



Stories, Coupons, and the TV Guide:

**Relationships between home literacy
experiences and emergent literacy
knowledge.**

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The Purpose of the Study

- To document and describe the ways print is used in the homes of low income families.
- To explore the relationship between the uses of print and emergent literacy knowledge held by young children in these low income homes.
- To further explore the relationships between home/community learning and school learning by young children learning to read and write.



Theory

- Language learning resulted from construction of knowledge with instances of situated dialogue (learners develop their understandings both implicit and explicit of language systems through experience.
- Young children begin to learn about reading and writing in their homes and communities as they observe and participate in culturally situated literacy practices.
- The study of literacy development must occur in the cultural context where the learning originally takes



Relevant Research

- **Everything children learn about written language is determined by what they learn through experience. This includes its functions and values placed on its various forms within a particular sociocultural community.**
- **Children learn that print signifies language about the natures, characteristics, and language forms of written language that they experience.**



Emergent Literacy Research

- **Literacy knowledge construction takes place both at home and at school.**
 - A critical question for educators is the relationship between that knowledge constructed at home before the onset of formal school-based literacy instruction and the knowledge gained through participation in literacy instruction at school.
- **Some studies have concluded that success with school-based literacy was related to personal learner experiences.**



Written Language Characteristics

- ⦿ We use written language to communicate over space and time. Thus written language must be shaped so that meaning is conveyed in the absence of shared physical contact between reader and writer.
- ⦿ We also use written language to make thoughts and emotions permanent.



The Study

- **A 1 year descriptive study of the uses of print and its relation to emergent literacy knowledge occurring in the home.**
- **Informants were considered for the study if they met the following criteria.**
 - They qualified as low socioeconomic status.
 - They had at least one child between the ages of 4 and 6.
 - English was the primary language spoken in the home.

The Study (Continued)

- **Twenty low-income families, including 24 children participated in the study.**
- **Literacy levels of the parents ranged from low literate (not able to read or write) to functionally literate (able to read and write at whichever level they need to and want to.)**



Collecting Data

- To ascertain the uses of print, researchers observed daily life activity within the homes. Each family was assigned one graduate student research assistant.
- Observation for each family was spread over the hours of a day during which both children and adults were awake and home over the period of a week.
- Observations focused on all functional uses of literacy within the home. They also included excursions to outside sites such as stores and social gatherings.



Collecting Data (continued)

- **Researchers noted all uses of print by all those present in the home such as reading, writing, looking at print, and talking about print.**
- **Researchers made note of all materials found in the home context that were related to literacy such as books, household products, television guides, and writing materials.**



Results

- **Entertainment and daily living routines are the most frequently mediated by print.**
- **The amount of storybook reading in the homes was found to be less frequently used.**
- **People mainly used coupons, ads, and some container text.**
- **Children had some idea that print maps onto speech at the phoneme level, but had not fully grasped the concept yet.**

Conclusion

- ⦿ This study provides us with a view of young children engaging in varying types of literacy practices which contributes to their development.
- ⦿ Children from low- SES homes learn about language function to the degree they experience it in their lives.
- ⦿ The issue is creating a literacy environment where learning includes emergent literacy concepts needed for school success.
- ⦿ Further research is needed in ways that school and home learning can build on and compliment each other. We can facilitate a child's literacy development if we address culture, literacy, and schooling hand in hand.