

Three levels of understanding about written language acquired by young children prior to formal instruction.

Author(s): Purcell-Gates, V.

Year of Publication: 1986

Publication Information: *National Reading Conference Yearbook, 35, 259-265.*

Type of Review: Narrative.

Purpose: To review research on literacy development before formal instruction in reading and writing. Focuses on how children construct knowledge and make sense of the world.

Inclusion Criteria: Not Reported.

Search Method: Not Reported.

Review Method: Not Reported.

Number of Studies: Approximately 20.

Population of Participants: (1) Normally developing preschool children with no formal reading instruction.
(2) Multicultural.

Age of Participants: Preschool.

Concerns Raised: Not Reported.

Outcome Measures of Interest: (1) Story telling measures.
(2) Picture matching measures.

Conclusion/Results: (1) Children construct knowledge about the world according to three levels. They learn about literacy as a whole, the nature and characteristics of written language, and about print as a language signifier. Learning through these three levels is not sequential but rather simultaneous.
(2) Children from different cultures construct knowledge about the world differently, usually the culture's literacy levels affect how ready the child will respond to formal instruction.

Comments: Useful for parents of children who were raised in a different culture, and perhaps even the slightly different cultures within the same environment/country (available references are also useful).