Achieving the Best for London's
Children, Youth and Families

Supporting Children's Literacy in Community Settings

Executive Summary—Conclusion and Recommendations

by

Rosamund Stooke

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Chapter Four
Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Introduction

> Rebecca. "I knew a lot about literacy but next to nothing about community development or even the concept of community capacity building. Now I am beginning to see the connection. I provide information and raise awareness, and the community makes the changes. (Day et al., 2005)

In *What Really Matters to Struggling Readers,* Richard Allington (2001) cites empirical evidence that we are getting better and better at teaching children how to read, but we are losing ground when it comes to "raising readers." Effective literacy instruction is necessary, but not sufficient to raise a reader. More to the point, what looks like effective literacy instruction in the short term sometimes turns out to be quite inefficient in the long term -- unless the learner finds reasons to use what's been learned. The old adage, u*se it or lose it*, applies to literacy.

One reason to promote literacy as a way of life, then, is that unless we promote literacy as a way of life, the energy we spend on literacy instruction will be wasted. This is not the only reason, but it is one that concerns policy makers and funders.

Another reason to promote literacy as a way of life is that literacy as a way of life supports social inclusion and neighbourhood vitality. When literacy is woven into a web of support, the web becomes stronger and everyone benefits.

This chapter synthesizes key findings discussed in the first three chapters and makes recommendations for the promotion of "literacy as a way of life" in the context of a neighbourhood-based community change initiative.

Like Rebecca, I know more about literacy than I do about community development, and like her, I appreciate its importance. I have examined a great deal of research on literacy development and a great deal of research on community development and conclude that some practical knowledge of the principles of community development, especially knowledge of the principles of critical community practice, is more helpful to the goals of a project that aims to support literacy as a way of life than more knowledge about effective instructional strategies.
This conclusion must be tempered with two acknowledgments.

First, I acknowledge that I am immersed in literacy literature. Ideas that seem too obvious or too vague to me may appear helpful to someone who spends a lot of time immersed in another field of practice. That is one reason why I tried to lay out some basic "what works" information in Chapter One.

Second, I recognize that some people will experience difficulties with reading and writing in spite of a desire to read and write and a commitment to work at it. They deserve thoughtful, explicit and intentional instruction based on current research. Indeed, all learners should be able to participate in engaging and worthwhile lessons.

But issue at hand is a different one. If the goal is to build literacy awareness, one resident at a time, then straightforward, research-to-practice instructional recommendations are unlikely to succeed. We must expand the scope of what counts as research and the scope of what counts as literacy. In short, we must take into account the complex and culturally-shaped nature of everyday life.

4.2   Implications of "Literacy as a Way of Life" for Literacy Programs

It is hard to imagine literacy becoming a way of life in the absence of any instruction. Learning to read and write appears to come naturally to some lucky children, but there is nothing natural about it. And reading is not only a matter of learning to identify words. Written language is not just speech written down. A solid foundation of oral language helps beginning readers and writers, but written language places extra demands on readers and writers that require guided experiences with print.

Chapter One introduced two broad perspectives that inform literacy education. The first perspective is often referred to as the cognitive / information processing perspective. Researchers who take this perspective draw primarily on psychology research traditions, including psycholinguistics. In these traditions reading has been studied more often than writing and various developmental continua or stage theories have been proposed to describe literacy development. There is general agreement that readers and writers will not achieve their potential in the areas of comprehension and composition until they have a sound grasp of the alphabetic principle – or another writing system. An ability to distinguish among the sounds in a word, what educators call phonemic awareness, is currently seen as foundational to decoding ability.

One group of cognitive researchers expressesparticularly strong views about what kinds of knowledge is necessary for reading and about how beginning reading and writing should be taught. This groups of scientifically-based reading researchers advocates research-based instruction, but limits what counts as research to experimental and quasi-experimental studies. A research-based practice is one that has been shown experimentally to increase literacy skills, usually decoding ability.

The second perspective views literacy as social practice. Informed by the ideas of social constructivist psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, and by research in anthropology and critical sociology, the second perspective conceptualizes literacy as a set of cultural tools and stresses the importance of social interaction in language and literacy learning. Social practices researchers claim that there are different kinds of literacy or literacies and that people call on different ways of being literate in different social contexts. They have pointed out that being literate in the traditional sense is valued in educational settings, but it is less valuable in out-of-school settings. They have also pointed out that outside of school, the screen is fast replacing the page and print is now embedded in visual design, animation, and other hallmarks the digital culture. Literacy as a way of life is more accurately described as literacies as ways of living.

Following Purcell-Gates et al. (2004) this report recommends that print literacy should be viewed through a widened lens. Literacy viewed through a widened lens recognizes that readers and writers need individualized, "in-the-head" skills that develop over time when the conditions are right, and usually with some instruction, but it asserts too that literacy development is always embedded, that is nested, within culturally shaped practices. Completing an income tax return and talking to friends on Face Book are examples of culturally shaped practices. So too is the task the Network has set itself -- supporting literacy within the valued, culturally shaped practices of a neighbourhood change initiative.

There is no dispute that most people need lessons of one kind or another to acquire literacy skills, but when literacy is treated only as skill development, it has a poor chance of sticking. The phenomenon of summer reading loss,in which children forget what they learned in school during the previous year, can be viewed as a consequence of lack of motivation, but it suggests too that reading and writing are for some children activities that get done at school and only school.

Purcell-Gates et al. argue that two characteristics of literacy lessons help to make literacy learning "sticky" for learners.

The first quality is authenticity. Authenticity refers to the extent to which a literacy activity addresses a genuine purpose for the learner. Authenticity does not always mean pleasurable. Completing a tax form is a tedious business, but tax forms are usually completed for genuine reasons.

The second quality that makes a lesson sticky is learner involvement. The acclaimed second language researcher, Jim Cummins (Cummins et. al, 2007), uses the term "identity investment."

Participatory models of family literacy and community literacy address both criteria..

> Research shows that people learn new literacy skills best when these literacy skills are integrated in meaningful learning and everyday texts. Reading to children, getting a driver's license, putting together a radio program, finding and advocating for affordable housing, looking for work, and participating in the religious and cultural life of one's community are all contexts for literacy learning (Eldred, 2005). Rather than assuming that community members cannot participate in these activities until they develop the required literacy skills, an asset-based approach to literacy holds that people can learn as they engage in these practices, with the support of those who are more experienced. (Smythe, 2005, p. 5)

Viewing literacy and research through a widened lens has implications for what counts as a research-based practice. The goal of promoting literacy skill development is not quite the same as the goal of promoting literacy as a way of life. As Allington has shown, having literacy is not the same as using it. Therefore, the practices that encourage literacy as a way of life will not necessarily be those practices that improve individuals' scores on literacy tests.

4.3   Implications of Literacy as a Way of Life for Community Literacy Initiatives

> Case studies of literacy collaborations suggest that the way to promote language/literacy goals may be not by focusing directly on language and literacy, but rather by focusing on community-based activities identified by participants. [R]igid adherence to predetermined goals may actually undermine the efficacy of a partnership. (Auerbach, 2002, quoted in Smythe, 2005, p. 6)

In recognition of this research, a growing number of literacy initiatives are embedded into broad-based change initiatives that work to involve residents as agents rather than clients of human service agencies.

Tools for Community Building
A workbook published by the Northwest Territories Literacy Council (2002)

This resource is printed in large font, accessible English and contains lots of white space
The workshop shows readers how to think about literacy in communities, develop a plan for local literacy and develop a proposal for funding.

Community development happens when people come together to take action around common issues. It is a process that builds on existing strengths of the community and involves local people in deigning and making change, and learning from it. The most important outcome of community development is a better quality of life. (p. 14)

Capacity building can happen through change and learning.
Here are some examples:
- Finding out how much you know about a topic.
- Discovering a new piece of information.
- Trying out a new skill such as planning, organizing, public speaking, keeping records.
- Thinking in different ways.
- Learning how to take risks and do things you have not done before.

Assessment should be ongoing.
- Ask children what they think. Check in with your group on a regular basis.
- Talk to other people in the community about your project.
- Collect stories about what it was like to be a participant.

Notice too that the Guiding Principles for the *Literacy Now* Communities program employs principles from community development. In addition to the guiding principles, I have included a sample literacy plan from a Vancouver neighbourhood.

Guiding Principles from the BC 2010 Legacies - *Literacy Now Communities* program

- ❖ Relationships and Collaboration
  Communities build and support networks, partnerships and mentoring relationships.

- ❖ Innovation
  Communities value new ways of viewing existing programs, new partnerships and new ideas for programs.

- ❖ Respect
  People are treated with respect and will be encouraged to freely share their ideas. Diversity is welcomed and valued.

- ❖ Capacity building
  Programs and projects promote and sustain lifelong learning for all participants and focus on improving the life chances of children and adults. People feel empowered to act.

- ❖ Access for all
  All community members have the opportunity to be part of the planning process and the programs. Community members respect the hopes and dreams of everyone and there is a place for all.

- ❖ Strength building
  Communities respect, build on and enhance past and current practices.

- ❖ Sustainability
  Success grows from long-term sustained commitment to literacy learning.

From: *2010 Legacies Literacy Now Community Literacy Planning Guide* (p. 4)
http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/fileadmin/user_upload/Embrace_Learning/PDF/Literacy Now_Guide.pdf\

From the Mount Pleasant Literacy Now Community Plan
Mount Pleasant's Community Literacy Plan vision aligns with the goals
identified by Mount Pleasant's Community Planning Committee, such
as:

- Meet basic needs of low income families and seniors through community-based actions
- Increase community engagement and socialization opportunities for marginalized youth
- Enable new immigrants and marginalized populations to fully participate in society (through
- improvements to language skills, mobility, education, and health care)
- Increase job training and employment opportunities for marginalized adults

Appendix C – Community Literacy Defined by Mount Pleasant

Art and Music
- Expressed as having access to, ability to understand or interpret, and being able to express self with art and music.

Reading, Writing and Spoken Word
- Expressed as being functional and able to acquire and present supported by these foundational literacy abilities.

Math Literacy / Numeracy
- Expressed as being able to understand or interpret use of numbers in various ways including currency; ability to budget, understand bills, read graphs, and other day-to-day activities requiring math literacy.

Computer Literacy
- Expressed as knowing the basics and beyond to be proficient and efficient with applications and technology, to have sufficient skills that new technologies are not intimidating.

Media Literacy
- Expressed as the ability to source, decode and have access to multiple sources of information

Family Literacy
- Expressed as engagement of all family members in reading and writing seen as contributory to the literacy and learning of the whole family i.e., school-based learner, younger and older siblings, parents.

Civic Leadership
- Expressed as active participation in community and neighbourhood.

The full plan is available at:
http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/fileadmin/user_upload/Embrace_Learning/PDF/Mount_Pleasant_Community_Literacy_Plan.pdf

4. 4　Marketing Literacy

For people who adopt literacy as a way of life, literacy itself may be taken for granted. Literacy is something we use to get other things done. It is not surprising, then, that many people who take literacy for granted have little awareness of what it might be like not to participate in that culture.

Promoting literacy awareness is not just a matter of promoting awareness of literacy problems or needs. It is about encouraging tpeople in diverse situations to spot the literacy opportunities or demands within their everyday routines. Promoting "literacy as a way of life" is as much about spreading literacy awareness to people who take literacy for granted as it is about spreading the word to potential program participants.

One initiative that set out to promote awareness was Audrey Gardner's (2003) *Building Capacity* project. Rebecca, whose comment opens this chapter, worked as a literacy specialist on the project in Alberta where she and the other literacy specialists carried out extensive outreach with local business people, community groups and organizations to make their communities more "literacy-friendly."

Changing to a larger font for signage, or adopting a colour code for job postings and brochures were two easy ways that local residents in the Alberta project enabled poor readers to be more independent and to take advantage of whatever was being advertised.   Kathy Day, recalls, "Eventually, we were able to articulate how literacy relates to every aspect of community life" (Day et al., 2005, p. 22). The process was not immediately measurable, however. It was more like making a snowball and the specialists learned to trust in the process. For example, Janet Quinn (Day et al., 2005) confesses that she had to slow her pace, get away from planning workshops (see e.g. Heyden & Sanders, 2002) and invest the time in talking with people about literacy in plain terms.

A similar story was told to me recently by my former student, Laura Nichols (personal communication). Laura was conducting a family literacy workshop to promote reading to young children. She knew that one mother would have difficulty reading to her child, so she took the opportunity to talk about the value of talking to young children instead. She said, "It's more important to me that this mom felt comfortable than it is to preach to the converted about storybooks."

Outreach and networking are core activities for community literacy organizations (Readers are referred to pages 86-89 for a list of strategies that literacy

practitioners have successfully used to build networks with other organizations and in the community more generally.) Such strategies have been deployed informally for many years, but recently there has been a more concerted effort under the umbrella term, social marketing.

In *Marketing Ourselves* (Community Literacy of Ontario, 2008, p. 8) Karen Farrar describes two recently developed strands of marketing: relationship marketing and social marketing.

Farrar writes that not-for-profit agencies and services can adopt marketing principles to market what they do even though they are giving away their services and programs for free. The table below provides rough translations of marketing terms in the social marketing arena.

Business marketing	Relationship / Social marketing
Product	Programs & services
Price	Buy-in
Promotion	Getting the word out
Place	Location

Farrar writes that social marketing is usually carried out with clients and potential clients. Relationship marketing is carried out usually with volunteers, funders and community partners. The goal of relationship marketing with volunteers, funders and community partners and social marketing with clients the same: positive social change.

Some principles of marketing that apply to community practice are:

- Build a budget line for marketing (p. 17).

- Don't sell the product; solve the customer's problem. (p. 11)
  E.g. Identify a community need first, then think about ways that literacy opportunities are embedded.

- Reflect on who you are and what you do (p. 12).

- Who do you want to buy in? Target marketing to specific segments of your market. (p. 18) Think: Which volunteers, funders, partners?

- Pay attention to people's wants as well as needs.(p. 21)
  Make your program exactly what your target wants. (p. 22)

- Aim to articulate features of your "product" as benefits. (p. 24)

- Develop strategies and tactics to reach your market. (the marketing mix). (p. 20) (E.g. Strategies for Effective Outreach, Recruitment and Retention. in Chapter Two - Section 2.6.2.)

To think about:

While the practical strategies of social marketing may appear to be aligned with the principles of participatory practice, they tend to position service providers and residents on opposite sides of a divide. "Buy in" implies that the marketer is controlling the agenda. Planners should consider the potential consequences. Social marketing has much to offer, but it also reflects a "power over" rather than a "power with" approach.

4. 5   Recommendations:

The findings of this literature review point to four overarching strategies for promoting literacy as a way of life.

(1) Support language and literacy programs that address an identified community need.

a. Ensure that programs promote authentic literacy activities and use authentic materials. Ensure that program plans are guided by recognized good practice principles such as the Centre for Family Literacy's *Good Practice Statements* or the Action for Family Literacy's *A Guide to Best Practices*.

b. Ensure that initiatives are guided by recognized principles of community practice such as those discussed in Chapter Three.

Successful initiatives:
- are Innovative,
- are sustainable,

- are inclusive,
- build capacity for residents and organizations,
- are collaborative,
- explicitly address power imbalances,
- create opportunities for learning and reflection

(2) Support initiatives that aim to weave literacy into change activities. Projects would begin with an identified community need, but would also embed opportunities for focused language and/or literacy use.

Priority should be given to projects that weave together strategies to strengthen literacy as a way of life and address one of the other goals of a comprehensive community change project such as promotion of health and/or reduction of poverty.

   a. Ensure that initiatives are guided by recognized principles of community practice such as those discussed in Chapter Three. Successful initiatives:
   - are Innovative,
   - are sustainable,
   - are inclusive,
   - build capacity for residents and organizations,
   - are collaborative,
   - explicitly address power imbalances,
   - create opportunities for learning and reflection.

   b. Provide guidance to help groups identify language and/or literacy learning opportunities in the proposed projects..

   c. Nurture collaboration among literacy practitioners and other community organizations..

(3) Employ network strategies to develop awareness of literacy issues and opportunities and to celebrate literacy. Developing awareness of literacy issues should include developing awareness of the ways in which digital culture makes new literacy demands on people. It is important to build awareness of digital literacy among potential funders because small grants typically won't stretch to purchase computers and other technological tools.

(4) For a program or service that already meets the criteria laid out in strategy (1) or (2), provide support that strengthens aspects of the program or service. Where necessary, provide support for infrastructure development and/or coordination within the organization and with other organizations.

For example: Promoting awareness of literacy in the community may require organizations to devote extra time and resources to outreach. Marketing literacy involves more than reaching out to the people served by other organizations. Literacy-focused organizations can promote literacy as a way of life to the staff of other organizations so that staff can look for literacy learning opportunities within the services they provide. This kind of activity needs to be ongoing.

Opportunities and challenges: Strategy (1)

An example of Strategy (1) can be found in *Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC).*
As a result of residents' work, Bridgeview School in Surrey, BC was chosen as a site for the provincial government's literacy pilot project, *Strong Start*. Caregivers, including grandparents, connect with one another and participate with the children in literacy activities that include play, socializing and instruction.

There is nothing unusual about this program, but it fulfills the requirements for authenticity and collaboration. Programs such as *Strong Start* can fulfill authentic purposes for participants. Although they exist because money for literacy activities has flowed into the community from a government source, they can integrate literacy with opportunities to develop community attachment, something that Bridgeview badly needed. It is important to note that *Strong Start* was not imposed on Bridgeview.

Opportunities and challenges: Strategy (2)

Few reports from community-based initiatives such as *Promising Practices* explicitly discuss literacy goals. In order to pursue Strategy (2), planners and residents examine proposed activities and identify potential opportunities for literacy learning. Then they plan activities that can bring visibility to the literacy opportunities. Strategy (3) (literacy awareness) supports Strategy (2) activities. At the same time Strategy (2) activities support Strategy (3).

Strategy (2) is exactly what Purcell-Gates and her research assistants did in the context of early literacy instruction. See for example the excerpts from *Real-life Literacy Instruction, K-3: Handbook for Teacher*s in Chapter One, Section 1.4 The resource, *Real-life Literacy*, describes the research base for authentic literacy and contains practical plans that cover each element in a "good practice" framework for early literacy classrooms. For community initiatives, the framework could be adapted to read as follows:

> (1) Get to know the literacy practices of your group. What do they use literacy for? What kinds of literacy activities do they engage in? This would be a good place to start.

> (2) Work with your group to select or create real-life texts to read and write. That is, identify tasks that require reading and writing.

> (3) Identify any explicit teaching of skills and strategies that will be needed.

> (4) Work with your group to identify what the indicators of success might be, but stay open to surprises. This is new territory for everyone.

Opportunities and challenges: Strategy (3)

Identifying literacy opportunities in everyday activities is a new way of thinking for most of us. It might be helpful to look at the opportunities in other successful initiatives. Most of the activities described in community initiative reports directly address community needs rather than literacy goals. Even so, these descriptions warrant attention. The activities have been shaped within valued community practices and they embed potential literacy learning opportunities. Literacy activities integrated into such activities will promote literacy as a way of life.

One such project was the Spryfield (Nova Scotia) community garden project which appears to have been aimed at providing some fun, healthy and safe activities for youth and a new food source for the community. It was only when the need for information about gardening arose that participants were led to conduct research in the school library.

See also ANC Community Stories
http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/547ENG.pdf
http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/630ENG.pdf

The following table is adapted from Anne Makhoul's (2007) summary of ANC small-grant funded projects.

Makhoul reports that each of the initiatives featured in the summary was identified by a site manager as an initiative with potential to create long-term, transformational change. Building on this strong foundation, I propose some opportunities for literacy learning present in each initiative.

Title of the initiative	Brief description	Literacy opportunities
Greystone's Community Garden	Spryfield Urban Farm Museum establishes a community garden to supply a low income housing development with fresh produce and to provide activities for children.	Library research, Internet research Measuring and estimating distances between plants and rows Labeling rows Budgeting to buy tools and supplies Organizing work schedules & distribution
The Spryfield Business Directory	The Spryfield and District Business Commission establish a business directory to entice residents to shop locally and to encourage business owners to get more involved in the commission.	Local residents could participate in data input, information verification and promotion activities such as advertising copy – which could be in available in more than one language. Neighbourhood groups could take on short term contracts related to printing and distribution.
Community Animators	ANC staff members select and train nine residents from diverse language and cultural backgrounds to help reach non-English speaking and non-mainstream voices.	. Opportunities for multilingual literacy learning for trainers as well as trainees. The residents could create multilingual resources and Increase the amount of environmental print in local languages.

	ANC staff members help parents from several language groups to access school board officials and prepare a list of interested families in order to secure language classes for their children at a neighbourhood school.	Literacy outreach during heritage language classes can facilitate access to other educational opportunities. (See Family Literacy Outreach in Chapter Two.) Work with heritage language teachers to develop multiliteracies projects. E.g. "Kids with Cameras"
Establishing a Neighbourhood Advisory Committee	ANC guides a large group of residents as they struggle to define a process and structure which will transform them from interested residents into an effective neighbourhood revitalization convenor structure.	Documenting processes and activities Accessing information from other communities who've tried to do the same thing. Learn Internet searching, social media

Adapted from: ANC Sketches: Building a Neighbourhood Renewal Process (Makhoul, 2007, p. 8).

4.6   Small Grants Programs

Several initiatives discussed in this literature review, including *The Civic Engagement Project* and *Action for Neighbourhood Change*, created funding programs for small-scale projects. The funding programs allowed resident groups and other local, not-for-profit organizations to apply for small grants of approximately $1,000 to $5,000.

Some municipal authorities such as the East London Council in the United Kingdom maintain ongoing small grants programs; other authorities and foundations sponsor projects of limited duration, usually during the early phases of an initiative.

The small grants programs serve several purposes. First, they enable residents and organizations to address one or more community need. Additionally, they promote engagement and help to build capacity and social capital.

Gorman (2007) reports that the *Action for Neighbourhood Change* small grants program supported the development of "leadership and organizational skills in the

residents who oversaw the grant process, brought residents closer together to talk about things they wanted and provided tangible improvements in the neighbourhood's physical, social/cultural and economic assets" (p. 4).

Recommendation
- The grant application process should build on several guiding principles and a set of success statements tied to the specific "literacy as a way of life" goal.

- The application form should require a description of the project followed by a series of open-ended "how?" questions -- each of them linked to a good practice / success statement. Several lists of good practice statements have been presented throughout this document. Any of the lists would provide a good starting point, but locally developed questions are the ideal.

4.6.1   Criteria for Funding

A small- scale project that aims to promote literacy as a way of life should demonstrate that it can meet expectations tied to the comprehensive community initiative through which the grant is administered.

The following set of broad criteria is adopted from BC's 2010 Legacies - Literacy Now Communities program.

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Criteria for acceptance of Literacy Now plans by 2010 Legacies

The task group must:
• Provide evidence of broad-based community support
• Provide clearly-identified ways to build capacity in the community
• Show alignment between needs and plans
• Show how the guiding principles have been followed.

2010 Legacies: Literacy Now Planning Guide
http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/fileadmin/user_upload/Embrace_Learning/PDF/LiteracyNow_Guide.pdf
Literacy Now Plans
http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/literacy_now_community_plans/

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In addition to criteria such as the Literacy Now criteria, several locally relevant criteria could be addressed.

For example:

Proposed activities should aim to meet these criteria for good community practice described in Chapter Three.

- be innovative
- be sustainable
- be inclusive,
- build capacity for residents and organizations,
- promote and engage in collaboration
- explicitly address power imbalances
- create opportunities for learning and reflection.

and / or

An activity will support "literacy as a way of life" to the extent that it integrates the following elements.*

1. creates opportunities for residents to engage in culturally and developmentally appropriate, authentic literacy activities
2. weaves literacy learning opportunities into the proposed activities
3. addresses a community need
4. is planned collaboratively with residents' input

Examples of specific criteria:

The following items apply to all community-based literacy initiatives. They are indicated by research or drawn from the *Best Practices* statements for Ontario or Alberta.

1. Successful programs stress real purposes for literacy and real texts, not workbooks.
   What are some purposes for literacy in your planned activities?

2. Successful projects integrate literacy with other kinds of activities.
   How does your project create opportunities for participants to practice literacy?
   How does your project weave literacy learning and literacy activities into project activities? (See examples.)

3. Successful programs ensure that families have the health and well being to carry out the literacy and developmental tasks of parenting and family life.

How will you promote the health and well-being of your participants? How will you learn about participants' lives and maintain confidentiality..

4. Successful programs incorporate the cultures and languages of the participants. Successful programs adapt to the work and family lives of parents.
   How will your initiative accommodate cultural and linguistic diversity?

5. Successful projects fill a need for the community.
   What is the purpose of your project? What need or gap will it address? Who will it help? How will it help them?

6. Successful projects form part of a web of community literacy supports such as libraries and adult education programs. Successful projects are a part of a larger educational plan.
   How does your proposed project fit into the Huron Heights neighbourhood literacy plan?

7. Successful projects use community resources.
   What community resources (e.g. local meeting spaces, local businesses, local residents) will your proposed project employ?

8. Successful projects are collaborative.
   Who is on your team? What are their strengths? What tasks will each of them do?

9. Successful projects are the products of strong community partnerships.
   (*For residents) Who is on your team? What role will each team member take?*
   (For organizations) What kinds of input did residents give to your project? Did you share the project with residents? How will you make sure that residents continue to have input?

10. A successful program uses a participatory method to assess and document progress and to evaluate the effectiveness of different aspects of the program in helping participants meet their learning goals.
    How will your project include participants in assessment?

Another set of success statements refers specific to family literacy programs. Following the pattern above, applicants could be asked to show how their proposed program can demonstrate success.

a. Successful programs help parents understand the importance of their role. Parents are responsible for implementing the strategies. They also educate parents about quality early childhood programs.

b. In successful programs leaders support parents by teaching simple strategies. Leaders can help parents learn the strategies by sharing information, demonstrating simple activities, and providing opportunities for practice.

c. Successful programs for very young children provide opportunities for language learning. They focus on building vocabulary, literacy enjoyment, and comprehension of concepts and ideas The types of language and activities experienced at church, the zoo, when shopping, at a park, and visiting friends and relatives are all relevant.

d. Successful programs provide regular and intensive literacy support over long periods of time (16 weeks is better than 6.)

e. Successful family literacy programs support the learning efforts of all family members by using a wide variety of instructional methods, strategies and materials.

f. Successful programs can be modified. While a program model may be followed, modifications are made continually to meet the needs, interests and capabilities of program participants.

g. Successful family literacy programs are culturally sensitive, and use resources that are appropriate for specific participant groups.

h. Successful family literacy programs offer activities that celebrate and emphasize the joy of learning.

i. Successful family literacy programs follow sound educational practices, appropriate for the literacy development of children and adults. Practitioners select from a variety of research-based approaches according to the needs of each group.

j. Successful family literacy programs are held in accessible, welcoming locations. Support is given to overcome barriers to participation, such as lack of child care.

4.7   Concluding Remarks

Chapter Four drew on findings presented in the first three chapters to make recommendations for the promotion of literacy as a way of life in community-based initiatives. Four broad recommendations are implied by this synthesis.

1. Support authentic and collaborative programs.
   There is strong evidence that print literacy development depends on learners acquiring certain understandings about how print works, a rich vocabulary, phonemic awareness (the ability to hear the individual sounds in a word). Programs that aim to teach can support literacy as a way of life because most people benefit from some instruction.

2. Weave literacy into culturally shaped and valued activities.
   Literacy learning opportunities are embedded in culturally shaped practices. The task is to identify the opportunities and sometimes to nudge the practices into a literacy shape. (Chapters One and Two)

3. Build a web of support for residents and practitioners.
   Networking and marketing are necessary components of spreading the word, but the principles of critical community practice suggest that stakeholders with relatively more power should make spaces for those with less power to develop their voices. (Chapters Two and Three)

4. Be prepared to fund operating costs. The reluctance of funders to support the nasic operations of an organization is understandable, but there will be situations where the most appropriate action is to support infrastructure and operations. Each case should be treated on its own merits. (Chapters Two and Three)

In addition to the four recommendations the literature review points to a need to attend to digital technologies. New Literacy Studies research suggests that new technologies and digital culture are profoundly influencing the ways people communicate outside of formal educational settings. Educational practices lag behind the research and behind the out-of-school practices of most children and youth. Digital literacies are literacies in their own rights, not just a way into print.

Several lists or frameworks for g*ood, promising* and *best practice* statements were discussed in detail in the Chapters Two and Three and they employed in Chapter Four to develop a list of criteria for a small grants program.

A significant portion of Chapter Four has been devoted to criteria for small grants programs, that is criteria that funders might employ when reviewing proposals. As noted earlier, small grants can provide an incentive for residents' involvement in change processes. Small-scale projects help groups to focus energy on small, manageable tasks that can build momentum. In keeping with the principle of integration, a small grants program will be most effective where projects are integrated in a larger initiative.

It seems redundant to add that no single strategy can independently support literacy as a way of life in a neighbourhood. Instruction can support individuals and groups in developing literacy; everyday activities can be mined for literacy learning opportunities and enriched by the infusion of new literacy practices; awareness of literacy issues can be promoted through coordinated outreach from schools and literacy organizations to local organizations, the business community and resident-led neighbourhood-based groups.

Finally, outreach should be understood as multidirectional. Residents need to reach out to schools and organizations to say what they need. This ideal situation requires that a good deal of energy and substantial resources should be devoted to capacity building.

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