

Revolutionising Under-Resourced Education: Harnessing Collaborative Creativity with Open Educational Resources

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Abstract

Learning and teaching support materials (LTSM) are essential for effective education, yet under-resourced schools in South Africa struggle to access authentic, relevant, and engaging resources that promote critical thinking, creativity, and analytical skills. Open Educational Resources (OER) used by student teachers offer a transformative solution by expanding content accessibility and fostering an inclusive, collaborative learning environment. Additionally, creating teaching resources from recycled materials not only enhances creativity but also contributes to sustainability and conservation efforts. The shortage of quality LTSM exacerbates the educational divide between privileged and underprivileged students, emphasising the need for strategies that nurture resourcefulness, autonomy, and problem-solving abilities. This study investigates how collaborative creativity fosters self-directed learning (SDL) and critical thinking in under-resourced schools through a community-driven OER LTSM project. Adopting a pragmatic paradigm and a qualitative, phenomenological design, the research explores participants' lived experiences within this initiative. The study focuses on BEd students from the Faculty of Education at North-West University, with up to 400 volunteer participants selected through convenient and purposive sampling. In-depth insights will be gathered from individual reflections and semi-structured face-to-face interviews with at least 16 randomly chosen participants, ensuring representation across all year groups and campuses. The findings will highlight the impact of creative, collaborative practices on developing SDL skills and elucidate participants' perceptions of using recyclable materials to create LTSM. This will offer valuable implications for bridging educational disparities and promoting sustainability in resource-challenged environments.

Keywords: critical thinking, educational equity, recycling, self-directed learning, sustainability