Literary Creativity in Senior Secondary Schools: Teachers' Conceptions, Deliveries and Challenges

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Abstract

This study investigated the strategies that teachers use in developing literary creativity at the senior secondary schools by examining the teachers' conceptions of creativity, how these are reflected or communicated in the classrooms, and the attendant challenges. Guided by three objectives, the study adopted the mixed design (quantitative and qualitative), while the participants were 10 Literature-in-English teachers and 283 studentsin ss2 and 3 classes in intact classes from five schools within Yaba Local Council Development Area of Lagos State. Research instruments used were a self-developed questionnaire for the teachers (r= 0.82), classroom observation schedule and focus-group discussion guide. In addition to administration of questionnaire, classroom observations of literature lessons and focus group discussions with teachers were held. Findings showed that Literature-in-English teachers placeda high premium on creativity, but its incorporation or integration within their instructional processes was just average due to some student- and context-related but closely linked factors. It was, therefore, recommended that teachers must be motivated and supported to strengthen their theoretical orientations about creativity, develop their own creative passion and competence, and demonstrate or use the passion and competence in instructional contexts, in order to promote and enhance students' literary and general creativity.

Keywords: Literary Creativity, creative writing, Literature-in-English, Teacher, Instructional strategy.

Introduction

In today's constantly and rapidly changing world, which also demands a lot of flexibility and adaptability, creativity has been established as a necessary competence for young people to develop to function effectively in, as well as impact same world (Lucas & Spencer, 2017). Creativity connotes the formation of new ideas in unusual and exceptional ways to bring about positive and unique outcomes. Creativity plays a vital role in man's everyday lives. We need to be creative to overcome obstacles, to adapt to change and find ways of coping with a huge variety of situations. It is used to uncover new knowledge, create innovations and break new grounds.

Scholarly interests in creativity are found in a number of disciplines, primarily psychology, cognitive science, education, technology, engineering, philosophy, sociology, and many others. In the domain of education, the modern focus on creativity informed the revised Bloom's Taxonomy of cognition (Krathwohl, 2002), making creating the highest of thinking skills to be attained by learners; hence, it has become the core of classroom practice. Creativity in school connotes the ability of learners to think and generate new ideas, develop new techniques in solving problems or formulate new ideas or improvise based on knowledge, experience and intuition. A creative student must have a strong motivation to read, possess intellectual curiosity, have independence in thoughts and actions, a strong desire for self-realisation, self-confidence, flexible in perception and execution of tasks, and openness to impression from within and outside. This is in agreement to Okpara (2007)'s conception of creativity as the ability to create, being imaginative and productive, and characterized by expressiveness and originality. In the same vein, Lee&Carpenter(2015), citing (Brent & Felder, 1992) noted that creativity is a teachable skill that results in generating unconventional ideas, insights and new perspectives and that it engages learners through deeper levels of understanding in a subject or discipline (Sweeney, 2003).

Literature or Literary Studies is one of the traditional school disciplines within which creativity is emphasized. Morley (2007) pointed out that reading great works of literature motivates individuals to become writers, while Stern (2001) as cited in Adam &Babiker (2015) supported that literature as a model and as a subject matteris a rich and inspiring source for writing -- students model their writings after the original works of literary writers by sometimes imitating the content, theme, organization or style of such texts, and as subject matter, Literature serves as avenues for students to demonstrate their thinking, interpretation or analysis, thus, learners' writing is better improved when they are exposed to literary texts. Reading literary texts by different authors is believed to introduce the learners to different writing styles; and this will, in turn, incite the learners and encourage them to develop their writing styles. These explain why O'Sullivan (1991) emphasized that literature has the power to develop the students' creativity and imagination.

Creativity in Literature is nurtured through poetry, plays, prose, fictions, essays, etc. Toolan (2011) refers to creativity in Literature as 'literariness', which connotes the skilful use of words in the creation of literary texts. This literariness is taught in senior secondary schools by infusing it into the curriculum where teachers are expected to expose students to classic and quality texts as models for creative writing, and support them to read, enjoy, analyse, interpret or respond to, discuss, perform, and pattern their writings in accordance to these models. All of these activities require varying degrees of creativity, thus, one of

the core objectives of teaching Literature in Nigeria is 'to encourage attempts at creative writing as a means of understanding the creative process and appreciating the principle of creativity (FME, 2009). As expert writers must first become expert readers (Damayanti, 2006), literary genres have the capacity to develop the imaginative abilities of learners and the originality of their thoughts and expressions. Students learn to write by reading, interpreting texts, and writing. Through extensive and intensive reading, learners are equipped with adequate stimulating experiences; they are motivated to express themselves in oral and written form. They are exposed to activities such as writing, composing, constructing, developing, modelling, modifying, performing, producing, revising, rewriting, blogging, etc., all of which border on creating. The essence of teaching Literature in schools is to teach reading to write, increase inter-subjectivity and expand students' experiences. By practising the critical analysis on literary works, where teachers support students to explore the use of narrative structure, literary techniques, character development, dialogue, sequencing, pacing, etc. in variety of ways, while the students have the opportunity to elaborate their abilities in comprehending texts and applying the literary elements for composing or producing. Burke &Brumfit (1986) noted Literature enhances imagination, which is critical to creativity. Vygotsky (2004) theorized the relationship between creativity and imagination. He denoted that the imagination serves as an imperative impetus of all human creative activity. The fact that this human creative behaviour "makes the human being a creature oriented toward the future, creating the future and thus altering his own present" (p. 9). Besides, Lombardi (2020) noted that students who study literature and read for pleasure have a higher vocabulary, better reading comprehension, and better communication skills, such as writing ability. The more students are positively immersed in quality literary texts, the more basis they have for writing quality works, and for wanting to write them through creative writing. Thus, most focus on creativity in Literature classes is often within the realm of creative writing. To (Damayanti, 2006), the purpose of creative writing is to guide, nurture, educate, and support young writers to produce fine-new texts. To him, creative writing expresses ideas and thought imaginatively; the writers express their feelings and emotions instead of just presenting facts. By implication, creative writers require, beyond the solid writing skills but also the ability to use life experiences, feelings, emotions, thoughts, opinions, imagination, and spirituality to create realistic visuals and attractive stories for the readers. As benefits, practice in creative writing is said to be both exciting as well as enriching (Martin, 2001), improves ways of thinking (Kroll, 2003), provides an outlet for creativity and personal expression (Urquhart& McIver, 2005), develops communicative competence and enhances critical thinking and organizational skills (Riabokrys & Mishchenkob, 2016).

Literary creativity, as the focus of this study, connotes fictional writings that are creative (as not all creative writings are fictional). Examples include poetry, novels, history, biography, and essays which have their specific purposes, forms, styles, and expresses relatively permanent ideas and of universal interest. Non-fictions (which can also use some form of creativity) include professional, journalistic, scholarly, or technical circulars, leaflets, technical manuals, advertising billboards, as well as the expository or argumentative forms of writing that are taught within the ESL curriculum. The Muse of Language Arts differentiates between creative writings within the context of Literature. From the article titled 'the nature of creativity in writing' (www.); these conclusions can be drawn about creativity in Literature:

- Creative writing is any writing that expresses an author's creative imagination and originality of thought or expression.
- Creative writing is not exclusively fictional, because not all fictional writing is creative
- Most creative writings combine both fictional and non -fictional elements. For example, novels frequently employ nonfictional passages to introduce relevant facts that establish credibility, background, situation, etc. while their characters, events, actions, scenes, and situations may be fictional.
- Fiction and nonfiction are complementary and supplementary to one another, and both offer authors significant opportunities for creativity.

Literary creativity focuses on the kinds of texts and discourse we might call Literature which include poetry, drama and fiction. Literary creativity is the application of creative thought or actions to the domain of written expression. It also opens up ideas about what happens in translation;the relationship between words and images in illustrated books. Literary creativity within this study, therefore, focuses on creative literary works that evolve from the students' thoughts, imagination, original ideas or insights, or points of view, that are relatively new, differentand important, and a departure from the mundane. While this may be a tall order to achieve at the secondary school level, this research argues that the Literature teaching at this level should give students ample opportunities to start practising the principles of literary creativity, as one of the objectives of its teaching is to develop creative talents.

Teaching literary creativity is premised upon the teachers being able to develop their own creativity. A mechanistic, manual or routine teacher cannot teach creatively. A creative focused teacher must first appreciate the value of creativity. There is a distinction between teaching creatively, teaching creativity and teaching for creativity. Teaching creatively connotes using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting and effective while teaching for creativity is intended to develop students' creative thinking and behaviour. It is teaching that is student-centred, interaction-based and open-ended that are more relevant to contemporary challenges and engages students holistically (Richards, 2013). Teaching for creativity involves teaching creatively. Students' creative abilities are likely to develop in an atmosphere in which teachers' creative abilities are properly engaged and utilized; therefore, teachers teach creatively for creativity. The principles for teaching creatively are:

- Encouraging students to believe in their creative identity
- Identifying each students' creative abilities
- Fostering creativity by developing some of the common capacities and sense of creativity

Creative teaching encourages divergent thinking, which challenges students to think of as many alternatives/options as possible to problems. According to McWilliam (2008), creative educators are 'neither sage on the stage' nor 'guide on the side' but are 'meddlers in the middle', which connotes teachers positioned amid the students, sharing their subject passion with full engagement in the learning environment. According to her, such meddler affords less time for transmission and more to problem-solving activities in which they too are involved and seeks to design, edit and assemble knowledge, as well as gives priority to experimentation, improvisation, risk-taking, co-learning and critical collaboration.

Ofsted (2009) opined that nurturing learner creativity should be a key function of the school. Creativity, however, is not common in schools, as students often are not encouraged or supported to explore ideas during instructional processes. They are only encouraged to read to pass examinations. Assignments and home works thatare given to them to do not encourage any thinking beyond the basic or literal level. Also, while creativity is central to Literature, literacy creativity is rarely taught in schools; it is often separated from composition writing in English as Second Language (ESL) classrooms, while the focus of Literature as a separate discipline in Senior Secondary Schools is often on reading, interpretation, analysis of texts, and the art of writing often falls by the wayside. To emphasize the importance of creative writing, (Riabokrys&Mishchenkob, 2016) suggested reasons why such writing should be developed and encouraged by schools - to foster artistic expression, explore the functions and values of writing, stimulate imagination, clarify thinkingand learn to read and write, among others.

The Problem

The goal of education is to enable students to develop their abilities as well as take full advantage of their potentials into practical uses and impact on everyday life. This can only be possible if learners are supported to think outside the box, which is what creativity entails. While global attention is now on teaching learners to be creative at all levels of education, creativity for creativity is yet to have a firm footing within the Nigerian schools, especially at the secondary school level. Notably, teachers are critical resources that can facilitate maximum students' learning experiences and enhance students' potentials in the classroom, but often, teachers do not demonstrate adequate skills to teach for creativity or creatively, hence students are not able to explore the world of creativity. More than any other subject area, it is believed that the Literature classroomis a fertile ground where students' creative thinkingand creative abilities can be nurtured. Literature teachers are expected to evolve effective strategies for developing their own 'self-creativity' and students literary potentials through varied creative and critical writing exposure in fiction and non-fiction writing as well as oral Literature. As the saying goes, you cannot give what you don't have, teachers must get involved in the creative world. This study, therefore, engages in an exploration of the strategies that teachers use indeveloping literary creativity at the senior secondary schools.Further, since teachers' beliefs influence their classroom practice and students' outcomes, the study examines the teachers' conceptions of creativity and how these are delivered or communicated in the classrooms.

Objectives

The study sought to:

1. determine the significance that Literature-in-English teachers place on creativity.
2. investigate how the teachers incorporate creativity into the teaching of Literature-in-English.
3. find out the challenges that teachers encounter in teaching creatively.

Literature review: Creativity theories and strategies in Literature teaching

Most literature on creativity acknowledges a wide variety of descriptions, due to its complex nature. For instance, creativity is discussed in the context of the 4Ps- Process, Product, Person and Place (Rhodes, 1961, Sternberg

&Lubart, 1991, Kozbelt, Beghetto& Runco 2010). Process denotes thought mechanisms and techniques for creative thinking such as a focus on divergent vs convergent thinking; Product connotes creative ideas translated into reality or objects; Person considers intellectual abilities, aptitudes, attitudes and dispositions of creative individuals while Place defines best circumstances or environments in which creativity flourishes, including a degree of autonomy, access to resources and nature of gatekeepers (Kozbelt, Beghetto& Runco, 2010). All these components are important in the discussion of creative pedagogy, i.e. techniques or strategies applied to improving or achieving the creative process, product, or environment (Howard, Culley &Dekoninck, 2008). There are also the distinctions according to levels and talents, commonly referred to as the **Four C Model of Creativity** - Big C, Pro C, Mini c and Little c (Craft, 2005, Kaufman &Beghetto, 2009; 2013). Big-C creativity is called high creativity and is reserved for a few elites who have transformed the literary space with their works. Pro-c creativity talks about creativity developed through professional exposure and experience, which takes time and efforts to develop. Little-c creativity is about 'acting with flexibility, intelligence and novelty in everyday activities (Craft, 2005). Richards (2007) observes that such can be found in individuals who can unravel complex meanings in Literature and relate them to things outside of Literature and dissects his conclusions. Little-c creativity involves practice and also may be developed over a period of time. According to Richards (2007), the internet has further provided the infrastructure for Little-c creativity to thrive especially through *YouTube, Instagram, Facebook* and blog sites, and apps such as *TikTok* enable creative people to share their literacy activities to the world. Lastly. We have the Mini-c category, referring to the 'novel and personally meaningful interpretation of experiences actions and events' (Beghetto& Kaufman, 2007). In Literature, this kind of creativity can be enhanced by teachers and parents to develop literary skills. According to Craft (2005), Mini-c creativity occurs when a student demonstrates flexibility, intelligence and novelty in their thinking. Also, Kaufman (2012) distinguishes five different domains of creative engagement: everyday, scholarly, performance, scientific, and artistic. All these conceptions are broadly referred to as theories of creativity and were fully discussed in previous studies by Adeosun (2016) and Adeosun &Adelabu, (2019).

Components of creativity include original thinking, openness to new ideas, ability to tolerate uncertainty and adapt to change, self-esteem, self-motivation, persistence, and enjoying doing something for its own sake (Coleman & Colbert, 2001). Others include imagination and originality, play, curiosity, making connections and relations, exploration of ideas and options, flexibility and fluency, critical reflection on ideas, actions and outcomes, self-expression and evaluation. Vygotsky (2004) states that imagination serves as an impetus for all human creative activity, thus it is an essential component of creativity. imagination yields original thinking, which involves doing or interpreting Literaturedifferently or from another perspective. Craft (2005) noted that play though is necessary to creativity, but not all play is creative. Curiosity has to do with inquisitiveness, openness to ideas, persistence, registering patterns and anomalies. Making connections requires thinking laterally and making associations between things that are not usually connected. In exploring ideas, we try alternatives and fresh approaches as well as keep open minds, and modify ideas to achieve creative outcomes. Flexibility connotes the ability to tolerate uncertainty and adapt to change, engage in divergent thinking, hypothesizing, and exploring various viewpoints. Critical reflection on ideas, actions and outcomes is important to identify and solve problems, review progress, invite and use feedback, criticize constructively, and make perceptive observations. Thus, literary creativity requires appropriate and balanced curriculum and instructional processes.

A search through literature (LeFever, 2004; Minot, 2003; Danielson &Abrutyn, 1997; Sternberg & Williams, 1996; O'Brien, 1993; Drury, 1991; Tsujimoto, 1988) revealed some engaging strategies for teaching creatively, enhancing creative thinking, developing creative writing or literary creativity in schools. These are summarized in Table 1. An examination of these strategies showed that they consist activity-oriented, learner-centred and interaction-based tasks and activities which are in line with the Constructivist, Reader-Response and Deconstructionist classrooms.

Table 1: Creativity-focused Strategies in the Literature Classroom

1. Anticipation guides	20. Journal writing	38. Shared story writing
2. Brainstorming	21. Letters to authors or characters	39. Simulation
3. Character development	22. Literature circles	40. Spoken word poetry
4. Comparison and contrast	23. Modelling writing process	41. Synectic
5. Crafting stories from news item, Features or journalistic writings	24. Novel & intriguing tasks	42. Use of students' experiences
6. Dialogues/conversation	25. Online creative writing resources	43. Using another story as a springboard
7. Discussions	26. Peer Tutoring or coaching	44. Using Bible poetry as models
8. Dramatizing poems	27. Picture books	45. Using digital writing tools
9. Explicit instruction on creative process	28. Practice in drama skits or playwriting	46. Video clips of writers' interviews
10. Explicit instruction on writing process	29. Problem-solving	47. Word games
11. Fantasies & make-believes	30. Proverbs and riddles	48. Writing for/through Social media
12. Fictional posts on social media: Snapchat, Instagram posts, or tweets	31. Questioning: Open-ended, controversial, stimulating questions	49. Writing from Art: portraits, drawings or photographs
13. Folktales/Schema	32. Reading to and with students	50. Writing personal narratives/memoirs
14. Freewriting	33. Reading-writing	51. Writing short poems with students
15. Games & puzzles	34. Reflective writing	52. Writing short stories
16. Graphic organizers	35. Review/feedback to students' writings	53. Writing workshops
17. Group composing	36. Risk-taking	54. Written/oral exercises
18. Humorous writing tasks	37. Role-playing/miming	
19. Imitation of great texts		

In support of many of these strategies, Richards (2013) emphasized that the application of creativity in the classrooms requires a flexible use of the eclectic method. Further, he suggested how teachers can apply creativity to their classrooms through their expected attributes, i.e. creative teachers give challenging tasks, allow for students' autonomy, provide interesting learning contents, connect to students' lives and concerns, exploit novelties, integrate technology and use tasks or materials that are ambiguous, problematic, paradoxical, controversial, contradictory and incongruous to stimulate curiosity and challenge students' imagination as well as encourage deep learning.Also, they areadept at skilled improvisation and always looking for teachable moments. These agree with Beghetto, Baer & Kaufman (2015)'s observation that creative approaches must encourage exploration and discovery rather than rote learning and automation.

Methodology

The study employed the mixed methods design, with the population focused on all the Literature-in-English teachers and students in public senior secondary schools in Yaba Local Council Development Area of Lagos State. Through a simple random sampling technique, five schools were selected, but only SS2 and SS3 classes were focused on. A total of 283students in intact classes and ten teachers participated in the study. Research instruments used were self-developed questionnaires for the teachers (*r= 0.82),* focus-group discussionsguides, and an observation schedule for Literature-in-English lessons.The focus group discussions were carried out immediately after the classroom observations in each of the schools. Ten questionnaires were administered and collected, while 10 classroom observations were carried out (2 per school, at SS2 and SS3).Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statisticswhile qualitative data werecontent analysed to validate the quantitative data.

Results

In terms of demography, the sampled teachers consisted of three males and seven females, four of them hada Master's degree, three possessed a PGDE in addition to B.A (English) while three had B.Ed. degree in English. Their post qualification experience ranged between eight to twenty-one years. For the classroom observation and focus group discussion, intact classes were used, with the class population ranging between 47 and 65. The core findings of the study are presented and discussed according to the research objectives.

1. **Significance of Creativity in Literature-in-English**

Table 2: Teachers' report on the significance they place on creativity **(N=10)**

S/N	Significance of creativity	High (%)	Modera-te(%)	Low (%)	Nil (%)
1.	Creativity is the core of Literature teaching	70	30	-	-
2.	Creativity can and should be taught	40	30	20	10
3.	Creative students are naturally creative but need further teaching	40	40	10	10
4.	Creativity not is for only gifted students	30	30	30	10
5.	Creativity is the key to today's learning	60	40	-	-
6.	Teachers should make efforts to nurture learners' creativity	40	40	10	10
7.	Literature teaching should create an environment for creative ideas	50	50	-	-
8.	Students by their very nature are wired to think effectively	20	20	20	40
9.	Creative thinking should be gradually developed in children	70	30	-	-
10.	Exposing students to varied tasks help their creative thinking	40	20	20	20
11.	Creative activities make students to actively participate in the class	30	30	10	30
12.	Creative activities enhance students' academic performance	10	20	50	20
13.	Creative activities support students to nurture their talents	40	40	20	-
14.	Creative activities stimulate students' imagination	50	40	10	-
15.	Creative activities support students in problem-solving tasks	60	30	10	-
16.	Creative teaching involves exposing students to varied reading/writing	70	30	-	-
17.	Every instruction should encourage students to brainstorm & think	70	20	10	
18.	Incorporating creative activities into lesson plans is important	70	30		-
19.	Type, quantity& quality of questions are important in Literature class	50	30	10	10
20.	Discussion of controversial issues should be encouraged in class	50	30	20	-
21.	Teachers should charge students to brainstorm on problems	60	40	-	-
22.	Relating textual issues to life situations is important for creativity	70	30	-	-
23.	Focus on creativity slows down the pace of lessons	40	20	10	30
24.	Creativity encourages disruptive behaviours in class	30	30	30	10
25.	Literature teaching should promote divergent thinking	70	30	-	-
Mean		**49.2**	**31.2**	**11.6**	**8**

Table 2 presents the importance placed on creativity as reported by the teachers. With a combined positive response mean of 80.4, it can be inferred from the self-reporting questionnaire that teachers place a very high premium on creativity, its essence and its teaching in the Literature-in- English classroom. Most of the constructs on the essence of creativity received a moderate to high rating from the teachers, except the notions that students are wired to think effectively and that creativity enhances the academic performance of students. The sampled teachers strongly believed that creativity is not for only gifted students, can and should be taught, and that students are naturally talented but need further teaching. These agree with Bereczki&Kárpáti (2017)'s that teachers endorsed a democratic view of creativity, it is universal and accessible to everyone, and that it is malleable. It is therefore important to develop students' creative skills by providing appropriate contexts and opportunities (Cropley, 2001; Kampylis, 2010). The teachers also confirmed since creativity cannot be taught out of context, the literary content and process are fertile grounds for nurturing creativity. Several studies have established a strong

correlation between Literature and creativity, especially in areas of nurturing imagination.However, teachers were divided on the notions that creativity is for gifted students only, slows down the pace of lessons and encourages disruptive behaviours in class.On creativity as a gift or talent, Esquivel (1995) argued that ascribing creativity to giftedness only may lead teachers to undermine the potentials to students who are seemingly not gifted, and this may hinder creativity from being an essential goal of education. On the whole, these findings represent teachers' beliefs about creativity, as Bandura (1997) emphasized that teacher beliefs guide their goals, decisions, actions, and reactions, hence it is important to establish the validity of their conceptions about creativity by determining how much of these beliefs affect their classroom practices in teaching creatively or for creativity.

1. Extent to which teachers of Literature-in-English incorporate creativity into the classes.

***Table 3:Teachers' report on the extent of incorporation of creativity into Literature-in-Englishclasses*(N=10)**

S/No	Techniques	Frequently (%)	Sometimes (%)	Rarely (%)	Never (%)
1.	I explore students' background knowledge in teaching any text	50	50	-	-
2.	I use real-life experiences in class	50	50	-	-
3.	I allow students to interpret texts from their points of view	10	40	40	10
4.	Students engage in free writing in class	20	20	50	10
5.	I ask students open-ended and controversial questions	40	30	20	10
6.	I provide regular feedbacks on students' creative efforts	30	50	10	10
7.	I use pictures to stimulate students' thinking and discussion	10	40	50	-
8.	I encourage students to watch videos related to texts being read	20	20	60	-
9.	I bring trending issues on social media to class for discussion	10	30	60	-
10.	Poems are recited or recorded through Mp3 recordings	-	20	40	40
11.	I engage students in field trips	10	20	50	20
12.	I use blogs as prompts for writing	-	-	20	80
13.	I encourage students to write their own stories and poems	50	40	10	-
14.	I students to visit other peoples' blogs to get writing ideas	10	20	30	40
15.	I encourage them to interpret poems through drawing	-	10	60	30
16.	Drama, simulation and role-playing are part of my class activities	70	20	10	-
17.	I engage students in a series of writing tasks	70	20	10	-
18.	Group work and interactive activities are used in my class	20	50	30	-
19.	I encourage discussion & debate in class	70	20	10	-
20.	I encourage students to write prologue or epilogue to texts	10	30	30	30
21.	I use other subjects to illustrate my lessons	20	20	40	20
22.	I encourage students to explore their instincts in writing	30	40	20	10
23.	Interviews is part of my techniques	-	20	30	50
24.	I use games to encourage creative use of language	40	30	20	10
25.	Storytelling and oral folktales are used in my class	50	40	10	-
	Mean	**27.6**	**29.2**	**28.4**	**14.8**

Table 3 gives teachers' self-reports on their creative teaching practice in Literature lessons. Teachers have an averagely positive rating of their creative teaching practices as the combined mean for *frequently* and *sometimes* is 56.8%, while 43.2% have a low rating. Strongly positive constructs of creativity here include use of students' experiences and real-life situations, encouraging students to write stories, use of hands-on tasks such as simulation, role-playing, debates, as well as the use of folktales. Creativity focused tasks such as freewriting, use of pictures and videos to stimulate thinking, encouraging sketches and drawings have a low rating. Also, despite the widely accepted roles of the social media – Facebook, blogs, video, etc. in promoting creativity, they are rarely used in by the teachers. One can therefore conclude that based on the teachers' self-report on of instructional practices, creativity-focused teaching is done on the average. In addition, findings from the focus group discussion with students did not give strong credence to creative practices in the classroom. In response to the question 'What activities do your teachers engage in or encourage you to do while teaching Literature-in-English?" the students' variously responded that their teachers:

a) make references to the books being read;
b) ask them to read in class;
c) refer them to dictionary search for difficult words;
d) often explain the text;
e) they read often from our study notes and text guides;
f) they discuss or analyse characters in the texts;
g) give them opportunities to ask questions and answer questions;
h) sometimes ask them to narrate stories similar to what was read;
i) sometimes bring pictures to class to teach;
j) ask them to discuss in groups;
k) encourage them to read before coming to class;
l) relate themes of text to real-life situations;
m) sometimes ask them to stage short plays;
n) give them time to talk;
o) sometimes ask us to write some interesting stories;

There are some similarities and contrasts between the teachers' claimand the perception of students. Studies on creativity in Literature class will support items (f) to (o) as encouraging some form of creativity in class due to their focus on the learners and interaction, but creative tasks such as writing, composition, drawing, sketching, creating are lacking in the learners' responses. To further buttress the teachers' claims, the results of classroom observation is presented in Table 3.

Table 4: Observation on the extent of incorporation of creativity into Literature-in-English classes(N=10)

S/No	The teachers…	Seen (F)	Not Clear (F)	Not seen (F)
1.	Activate and use students' experiences	10	-	-
2.	Ask stimulating questions	4	6	-
3.	Infuse real life experiences into teaching	8	-	2
4.	Encourage asking questions	8		2
5.	Use creative resources for instruction	-	2	8
6.	Give positive feedback to students	3	7	-
7.	Give free writing tasks	2	-	8
8.	Give reading assignments	10	-	-
9.	Gives writing assignments	3	-	7
10.	Allows students free expression	-	3	7
11.	Allows students to interpret texts independently	2	8	-
12.	Support students to unlock meanings in texts	4	2	4
13.	Support students to explore ideas at their own pace	1	2	7
14.	Use questions to enhance thinking	2	-	8
15.	Use hands-on activities – drawing, discussion, role-playing, simulation, debate, etc.	1	1	8
16.	Encourage brainstorming and independent thinking	2	2	6
17.	Ask students to rewrite selections of the text in their own way	-	-	10
18.	Support students to use their experience in interpreting texts	2	2	6
19.	Allow students to discuss with peers in interpreting texts	5	3	2
20.	Task students to create new writings from existing texts	-	-	10
Mean		**3.35**	**1.9**	**4.75**

Moving to classroom observations, it was discovered that out of the 10 classes observed, only 3 of the teachers were seen to effectivelyincorporate some creativity-enhancing techniques in their teaching, while in 2 classes, some semblance of creative techniques was seen but not effectively used, while creative teaching was absent in 5 classrooms. The highest mean score from Table 3 is 4.75 (not seen), meaning that creative teaching indices were absent in almost half of the class observed. From the table, there wasa gross absence of creativity- stimulating instructional resources, questions and activities, especially creative writing. In constructs where *Not Clear*were scored, it implies that those tasks though used, but not effectively done, or in some cases, the teachers could not clearly communicate the purpose of those tasks to the students, hence the intended outcomes were not achieved. For instance, while teachers used questioning as a technique, most of the time, basic questions were asked, hence, students thinking or brainstorming could not be triggered. Most importantly, it must be reported that the list of techniques in the classroom observation guide used was quite extensive based on the template in Table 1, however, a number of them were removed in reporting this section because they were not featured in any of the classrooms observed. The absence of some of these techniques in the classroom observation may be because creativity goes beyond what goes on in the classroom, but is strongly supported or enhanced by a continuous activity of challenge, motivation encouragement, etc. on the part of the teacher and repeated exposure of students to creative activities beyond the classroom interaction. Bereczki&Kárpáti (2017)'s extensive literature review on creativity conception by teachers reveals that creative pedagogy generally involves elements such as 'valuing, encouraging and fostering students' creative capacities, offering them opportunities to be creative, and establishing an environment in which creativity can flourish' (p. 6). Although Cropley (2001) argued that the wishes and practices of teachers could and should be more coherent in the classroom, but there was a gross disparity between the significance teachers' place on creativity, their self-reported instructional procedure and their actual classroom practice in terms of creativity and creative teaching. Why is this so? Giving some explanations about this, Fleith (2000) thought that teachers may be aware of the characteristics that promote students' creativity, but their transfer into practice may be intuitive as not only declarative but also procedural knowledge is needed to nurture creativity. This leads us to research objective 3.

1. The challenges that teachers encounter in teaching creativity or creatively

Table 5: Teachers' reported challenges that inhibit creative teaching in Literature-in-English

S/No	Challenges	Frequency	Rank
1.	Lack of instructional materials	10	1st
2.	Large or overcrowded classes	10	1st
3.	Most students do not have the required books	10	1st
4.	Time constraints	10	1st
5.	The focus of school management on examinations	9	5th
6.	Students' lack of interest in Literature	9	5th
7.	Students mostly focus on examinations	8	7th
8.	Students lack the motivation to think independently	7	8th
9.	High workload/multiple responsibilities as a teacher	7	8th
10.	Reluctance to participate by students	7	8th
11.	Low ESL competence of students	6	11th
12.	Poor level of literary skills	5	12th
13.	Distraction and noise affect class management	5	12th
14.	Too many Literature books to read	5	12th
15.	Lack of interest in creativity on the part of the students	5	12th
16.	Diversity of students with different learning styles	2	16th

Table 5 shows that focus on creativity in the Literature classroom has a lot of inhibitions. While some of the challenges, such as lack of instructional materials and overcrowded classrooms are not peculiar to Literature teaching alone, the lack of required texts is particularly challenging to both Literature teaches and students. As an intensive reading programme, repeatedly close readings of texts are needed for students to achieve comprehension and interpretation which are baselines for creativity. In deconstructing a text, a reader often needs to liberally annotate the pages of the text, making use of the margins and the gutter, and underlining critical vocabularies, phrases and sentences, even paragraphs that can aid meaning-making from the text. Therefore, the students need to have personal copies of their texts to do these effectively. Also, students need to engage in extensive reading thus they must have beyond the recommended texts. In situations where the recommended and supplementary texts cannot be procured by the students, and with the scanty state of most public schools' libraries, teachers can be said to be teaching from and to a vacuum. This has serious implication for teaching creativity because creativity cannot be developed outside content knowledge (Nathan, 2019).Closely linked to this is the volume of reading expected of students. At the senior secondary school level, the reading list for Literature-in-English is always from three examination bodies -- West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination

Council (NECO), and the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB); the latter often have separate reading lists from the first two. For instance, the combine Literature texts for 2021-2025 WAEC& NECO syllabus includes four prose texts, four drama texts and twelve poems, JAMB's recommended anthologies and critical texts are ten, making a total of thirty texts of varied genres and structure (prose, drama, poem; fiction and non-fiction), cultural orientations (African and non-African), length, and focus to be studied over three years of senior secondary schools. This may explain why students also lack interest in studying Literature, as a number of them often complain about 'too much reading'.

Related to the above is the reluctance to participate in literary activities, lack of interest in creativity, low ESL and literary skills, all of which may be traced to students prior learning experiences and exposure to ineffective teaching and learning at the basic schools. To some students, reading is boring, and since Literature demands too much reading, the subject is also boring. This calls for the reorientation of learners right from the early years. Efforts must be made to ensure that schools built a community of learners who value learning and creativity and recognize their importance in their lives and society. The motivation to learn must be established through environments that are comfortable, supportive, pleasant, and non-threatening develop students' passion, interests and creativity. Fleith (2000) listed the components of an environment that fosters creativity as that which allows time for creative thinking, rewards creative ideas and products, encourages sensible risks, allows mistakes; in essence, a learner- and learning-friendly environment. In this study, student diversity is not reported as a significant problem, i.e. has the lowest ranking, but teachers have been variously encouraged to make their classrooms inclusive, participatory and accommodate diverse learning styles and concerns. This is important in addressing the many learner-related challenges as observed in this and other studies.

In terms of undue focus on examinations, Runco (2004) explained that pressure caused through evaluation can cause anxiety that distracts from creative tasks. If students feel pressured by examinations, their willingness to express creativity suffer. This may be true in the Nigerian context where most of the content for Literature teaching is recommended by examination bodies as shown above. The implication is that the teachers will only teach for examination purposes. However, notwithstanding the requirements for examinations, teachers need to help students focus on learning, understanding and mastery of tasks rather than grades (Fasko, 2001). It also implies that in order to have a creativity focused curriculum, the significance, role and modes of assessment must be reviewed. When assessments are viewed as sources of self-improvement, students can focus on competing against self (as against others), and they will collaboratively develop and contribute ideas that are original, valuable and useful (Nickerson, 1999).

Time constraint also has a 100% rating. Some studies have elaborated that creativity development takes time, patient and consistency (Schrecengost, 2001), whereas, it is often difficult for educators to keep up with their curriculum demands with additional responsibility for creativity teaching (Riabokrys&Mishchenkob, 2016). As established above, teaching Literature is a time-consuming activity, as teachers and students need time, often outside the classroom schedule to read, re-read, analyse, interpret and respond to texts. Coupled with the creativity dimension, ample time is needed as students learn to reflect, compose, develop, edit and review their writings, which also requires repeated efforts. The teacher is also expected to lead and model these activities. With the focus of most schools on how far, and not how well the scheme of work or syllabus is covered, teachers are often under pressure to focus on surface learning rather than deep learning. What is the way of this? Manning (1995) encourages teachers to place writing at the top of their daily priority list, and promote interdisciplinary writing where students will have access to continuous, repeated exposure to the writing process across all related subjects, i.e. writing across the curriculum.Teachers also need time to be creative since they cannot offer what they don't have. Coupled this with their high workload and multiple responsibilities – they teach, assess, invigilate, mark scripts, give feedbacks, mark attendance, attend meetings, model learning,seek professional development, etc. – they are constantly tired and burnt-out. Many studies saw teacher burnout as a major bane of education that must be looked into, especially in developing countries where qualified and experienced teachers are always in short supply. On the whole, the analysis above showed despite the desire to nurture and inspire students to be creative, multiple constraints, mostly connected and interwoven, inhibits creative teaching and literary creativity, and that attempts at solving one may indirectly help in addressing others.

Conclusion

One of the core objectives of teaching Literature-in-English is to enhance creativity within and beyond the classrooms, and teachers can only achieve this if they value creativity, model it and incorporate it into their instructional practices by teaching creatively. Creative teaching activities are often student-centred, interaction-

based and open-ended andusually challenge the creative abilities of the teachers themselves. This study established that Literature-in-English teachers place a high premium on creativity, but its incorporation or integration within their instructional processes was just average due to many student-relatedand context-based but closely linked factors. Some of these issues were discussed, with their implications and remedies.Thestudy also affirmed that a continuously relevant and impactful discipline or curriculum, albeit system of education,mustprogressively look inwards and develop creative solutions to the challenges raised. However, it starts with the teachers who are expected to give their students grounding in literary creativity.

Recommendations

To do justice to the teaching of creativity, the teachers' theoretical orientations about creativity must be strong. They must also be committed to change, be highly motivated, and be given the necessary tools and enabling environment to develop their own creative passion and competence, while they demonstrate these in instructional contexts.

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