Article

Thematic Instruction on the Wheels of Indigenous Stories: A Creative Approach to Enhancing Foundational Learning Outcomes

Agnes Afua Tetteh[1], Joyce Esi Tawiah – Mensah[1], Ebenezer Appah Bonney[1],
Ernest Frimpong Akosah[2], George Yao Kafu[2]
[1]University of Cape Coast, Ghana
[2]Peki College of Education, Ghana

ABSTRACT

This study explores the integration of indigenous stories into thematic teaching in Ghanaian kindergartens to enhance foundational learning. Guided by Rogoff's sociocultural theory and participatory action research, data were collected from four schools in the Awutu-Senya East Municipality through observations and interviews. The findings show that while indigenous stories foster engagement, identity, and literacy, their use is limited due to teachers' lack of storytelling skills, cultural knowledge, and language fluency. The study recommends curriculum revisions, teacher training, and leveraging professional learning communities to support integration. Emphasizing indigenous narratives can strengthen early learning experiences, and further research is needed to evaluate their broader educational impact.

Keywords: *Integration, Indigenous stories, Knowledge transfer, Thematic curriculum*

INTRODUCTION

Since the thematic and integrated curriculum was introduced for Ghanaian kindergarten schools in 2019, teachers need to use different means to introduce concepts related to these themes (NaCCA, 2019). Integrating indigenous stories into thematic teaching offers a significant opportunity to enhance foundational development and learning among young children. These narratives, which focus on cultural heritage, moral lessons, and local wisdom, act as powerful tools for engaging students and deepening their understanding of identity and language usage (Brooks et al, 2022; Cijete, 2017; Eisazadeh et al., 2017). By incorporating indigenous stories into the curriculum, educators can create relatable and meaningful learning experiences that resonate with children's lived experiences, which in turn improve their academic, social and emotional development.

Educators can use existing indigenous stories that align with the theme for discussions, or they can create stories to align with the theme to lessen the difficulties that some teachers encounter in thematic lesson delivery (Wadani, 2020). A study by Shanon & Hackett (2024) revealed that a narrative with a particular intention enhances children's language learning and concept learning since stories serve as a means for children to recognize themselves within a world encompassing Inuit knowledge and practices. This approach not only fosters literacy and critical thinking but also strengthens cultural ties and promotes respect for diverse traditions (Fu & Sibert, 2017). The use of indigenous stories captivates audiences, evokes emotions, and enhances meaning (Rieger et al, 2020).

Despite the potential benefits of integrating indigenous stories into thematic teaching, there remains a significant gap in research and practice concerning effective methods for embedding these narratives within early childhood education curricula in Ghana. While some educators recognize the value of indigenous storytelling, there is a lack of comprehensive guidelines on best practices for incorporation into lesson plans, assessment strategies, and classroom activities (Agyeman et al., 2022). Furthermore, empirical evidence examining the impact of this integration on children's learning outcomes and cultural identity is limited. Addressing this gap could enhance the relevance and effectiveness of early childhood education in Ghana, making it more culturally responsive and engaging for young learners (Baffoe & Agyemang, 2023).

Although the literature has proven the usefulness of storytelling in young learners' language and cognitive acquisition (Cremen et al, 2017; Price-Dennis & Muhammad, 2021; Rahiem, 2021), little has been done on the use of indigenous stories in teaching thematic concepts; therefore, this research seeks to explore the impact of indigenous stories on teaching thematic concepts in kindergartens (KGs) with two guiding research questions: How do KG teachers integrate

indigenous stories in their thematic teaching? What challenges do KG teachers encounter in integrating indigenous stories in thematic teaching?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Barbara Rogoff's sociocultural theory (1995) provides a foundational lens for understanding how indigenous storytelling is integrated into thematic teaching in kindergarten classrooms. Rogoff's theory emphasizes that learning is a socially mediated process that is deeply embedded within cultural and community contexts. Her perspective on cognitive development highlights three key components that are particularly relevant to this study: *apprenticeship, guided participation,* and *cultural tools.*

1. *Apprenticeship in Thinking*: Indigenous storytelling serves as an apprenticeship process in which children acquire knowledge by actively engaging in narratives shared by experienced members of their community. Kindergarten teachers act as facilitators, guiding students through stories that carry moral, historical, and educational significance.
2. *Guided Participation*: Storytelling fosters guided participation, wherein children learn by being actively involved in shared storytelling experiences. Teachers play a crucial role in scaffolding students' understanding, helping them internalize the lessons embedded within indigenous narratives.
3. *Cultural tools and mediation*: Rogoff's theory underscores that cultural tools, such as language and storytelling, mediate children's cognitive development. Indigenous stories function as cultural tools that help young learners develop language skills, critical thinking, and social-emotional competencies while simultaneously preserving cultural heritage.

By applying Rogoff's sociocultural theory, this study situates indigenous storytelling as an essential component of thematic teaching, demonstrating how children learn through collaborative participation and culturally rich narratives.

Empirical Review

Storytelling has long been a fundamental aspect of human communication, serving as a powerful educational tool that enhances learning outcomes by fostering engagement, comprehension, and critical thinking among students (Landrum et al., 2019). Recent research underscores the growing significance of storytelling in education, particularly as emerging technologies and pedagogical innovations reshape how narratives are used in classrooms

(Ghunu, 2022; Omar, 2025; Ssentanda, Southwood & Huddlestone, 2019; Setyarini, 2018). The use of stories enables students to connect with complex concepts on a deeper level, making learning more meaningful and immersive.

Several studies emphasize the critical role of storytelling in knowledge sharing and cultural preservation (Brooks et al, 2022; Christensen, 2012; Gonzalez, Kokozos & Byrd, 2025; Lee & Le Doux, 2025; Oloo & Kiramba, 2019). In alignment with Christensen's (2012) assertion that storytelling is inherently linked to knowledge transfer, these studies suggest that children not only engage with narratives for entertainment but also acquire valuable insights into history, culture, and societal values. Listening to stories provides a framework for understanding the origins of various phenomena and the interconnectedness of global traditions and customs (Setyarini, 2018).

The incorporation of indigenous perspectives in education has been a growing area of focus, particularly in the context of narrative inquiry. Oloo and Kiramba (2019) highlight the importance of integrating indigenous storytelling into curricula, demonstrating how personal narratives serve as effective tools in culturally responsive teaching. Gonzales et al. (2025) further expand on this notion, asserting that storytelling fosters trust, encourages community building, and allows students to explore diverse modes of storytelling. By engaging in narrative-driven learning, students develop a deeper appreciation for their cultural heritage while enhancing their cognitive and social development.

Emerging pedagogical research highlights the effectiveness of story-driven learning in fostering engagement and comprehension. Lee and Le Doux (2025) emphasized that storytelling enhances students' ability to grasp complex concepts by making lessons more relatable and accessible. This aligns with Perez and Benavides (2025), who assert that storytelling plays a crucial role in addressing students' social and emotional needs, particularly in diverse classrooms. Through engaging narratives, students develop empathy, improve communication skills, and gain insights into different cultural perspectives, fostering an inclusive learning environment.

With advancements in technology, digital storytelling has revolutionized how narratives are utilized in education. Rahiem (2021) discussed the transformative potential of digital storytelling, particularly in enhancing student engagement and knowledge retention. The integration of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) in storytelling has enabled immersive learning experiences, allowing students to interact with historical events or scientific phenomena in ways that traditional teaching methods cannot replicate (Chasoka & Mangena, 2025). This shift toward technologically enhanced storytelling underscores its enduring relevance in contemporary education.

Moreover, storytelling extends beyond language acquisition and comprehension; it plays a pivotal role in shaping students' social consciousness. Raikhel (2025) emphasized that storytelling fosters imagination, evokes

emotional connections, and cultivates empathy, making it an invaluable component of holistic education. Additionally, Sabic-El-Rayess (2023) highlights the importance of storytelling in promoting resilience against misinformation and extremist narratives. By empowering students to engage critically with stories, educators can equip them with the skills needed to navigate complex social realities and develop informed perspectives.

In essence, storytelling remains an indispensable educational tool that is continuously evolving to meet the demands of modern learning environments. Through traditional oral narratives, culturally responsive teaching, or digital innovations, storytelling enhances cognitive, emotional, and social development. As educators integrate narrative-driven learning into curricula, they not only enrich students' academic experiences but also foster a greater understanding of global interconnectedness and cultural diversity.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on the integration of indigenous storytelling into thematic teaching, considering both its pedagogical benefits and the challenges teachers face. Figure 1 visually represents the relationships among the integration of indigenous stories into thematic teaching (independent variable), educational outcomes (dependent variable), and the challenges that teachers face (moderating factors).

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework
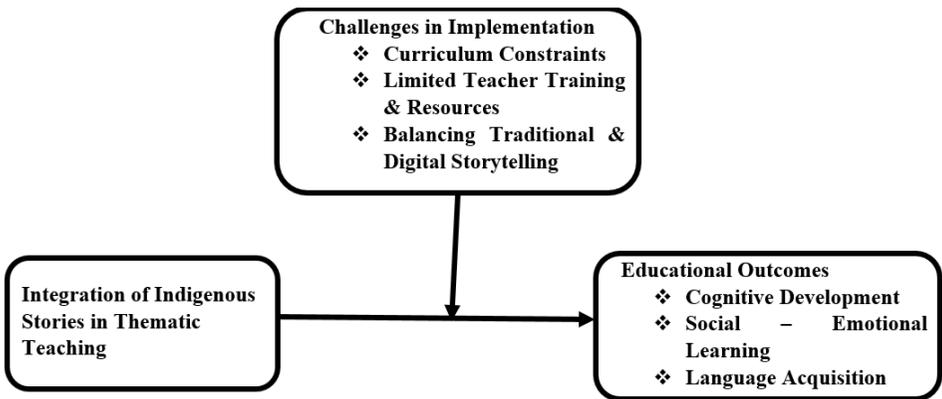
(Source: Field survey, 2024)

The conceptual framework was structured as follows:

1. Independent Variable: Integration of Indigenous Stories in Thematic Teaching

The integration of indigenous stories represents the main teaching strategy under investigation. This involves how kindergarten teachers incorporate traditional narratives into thematic lessons to enhance learning.

2. Moderating Factors (Challenges in Implementation)
The moderating factor highlights three key challenges that may affect the successful integration of indigenous storytelling:
- *Curriculum Constraints:* Some educational curricula may not prioritize indigenous storytelling, limiting the time and resources allocated for its use.
- *Limited Teacher Training & Resources*: Teachers may lack adequate training or culturally relevant teaching materials, making it difficult to integrate indigenous narratives effectively.
- *Balancing Traditional & Digital Storytelling:* With increasing digitalization, teachers must find ways to balance traditional oral storytelling with modern technological storytelling tools.

These challenges can hinder or influence the effectiveness of indigenous storytelling in thematic teaching.

3. Dependent variable (DV): Educational outcomes
The dependent variable represents the educational outcomes that storytelling aims to improve. The three primary benefits of integrating indigenous stories in thematic teaching include the following:
- *Cognitive development:* Storytelling enhances critical thinking, problem solving, and comprehension skills.
- *Social-Emotional Learning*: Indigenous narratives help foster empathy, emotional intelligence, and a deeper understanding of cultural values.
- *Language Acquisition*: Exposure to storytelling strengthens oral and written communication skills, facilitating language development in young learners.

A solid arrow connects the integration of indigenous stories to these educational outcomes, indicating a direct influence.

Overall, this framework serves as a visual roadmap for understanding how kindergarten teachers integrate indigenous stories into thematic teaching, the obstacles they face, and the expected educational benefits. By identifying key

challenges and their impact on learning, this study can offer solutions to improve storytelling-based education.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research adopted a qualitative approach with participatory action research as the design and was rooted in Barbara Rogoff's sociocultural theory (1995), which seeks to investigate how indigenous stories influence learners' engagement and comprehension of thematic concepts. Participatory action research (PAR) is a special investigative method that actively enables participation to investigate and address real-world problems (Lawson et al, 2015). It uses a collaborative approach that actively engages participants in the research process, fostering a partnership between researchers and community members. By treating participants as coresearchers rather than mere subjects, PAR ensures that the research remains relevant to the needs and priorities of those directly affected. The use of participatory action research (PAR) to examine the integration of indigenous stories in teaching thematic concepts enhances the educational experience while also empowering communities. This approach promotes critical reflection and addresses educational inequities. By prioritizing indigenous voices and perspectives, PAR plays a crucial role in fostering a more inclusive and responsive educational environment. Having advantages such as the empowerment of participants, promoting social change, and fostering critical reflections, the design is suitable for this research because it enables teachers to observe, reflect and add their voices to the research. The approach involves participants in decision-making processes, which can enhance their skills, build confidence, and foster a sense of ownership of the research outcomes (MacDonald, 2012 Cornish et al, 2023). Furthermore, PAR is inherently action oriented, aiming not only to produce knowledge but also to facilitate tangible change. The research process is often cyclical and involves stages of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Morales, 2016, Matos et al, 2023).

Participants

This study was conducted in the Awutu-Senya East Municipality, which has a population of 35 kindergarten schools; from this larger pool, four schools were purposefully selected on the basis of specific criteria that highlight the diversity and indigenous perspectives of the students within the circuit. Data collection was carried out through observation and interviews, allowing for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and insights. Thematic analysis was employed to systematically organize the data, with coding used to identify key themes and patterns that emerged from the discussions. This approach aims

to uncover the nuanced ways in which indigenous narratives shape understanding and engagement among young learners, ultimately contributing to a richer educational experience that respects and incorporates diverse cultural perspectives.

The study involved kindergarten learners from four different schools and a teacher selected from each of the schools, resulting in four teachers. To ensure anonymity and ethical considerations, the names of the teachers were coded as KT1, KT2, KT3 and KT4. The schools were also coded as schools A, B, C and D. Purposively, sampling was used to select the participants from schools located in distinct districts within Awutu-Senya municipality in the central region of Ghana. The inclusion criteria required participants to have a minimum of five years of teaching experience in kindergarten. This is to ensure that the teachers used have adequate experience in teaching with themes. The sampling method aimed to achieve diversity and representation by including KG2 classrooms from various economic contexts in the respective districts.

The research was guided by two research instruments: observation and semistructured interviews. The research process involved four visits to the schools. During the first visit, the researchers observed the teachers' approach to thematic teaching and how the learners were engaged. At the second visit, the researchers and teachers coplanned the next theme to be taught, and the researchers suggested some indigenous stories that could be used. On the third visit, the researchers modeled a lesson using existing and teacher-created indigenous stories to teach the themes while the teachers observed and were subsequently interviewed about observations made. The interview data were transcribed for analysis. Finally, during the fourth visit, the researcher returned to the schools, allowing the participants to review the transcriptions and ensuring the accuracy of the representations (member check). Overall, this methodology allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the research topic, combining observations with in-depth interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives. The study utilized a triangulation approach by combining both observations and interviews as the data were collected. This methodological choice strengthens the credibility and dependability of the findings by incorporating multiple sources of data and perspectives.

RESULTS

Thematic analysis was used for this research, in which the data were transcribed and organized into themes for discussion (Kusi, 2012: Rashid et al, 2019). The following themes emerged from the data collected and were used for the analysis.

Demographics of the participants

Teachers with diverse education backgrounds and teaching experiences participated in the study. KT1 is a participant from School A who has 7 years of experience teaching in kindergarten. She holds a first degree in early childhood education. KT2 from School B holds a first degree in basic education and has 12 years of experience teaching in kindergarten. KT3 from School C holds a master's degree in early childhood education with 10 years of experience, and KT4 is a teacher from School D who also holds a master's degree in early childhood education, with 15 years of experience in teaching at the kindergarten level. The participants' diverse backgrounds and levels of academic and professional experience helped capture a range of perspectives and experiences related to the study. This diverse representation enhanced the depth and comprehensiveness of the study's findings, providing a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Research question one: How do KG teachers integrate indigenous stories into their thematic instruction?

This question aimed to determine how KG teachers incorporated indigenous stories into their teaching of the required themes and strands. Both observation and interview data were used to answer this question. The themes that emerged are presented and discussed below.

Adherence to Thematic Teaching in Kindergarten

In School A, the teacher employed a discussion-based method to explore the theme "Types and Members of My Family." However, several learners were disengaged, failed to participate actively in the discussion and were instead distracted by other activities (Observation, School A). In contrast, School B utilized picture descriptions to facilitate a discussion on the theme "Origin and History of My Family." While the visual imagery captured the learners' attention, a significant number struggled to contribute meaningfully to the ensuing discussion, with only a few students participating effectively (Observation, School B). During the visit to School C, the theme "Family Celebrations and Festivals" was introduced through a story. However, the narrative and accompanying visual imagery were largely unfamiliar to the students, which impeded comprehension and engagement. For example, the use of terms such as "pastries" alongside images of cookies that did not resonate with the learners' cultural backgrounds hindered their ability to relate the story to their personal experiences (Observation, School C). Finally, in School D, the theme "My

School Family – Rules and Regulations" was explored through a question-and-answer format. The teacher engaged students in a short observational walk to identify various school family members and their roles. This hands-on approach resulted in meaningful contributions from the learners during discussions, indicating a higher level of engagement (Observation, School D). Overall, the observations highlight various teaching methods across schools and their impact on student engagement and understanding, which confirms the findings of Brooks et al. (2022), who claim that holistic education, which focuses on teaching ideas and topics in relation to other subjects, ensures holistic development.

Although the observations from all the schools indicated that teachers teach thematically, they used different modes in teaching, some of the techniques used were not very fruitful for the academic achievement of the learners. When interviewed, the teachers gave diverse views on the issue.

'Yes, I teach according to the themes in the curriculum, but I normally use discussions supported by pictures' (KT2).
'I do teach per the themes, but I use poems, songs and sometimes picture descriptions in explaining the themes' (KT4)

The use of indigenous stories in thematic teaching

According to the data, all four teachers acknowledged that they do not use indigenous stories when teaching the themes, although two of the teachers (KT1 & 3) acknowledged that they use stories and that the stories used are not indigenous and do not have links to the sociocultural background of the learners. This was what the teachers had to say when questioned about the use of indigenous stories

'I sometimes use stories but not necessarily indigenous ones' (KT1).
 'Yes, sometimes I use story only if a story I know aligns with the theme, but these stories are not all indigenous; in fact, most of the story I use are not indigenous' (KT3).

The Effective Use of Indigenous Stories in Thematic Teaching

On the second visit to the various schools, the researcher used an indigenous story to engage learners in teaching the themes. In all four schools, the learners paid close attention to the story, and they were fully engaged throughout the process. Most learners were able to answer questions, retell the story or role play, or dramatize aspects of the story. Learners also expressed enthusiasm for the theme and were able to relate to their background and talk about themselves in

relation to the theme. This is in line with the research of Shanon & Hackett (2024), which affirms that a narrative with a particular intention enhances children's language learning and concept learning since stories serve as a means for children to recognize themselves within the world around them.

Teachers shared their observations after the story-telling process and the engagement thereafter and made the following observations during the interviews. The question they answered was as follows: In your opinion, how do indigenous stories contribute to students' understanding of cultural diversity and different perspectives?

'I believe because of the characters used in the story, learners were highly enthused, and the elements made it very simple for learners to relate to' (KT2).
'I observed that the learners paid rapt attention, and they were able to get the meaning of the theme easily through the story because it was very clear and simple' (KT4).

Research question 2: What challenges do KG teachers encounter when using indigenous stories in teaching thematic concepts?

This question sought to ask teachers about the various challenges associated with using indigenous stories in thematic teaching.

Lack of skills in creating indigenous Ries

The lack of adequate skills in crafting indigenous stories is another challenge. Most of the teachers interviewed acknowledged that they lack the skills to create stories that align with the sociocultural context of their learners and that training, if organized for them, would equip them with the necessary skills to be creative in the classroom.

*'To me, getting the story and the dynamics involved in telling the stories are my challenges; I think when I receive training, it will help me to use it better' (*KT4*).*
*'Personally, I have a problem creating such suitable stories, so I think if I'm given some training, it will equip me with the necessary skills to be able to do that with ease' (*KT1*).*

This challenge confirms the research of Wadani (2020), who affirmed that teachers still struggle to understand the connection between the themes studied and learning, thereby making it challenging for them to create stories.

Lack of in-depth knowledge about the area of practice

Another challenge that was identified in the data was the lack of in-depth knowledge about the practices of the areas in which they are posted. Since the creation of indigenous stories is culturally bound, not having adequate knowledge of cultural norms and practices, as well as beliefs, hinders the creation of indigenous stories that resonate with learners' culture.

My major challenge is how to obtain these indigenous stories to use, especially if the teacher does not have in-depth knowledge about the settings of the learners (KT3)*.*

With the current practice of centralized posting, most newly trained teachers find themselves in areas they are not familiar with, so they may take some months to learn about the practices and beliefs of the area so that they can contextualize their teaching practices.

Language Barriers in Telling Indigenous Stories

The interviewees identified the language barrier as one of the challenges of the use of indigenous stories in kindergarten classrooms. The use of L1 sometimes might not be suitable for teachers who have gone through centralized posting and who may not be conversant with the language. When questioned about the challenges associated with the use of indigenous stories in teaching thematic concepts, all four teachers agreed that there are challenges associated with these techniques.

'I have a problem with language barrier, since I am not an Akan but the L1 in the area is Twi, I find it difficult naming some of the elements in the local dialect and since it has to be an indigenous way then I need to know the local names so I can flow with the story' (KT2)*.*

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings indicated the following:
1. KG educators rarely incorporate indigenous stories in teaching thematic concepts. The commonly employed teaching methods include discussions, direct instruction, songs and rhymes.
2. The integration of indigenous stories made the lesson participatory and enjoyable, fostering learners' foundational learning.
3. Through the use of indigenous stories, teachers' creative and imaginative skills were enhanced.

4. The challenges faced by teachers included a lack of skills in creating indigenous stories, a lack of in-depth understanding of the cultural context of the area of practice, and language barriers.

The findings indicate that teaching thematic concepts through indigenous stories significantly enhances learners' understanding and engagement (Baffoe & Agyeman, 2022). Indigenous narratives are deeply rooted in the cultural backgrounds of the students, allowing for meaningful connections with the material. This cultural relevance not only makes lessons more relatable but also fosters a sense of identity and belonging among learners. When students see their own experiences reflected in these stories, they are more likely to engage actively in discussions and retain the information presented (Christensen, 2012). Moreover, indigenous narratives often convey moral lessons and cultural values, enriching the educational experience beyond mere academic content (Cijete, 2017).

Despite the evident benefits, educators in kindergarten settings often fail to incorporate indigenous stories when teaching thematic concepts. While various teaching methods are employed, the absence of culturally relevant narratives can limit the effectiveness of their instruction (Brooks et al, 2022). This oversight may arise from a lack of awareness regarding the advantages of using such materials or from the belief that other teaching methods are more effective. As a result, learners miss the opportunity to explore themes in ways that resonate with their backgrounds, potentially leading to a disconnect between the content and the students' realities (Fu & Sibert, 2017).

Several challenges hinder the effective integration of indigenous stories in thematic teaching. A significant barrier is that the skills necessary for crafting and narrating engaging indigenous stories are often lacking among educators. Effective storytelling requires practice and a keen understanding of pacing, tone, and audience engagement (Ssentanda et al, 2019). Many teachers may feel more comfortable relying on conventional teaching methods that do not demand such skills, thereby avoiding the challenge of incorporating indigenous narratives into their lessons. Additionally, some educators may lack an in-depth understanding of the cultural contexts from which these stories originate, making it difficult to convey the nuances and significance inherent in these narratives (Ghunu, 2022). Without this cultural competency, teachers risk misrepresenting or oversimplifying stories, further disengaging students.

Another challenge is the language barrier issue; many indigenous narratives may be rooted in specific dialects or languages that teachers and students may not fully understand (White, 2020). This can create misunderstandings or a lack of clarity, diminishing the impact of stories on learners. Addressing these challenges through professional development and training could empower educators to

utilize indigenous stories effectively, ultimately enhancing thematic learning experiences for their students (John, 2015).

Based on these findings, the following recommendations were made.

- There is a need to use PLCs and other training available to train teachers and equip them with the skills of indigenous story creation and telling.
- Educational stakeholders such as SISOs, head teachers, and KG coordinators should ensure that teachers use indigenous stories to teach the themes.
- Newly posted teachers should be given orientation on the ethics of the town and encouraged to learn the language in their settings.

The integration of indigenous stories into the teaching of thematic concepts offers significant potential for enhancing learners' understanding and engagement. These narratives resonate with students' cultural backgrounds, fostering a deeper connection with the material and enriching the educational experience. However, the current lack of emphasis on indigenous storytelling in kindergarten settings indicates a missed opportunity for culturally relevant teaching.

The challenges associated with language barriers, insufficient cultural understanding, and a lack of storytelling skills among educators hinder the effective use of indigenous narratives. Addressing these obstacles through targeted professional development and training is essential. By empowering teachers with the necessary skills and cultural knowledge, schools can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment that values and incorporates indigenous perspectives. Ultimately, embracing indigenous stories in thematic teaching not only enhances educational outcomes but also cultivates a sense of cultural identity and belonging among learners, contributing to their overall development.

IMPLICATIONS

Revising the Curriculum to Emphasize Indigenous Stories in Thematic Teaching

The implication is that reviewing and revising the curriculum to prioritize the use of indigenous stories is crucial for enriching thematic instruction in KG classrooms. There is a pressing need to integrate culturally relevant narratives, specifically indigenous stories, into the kindergarten curriculum. By doing so, educators can create a more inclusive learning environment that respects and reflects the diverse backgrounds of their students. The incorporation of these narratives not only enriches thematic teaching but also fosters a sense of belonging among students.

Necessity of Leveraging Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for Teacher Development in Story Creation

The implications of this perspective suggest that leveraging professional learning communities (PLCs) is essential for the professional development of educators, particularly in enhancing their skills and competencies in story creation. PLCs can serve as a supportive network where teachers collaborate, share experiences, and learn from one another about creating and using indigenous stories in teaching. These communities provide a platform for teachers to develop the skills and competencies needed to craft culturally relevant narratives and effectively incorporate them into their teaching practices.

Supervision and monitoring of teaching practices to incorporate indigenousories

The implication here is that adequate supervision and monitoring of the teaching process are crucial to ensure that educators integrate indigenous stories into their instructional practices. Adequate supervision and monitoring of the teaching process are vital to ensure that educators successfully integrate indigenous stories into their instructional practices. Regular observations and constructive evaluations can identify areas where educators may struggle or need additional resources, fostering an environment of continuous improvement. This oversight not only reinforces the importance of indigenous stories in the curriculum but also helps create accountability, ensuring that these narratives are not only acknowledged but actively utilized in teaching. Ultimately, effective supervision cultivates a more culturally responsive educational environment, enriching students' learning experiences and strengthening their connections to their cultural heritage.

Training Preservice Teachers with Indigenous Stories for Effective Classroom Practices

Training preservice teachers to utilize indigenous stories is essential for a smooth transition into classroom practice, as it equips them with culturally relevant tools that resonate with their students' backgrounds. By incorporating these narratives, educators can create meaningful learning experiences that enhance engagement and understanding. This training promotes respect for diversity and inclusivity while helping teachers develop critical thinking, creativity, and empathy in their students. Ultimately, such preparation enables future teachers to navigate diverse classrooms effectively, enrich their instructional strategies, and improve educational outcomes for all learners.

Orientation for Newly Posted Teachers on Indigenous Cultural Practices and Language

The implication is that providing orientation for newly posted teachers on the cultural practices and language of local indigenous communities is essential for fostering effective teaching and learning. Newly posted teachers often struggle to adapt to the cultural dynamics of their new environments. To address this, comprehensive orientation programs that educate educators about the cultural practices and traditions of local indigenous communities are essential. These programs should provide an overview of local customs and values, as well as practical insights into the significance of indigenous stories and their integration into the curriculum. Encouraging new teachers to learn the local language can further enhance communication and understanding with students and their families. This linguistic and cultural knowledge enables teachers to establish meaningful connections with students and cultivate an inclusive classroom environment.

Conducting Further Research on the Impact of Indigenous Stories in Thematic Teaching

The implication is that further research into the impact of using indigenous stories in thematic teaching is critical for understanding their effectiveness and enhancing educational practices. Further research on the impact of using indigenous stories in thematic teaching is essential for understanding their effectiveness and improving educational practices. This research can provide insights into how these narratives influence student engagement, comprehension, and cultural identity. By identifying best practices and tailoring strategies to diverse student populations, educators can enhance critical thinking, creativity, and empathy in their classrooms. Additionally, examining the effects of these stories across different age groups and learning environments can inform teacher training and curriculum development. Ultimately, such research fosters a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational landscape, benefiting both students and educators.

REFERENCES

Brooks, S. P., Zimmermann, G. L., Lang, M., Scott, S. D., Thomson, D., Wilkes, G., & Hartling, L. (2022). A framework to guide storytelling as a knowledge translation intervention for health-promoting behavior change. *Implementation Science Communications*, *3*(1), 35. https://doi.org/10.1186/s43058-022-00282-6

Cajete, G. A. (2017). Children, myth and storytelling: An Indigenous perspective. *Global Studies of Childhood*, *7*(2), 113-130. https://doi.org/10.1177/2043610617703832

Chasokela, D., & Mangena, N. (2025). The Future of Learning in the Digital Age. In *Insights Into International Higher Education Leadership and the Skills Gap* (pp. 471-500). IGI Global.

Christensen, J. (2012). Telling stories: Exploring research storytelling as a meaningful approach to knowledge mobilization with Indigenous research collaborators and diverse audiences in -based participatory research. *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien*, *56*(2), 231-242. **https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0064.2012.00417.x**

Cornish, F., Breton, N., Moreno-Tabarez, U., Delgado, J., Rua, M., de-Graft Aikins, A., & Hodgetts, D. (2023). Participatory action research. *Nature Reviews Methods Primers*, *3*(1), 34.

Cremin, T., Flewitt, R., Mardell, B., & Swann, J. (2017). *Storytelling in early childhood* (pp. 67-85). Abingdon: Routledge.

Eisazadeh, N., Rajendram, S., Portier, C., & Peterson, S. S. (2017). Indigenous children's use of language during play in rural northern Canadian kindergarten classrooms. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*, *66*(1), 293-308. https://doi.org/10.1177/2381336917719684

Fu, Y., & Sibert, S. (2017). Teachers' Perspectives: Factors That Impact Implementation of Integrated Curriculum in K-3 Classrooms. International Journal of Instruction, 10(1), 169-186

Ghunu, N. M. (2022). The challenges of remote area elementary schools in thematic curriculum implementation. *International Journal of Instruction*, *15*(2), 19-36.

Ghunu, N., Meirawan, D., & Prihatin, E. (2019). How Indonesian Principals Create and Improve Teacher's Self-Efficacy. International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change, 5(3), 685–707. . www.ijicc.net

Gonzalez, M., Kokozos, M., & Byrd, C. M. (2025). *Teaching Storytelling in Classrooms and Communities: Amplifying Student Voices and Inspiring Social Change*. Routledge.

John, Y. J. (2015). A" New" Thematic, Integrated Curriculum for Primary Schools of Trinidad and Tobago: A Paradigm Shift. International journal of higher education, 4(3), 172-187. *http://www.sciedupress.com/ijhe*

Kusi, H. (2012). *Doing qualitative research: A guide for researcher*. Accra Newtown: Emmpong Press.

Kiramba, L. K., & Oloo, J. A. (2019). Untapped communicative resources in multilingual classroom settings: Possible alternatives. *Southern African linguistics and applied language studies*, *37*(2), 171-187.

Lawson, H. A., Caringi, J. C., Pyles, L., Jurkowski, J. M., & Bozlak, C. T. (2015). *Participatory action research*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Landrum, R. E., Brakke, K., & McCarthy, M. A. (2019). The pedagogical power of storytelling. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*, *5*(3), 247. https://doi.org/10.1037/stl0000152

Lee, H. Y., & Le Doux, J. M. (2025). Unpacking pedagogical practices of story-driven learning in biomedical engineering education. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/03043797.2025.2474042

Levine, S. (2019). Using everyday language to support students in constructing thematic interpretations. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, *28*(1), 1-31. https://doi.org/10.1080/10508406.2018.1485023

MacDonald, C. (2012). Understanding participatory action research: A qualitative research methodology option. *The Canadian Journal of Action Research*, *13*(2), 34-50. https://doi.org/10.33524/cjar.v13i2.37

Matos, F. A., Alves, F. M., Roebeling, P., Mendonça, R., Mendes, R., López-Maciel, M., & Vizinho, A. (2023). Participatory action research challenges amidst the COVID-19 pandemic: *A review and comparison across two European projects. Sustainability, 15(8), 6489.*

Morales, M. P. E. (2016). Participatory action research (PAR) cum action research (AR) in teacher professional development: a literature review. *International Journal of Research in Education and Science*, *2*(1), 156-165.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2019). Curriculum for Kindergarten

Omar, S. (2025). THE POWER OF STORYTELLING IN EDUCATION: FOSTERING EMPATHY AND DEEPER LEARNING THROUGH NARRATIVE. In *International Conference" Actual economy: local solutions for global challenges"* (pp. 258-260).

Otter, D. W., Medina, J. R., & Kalita, J. K. (2020). A survey of the usages of deep learning for natural language processing. *IEEE transactions on neural networks and learning systems*, *32*(2), 604-624.

Price-Dennis, D., & Muhammad, G. E. (2021). *Black girls' literacies transforming lives and literacy practices*. Routledge.

Perez, L., Rivera, A., & Benavides, R. (2025). The Power of Storytelling and the Positive Impact They Have on Students of Color. In *Hispanic Perspectives on Student Support and Community Empowerment* (pp. 33-54). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.

Rahiem, M. D. (2021). Storytelling in early childhood education: Time to go digital. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy*, *15*(1), 4.

Rashid, Y., Rashid, A., Warraich, M. A., Sabir, S. S., & Waseem, A. (2019). Case study method: A step-by-step guide for business researchers. *International journal of qualitative methods*, *18*, 1609406919862424.

Rieger, K. L., Gazan, S., Bennett, M., Buss, M., Chudyk, A. M., Cook, L., ... & Schultz, A. S. (2020*). Elevating the uses of storytelling approaches within Indigenous health research: a critical and participatory scoping review protocol involving Indigenous people and settlers. Systematic reviews*, *9*, 1-9.

Raikhel, A. (2025). Beyond the words: the power of storytelling in english as a second language acquisition.

Rogoff, B., Radziszewska, B., & Masiello, T. (1995). Analysis of developmental processes in sociocultural activity. *Sociocultural psychology: Theory and practice of doing and knowing*, 125-149.

Sabic-El-Rayess, A., & Joshi, V. (2023). The Power of Storytelling in Curriculum Design and Online Learning: Enhancing Outcomes, Pedagogy, and School Safety.

Setyarini, S., Muslim, A. B., Rukmini, D., Yuliasri, I., & Mujianto, Y. (2018). Thinking critically while storytelling: Improving children's HOTS and English oral competence. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *8*(1), 189-197.

Shannon, D. B., & Hackett, A. (2024). The entanglement of language and place in early childhood: a review of the literature. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 1-24.

Ssentanda, M., Southwood, F., & Huddlestone, K. (2019*). Curriculum expectations versus teachers' opinions and practices in teaching English in rural primary schools in Uganda*. Language Matters, 50(2), 141-163.

Tengecha, N. A., Akintunde, T. Y., Agyeman, S., & Alimo, P. K. (2024). Education for sustainable development in rural communities: Parents' perceptions of children's willingness-to-study and learning difficulties associated with school transport in Ukerewe Island, Tanzania. *Sustainable Development*, *32*(1), 275-286.

Wardani, N. F. K. (2020, February). Thematic learning in elementary school: problems and possibilities. In *3rd International Conference on Learning Innovation and Quality Education (ICLIQE 2019)* (pp. 791-800). Atlantis Press.

Wandhe, D. P. (2024). Unleashing the Magic: The Power of Storytelling in Academics. *Available at SSRN 4727196*.

Bios

AGNES A. TETTEH is a PhD candidate in early childhood education at the University of Cape Coast. She is currently a lecturer at the Education Department of Peki College of Education. Her major research interest focuses on issues related to early childhood education, children's literacy, play-based instructional approaches, curriculum implementation and teacher education. Email: agnestetteh79@gmail.com

JOYCE E. TAWIAH-MENSAH has a PhD in curriculum and instruction in education (ECE) with a cognate in literacy. She is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Basic Education, University of Cape Coast. Her research interest centers on issues relating to early childhood education, play-based instruction, teacher preparation and culturally responsive pedagogies. Email: joyce.bronteng@ucc.edu.gh

EBENEZER A. BONNEY holds a PhD in Science Education. He is currently the principal of Peki College of Education. His research focuses on science education, early childhood education, quality assurance and assessment. Email: bonney2007@yahoo.co.uk

ERNEST F. AKOSAH is a PhD candidate in mathematics education at the Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development (AAMUSTED), Kumasi-Ghana. He is currently a lecturer in the Department of Mathematics and I.C.T., Peki College of Education. His research focuses on realistic mathematics education, urban mathematics education, ethno-mathematics, teaching mathematics for social justice, mathematics curriculum, valuing mathematics education, teacher education and instruction. Email: akferst@gmail.com

GEORGE Y. KAFU is a PhD candidate in geography education at the University of Ghana. He is a lecturer in the Department of Social Sciences at Peki College of Education. His major research interests lie in the areas of child migration, climate adaptability and early childhood education. Email: gykafu1@gmail.com

---