

Integration of social work intervention and literacy education: A catalyst for inclusive national development

Andong, H. A.¹, Abangbeshie, B. G.² & Ubana, M. U.³

¹⁻³ Continuing Education and Development Studies Department.

Abstract

Despite considerable advancements in social work and literacy education, the problem of addressing the intertwined barriers that perpetuate systemic disadvantage and hinder inclusive national development still remains. While social work has focused on supporting vulnerable populations and addressing issues such as poverty, mental health and social injustice, literacy education has focused on providing the literacy and communication skills essential for individual and community development. This paper explores the integration of social work interventions and literacy education as a transformative, synergistic approach to catalysing grassroots empowerment and dismantling structural barriers to progress. Using methods of textual analysis, speculation and synthesis, the paper explores how this integrated paradigm transcends mere skill acquisition and positions literacy as a tool for critical consciousness, civic engagement and collective upliftment. Complemented the strengths-based, culturally responsive practices of social work, marginalised communities are equipped with the skills to navigate complex systems, assert rights and drive structural reform. The paper concludes that this approach compellingly recalibrates our understanding of what constitutes development, transcending narrow economic metrics to encompass the realisation of human potential, the establishment of social justice, and the promotion of civic engagement.

Keywords: Social work, literacy education, National development, Integration, Intervention

Introduction

Policymakers and scholars envision an ideal society in which every individual, regardless of socio-economic status or background, can actively contribute to the nation's growth, prosperity, social cohesion, equal access to opportunities and overall well-being. However, the current reality stands in stark contrast to this vision, characterised by glaring inequalities in education, income and social services. Yet despite these aspirations for an inclusive society, the current reality falls drastically short, resembling a chronic societal illness caused by glaring disparities in education, income and access to social services. From a social work perspective, these inequalities are not only structural challenges but also indicators of systemic neglect of vulnerable populations, perpetuating cycles of disadvantage and marginalization (NASW, 2021).

Like a chronic illness affecting an individual, our society suffers from a systemic lack of social inclusion and educational empowerment. Just as an individual's health deteriorates when vital organs fail, a nation's well-being suffers when segments of its population are marginalised and disenfranchised. Moreover, conventional efforts to address these issues through economic policy and infrastructure development have fallen short, as persistent social inequalities underscore the need for a more holistic approach. In this context, social work and literacy education provides a critical framework for understanding and addressing these challenges, offering a comprehensive lens through which the interrelated nature of social determinants can be addressed. In doing so, social work emphasises the importance of addressing underlying social determinants such as community support, access to mental health resources and equitable education systems as part of national policy strategies.

Historically, social work intervention and literacy education have operated independently, addressing different facets of social well-being. While social work has traditionally focused on helping marginalised communities, addressing issues such as poverty, homelessness and mental health, literacy education has primarily aimed to provide the basic skills necessary for participation in the workforce and civic engagement. Despite significant advances in both fields, their potential synergies have remained largely unexplored until recently. Integrating these disciplines aligns with the core values of social work, including

social justice, human dignity, and the empowerment of individuals and communities, creating a framework for addressing deeper systemic issues (Dominelli, 2018).

However, recent research suggests that the integration of social work interventions and literacy education creates a powerful synergy that amplifies the impact of both disciplines. To illustrate, Alidou et al (2015) highlight how this holistic approach addresses social, economic and psychological barriers that impede access to education. By incorporating social work principles into literacy programmes, individuals and communities are empowered to fully engage in educational endeavours. For instance, social work methodologies such as case management, advocacy, and psychosocial support can directly enhance literacy outcomes by addressing issues such as trauma, instability, and lack of resources, which often hinder learning (Truell & Jones, 2021). This holistic approach is particularly relevant in addressing the multiple challenges faced by developing countries. Specifically, in many contexts, poverty, gender inequality, conflict and limited access to resources are significant barriers to both social development and literacy acquisition (UNESCO, 2021). Integrating social work interventions and literacy education offers a comprehensive solution to these intersecting challenges, promoting inclusive and sustainable development.

Despite the promising potential of integrated interventions, challenges remain. For example, structural barriers such as funding constraints and bureaucratic hurdles often make it difficult for different sectors to work together. In addition, entrenched ideologies and disciplinary boundaries within academic and policy-making circles perpetuate the status quo, hindering innovation and holistic approaches to societal challenges. In light of these challenges, this research seeks to fill a critical knowledge gap by critically examining the integration of social work interventions and literacy education in the context of national development. It argues that this integration represents a paradigm shift with the potential to address entrenched inequalities and advance national development. Ultimately, by bridging the gap between these two disciplines, we can harness the synergies between social empowerment and educational attainment, paving the way for a more inclusive and prosperous society.

The synergistic framework of social work and literacy education: A theoretical perspective

This paper employs a Critical Pedagogy Framework, which accentuates the interplay between social work and literacy education in fostering critical consciousness and empowerment among marginalized communities. Inspired by theorists such as Paulo Freire, this framework posits that education serves not merely as an instrument for skill acquisition but as a means of fostering critical awareness of societal inequalities and injustices (Freire, 1970). Central to this framework is the belief that literacy education should go beyond traditional instructional practices, integrating social work principles that address the broader social determinants influencing literacy outcomes.

The Strengths-Based Approach, commonly utilized in social work, complements this pedagogy by focusing on the inherent potential and resilience within individuals and communities (Saleebey, 2018). This approach reinforces the notion that people are not merely passive recipients of educational services but active agents who can leverage their experiences and backgrounds to navigate and transform their socio-economic realities. By blending critical pedagogy with strengths-based practices, this framework encourages learners to critically engage with their contexts, challenge oppressive structures, and develop skills necessary for civic participation.

At the intersection of these theories lies an Intersectionality Framework that recognizes the multiplicity of identities and experiences affecting individuals' access to education and

social services (Crenshaw, 1989). This aspect is crucial when examining the complex barriers faced by marginalized groups—such as race, gender, and socio-economic status—which intersect to create unique challenges that hinder their progress. By applying this framework, social work and literacy education can address these overlapping forms of oppression comprehensively, fostering an inclusive and responsive approach to national development.

In summary, the integration of social work interventions and literacy education through these theoretical lenses catalyzes a transformative synergy that not only enhances individual capabilities but also mobilizes collective action toward systemic change. This framework offers a robust foundation for understanding how the collaboration between these two disciplines can dismantle barriers, promote social justice, and pave the way for a more equitable society.

An overview of literacy education

Globally, there are wide disparities in literacy education outcomes, with those from privileged backgrounds significantly outperforming underprivileged populations (College Board, 2005; Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005). In response, scholars such as Paulo Freire (1970), Peter McLaren (2002), Antonia Darder (1991), Bell Hooks (1994), and Henry Giroux (1988) have pioneered a generation of critical pedagogy that examines how Western educational institutions have perpetuated the interests of dominant groups. Their theories advocate for empowering forms of teaching that equip marginalised populations with literacy and civic engagement skills. This enables them to better navigate, resist, and ultimately transform the power structures and institutions that have historically excluded them. Their work highlights education as a potential catalyst for dismantling systemic oppression and achieving social transformation.

The concept of literacy education encompasses the teaching and learning processes that aim to develop an individual's ability to read, write, speak, listen and think critically in a variety of contexts. Literacy education goes beyond basic literacy skills to include the comprehension, interpretation and communication of information in different forms and media. It is therefore essential for individuals to participate fully in society, to engage with diverse texts and to navigate the complexities of the modern world. Literacy education involves understanding the cultural, social and historical dimensions of literacy practices and adapting teaching to meet the needs of diverse learners. In essence, literacy education plays a crucial role in empowering individuals, promoting equity and fostering lifelong learning (Freebody, 2007).

This means that literacy is a fundamental component of human development and a catalyst for social, economic and political progress. Expanding on this idea, it encompasses the acquisition of skills and competencies that enable individuals to read, write, communicate effectively and engage critically with information (UNESCO, 2021). Moreover, in today's rapidly evolving world, the concept of literacy has expanded beyond its traditional boundaries to include digital literacy, financial literacy, and the critical thinking skills needed to navigate complex social and economic landscapes.

To fully understand the impact of literacy education, it is essential to examine its development across different stages of life. Literacy education begins in early childhood, laying the foundation for lifelong learning and cognitive development (Dickinson & Neuman, 2018). At this critical stage, early exposure to books, storytelling, and language-rich environments plays a crucial role in fostering emergent literacy skills and developing a love of reading and learning (Neuman & Moland, 2019).

As children progress through formal education, literacy instruction becomes more structured and focuses on developing skills in reading, writing and comprehension (Graham & Harris, 2014). In addition, effective literacy programmes in primary and secondary schools use

evidence-based pedagogical approaches, such as balanced literacy instruction, which combines explicit skills instruction with opportunities for authentic literacy experiences.

However, literacy education extends beyond the traditional classroom setting. In this regard, family and community engagement are critical components of successful literacy initiatives (Mapp & Kuttner, 2020). Specifically, involving parents, caregivers, and community members in literacy activities and providing them with the necessary resources and support can significantly improve literacy outcomes (Boykin & Noguera, 2011).

Moving on to the role of technology, the integration of technology into literacy education has gained momentum in recent years (Leu et al., 2015). Accordingly, digital literacy skills, including the ability to navigate online platforms, critically evaluate digital information, and communicate effectively through various digital media, have become essential for personal and professional success (Spires et al., 2018). As a result, effective literacy programmes now incorporate digital tools and resources to equip learners with the skills they need to thrive in an increasingly digitised world (Coiro et al., 2021). The use of technology can also play a central role in promoting more inclusive and equitable literacy practices. Digital platforms and assistive technologies can help remove barriers and provide access to literacy materials for learners with different abilities, backgrounds and needs.

Moreover, literacy education plays a critical role in promoting inclusive and equitable societies. On the one hand, marginalised and underserved communities often face barriers to accessing quality literacy instruction, perpetuating cycles of disadvantage. On the other hand, culturally responsive literacy practices that value diverse backgrounds, languages, and experiences can help address these inequities and create more inclusive learning environments (Paris & Alim, 2017). By using technology in culturally relevant ways, educators can further improve accessibility, representation, and engagement for all learners.

Effective literacy education requires a multifaceted approach that addresses not only skill development but also the broader social, cultural, and economic factors that influence literacy acquisition. Collaboration between educators, policy-makers, families, and community stakeholders is essential to design and implement literacy programmes that meet the diverse needs of learners and contribute to the overall development of individuals and societies. This holistic approach to literacy education must include early childhood foundations, evidence-based pedagogies, family and community engagement, technology integration, and culturally responsive practices that promote inclusivity and equity. By empowering marginalised populations with literacy skills, critical consciousness, and civic engagement skills, literacy education can serve as a catalyst for dismantling systemic oppression and driving social change. Furthermore, the evolving nature of literacy requires literacy programmes to be adaptable in order to address digital literacy, financial literacy, and critical thinking skills that are essential for navigating complex modern landscapes. Ultimately, effective literacy education is a cornerstone of human development, individual empowerment and inclusive national progress, fostering lifelong learning, economic mobility and active civic participation for all.

Social work intervention: Empowering individuals, transforming communities

In societies around the world, individuals, families and communities face a wide range of challenges that impede their well-being and ability to thrive. From economic inequalities and mental health problems to social exclusion and violence, these challenges permeate different facets of human existence and require compassionate and effective responses. Among the professions dedicated to tackling these complex issues, social work stands out as a noble and indispensable force, playing a pivotal role in addressing the diverse needs of individuals and communities.

Social work interventions are used as a means of addressing these diverse needs. These interventions are the deliberate actions and strategies employed by social workers to address the needs, challenges and concerns of individuals, families, groups and communities (Teater, 2022). Developed with the intention of enhancing well-being, promoting social justice, and empowering individuals to navigate and overcome the various adversities they face, these interventions embody the core principles of the social work profession. The authors echo the views of the International Federation of Social Workers (2014) and Banks, S. (2012) who affirm that social work interventions are rooted in the principles of human rights, social justice, and the empowerment of marginalised populations. Through a holistic and multidimensional approach, social workers strive to create a more just and inclusive society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

One of the fundamental aspects of social work interventions is the strengths-based approach, which recognises and builds on the inherent capacities, resources and resilience of individuals, families and communities (Saleebey, 2018). This approach challenges the deficit-oriented paradigms that often dominate social service provision and instead focuses on empowering clients to identify and use their strengths to overcome challenges and achieve their desired outcomes (Berzoff & Kita, 2020). Central to this approach is an emphasis on strengths-based and person-centred methodologies (Saleebey, 2013). Rather than viewing individuals or communities as passive recipients, social workers identify and build on inherent strengths, resilience and capacities.

Another critical aspect of effective social work interventions is cultural competence and sensitivity (Kohli et al., 2010). Building on the strengths-based approach, which recognises the inherent capacities of individuals, interventions must also respect and incorporate the cultural backgrounds, values and belief systems that shape people's experiences and perspectives. By respecting and incorporating these contexts, interventions resonate with communities and foster trust, understanding and meaningful engagement. However, it is crucial to recognise that cultural identities do not exist in isolation; they intersect with other aspects such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability and socio-economic status, creating unique experiences of privilege and marginalisation. The framework of intersectionality, developed by scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, highlights how individuals can face compounded forms of oppression and discrimination due to the intersection of multiple marginalised identities (Crenshaw, 1989). Social workers need to adopt an intersectional lens to understand the complex, multidimensional nature of clients' identities and the systems of oppression they navigate. This involves critically analysing how different forms of discrimination and marginalisation intersect and shape the realities of individuals and communities, creating unique challenges and barriers. For example, a woman of colour from a low-income background may face particular challenges resulting from the simultaneous effects of gender, racial and economic marginalisation. Effective social work interventions must recognise and address these intersecting identities and their impact on access to resources, power dynamics and lived experiences.

Social work interventions operate at multiple levels, from micro-level interventions focused on individuals and families to macro-level interventions that address systemic and structural issues (Kirst-Ashman & Hull, 2018). At the micro level, social workers use techniques such as counselling, case management, and crisis intervention to help individuals and families navigate complex life situations, address mental health concerns, and access needed resources (Thyer & Myers, 2011). These evidence-based interventions enhance coping mechanisms, improve well-being, and facilitate positive transitions, such as trauma-informed therapy for mental health problems or helping families navigate resources (Herman, 1997).

While micro-level interventions address immediate and individual needs, social work also recognises the importance of broader, systemic change. In addition to individual interventions, social workers engage in community level interventions involving grassroots organising, capacity building and advocacy (Rothman, 2007).

Despite challenges such as limited resources, bureaucracy and entrenched societal problems, social workers remain committed to promoting social justice, human dignity and the empowerment of all individuals (Banks, 2012). To effectively address the multiple needs of individuals and communities, interdisciplinary collaboration is essential for holistic interventions. Social workers often work with professionals from other disciplines, such as health, education and law enforcement. This multidisciplinary approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of clients' needs and facilitates coordinated, integrated support. In addition to collaborating with professionals across disciplines, social workers also play an important role in advocating for policy reform and systemic change (Jansson, 2018). By combining expertise and resources across disciplines, social workers can develop more effective and tailored interventions that address the complex interplay of factors affecting individuals and communities. Social workers use this expertise, research and first-hand experience to inform policy makers, raise awareness of social injustices and propose evidence-based solutions. By advocating for inclusive and equitable policies, structural barriers are dismantled and the well-being and self-determination of marginalised people are supported (Reisch, 2016).

Finally, social work intervention is an important catalyst for positive change, addressing the multiple challenges faced by individuals, families and communities. Through strengths-based approaches, cultural competence, community engagement and advocacy for systemic reform, social workers strive to create a more just and inclusive society. By empowering individuals and transforming communities, social work interventions shape a better future for all.

Integration of social work intervention and literacy education: A catalyst for inclusive national development

Achieving inclusive and sustainable national development depends on a variety of factors that go far beyond economic metrics. It requires a holistic approach that addresses systemic barriers, empowers marginalised communities and equips all citizens with the tools for civic engagement and socio-economic mobility. In this context, the integration of social work interventions and literacy education emerges as a powerful synergy with transformative potential.

Historically siloed, these two disciplines have traditionally operated in different spheres, hampering the potential synergies between them. On the one hand, social work has focused on supporting vulnerable populations and addressing issues such as poverty, mental health and social injustice. On the other hand, literacy efforts have focused on providing the literacy and communication skills essential for individual and community development. However, this dichotomous and siloed approach fails to realise the combined benefits of strategically linking social empowerment and educational advancement.

Integrating social work principles of empowerment, advocacy and systemic change with literacy initiatives creates a holistic framework for catalysing national development from the grassroots up. This holistic framework recognises that educational attainment alone is not enough when communities face multi-dimensional challenges such as economic deprivation, discrimination, lack of social support structures and limited access to resources. Through this integrated lens, literacy is not just a technical skill, but a tool for critical consciousness and

civic empowerment. Drawing on the philosophies of Freire, Hooks and other critical educators, literacy efforts become a means for marginalised groups to challenge power structures, amplify counter-narratives and mobilise for collective uplift. Coupled with social work's emphasis on strengths-based, culturally responsive practice, these literacy programmes equip learners to navigate social institutions, assert their rights, and be active agents of change.

This synergistic approach is particularly important in contexts where systemic disadvantages intersect, as is often the case in developing countries. Factors such as poverty, conflict, gender inequality and limited infrastructure perpetuate vicious cycles that hinder both social development and access to education. By addressing these multiple barriers holistically, integrated social work and literacy interventions can disrupt entrenched inequalities and open pathways to inclusive progress. On a practical level, social workers' community engagement strategies and cultural competencies can enhance the effectiveness and reach of literacy programmes. Their understanding of local challenges, trust building with marginalised groups and advocacy efforts create an enabling environment for learners to fully engage. Conversely, literacy initiatives equip social work clients with the communication, analytical and self-advocacy skills needed to navigate complex systems and drive change efforts. Furthermore, this integrated paradigm aligns with global commitments to sustainable development and human rights frameworks that prioritise equity, inclusion and the advancement of underserved populations.

This integrated paradigm is consistent with global commitments to sustainable development and human rights frameworks that prioritise equity, inclusion and the advancement of underserved populations. By linking social empowerment and educational advancement, nations can make progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those that focus on quality education, gender equality, reducing inequalities, and promoting peaceful, inclusive societies. This is evident in several empirical studies and real-world cases, highlighting how the synergy between the community engagement of social work and the empowerment potential of literacy education can have ripple effects in areas such as health, gender equality, civic participation and psychosocial well-being.

For example, a longitudinal study in South Africa found that children from families who received integrated social work support and parental literacy training had higher reading skills and psychosocial well-being than control groups (Cain & Comings, 2014). In addition, in refugee camps in Uganda, social workers worked with NGOs to establish 'safe space' literacy centres for displaced youth. In addition to academic skills, these centres provided psychosocial support, vocational training and rights awareness, fostering resilience and self-reliance among participants (UNHCR, 2021). Similarly, a UNICEF-supported programme in rural Pakistan combined adult literacy classes with social mobilisation efforts by community workers, resulting in increased literacy rates while empowering women, delaying early marriages and improving health outcomes (Akseer et al., 2020). However, realising this powerful synergy requires overcoming structural barriers and fostering cross-sectoral collaboration. Bureaucratic silos, limited funding and entrenched disciplinary boundaries can hinder the integration of social work and literacy efforts. Concerted policy initiatives, innovative funding models and paradigm shifts within academia and civil society are needed to break down these barriers and institutionalise holistic approaches.

Despite the challenges, the potential benefits of integrating social work and literacy are profound. By combining the transformative vision of social work with the emancipatory potential of literacy, nations can cultivate an engaged, empowered citizenry able to address systemic injustices and collectively steer progress. This integrated intervention creates a positive feedback loop in which empowered communities drive national development, which

in turn promotes greater social inclusion and educational opportunity. Ultimately, the integration of social work interventions and literacy education represents a paradigm shift in how we conceptualise and pursue national development. It moves beyond narrow economic metrics to a holistic vision that intertwines human flourishing, social justice and civic empowerment. Through this synergistic lens, national progress is inextricably linked to the advancement of all communities, harnessing the strengths of an educated, engaged and liberated population to drive sustainable, inclusive change.

Conclusion and recommendations

This paper elucidates the powerful synergy between social work interventions and literacy education, highlighting their potential to catalyze inclusive national development through empowerment and systemic change. By integrating these two fields, marginalized communities can gain critical skills and resources necessary to challenge oppressive structures, advocate for their rights, and engage actively in civic life. The interplay between social work and literacy not only enhances individual capabilities but also fosters collective action towards dismantling systemic barriers that perpetuate inequality. Based on the findings and analyses presented, the following recommendations are proposed to optimize the integration of social work and literacy education:

1. **Develop Interdisciplinary Training Programs:** Educational institutions and professional organizations should create interdisciplinary training programs that equip social workers and educators with skills and knowledge necessary for integrating social work principles into literacy education. Such programs should emphasize culturally responsive practices, critical pedagogy, and strengths-based approaches to ensure effective collaboration.
2. **Promote Collaborative Policy Frameworks:** Policymakers should develop collaborative frameworks that facilitate dialogue and partnership between social work organizations and literacy education providers. This could involve creating joint initiatives, funding opportunities, and aligning objectives under a shared vision for social inclusion and empowerment.
3. **Implement Community-Based Programs:** Encourage the implementation of community-based programs that combine social work and literacy education interventions. Such initiatives should be tailored to local contexts, addressing specific needs while fostering community ownership and engagement. Programs could include literacy workshops that also provide psychosocial support and advocacy training.
4. **Invest in Research and Evaluation:** Fund and conduct longitudinal research to assess the impact of integrated interventions on communities' socio-economic well-being. This research should aim to document best practices, identify challenges, and measure outcomes related to literacy levels, social engagement, and empowerment.
5. **Facilitate Access to Resources:** Increase access to resources such as technology, learning materials, and mental health support services to enhance the effectiveness of integrated programs. Social workers and literacy educators should collaborate to identify barriers to resource access and develop strategies to mitigate these challenges.
6. **Leverage Technology for Learning and Advocacy:** Harness the potential of digital literacy and technology to enhance both literacy education and social work interventions. Programs should incorporate digital tools to provide access to resources, facilitate communication, promote civic engagement, and empower participants through skill-building initiatives.

In conclusion, the integration of social work and literacy education offers a compelling framework to address systemic disadvantages and promote inclusive national development. By taking proactive steps to implement these recommendations, stakeholders can create resilient communities empowered to thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. The journey to dismantle barriers and achieve equitable opportunities for all requires sustained effort, collaboration, and innovation across sectors and disciplines.

References

- Akseer, T., Kamali, M., Husain, S., Soofi, S., Arjumand, R., Khan, N., & Bhutta, Z. A. (2020). Strategies to avert preventable mortality among mothers and children in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, 26(1), 54–64.
- Banks, S. (2012). *Ethical standards in social work: A global perspective*. New York: Routledge.
- Banks, S. (2012). *Ethics and values in social work* (4th ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Berzoff, J., & Kita, K. (2020). *Connecting the dots: A strengths-based approach to social work practice*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Boykin, A. W., & Noguera, P. A. (2011). *Creating the opportunity to learn: Moving from research to practice to close the achievement gap*. ASCD.
- Cain, K., & Comings, J. (2014). Integrated service delivery and adult education in South Africa. *Adult Education Research Conference*. <https://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2014/papers/9>
- Coiro, J., Castek, J., & Macgill, J. (2021). Developing digital literacy: A transformative perspective on instruction and assessment. In E. G. McFarlane & R. M. Frayer (Eds.), *Digital literacy in the classroom* (pp. 112-140). Routledge.
- College Board. (2005, August 30). *2005 college-bound seniors*. College Board.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 139–167. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429407557-3>
- Darder, A. (1991). *Culture and power in the classroom: A critical foundation for bicultural education*. Bergin & Garvey.
- Dickinson, D. K., & Neuman, S. B. (2018). Teaching the young child: A handbook of activities for teachers. *The Early Childhood Education Journal*, 46(4), 431-442. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-018-0888-9>
- Dominelli, L. (2018). *Social work, activism, and social change*. Policy Press.
- Freebody, P. (2007). *Literacy education in school: Research perspectives from the past, for the future*. ACER Press Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.
- Giroux, H. A. (1988). *Teachers as transformative intellectuals*. Bergin & Garvey.
- Graham, S., & Harris, K. R. (2014). *Evidence-based practices in writing: Translating research to practice*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Hooks, B. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.
- International Federation of Social Workers. (2014). *Global definition of social work*. <https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/>

- Jansson, B. S. (2018). *Becoming an effective policy advocate: From policy practice to social justice* (8th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Kirst-Ashman, K. K., & Hull, G. H. (2018). *Generalist practice with organizations and communities* (6th ed.). Chicago: Cengage Learning.
- Kohli, H. K., Huber, R., & Faul, A. C. (2010). Historical and theoretical development of culturally competent social work practice. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 30(3), 252–271. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841233.2010.492928>
- Leu, D. J., Forzani, E., & Coiro, J. (2015). The 21st century literacy and technology model. In L. W. H. Hiebert & D. R. Reutzel (Eds.), *Creating a new standard in literacy education* (pp. 78-97). Pearson.
- Mapp, K. L., & Kuttner, P. J. (2020). *Partners in education: A dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships*. U.S. Department of Education.
- McLaren, P. (2002). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education* (4th ed.). Longman.
- Menezes, I., Prouse, C., Gaspar Carvalho, R., & Dias, S. (2018). Transformative potential of the right to literacy education: Surveying CEAAL literacy campaigns in Brazilian Favelas. *International Review of Education*, 64(3), 367–390. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-018-9721-7>
- National Association of Social Workers. (2021). *Social justice priorities*. <https://www.socialworkers.org>
- Neuman, S. B., & Moland, N. (2019). The role of books in early childhood education: Promoting literacy and a love of reading. A research synthesis for the National Literacy Panel. *Child Development Perspectives*, 13(2), 124-130. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12331>
- Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2017). *Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice*. Harvard Education Press.
- Perie, M., Grigg, W. S., & Donahue, P. (2005). *The nation's report card: Reading 2005* (NCES 2006–451). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.
- Perkins, D. D., & Zimmerman, M. A. (1995). Empowerment theory, research, and application. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 23(5), 569–579. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02506982>
- Reisch, M. (2016). Why macro practice matters. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 52(3), 258–268. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2016.1174638>
- Rothman, J. (2007). Multi modes of intervention at the macro level. *Journal of Community Practice*, 15(4), 11–40. https://doi.org/10.1300/J125v15n04_02
- Saleebey, D. (2013). *The strengths perspective in social work practice* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- Saleebey, D. (2018). The strengths perspective: An emerging paradigm for social work practice. In A. G. E. G. D. G. K. Tsui (Eds.), *Social work: An empowerment approach* (pp. 44–68). Routledge.
- Spires, H. A., Elemente, M. A., & Szabo, A. (2018). Digital reading: Challenges and opportunities. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 53(1), 87-106.
- Teater, B. (2022). *An introduction to applying social work theories and methods*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Thyer, B. A., & Myers, L. L. (2011). The quest for evidence-based practice: A view from the United States. *Journal of Social Work*, 11(1), 8–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468017310381812>
- Truell, R., & Jones, D. (2021). *The global agenda for social work and social development: Framework for action and transformation*. International Federation of Social Workers.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2021). *Refugee education in Uganda: Bridging the gaps*. <https://www.unhcr.org/61ba9b6c4/refugee-education-uganda-bridging-gaps>