


Explore how everyday scenarios impact literacy practices and promote interdisciplinary approaches to literacy learning

**Author:**Zelda E. Barends¹ **Affiliation:**

¹Department of Curriculum Studies, Faculty of Education, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa

Corresponding author:

Zelda Barends,
zbarends@sun.ac.za

Dates:

Received: 12 Aug. 2025

Accepted: 27 Aug. 2025

Published: 27 Nov. 2025

How to cite this article:

Barends, Z.E., 2025, 'Explore how everyday scenarios impact literacy practices and promote interdisciplinary approaches to literacy learning', *Reading & Writing* 16(1), a605. <https://doi.org/10.4102/rw.v16i1.605>

Copyright:

© 2025. The Author.
Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Read online:

Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

We are pleased to present the topical collection of *Reading & Writing*. This collection of the journal contributes and brings together seven thought-provoking articles that explore how various everyday environments influence literacy practices under the theme 'Literacy learning across contexts: home – play – work'. In line with this, the articles presented in this collection explore how various everyday environments influence literacy practices. By examining literacy learning in diverse contexts, the articles demonstrate interdisciplinary approaches to literacy that can drive socio-economic transformation and contribute to educational development.

In the article titled 'Family language policy in multilingual first language-isiXhosa families in the Western Cape, South Africa', Simthembele Xeketwana, Nobesuthu Xeketwana and Christine Anthonissen (2025) explore family language policies in isiXhosa-speaking families in the Western Cape, examining how these policies influence children's language development and educational choices. Drawing on qualitative interviews with seven isiXhosa-speaking families, they argue that non-nuclear family structures, multilingual repertoires, and language negotiation shape learners' literacy and learning.

The second article, 'Perceptions of Montessori preschool teachers regarding literacy development through technology-supported play-based activities' (Margaret F. Omidire, Shine Aung, Etinosa Izevbigie & Seboke Shai 2025), explores the perceptions of Montessori preschool teachers in Tshwane, South Africa. This exploration focuses on Montessori preschool teachers' perceptions of literacy development through technology-supported play-based activities. Using interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations with 10 teachers from four schools, the research found that most Montessori teachers preferred traditional, hands-on, sensory-rich methods for early literacy, citing concerns that technology undermines sensory and social development.

Clare Khan, Dean van der Merwe and Christopher Koekemoer (2025) in the article 'Literacy support in practice: Grade 3 teachers' experiences with government reading interventions' make a case for how literacy development is shaped by interactions across home, play, and work contexts. At home, they discuss how parental involvement with Department of Basic Education (DBE) provided resources, such as workbooks and readers, can reinforce reading skills and foster positive attitudes toward literacy. In play, activities like 'Drop All and Read' and the use of 'Big Books' in schools create opportunities for shared, interactive reading experiences, which can make literacy learning enjoyable and socially engaging. Further, they found that within the work context of the school, teachers' professional knowledge, training, and access to suitable materials directly affect how literacy support programmes are implemented and sustained. The findings highlight that effective literacy development requires alignment and mutual reinforcement between home support, playful learning experiences, and the structured teaching work of educators.

Simbayi Yafele (2025) states that teachers' perspectives influence learning in the article titled 'Fostering reading-culture of pre-teen community friends via reading playdates'. The research that informed this article examined Grade R teachers' perspectives on how children's multilingual and multicultural backgrounds influence literacy teaching and learning in South African classrooms. Through qualitative interviews with teachers from urban, peri-urban, and rural schools, Yafele found that linguistic diversity presents both opportunities and challenges. Teachers valued learners' home languages as a foundation for literacy, but faced constraints such as limited teaching resources in multiple languages, large class sizes, and curriculum demands prioritising English. Strategies used include code-switching, integrating familiar cultural contexts

Note: The manuscript is a contribution to the topical collection titled 'Literacy learning across contexts: home - play - work', under the expert guidance of guest editor Dr Zelda Barends.

into reading materials, and the use of songs, rhymes, and storytelling from various languages to build vocabulary and comprehension.

In the article 'Why do children have to hide their true selves at important places (like class)?', Rose-Anne Reynolds (2025) explores how everyday environments influence literacy practices by highlighting that literacy is not confined to formal settings. Instead, she posits that literacy emerges dynamically through children's questions, storytelling, and critical dialogue in various settings. In her focus on the pedagogical significance of philosophical enquiry in early education, she emphasises the role this plays in fostering children's critical thinking, questioning, and active participation in classroom discussions. While her main focus is on classroom practices and pedagogical philosophies, she implies that a broader understanding of how environments, such as classrooms, can be structured to encourage children's questioning and reasoning.

In the article 'Community literacy club and family language policymaking initiatives for biliteracy development', Xolisa Guzula and Babalwayashe Molate (2025) look at a literacy club and a multilingual Xhosa family to explore language policies, translanguaging, and family language management in South Africa. The study researched how language policies are contested and re-negotiated at the grassroots level and within families, challenging normative language hierarchies. Guzula and Molate (2025) also includes a discussion on the role of extended family and community in shaping family language policies, highlighting the importance of multilingualism and biliteracy development.

Janet Condy and Heather Phillips (2025), discussing a workshop that focused on Reading-for-Meaning strategies,

reminds us that literacy is not only confined to school and educational settings. In their reflections on a five-day professional development workshop for educators teaching in South African correctional centres, they discuss strategies aimed at enhancing inmates' literacy and critical thinking skills, with the broader goal of reducing recidivism.

Overall, the articles presented in this topical collection of *Reading & Writing* provide valuable insights into how diverse, everyday environments shape literacy practices, as well as how such practices support interdisciplinary approaches to literacy learning. These articles also show how socio-economic transformation can be enhanced through literacy research.

The editorial team of *Reading & Writing* would like to extend their collective thanks to all the authors and reviewers (both national and international) who have contributed to making this a stimulating and thought-provoking topical collection.

References

- Condy, J.L. & Phillips, H.N., 2025, 'Educators of inmates: Reflections on a five-day Reading-for-Meaning workshop', *Reading & Writing* 16(1), a570. <https://doi.org/10.4102/rw.v16i1.570>
- Guzula, X. & Molate, B., 2025, 'Community literacy club and family language policymaking initiatives for biliteracy development', *Reading & Writing* 16(1), a569. <https://doi.org/10.4102/rw.v16i1.569>
- Khan, C., Van der Merwe, D. & Koekemoer, C.W., 2025, 'Literacy support in practice: Grade 3 teachers' experiences with government reading interventions', *Reading & Writing* 16(1), a534. <https://doi.org/10.4102/rw.v16i1.534>
- Omidire, M.F., Aung, S., Izevbigie, E. & Shai, S.P., 2025, 'Perception of Montessori preschool teachers regarding literacy development through technology-supported play-based activities', *Reading & Writing* 16(1), a543. <https://doi.org/10.4102/rw.v16i1.543>
- Reynolds, R.-A., 2025, 'Why do children have to hide their true selves in important places (like class)?', *Reading & Writing* 16(1), a568. <https://doi.org/10.4102/rw.v16i1.568>
- Xeketwana, S., Xeketwana, N. & Anthonissen, C., 2025, 'Family language policy: Choices in isiXhosa families and implications for multilingual education', *Reading & Writing* 16(1), a531. <https://doi.org/10.4102/rw.v16i1.531>
- Yafele, S., 2025, 'Fostering reading-culture of pre-teen community friends via reading play dates', *Reading & Writing* 16(1), a552. <https://doi.org/10.4102/re.v16i1.552>