and answers about the study were given. The study took place in July, 1999.

Data Analysis

Kvale's structural 7-stage course for exploration was utilized to analyze the data. The stages are as follows: (a) thematizing, (b) designing, (c) interviewing, (d) transcribing, (e) interpreting, (f) verifying, and (g) reporting.

As part of the thematizing stage, the content and reason for the study, or the "what" and "why" of the study, were identified. According to Kvale (1996), a base must be established to which new knowledge can be added and combined. This includes not only reading through the literature, but also experiencing the environment of the participants. Previous experience with immigrants in a daycare setting, and as an intermediate school teacher working closely with immigrant parents to develop an individual language arts program, contributed to the researcher's understanding of children and their parents from different countries.

Active listening, paraphrasing, rephrasing, and open-ended questions were utilized during the interview. Extra details given by the participants were recorded on a

separate sheet of paper to ensure the richness of the interview (e.g., what a participant thought of Victoria as a city).

Since tape recorders give a "decontextualized version of the interview" (Kvale, 1996, p. 160), Kvale recommends that data should be transcribed before it is analyzed. Of the six interviews, four were audio taped. To more clearly preserve the interview situation, the interviews were transcribed within the same 24-hour period. Information from the interviews was interpreted by generating common themes and categories. A method of constant comparison was used, where each new response was compared to previous responses.

The last stage of Kvale's (1996) framework is reporting. The writing process is, in part, "an aspect of the social construction of the knowledge gained from the interviews" (p. 253). The report informs others of the importance and accuracy of conclusions reached through an analysis of data collected and the liberal use of the participants' words.

Both quantitative (inventory) and qualitative data (interview, journal) were analyzed. Data were examined from two perspectives, as an entire group and individually.

Categorization of the cultural interview.

Each participant's responses to the 14 questions were recorded verbatim on 3" x 5" index cards, with each response being listed on a separate card (the shortest answer being one word, the longest 3 cards front and back). This was done after the researcher had transcribed the tapes and had listened to them another two times. The analysis took place over a 1-week period.

The index cards were placed on the researcher's office floor in six groups and following the order of the interview questions, and were then reviewed in two ways. First, the researcher read the first interview question orally, read the answer for each of the participants, and then repeated the process for the remaining questions. Second, the researcher read the questions consecutively in the order they occurred in the interview, read the answer for the first participant, and then repeated the process for the other five participants. The emerging categories or themes for each interview question were then noted on the front of an envelope identified by the participant's number. For example, participant #1: "Had no choice, had to move."

Categorization of the Journal Responses

To begin the analysis process, participants' journals were reread and the researcher wrote in her own hand activities for each participant. Over a 7-day period, these notes were reread and any unique activities were circled (e.g., learning picture). Ten categories emerged, which were then reviewed to determine if any could fit together conceptually. Eight categories resulted: (a) morning ritual, (b) television, (c) playtime; (d) schedule of eating habits; (e) visiting friends, (f) learning, (g) exercising, and (h) chores. The participant's number was placed in each applicable category, revealing a typical day for each family. After another week, the journals were reexamined with the matching categories to confirm the sorting of the data.

Quantifying the reading and writing inventory (RAWI).

Data were examined from two perspectives, as a group and individually for each participant. First, the total responses for each section of the inventory was tallied, and the

number of times each participant responded 'never,' 'daily,' 'weekly,' and 'sometimes' was totalled on a section-by-section basis for the group as a whole. The percentage for each response category was then calculated for the group. For example, there are 22 items in the first section (reading) of the inventory, and the 6 participants responded "never" a total of 50 times for this section (22 items x 6 participants = 132 total responses, 50/132 = 38%). Thus, 38% of the time the participants' children never look at or read items listed in the first section of the inventory.

Second, the number of times each participant responded 'never,' daily,' 'weekly,' and 'sometimes' was totalled on a section-by-section basis for each individual participant. The percentage for each response category was then calculated for the 6 participants individually. For example, participant # 1 responded "never" 6 out of a possible 22 total responses for the first section of the inventory (6/22 = 27%). Thus, 27% of the time participant #1's child never looks at or reads the items listed in the first section of the inventory.

Summary

In this chapter, the methodology of this study was provided. Specifically, the six research questions were given as a guide, and specific details about the location, participants, design, instruments and procedure were detailed. Also, ethical considerations, reliability/validity issues, the pilot study, and data analysis were described.

Chapter Four

RESULTS

Examination of the data began with analyzing the responses to the Cultural Interview (CI), journals, and inventory. This chapter begins with demographic characteristics of the sample. The results are then presented for each of the research questions, journal, and inventory responses. Results are presented for the group as a whole and each individual case is described in the discussion section. The chapter closes with a summary and further description of the individual cases.

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of the sample are summarized in Table 3. All of the participants in the study were female and between 33 and 40 years of age, with their husbands being between 33 and 44 years of age. At the Inter-Cultural Association, 75% of the participants are female and 25% male, and most people who participate in the English programs come from Mainland China. The employment history of the 6 participants and their spouses is shown in Table 4. All 6 participants' spouses were employed in their country of origin, while only 3 of the participants worked outside of the home in their country of origin. Since moving to Canada, all of the spouses are employed, and none of the 6 participants work outside of the home.

Table 3

Characteristics of the Sample

Gender of Participant	Number of Participants	Proportion
Female	6	100%

Gender of Child	Number of Children	Proportion
Female	3	50%
Male	3	50%

Family Characteristics	Number of Families	Proportion
One child only	3	50%
Two or more children	3	50%
Two-parent family	6	100%
Children in ICA daycare	5	83%
Parents aged 33+	6	100%
Older sibling	3	50%

Table 4

Employment History

	Gender	Number	Percentage
Participant Employed in Country of Origin	F	3	50%
Spouse Employed in Country of Origin	M	6	100%
Participant Employed in Canada	F	0	0%
Spouse Employed in Canada	M	6	100%

Interview Results

1. **Who lives in your home?**

When asked to list family members, all 6 participants mentioned themselves, their spouses, and children. Three of the participants had only one child, while the other three had 2 to 4 children, one with twin boys. Most participants did not give much detail when answering this question. A more detailed response was:

> *Yes, I born in China. Harbing City like Edmonton, it's north, very cold, summer time is good. Husband born in Harbing City, it's a small city town, do you understand? First child in China, second in Canada.*

No participant mentioned extended family members living in the home at the time.

2. **Where were they born? What language do they speak? What is the language used most in your home?**

When asked to give their place of birth, 5 participants stated that both they and their spouses were born in a country other than Canada. One participant stated that her husband was born in Canada and that they met in South America while he was travelling. With the exception of the twin boys and a 2-year-old boy, all of the children were born in a country other than Canada. Three of the 6 families spoke both English and Chinese in the home, 1 family spoke Spanish, English, and French in the home, and the other 2 families spoke only Chinese in the home. The oldest sibling (10-year-old female) in one family acts as a translator for her mother. All 6 participants stated they were learning English through the LINC program at the Inter-Cultural Association and all their husbands speak English and do not need to participate in an English class.

3. **What jobs does each of you hold?**

When asked this question 3 participants stated they had no job, with one adding "take care of baby, yes, big job," and the other 3 described their husbands' jobs. The varied jobs held by their spouses included government employee, computer engineer, architect, dentist, bank manager, and house painter. The participants described the jobs/professions that they themselves had left behind in China and South America. These included engineer, computer operator, accountant, personal accounts, and interior designer. One participant did not mention a career back in China; however, she did mention working as a waitress when she first arrived in Canada.

4. **Why did you move to Canada?**

All of the participants moved to Canada either for their husbands or their children. None of the participants stated they had moved for themselves or to further their careers. Specifically, 3 participants stated they moved to Canada because of their husbands' careers, either for a better job or because the Chinese government wanted them to relocate. Of the 6 participants, 2 stated they had no choice but to follow their husbands to Canada. Two more detailed responses were:

My husband has a good job. I had no choice, follow him, come here. Yes, yes, I miss China, my friends and my family.

Immigrants, because I, for my son, because we think China too many children, many people. We think they are not happy because from their child they must learn a lot of things at school, then homework too heavy,

very heavy. They have no time to do what they want, no time to play. Victoria is a very good city, very beautiful. We very like, very clean, air is good.

5. **Where did you do your schooling? What schooling have you completed in Victoria?**

Of the 6 participants, 2 completed secondary education in their country of origin, 3 attended college, and 1 has a Master's degree. All of the mothers are part of the LINC English program at the Inter-Cultural Association. The amount of time they have participated in the program varied from just beginning after a 4-month break to 1½ years. Two participants stated they planned to attend college in Canada once their English improved. One participant stated:

I just learn English because my English is not good. I can't study, I can't go to college now. Yes, if I improve my English maybe I go to college. New year, I think I can't. I'm just in level two now. So it's difficult for new immigrants. Not too young, I must spend a lot of time to learn English. Something new, something different. My child is very happy in Canada, but, it is difficult for my husband and I. We are very hard, because change, change my life. We are not too young. We have very good job in China, yeah.

6. **Are you and your family part of a family literacy program? What activities do you like/dislike? Why did you join the program?**

Participants were asked to describe a family literacy program they had participated in; however, none of the mothers had taken part in such a program. One mother simply responded negatively, while other mothers described activities that occurred in their homes, such as reading, family activities outside of the home, and her husband's weekly ping-pong game. Two detailed responses were:

> *Just first boy, first boy, very interested in Bible. Thursday, "mom, come on." Every morning learn Bible. "Mommy look, Bible good story." No annoy baby. Husband go to community centre, go swimming, yeah. I like church. Talk families, the husband, whole family involved. Talk for the feelings. Church song very nice.*

> *No, yes, he's in daycare. Study English at home. I'm here. No, I study. Maybe it's good, but no this kind of school. This mommy and children study together. It is good, yes. Maybe at evening or family. Yeah, it's good. I think ESL in Canada is very useful for us. Teachers are very nice. There are some volunteers at school. It's very good.*

7. **What clubs do you and your family belong to?**

Of the 6 participants, 5 stated they used local community centres for swimming or skating. One mother stated she and her family attend church services to hear their friend sing in a choir. She added that she does not understand the words but enjoys the music

and that her friend has been in Canada for 30 years. This family also meets other people who speak Chinese. Another mother stated that her son does not belong to any clubs because he cannot speak English and thus it would be dangerous. She also stated:

> *I very like Canada. There are many good places for children to learn sports.*

8. **What specific traditions, customs, and celebrations do you participate in?**

Participants were asked to name the specific traditions their family celebrated. Of the 6 participants, 5 stated that Chinese New Year is important to them. One participant said:

> *Chinese like food, yes. It's a tradition, eating and talking, not only eating. Because everyone so busy, so on holidays they get together and talk. Busy in China, almost every woman goes to work.*

Another participant described New Year's traditions in her town:

> *Many people drinking, take photo, very nice. All of the cars, engines, stop, push on horns three or four minutes to say New Year is coming. More than 600,000 and the area is smaller than Victoria.*

Christmas was mentioned as a tradition by 3 of the 6 participants. Of these 3 participants, 2 stated that Canada is too commercial and that Christmas is better in China. One participant said:

Christmas is very important in China. We buy old man, how to say old man? We call Christmas in China old man. Many gifts and Christmas trees.

One of the participants said that she went to the library to learn about Easter traditions. She added:

I know the holiday. Many chocolate eggs.

Only 2 of the 6 participants mentioned specific holidays celebrated in China (e.g., October 1st is our national day, June 1st is Children's Day).

9. **What are the religious/spiritual organizations you and your family attend?**

Of the 6 participants, 3 stated they occasionally attend church in Victoria. Buddha was mentioned by 2 participants, saying they did not believe he exists. One participant responded:

Buddha no, because we were educated. No, how do you say? No God. Don't believe that you must believe yourself.

This participant also asked if the researcher believed that the Bible is the origin of Western culture. Two participants described the temples which are often found in parks in China, and explained that there are many types of gods. One participant stated:

A temple protects the fisherman. Many, many temples, want to get married, catch a good boyfriend. Parents go to pray for a good boy or lady, may I have a girl, may I have a boy?

She added that many parents go to the temple to pray for a good spouse for their son or daughter, or to pray for a specific gender for their baby.

10. **Do you keep in contact with family and friends from _____ (name of country from Q2)?**

All 6 participants stated that they kept in contact with friends and family in their country of origin. Table 5 summarizes the methods they use to maintain this contact.

Table 5

Ways to Keep in Touch with Friends/Relatives

Participant:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cards						✓
Letters	✓			✓		✓
E-Mail	✓	✓			✓	
Telephone	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

One participant stated that Sprint's calling plan is the most inexpensive method of phoning China at 88¢ per minute. All 6 participants used the phone to communicate, 3 used e-mail on a regular basis, and 1 writes cards.

11. **Are most of your friends in Victoria also from _____ (name of country from Q2)? If not, where are they from?**

All 6 participants stated they had friends from their own country and 4 stated they had Canadian friends in Victoria. Two of the participants said that Canadian people are nice and 1 participant said she was not close to her Canadian friends, but added, "Maybe later." Table 6 summarizes the origin of the participants' friends.

12. **For you, what is the hardest part of living in Canada?**

Seven important categories evolved from this question. All 6 participants commented that coming to Canada had not been easy for them, with loss of job, language, family support, and career opportunities, as well as changes in weather, food, and culture being the main obstacles. Table 7 summarizes the participants' answers to this question.

Different language, loss of job, and the colder weather were significant obstacles for the participants. Only 1 participant mentioned loss of family support, stating:

> *In China, my home is bigger, my daughter's grandmother/father live in together. They're help me to go shopping, buy some food.*

Table 6

Country of Origin of Friends

Participant:	1	2	3	4	5	6
China	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Canada		✓	✓	✓		✓
Hong Kong			✓			
Singapore			✓			
Taiwan			✓		✓	
Italy						✓
Cuba						✓
Ecuador						✓

Table 7

Difficulties in Adapting to Canadian Life

Participant:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Change of Weather	✓				✓	✓
Loss of Family					✓	
Support						
Loss of Job		✓		✓	✓	
Different Language	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Loss of Career		✓		✓		
Opportunities						
Different Food	✓					
Different Culture		✓				

13. **If your child is learning to ride a bike, who will give the instruction and spend time teaching the skill?**

Of the 6 participants, 3 responded to this question by stating their husbands were too busy working to help. One participant said she was too busy and had enough things to worry about so she could not help her child ride a bike, while 2 participants said both parents gave instructions. One participant said:

Sometimes me, my husband. Depends on who does the housework, usually we go together.

14. **When you were a child, were you treated differently than your brother/sister? If yes, how?**

Of the 6 participants, 5 have a sibling. All the participants said boys are treated differently from girls in their country of origin. One participant stated that boys are the preferred gender in China, and that everyone is happy when a baby boy is born. She further commented that her mother-in-law was very concerned about the gender of her babies, but was all right because she had two boys. Two participants mentioned that boys have more power, with one participant adding that boys do not cry. One participant replied that she has four sisters and one brother, and that her parents treated the girls very badly.

Brother is more, only brother.

Another participant stated that her mother tried to compensate for the difference by treating her well and spoiling her, and even allowed her to be choosey with food

despite the fact they were a poor farm family. This participant said she was the first child in town to be sent away to school. This proved difficult, as people in town reacted by saying: "*Don't spoil her, she is your daughter, she will be other's wife.*" Her mother responded to this by saying: "*If she can study, I will support her forever.*"

Another participant said she is an only child due to the population restrictions in her city of origin. She added that parents treat girls differently because they worry about their well-being, particularly teenage girls:

They don't like girls to join at night, don't like girl go out.

Inventory Results

This section of the results examines the inventory (see Appendix H) the participants filled out with the researcher's help. The inventory was based on the work of Genisio (1998), and provides information on the reading and writing habits of both the parents and the children. The first section of the inventory examines at what the child is doing/exposed to with regard to reading activities in the home. There are 22 items/ materials listed in this section, including a section entitled 'other.' The second section of the inventory focuses on writing activities in the home, and participants are asked to comment on the adults' habits with regard to the 15 items/materials listed. The third section includes 17 items dealing with the reading habits of the parents, and the fourth section focuses on the reading and writing activities of both the parents and children with 16 items to complete.

Table 8 summarizes the results from the four sections of the inventory for each individual participant. Based on these totals, one may conclude there are relatively few literacy activities occurring in the home. However, through discussions, interviews, and follow-up questions it was discovered literacy is occurring, often in the first language through songs, pictures, and games.

Journal Results

Each participant was asked to keep a journal for 7 days in which they described, in a word or short sentence, their child's literacy activities. Only 4 of the 6 participants took part in the journal activity for all 7 days. Their responses varied in detail. The other 2 participants only made one entry in their journals, each saying that they were too busy to complete the rest. The journals provided information on each child's eating, sleeping, and learning habits, as well as activities the child had engaged in, such as watching television, reading, playing, singing, exercising, drawing, and visiting.

While the journal entries show that each family is unique, some of the activities they participate in are similar. The journal categories which evolved for each family are summarized in Table 9.

Results of the Follow-up Questions

The final section of the results looks at the responses to the two follow-up questions the researcher asked each participant.

Table 8

Total for Individual Participants from the Reading and Writing Inventory

A. Reading — Child looks at / reads (22 items - in percentage form)								
Participant	**Daily**				**Weekly**			**Sometimes**
	Never	1x	2-5x	5+	1x	2-5x	5+	Once in a while
1	27	9	9	0	18	9	0	27
2	36	9	4	0	22	0	0	27
3	31	22	0	0	0	0	0	45
4	41	9	0	0	0	0	0	50
5	45	13	4	0	9	0	0	27
6	45	13	0	0	0	0	0	41
B. Writing — Child observes others (15 items - in percentage form)								
Participant	**Daily**				**Weekly**			**Sometimes**
	Never	1x	2-5x	5+	1x	2-5x	5+	Once in a while
1	47	13	0	0	20	0	0	20
2	33	13	0	0	6.7	6.7	0	40
3	33	13	0	0	0	0	0	53
4	67	0	6.7	0	0	0	0	67
5	67	13	0	0	0	0	0	20
6	67	0	0	0	0	0	0	33

C. Reading — Being a model for your child (17 items - in percentage form)								
Participant	**Daily**				**Weekly**			**Sometimes**
	Never	1x	2-5x	5+	1x	2-5x	5+	Once in a while
1	35	6	0	0	24	0	0	35
2	47	0	0	0	12	0	0	41
3	18	41	0	0	0	0	0	41
4	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
5	59	6	0	0	12	0	0	17
6	24	59	0	0	0	0	0	47

D. Reading and writing — Child and adult together (16 items - in percentage form)								
Participant	**Daily**				**Weekly**			**Sometimes**
	Never	1x	2-5x	5+	1x	2-5x	5+	Once in a while
1	31	13	0	0	13	0	0	38
2	38	25	0	0	6	13	6	13
3	13	38	0	0	0	0	0	50
4	63	13	0	0	0	0	0	25
5	57	19	6	0	6	0	0	13
6	63	0	6	0	6	0	0	25

Table 9

Summary of Journal Entries

Participant:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Activity						
Morning Routine:						
Dress themselves				✓	✓	
ICA daycare	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Walk to ICA				✓	✓	
Community daycare	✓					
Afternoon Routine:						
Watch TV						
Once daily	✓				✓	
Twice daily						✓
Three times daily		✓		✓		
Play by themselves	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Play with a friend		✓		✓	✓	
Play with older sibling			✓			✓
Play with father		✓			✓	
Play with mother					✓	
Provided schedule of eating habits	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Visiting friends		✓		✓	✓	
Visiting mom's friends					✓	

Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6
Literacy Activities (literacy) outlined:						
Counting				✓		
Painting					✓	
Writing in English and Spanish						✓
Listening to stories in English		✓			✓	
Make up and tell stories in English/ Chinese		✓		✓		
Look at/read books in Chinese/English	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Listening to stories in Spanish						✓
Singing		✓				
Dancing		✓				
Talking to parents		✓				✓
Swimming	✓			✓		
Shopping	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Walking				✓	✓	✓
Attending community events/part		✓		✓	✓	✓
Clean up toys					✓	
Playing piano			✓			
Taking out garbage					✓	
Watering plants					✓	
Playing Lego						✓
Hopscotch					✓	
Puzzles					✓	
Computer games					✓	

Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6
Manner/Way of Teaching Child:						
Modelling → relaxed	✓	✓			✓	✓
Explicit teaching			✓	✓	✓	

1. **If I were planning a program about family literacy for _____ (country of origin) parents and children, what advice would you give me?**

All of the participants believe it is important to maintain their culture and to remind and teach their children about their country of origin. Of the 6 participants, all hope to accomplish this through reading books and 5 plan to include music and songs. The participants had no difficulty coming up with suggestions, and believe a family literacy program would be useful to them. These suggestions in the participants' own words are summarized in Table 10.

2. **After answering interview questions, keeping a journal for 7 days, and filling out an inventory, how did this affect your daily lives? Did any of your routine habits change because of the study?**

All 6 participants stated that nothing had changed in their daily routines; everything had stayed the same during the 7-day period.

Individual Cases (Details from Handwritten Notes)

In this section, individual cases will be discussed. Background information and responses from the interviews, inventory, and journal entries for each participant will also be presented.

Table 10

Suggestions for Family Literacy Program

Participant	Suggestions
1	• Maintain Chinese culture
	• Talk about China
	• Read books on China
	• Mom meeting other mom so they can talk
2	• Maintain Chinese traditions
	• Language/culture very important
	• Speak about culture, remind child what country is like
	• Sing songs
	• Use videos such as *Mulan*
	• Children's stories
	• Gathering together

Participant	Suggestions
3	• Maintain Chinese culture
	• Talk about relationships
	• Use low level, easy story
	• Books in English
	• Talk about culture, festivals, and traditions
	• Sing songs
	• Activities on Saturday for a family picnic
	• Board games for parents
4	• Read to children
	• Have children do chores together
	• Read travel magazines together
5	• Read simple books
	• Sing Chinese songs
	• Simple A, B, Cs
	• Colour
	• Computer games
	• Drawing
	• Play games – hopscotch
	• Parent and child

Table 10 continued

Participant	Suggestions
6	• Writing about animals, cats, etc. using Spanish/English words • *Cuento* – story of the dog/cat, use coloured figures to tell the story • Singing songs with pictures on the wall • Read about animals, family, children, boats, sea, seagulls • Listen to sentimental South American music • Children's books – books learn

Participant 1.

Ann[4] is a 35-year-old female, who is married to Linus (age 38). They have two boys, ages 2 and 12. Ann has belonged to the Inter-Cultural Association for 6 months, and her 2-year-old son attend the Inter-Cultural Association daycare. Linus studied computer science in China and worked for the Chinese government there until they relocated him to Canada. Ann stated she found the move to Canada difficult because of the changes in culture, language, food, and weather. She likes the teachers in Canada because they are "happy."

Ann stated they have *Goose Bump* books, Future Shop catalogues, and fashion magazines in their home. When asked about reading, Ann replied that her family looks at menus and reads Chinese newspapers. They discuss news from China as a family.

Ann participated in the journal activities for the 7-day period and her entries included brief statements such as "egg, soup, fish 10:00 a.m.," "play ball 7:00," and "learning picture." In her interview, Ann used humour and emphasized how nice people are in Canada. She compared the gentle, kind nurses in Canada to the cold, fierce nurses in China when describing her experience in a Canadian hospital as a new citizen. She stated that her husband reads Chinese stories to the children, but was unwilling to help their son learn to ride a bike. Ann stated that, in China, her mother-in-law placed pressure on her to have a boy and that boys are considered more important as they carry on the family name.

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[4] All names used are pseudonyms.

Participant 2.

Mindi is a 34-year-old female, who is married to John (age 33). They have a 3-year-old daughter and Mindi was pregnant with her second child when she was interviewed. Mindi has belonged to the Inter-Cultural Association for 3 months, but could not attend for 1 month due to a labour strike. Her daughter attends the Inter-Cultural Association daycare. Mindi has a Master's degree in engineering and John is a computer engineer.

Mindi found the move to Canada difficult, as she had many career opportunities in China. She stated she had no choice but to follow her husband to Canada and that she misses her friends and family. Mindi mentioned that her daughter watches the Treehouse station on television, and that while she can sing many of the songs, she does not understand the words. She also recognizes signs such as KFC, London Drugs, and McDonald's in the community environment and while watching television, and tries to help her mother with her Inter-Cultural Association LINC program homework. Mindi also stated that her daughter helps open bills and letters, asking "What's this?," helps John prepare the grocery list, and looks at Chinese recipe books. The family reads and writes together at bedtime, enjoying traditional Chinese poetry and *Island Parent* magazine. Also, when Mindi and John are watching the news on television, their daughter will change the channel to programs she prefers.

Mindi participated in the journal activity for the 7-day period, including detailed statements such as "5:30-6:30 watching TV, drawing, riding a bicycle at home," "10:45

lying on bed listening to stories," and "4:50 playing, singing, dancing." During her interview, Mindi emphasized how frustrating it was for her to walk away from the career opportunities in China, but that she needed to keep her family together. She misses work a great deal, and may pursue her academic career here in Canada. Mindi also stated that she was the first to leave her hometown in China to attend school, and that she could not return to China as merely a wife and mother after all the care and financial support she received from her parents.

Participant 3.

Dee is a 40-year-old female, who is married to Don (age 43). They have two children, a 10-year-old daughter who translates Chinese to English for her mother, and a 4-year-old boy. Dee was nervous and quiet during her interview and would not allow the session to be audio-taped. However, by the eighth question, Dee relaxed and opened up for the interviewer. Dee has been part of the Inter-Cultural Association for 1½ years, and her 4-year-old son attends the Inter-Cultural Association daycare. Don is an architect who travels to Hong Kong on business, so Dee is left alone with both children for months at a time.

Dee and Don moved to Canada because they were concerned about their children's education. Dee commented:

The education condition very hard, and children have to work too much in China.

She is concerned about the discipline in Canada, believing parents here are too lax. Dee remembers the stick back in China as an effective disciplinary tool for her older daughter. She found the move to Canada difficult because of the change in language. Dee speaks only Chinese to her children in the home.

During the inventory, which was administered in her home, Dee mentioned that her boy reads road signs a little. She has her son recite poetry and practise Chinese and English numerals and letters as homework. The researcher saw an example of the boy's writing, which was exceptionally neat. Under the work was the word "good" and a star. There were Chinese comic books in the home, as well as a *Highlights* magazine in English. The interviewer was invited to play with the children and share a meal with the family any time. Dee asked the interviewer the following questions: "Are you married? Do you have kids? Are you lonely?"

Dee participated in the journal activity for 1 day, saying she was just too busy. An example from her journal is "went to see piano teacher," and "had a Chinese dinner." According to Dee, boys have more power within the family in China. She stated that when her husband is at home he helps with the housework and the cooking, adding that the children prefer Don's cooking to her own.

Participant 4.

Laurie is a 33-year-old female and is married to Yule, who is 40. Together they have a 4-year-old son, who speaks very little English. Laurie has belonged to the Inter-

Cultural Association for 4 months and her son attends the Inter-Cultural Association daycare.

Yule is a dentist, and the family moved to Canada for their son's sake. Laurie and Yule believe China is too overpopulated and that the schools put too much pressure on children. However, Laurie believes children in Canada have too much freedom and is concerned about this. She stated it was difficult for her and her husband to emigrate to Canada because they both left good jobs in China and that she must spend a lot of time learning English.

In their home Laurie and Yule read to their son, and he helps his father "balance the cheque book." She also spoke of how she and her husband model literacy by reading Chinese newspapers and travel magazines.

Laurie participated in the journal activity for 7 days, including statements such as "1:30-3:00 p.m. watched TV," "8:00-10:00 p.m. friends came to my home," "14:30-15:00 told him story," and "21:00-21:30 learned to write one English word and mathematics within ten." During her interview, Laurie was very open and helpful. She said she was bored at home looking after her one child and would prefer to spend some of her time shopping, seeing the city, spending time with friends, or finding a job. Laurie said her husband was very busy with his job and would not teach their son a skill such as riding a bike. She is an only child, but believes boys are treated differently than girls. Laurie attributes this to the fact that parents tend to worry a lot about their daughters, particularly when they are teenagers.

Participant 5.

April is a 35-year-old woman who is married to Arnie, a 36-year-old bank manager. Together they have one child, a 3½-year-old daughter. April has been part of the Inter-Cultural Association for 2 months and her daughter attends the Inter-Cultural Association daycare. She stated that it was difficult to come to Canada, as she had to leave behind family support and a comfortable lifestyle. The couple moved to Canada because of her husband's job.

In their home, the family reads Chinese books. April's daughter helps "read" the mail, can identify clothing labels such as Esprit, and enjoys looking at photographs. Their daughter also plays Chinese computer games, reads Chinese magazines, and sends e-mail messages to China. April and Arnie often download Chinese newspapers from the Internet. Arnie takes their daughter to the library regularly, checking out books that April describes as "simple picture books." April stated that her husband seldom reads to their 3½-year-old, as he is very busy. She often takes along books for her daughter to read when visiting a friend and when the family watches a video they discuss it.

April participated in the journal activity for the full 7 days, including entries such as "listen to story, play game with mother, learn to write words," "visit friend, play with girl, clean up toys with mother," and "sent mail, look at book, shower, go to bed 11:00." April was friendly and very open during her interview. She stated that her husband goes out with friends and is busy, but will sometimes help their daughter with a skill. April also stated that her brother was treated better than she was within her family.

Participant 6.

Alison is a 35-year-old woman, married to 41-year-old Lorne who is a house painter. Alison met Lorne, who speaks English, Spanish, and French, when he was travelling in South America. Alison has two girls aged 12 and 14, and together Lorne and Alison have twin 2½-year-old boys. Lorne asked her to move to Canada with him, and, according to Alison, this happened quite quickly. "Got my visa very fast, had babies fast, bought a house only very fast." Alison has been part of the Inter-Cultural Association on a sporadic basis for the past year. Her two boys no longer attend the Inter-Cultural Association daycare, as the older siblings take care of them.

Alison said the move to Canada was difficult for her due to the weather here and the fact that she cannot drive. In the home, her sons look at letters and pictures from relatives and they write words and draw. According to Alison, the boys are very active and like imitating the family cat and watching cartoons. The boys help Lorne balance the cheque book. Alison reads to the boys from time to time, but Lorne does this on a more regular basis. She added that her two older girls love books, and constantly read to the twins. Alison also teaches the boys Spanish, writing words in both languages such as *cama* (bed) and *leche* (milk). The boys alternate between English and Spanish (e.g., saying "Mommy, *leche*?") before nap time.

Alison asked not be audio-taped during her interview and seemed quite nervous to begin with. However, once the researcher began speaking Spanish, she visibly relaxed. The interview was conducted in English, but Alison asked the interviewer three questions

in Spanish with regard to her own background (e.g., where did you learn Spanish? or "*A donde tù apprendiste espanol?*"). Alison stated that both she and her husband are involved in their children's lives, and they both teach them skills such as learning to ride a bike. According to Alison, girls are treated differently than boys in South America. Boys are considered "more strong and don't cry, while girls are more sensitive." Alison filled out one page of her journal, saying the boys' routine does not change much during the week. Her journal entry included "11:30 fruit, playing with Lego, wood, talking - climb," and "Daddy read English, Mommy read Spanish."

Summary

The Cultural Interview (CI), Reading and Writing Inventory (RAWI), and a journal activity were used successfully with this group of immigrants. The participants in this study were able to discuss their customs, religious/spiritual beliefs, childhood experiences, and literacy practices. With the help of the inventory, participants were able to identify their children's daily activities. This group of participants touched upon a range of subjects, from their frustrations, to their optimism about Canada's school system, to the fact that boys are treated differently from girls in their country of origins.

The tools from this study may be of interest to teachers and counsellors and may have direct application to schools and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, such as those held at the Inter-Cultural Association. A teacher may use the interview questions during an initial meeting with a new family to collect information about interests and values. The inventory could be used to collect specific activities that

families do in their homes, and the journal could be utilized as a communication tool throughout the year. Explicit programs or lessons could be developed using the different traditional literacy activities, such as poetry, story telling, and singing. Similarly, different countries could be studied and examined to show the diversity of students and experiences in the classroom. For example, a unit could be taught on cooking and the children could bring in a recipe/meal to share with the class.

For an association such as the Inter-Cultural Association, the interview questions, inventory, and journal may be helpful to inform instructors of their clients' backgrounds. Instructors could reinforce and bolster each person's traditions and customs, so that each family member feels empowered. The rich histories of these families could be used to encourage children to be proud of their heritage and country of origin.

Chapter Five

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Virtually unknown a decade ago, the family literacy movement has come of age. Increased interest and awareness in the "family as educator" has sparked a proliferation of programs and publications designed to broaden access to education and enhanced family skills in reading, writing, and communication. Despite tremendous enthusiasm, a pervasive gap has been noted in the knowledge base about family literacy, with widening diverging perspectives on parental roles, effective practices, measures of assessment, and program models. Most important, the voices of the participants themselves have largely been absent in any discussions of program development, quality, and evaluation.

This study focussed on the participants and their daily lives. Interview questions, an inventory, and journal activity were used to encourage the participants to talk about their lives, interests, and histories. Using these tools, family literacy practices, ethnicity, culture, traditions, and religious/spiritual beliefs were illuminated. Family literacy was explored with an examination of children before they entered school and mainstream ideas were placed on the families. Because of Canada's changing population, new Canadians were the focus of this study. Although in Canada for just a short time, all the participants were able to state what is important for them and their children, voicing their opinions and their unique family experiences.

The interview questions, inventory, and journal activity may be used by teachers, daycare workers, and ESL instructors to truly get an understanding of their students' lives, beliefs, hopes, and goals.

The results of the study will be discussed in more detail in relation to the six research questions. Also the two follow-up questions will be examined, and results will be summarized using the participants' own words. The chapter will end with conclusions, recommendations, and a discussion of future directions.

1. **What literacy practices does the child see family members engaging in on a daily or weekly basis: (a) incidental, and (b) deliberate?**

On the Reading and Writing Inventory (RAWI) incidental is defined as occurring only sometimes (i.e., once in a while). In contrast deliberate is defined as occurring as often as once a day or more, or as infrequently as once a week or more. The children in the study did see participants reading and writing on a daily/weekly basis. Specifically, 5 of the 6 participants completed homework and used the computer on a daily basis; however, these were the only writing activities they did deliberately. On a weekly basis, grocery lists, cheque books, recipes, and messages were written in front of the children. Six participants in the study are deliberately using literacy, as they attend a LINC class and need to do homework on a daily basis. The participants are using the computer, writing grocery lists, letters, and recipes. These activities are related to daily chores and are not usually thought of as recreational activities.

In respect to reading, and the parent as a model, newspapers, magazines, junk mail, and labels were looked at daily and deliberately by participants. However, only 2 of the 6 reported they read books on a daily basis. Telephone books, recipes, magazines, and catalogues were being read on a weekly basis. The only reading activity the adults were not engaging in was looking at t.v. guides. All the other listed activities from the RAWI were occurring either deliberately or incidentally, depending on the individual.

As related to the current family literacy literature, Brock and Dodd (1994) and Winter and Rouse (1990) have used the term *intergenerational* to describe the formal and informal literacy instruction that occurs between adults and children. They believe that parents and other family members prepare children for learning as they go about the daily activities and interactions of their culture. Similar to this, Celano and Neuman (1995) believe the role of parents as their child's first teacher is important, and that a family's routine will provide learning opportunities for a child. Even though the parents in this study are not reading books/novels on a daily basis, as suggested by Williams (1997), their children appear to be learning to read without ever seeing their parents read or having reading materials in the home. Rather, as shown with the study, parents are reading different materials on a weekly basis. These activities are supported by Gadsden (1994), who believed only school-related activities have been equated with literacy, not everyday activities found in this study such as reading junk mail, labels from a grocery store, magazines, recipes, or telephone books.

As stated by Piper (1997), the frequency of literacy activities occurring in a home depends on the lives and needs of the people at that time. With the six participants, the types of literacy activities which occurred relate to running a home and taking care of a family. The participants are reading and writing and doing mostly functional activities. The findings of this study are divergent to the previously published reading research, as this research has focussed on deficit views that blame low-income non-mainstream families for not providing literacy environments and support to their children.

Many researchers, such as Durkin (1966), Teale (1978) and Tizard et al. (1982), imply that book reading is the primary literacy event in the home, regardless of class, race, gender or culture of the family. Researchers, such as Adams (1990), Clark (1984), Morrow (1983) and Wells (1981), suggest that young children who have access to books/novels have a decided advantage to others who do not. With this study, participants were able to identify literacy events in their day, including reading storybooks, visiting the library, and creating stories. This indicates that, contrary to earlier research, these families are providing literacy environments and support for their children, and reading novels does not have to be the sole criterion for developing definition of literacy.

2. **What literacy practices does the child engage in on a daily or weekly basis: (a) incidental, and (b) deliberate?**

The children in the study did read and look at a variety of materials and such activities were recorded using the RAWI. All of the children looked at or read children's books in their home language or English. Also, all of the children looked at or watched

cartoons on a daily basis. Labels, letters, newspapers, prayer books, and magazines were looked at on a daily basis. Weekly, photos, advertisements, catalogues, and road and fast food signs were looked at by the children. The activities that occurred deliberately (once a week or more) were looking at sports items, photographs, computer games, and newspapers. The activities that occurred incidentally (sometimes, once in a while) included: reading letters, cards, grocery lists, clothing, t.v. guides, cheques, and menus. The activities which occurred both deliberately and incidentally for the families were reading sports items, fast food/road signs, advertisements, prayer books, and computer games.

The reading and writing activities that parents and child did together were also recorded on the RAWI. Three of the 6 families read at bedtime on a daily basis. The other activities occurring on a daily basis were selecting videos, inviting friends to storytime, going to the library, and talking about videos. On a weekly basis, families were making up stories together, and looking at recipes and letters.

The activities that were occurring deliberately were reading at bedtime and looking at road/restaurant signs. The activities that were occurring incidentally included looking at grocery lists, score cards for games, and letters and cards. The activities which occurred both incidentally and deliberately were selecting videos/cartoons and inviting friends to share in storytime.

With this study, all of the families read stories together and cuddled, showing they believe this is an important literacy activity. All of the families watch videos together and

allow the children to make decisions about their choices. Thirty-three percent of the families read together each bedtime and include this as part of their daily routine. The families in this study visited the library and invited others to story time, showing that they valued this parent/child interaction time. This finding is supported by Rogoff (1990), who has observed parents/children solve problems together with large amounts of verbal interaction and effective parent/child interaction in many domains are a result of this. As shown in this study, parents and children are reading/writing together and completing everyday household chores. As noted by Anderson and Stokes (1984), many incidental literacy events occur in a home, such as paying bills, reading letters, or looking at the Bible. Children in this study are very much part of the families' daily routine and participate in a variety of literacy events, whether it be deliberate or incidental.

Contrary to the study's findings is the belief that parents are not equipped to be the child's first teacher. Lancy and Nattiv (1992) have suggested that parents need to be taught how to read to their child. Similar to this, Friedberg (1989) has held the position that parents need to be informed of the importance of storybook reading. However, this study shows that parents from countries other than Canada are reading with their children, and have not been explicitly taught to do this.

Many researchers in the past may not have taken into consideration a family's history, background, beliefs, or culture. A single solution has been prescribed to parents without a true understanding of their lifestyle. This implies that to truly understand a

family and its culture, participants need the chance to share their thoughts, hopes, and wishes with researchers.

3. **What are the common literacy activities among the culturally diverse families?**

There were common literacy activities among the adults and children. The adults and children will be examined separately. Furthermore, activities which the families are and are not engaged in will be examined.

Reading — Adults as Models for Their Children

Not one of the participants stated they read t.v. guides. Three of the 6 stated they never read books, recipes, letters, or prayer books. With this sample, there was no common daily reading activity. Three of the 6 stated they looked at telephone books on a weekly basis. Two of the 6 participants reported they read recipes and labels on a daily/weekly basis. One of the participants did not read any type of material on a daily basis, but weekly, would use recipes and telephone books. The participants in this sample are using predominantly informational literacy rather than recreational literacy. Contrary to the Leseman and deJong (1998) study, the use of literacy for recreational purposes was the greatest difference between the three groups in the Leseman and deJong study (Dutch, Surinamese, and Turkish). However, with the present sample, all of the participants were reading for informational not recreational purposes, and these young parents may not have time to read for pleasure.

Writing

Five of the 6 participants were writing daily for a literacy program and 3 of the 6 were writing in their child's homework book. Similar to the Leseman and deJong (1998) study, results indicate that none of the participants were writing for their own pleasure. Grocery and to-do lists, directions, and recipes were being written by this group, and this may be considered informational writing not recreational. As shown by these results, the participants were not using writing skills on a daily basis. They were writing for the literacy program, because work was assigned by an instructor.

Children in this study were reading/looking at books, both in the home language and in English, according to their mothers. Five of the 6 children were looking at cartoons on a daily basis. Only 2 of the 6 children were reading a prayer book.

None of the children in this sample was reported reading labels on food at the supermarket. Five of the 6 were not reading t.v. guides or newspapers. Four of the 6 were not looking at a grocery list or logos on sports items. Three of the 6 were never looking at prayer books or cheques, according to their mothers.

In respect to reading and writing together, all of the children were reported cuddling with a parent at storytime. This is important, as many past researchers have not looked at the quality of parent/child dyads, only the quantity of books. Leseman and deJong (1998) in their study emphatically state that less rewarding social/emotional interactions between child and parent may lead to a negative attitude toward school. Dutch children from their study had the highest literacy rate and the highest

social/emotional quality, as recorded by a rating scale, showing that emotional equality is important for literacy development. Three of the 6 children in the present study were reading at bedtime, and talking about videos on a daily basis, according to their mothers.

As for activities that parents and children were not doing together, two of the 6 were not reading at bedtime or inviting friends to share in storytime. Three of the 6 children reportedly never made up a story, looked at letters, or kept score for board games. Four of the 6 families did not use the computer, looked at messages, grocery lists, or recipes together.

Parents and children in this study were not participating in mainstream activities. They were following their own unique routines. Congruent to these findings is the Yaffe and Williams (1998) study that interviewed 6 women through open-ended questions. In this study the researchers discovered their routines and habits, and were going to build on those interactional patterns. Similar to this, Morrow and Young (1997), who used an experimental and control group, were able to find activities that were appropriate for different families because they were sensitive to the interests of the parents and the diversity of family backgrounds.

As shown, with the results of this study, each family is unique, and more differences are apparent than similarities.

Contrary to Leseman and deJong's (1998) findings, this sample did not report religious literacy as part of their daily activities. None of the participants stated they read prayer books on a daily basis, and 3 out of the 6 said they never read prayer books on

their own. However, 3 of the participants stated that their child would pick up or look at prayer books. This implies that there are prayer books/hymnals in the house, but that this activity is not considered sacred, as was found in the Leseman and deJong (1998) study.

4. **How does the gender of both parent and child influence the types of activities a child engages in during the day?**

The children in this study, 3 girls and 4 boys (including a set of twins), spend the majority of their time with their mothers, as all of the fathers are employed. There were distinct differences between the activities the children participated in with their father and the amount of time they spent together when he was at home. Activities with fathers will be examined first, then activities together as a family, ending with activities of mothers and children.

On average, children spent 30 to 60 minutes a day alone with their father — most often in the evening, according to their mothers. Three of the 6 participants specifically mentioned the fathers' limited activities in the journal, again indicating that mothers in the main and children spend the most time together. With their fathers, children were found to be playing (inside and outside), painting, writing, words, reading stories, and doing rough and tumble play. No difference in activity was found based on the gender of the child.

The types of activities parents were doing together included playing, visiting friend's house, attending city functions, shopping, and making up stories. The gender of the child did not influence the types of activities the family participated in.

Mothers and children did many activities together and, as in the case of the fathers, the gender of the child did not seem to influence the activities. The activities, categorized from the journal, included the sharing of mealtimes, morning routines, learning activities (e.g., reading, writing, singing, and drawing), active play (e.g., ball, swimming, biking, dancing, and walking), chores, and accompanying family on outings.

Very little research into the gender of both parent and child has been completed, as it relates to family literacy activities. Additional research may supply information about the onset of gender difference with literacy activities, if and at what age they occur.

5. **What contextual variables (e.g., level of education, job, and religious involvement) of the parents and other family members affect literacy in the home?**

The contextual variables in this study did not seem to affect the literacy choice in the homes of the 6 families.

Religious Involvement

Contrary to Heath's (1983) ethnographic study, religious commitment and the use of the Bible was not central in the sample's lives. Only 2 out of the 6 children read prayer books or hymnals, and only 2 mothers mentioned the benefit of Bible stories. However, these same mothers stated they never read prayer books or hymnals. Only 1 of the mothers stated she attended church on a regular basis and 2 stated they visit sometimes.

Maternal/Education

In relation to schooling, 3 of the 6 mothers had attended a college and had received a degree in their country of origin. Two out of the 6 had completed secondary

school. None of the women was using her degree in Canada or attending university or college. All 6 women were or had been involved in English classes through the Inter-Cultural Association.

Jobs

In relation to jobs, 5 of the 6 men had a degree and were working in a profession (degree required). Four out of the 6 women had jobs in their country of origin requiring the use of a computer. Therefore, contrary to the Leseman and deJong study (1998), there does not seem to be a relationship between literate-symbolic job content and the amount of reading and writing completed in leisure time. In other words, a parent may be using reading and writing on a daily basis in his or her job, however is not being a role model for his or her child. However, as shown with the present study, some type of literacy is occurring in each household.

Traditions

Loss of tradition was mentioned as a difficult part of the transition to Canada. Five of the 6 mothers stated they celebrate Christmas in their country of origin, and in Canada. Four of the 6 celebrate Chinese New Year, and of those four, 3 reported that China had better celebrations. One woman said: "it not good here, we have friends, t.v. and radio programs and reading, here there is no." Other traditions mentioned were Spring Day, National Day, Children's Day, and Solar Day. One of the mothers did describe a visit to the library so that she could check out books and learn more about Easter. She stated: "so many chocolate eggs." This same woman sent an e-mail to her

husband to wish him a Happy Thanksgiving, but did this in November, and she wondered why Canada and the United States had different dates.

Clubs

Recreation centres and clubs seem to be a very integral part of the samples' lives. All of the participants, except 1, attended neighbourhood recreation centres to use the pool and skating rink. One of the mothers stated that Canada has many good places to play. But she was afraid, especially with swimming, because her son could speak very little English, and this could be dangerous. One of the husbands, on his own, would go to the University of Victoria to play ping-pong.

The results of this study are contrary to the results of those found by Leseman and deJong (1998). In that study they found home literacy was strongly determined by socio-economic, cultural, ethnic factors, and educational attainment, particularly as they influence the instruction quality of reading. The present study shows, regardless of ethnicity, school attainment, and socio-economic status, parents are interested in the socio-emotional support of the child, and in fostering learning. The adventitious result of this study is that job, educational level, and spiritual beliefs are not strongly related to literacy practices.

6. **Has the family previously been involved in a family literacy program? If so, what activities did they like/dislike? Common factors of the programs among the sample group.**

None of the participants had been involved in a family literacy program, although all had been part of the ICA daycare program and the majority of families made use of recreation centres. Two of the mothers believed a family literacy program is a good idea, as they enjoyed the ESL classes, and the teachers whom they described as being nice. These participants reported that it would be a good idea to hold the classes in the evening so the whole family could be involved, and to talk about feelings, like they often did in church. Three of the 6 wanted to keep with their own routine and to remain at home and practise English there. One of the mothers stopped sending her twins to daycare, because they have older siblings to read and play with, so she is satisfied with her routine.

One of the 3 women said she is angry at her husband because he criticizes her pronunciation and states that her daughter speaks English better than she does. This same family takes their daughter to the library consistently, allows her to watch the Treehouse network, where she can watch and sing along with characters such as Barney and Blues Clues. Consistent with the findings of Yaffe and Williams (1998), the mothers in the present study see the benefit of English classes for themselves, but do not see a connection between the child's literacy and their own. This finding implies that the LINC and family literacy classes should amalgamate so that parent and child can learn together and not be separate.

Implications of Findings

Theoretical.

A social constructivist theory suggests that several facets of home literacy might influence language and literacy development. There are three facets that are important for young children's language development and literacy acquisition: (a) opportunity to participate in literate or literacy-related practices; (b) the promotion of skills by experienced others; and (c) affective-motivation aspects. The results of this study are consistent with this theory. The participants are providing opportunity, guidance, and emotional support for their child in relation to literacy.

Research.

In the literature research review, there were a number of different methodologies used, ranging from observational to longitudinal. Only one of the studies was using a control variable, which was a measure of early vocabulary as an indicator of language development. This was measured before the longitudinal study began. As found with this study, there was no relationship between SES (education level, job) and literacy activities in the home.

Applied.

The results of this study imply that educators, particularly those who work with young children, need to be aware of the cultural differences/histories background, both social and political, before they recommend activities to parents or utilize strategies in their classrooms.

Conclusions

Young children's literacy development occurs in the social, economic, cultural, and linguistic context of their families. Canadian families are diverse today; children come to school with a variety of literacy experiences, knowledge, learning styles, and attitudes toward literacy, and it is the responsibility of educators to recognize, respect, accommodate, and extend these. According to Mayfield (1995), it is important for educators to familiarize themselves with recent family trends, and with the diversity of the families in their own schools and communities. This study has explored each family's diversity and their unique literacy practices.

The participants frequently mentioned the importance of retaining their own cultural heritage and language, while trying to fit in and accept Canadian culture. They reported frequently engaging in activities that taught their children skills. None of the participants mentioned feeling incompetent, which is contrary to the findings of Lancy and Nattiv (1992), who stated that parents feel incompetent to teach their children.

In her study of Indo-Chinese families, Auerbach (1995) found that families who retained their own traditions, rather than adapting "American" ways and assimilating into the melting pot, were able to adapt more easily. During their short time in Canada, the 6 participants have retained their own language, food, and other cultural traditions.

Winter and Rouse (1990) believe that all communication, including reading and writing, is cultural. Without acknowledging the learning environment of the home and building on family strengths, we cannot hope to make a difference in a child's life. There

is a growing consensus that interventions aimed at children must recognize the family as the client, and respect the value system of the family in that process.

Recommendations

Based on the literature review, in particular the findings of Auerbach (1989) and Neuman et al. (1989) who are strong advocates for "the family," and the results of the study, the following points are recommendations or suggestions specifically for the ICA to develop a family literacy program. These points to be discussed are community setting, staff, members, philosophy, purpose, materials and recruitment of members.

It is recommended that the community and its members be examined carefully.

1. Each community is unique; family literacy planners could visit the community or be a part of it. The types of challenges the community faces need to address, for example, immigration, employment or housing. Literacy could include family and community problems, so that a program is significant to parents' lives.
2. Neighbourhood schools could be an integral part of the literacy program, so that support networks/advocates for individuals and groups can be developed.
3. Creative scheduling, transportation and child care could be in place, so that the maximum number of members may attend the program.
4. The community's resources could be utilized and include other social and educational services.

Setting

It is important to provide a nurturing, warm and aesthetically pleasing environment.

1. The rooms could have pictures, maps and posters of different people (who belong to the program) and places in the world.
2. The rooms could have both individual desks and tables, so that parent(s) and child may work/play separately and together.
3. The rooms could have a variety of materials including audio/visual, board games, sink and art materials, as well as props (little theatre, puppets, big books and felt characters).
4. There could be one main kitchen, so that meals can be prepared for special occasions/celebrations.

Staff

The personality, background and experience of the workers should be researched carefully.

1. Staff members could work as a team (from secretary to executive director) to create a supportive environment, where achievement (both short- and long-term) is recognized and celebrated.
2. Staff members could come from different backgrounds and have the ability to speak more than one language.

3. Staff members should be flexible, caring, creative and be able to cope with any situation that arises. They should be involved, experienced and knowledgeable about diversity (cultural, economic and instructional).
4. Staff members could look at their own biases and stereotypes and explore these before working with a particular ethnic group.
5. Staff members could highlight each family's uniqueness and strengths and build a program around this, incorporating suggestions from the members.

Members

Members should feel supported and that most issues/problems will be addressed within the Family Literacy Program.

1. The Family Literacy Program could be open to everyone, so that there is literacy instruction available for parents, caregivers, siblings and young children.
2. Members could be a strong part of the curriculum and planning.
3. Members (parents) could develop/maintain their home language and culture, so they build the foundation for their children's academic achievement, positive self-concept and appreciation for their multicultural heritage.

Philosophy

Family literacy is not something that can be "done" to people. Family literacy programs should not change existing routines; they should offer choices and opportunities.

1. Parents come to the program with rich histories and experiences that should be honoured and used in program development.
2. The cultural practices of families vary significantly, so too must family literacy programs to reflect the contextual factors and social conditions that shape family life.
3. The purpose of the family literacy program needs to be explicitly clear; there should be benefits for both parent and child.
4. The activities of the program may be sensitive to the interests of the parents. The voices of the participants could be included rather than ideas based on outdated research.
5. Parents could be encouraged to read for pleasure.
6. Parents could have a forum for discussing child-rearing concerns. The family literacy program will provide a safe place for dialogue. Parents can also share and develop their own strategies for dealing with issues.
7. The program could build on what children bring to the setting, not what they lack. The daily interaction and activities children have with parents prepare them for learning.

Purpose

The purpose of the family literacy program could be explicitly stated, so that all members and staff are aware of the philosophy and overall purpose.

1. The program could build on the strengths of each family and the interactional patterns that exist within families.
2. The members could see value in the program and need to consider it effective for their needs.
3. The program could allow for the maintenance of an individual's own history, culture and home language.
4. Parents and children could have the opportunity to learn separately and together.
5. The program could reflect through the use of surveys and interest questionnaires the lifestyle, culture and customs of its members.
6. The program could be more than a replication of mainstream ideas and practices.

Materials

A variety of materials could be available, so that different learning styles/ multiple intelligences are accommodated.

1. Materials could support the strengths and weaknesses of every individual.
2. Materials could come from a variety of sources: books, magazines, computers, newspapers, staff and members' homes.
3. Different learning styles could be accommodated: visual, auditory and kinesthetic (hands-on).

Recruitment of Members

Recruitment is a very important part of maintaining a solid literacy program.

1. Corporate sponsorship of the program would be important so advertisement of the program would be maintained.
2. Strategic recruitment plans could be utilized: word of mouth, local, radio, television and newspaper announcements.
3. The staff would could plan/be part of community events, so the program would become well known to local residents.
4. The facility could host open houses to invite the public and participate in annual holidays (e.g., Canada Day).

A family literacy program is not just about literacy. It can serve many different functions and people and can be a very important part of a community.

Limitations of Study

The limitations of the study should be borne in mind. The sample size of 6 is too small to yield statistically significant findings; however, it is large enough to provide rich detail for case studies. The participants all came from an ESL program and belong to the Inter-Cultural Association and may therefore be very keen to learn English and may not be representative of all immigrants. The generalization of findings to all immigrants is not appropriate. Similarly, as each participant willingly volunteered to be part of the study, the findings are less generalizable than with random or stratified random sampling.

The results of the study rely on the types of instruments used. The open-ended cultural interview allows participants the freedom to openly express themselves, while the journal and inventory rely on self-report. An advantage in using these tools is they allow for self-reflection and exploration. A disadvantage is that the participants' answers may reflect what they think the researcher wants to hear and analysis of the responses requires more subjective judgement on the part of the researcher. Although the established procedures for analyzing data were followed, final decisions about categories were the researcher's responsibility.

Future Directions

A necessary extension of the research would be to gather longitudinal data on each of the children as they begin school and compare the various literacy routines for each. A second avenue warranting empirical study focuses on using a wider variety of subjects (e.g., families who do not belong to a centre such as the Inter-Cultural Association, or a family where a parent was born in Canada but are not Canadian). Further, is a comparison of the results of this study with male participants (fathers) only.

Two follow-up questions for this study:

How do fathers engage in literacy activities with their child, differently than mothers?

How can studying immigrant children help them retain their first language and literacy traditions?

In summary, the results of this study illustrate there is much information to be sought and utilized from immigrants. Family literacy programs do not have to rely on historic beliefs; rather, new ways of working with parents can be incorporated into any program. Parents, even if they speak only limited English, want to be involved in their children's lives and education. As shown in this study, parents will leave a country if they believe it is in the best interests of their child. Parents have the right to voice their opinions, and educators have the responsibility to include their ideas. Multiculturalism is not a trend, but it is an integral part of the twenty-first century.

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Appendix A

Letter to Inter-Cultural Association

Program Director
Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria
930 Balmoral Road
Victoria, BC V8T 1A8

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am currently working toward a Master of Arts Degree in Special Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria. As part of the requirement for this program, I am conducting a research project about literacy practices in families. The purpose of the research is to explore the everyday literacy practices that occur in culturally diverse homes. (My supervisor is Dr. M. Mayfield. Should you have any questions, please call 721-7849).

I am writing to ask for your permission to conduct audio-taped interviews with six mothers or fathers (see attached), to have the parents fill out an inventory (see attached), and to write in a journal (see attached). The interview will consist of fourteen questions relating to the participants' home language, country of origin, religion, job, customs, and everyday literacy practices. Also, I will ask the participants to take home a journal for seven days, in which they will record, using a word or sentence, literacy activities that occurred in their home. After the one-week period, I will ask the participants to fill out (check mark type answers) an inventory of daily and weekly activities that occur in their home with their child. After the inventory is filled out, I will ask a follow-up question, seeking advice on planning a family literacy program.

All participation will be voluntary and individual responses will be kept confidential. I will ask permission of the volunteer, if they wish me to audio-tape their answers. The tapes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my private residence until the completion of the research project, at which time the tapes will be destroyed. I enclose a copy of the data sheet, interview questions, inventory, journal, volunteer letters to participants, and a letter of consent which I will present to participants. As a result of the research, I will submit to the Association a summary and some recommendations that could be useful in planning a family literacy program in the future.

In order to continue, I will require a letter of permission from the Association. In the letter, will you please include (1) that you have read this letter, and (2) that you agree to the research as outlined. If you have any questions, please contact me or my supervisor, Dr. Mayfield (721-7849). Thank you for considering my request, and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours truly,

Cynthia Gower
Tel:

Appendix B

Description of Proposed Study for Volunteers

I am a graduate student from the University of Victoria in the faculty of Education in special education and as part of my degree I am conducting research on literacy practices of culturally diverse families. I want to talk to you about reading and writing that you, family members, and your child do. I will ask you questions, ask you to write down activities in a book that you take home, and talk to you after the seven-day period. You may leave the study at any time, with no questions asked. Interviews will be taped, however, if a volunteer does not want to be tape recorded during the interview, that can be stated by you at any time, and I will hand write the answers. Any time during the interview you may withdraw, and the raw data will be destroyed immediately. All data will be kept confidential and will be locked in my home office, and your names will not be used on the final or any document. If you agree to participate in the interview, your name will be included in a pool from which six names will be drawn. If your name is selected, the interview will be scheduled depending on your wishes and convenience. The interview will take approximately forty minutes, the inventory ten minutes, and the take-home journal about five to ten minutes each day for seven days and will be returned to me at the Inter-Cultural Association. After the one-week period, I will ask you to fill out (check mark) reading and writing activities that you and other family members and your child do in your home. Thank you for considering my request and please feel free to ask me questions.

Appendix C

Letter for Soliciting Volunteers

Dear Parents,

I am a graduate student at the University of Victoria. I am in Special Education in the Faculty of Education. I am working on my Master's degree. My research is called "Family Literacy Practices within Culturally Diverse Families." The purpose is to explore everyday literacy practices, and at the end I will talk to the Inter-Cultural Association, and tell them what I found out for a family literacy program.

I am writing to ask for your help. You may say no. Should you agree, answers will not be shared with anyone. You can stop at any time, and I will not ask you why you have stopped. I will get rid of the answers you have given me. Nothing will change at the Inter-Cultural Association for you if you work with me or not. If you let me, I will audio-tape record your answers. I will get rid of the tape if you stop working with me, or when we are finished. If you do not want to be audio-taped, tell me and I will write out your answers.

When we are finished with the study, your name will not be on anything. If you agree to work with me, you and I will talk about the times we can meet. You can let me know what time is good for you. The talk will take 40 minutes, and writing your everyday activities will take 5 to 10 minutes each day for 7 days. The last thing, putting check marks on four lists, will take 10 minutes.

Thank you very much.

Yours truly,

Cynthia Gower

Supervisor: Dr. Margie Mayfield
Tel: (250) 721-7849

- -

I have read the above and I am willing to participate.

Name: (please print)

Signature:

Contact phone number: ________ __

Date:

Appendix D

Letter of Consent for Participants

Consent form for participants in the study entitled "Literacy Practices within Culturally Diverse Families."

I understand that the research project is a study conducted by Cynthia Gower of everyday literacy practices within culturally diverse families. I understand that I will be answering questions about my literacy practices and my spouse and children in the following ways: (1) an interview; (2) an inventory; and, (3) a journal.

I understand that I do not have to do this (i.e., my participation is completely voluntary), and that I can quit the study at any time, without explanation or penalty.

I understand that all interviews with Cynthia Gower will be audio-taped and that the tapes will be burned upon completion of the study. I understand that anything I will say will be kept secret (confidential), and will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in Cynthia Gower's home. Only the researcher will have my answers (access to the raw data). I understand that if I do not wish to have my interview audio-taped, I can refuse to do so by stating that I do not want to be taped, and I understand the interview will then be recorded in the researcher's written hand. I understand that my name will not be on anything (not attached to any published results), and that numbers will be used to sort out answers (confidentiality will be protected by using pseudonyms to identify the results obtained from individuals).

I understand that whether I participate or choose not to participate will have no bearing on my status at the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria.

I hereby give my consent to participate. I understand and accept the above conditions.

Name: Signature:
(please print)

Date:

I agree that you can audio-tape my answers:

Name: Signature:
(please print)

Date:

Appendix E

Personal Data Sheet for Parents

Information on Parents and Other Family Members

Name of Parent: _____ Age: _____

Partner's Name: _____ Age: _____

Other Family Members: _____ Age: _____

_____ Age: _____

Your address in Victoria: _____

Telephone number(s): Home: _____ Work: _____

Number of children: _____ Ages: _____ Genders: _____

Does your child(ren) belong to a daycare or early childhood education program?

_____

If yes, how long has he/she been participating? _____

What is the primary language used at the daycare/early childhood education program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix F

Interview Questions

Before the interview, the researcher will say: "I am going to ask you fourteen questions on the country you and your family members were born in, languages spoken at home, and everyday literacy practices. I will audio-tape record your answers. If you do not want to be audio-tape recorded, tell me at any time and I will stop the tape recorder and hand-write the answers. You can stop at any time, without giving a reason, and the raw data will be destroyed immediately.

If you choose to answer the questions, I will not put your name on any documents or tell anyone you are participating or what you said. All information will be locked in my home office. I will give you a copy of your answers and you can make any changes you like."

1. Who lives in your home?
2. Where were they born? What language do they each speak? What is the language used most in your home?
3. What jobs do each of you hold?
4. Why did you move to Canada?
5. Where did you do your schooling? What schooling have you completed in Victoria?

6. Are you and your family part of a family literacy program? Please describe and tell me in particular what activities you like/don't like? Why did you join the program?
7. What clubs do you and your family belong to?
8. What specific traditions, customs, and celebrations do you participate in?
9. What are the religious/spiritual organizations you and your family attend?
10. Do you keep in contact with family and friends from _____ (name of country from Q2)?
11. Are most of your friends in Victoria also from _____ (name of country from Q2)? If not, where are they from?
12. For you, what is the hardest part about living in Canada?
13. If your child is learning to ride a bike, who will give the instruction and spend time teaching the skill?
14. When you were a child, were you treated differently than your brother/sister? If yes, how?

Appendix G

Journal for Parents

Time of Day	**Activities**
Wake-up time	
Breakfast time	
Mid-morning (e.g., 10 am to noon)	
Lunchtime	
Afternoon (e.g. 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.)	
Dinnertime	
Evening (e.g., 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.)	
Bedtime	

Appendix H

Reading and Writing Inventory (RAWI) Sheet for Parents

The following is an example of the inventory sheet parents filled out during the interview. It is based on the work of Genisio (1998), and provides information on the parents', children's, and other family members' reading and writing habits.

Reading

The following list contains different kinds of reading material your child may have had experience with. Do you ask your child to look at or read any of the following materials?

Materials	**Daily**				**Weekly**			**Sometimes**
	Never	**1x**	**2-5x**	**5+**	**1x**	**2-5x**	**5+**	
Books								
Advertisements								
Catalogues								
Labels on supermarket items								
Letters from relatives								
Greeting cards								
Grocery lists								
Labels on food items								
Sports items, team logos								
Fast food signs/ department store signs								
Road signs								
Prayer books/hymnals								

Materials	Daily				Weekly			Sometimes
	Never	1x	2-5x	5+	1x	2-5x	5+	
Clothing labels with their name on it								
TV guides								
Cheques								
Cartoons								
Scoreboard at sports event								
Photographs								
Computer games								
Magazines								
Newspapers								
Other: _____ _____								

Writing

Does your child see you or others engaged in any of the following writing activities?

Materials	Daily				Weekly			Sometimes
	Never	1x	2-5x	5+	1x	2-5x	5+	
Writing messages								
Homework for school, literacy program, or work								
Writing letters								
Preparing grocery lists								
Writing notes								
Balancing chequebook								
Writing cheques								

Materials	Daily				Weekly			Sometimes
	Never	1x	2-5x	5+	1x	2-5x	5+	
Household budget or to do list								
Writing greeting cards								
Writing for pleasure								
Writing directions								
Writing recipes								
Writing using the computer or typewriter								
Writing in homework book for your or your child's school								
Other: _____ _____								

Reading — Being a Model for Your Child

Does your child see you or others reading any of the following materials?

Materials	Daily				Weekly			Sometimes
	Never	1x	2-5x	5+	1x	2-5x	5+	
Newspapers, inter-national news articles								
Books (novels)								
Textbooks, scientific journals, encyclopaedias								
Recipes								
Labels								
TV guides								
Magazines								
Letters								

Materials	Daily				Weekly			Sometimes
	Never	1x	2-5x	5+	1x	2-5x	5+	
Greeting cards								
Road signs, maps								
Telephone books								
Catalogues								
Prayer books, hymnals								
Directions								
Computer screen								
Flyers, 'junk' mail								
Other: _____ _____								

Reading and Writing Together

Does your child do any of the following activities with either you or your spouse?

Materials	Daily				Weekly		
	Never	Once a day	2 to 5 times a day	5 times a day	Once a week	2 to 5 times a week	> 5 times a week
Cuddling during story time							
Inviting friends to share story time							
Reading at bedtime							
Make up a story when looking at book							
Selecting/checking out books at the library							
Selecting/checking out videos							
Talking about books/videos							

Materials	Daily				Weekly		
	Never	Once a day	2 to 5 times a day	5 times a day	Once a week	2 to 5 times a week	> 5 times a week
Selecting/writing greeting cards							
Following recipes							
Reading and writing letters							
Writing grocery lists, gifts wanted, etc.							
Noticing and using road signs or restaurant logos							
Leaving messages by writing or drawing							
Keeping score for card or board game							
Using the computer							
Other: _____ _____							

Appendix I

Follow-up Questions

Two follow-up questions will be asked after the participants have answered the fourteen questions, written in the take-home journal for seven days, and completed the inventory:

1. If I were planning a program about family literacy for _____ parents and children, what advice would you give me?
2. After answering interview questions, keeping a journal for 7 days, and filling out an inventory, how did this affect your daily lives? Did any of your routine habits change because of the study?

VITA

Surname: Gower Given Names: Cynthia Louise

Place of Birth: Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Educational Institutions Attended:

University of Victoria	1997 - 1999
University of Victoria	1983 - 1988

Degrees Awarded:

B.Ed.	University of Victoria	1988

Honours and Awards:

Dean's Graduate Bursary	1999

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An Exploration of Literacy Practices within Culturally Diverse Families

Author: [redacted]

Cynthia Louise Gower
August 28, 2000