

Teacher Preparedness and Utilization of Print- Rich Environment in Rethinking Creative Literacy in Udu Local Government Area, Delta State

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Abstract: *Literacy is an important passport to future learning which can be promoted at the primary school level through adequate teacher preparation and utilization of a print rich environment. This paper examines teacher's preparedness in creating and utilizing print rich environment for lifelong creative literacy in public primary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. It employed a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised three hundred and forty-two (342) public primary school teachers in Oshimili South Local Government Area. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select one hundred and forty two (142) teachers for the study. The instrument for data collection was a 28-item structured questionnaire titled "teachers preparedness and utilization of print-rich environment for promoting lifelong creative literacy" (TPUPLCL). The instrument was face validated by three experts. To establish the content reliability of the instrument Crombach Alpha, was used and a reliability coefficient of 0.78, 0.79 and 0.81 was obtained from the three clusters with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.79 obtained for the entire instrument. Data collected were analyzed using the mean score and standard deviation. The findings of the study was that teachers possess moderate adequate but uneven skills in utilization of print rich environment, they have a generally good but not fully uniform ability to utilize print-rich environments and teachers agreed that they face various challenges in utilizing a print rich environment thus limiting their use of a print rich environment required for promoting lifelong creative literacy program for pupils at the primary school level. Based on the findings, recommendations made among others included that training gaps, professional development needs and adequate funding will go a long way in promoting teachers preparedness for lifelong creative literacy.*

Keywords: teacher preparedness, print-rich environment, lifelong creative literacy

INTRODUCTION

Primary education is commonly described as the education given to children within their late childhood. According to the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), primary education is an important sector that

provides education for children between the ages of 6 to 12 years. It begins the foundation of formal education. In order to qualify for other levels of education one must pass through the primary school, as such it is an institution upon which other levels of educational achievements are built. This level of education prepares the mind and trains the child for higher and tougher academic pursuits in future. It provides young learners with the fundamentals of reading, writing and problem solving skills required for lifelong learning. Rethinking creativity in literacy at this level of education to promote lifelong learning, is paramount as section 2 of the National Policy of Education states amongst others that the goal of primary education is to inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy and ability to communicate effectively.

Until quite recently, literacy was generally defined in a limited way as the ability to read and write. Rafferty (2011), sees literacy as a tool, a way to learn about the world and a means to fully participate in the technological society of the 21st century. Literacy forms the foundation of all learning. Through exposure to literacy's practical and significant applications in everyday situations, children learn to perceive and develop reading and writing skills which are indispensable for academic success and future learning. (Chawla, 2017). There is no contending the fact that the improvement of literacy levels in schools can only be achieved through creative strategies which are problem solving behavior selected deliberately to achieve a goal. Teaching of literacy skills in primary schools depends on the teacher's ability to bring in new ideas, strategies and methods in the activities and production processes which is known as creativity.

Schools can support instructional effort by advancing the use of print-rich settings to enrich children's literacy. For instance, a lot of children have print and story notions long before they start school, and they can recognize a lot of signs and prints that are related to them (Yusuf, Abubakar & Jibril 2022). Teachers, as facilitators of learning, are expected to be adequately prepared to create and use such environments. Teacher preparation has been identified as a gap facing the educational system of developing countries like Nigeria which has experienced a wide range of teaching and learning deficit as a result of the application of modern knowledge and skills in teaching literacy in schools for enhanced learning in the 21st century. Teacher preparedness also refers to the extent to which teachers possess the knowledge, skills, training, and professional competence required for effective instruction. This term teacher preparation therefore denotes the state of readiness of the teachers for the teaching profession (Manasia 2019). Prepared teachers must understand learning theories, instructional strategies, classroom management, and materials utilization to effectively utilize a print rich environment (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

In literacy education, preparedness extends to knowing how to embed reading and writing supports in the classroom setting which give rise to a print-rich environment *and* they include labels, charts, posters depicting letters, words and texts,, student work displays such as stories and poems, word walls and labels, varied learning corners with print displays, reading materials, and classroom libraries, . A print rich environment plays a crucial role in stimulating literacy development, especially in early grades (Stahl & Miller, 2017). A print-rich environment is one where learners are surrounded by varied written materials that promote reading and writing. But various challenges have been identified as Challenges faced by teachers in utilizing a print rich environment

However, varied challenges such as insufficient instructional materials, high pupil–teacher ratios, and inadequate professional development affect teaching quality (Okanlawon, 2018). Additionally, research in Bayelsa State by Cleopas (2025) identified resource constraints and limited training as barriers to effective teacher preparedness, particularly in rural schools. Other Nigerian studies have linked teacher preparedness to instructional effectiveness, noting that inadequate training and limited access to instructional materials diminish teaching quality and preparedness outcomes. In a similar study carried out by Alfredo, Jimmy and Lee (2021) on the challenges hindering the implementation of play in Asian preschools, they identified that Children are not well connected to plenty labels which are supposed to positively impact on the cognition process of the child. For instance, if a label says “door” on the door of preschool door, children can easily remember the meaning of “d-o-o-r” is “door.” (Amanda Rock, 2020). Prior to what is experienced today, Lack of print- rich classrooms is persistently diminishing the quality of educational achievement of children in Nigeria. This trend has caused a bitter experience among children and managers of education and as such causing stagnation in the lower education sector

The implication for promoting and developing literacy, primary school teachers have the role of creating, displaying and making use of meaningful charts. They can also use co-created prints, functional prints, labels among others in order to make learning environments stimulating, warm and interactive. Together, these international and Nigerian studies emphasize that teacher preparedness is multidimensional, involving professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, technological literacy, resource availability, and ongoing professional development. Despite contextual differences, a consistent theme emerges: teachers are better prepared when training, support systems, and materials are in place, while inadequate professional development and systemic challenges hinder effective instructional readiness. The objective of this study is to investigate the level of teachers’ preparedness in creating and utilizing of print-rich environment for literacy enrichment in primary schools in Delta State.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on the socio-cultural theory of cognitive development by Vygotsky (1978), he posits that learning is an inherently social process which is deeply rooted in a child’s cultural and physical environment. In early childhood, language and creative literacy emerge primarily through social interactions with adults and physical tools. In the early childhood education classrooms, the teacher serves as the more knowledgeable other. The teacher’s capacity to guide the young children depends heavily on their specialized training in early childhood pedagogy. according to the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding, young children transition from emergent literacy (scribbling, recognizing symbols) to creative literacy such as storytelling, phonetic writing through scaffolding. A print – rich environment with classrooms filled with story books, and student work serves as a critical cultural tool and visual scaffolding. It transforms the physical classroom from a passive space into an active participant in literacy acquisition.

Statement of the Problem

In a print rich classroom certain materials such as books, magazines, reading corners and toys are provided. In most public early childhood/primary classrooms today, materials carrying words and letters that supposed to have more impact on the learning of children are not put in place. Therefore, without

providing the children with such essential prints, they are likely to be ignorant of the images that are very important for their literacy enrichment. This is because, lack of print-rich classroom reduces the amount of knowledge a child stands to acquire in the class (Fatt, 2022). However, varied challenges such as insufficient instructional materials, high pupil–teacher ratios, and inadequate professional development, etc. affect teaching quality (Okanlawon, 2018). In the present study, the researcher observed that the presence of print-rich material can act as an enabling factor, attracting students’ focus toward enriching their literacy skills. In Nigeria, primary education is the foundation for literacy. Not only that, there is paucity of research on the contribution of print-rich classroom environment on children literacy development in Nigeria. None of the previous scholars investigated Print-Rich Classroom and Children's Literacy Development in relation with Implication for Teacher preparedness in Nigeria.’ At this point, it is imperative to investigate the level of teachers’ preparedness in creating and utilizing of print-rich classroom for promoting children's literacy for lifelong learning. Delta State, like many states, has initiatives to improve education, yet teacher preparedness in creating stimulating literacy environments remains under-researched. This inquiry aims to fill the gap by systematically examining the preparedness of teacher’s in creating and utilizing a rich print environment for literacy enrichment in primary schools in Delta State.

Objectives of the Study

This study focused specifically on teachers’ preparedness in rethinking creativity and utilizing of print-rich classroom for literacy enrichment in primary schools. The researcher proposes to determine:

1. The level of teacher preparedness in rethinking the future of creative literacy through print-rich environments in primary schools
2. The teachers’ ability to utilize print-rich environments for rethinking lifelong creative literacy in primary schools
3. To identify challenges teachers face in rethinking creating literacy through print-rich environments in primary schools

Research Questions

Based on the above, the following research questions were posed to guide the study

1. What is the level of teacher preparedness in rethinking creative literacy through print-rich environments in primary schools?
2. What is the level of teachers’ ability to utilize print-rich environments for rethinking creative literacy in primary schools?
3. What are the challenges teachers face in rethinking creative literacy through print-rich environments in primary schools?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. It is a survey that explored teacher’s preparedness and utilization in promoting lifelong creative literacy through rich-print environment. The study was carried out in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State. Three research questions were raised for the study. The population for the study was three hundred and forty two (342) primary school teachers

in the area of the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select one hundred and forty two (142) teachers from the total population. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select one hundred and forty two (142) teachers for the study. The instrument for data collection was a 28-item structured questionnaire titled “teachers preparedness in promoting lifelong creative literacy through print rich environment” (TPPLCL). It had a response scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree with numerical value of 4,3,2,1. The instrument was face validated by three experts, one in early childhood education, one in English language and one in measurement and evaluation. The comments and suggestions made by them were carefully effected in the final draft of the questionnaire. To establish the content reliability of the instrument Crombach Alpha, was used and a reliability coefficient of 0.78, 0.79 and 0.81 was obtained from the three clusters with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.79 obtained for the entire instrument. The researchers personally visited the selected schools and administered the instrument to the respondents. However only 140 instruments were retrieved. Data collected were analyzed using the mean score and standard deviation.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

Research Question 1: What is the level of teacher preparedness in creating print-rich environments in Delta State primary schools?

Table 1: showing the mean and standard deviation of teacher preparedness in rethinking lifelong creative literacy through print rich environment in primary schools.

S/N	QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	MEAN	STD	DECISION
1.	I am familiar with the concept of a print-rich environment	2.86	0.92	Agree
2.	I possess the specialized skills and teacher training needed to design and implement a highly effective print rich literacy environment	2.03	0.91	Disagree
3.	My background in literacy enrichment allows me to confidently set up engaging print rich learning environment for lifelong learning	2.63	1.29	Agree
4.	I feel fully prepared to establish an impactful print rich learning environment for lifelong learning	3.11	0.87	Agree
5.	I frequently utilize interactive methodologies such as small group work, pair work, and role-playing games to drive pupils engagement	2.93	0.84	Agree
6.	I regularly give students the platform to lead their own learning activities	2.49	0.96	Disagree
7.	I leverage my ICT skills to upgrade traditionally point rich classrooms with digital skills	2.46	1.07	Disagree
8.	My training gives me the confidence to use print-rich strategies everyday	2.69	1.07	Agree

9.	I build print-rich resources right into my lessons to support pupils lifelong creative learning	2.61	1.02	Agree
10.	I possess the pedagogical knowledge to synthesize print rich materials with lesson objectives	2.47	1.03	Disagree
	GRAND MEAN	2.79	0.94	Agree

The grand mean of 2.79 indicates that the respondents generally agree that they possess adequate skills related to their preparedness in creating a rich print environment. This suggest moderate to positive level of competence among them. Items 1, 3,4,5, 8 & 9 recorded a higher mean value of (2.57-3.21) showing strong agreement, however, items, 2, 6,7 & 9 falls below the agree range suggesting the respondents have challenges in use of provision of sufficient opportunities for learning activities, ICT skills and adequate training in creating a print rich environment. Thus findings show that respondents possess general adequate but uneven skills with strength in some areas and gaps in others that require training or improvement program

Research Question 2: What is the level of teachers' ability to utilize print-rich environments for literacy enrichment in Delta State primary schools?

Table 2 showing the level of teacher's ability to utilize print rich environment for literacy enrichment in Delta state primary schools

S/N	QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	MEAN	STD	DECISION
1.	I regularly use charts and posters during lessons	2.83	0.92	Agree
2.	Pupils interact with displayed print materials	2.93	0.91	Agree
3.	Design and display print-rich materials	2.13	1.29	Disagree
4.	Pupils are encouraged to read displayed print-rich materials repeatedly	2.93	0.87	Agree
5.	Create classroom labels and signs	2.32	0.84	Disagree
6.	Integrate print-rich resources in lessons	2.57	0.96	Agree
7.	Develop low-cost instructional materials	2.56	1.07	Agree
8.	Encourage reading using print materials	3.11	1.09	Agree
	GRAND MEAN	2.67	1.06	Agree

The grand mean of the data set above of 2.67 and standard deviation of 1.06 indicates that teachers have the ability to utilize rich print materials. But items 3 and 5 falls below the agree range of 2.50 suggesting the respondents have challenges in designing and displaying rich print environment and also creating labels and signs for an enriched print rich environment. Findings from the study revealed that teachers generally demonstrated a **moderate to high level of ability** in using print-rich environments. Teachers showed competence in designing and using print-rich materials such as charts, labels, and instructional displays, although gaps existed in training and practical application.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges teachers face in creating and using print-rich environments in Delta State primary schools

S/N	QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	MEAN	STD	DECISION
1.	Lack of funds limits print-rich materials	3.18	0.88	Agree
2.	Large class size affects print utilization	3.07	0.90	Agree
3.	I lack regular training on literacy strategies	3.21	0.89	Agree
4.	Lack of instructional materials	3.14	0.87	Agree
5.	Large class size discourages the use of print rich environment	3.14	0.87	Agree
6.	Poor access to teaching aids	3.04	0.89	Agree
7.	Poor infrastructure	2.93	0.87	Agree
8.	Difficulty updating materials	3.00	0.88	Agree
9.	Lack of administrative support	3.07	0.90	Agree
10.	High workload	3.07	0.90	Agree
	GRAND MEAN	3.08	0.89	Agree

The study revealed that teachers face significant challenges including lack of instructional materials, inadequate funding, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient training, and limited time. The grand mean of approximately 3.08 shows strong agreement among respondents that these challenges affect implementation. Observation results revealed that while most classrooms had print-rich features such as charts, posters, labeled objects, and instructional materials, there were deficiencies in areas such as **reading corners, availability of storybooks, and regular updating of classroom displays**. Although most classrooms exhibit elements of print-rich environments, the implementation is not fully optimal, particularly in promoting independent reading and sustained literacy development.

DISCUSSION

Findings revealed that teachers in Delta State primary schools generally have a moderate level of ability to utilize print-rich environments for literacy enrichment. Teachers are familiar with print-rich strategies such as charts, labels, posters, and instructional displays, but practical application is not fully developed due to limitations in training and resources. And this could be attributed to ineffective professional development: Teachers receive minimal training in pedagogy, assessment methods, and integrate employability skills (UNESCO, 2021). Teachers also struggle to shift pedagogies from traditional, teacher-centred procedures to learner-centred approaches required by CBC (OECD, 2019). This implies that teachers have a moderate level of preparedness in utilizing print –rich environment to promote a lifelong creative literacy among pupils in primary schools.

The study also found out that teachers generally demonstrated a moderate to high level of ability in using print-rich environments. Teachers showed competence in using print-rich materials such as charts, labels, and instructional displays, although gaps existed in training and practical application in designing and

displaying rich print environment and also creating labels and signs for an enriched print rich environment. Thus prepared teachers must understand learning theories, instructional strategies, classroom management, and materials utilization to effectively utilize a print rich environment (Darling-Hammond, 2006). This implies that teachers can utilize the various skills needed for using a print rich environment. The study further proved that teachers face significant challenges including lack of instructional materials, inadequate funding, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient training, and limited time. This is in consonance Cleopas (2025) who identified resource constraints and limited training as barriers to effective teacher preparedness. Okanlawon (2018), study also identified challenges such as insufficient instructional materials, high pupil–teacher ratios, and inadequate professional development as factors that impede teacher’s utilization of print rich environment. This Implies that despite teachers preparedness and utilization of print rich environment there are still some identified gaps that have impeded their adequate utilization of the print rich environment to promote lifelong creative literacy.

Implication to Research and Practice

Conclusion

Literacy rich-environment plays a vital role in learning the four language skills at the primary level of schooling, teachers therefore have an important role in rethinking creative literacy for lifelong learning. The results of this study revealed that primary school teachers in the study area preparedness and utilization of print rich environment in rethinking lifelong creative literacy is moderately high. However, their effectiveness is limited by several institutional and professional challenges such as inadequate training, insufficient instructional materials, and poor infrastructural support particularly in promoting independent reading and sustained literacy development

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- The workload of teachers should be considered so as to enable them design lessons that allow them to fully utilize print rich environment for promoting creativity in literacy and future learning in an AI generation
- Teachers and school administrators should provide materials in the classroom that promote a print rich environment that will enable creativity to thrive among children in this era of artificial intelligence
- Universal basic education board should conduct seminars /workshops on regular basis on the use/importance of print rich environment for teachers to promote creativity and be able to raise children in an era of artificial intelligence.
- Therefore, there is a need for continuous improvement in teacher training and provision of resources to enhance literacy outcomes in primary schools

Future Research

Further research could be carried out on:

Transitioning from Traditional Print to Multimodal Environments: Integrating digital and Physical Print for Creative Literacy in Udu LGA or

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