

**CURRICULUM AS A SAFE PLACE:
PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF NEW LITERACIES
IN A RURAL SMALL TOWN SCHOOL***

[Michael Corbett](#) and Ann Vibert, *Acadia University*

New literacies have challenged all players in the educational enterprise in many different ways. Youth are now engaged in literacies that extend well beyond the safe and respected traditional texts that their parents experienced in school. In this research we analyze parents' perceptions of the relative educational value of their children's different textual engagements both in and out of school. We find that parents employed a textual hierarchy of educational value with the traditional *hard copy* school textbook and literature at the top of the pyramid, and *plastic* virtual and visual texts at the bottom. These assessments are understood within a framework that employs the idea of safety to understand how parents navigate and negotiate the often risky literate engagements their children enjoy.

This paper analyses data from a film-making project entitled *A Lens on Community: Video Ensemble Process in a Rural Middle School*. There were three general objectives in the project. First, the project sought to tap into energy surrounding new visual literacies in a school that had had little formal engagement with contemporary technologies and particularly, with film as a literary medium. Second, the project sought to engage educators and students critically with

* The authors would like to acknowledge funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for financial support of the research upon which this writing is based. We would also like to thank the school board and school staff, parents and students for their cooperation and collaboration. Unfortunately, for reasons of confidentiality we are unable to name names specifically.

key issues in the rural community. Finally, the project sought to understand how rural children, parents, and teachers understand literacy/literacies in light of the proliferation of new information technologies and in the face of a narrow accountability regime around literacy.

Our theoretical orientation draws on two principal strands of thinking. First, this work was located broadly in the idea of place-based or place-conscious education (Greenwood & Smith, 2008; Gruenewald, 2003; Theobald, 1997), particularly as it applies to literacy education (Comber, Nixon, & Reid, 2007; Thomson, 2006). Second, we situated this project in context of the New Literacy Studies [NLS] (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2001; Gee, 1999; Street, 2003). The NLS framework understands literacy as a social practice. We believe that by bringing these theoretical frameworks into conversation, place-based education might be conceptualized in a more complex way, accounting for the impact of emerging technologies in rural communities.

This project employed qualitative methods including: observation using traditional ethnographic data collection practices (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), video recording, semi-structured interviews (Spradley, 1979), and diary-keeping. The methodological orientation in this project drew on an interpretive framework in which we were interested in understanding how actors operating individually and collectively make sense of their social worlds. The observational aspects of this project were integrated into a practical classroom component which was, in essence, an action-research project undertaken collaboratively by university researchers, student teachers, and school-based educators. This methodology attempted to integrate social research more seamlessly into forms of reflective classroom practice that seek to improve quality of literacy teaching and learning with technology in a rural community.

This paper discusses the implications of several key findings from the ongoing research.

Here we present findings related to parental perceptions of what we call the *hierarchy of text* in which different forms of textual material are understood to be more or less important. Second, we argue that parental understandings of literacy are cast in terms of old and emerging problems of safety. Our process moved students through an engagement with relatively freeform improvisation on film to more structured pieces designed to articulate with curriculum goals and to analyze community. We argue that place-based educational practices must combine an element of critical reflection that allows students to investigate community questions in authentic conditions. This authenticity involves transforming curriculum from a safe, hierarchical place to a risky, improvised one. The ubiquitous and unavoidable (and we think productive) tension between the “safe” scripted curriculum and official knowledge on one hand, and “risky” improvisation, generativity and creativity on the other, are central to our analysis. We begin with a discussion of the intersection of rural social space and our understanding of literacies.

New Literacies in Rural Social Space

In recent years both educational research and research on rurality have been challenged by spatial analysis (Green, 2010; Green & Letts, 2007; Leander, Phillips, & Taylor, 2010). Cutting edge research in literacy is now defined well beyond traditional and established print-based categories of reading, writing and speech. Theorists now speak of a proliferation of multiliteracies and new ways of making and interpreting text broadly understood (Coiro, Knoble, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008; Comber et al., 2007; New London Group, 1996; Street, 2003). Multiple ways of reading and writing the world are also drawn into contemporary literacies discourse; areas such as ecological literacy, numeracy, critical literacy, media literacy, scientific

literacy, and political literacy, for example, enhance the way symbolic production and interpretation are now understood in more complex ways. For instance, in the 3D model of literacy proposed by Durrant and Green (2000), and in the four resources model developed by Freebody and Luke (1990), cultural and critical features are added to conventional technical and pragmatic understandings of the character of literacy. Additionally, it is now understood that literacy is a social practice in which differently positioned social actors read and write the world in non-standard ways. The multiplicity of cultural and social practices evident in multicultural societies like Canada challenges singular and unified definitions of what might be termed “big L” Literacy. Because the idea of literacy carries so much freight, it is now spoken of in the plural, or as *literacies*. Contemporary information technologies also add to the complexity. The rapid spread of mobile communication, easily accessible image making technology, wireless computing, and a more widely accessible broad band internet are just some of the change forces that have driven reconceptualization of the ways people are literate.

At the same time a new emphasis on place and space in social sciences generally, and in educational thought in particular, has led to new ways of thinking about ruralities and education. As educational thought has come to focus on a multiplicity of aspects of what might be called the uneven development of education, it is clear that rural spaces are one largely unexamined space of social disadvantage (Ward & Brown, 2009). Rural spaces too are now considered as multiple and distinct rather than uniform and vestigial (OECD, 2006). As the Canadian state has begun to develop rural policy that recognizes the diversity of ruralities, rural education scholarship has not been as responsive. It is equally clear that traditional ways of understanding rural space are no longer adequate as ruralities are transformed, sometimes radically, by globalization, the spread of mobile communication technologies, and the same contemporary

change forces that have transformed literacy. Similarly, we believe that narrow understandings of both literacy and rurality have not been particularly helpful in addressing the transformation of rural communities and regions both in Canada and around the world (Kvalsund & Hargreaves, 2009). As a result, rural areas are typically defined as problem spaces to be fixed or alternatively to be abandoned, particularly by youth (Carr & Kefalas, 2009; Corbett, 2006, 2007).

In this paper we deal with data from parental interviews conducted in year 1 of the project, 2008-09. In the larger project we investigated how three main constituencies in the educational process (students, parents and teachers) each understand contemporary literacies and the tension between what is perceived as the relative safety of simpler, controlled, and more traditional spaces in language curriculum and the emergence of relatively risky, creative, and anarchistic spaces of emerging non-traditional literacies. New literacies are implicated powerfully in contemporary transformations of rural space, and youth are, to a considerable degree, on the cutting edge of many aspects of this change (Looker & Naylor, 2010). The new and emerging virtual environments accessible with digital communication tools are risky and exciting to youth, and often perceived to be of dubious value and safety to the established generation.

While all three constituencies register, in different ways, tensions between safe and risky literacies, we argue that nostalgic visions of a traditional and simple rural social space are associated, particularly for parents, with controlled, basic-skills, static, “hard-copy” visions of literacy education. Parents see their role and that of the school as one of regulating the relatively anarchistic and risky creative affordances presented to children by new media and the virtual spaces youth now inhabit. These spaces are exciting, fluid, immediate, and mobile, representing a plasticity of meaning and representation. The film-making project, then, was viewed with

considerable ambivalence because it represented one form of the broader array of *plastic* literacies that introduce new risks, opportunities and seductions into family life. The place of such literacies in school was therefore understood by parents with a heavy undercurrent of ambivalence. As a result parents spoke about the introduction of video into the literacy curriculum primarily in terms of broader issues of textual control and safety.

Literacy Curriculum as a Safe Place and the Hierarchy of Text

If given the opportunity he'd play games all the time. He'd never crack a book. I worry about him. (Parent)

Our first set of interviews was conducted with a sample of parents whose children were participants in the film-making project. We borrowed the idea of hierarchy from Ivor Goodson's (1993) concept of the *hierarchy of curriculum*, or the idea that more esoteric and abstract subject matter is accorded the highest status while those school subjects which are more concrete and pragmatically oriented are relegated to relatively low status in schools. High status subjects are tested while low status subjects are not, serving in the pragmatic vein as “their own reward.” We found a somewhat similar status system in parents' sense of the importance of different forms of text. This sense of the relative importance of virtual and physical text dovetails with questions of safety and the control of text and space:

We're involved in a media driven society. Everything today seems to be focused on what you see in the news and find on the Internet. And it's an opportunity for people who wouldn't normally have the visibility to give them an opportunity to share their ideas and information. So I think video is a great communication tool. It's another skill they should learn. Not necessarily a primary skill like reading or writing but it is a skill that you should learn. (Parent)

Generally, parents' responses to their children's involvement with virtual and visual literacies were complex. Many parents recognized the centrality of digital literacies in their own

work lives and social worlds, and consequently framed such textual practices as an appropriate component of the school literacy curriculum. They understood these plastic texts as engaging, and marked the social and educational value of that engagement. Nevertheless, like the parent above, most placed a higher premium on reading and writing print texts, perhaps in deference to their ongoing association with school success. High status, developmentally sequenced texts were considered safe and approved. The skills they “taught” were understood to be “basic” or necessary for both literacy and for securing employment and full social participation. The relative importance of different forms of text and the focus on technical aspects of literacy were typically framed in terms of safety in a number of different ways.

Growing Up Too Fast? Textual Sequencing and Risky Literacies

Safety was the central theme in parental interviews, and new and emerging literacies brought new risks into the lives of children, even when the children were ensconced in the family home. Parental safety-related concerns were multiple. They were concerned about dangers of the reception and production of inappropriate internet content and the possibility of private playfulness becoming public information. The potential for stalking and abuse was also important for parents. They realized that emerging virtual social networking spaces like Facebook and Twitter are not as safe as they imagined their small town and rural communities to be, because “everybody knows everybody else.” Apart from issues concerning physical safety and the difficulty of controlling age-appropriate content, there were other concerns about health and social development. Parents were concerned that increasing engagement in the virtual worlds of information technology will cause youth to become physically inactive—what one parent called “isolationists,” or people who lack social abilities and sensibilities, even losing

touch with nature and their own bodies.

The idea of safe internet spaces was a prominent preoccupation for these parents. All parents maintained some form of surveillance over their children's internet activity and negotiated their access (time and content) to cyberspace. Notions of developmental appropriateness of internet content emerged as a central safety issue for many parents. For them, controlling what children might access was a way of dealing with the fear that the “normal” developmental life sequence is artificially accelerated and even set asunder by the dangerous texts available on the internet. The idea of safety was frequently combined with developmental appropriateness:

I think that children today are growing up too fast. It's like... it's like they have access to so many things and they view so many things that I never did when I was a kid and they think it makes them more mature. With all the things kids see on TV and see on the computer, they should have to wait until they're a certain age to see. Um, with Mary, I try to make sure she's at her own age level with what she sees and I try to make sure that there are restrictions so she doesn't have access to too much. There are a lot of inappropriate things she could see on the internet but we talk about these and she knows what she should or shouldn't be doing, like Facebook. She knows she's not allowed to go on there and she knows why because there's a lot of people who can go there and say they are someone they're not and do whatever and that's not fair to kids who don't have the understanding of, um, of mature stuff. I think Mary is a mature girl but not mature enough yet to fully understand certain actions and consequences.

The idea that children are “growing up too fast” illustrates how idealized, safe sequencing of access to text is important to parents. Questions of safety are merged with problems of literacy in the sense that plastic text is understood to be both seductive and dangerous, and at the same time insufficiently “educational” or challenging enough to promote high quality literacy, which ironically, is now thought to be more necessary than ever before. Most parents commented on how new textual environments have done nothing to diminish traditional literacy demands for the emerging generation. Still, there is debate among parents

about which sites are safe and educational.

In emerging textual environments it has become increasingly difficult to control when children are exposed to various forms of controversial or adult content. Parents struggle with the timing of exposure to adult knowledge particularly around questions of sexuality. Media provide what parents consider to be early exposure and it is understood to be the role of the school to contextualize and educate youth around questions of sexuality raised in media. This parent struggles to understand how contemporary sex education curriculum relates to media exposure to sexuality:

They see more on TV, they hear more on the radio they see more and read more on the Internet so they are exposed to an awful lot. Doesn't mean that it was the right time for them to hear it. ... So ya, they are overwhelmed, and have the opportunity to grow up faster. There is also the opportunity, if, if the media is used correctly, it can be used to protect this child... I guess that is why they are teaching it earlier, so they know. So if you use that info well, then they have the opportunity to still being a child. (Parent)

Ironically it is the holding power of emerging literacies in virtual environments (i.e. mobile communication technologies, gaming and internet) that are understood to generate these and other new risks. As Beck (1992) argued, contemporary social actors now face the ambivalent prospect of having to manage multiple manufactured problems created by technological affordances and social conditions that demand increasing individualization and increasing standardization at the same time. While most parents tended to hold a standardized basic-skills oriented vision of literacy learning founded on reading and writing developmentally normed texts, they also saw the power of new textual environments to engage their children's unique interests and to support literacy learning. Parents generally understood that individualized multiple literacies are important for their children's education and also that the children are engaged in multiple ways of making meaning and communicating. Still, parents tended to see

the need to balance their children's engagement in virtual environments and, often, to negotiate what they saw as virtual play-time in exchange for what they saw as reading important school-based text. In response to a question about the kinds of reading his child does, this parent commented that it is mostly mediated by the computer:

Most of the stuff they do is just getting on the internet and reading whatever's on there, not just Facebook. They do their homework and that kind of stuff. I would say the majority of it is computer related... They write in journals and they are always talking to each other. There's a lot of keyboard work going on upstairs, whether they are talking to friends or that sort of thing. They are allowed an hour and a half each day after school on the computer. We allow them an hour and a half everyday to go on stuff like Facebook and other safe sites. (Parent)

Regulation and negotiation notwithstanding, recent research is uncovering a significant transformation in the way youth consume and produce media. The amount of time young people spend using interactive and networked information technologies has already surpassed that of older transmission-oriented media like television and movies. In addition, the Pew Foundation recently found that the gaming industry has surpassed the film industry in economic importance. The rapid escalation in youth engagement in interactive and productive spaces of Web 2.0 has brought new safety questions rapidly to the fore as families and schools attempt to understand how to deal with Facebook, Youtube, texting, online gaming, and other forms of interactive and participatory media. Each of these media was seen to introduce new seductions, diverting children's attention from traditional print literacy.

The Safety of the Book: The Developmental and Moral Power of the School Text

Parents expect schools to provide children with safe, appropriate, and, most importantly, sequenced educational material. This material is thought to be designed and presented in such a way that it supports and does not interfere with what is seen as the natural developmental and

maturation process. In other words, it allows children to be children in an idealized protected school space. Curriculum is understood to be a safe, “quality controlled” place where textual rituals are familiar and predictable: “They still read books in school and that is good. There is no quality control online you know. The books they study in school, you know, the information is right” (Parent).

Regardless of differences about the safety of particular on-line environments, there is a common sense that mundane virtual texts are unregulated and thus of limited quality. Regulated “hard-copy” book knowledge is considered to be the gold-standard that matters in terms of academic achievement in the highly controlled textual environment of the school:

When I think about educational books, I think about textbooks and good novels, you know, like the ones I read in school. And when I see him come through the door with those kind of books in his backpack, it kind of makes me feel he's ... I don't know ... is safe the right word? (Parent)

Parents also trust schools to retain the close child surveillance values and procedures that typified life in rural communities. Parents in this study seemed to be increasingly aware that their rural town is no escape and that their children are both virtually mobile and potentially “out of sight” at a very early age. New communication technologies have compressed space for children and youth, and the rural community no longer offers protection from the seductions, influences and dangers typically associated with urban spaces. While parents commented on how communication technologies have fragmented the experience of home life as family members pursue their own interests in isolation, they also appreciated the choices these technologies have made possible. But the independence their children gain on-line also generates additional safety and security concerns. For these parents, the school represented a controlled space in which children are kept safe while away from the family home. In some respects the school was seen as a safer, more controlled place because it is not as technologically advanced as the home. Parents

expected that similarly vigilant surveillance and monitoring practices operated at school.

Expected surveillance practices included the promotion of reading “appropriate” books such as age-appropriate novels, subject text books and approved non-fiction titles. In fact, the “good book” itself is a security measure because its content is officially approved and controlled. The trade-off between time spent on the computer doing “research” and time spent reading “real books” was often negotiated by parents to insure an appropriate level of engagement with serious text. In one case, a parent spoke to a process of trading 20 minutes of “reading” for 20 minutes of computer time:

Jimmy has to read 20 minutes every night. We’re trying to get out of this 20 minute time for reading that you have to do, then it’s not really, because I want to, and we’ve now counted time on the computer, if he is doing research, and we also give him time to research his interest. So rather than doing a book he can sit on the computer for 20 minutes and provide me with details on something that he has researched that is of his interest. Just trying to get away from the “I have to do 20 minutes.” (Parent)

While this parent, like others, saw the trade-off as problematic, they felt compelled to offer their children incentive for spending time with static book text.

Literate activity on the Internet is seen as important and, indeed, parents marvel at the sophisticated forms of literate performances their children undertake using computers. They actively problem-solve and “figure it out” in ways that they are not willing or able to do in mundane school activity using school texts. The textual spaces of the Internet, though, are seen with ambivalence as both motivating yet insufficiently challenging for children. It is the ease of use of these texts, their uncertain and uncontrolled content, as well as their visual nature that causes the ironic problem of being “too easy” to access:

Well friends have posted things from Playstation 3 on YouTube. They watch video games while they are playing video games, if that makes any sense. They have taped games, and they were watching them and talking about it. I don't know about that, I don't know how he managed that, he doesn't really take the

initiative with books and school. But with video games, he does. At least it is user friendly, but it's almost too user friendly. (Parent)

Ease of access could be a problem for a number of reasons. Young people can access inappropriate material, putting them in danger. They can achieve or access ideas without having to both put in time for maturation and the moratorium appropriate to the achievement of adult wisdom and the accompanying right to view, understand, and create adult content. This potentially puts youth into unsafe situations of the sort portrayed regularly and sensationally in the media. There is also the sense in which learning to read and to write and learning high status subjects is a process that takes time and a scholarly period of apprenticeship and practice. This academic apprenticeship involves the establishment of disciplined scholarly habits. This is hard work as opposed to the apparent ease and immediacy of new visually-based literacies. Yet, online text and video games may serve a purpose if they can motivate a child to do what one parent characterized as “hard-copy reading”: “What kind of reading do I want to see my children doing? Well, definitely hard copy reading, so books they take home, books they have in the classroom ...” (Parent).

Morality and safety merged for parents who believed that things are often too easy for their children. They worried that ease of access and the apparently easy, fluent production of pragmatic yet ungrammatical MSN messages, Facebook or Twitter posts, and text messages inculcate habits that contradict the hard work of mastering authorized school literacies. Emerging literacies were seen rather as windows into the future, which is a place that is unknown, potentially unsafe, yet alive with creative possibility. These literacies sat uneasily with parents, representing outlets that allowed children spaces for escape from the mundane routine of the “important” traditional schooled curriculum which is itself represented by hard-copy text:

Well it is definitely a creative outlet, I think it's important because it allows

children to show another side depending what you're doing on the video, it can maybe be a different character, a lot of times kids change when they are on camera and it allows them to be silly, be creative, maybe say what's on their mind, when normally there in school, just orderly and not always allowed to do that and it just gives them something different to focus on as well and something that is more closely related to maybe what they like to do at home so they'll grasp it easier. (Parent)

Parents understood that the safety of traditional curriculum involves routine, repetition, inactivity and even boredom, and they realized that their children need an element of excitement and release in an otherwise highly controlled school situation. School, like the rural community, is understood to be what Baeck (2004) called a safe yet boring place. Notwithstanding multiple safety concerns, the introduction of video was seen as an important window on new technology and (ironically) a safety valve to allow for some creative release in an otherwise buttoned-down school experience. The introduction of this new literacy into curriculum represented for parents a mechanism for mitigating the possible dangers of a school literacy curriculum that is too boring, too inactive and too focussed on mechanics and testing. It was not, however, seen as legitimate literate expression, but rather an activity that mirrored the engaging yet easy creativity afforded by information technologies more generally. School, then, reflected the safe yet boring nature of rural social space, and parents saw a need for diversion, excitement, self-direction, and creativity in curriculum so that their children would remain engaged in what they saw as the critically important skills-based literacy agenda of the school.

Conclusion

This project demonstrated the complexity of contemporary in-school and out-of-school literacies and the ways that these spaces come together in a small town/rural school. While parents attempted to maintain a coherent sense of community as a space that needs to be

conserved in the face of urbanization and technological change, students appeared to see community as an amalgam of virtual and physical locations. Whether this is a developmental issue for 12 to 14 year old children, or whether it represents emerging understandings and experiences of rural space and place, is an interesting question. What is clear is that play spaces for these youth weave the virtual and physical in ways that are both new and disconcerting to their parents.

The tensions expressed by parents in this study between safe school literacies and the unruly world of digital communication technologies mirror current and more wide-spread tensions, as school systems struggle with increasingly irresistible questions about the educational place of web-based and visual literacies. The challenge for schools is to find ways, on the one hand, to draw these new literacies into meaningful engagement with curriculum, and, simultaneously, to open spaces for genuine dialogue with parents on questions of the changing nature of literacies in and out of school. Through authentic engagement with adults in the community we began to move slowly in this direction. Nevertheless, this level of community work is time-consuming and teachers are pressured to devote time preparing for state assessments and other administrative constraints. In an important sense, it is the traditionalist vision of the hierarchy of text and the community, and administrative pressure that teachers face, that make it difficult to expand the scope of what counts as literacy in this small town/rural school.

Challenging the narrowness of curriculum helped us focus on current preoccupations with curriculum as a controlled place of safety. This was most powerfully illustrated by parents' safety concerns and by their organized and hierarchical understandings of which texts were of the highest quality and value. Valuable texts were those associated with academic capital,

representing vehicles that would insure the safe passage of their children through the risky terrain of public schooling. In the context of schooling as it is presently constituted, they were not wrong. Parental safety concerns are mirrored by standardized accountability regimes which are often promoted as safety measures or quality control systems to insure the creation of human capital necessary for competitive global economies (Spring, 2008). In concrete terms, engagement with print “approved” school text was perceived by parents to be a safe road to post-secondary education and elite job markets, and in this assessment they were at least partially correct.

Regardless of system and generational pressures toward traditional literacy curriculum in schools, young people are engaging with emerging literacies that constitute the worlds they inhabit, and as these parents understood, such engagement entails dangers both real and imagined. Schools and school systems are responding to these engagements and dangers in different ways, and in doing so are provoking, whether or not we are prepared, a debate on the place of new literacies in schools and school curricula. Questions of safety appear to be emerging as central themes in that debate. While schools may find it understandably tempting to address their safety responsibilities by regulating and/or banishing in-school engagements with risky literacies, history would indicate that such approaches provide an illusory safety. The central implication of our work with parents through this project is that dialogue between schools and communities on the changing nature of literacies, and their implications for public education, is not only timely and welcome but also inevitable.

Rural community is now understood by both parents and students as a location from which to access a broad array of information, perspectives, ideas, and images. It should come as no surprise that rural youth are excited by the risky possibilities opened up to them in virtual

spaces. It should also come as no surprise that rural parents who themselves often hold relatively conservative place-based values are concerned with real and imagined dangers lurking on the virtual horizon. The tension between the safety and security of a rural community and the risky geographies of emerging communities provides a backdrop against which new literacies are enacted. Place-based education in rural contexts is a lot more complicated than we might have imagined even a few short years ago.

References

- Baeck, D. (2004). The urban ethos: Locality and youth in north Norway. *Young, 12*, 99–115.
- Barton, D., & Hamilton, M. (2000). *Local literacies: Reading and writing in one community*. London: Routledge.
- Barton, D., Hamilton, M., & Ivanic, R. (2001). *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context*. New York: Routledge.
- Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society: Towards a new modernity*. London: Sage.
- Carr, P., & Kefalas, M. (2009). *Hollowing out the middle: The rural brain drain and what it means for America*. Boston: Beacon.
- Coiro, J., Knoble, M., Lankshear, C., & Leu, D. (Eds.) (2008). *Handbook of research on new literacies*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Comber, B., Nixon, H., & Reid, J. (2007). *Literacies in place: Teaching environmental communications*. Newtown, Austral.: Primary English Teaching Association.
- Corbett, M. (2006). Educating the country out of the child and educating the child out of the country. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 52*, 286-298.
- Corbett M. (2007). *Learning to leave: The irony of schooling in a coastal community*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood.
- Durrant, C., & Green, B. (2000). Literacy and the new technologies in school education: Meeting the l(IT)eracy challenge. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 23*, 89-108.
- Freebody, P., & Luke, A. (1990). “Literacies” programs: Debates and demands in cultural context. *Prospect, 5*(3), 7-16.
- Gee, J. P. (1999). *The new literacy studies and the “social turn.” ERIC Opinion Paper* (ED442118). Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED442118&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED442118
- Goodson, I. (1993). *School subjects and curriculum change: Studies in curriculum history*. Washington: Falmer.
- Green, B. (2010, June). *Education and rural-regional sustainability*. Paper presented to the American Educational Research Association, Denver.
- Green, B., & Letts, W. (2007). Space, equity and rural education: A trialectical account. In K. Gulson & C. Symes (Eds.), *Spatial theories of education: Space and geography matters*.

- New York: Routledge.
- Greenwood, D., & Smith, G. (2008). *Place-based education in the global age: Local diversity*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Grunewald, D. (2003). Foundations of place: A multidisciplinary framework for place-conscious education. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40, 619–654.
- Kvalsund, R., & Hargreaves, L. (2009). Review of research in rural schools and their communities: Analytical perspectives and a new agenda. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 48, 140-149.
- Leander, K., Phillips, N., & Taylor, K. (2010). The changing spaces of learning: Mapping new mobilities. *Review of Research in Education*, 34, 329-394.
- Looker, D., & Naylor, T. (2010). *Digital diversity: Youth, equity and information technology*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press.
- New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66, 60-92.
- OECD. (2006). *The new rural paradigm: Policies and governance*. Paris: author.
- Spring, J. (2008). *Globalization of education: An introduction*. New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Spradley J. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. New York: Holt Reinhart and Winston.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. London: Sage.
- Street, B. (2003). What's "new" in New Literacy Studies? Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 5, 77-91.
- Theobald, P. (1997). *Teaching the commons: Place, pride and the renewal of community*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Thomson, P. (2006). Miners, diggers, ferrets and show-men: School–community projects that affirm and unsettle identities and place? *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 27, 81–96.
- Ward, N., & Brown, D. (2009). Placing the rural in regional development. *Regional Studies*, 43, 1237-1244.