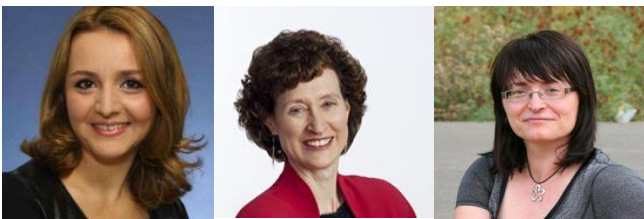


# RESEARCH CONNECTION

## NOW Play: Northern oral language and writing through play

*Burcu Yaman Ntelioglou, Ph.D., Shelley Stagg Peterson, Ph.D., & Laureen J. McIntyre, Ph.D.*



### Why this research is important

Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, this seven-year project involves conducting studies focusing on language learning and literacy development in schools and daycares in northern and rural Manitoba, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. For Dr. Burcu Yaman Ntelioglou, the NOW Play project not only accentuates language and literacy acquisition, but also highlights the significance of equity in language and literacy education, responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call for educators.

### How the research is being done

As lead investigator in Manitoba, Dr. Burcu Yaman Ntelioglou works with over a hundred participating children and their teachers in a northern rural school division and an Aboriginal Head Start program. Using Educational Ethnography and Collaborative Reflective Practitioner Inquiry methodologies, Dr. Yaman Ntelioglou aims to research the pedagogical questions and wonderments brought forth by the teachers. A significant opportunity in this collaborative research project is

### What you need to know

This research is addressing the need to close literacy achievement gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children, and between rural and urban children. The overarching goal of this research is to enhance the oral and written language of young children living in rural, northern Canadian communities.

The proposed partnership addresses the following objectives:

1. To foster a dynamic, culturally-relevant, and linguistically-responsive play-based framework for assessing and supporting children's oral language and writing development;
2. To contribute contextualized data to inform theory development in the fields of oral language and writing development, play-based learning, culturally appropriate teaching, and curriculum development;
3. To encourage family literacy practices tailored to the needs of educators as well as parents/caregivers in northern rural Aboriginal communities; and
4. To strengthen and sustain the relationality between theory and practice to support children's oral language and literacy development in their multiple languages, in northern rural Aboriginal Canadian communities.

the opportunities for teachers and researchers across provinces to share and co-analyze pedagogical practices for language and literacy teaching and learning. Viewing teachers as active participants in research about their own and each other's teaching, reflective collaborative practitioner inquiry allows Dr. Yaman Ntelioglou to examine classroom practices and how improvements can be made to help enhance the future practices of other educators who are working to support the language and literacy development of rural, northern and Aboriginal children.

### What the researchers found

This seven-year project is in its fourth year. One of the central preliminary findings of this study is the significance of situated and culturally-relevant practice in language and literacy education. Language minority students, such as some Canadian Aboriginal students and newcomer immigrant students, engage in many different language and literacy practices outside the school. Within schools, however, the teaching of literacy is often narrowly focused on the literacy in the dominant language, failing to acknowledge/build on the multilingual and multiple literacy practices of the students. This study also documents that culturally-relevant and embodied play-based approaches in language and literacy teaching provide an important platform for students to draw on their multilingual and multimodal repertoires. The research features students' language and literacy practices in everyday 'real' life spaces highlighting the significance of making better home, school, community connections.

### How this research can be used

Expanding understandings of culturally-relevant pedagogy in language and literacy education, this study supports the creation of a repertoire of instructional approaches, materials and assessment practices that are aimed at helping educators to bring greater equity, creativity and criticality in language and literacy education in schools.

### About the researchers

Dr. Burcu Yaman Ntelioglou from Brandon University, Faculty of Education, Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy collaborates with the Principal Investigator Dr. Shelley Stagg Peterson from University of Toronto, and co-investigator Dr. Laureen J. McIntyre from University of Saskatchewan.

For more information, please visit: [now-play.org/publications/](http://now-play.org/publications/)

Dr. Burcu Yaman Ntelioglou, email: [nteliogloub@brandonu.ca](mailto:nteliogloub@brandonu.ca)  
[people.brandonu.ca/nteliogloub/](http://people.brandonu.ca/nteliogloub/)

Dr. Shelley Stagg Peterson, email: [shellevstagg.peterson@utoronto.ca](mailto:shellevstagg.peterson@utoronto.ca)

Dr. Laureen J. McIntyre, email: [laureen.mcintyre@usask.ca](mailto:laureen.mcintyre@usask.ca)

### Keywords

Language and literacy education; culturally-relevant play-based pedagogy; collaborative reflective practitioner inquiry; educational ethnography

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<http://www.brandonu.ca/research-connection>

This research project has been approved by the Brandon University Research Ethics Committee.

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