

Children's Funds of Knowledge in a Rural Northern Canadian Community: A Telling Case

JIM ANDERSON

University of British Columbia

LAURA HORTON

World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium

MAUREEN KENDRICK

University of British Columbia

MARIANNE MCTAVISH

University of British Columbia¹

Abstract

In this article, we describe how the funds of knowledge in a community in rural Northern Canada were actualized or leveraged in an early childhood classroom. We draw on a video recording of a First Nations elder demonstrating to the children (and early childhood educators) how to skin a marten, a historical cultural practice of the community. We argue that elders are an untapped source of knowledge that preschools and schools can call on to legitimize and bring to the forefront, Indigenous knowledge that has been ignored or undervalued by assimilationist and colonialist policies. We also argue that the elder's demonstration is culturally congruent with First Nations traditions of sharing or passing on knowledge and that it is imperative that educators are aware of and implement culturally appropriate pedagogical practices. We conclude by sharing some ideas of how early childhood educators might facilitate through play, children's taking up and appropriating cultural knowledge such as the elder shared in this case.

Introduction

If we were to spend half an hour in a school staffroom or join in a teacher education class today in North America, inevitably we would hear someone make reference to "funds of knowledge." The construct originated in the anthropological literature (e.g., Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1989) and Luis Moll and his colleagues popularized the term in education circles nearly two decades ago. They reported on a project in which researchers and teachers visited the homes of Latino students, and employing ethnographic techniques, documented the learning and teaching strategies that families employed as they went about their daily lives (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992). In their work, Moll and colleagues demonstrated that the rich funds of knowledge, learning processes, skills and strategies evident in the homes and communities of these families could be incorporated into teaching in schools.

¹ Author note: Authors are listed alphabetically to indicate equal contributions.

In this paper, we examine how funds of knowledge were actualized with young children from a community in Northern Canada, who along with their teachers, are participating in a transnational, community based Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funded research initiative that aims to support young children's language and cognitive development through play-based curricula. We begin by tracing the development of the concepts of funds of knowledge and review studies that have examined the intersection of that construct and play. We then describe the context in which the larger study took place and present our analysis of one "telling case" (Sheridan, Street, & Bloome, 2000) from a short video, in which an elder from the community who is a trapper and a grandfather of one of the children in the classroom, demonstrates how to skin a marten, a cultural practice of that region. Of course, this is but one example of the cultural practices and funds of knowledge in this community and we present it as one model of how funds of knowledge can be leveraged.

What are funds of knowledge?

Funds of knowledge have been described as "the essential cultural practices and bodies of knowledge and information that households use to survive, to get ahead, or to thrive" (Moll & Greenberg, 1990, p. 321). They are historically situated and culturally developed (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992; González et al., 2005) "strategic and cultural resources ... that households contain" (Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 313). Because a funds-of-knowledge approach to research, learning, and teaching involves close consultation and personal experience with families, it offers a powerful way to showcase their existing resources, competence, and knowledge (see e.g., Namazzi & Kendrick, 2014). This approach provides a counter-narrative of marginalized families and communities by forwarding a more nuanced understanding of their lives, skills, knowledge, and practices that challenges a deficit view (González et al., 2005). From an Indigenous point of view, utilizing funds of knowledge aligns with the signing of treaties and the emphasis on sharing knowledge, rather than dictating it. The concept is also important in helping us uncover and confront unconscious biases by ensuring that all types of knowledge are valued, particularly within learning spaces in socially disadvantaged communities.

Although there was a time when European settlers depended on Indigenous funds of knowledge to survive, Indigenous knowledge systems continue to be actively dismissed and marginalized. A funds of knowledge approach to learning and teaching attempts to reverse this history through a more conscious, gracious way of listening to one another in order to create space for Indigenous voices, knowledge, and practices that have been silenced, often for centuries. The concept of funds of knowledge also fits with broader understandings of learning, namely, the idea that we use our existing knowledge or schemata to construct new knowledge (Kant, 1934; McVee, Kailonnie, & Gavelek, 2005). In other words, it reflects the understanding that people use what they know to learn something new in the context of their culture and communities.

Related Literature

A number of studies have focused on the relationship between play and children's funds of knowledge. Although the "learning through play" movement has been ubiquitous in Western early childhood education, Grieshaber and McArdle (2010) critique the

pedagogy for romanticizing children's play choices and interests. Their study provides critical understandings of how children's play interests are evidence of power relationships and inequality in classrooms and peer cultures. Hedegaard, Fler, Bang, and Hviid (2008) examine play from the perspectives of children, parents and teachers, foregrounding the social, cultural and historical practices integral to children's lives. Building on previous studies of children's funds of knowledge, Chesworth (2016) argues that understanding the intricacies of play cultures requires that teachers and researchers engage critically with children's individual and collective funds of knowledge by making sense of the social and cultural activities they reconstruct in their play. Chesworth also demonstrates that when children mutually develop collective funds of knowledge, it provides opportunities for them to co-construct meaning with their peers; moreover, the interests that arise from these co-constructions may also contribute to more equitably shifting how power, agency and status interact within peer cultures.

Within play cultures, there have also been attempts to identify children's interests for the purposes of enhancing early childhood programs. The tendency in much of the literature, however, has been to view children's play interests as their individual engagement with the play materials or activities available in their immediate play environment (Carr, 2008 cited in Chesworth, 2016), which offers only a superficial interpretation of what constitutes children's interests (Hedges, 2011). Focusing instead on funds of knowledge moves beyond the immediate environment and acknowledges the rich experiences that result from children's participation in intergenerational household and community activities (González et al. 2005). As Moll et al. (1992) contend, these activities contain "ample cultural and cognitive resources" (p. 134) and offer deeper understandings of children's lives and authentic possibilities for home-school connections in the classroom. Similarly, Riojas-Cortez's (2001) study of sociodramatic play in a bilingual pre-school offers insights into how funds of knowledge can inform the creation of a culturally responsive curriculum infused with children's interests and capabilities. Oughton (2010) forwards both a critique and a caution regarding the adoption of a funds of knowledge approach, namely, that practitioners and researchers "need to be critically reflexive to avoid imposing their own, however well-intentioned, cultural arbitraries on learners" (p. 63) as we "identify and privilege what we regard as 'funds of knowledge'" (p. 64). This point is especially poignant when working with Indigenous children and communities, given the imposition of an education system rooted in Eurocentric epistemologies that they have experienced.

Indeed, within Indigenous cultures, separating children by age groups and the concept of formalized early childhood education are relatively new (e.g., Mashon, 2010). The traditional practice was for children to learn through emulation, watching others who are older, more skilled, listening to the language, vocabulary and nuances of how thoughts are strung together and voiced. Traditionally, play was considered an imitation of life on the land, on the water, in the home or wherever young people were observing. By engaging in different practices during play, children learned about their communities' ways of knowing and doing. The underlying premise of these beliefs was that during play, children constructed their understandings of what they had seen, using items, toys, natural materials, or whatever was at hand (Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). Play was the pathway to the cultural lifestyle of the family and Indigenous funds of knowledge were passed down from one generation to the next and adapted to the changing

world, and it is only within the last few decades that preschool Indigenous children have been attending daycare and early childhood education centers (Greenwood & Shawana, 2000). Currently in many Canadian First Nations communities, children spend their day in schools and early childhood centers, and are usually in homogeneous age groups. Often, the mentors (i.e., the teachers) are not related to them nor do many of them have the cultural knowledge necessary to pass knowledge and skills down to those in their charge. This disconnection is well recognized; funds of knowledge offer one possible link between the current education system and the families it serves.

Understanding Culture

In this article, which focuses on cultural practices, we view culture as “a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which [humans] communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (Geertz, 1973, p. 89). Rogoff (2003) argues that to date, “the study of human development has been based largely on research and theory coming from middle class communities in Europe and North America” (Rogoff, 2003, p. 4). Furthermore, Genzuk (1999) indicates that culture has often been reduced to simplistic notions of the foods, folklore, festivals, and fashions of a particular group, and that what is required instead is an understanding of the dynamic social, physical, spiritual, and economic resources that individuals and families use to survive in the world. He emphasizes that it is common practice for many educators to devalue the knowledge that non-mainstream children bring to school and to view households as situations “from which the student must be rescued, rather than as reserve of knowledge that can foster the child’s cognitive development” (p. 10).

Play offers children a way of exploring the complex situations that arise in social and cultural situations in their homes and communities, and also allows for the construction of new or alternative perspectives (Huizinga, 1950/1955). As Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (1998) observe, when players make up worlds through play, they engage in a serious process of identity making as they draw on their intuitive cultural knowledge. In play, children “tell others who they are, but even more importantly, they tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are....” (Holland & Lave, 2001, p. 3). In other words, play is “a story the players tell themselves about themselves” (Geertz, 1973, p. 237).

We would be remiss in discussing First Nations children and families and their cultural heritage without acknowledging the devastating legacies of assimilationist, colonialist policies in Canada. Reflecting these policies, the residential school system in which children were taken from their homes and communities, placed in residential schools, operated by churches and other organizations, had incredibly negative consequences. Children experienced the trauma of being removed from their families, forced to speak a foreign language while forbidden to use their own, offered substandard education, and many of them were subject to physical and sexual abuse. Residential schools were a disruptive force for families because children who were raised institutionally did not learn the cultural ways of parenting (e.g., Battiste & Barman, 2000; Hare, 2005). Although residential schools have been closed for some time, memories of abuse still percolate to the surface and some children and grandchildren of former residents have negative associations with schooling (see e.g., Anderson, Morrison, Leighton-Stephens, & Shapiro, 2007; Hare & Anderson, 2010). Parenting knowledge is still in need of repair,

rebuilding, and remembering. Families, educators and communities need opportunities to work together collaboratively, and the current community based initiative in Northern communities that we described earlier affords a chance to do this, especially when curriculum and pedagogy include families' and communities' funds of knowledge.

On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Harper acknowledged the inter-generational damage caused by the former policy of Indian Residential Schools (see www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca). Much has happened since then including the release of the final report from The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, which proposes 94 Calls to Action, (see www.trc.ca) that challenge governments to redress the legacy of residential schools and the devaluing of Aboriginal cultures and languages. NOW Play (<https://now-play.org>), the larger study from which our example is drawn, engages Aboriginal funds of knowledge and is able to embrace and address several of the proposed Calls to Action. For example, the project emphasizes, "full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples" (Call to Action #10) and it "enable[s] parents to fully participate in the education of their children" (Call to Action #10: vi). In addition, primary objectives include the "development of culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal peoples" (Call to Action #12) and "preservation, revitalization and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal peoples and communities" (Call to Action #14: iv). In the next section, we address more specifically how these Calls to Action are being interpreted and activated in an Aboriginal Head Start program in Northern Canada.

Marten Skinning: Funds of Knowledge in an Aboriginal Head Start Program *Context*

As noted previously, in this paper we draw on data from the NOW Play project taking place in Northern communities in three Canadian provinces. The project aims to support young children's oral language development through play. The video that we analyzed was recorded in an Aboriginal Head Start program in a small community with a population of about 4,000 in Northern Manitoba. Parents are involved in the program and with their children's education more broadly, and children, parents, teachers and the community have good relationships. Aboriginal Head Start is a Canadian offshoot of the original Head Start program in the United States designed to provide early educational support for children who are socially disadvantaged. It has six component areas: culture and language; education and school readiness; health promotion; nutrition; social support; and parent and family involvement (Aboriginal Head Start Association of British Columbia, 2016). Parent participation in the Head Start program is more spontaneous than planned and occurs when the opportunity arises. Participants in the research project indicate that they believe the program has served as a bridge, bringing educators, families and the wider community together to support young children's development and learning.

For this paper, we analyzed one video that was recorded by a researcher observing in an Aboriginal Head Start program. As the six-and-a-half minute video opens, we see a grandfather with a marten (a weasel-like mammal) he has trapped; he has laid it out on paper on the table in front of him and is about to begin skinning it. His grandson sits on his lap, and five other children sit around the semi-circular table watching him. After nearly a minute, an early childhood teacher and a seventh child join the others at the table and watch the grandfather meticulously skin the marten, guiding his grandson's hand, which holds

the knife. The grandfather makes observations, engages the children in conversation using his knowledge of their parents' hunting and trapping activities, and responds to comments or answers questions posed by the children and on one occasion, the videographer. During analysis, we viewed the video multiple times and coded isolated segments that illustrated how funds of knowledge were invoked or demonstrated through gestures, movements, or both. We cross-referenced our coding of the video with a written transcript of the video (which cannot be included here for reasons of confidentiality) and then coded the transcript separately. We then compared the codes from the video and from the transcript and sorted them into categories. We then collapsed the categories as necessary until themes emerged.

Invoking funds of knowledge

Funds of knowledge were actualized and incorporated into this early childhood classroom in a variety of ways: *demonstration and modelling*, *participation*, and *worldview*. It is important to emphasize that all funds of knowledge are contextually bound and in the particular community where these children live, hunting and trapping are part of their lived reality. That is, while some might question the idea of demonstrating how to skin a marten to a group of young children, hunting and trapping are common in their community and the children are familiar with these practices. For example, during the discussion with the grandfather, one of the children indicated that her father trapped beaver while another said that his father hunted ducks.

Demonstration and modelling. Funds of knowledge are often used to refer to specific content knowledge from children's homes and communities. For example, Dyson (1997) documented how inner city African American children integrated their wealth of knowledge of popular culture and sports in their writing in school when they were encouraged to do so. However, funds of knowledge also refers to cognitive strategies and mediational processes (Rogoff, 2003), as well as modes of meaning making (Kendrick, 2016), which can differ significantly across cultures and communities, along with expectations of children. For example, in the video we analyzed, the grandfather held and guided his grandson's hand as he was holding the knife, kinesthetically teaching the child the motor skills involved in the delicate task at hand. The young boy was simultaneously watching and doing as he listened to the language of his grandfather to learn about intergenerational ways of knowing and living in his community. From a contemporary, middle-class, Eurocentric perspective, teaching a four-year-old child to use a knife might be considered developmentally inappropriate; however, Rogoff (2003) reminds us that this practice would be considered quite normal in some cultures, illustrating the point with a photograph of a toddler using a machete to cut a fruit (p.6). Although the grandfather also verbally explained some of his actions, this was primarily a demonstration. Rogoff (2003) and others point out that in some cultures, demonstration or modelling such as what occurred here is the preferred way of inducting young children into the social practices of their communities. For instance, Anderson and Morrison (2011) documented how some parents assumed this pedagogical stance as they supported their preschool children at an art center in a family literacy program. Demonstration and modelling are also consistent with Lave and Wenger's (1999) notion of legitimate peripheral participation in which participants first learn the skills and knowledge on the outskirts of an activity and then gradually move toward full participation. Early childhood educators immersed in a

child-centered, “hands on, learning by doing” philosophy typical of most early childhood education programs in North America sometimes have difficulty accepting such as pedagogical stance.

Participation. Although the vignette in our video is primarily a demonstration, the children were also learning through participation in the discussion. In particular, at one point, one of the children asked about the “white fur on his [the marten’s] mouth?” The grandfather answered, “Martens are all different colors. Sometime they are pure black, sometimes they are nearly orange, and sometimes they are really white.” In addition to answering children’s queries, the grandfather also helped them make connections between the demonstration and their own experiences, using his detailed knowledge of the children and their families and capitalizing on community relationships. For example, at one point, he asked a child, “Your dad does trapping, right?” to which the child replied, “Beaver.” Extending that conversation, another child reported, “My dad gets ducks.” The grandfather then responded with a question, “Does he use a knife? Or does he pull the feathers?” helping the child distinguish the difference between preparing a marten fur and preparing a duck for food. Indirectly, he was also teaching the children the difference between mammals and birds. After he had completed the demonstration, the grandfather brought closure to the activity by explaining that the fur would be sold and that the money would be used to buy things that he and his family need: “Why we got the fur off? Cause we go sell the fur and we get a whole bunch of money and we go buy bread and gas and toys.” In other words, the grandfather brings the life skill of trapping, skinning and entrepreneurship to the children’s attention.

Worldview. Perhaps most importantly, this vignette exemplifies and brings to life a worldview of First Nations that too often is ignored in education and schooling. Specifically, Indigenous people have a long history of hunting and trapping, and the marten skinning exemplifies this traditional way of life. As Cajete (1994) explains, trapping is a “highly evolved survival skill based on direct and personal experience with Nature” (p. 56). Although most of the children in this vignette seemed to be aware of hunting and trapping, the demonstration in the formal context of the Head Start program conveys to them that the skills and knowledge and ways of life of the local people and their community – their funds of knowledge – are legitimate and valuable. An example of such teaching comes from Elder Bebomijiwebiik-iban of Rainy River First Nation who would give teachings of Biskaabiyyang – Pay Attention. Biskaabiyyang is an Ojibwe verb meaning “returning to ourselves” (Geniusz, 2006, p. 13) or to “look back” (Simpson, 2011, p. 49). Laura Horton, one of the authors of this paper and former director of the post-secondary education program at Seven Generations Education Institute, helped develop with Elder-Bebomijiwebiik-iban (Elder Anne Wilson) a Biskaabiyyang approach to research that attempts to decolonize Indigenous knowledge. According to our co-author, Elder Anne Wilson would tell listeners: “turn around and look at what you have let go of, there is much Indigenous intelligence” (personal communication, March 19, 2017). The Elder loved life and all that it offered in this modern world but reminded us to temper life with original teachings.

Implications, Issues, and Concerns

As young children participate in activities and experiences in families and communities, they develop local and situated cultural repertoires of practice (Rogoff, 2003). This form of learning can be highly motivating, and as the children observe adults intently in these interactions and experiences they come to understand and value the ways of acting and participating in their families and cultures.

Children make meaning in the social and cultural contexts of which they are a part. In the context of the marten skinning, cultural ways of knowing are shared by a caring grandfather; children learn and encounter the world by those who have come before. As Säljö (1998) points out,

We do not encounter the world as it exists in any neutral or objective sense outside the realm of human experience.... [T]he world is pre-interpreted for us by previous generations and we draw on the experiences that others have had before us. (p. 55)

As mentioned previously, Indigenous people have a long history of hunting and trapping. This knowledge has been passed down from generation to generation and now is passed down again as the grandfather carefully and thoughtfully demonstrates this traditional way of life to his grandson and his classmates as they observe the task taking place in front of them.

Unfortunately, it has been common practice in educational institutions to view and dismiss the funds of knowledge of families from diverse backgrounds as low-status, not valid, or common-sense and thus not worthy of being integrated into curriculum and pedagogy (Oughton, 2010). This deficit perspective often accompanies the expectation that families must learn the dominant culture in order to be academically successful. Even when diversity is recognized in schools and early childhood centers, culture is often reduced to compensatory, fragmented programs that focus on the aforementioned “Fs” (food, folklore, festivals and fashion) highlighting the differences between cultures rather than an understanding of them (González et al., 1993; Meyer & Rhoades, 2006). In this way, culture is viewed as static and normative, rather than dynamic and diverse (Amanti, 2005). Such practices call into question whose knowledge “counts,” highlighting the systematic exclusion of local families, students, and community members from decisions about what matters most in cultural representations.

Although changing the beliefs and practices of schools and teachers from a deficit to a credit-based view of families’ diverse funds of knowledge and experiences has been a recent focus of pedagogy with shifts towards culturally responsive teaching and multicultural education, there is still much work to be done in actualization. Teachers may wholeheartedly embrace the inclusion of expertise by inviting families and other community members to visit their classroom; however, many Indigenous families may approach these invitations with caution, their concerns grounded in the historical narrative of the systematic denigration of Indigenous knowledge and culture practices of residential schools (Hare, 2012). By building bridges across the community, schools may form very comfortable relationships with parents, children, and community members. Inclusion of community members then may not always be planned but may happen spontaneously as the opportunity arises.

The marten skinning demonstration and modeling and the children's participation in the activity offers a window into possibilities for including, exploring, and understanding a worldview that is not taught in schools. In this context, the early childhood classroom is a place in which family members are welcomed and cultural knowledge is shared and valued. The marten skinning afforded a moment in time in which teaching was based on Aboriginal ways of knowing and enhanced the learning opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators and learners.

To further these opportunities for young children, provocations such as this become catalysts for culturally appropriate play, and can push the boundaries of mainstream play practices typically found in early learning settings. For example, to extend the marten skinning demonstration, children could be provided with dried pelts and skins from local trappings (e.g., rabbits, beavers) in addition to culturally appropriate tools for the children to touch and manipulate. Teachers could also plan follow-up activities or scenarios to demonstrations and modelling like the example we described in the video, which may encourage children to take-up activities such as hunting and trapping, preparing furs, and so forth in their play. These kinds of activities not only respect families' cultural knowledge but also honor children's abilities to take on new responsibilities.

With decades of school education, many Indigenous people have been removed from the land and its teachings, and from their cultural funds of knowledge. The marten demonstration serves as a starting place for a continuation of content and a re-connection to the land. There is also a need to take the classroom outside where children can engage in authentic experiences such as hanging traps, participating in fishing and hunting, picking plants or berries, or gathering and preparing traditional foods.

Cajete (1994) speaks of Indigenous tracking which is a "highly evolved survival skill based on direct and person experience with Nature" (p. 56). He states that people can use their physical environments as ground for their teaching, learning and spiritual tempering. He further explains,

Indigenous complexes of hunting throughout the world followed a pattern that, while finding a diversity of expressions, included basic component processes ... first setting one's intentions through prayerful asking. Second,...intense questions and application of skill and attractive behavior toward the goal of a successful hunt. Third,...includes the community process of respectful treatment of the prey, celebrating and thanksgiving.... The Hunter and his community entered a spiritual exchange, a creative process of learning and teaching that has formed the foundation of human meaning since the dawn of history. (p. 63)

Cajete continues, "Moderns no longer experience a daily and direct relationship with animals.... To truly understand animals, is also to truly understand others" (p. 64). As we reflect upon the marten skinning demonstration and the words of Elder Anne Wilson (as communicated through our co-author Laura Horton) and Cajete, we can imagine how to extend a demonstration into a richer experience for the children and involve the community. Creating an environment in which children can play hunting and trapping, taking on the identities of members of their community in the school playground, is a meaningful way to connect community and school, for children to listen and talk, and to participate in experiences that are authentic. Community members could also be asked to

imagine and help create spaces where children could construct their own understandings of the hunt, the traps, the skinning, and preparing food on the land. By encouraging children to bring their family and community funds of knowledge into the classroom and onto the playground, children's oral language is extended to what they know, and in this way, school can become much less foreign. Those who deliberated over the contents of Treaty #3 would be pleased. The Head Spokespeople ensured education was included, education that was directed both ways (e.g., Anishinaabe would learn mainstream ways and the mainstream would learn Anishinaabe ways). Funds of knowledge is a platform to bring this concept to a place of respect and dignity.

References

- Aboriginal Head Start Association of British Columbia. (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.ahsabc.com/>
- Amanti, C. (2005). Beyond a beads and feathers approach. In González, N., Moll, L., & Amanti, C. (Eds.). (2005). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms* (pp.131–141). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Anderson, J., Morrison, F., Leighton-Stephens, D., & Shapiro, J. (2007, May). *Listening to parents' voices: Working with First Nations communities in a culturally responsive family literacy program*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, Saskatoon, SK.
- Anderson, J., & Morrison, F. (2011). Learning from/with immigrant and refugee families in a family literacy program. In A. Lazar, & P. Schmidt (Eds.). *Practicing what we teach: How culturally responsive literacy classrooms make a difference* (pp. 30–38). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Battiste, M., & Barman, J. (2000). *First Nations education in Canada: The circle unfolds*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Cajete, G. (1994). *Look to the mountain: An ecology of Indigenous education*. Skyland, NM: Kivaki Press.
- Chesworth, L. (2016). A funds of knowledge approach to examining play interests: Listening to children's and parent's perspectives. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 24(3), 294–308.
- Dyson, A. H. (1997). *Writing superheroes: Contemporary childhood, popular culture, and classroom literacy*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Geniusz, W. D. (2006). *Decolonizing botanical Anishinaabe knowledge: A Biskaabiiyang approach* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (305308922). (Order No. 3227544).
- Genzuk, M. (1999). Tapping into community funds of knowledge. In *Effective strategies for English language acquisition: Curriculum guide for the professional development of teachers grades kindergarten through eight* (pp. 9–21). Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project / ARCO Foundation.
- González, N., Moll, L., & Amanti, C. (Eds.). (2005). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- González, N., Moll, L., Floyd-Tenery, M., Rivera, A., Rendon, P., Gonzales, R., & Amanti, C. (1993). *Teacher research on funds of knowledge: Learning from*

- households (*Educational Practice Report 6*). Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning.
- Greenwood, M., & Shawana, P. (2000). *Whispered gently through time: First Nations quality child care: A national study*. Human Resources Development Canada, Ottawa (Ontario). Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED 462 224)
- Grieshaber, S., & McArdle, F. (2010). *The trouble with play*. Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.
- Hare, J. (2005). To 'Know Papers': Aboriginal perspectives on literacy. In J. Anderson, M. Kendrick, T. Rogers, & S. Smythe (Eds.), *Portraits of literacy across families, communities and schools: Intersections and tensions* (pp. 243–264). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hare, J. (2012). 'They tell a story and there's meaning behind that story': Indigenous knowledge and young Indigenous children's literacy learning. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 12(4): 389–414.
- Hare, J., & Anderson, J. (2010). Transitions to early childhood for Indigenous children and families in Canada: Historical and social realities. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 35(2), 19–27.
- Hedegaard, M., Fler, N., Bang, J., & Hviid, P. (2008). Researching child development – An introduction. In M. Hedegaard, & M. Fler (Eds.), *Studying children: A cultural-historical approach* (pp. 1–9). Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.
- Hedges, H. (2011). Rethinking Sponge Bob and Ninja Turtles: Popular culture as funds of knowledge for curriculum co-construction. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 36(1), 25–29.
- Holland, D., Lachicotte, W., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Holland D. C., & Lave J. (2001). *History in person: Enduring struggles, contentious practice, intimate identities*. Santa Fe, MN: School of American Research Press.
- Huizinga, J. (1950/1955). *Homo ludens: The study of the play element in culture*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Kant, I. (1934). *Critique of pure reason* (J.K.M. Meiklejohn, Trans.). London, England: Dent. (Original work published 1781).
- Kendrick, M. (2016). *Literacy and multimodality across global sites*. London, England: Routledge.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1999). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Mashon, D. (2010). *Realizing 'quality' in Indigenous early childhood development*. Unpublished master's thesis. University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC.
- McVee, M., Kailonnie, D., & Gavelek, J. (2005). Schema theory revisited. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(4), 531–566.
- Meyer, C., & Rhoades, E. (2006). Multiculturalism: Beyond food, festival, folklore, and fashion. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 42 (2), 82–87. doi:10.1080/00228958.2006.10516439
- Moll, L., Amanti, C. Neff, D., & González, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132–141.

- Moll, L., & Greenberg, J. (1990). Creating zones of possibilities: Combining social contexts for instructions. In Moll, L. (Ed.), *Vygotsky and Education* (pp. 319–348). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Namazzi, E., & Kendrick, M. (2014). The use of multilingual cultural resources in child-headed households in Uganda. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 35(7), 724–737.
- Oughton, H. (2010). Funds of knowledge – a conceptual critique. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 42(1), 63–78.
- Riojas-Cortez, M. (2001). Preschoolers’ funds of knowledge displayed through sociodramatic play episodes in a bilingual classroom. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 29(1), 35–40.
- Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). (1996). *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples – Final Report – Vol. I – Looking forward, looking back*. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Library and Archives Canada. Ottawa, ON.
- Säljö, R. (1998). Thinking with and through artefacts: The role of psychological tools and physical artifacts in human learning and cognition. In D. Faulkner, D. Littleton, D., & M. Woodhead, M. (Eds.), *Learning relationships in the classroom* (pp. 54–66). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Sheridan, D., Street, B. V., & Bloome, D. (2000). *Writing ourselves: Mass-observation and literacy practices*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Simpson, L. (2011). *Dancing on our turtle's back: Stories of Nishnaabeg re-creation, resurgence and a new emergence*. Winnipeg, MB: Arbeiter Ring Publishers.
- Vélez-Ibáñez, C.G., & Greenberg, J.B. (1989). *Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge among U.S. Mexican households in the context of the borderlands*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, DC.
- Vélez-Ibáñez, C.G., & Greenberg, J.B. (1992). Formation and transformation of funds of knowledge. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 23, 313–335.

Author Biographies

Dr. Jim Anderson is a professor in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia where he teaches and conducts research in early literacy and family/community literacy. Prior to joining UBC, he worked in the public school system as a teacher, reading specialist, language arts coordinator and assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction. With colleagues, he is currently conducting a Social Science and Humanities Council of Canada funded study of children’s and families’ access to digital technology in socially disadvantaged communities.

Laura Horton is the Executive co-chairman of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium and former director of post-secondary education for the Seven Generations Education Institute. She has co-authored papers on action research and Indigenous research perspectives, and is currently serving as a consultant on Indigenous perspectives for the NOW Play project. Laura is Dene Anishinaabe and community member of Rainy River First Nations. As a grandmother of three, it is important for her to pass on teachings and traditions.

Dr. Maureen Kendrick is a professor in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia. Her research examines literacy and multimodality as integrated communicative practices, and addresses a range of social and cultural issues in diverse contexts. She has a particular interest in visual communication. Her research on communicative practices in various geographic locations includes a focus on marginalized populations in East Africa and Canada. She is currently engaged in a SSHRC-funded study on youth refugees in Canadian classrooms.

Dr. Marianne McTavish is Senior Instructor in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia where she teaches graduate and teacher education courses in early childhood, language, and literacy. Prior to obtaining her PhD, Marianne taught kindergarten through third grade in the public school system for over 25 years. Her research interests include young children's information and digital communicative practices as they engage in multimodal meaning making across classroom, home, out-of-school, and community spaces. She is currently co-investigator in a SSHRC-funded study that aims to document young children's use of digital technology prior to kindergarten.