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# Chapter 18

## Stories Make Readers: Enhancing the Use of Fictional Literature With Multilingual Students

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### ABSTRACT

*Using literature in multilingual and second language classes promotes literacy skills and helps children to adapt to second language instruction. This chapter presents the theoretical framework and practical implementations for enhancing the use of literature in multilingual environments employing Stories Make Readers (StoRe)–project as an example. StoRe concept helps to promote the use of fictional literature and to increase the reading materials and reading time at school and at home. An important aim is to offer, in multilingual groups, reading materials that correspond to the reading abilities and interest of the readers, and to connect different collaborative, child-centered, and multidisciplinary activities in reading. The multilingual line of the StoRe project, called Creating Innovative Approaches to Language Education (IKI), identifies and promotes innovative models for the use and development of language in education and creates research-based, pedagogical maps that help teachers develop and improve their pedagogical practices.*

### INTRODUCTION

**Literature** is beneficial for human growth and education: it supports the development of thinking, promotes readers imagination, gives information about life, society, and language, and allows readers to experience various cultures, people, and life situations with empathy (Aerila, 2010; Nussbaum, 2005). It also plays a key role in language acquisition. Using literature in multilingual and second language classes can promote literacy skills and help children adapt to second language instruction. Literature can act as a change-agent because it deals with real-life situations and aspects of humans and can therefore

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## **Stories Make Readers**

affect children's development and help establish positive relational and intracultural attitudes (Alverman & Phelps, 1998). In multilingual and multicultural settings, literature can have special value for recognizing cultural roots and affirming identity of individuals. Children's literature acts as a cultural and linguistic resource for individuals of different ages and gives opportunities for interpretation, reflection, and discussion to children and adults; therefore, it increases the sense of language/cultural community and creates opportunities to be active (Ilyas, 2016; see also Curtin in this volume).

Exposure to fictional books enhances the development of second language skills because reading literature positively affects vocabulary growth, reading rate, the amount of reading, and motivation to read (Lao & Krashen, 2000). Literature can be used in several areas composing second language acquisition (Alisaari, 2016), and it is particularly effective in increasing vocabulary and literacy skills. The connection between literature and word study is an important notion because communication is challenging without sufficient vocabulary (Hulstijn, 2010), and literacy skills are necessary for success in all school subjects (Alisaari, 2016e).

The interest in reading for pleasure has been declining globally over the last decade (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Hooper, 2017). On the contrary, research has reported that students can perceive reading for pleasure as having a role in improving second language skills, and they believe reading literature can help them in their future studies and support them in becoming active members of society (Lao & Krashen, 2000). Therefore, parents and other adults (teachers) have the important task of developing children's interest in books and reading. This mostly involves making reading an everyday practice and an enjoyable routine; it can entail, for example, making the readership of others visible and creating meaningful reading experiences for children. The value and meaningfulness of reading can be visualized by access to books, opportunities to share reading experiences, time for reading in comfortable places, and motivational activities to connect literature and reading (Aerila & Kauppinen, 2019; Cremin, Mottram, Collins, Powell & Safford, 2014; Wigfield, Gladstone, & Turci, 2016). Positive reading atmosphere is also important for pleasant reading experiences and creating a community of readers (Bärlund & Kauppinen, 2017). This is the case in both monolingual and multilingual groups (Enz, 2003).

Teachers and the educational environment play a remarkable role in enhancing the knowledge and competencies of multilingual and multicultural families regarding the development of literacy skills, awareness of children's literature, and the meaning of literature for children. However, **multilingual literacy** practices seem rare in classrooms and schools (see, for example, Tarnanen, Kauppinen, & Ylämäki, 2017). Classrooms still implement pedagogies that are restrictive, i.e., language development is treated a rigid action, which is not related to individual's condition and language environments. As a result, pedagogy remains restricting in relation to children's volition and social interaction as readers. Children seem to consider reading as a matter of proficiency and not pleasure, while teachers tend to use independent reading time to meet the school's assessment or accountability requirements by, for example, focusing on reading comprehension tasks, rather than enhancing the joy of reading. Moreover, reading aloud, instead of reading and responding to the text, is often practiced for comprehension and vocabulary extension, in line with the assessment expectations (Cremin et al., 2014; Kauppinen & Aerila, 2019a; Merisuo-Storm & Aerila, 2018).

To counter such pedagogical approaches to reading and to promote the use of fictional literature in classrooms and during family reading, we have conducted the Stories Make Readers project (StoRe-project). This chapter relies on the theoretical framework and experiences of this project. The main issues include the meaning of reading fiction, creating **communities of readers**, and investing in multilingual resources for children. **StoRe-project** aims to increase the reading materials and reading time at schools

and home, offer reading materials that correspond to the reading abilities and interest of the readers, and connect reading to different collaborative, child-centered, and multidisciplinary activities. In addition, StoRe-project encourages teachers and parents to be aware of the importance of reading and the influence of their reading habits on children, and it enhances classroom pedagogy so that it focuses on using more literature both in language lessons and other disciplines (Aerila & Kauppinen, 2019; Kauppinen & Aerila, 2019a, 2019b).

In its original stages in 2017, StoRe-project focused on reading in monolingual settings and then continued and expanded with more multilingual perspectives. The multilingual line of the project, called IKI, aims to identify and promote innovative models for the use and development of language in education from early childhood throughout comprehensive school and to create research-based, pedagogical collections of good practices, that help school and early childhood teachers develop their pedagogical practices. StoRe-project focuses on literature education from the IKI aims' perspective. The Finnish Ministry of Culture and Education 2018–2021 funds the IKI project.

The present chapter presents the theoretical framework and practical implementations for enhancing the use of literature in multilingual and multicultural settings using specific examples from StoRe project. The chapter aims to help teachers, parents, and school administrators alter the dominant, mainly monolingual literacy practices, to promote the use of non-dominant languages in diverse settings, to support the language identity of multilingual children, and to create language-oriented communities at school, where multi-literacy is at the core of learning (cf. Finnish National Board of Education, 2014).

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **Reading Literature in Multicultural Settings**

Literature plays an important role in the education of second language learners and in multilingual settings. The importance of reading and literacy skills in the development of a child's academic skills, emotions, and coping mechanisms is undeniable (Aerila & Merisuo-Storm, 2018; Allington & Gabriel, 2012). Recent studies emphasize the value of implementing children's literature in multilingual classrooms from an early age and indicate that children's literature can be very effective in acquiring a second language for students of all ages (Aerila & Kokkola, 2015; Chen, 2014).

Literature is currently used to teach different school subjects, but it is unclear to what extent. Most commonly, it is employed to motivate or illustrate certain concepts, such as the main character, environment, turning point or plot. Moreover, the methods interconnecting literature to teaching are unstable, as is the general case with teaching language arts (Kauppinen & Aerila, 2019a). For example, in national curricula in Europe, the status of literature can vary from being integrated with language and communication to constituting a separate, autonomous subject (Sawyer & Van de Ven, 2007). In Finland, literature is integrated with first language (L1) teaching, and the national curriculum for basic education (2014) connects literature education with experiential reading, canon-based teaching, and literature analysis (Kauppinen, 2010).

Literature is about stories. Storytelling is a profound human activity; we understand and describe our experiences through stories. Stories are used to teach, to remember things, and to entertain or warn of danger. Literature is a form of stories saved for generations, and it is through literature that individuals can ponder and build their life stories (Alsup, 2015; Gottschall, 2012; Schank, 2002). Children should

## **Stories Make Readers**

have the opportunity to hear and read literature that have characters, settings, or series of events to which they can relate. This is not always easy since different people empathize with different texts and characters (Aerila, 2010; Aerila & Kokkola, 2013; Alsup, 2015). Empathizing with different features of literature is called social imagination, according to which reading literature exposes one's ability to imagine others' situations, empathize with them, and consider their perspective (Aerila, 2010; Alsup, 2015). Particularly children from multicultural communities can find role models, experiences, and ideas for the identity work in literature with multicultural contents (Aerila & Kokkola, 2013).

Literature affects everyone regardless of age, race, class, or gender, as it has a potential to describe events common to all humanity (Gopalakrishnan, 2011). Reading fiction might be a more effective learning method than reading mere factual material because understanding fiction is more complex; in addition to information processing and reasoning, fiction readers need to imagine and empathize with the described situations, people, and events (Aerila & Kokkola, 2013; Nussbaum, 2005). Therefore, the reader is more involved in the process of understanding the text. The language of fiction is metaphorical; readers, therefore need to interpret the text to understand it. Learning through fiction can be described as abstract conceptualization, wherein new internal perspectives are generated, and issues are understood during the empathetic reading process (Aerila, Soinen & Merisuo-Storm, 2016). At the moment of abstract conceptualization, learners are consciously in contact with their inner worlds and identify with the subject in new ways and on new levels (Beard & Wilson, 2006). Although each person has their own experiences of the world and life, reading fiction allows individuals to see and understand things that are not present in their lives (Aerila et al., 2016). Prior research indicates that supporting student's agency and participation enhances intrinsic motivation for reading (Cremin et al., 2014). This agency is formed through interaction with the social communities around the student: peers, classmates, and parents (Cremin, Mottram, Collins, Powell, & Safford, 2009).

**Multicultural literature** has diverse definitions. It can refer to a literature with several languages or multicultural themes. In some definitions of multicultural children's literature, the author's authentic relationship with the described culture is emphasized (Gopalakrishnan, 2012). According to Short (2007), multicultural books reflecting children's own lives are essential to building multicultural understanding, and books should have characters that help readers develop deeper understandings of both their own and other nearby cultures. Only after this is attained can teachers introduce multicultural literature to children from a broader and more international perspective.

Multicultural literature positively affects people with different backgrounds by increasing cultural awareness, developing self-awareness, and promoting intercultural understanding. Fiction that positively reflects minority groups' own cultures may increase learners' self-esteem and help them feel a sense of unity with the majority. Readers from majority groups can better understand diversity and different cultures and learn that despite differences, people have many similarities (De la Iglesia, 2012). In school settings, ensuring that students read literature that reflects their different cultural backgrounds and nationalities is important (Shiohita, 1997). However, achieving the aim of more extensive use of multicultural literature in education requires considerable efforts. In many cases, teachers are unsure of the application of multicultural literature in primary education and are therefore unlikely to use it in the classroom. The uncertainty can be attributable to the limited knowledge of multicultural literature and methods for its use in multicultural education, prejudices and fear of the effects of reading multicultural literature on the children of natives and immigrants, and unwillingness of teachers to read books in their free time (Gopalakrishnan, 2010; Norton, 2005).

Teachers may be unfamiliar with the multiple research-based pedagogical approaches and more diverse and effective uses of multicultural literature in education. However, some countries, like USA, have invested in enhancing the knowledge and reading experiences of multicultural literature in teacher education. In Finland, Aerila, Soininen and Merisuo-Storm (2016) have tested the effectiveness of reading circles instruction in teacher education as a tool for getting the experiences on reading multicultural literature visible and shared by others. In their study, teacher students could effectively share their reading experiences and respond to multicultural issues in the reading circles organized after individual reading (see also Zhao & Christison in this volume). When literature is combined with an activating pedagogical approach, reading levels improve along with attitudes toward different cultures (Louie, 2006; Norton, 2005). According to Häggblom's (2006) study of multicultural literature use in Swedish-speaking immersion classes in Finland, literature may increase the awareness of the importance of culture and diversity and help readers feel more empathetic toward diversity and the representatives of another culture (Häggblom, 2006). Therefore, sharing reading experiences with children, discussing reading, and showing interest in children's views on books, regardless of language, is beneficial. Conversations on books can act as a tool for connecting with speakers of different languages and developing oral skills. This is important because oral linguistic skills connect with children's present and future reading fluency along with the other benefits of reading literature (Reese, Suggate, Long, & Schaughency, 2010).

Multilingual classrooms should have literature in both the school's and students' own languages. Home language literacy and second language learning and development are interrelated (Murray, 2007). Studies (Chen, 2014) suggest that the degree of children's home language proficiency becomes the strongest predictor for their second language development. Further indications show that children's home language builds a knowledge, concept, and skills base that transfers from reading in the first to the second, third, etc. language (García & Kao, 2014). Moreover, learners' additional language development is predicted and affected by not only their first language competence but also the level of the second language input, which is expected to be at least one-step beyond the student's current level of linguistic competence (Chen, 2014). Note that when first and second language lessons include language-learning objectives, various activities with texts make learning more effective. Learning tasks should contain reading, listening, and viewing materials both in large and small groups and in pairs (Kauppinen & Aerila, 2019b). It is also important to remember that for second language learners, learning the language also means learning the culture; this includes the cultural features of certain areas, nations, and communities and identity work of language learners because language is an essential part of one's identity and personhood (Bärlund & Kauppinen, 2017).

For immigrant families, language may create cultural conflicts: children generally learn a majority language at school via social practices faster than the parents or grandparents and start using it at home. This cultural crash is one of the main reasons for immigrant students' identity crisis and psychosocial stress. In order to avoid that, all kind of language resources have to be recognized and taken into account while considering students' overall personal and educational development. (e.g., Bialystok & Feng, 2011.) Therefore, teachers should consider the heritage cultures at school (see also Moody, Matthews, & Eslami in this volume). One way to do this is by offering literature other than that in the mainstream language and evaluating the literature used at school from the perspective of the students' cultures to help them recognize the value of their own cultural heritage. For second language learners, texts with the target and heritage languages can be used for language learning. This kind of literature-based instruction requires that languages are no longer seen as separate subjects with their own objectives and learning cultures,

but resources for broad-based learning. One example of that is the online *Active Library* with learning activities, which draws on cultural experiences and authentic texts (Bärlund & Kauppinen, 2017).

Children's literature and all semiotic text artefacts have their ideological layers. Therefore, teachers have to be aware of the values and norms included in the texts they use in the classroom. Literature ought to be approached also as a media product, which constructs and maintains ideological issues. Reynolds (2007) considers that literature is a paradoxical cultural place while books comprise traditional didactic meanings and radical and revolutionary issues. From the multi-culturality perspective, teachers need to notice how intersectionality is made visible in books. Issues like ethnicity, gender, race, ability, age, and present social categories can be reproduced in children's books in many ways. Multi-culturality, a challenging theme in books, can be deconstructed as humor and parody in text (Pesonen, 2017). Multi-cultural themes can be described otherwise in books by challenging the dominant discourses and ways of talking. The best picture books confront the themes and power statements considered normal in society and offer critical, even odd, alternatives to near the reality (Pesonen 2017; Reynolds 2007).

### **Creating Communities of Readers — Engagement and Meaningfulness in Reading**

Literacy is a community practice tied to the community values, which are based on the members' shared histories and cultural roots (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). Under the sociocultural theory of reading, children socialize in the text world around them when participating in the activities of their communities (Kauppinen, 2010). Language use and people's identities in communities are socially constructed. Therefore, in children's readership, participating in activities related to various situations in books is crucial. If more ways of using books exist in the reading community, more models can be employed to develop children's reading interest and engagement with books in their free time. The positive social dimension of reading includes safe reading atmosphere, dialogical sharing of reading experiences, reading strategies, and noticing and appropriating others' ways of reading. As members of a community of readers, individuals of all ages develop their reading identity (Schoenbach, Greenleaf, & Murphy, 2016).

Creating communities of readers based on reading for pleasure and engagement is a practice with significant cognitive, emotional, and social benefits. It supports the general learning outcomes, improves literacy and numeracy skills, and increases empathy and mindfulness (Hempel-Jorgensen, Cremin, Harris & Chamberlain, 2018). It is a part of performative and competence pedagogy that focuses on children's agency as learners (Hempel-Jorgensen et al., 2018). Communities of readers can be created in education and free-time settings. Herein, we first illustrate how communities of readers are created in school settings and the role of an adult reader. Next, the communities of readers are described as environments for language learning. In the practices of the communities of readers, cooperation with families is important. Therefore, this theme is approached in a separate section (**Family Literacy**).

Creating a community of readers requires increasing children's volition as readers. This means that children should be allowed to choose whom to sit with and be encouraged to engage with peers informally around texts. Teachers' support and encouragement are crucial for children's engagement. For example, sometimes it may be good for the teacher to encourage the student to read more challenging texts or to ponder the texts a bit deeper, for example through some post-reading activities. Reading literature should involve reading experiences and immersing oneself in the text; remembering details or filling in worksheets takes pleasure away from reading, transforming it into a school assignment (Aerila & Merisuo-Storm, 2018; Tauveron, 2006). The communities of readers theory focuses on creating peda-

gical spaces wherein children can develop motivation and skills as readers and are actively engaged in expressing their experiences by talking about texts and through different creative activities (Aerila & Kauppinen, 2019).

From the identity negotiation perspective, using literature in multifaceted ways is important in multilingual classrooms. Prior research indicates that supporting students' agency and participation enhances intrinsic motivation for reading (Cremin et al., 2014). Interaction between students and the teacher and among peers creates collaborative spaces wherein minds and identities can meet. All kinds of "scripted" text usage prevents students' agency in the classroom (Cummins, 2001; Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). Furthermore, choosing the literature available for reading, which should be differentiated according to both literacy and interest, is important. Students should also be encouraged to choose literature that interests them (Allington & Gabriel, 2012). The reading experience expands and deepens when the book choices remain sufficiently close to students' experiences and knowledge (Aerila & Merisuo-Storm, 2018). Limiting book choices or providing literature and reading assignments that are unrelated to children's lives negatively affects reading motivation and attitudes (Allington & Gabriel, 2012).

Prior research (Cremin et al., 2014; Kauppinen & Aerila, 2019a, 2019b) shows that teachers often need encouragement to use pedagogical approaches that support reading for pleasure and children's participation and engagement. They do not always possess sufficient subject knowledge of children's literature and other texts and are not sufficiently conscious of their own (and children's) everyday reading practices or identities and their relation to the reading activities implemented in the classroom. Several studies indicate that teachers and other adults influence both a group's positive reading atmosphere and children's individual literacy development (Cremin et al., 2014; Hellmich & Hoya, 2017; Lerkkanen et al., 2012). To create communities of readers, teachers and adults need encouragement to develop and share individual preferences and enthusiasms, acknowledge family, community, and cultural influences on reading, and consider the pleasures of reading (Hellmich & Hoya, 2017).

StoRe-research (2019a, 2019b) shows that teachers do not take advantage of their own reading experiences while guiding children to read. Teachers often concentrate on the instrumental use of books at schools (i.e., learning literacy skills mainly to support academic reading), although they value the imaginations and contentment of reading books during their own free time. Moreover, although teachers promote reading in their discourses, reading is not included in students' daily activities (Kauppinen & Aerila, 2019a, 2019b). A simple way for teachers to inspire children to read is to share their own reading experiences. Children make notions about the true meaning of reading based on concrete observations like having easy access to books and experiencing teachers' interest in children's reading experiences (Merga, 2015).

A community of readers can be created in classroom or home environments with very concrete actions. Supporting children's readership is part of value education. Merely talking about reading and books is not sufficient; teachers must show involvement in reading and books in their everyday lives (Aerila & Kauppinen, 2019a; Merga, 2015, 2016). The positive aspects of reading and books should be visible in day care, at school, and at home. For example, sufficient versatile and new reading material should be available at home and in schools. The reading materials should also be easy to access and interesting, and it should change from time to time. Moreover, various reading materials (electronic and print) should be available. In addition to inspiring reading materials, posters and other items should highlight the pleasure of reading: reading instructions and tips from peers, excerpts from stories, and details about the books read at home, in hobby groups, or in education. To ensure that the environment is inspiring, the material should be organized in an aesthetic and child-friendly way (; Roskos & Neuman, 2013).



## **Stories Make Readers**

Creating communities of readers in one or few classes at school is not always sufficient; however, the entire school should support rich reading practices.

In addition to the inspiring environment, the **ACC** (Amount, Choices, Creativity) **model** for communities of readers rests on three pillars: increasing the *amount* of reading time and books offered, investing in individual *choices* and various literature (themes, levels of difficulty, and forms) for readers, and offering meaningful and *creative* activities to work with the experiences aroused while reading (Aerila & Kauppinen, 2019). A simple method of implementing the ACC model is to give children more time to read in groups, pairs, and alone and ensure that all students have time to present their reading experiences. While planning reading times and activities it is important that every student has sufficient time to engage with the text and the activities. The weakest readers generally cannot concentrate on reading or fully participate in the activities (Allington & Gabriel, 2012). Monitoring and regulating reading can be promoted in groups and classrooms by collective book tickets (e.g., filling out a leaf shape document about reading experience to add to a “reading tree”), digital reading diaries (e.g., applications like BookCreator), and book review activities (Aerila, Kauppinen, Niinistö, & Sario, 2019a). Routines are important in the lower grades and for many adolescents and even later (Kauppinen & Aerila, 2019b).

Almost as important as reading books are discussions based on the books and sharing reading experiences. At best, the discussion should take place in small groups among students. This way everybody has the possibility to take part and have his or her voice heard. However, students often need support for literature discussions; therefore, assigning different roles or question cards and creative activities (drama, visual arts, and animations with digital applications) are very useful (see also Zhao & Christison in this volume). Via these creative activities, readers can visualize their experiences. This helps to engage everybody in the process of creating joined understanding of the text (Aerila et al., 2019; Aerila, Rönkkö, & Grönman, 2019). Each reader’s experience of a particular literature differs because reading is based on life experiences and personality (prior experiences and knowledge of life and literature, literacy skills, vocabulary, etc.) (Rosenblatt, 1978). Making each reading experience visible is therefore one of the cornerstones of literature education and creating communities of readers. Various creative tasks help students empathize with the text and they enhance the students’ agency. Furthermore, students generally treasure the product they have created and wish to share it with those they care about (Cummins, 2005).

Texts should also have elements the students can relate to (Aerila et al., 2019a). For example, they should have a protagonist and events that resonate with the reader’s experiences (sex, age, background, and life situation) (Alsup, 2015). This is highlighted in the themes that interest students: the one interested in playing ice hockey often wants to read about hockey players, whereas the one who has developed an interest in girls may want to read a book that describes dating (Aerila & Kauppinen, 2019). The community of readers is made up of individuals, which should be remembered while recommending and choosing books and offering book-related activities (Aerila et al., 2019a). According to Bland (2015), many students with multicultural backgrounds enjoy literature describing dramatic and formative events, which emotionally resonate to the life stories of the students. This kind of literature often centers on a young hero/heroine as a focalizer who experiences a life changing adventure. These are, however, all too often ignored in education; both culturally and technologically, education seems to be becoming distanced from people’s daily lives.

In sum, literature instruction practices, like student-centered reading environments, make students’ reading experience visible. Student-led literature discussions or composing life stories are aimed to create communities of readers, and they are especially beneficial for multilingual readers because reading facilitates identity exploration (Hempel-Jorgensen et al., 2018). Children who enjoy reading and are

intrinsically motivated to read more; reading for pleasure increases their proficiency and vice versa (Morgan & Fuchs, 2007). In communities of readers, multilingual students can exploit the literature and reading materials for identity affirmation. According to Ntelioglou, Fannin, Montanera, and Cummins (2014), multilingual students' agency is vital for their literacy achievement. Their engagement (literacy engagement framework) is approached by scaffolding meaning, connecting to students' lives, affirming student identities, and extending students' awareness and command of academic language across the curriculum.

Sharing reading experiences in many ways as well as continuing the texts with peers serve as the means of creating communities of readers. The sense of belonging – not just the reading skills – is crucial in developing children's readership. This is particularly important for multilingual children who should be empowered to develop literacy skills in both their home language as well as the language of the school. Creating communities of readers, regardless of the languages children possess, is actually not difficult. As Allington and Gabriel (2012) asserted, supporting the readership, reading skills, and the interest in reading can be easily attained if teachers and parents invest time in creating enjoyable reading spaces for children.

## **Family Literacy**

Parents as well as teachers play an important role in promoting reading, and they can act as positive role models for reading. However, not all parents know how to confidently support their children's language and literacy development. From the perspective of children's equality, teachers should help all the parents understand and succeed in establishing the foundation of literacy and language development and creating a community of readers at home. Families come from different reading and literacy environments and not all parents value reading, books or even advice they receive from teachers. Additionally, especially, in multilingual and multicultural families the parents might be unfamiliar with fictional literature and the value of imagination as well as the meaning and use of libraries. Current research (Curry, Reeves, & McIntyre, 2016; Niklas, Cohrssen, & Taylor, 2016) confirms that children's literacy develops at home and the development is further supported at school. The fluent cooperation between school and home is required to develop reading interests of multilingual children, while parents need to know the value of home language practices in language development. Schools can affirm families' cultural identity in formal and informal ways so that all home languages are recognized in the school (Blackledge, 2000). This section presents the forms and definitions of family literacy practices.

Family literacy practices are part of the home literacy environment. Hannon (2003) divides family literacy practices into the literacy practices at home, which are based on family routines and theoretically linked to the sociocultural approach, and the formal programs by educational institutions, where parents are involved in their children's learning. Most family literacy programs are led by educational institutions and do not take advantage of the already existing literacy practices at home. Family literacy programs generally involve children aged four to seven years and their parents (Swain & Cara, 2017). These programs should be extended to also include older children.

According to Swain and Cara (2017), family literacy practices offered to families are affected by several factors: 1. family resources, e.g., number of children, and literature at home, family size, parents' mother tongue, and parents' education; 2. parental literacy behaviors and attitudes, e.g., the amount of parents' free-time reading and perception of the importance of literacy and the quality of reading materials at home; 3. parental beliefs and understandings, e.g., the appreciation of homework assignments

## **Stories Make Readers**

and knowledge of the school's way of teaching reading-related contents; and 4. the already existing family literacy activities and practices, e.g., the time spent on reading, the times of reading, and parental involvement in reading-related homework.

Home interaction is an opportunity to enhance language and explore literacy (Enz, 2003). Even though some parents have positive experiences of family literacy (Swain & Cara, 2017), the lack of literacy experiences is an important factor in the relationship between low socioeconomic status and ethnic minority children's poor success rates at school (Swain & Cara, 2017). Many parents in immigrant background families struggle with reading and writing themselves and have difficulties in supporting the children to read. Negative feelings like shame and labeling of the parents as inept is projected on the children. A major task of formal education is to prevent the chain of no-reading generation after generation. Here, we present different practices of family literacy, followed by some practical perspectives to the effectiveness and success of these practices.

Parents often start establishing their home literacy practices before the birth of a child; they acquire children's literature and characters familiar in literature such as soft toys or other interior elements (Appleyard, 1998; Heikkilä-Halttunen, 2015). After birth, parents start rhyming and singing songs during the everyday activities of both the child and parents, such as sheathing, eating, or sleeping. The reading moments, like bedtime story reading, build the relationship between a child and an adult and can act as a bridge to attachment (Heikkilä-Halttunen, 2015). A bedtime story is the most common home literacy practice. Its significance for the later reading habits of the child and positive reading experiences is visible until adulthood. Moreover, reading aloud affects many other aspects of child development (Aerila, Kauppinen, Niinistö & Sario, 2019b).

Reading instruction that considers the social, cultural, and linguistic strengths of the families and emphasizes the interaction between parents and children provides support for children's learning both at school and home. This might be a challenge for some minority groups because their cultural learning models differ. Through interactions with teachers and other personnel in day care and at school, parents from minority groups learn to adapt to the practices and beliefs of the majority while teachers learn about the traditions of minority groups. It may be effective for the teacher to provide parents with explicit demands regarding reading, which can be assigned as homework (Reese & Gallimore, 2000; Rodriguez-Brown, 2003).

Steensel, McElvany, Kurvers, and Herppich (2011) investigated the effectiveness and forms of family literacy. They observed that family literacies offer a broad range of activities and the current programs focus on holistic approaches of the emergent literacy rather than (primarily code-related) literacy exercises. The programs are mainly aimed at early childhood education, and the most popular activities are shared reading, wherein parents and children construct meaning together, and storybook reading. According to an English consumer survey (2019) (2019), most English parents stop reading bedtime stories when their child reaches age eight, and only 19% of parents read bedtime stories until age ten. Note that parents read bedtime stories to girls (24%) more often than boys (14%). Many families think that once a child has learned read, reading together or recommending books is not required. Finland is often considered to be an example of supporting family literacy and reading skills of children. Therefore, it might be useful to illustrate how family literacy routines are implemented in this country. In Mullis, Martin, Foy, and Hooper's (2017) study, reading opportunities were evaluated based on the number of books and children's books, parents' educational background and profession, and whether the child has his/her own room and home internet connection. Results showed that about one-third (37%) of the Finnish families have good opportunities to support the reading by the child. None of the families was considered

to belong to a group where the family had little resources to support the child's readership (less than 25 books, 10 or fewer children's books, and little education of parents). Note that in the early years of family literacy experiences, Finland was ranked behind other Nordic countries and reading experiences in Finland focused on common reading moments (82%) rather than reading and sharing reading (34%).

Family literacy programs seem to offer long-term commitment to families toward literacy learning. In case of multicultural classrooms, literacy programs should be based on sociocultural knowledge and offer the information on how different families learn at home. The sociocultural learning model should be based on the idea of emerging minority families learning the traditions of the majority. This way they support each other. Many family literacy programs rely on two main perspectives: parents as teachers and parents as learners (Rodriquez-Brown, 2003).

From the perspective of learning a second language and children at risk of reading delays, semi-professionals are often responsible for training the parents of these children. The training for family literacy activities is sometimes provided by mothers from the target communities who are slightly better-educated than the others. This is a way of approaching parents who can be hard to reach. Moreover, in some programs, the mothers providing training are invited to families' homes. As a result, the family literacy programs using semi-professionals are almost as effective as the ones using professionals (Steensel et al., 2011).

However, a single-family literacy practice is insufficient without the schools' support in reading. The aim of these practices is to influence the habits and values in families; therefore, their broader aspects should be considered when planning. Family literacy programs cannot differ from the school's way of guiding reading and teaching literacy. Moreover, the different linguistic and cultural resources of different families should be considered to develop familiar reading practices for families (Swain & Cara, 2017). At worst, the families may be feeling that their previous activities are not valued, or parents may abandon the existing practices (Dugdale & Clark, 2008).

## **CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS**

In this section, we provide an overview of practices that can be implemented to inspire children to engage with fiction. We present the practical applications of each issue described earlier: enhancing reading practices, encouraging reading fiction, creating communities of readers, and family literacy practices. We start with choosing literature for multicultural classrooms and continue with practical and concrete examples of how to create and inspire learning environment for reading. The last part of this section is dedicated to family literacy practices.

### **Choosing Literature for Multilingual Classrooms and Families**

Literature for multicultural and multilingual groups and multicultural-themed literature for versatile groups must be carefully chosen to enhance the educational value and respect the culture and language of all students. Lehman (2011) emphasizes the responsibility of teachers when using and choosing literature with students. This is particularly challenging when the literature is beyond the teachers' own experience. Although all kinds of books can be read, children should be directed to critical reading and false or biased perceptions should be avoided. Ensuring that the literature does not contain anything offensive that can make a student feel ashamed is important.

## **Stories Make Readers**

Higgins (2000) has developed an instrument for teachers to evaluate and choose literature from the multicultural perspective, asserting that while the concept of multicultural children's literature has previously been used only for books wherein minority groups are positively described, the current goal is to provide a realistic picture of different cultures. Higgins' (2000) criteria include stereotypes and negative images of different cultures and a text's literary quality. The literature used in classrooms should authentically represent the minority groups, and the minority characters should be of equal status with the majority-group characters and depicted as directing their own lives. This means that the teacher must critically evaluate both the illustrations and texts in books. For example, there should be references to all children in classroom and they should give a realistic picture of their life. The teachers can take care that reading materials used in classrooms have representatives of all the cultures present in the classroom. Additionally, it might be a good idea to check that the main characters are not always representing the majority but also the minorities. This does not mean that all the materials should meet these criteria, but the teacher should keep this in mind while choosing the reading materials during the year.

Shiohita (1997) stresses the importance of selecting books based on readers' interests. Additionally, De la Iglesia (2012) confirms that reading multicultural literature should be a positive experience and children should enjoy reading the books without thinking about multicultural values. In a sense, assessing literature suitability based on different criteria and guidelines can be regarded as censorship; however, more important than censorship is that children should be protected from abusive texts. The main aim of these guidelines is to include the cultures and languages of the students in classrooms. All students must find characters that they can empathize with in the reading materials. The simplest recommendation for teachers could be: Think of your students as well as the society and try to choose literature that corresponds to those two.

## **Creating Communities of Readers**

StoRe (Stories make Readers) project applies the theory of communities of readers to help learners, teachers and schools co-operate when implementing reading programs. During different interventions of StoRe project, seven aims for creating the positive and engaged reading atmosphere were created: learning environment, activities supporting the engagement, visualizing the interpretations of readers, literature discussions based on expressions aroused during reading, investment in reading time and comfortable reading places, getting information and experiences of current books and reading materials, building effective cooperation with libraries and other local actors and activating the families (Aerila et al., 2019a).

One of the best ways to engage children in reading is creating reading routines. Reading lessons can include many choices (reading materials, reading places, and reading in pairs, groups, or alone) but reading is obligatory for all. Some children may enjoy reading the text silently, some might enjoy listening to others read aloud, some want to listen to audiobooks, some prefer reading in reading circles, or in pairs. The teacher should take these different reading preferences into account as well as think of ways to encourage children to read during the scheduled time. For example, teachers can turn on special lamps in the classroom that signal to the children that it is time to read. No additional guidance is needed; everybody starts reading while the lamp is on Aerila et al., 2015).

Positive reading atmosphere keeps children engaged in books. For children to enjoy reading, reading moments should be comfortable and often happen in someone's company. Colorful, aesthetic, and reader-friendly spaces should be designed for both private and shared reading. One important aspect is that the reading place should help the children to concentrate on reading. Therefore, different kinds of reading

spaces are a good option (Aerila et al., 2015). We have even tested yoga caves as reading cottages, which are small, quiet corners built by children out of old curtains or cardboard boxes built from cardboard boxes, fabrics or furniture. Children have a lot of resources in designing and inventing reading places.

Furthermore, the reading environment should inspire students to talk about reading experiences and contain materials in connection to reading. The different places where children read (class, home, school, and library) may, for example, have printed posters of the covers of popular books and slogans about the benefits of reading as well as posters about reading, display pictures, and descriptions of books made by children. Students should be active agents in the process of transforming the environment into a reading environment (Aerila & Kauppinen, 2019).

Because reading experiences and making these experiences visible is in the core of creating communities of readers, the pedagogical approaches and activities implemented in classrooms should focus on creative activities and discussions that are not teacher-led (Aerila et al., 2019a). Traditional adult-led discussions tend to test the memory of the reader rather than the expressions aroused while reading (Merisuo-Storm & Aerila, 2018). Different texts are easily combined with drama, apps, visual arts, and writing, allowing children to create their own interpretations. Moreover, literature discussions should be connected to different parts of creative processes (planning and presenting a product and discussing based on the product). Creative activities such as reader's theater and literature circles not only are effective as interpretations of the expressions aroused but also can be part of reading activities (Aerila & Kauppinen, 2019).

Teachers often complain that children reading in a foreign language suffer from lack of fluency, low phonics knowledge, and decoding and comprehension difficulties. They also ignore punctuation and read slowly and falteringly. One popular method in developing reading fluency is reader's theater method. In reader's theater, students prepare a presentation of a text by reading it aloud and illustrating it with sound effects, movements, and creative use of voices. It is similar to radio drama (with visual effects) and acting (the text is part of the presentation and not memorized) (Aerila & Kauppinen, 2019). Additionally, with reader's theater method inspiring presentations on books and other texts are easily created.

The best readers are found in schools that have a school library and class libraries or are located near a public library. With library visits, students learn to use the library and they seem to visit libraries more often on their free time compared to those not visiting libraries during school time (Aerila et al., 2019a). Unfortunately, many classes and schools lack proper libraries (Aerila & Kauppinen, 2019). According to Allington & Gabriel (2012), in contexts where access to libraries is limited, schools can come up with alternative methods of creating collections of books that are available to students. Teachers can save from other learning material to books and many communities have volunteers (department stores, bookstores, and clubs) who can donate books. Parent associations can also arrange events for collecting funds for books.

Finally, it is important for children to see that many people, including the ones they particularly appreciate, read and enjoy reading (Merga, 2015, 2016). Many local community members (sports clubs, charities, and elder students) happily come to school to read and share their reading activities. StoRe-project was involved in a project in which the local ice hockey team read chapters of book online, visited schools to read the same book aloud, and told students about the benefits of their reading as a hobby. It was an effective project, especially for boys who dream of becoming professional athletes. Furthermore, ice hockey served as a perfect metaphor for reading; they are both skills that need to be practiced and skills that can be improved throughout the entire life. Programs that invite book authors to visit schools and read from their own books can also be a very effective way of promoting positive attitudes to reading at school and at home.

## Stories Make Readers

### Teaching Tip 1

Erika works with students of diverse linguistic and cultural background. In order to promote students to develop their communication skills, especially encouraging them to react each other's comments, Erika has used drama methods. In this case, she invites her students to dramatize fables and fairy tales from students' own cultures. She encourages them to compose pictures of characters like Giuseppe Arcimboldo did in his art. Arcimboldo was an Italian painter who created imaginative portrait heads in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The portraits of him look like they have been composed of fruits, flowers, vegetables, and fish. Erika wants her students to opportunity to use imagination and creativity to impersonate the characters from fables and fairy tales they read.

In her recent class, Erika's students engaged in the following activities:

- First, the students carefully examined Arcimboldo's painting techniques in the pictures available online. Erika asked the students to describe the features of the characters in the paintings. Through the classroom dialogue, students were able to analyze the meanings of different elements in the portraits and at the same the ideas to describe them in the pictures.
- Next, the students listed the characters' features in their own and school languages. The characters could also be described in mandala form, wherein the upper part of the circle presents each character's features and the lower part presents the features that the character does not have.
- Next the students orally presented the descriptions of the portraits of the characters to the others. Using mandala visualizations, even the students with limited vocabulary were able to express themselves in an understandable way.
- Next, students created portraits of the characters from a story they recently read. Fliers from supermarkets were used while they offer many colorful pictures of fruits and vegetables, and they are easy to access. The students cut out the pictures and created a head of the character which they glued onto a sheet of paper.
- Finally, when the portraits were ready, they were presented in small groups. Now it was time to dramatize the story with the voice and form of each character using readers' theater.

By making portraits of the characters in a story, Erika's students were enabled to empathize with the characters and adopt the features of their characters using imagination. When composing the fruit picture, the students activated both home language and school language vocabulary. The oral presentation of the characters helped learners to recognize the main features of the story, and dramatizing the story enabled them to better understand the character's role in it. In addition, the students became familiar with the textual and linguistic features of two genera: a description and a narrative. With the older students, the textual and linguistic features of the genres could be analyzed a little bit carefully.

## Activating Families

Families play a major role in reading to children. However, not all families have a culture of reading and sometimes require support and ideas for family reading. In many cases, 15-min/day routines are effective. For low-reading families, even reading for 5 min/day can be a good start. Although family reading practices are often thought to involve only the parents, grandparents, godparents, and siblings can be a great resource and many of them do not read because they think children do not like listening to reading. This is a misconception because with the right books and encouragement, everyone becomes a reader. Children can also be motivated to read through visits to different workplaces or interviews with adults. Children should experience explicit evidence that all professions require reading.

The reading culture perspectives of each family differ. However, most families are interested in either starting a family literacy activity or further developing it. The activities aimed at families should be offered discreetly and with information on the families' prior reading habits. Some families, however, are unfamiliar or unaccustomed to family reading practices and may need guidance (Aerila et al., 2019b).

Family literacy in day care and at school can be supported by ensuring that families have interesting reading materials that are easily accessible. Another option is a *classroom lending library*, which enables children to get familiar with storybooks throughout the day and learn how to choose and loan books from city libraries (Allington & Gabriel, 2012;ENZ, 2003). *Book bags* are popular for encouraging family reading. A book bag usually contains three or four books and activities inspired by a specific theme. Book bags are especially helpful for those parents who have difficulties in finding suitable reading

materials and unaccustomed to reading or creating reading moments. Book bags empower parents to become teachers, encourage them to create a supportive home learning environment, and expand their interaction with their children (Enz, 2003).

Enz (2003) has listed rules for a successful family literacy moment: the moments should emphasize frequency over duration (5 min or reading two or three times a day instead of 30 min at once), involve reading the same book many times (children learn new things each time and can successfully retell the story), have a base of multiple books (several new books each week), give the children opportunities for handling the books (encourages a child's involvement in reading sessions), and contain some dramatic elements (reading with different voices to bring the story to life and allowing children play the story). These rules highlight that creating a successful reading moment is not difficult: sometimes it is enough to have books (or sometimes even one book) present and reserve time to read and go through books together.

It seems that many families already invest time in reading books together, but less time is devoted to sharing reading experiences and talking about books. However, story times are more motivating for both the parents and children if the reading is implemented in a dialogic way, wherein children describe the illustrations, describe what they think is happening on the page, and predict what might happen next. Moreover, parents should share information about their feelings about the story (Enz, 2003). In addition to getting reading material and guidance for successful reading time, families are often happy to get and share ideas of book-related activities with children. One option for introducing a new activity might be a video clip, after which the teacher reads books with the children and demonstrates oral fluency, enthusiasm, different voices of story characters, literature-based conversation, and activities related to reading sessions. The video clip with the book being read could be filmed at home. It may then act as an educational tool for parents or entertainment for children (Enz, 2003).

Another easily implemented method for making the reading moments more dialogic and participate children more is shared reading. Shared reading has specific phases. Before reading, the more experienced reader introduces the story and encourages the children to anticipate it based on the title, cover, and illustrations. Moreover, the reader conducts a picture walk through the book, briefly pointing out specific character actions or events and asking probing questions to engage the students in thinking about the pictures and story without telling the story. During shared reading, the text is read multiple times. The first reading is generally for enjoyment. The adult points to each word as it is read. Here, the more experienced reader applies realistic reactions to the text and uses appropriate voice intonation. After reading, the adult can take the child back to the point of making predictions, whether at the word or story level, and ask how they knew they were right or if their prediction was not quite correct. The second and subsequent readings allow for the child to chime in with now familiar words and phrases (Fountas & Pinell, 1996). Shared reading activities are especially beneficial for multilingual children because they allow the children to enjoy materials that they may be unable to read on their own since it enables the children to act as though they are reading. It may also help the children to learn about the relationship between oral and printed language (Fountas & Pinell, 1996)

Another concrete example of a family literacy practice implemented by schools and early childhood education centers is a **Bedtime-Story Shelf**. A Bedtime-Story Shelf is a special shelf or box of about 25 picture books in the classroom. Children can loan the books from the collection for one night and are encouraged to be active in choosing books and creating reading moments at home. These bookshelves are successful because the books must be returned to school the next day, making reading the books on the same day compulsory (Kauppinen & Aerila, 2019a). The Bedtime-Story Shelf can be easily connected with other activities: the books can present certain themes and have guidance for the reading activity



## Stories Make Readers

itself. For example, shared reading activities during which more experienced readers explain the reading process and strategies to children can enhance the reading moments. In shared reading, the reader reads a big book or other enlarged text with fluency and expression. The text must be sufficiently large for all the children to clearly see so that they can share in the reading of the text (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

The Bedtime-Story Shelf is a good example of an activity to start family literacy practices. Based on StoRe-research (Aerila et al., 2019b), although parents are often motivated to implement the activity, some aspects needed consideration. Some parents may not understand the activity and feel that the information provided by the school is not sufficient; they may prefer guidance for the reading moments and a photo of the shelf. Some families may find certain activities stressful because the children consider them as a homework or because the family already has a reading routine in the evening and additional reading activities seem to them unnecessary. Multilingual families, on the other hand, may prefer a book in their home language. This shows that teachers must implement flexible family literacy practices and listen to the needs of the families (Aerila et al., 2019b).

Despite the critiques on the Bedtime-Story Shelves presented above, the practice can have very positive outcomes. The possibility of choosing their own reading materials is important for children, but many parents have difficulty finding suitable reading materials and are sometimes too busy to go to libraries. Finding an approach that helps all families to create reading routines and a positive reading climate is

### Teaching Tip 2

Food culture connects families with different backgrounds and has offered an excellent base for supporting family literacy practices. On example of them are cookbooks, that Erika has composed with her students in co-operation with their families. Erika understands the importance of involving the parents, and she has decided to invite them to participate in a project. Together with families, Erika and her students composed multicultural cookbooks. Food concerns every one of us and students of every age are interested in it. In the means of literacy pedagogy, food culture gives an excellent base for family literacy practices.

Multilingual and -cultural cookbooks offer opportunities to engage with language, cultural, history, and aesthetic expression, and pleasure of food in one packet. Cookbooks can appear in many forms, for example a traditional book, an e-book, or a collection of recipe cards. The contents of cookbooks can also vary. Along with recipes, the cookbooks can include facts about spices, herbs, and other ingredients of dishes; fairy tales that connect somehow to dishes and so on. In Erika's classroom, the students varied the idea of cookbooks: some groups described traditional menus (e.g., typical Thai food), while others presented food recipes for parties and celebrations, like children's birthday parties or Christmas.

Erika began the lesson by asking the students about their favorite dishes, spices, etc. Traditional holidays and foods associated with them as well as the food habits of families were also discussed. Next, the students worked in groups to examine some examples of cookbooks that Erika took out of the local library, and to brainstorm and plan their own cookbooks.

After deciding on the theme and idea of a cookbook, students needed some support picking out recipes. For homework, the students were asked to consult their family members and do a search on the internet. As a result, they were able to collect some traditional family recipes, including traditional pastry and cookie recipes, as well as some new recipes that they thought they would like to try out.

Erika wanted to engage the families in the next step, namely trying out the recipes at a family cooking event. Erika and her students have access to home economics facilities at their school with a fully equipped kitchen. She chose the date with the parents in advance as she wanted to ensure that as many as possible participated. The families worked in teams, and each team prepared one dish following a recipe to share with everyone else. Each of the recipes was then written on a large poster board and the teams took pictures of the dishes they prepared which they added to the posters. The finished posters were displayed on the classroom walls.

In the perspective of language learning, composing cookbooks offers many possibilities. The cookbooks are multimodal texts as they contain printed text and drawn images or authentic pictures. Therefore, they serve as a rich resource for meaning making even for students with minimum language skills. Multisensory learning is also used when literacy is tied in concrete acting (cooking), smells, tastes and appearance of food.

A cookbook comprising recipes represents instructional text. Multilingual learners learn several aspects of language and text, like vocabulary for food and ingredients, compact written expression, and structure of instructional text. Furthermore, composing cookbooks is a cross-curricular tasks (home economics, chemistry, biology, and language) that prompts integration of meaning-making and phenomenon-based learning. Composing cookbooks expands literacy activities to practices outside of school that involve families. Finally, cookbooks provide a channel to make students' own cultures visible at school.

difficult, particularly for classrooms with multilingual students, but feasibly solutions can be reached through close school-home collaborations (Aerila et al., 2019b).

## **CONCLUSION**

Using literature often and in varied ways enhances students' literacy skills overall. Students learn various means of meaning making through factual and, particularly, through fictional texts containing metaphorical language. Literature also supports understanding of various registers. This knowledge about texts and language use helps develop language awareness, which forms the base of language skills. Using different activities in literature classrooms enhances creativity in composing strategies for interpreting and producing texts. The meta-level skills of language learning are important, while the advanced language skills are the target.

Reading and literature education (motivation of reading, attitudes towards reading, literacy skills, child's readership) go hand in hand with the general school achievement and child's self-esteem (Alligton & Garbriel, 2012; McGeown, Johnston, Walker, Howatson & Stockburn, 2015; Merisuo-Storm & Aerila, 2018). This means that by adding positive reading experiences and improving literacy skills actively, teachers can prevent the exclusion of adolescents and promote the general wellbeing of children and adolescents. In particular, critical reading and literature education are crucial for multilingual students, who may have wider linguistic resources but are unable to employ them for academic purposes or to express inner emotions (Alisaari, 2016; Brozo, 2010). This is the reason why the role of school and a single teacher is remarkable in creating basis of reading culture. The whole group, class and school is reading also means that families and important communities outside of school should display explicit support for the value of reading.

It seems that literature is often considered only as an instrument to improve reading skills, and its use is restricted to enhancing the reading of other texts, like textbooks. This kind of thinking has narrowed the use of literature in education, causing the activities connected to reading literature resemble activities around any text. As a result, children and adolescents move away from the true meaning of reading literature. Reading literature is about increasing vocabulary, fluency and different registers of language, but mostly it is about engagement with reading, empathizing with the characters, and connecting with the stories. If we are able to shift the attention to these goals, literature becomes more meaningful to the readers of all ages and supports us in different situations by comforting and helping us to cope with new situations as well as different feelings. From the perspective of reading at home or in education, the activities connected to reading literature must concentrate on promoting children's reading experiences and sharing these experiences. In this chapter, we have been illustrating this shift. In multicultural settings, the shift from restricting pedagogy to the pedagogy of sharing experiences is even more important. In addition to improving children's language skills, literature has the potential to contribute to their world knowledge and allows them to rehearse a change of perspective as well as mentally represent alternative visions for the future (Bland, 2018).

Families are not equally active in reading. This is due to many reasons. For instance, literacy practices of multicultural and multilingual families may differ from those promoted at school. Family literacy programs can act as a subtle agent to changing the culture of reading within the homes. However, it is vital to remember that approaches should be modified to align with families' values, and family literacy programs should not interfere or prevent the already existent reading and storytelling culture at home.

## Stories Make Readers

This means, for example, appreciating all home languages and becoming familiar with the role of reading in the traditions and culture of each family.

Creating communities of readers is a question about values and value education. Any value is vital only if our discourse is in line with our actions, so that they highlight the same attitude towards the value. If our actions and discourse are in conflict, the actions are more powerful. This reality means that the value of reading should be presented in our actions, as well as words. We as educators often give speeches about our love of reading and its importance. Do these feelings show in our actions at school and at home? Do we invest time in our own reading and share our reading experiences? Do we invest time in children's reading and listen to their experiences? This chapter aimed to show how to illustrate the value of reading in our actions at home and at school and how this kind of pedagogy of the communities of readers can be not only fun but also effective.

### Discussion Questions

1. What kind of reading pedagogy do you implement in your classroom? What are the objectives of reading, and how do they reach the students? What are the reading materials like and what is your motivation for using those particular materials? How do you foster a community of readers for your students and at school?
2. What sort of family literacy practices already exist in your school and country that you haven't applied in your teaching yet? Consider your motivations for embracing or rejecting them. Are there any practices that could help multilingual families to promote all family languages?
3. How are the multilingual students and their languages taken into account in your school and in the classroom? Look around the class and the school (or ask children and parents to do so). Look for evidence of the value of various languages and reading material. If you can notice multilingual learning environments, you can document them together. Generate ideas about enhancing the visibility of all languages of students and cultures within the classroom/school and develop a plan to implement them?

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## Stories Make Readers

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## KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**AAC-Model:** (Amount, Choices, Creativity) A model created by Aerala and Kauppinen on communities of readers. It rests on three pillars: increasing the *amount* of reading time and books offered, investing in individual *choices* and various literature (themes, levels of difficulty, and forms) for readers, and offering meaningful and *creative* activities to work with the experiences aroused while reading.

**Bedtime-Story Shelf:** A collection of books in the classroom for children. Children loan the books over-night for family reading.

**Communities of Readers:** Groups of people, where the participants are engaged in reading for pleasure while at the same time interacting with each other.

**Family Literacy:** The reading culture of a family and its relation to children's reading.

**Literature:** Fictional and factual texts with different modes, like oral or multimodal meaning-making.

**Multicultural Literature:** Literature that highlights multicultural themes and strives to tolerance between different people.

**Multilingual Literacy:** Interpreting and producing texts with various languages and their variants.

**StoRe (Stories make Readers)-project:** A Finnish project which aims at creating communities of readers through arts-based activities and personal meaningfulness.

## APPENDIX: SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS

1. Bland, J., & Lutge, C. (2013). *Children's literature in second language education*. London, UK: Bloomsbury.

*This book gives a great insight into the meaning of literature in second language education. It contains both the theory and practical aspects of reading literature in second language. Janice Bland has several other publications on this theme.*

2. Cremin, T., Mottram, M., Collins, F.M., Powell, S., & Safford, K. (2014). *Building communities of readers: Reading for pleasure*. New York, NY: Routledge.

*Terese Cremin has developed the theory of communities of readers. In this publication she and the other authors provide a very multifaceted picture of how to inspire both parents, children, and teachers to support the engagement in reading.*

3. Alsup, J. (2015). *A case for teaching literature in the secondary school: Why reading fiction matters in an age of scientific objectivity and standardization*. New York, NY: Routledge.

*Janet Alsup has many publications on the meaning of reading literature in education. In this book, she illustrates the meaning of reading literature beyond literacy skills. She provides her own thoughts and supports them with a solid theoretical background.*