

**TEACHER PREPAREDNESS TO UTILIZE
EMERGENT LITERACY FOR TEACHING INITIAL
LITERACY IN SELECTED SCHOOLS OF MANSA
DISTRICT**

**BY
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**A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in
Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of the Degree of
Master of Education in Literacy and Learning**

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

LUSAKA

2013

DECLARATION

I, **Samuel Imange**, declare that this dissertation represents my own work, and that it has not previously been submitted for a degree or other qualification at this or other university, and does not incorporate any published work or materials from another dissertation except where reference has been made.

Signed _____

Date _____

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of **Samuel Imange** has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Education in Literacy and Learning by the University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated whether or not primary school teachers utilized learner's emergent literacy in teaching conventional literacy to Grade 1 learners. The study also investigated on other means the teachers applied to utilize emergent literacy and what challenges they encountered in their teaching of conventional literacy. Vygotsky's constructivist theory of learning in line with that of learning from the known to unknown guided this study. The purpose of this study was to establish whether or not primary school teachers knew and utilized emergent literacy in teaching the literacy skills of reading and writing.

The study was a descriptive survey and adopted the qualitative approach. Structured observation schedule and semi- structured interview guide were the instruments used to collect data from the respondents for this research. The sample size was 62 Grade 1 teachers and 3,594 pupils. Purposive sampling was applied to get the sample. The population comprised all Grade 1 teachers and their pupils in Mansa District. Data were collected through lesson observation and post lesson interviews with each teacher observed. The findings were organized, interpreted and analyzed thematically following the research objectives.

The major findings indicated that Grade 1 teachers did not have adequate understanding of emergent literacy, the concept appeared new to them and it was difficult for them to utilize it. It was also revealed that teachers did not perceive emergent literacy as the foundation for conventional literacy development among children. In addition, no teaching and learning materials with emergent literacy background were designed for teaching literacy.

The study suggested the following as some of the recommendations. Equip teachers with knowledge of emergent literacy through in-service training, the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MoESVTEE) to review and redesign the teacher-education curriculum to include a component on emergent literacy to ensure primary school teachers graduate with this knowledge and were equipped for effective and successful literacy instruction in Grade 1. The other recommendation was promotion of a print-rich and language-rich environment in the primary school classroom as a means through which teachers would effectively scaffold the learning of conventional literacy.

DEDICATION

To my dearest wife Idah Tembo and the children: Donalia, Sandra, David and Grace, and my nephew Anthony, for their support and encouragement throughout the period I undertook my studies. I also dedicate this piece of work to my beloved mother, 'Mai Donalia Phiri', for her great care she took to see me reach this far in life. When my father passed-on, she struggled as a single parent to ensure that I attended my last year at school and that I achieved the best that she hoped-for in me.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASHA	-	American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
ICT	-	Information and Communications Technology
LEA	-	Language Experience Approach
MoESVTEE	-	Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education
NBTL	-	New Breakthrough to Literacy
NOMA	-	Norwegian Masters
PRP	-	Primary Reading Programme
PSA	-	Phonological Sensitivity Approach
SEN	-	Special Education Needs
USA	-	United States of America
UNESCO	-	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
ZPD	-	Zone of Proximal Development