Finding and Developing Children's Literature

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Outline

- Finding Books
- Developing Books
  - Language Experience Approach
- Cardboards
- Environmental Print
- Oral storytelling

Language-Rich Environment

- **Language-Nutrition:** The quantity and quality of language that a child is exposed to improves language development and thinking skills
  - Just as the quantity and quality of food that a child eats improves physical development
- **Language-Rich Environment:** Children are frequently exposed to language in all forms: spoken language (listening and speaking) and print language (reading and writing)

Spoken Language-Rich Environment

- **Oral storytelling**
- Back-and-forth dialogue between a child and an adult/older child
- Question-and-answer discussions

Print-Rich Environment

- **Print-Rich Environment:** Children regularly interact with many forms of print throughout the day
- Examples of print
  - Books
  - Signs
  - Posters
  - Labeled objects
  - Word walls
  - Bulletin boards
  - Poems
- Advantages of a print-rich environment
  - Children learn that text carries meaning
  - Children learn to identify letters
  - Children are motivated to learn to read and write

Print-Rich Environment

- The more children are exposed to print, the better readers they will become
  - Provide as many *meaningful* words as possible in the classroom
- Children can be exposed to print in the classroom through:
  - **Books**
    - Published books
    - Teacher developed books
  - **Cardboards**
  - **Environmental Print**
  - **Language Experience Approach**

Classroom and School Library

Creating a Classroom Library

- The majority of books in a classroom library should be trade books (NOT textbooks)
- Having books available in the classroom is extremely important
  - Children can use books to practice reading (even if just *pretend reading*)
  - Teachers can use books to teach content in all subjects
  - Availability of trade books communicates the importance of lifelong reading and learning
- It takes time – YEARS – to create a classroom library.
  - Begin building a library now, and it will grow

Finding Children's Books

- Link with book sellers in Jos to reserve children's books for you when they find them
- Abuja has a number of good book stores
  - **Silverbird Shopping Complex**
  - **Cassava Republic**, Shop 62b Arts and Craft village opposite Sheraton Hotel

## Finding Money for Children's Books

- Ask for money
  - Create a 1-page request for funds that includes:
    - The amount requested
    - Kinds and number of books to be bought
    - A description of the benefit to students and teaching
  - Who to ask:
    - Principal/Propriator
    - PTA
    - Community groups
    - Local businesses
- Earn books
  - Host a book/toy fair – display books from a bookseller and the school can get a percent
  - Host a fundraiser (e.g., launching)

Developing Books

- Books can be created by:
  - Children
  - Older Children
  - Teacher
  - Parents
- Ideas for Classroom Books
  - Autobiography of each child/teacher
  - Class-developed story (each child adds a sentence; stories created by the class)
  - Stories by individual children on a theme (Fortunately, Unfortunately)
  - All children write on a writing prompt (google: writing prompt kindergarteners)
  - Language Experience Approach
- Once the book has been completed (and thoroughly edited for grammar and spelling) spiral bind the books

Example Writing Prompts

Class Yearbook
My name is _____

Self Portrait	When I grow up
Words I can write	Favorite food
My family	I like to play
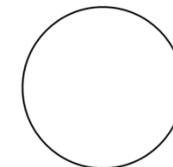
A circle is just a circle until you add…

Language Experience Approach

- **Language Experience Approach:** Uses children's language and personal experiences to create reading materials
  - Children learn to read more effectively if they read texts with familiar language and experiences
- Overall idea:
  - *What I can say, I can write.*
  - *What I can write, I can read.*
  - *I can read what I write and what other people write for me to read.*

Language Experience Approach

- Step 1: Provide an experience that most of the pupils share in class
- Step 2: Discuss the experience during large group time to activate background knowledge
- Step 3: Meet with each child to record what the child says
  - Writing should be neat and all words spelled correctly and correct punctuation
  - Do not edit what children say except for minor grammatical errors
- Step 4: The child draws a picture to illustrate what they said.
- Step 5: Bind the children's finished products into a book.

Cardboards

- Create cardboards with sentences on topics of interest to the children
  - Facts in science, social studies, or religious studies
  - Messages to the children
  - Children's experiences or observations
- Cardboards can then be used for:
  - Identifying letters
  - Identifying sight words
  - Linking letters to sounds

Cardboards

- Write largely, clearly, neatly, and use words that are matched to the developmental level of the children
- Create the cardboard with the children to model the writing process
  - Ask questions to help the children get involved in the writing process
- Refer to the letters/words on the cardboard when opportune

Environmental Print

Environmental Print

- **Environmental Print:** Print found in the world around us from logos and signs
  - Environmental print is usually the first print that a young child recognizes
  - Identifying and recognizing environmental print is important in emergent literacy
    - Children get excited when they can "read" environmental print
    - Environmental print helps children understand that letters have meaning
    - Environmental print can be used to help children learn become familiar with text
  - Environmental print is meaningful to young children – a key factor in helping children become successful readers

Types of Environmental Print

- Labels on food boxes or cans
- Signs for stores
- Traffic signs or license plates
- Logos or Brand names
- Calendars
- Invitation cards

Activities with Environmental Print

- Cut out and make puzzles
- Create cards with two sets of each environmental print and have children play memory/Go fish
- Have children match letters from flash cards with the letters in environmental print
- Have children select samples of environmental print that have a certain letter
- Environmental Print Word Wall
- Make an alphabet book with environmental print that starts with each letter

Oral Storytelling

- **Oral storytelling**: Retelling a tale to one or more listeners through voice and gestures
- Storytelling is important teaching strategy in African indigenous education for imparting cultural values, knowledge, wisdom, and successful life skills
  - Passes knowledge, history, and experiences from one generation to the next

Research on Storytelling

- Research has found that storytelling:
  - Influences attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors
  - Is more persuasive in communicating facts than simply telling facts
  - Improves academic performance
    - Children who were told life stories of famous scientists, particularly stories about how they overcame challenges, had higher science achievement scores
- **Both listening to and telling stories has been found to improve academic performance**

Importance of Oral Storytelling

- Listening to stories helps develop children's:
  - Oral language skills (e.g., grammar)
  - Vocabulary
  - Comprehension (understanding of stories)
  - Attention skills
  - Knowledge of the world
  - Imagination and creativity
  - Social, character, and moral development

Benefits of Oral Stories

- Interesting and engaging
- Puts learning in context
- Free source of learning materials
- Authenticates and dignifies Nigerian culture

Telling a Good Oral Story

- Choose a good story
  - Single clear theme and an interesting plot
- Adapt the story to the audience
  - Message should be developmentally appropriate
  - Language should be developmentally appropriate
  - The context of the story should resonate with the audience
- Practice telling the story beforehand
- Be dynamic and enthusiastic in your storytelling
- Use gestures, sound, music, repetition, and rhythm
- Involve the audience where possible

Sources of Stories

- Traditional folktales
- Life experiences
- Books, magazines, internet
- Imagination
- Holy books

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS: Free Children's Stories Online

- **International Children's Digital Library**: Build a collection of books that represents outstanding historical and contemporary books from throughout the world
  - http://en.childrenslibrary.org/
  - Free, but requires online access
- **Digital Book Index:** Provides links to more than 165,000 full-text digital books from more than 1800 commercial and non-commercial publishers, universities, and various private sites
  - http://www.digitalbookindex.org/_SEARCH/search010childt.asp
- **Loyal Books:** Public domain (out of copyright) books in audio and e-format
  - http://www.loyalbooks.com/
  - Free and downloadable, though mostly for older children

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS: Free Children's Stories Online

- **Online Children's Stories**: Provides links to websites that have stories for children
  - http://people.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/stories.html
- **Children's Storybooks Online:** Simple illustrated texts
  - http://www.magickeys.com/books/
  - Free, but requires online access

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS: Children's eBooks: Payment Required

- **Epic!:** Unlimited selection of eBooks that can be instantly discovered, read and shared with friends
  - https://www.getepic.com/
  - $4.99 per month access to ebooks (about N1,800 per month)
  - Requires constant internet connection
- **Amazon:** Buy ebooks that are downloaded onto a computer or smart phone, read through the free Kindle App
  - https://www.amazon.com/Childrens-Kindle-eBooks/b?ie=UTF8&node=155009011
  - Range in price from $0.99 (about N350) upwards