

EVOLVING READING CULTURE AND READERSHIP PROMOTION AMONG THE NIGERIAN YOUTHS

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ABSTRACT

One vital aspect of education, which is awfully lacking in Nigerian education system in spite of the curious nature of our society, is the reading culture. Reading is an indispensable part of an educational program without it the latter will be crippled and the nation will be deprived of intellectuals, artists, musicians and other talented persons; and the state of depression and monotony will prevail. There will be no zeal in life, which would be the very contrast of the theory of life. Against this background the paper examines the need to evolve a sustainable reading culture and discusses the role of various agencies in the development of reading culture and readership promotion. In addition, clarification is given to the concept of reading and recommendations are made to enhance a durable reading culture and readership promotion.

Concept of Reading

Reading process is so complex that a single acceptable definition is not readily available. There are almost as many definitions as there are experts in reading. We shall not go into arguments over these definitions but stick to one as a working definition. One of such classic and commonly used by Foertsch (1998) as the ability to pronounce words, the ability to identify words and get their meaning; and the ability to bring meaning to a text in order to get meaning from it. This definition looks logical and attractive because it encapsulates the ability to perceive and comprehend letters, words, sentences, paragraphs and whole stories in a written text. However, these definitions reflect long-standing views of reading, current literacy research by Arlington and Cunningham (1996) supports a more comprehensive definition of reading. This new definition includes all of the above definitions and places learning skills in the context of authentic reading and writing activities. It recognizes the importance of skill instruction as one piece of the reading process.

KEYWORDS: Nigerian Education System, Reading