



Repositioning Literature Education For Global Relevance: Teaching For Cultural Literacy and Creative Competence

Rashidat Olamidayo Ajakaye¹, Tosin Samson Olagunju²

¹Department of Language, Arts and Social Science Education Department, Faculty of Education, Lagos State University, Ojo, Nigeria.

²Department of Linguistics and African Languages, Faculty of Arts, Federal University Lokoja.

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ABSTRACT

This paper introduces cultural literacy and creative competence as twin pillars for the field of literature education. The paper arises with the need to reposition Literature Education to meet the demands of a globalised world. The ability of learners to engage with theirs and adapt to diverse cultural situations is an essential drive towards personal, education, professional, national and international success. This paper arises from the undeniable relevance of knowledge, sensitivity and interpretative capacity to encounter and manage multiple cultural systems through literature. Literature education requires not only analytical skills but also creative competence that enables learners to interpret and recreate literary forms across different cultural settings. This position aligns with UNESCO (2026), which emphasises that creative skills and cultural competencies are essential drivers of innovation, sustainable development, and employment within the cultural and creative industries. Creative competence enables students to transform literary knowledge into innovative products and performances that meet global standards. Drawing on practices from literary studies and performance, the study further highlights pedagogical approaches such as comparative textual analysis, creative writing, performance-based activities and digital storytelling as effective strategies for improving communication and innovation among learners. It argues that when students are properly taught with certain pedagogic elements, classrooms can become transformative spaces that can reproduce globally relevant and employable graduates. The paper concludes that literature consumption serves as a flexible route to self-fulfilment, economic relevance and sustainable career development in the reigning generation.

Keywords: Cultural Literacy, Creative Competence, Literature Education, Global Employability, Literary Pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

The ability of various professionals to achieve global visibility within their respective environment and beyond is mandatory. Global relevance depends on the ability of professionals to apply their knowledge and skills in solving contemporary challenges. This requires adapting disciplinary knowledge to meet the demands of an increasingly interconnected world. This entails the adoption of career-oriented approaches to meet the needs of other disciplines without losing its primary purpose. In essence, varying qualifications can retain their peculiarities with also building up relevance to several other fields of life. Kote (2024) submits that cultural exchange is not only enriching but also an enriching cornerstone to the modern world. Literature education involves sharing traditions, opinion and practices with also developing creative skills through cooperative analytical discussions and in innovative intentions.

Rogers (2021) advises that awareness of first culture and others orients human beings on expected range of behaviours. Several specialisations of life need to be taught open-minded with a neutral sense of judgments towards other works examined. Literature is closely related to creative expression as it functions as reflections and interpretations of social realities. Literature education is an independent academic discipline as it is part of the solid courses within the humanities. Chan (2023) reports that a few people see literary writing as a hobby

rather than a gift and a career. She also reports Professor Bryan Walpert who says creative writing is an emotional, successful and enjoyable experience in career.

Ahmed & Yousif (2015) agree that Literature Education is a means of reawakening the scope of cultural identity, intellectual growth and a deeper understanding of the world. The art field is the best ways to encode and decode information on the tradition, nature, heritage, influences and relationships of a society. Art is a relevant part of the present and future for it documents human experience which would be sourced to guide future intentions. Yet, art is often undervalued as a non-professional field. Oloidi (2010) stresses that art education is relevant to provision of employment and poverty reduction from the society. The skills from literature education equip learners with skills that are transferable and applicable across various professional fields. Adeniyi & Williams (2024) argue that literature possesses not only deemed intellectual value but also artistic value.

Cultural literacy refers to the knowledge, understanding, attitudes, and communication skills that enable individuals to interpret, appreciate, and interact effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. It involves recognising the influence of culture on beliefs, values, behaviours, and communication while demonstrating respect for cultural diversity. In Literature Education, cultural literacy equips learners with the ability to interpret literary texts from multiple cultural perspectives and develop intercultural understanding (Oxford Review, 2024; UNESCO, 2022).

Creative competence is the ability to generate original ideas, solve problems creatively, communicate imaginatively, and transform knowledge into meaningful products or performances. Within Literature Education, it enables learners to apply imagination, innovation, and critical thinking in creative writing, dramatic performances, literary criticism, storytelling, and digital content creation (Adeosun, 2020; Arifin, Mujahid, & Suyuthi, 2023). Pham (2026) argues that employers increasingly value creativity not merely as artistic talent but as the ability to solve problems, improve existing processes, observe critically, and adapt to new situations. Reflective learning enables students to recognise and demonstrate these creative capabilities during recruitment and professional practice.

Global employability refers to an individual's capacity to obtain, sustain, and succeed in employment across diverse national and international contexts through a combination of disciplinary knowledge, transferable skills, creativity, communication, digital competence, and intercultural awareness (Cole & Tibby, 2013; Römgens, Scoupe, & Beausaert, 2019). Römgens, Scoupe and Beausaert (2019) conceptualise employability as a multidimensional construct comprising knowledge, skills, attitudes, adaptability, lifelong learning, and professional competence. This perspective reinforces the argument that literature education should cultivate transferable competencies that prepare graduates for dynamic labour markets.

Ergo, the paper investigates the urgent need to reposition literature education for global employability through the integration of cultural literacy and creative competence into students. It confirms the relevance of cultural literacy and creative competence to the world. It argues that if these elements are concentrated upon, literature classroom would become reproductive spaces to achieve global recognition in the labour market.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The paper builds its objective with the adoption of two theories. To defend the global relevance of literary intelligence and creativity, this study synthesises intercultural competence theory and global competence theory.

Deardorff (2006) developed a widely accepted model of intercultural competence theory. According to Deardorff (cited in Hang & Zhang, 2023), intercultural competence theory is an endless process of development that individuals cannot ultimately or fully achieve. Sobieraj (2012) explains this framework to be the ability to regard personal identity with the capacity to understand the foreign scope of culture. Individuals or parties involved are not losing their respective identifications in the course of blending with others. Therefore, culturally intelligent students are able to interpret, appreciate, and recreate literary forms while navigating diverse cultural perspectives. This theory places literature as a medium of generating cross-cultural

awareness, empathy and critical reflection without forgetting personal identity. It would be relevant in binding local traditions to global avenues.

On the complementary perspective, global competence theory is a contemporary educational framework. According to Martinez & Inesta-Mena (2023), it is a cutting-edge educational initiative for meeting the need of 21st century society. It requires being dynamic and focused in order to comprehend and act rightly on issues. Chan (2021) describes this theory as the ability to be aware, understand, respect and respond to international events and issues. It is a tool useful for analysing global issues, understanding diverse perspectives and acting responsibly in an interconnected world. This theory highlights the ability of students to use creative and analytical skills to contribute meaningfully to global discourses in literature, and deal with world challenges.

In unison, these two mentioned theories provide a conceptual foundation to understand the position of literature education for employability and global recognition. The independent variables are placed on a practical framework to command a global citizenship for literature education. Therefore, learners can be nurtured for literary proficiency, cultural literacy, creative competence for meeting employability and global realities.

REVIEW OF ASSOCIATED LITERATURE

The Oxford review (2024) explains cultural literacy as the ability to comprehend and communicate effectively across varying cultural standards. It entails the process of understanding how each cultural criterion affects our psychology of thoughts, decisions and actions. Through literature, students can acquire knowledge on countless cultural notions and then deliberate upon portrayed characters or creative case studies. In literary products, students enjoy and interpret socio-cultural, economic and other issues with a high percentage of receptive mindset from literary thinking. Segal (2015) agrees that this is where competency in the contemporary world builds up. It involves students' capacity to recognise cultural norms and respond appropriately through discussion, analysis and interpretation.

Creative competence is often developed gradually through learning experiences and practice. It deals with the ability to generate new products that are appealing to originality, technicality and problem solving. It enables students to reinterpret and transform textual knowledge into original works, linking literature to performances on essays, creative exercises, dramatic performances and many others. The result of development of competence is performance. Arifin, Mujahid & Suyuthi (2023) stresses, the results of competence development contribute to productivity, service, quality and change. When creative competence is operationalised, graduates become more employable and as the goals of the organisation extend, performance is strengthened and well-utilised to reach a proper chain of professional and national pursuits.

Cole & Tibby (2013) defines employability as an individual's perceived ability to obtain and maintain employment throughout his/her career. Thus, students are filled with skills that prepare them uncertainties and challenges throughout chosen professional paths. Global relevance is a product of employability; its scope arises from the capacity to show their literary knowledge and creative compositions both nationally and internationally. Akhimien (2021) accounts core characteristics of advertising discourse; it must be edited, purposeful, slangy, rich, interesting, simple, involving, neological, referenceable and many others. All these would show students to be cultural literates and professional individuals.

Tanesa (2023) admits that traditional teaching styles engage students with background knowledge of the text and thematic preoccupations. This makes learners passive since they are not allowed to analyse texts with a unique sense and tentative reaction. Ozugogru & Aksu (2020) expose that the traditional literature classrooms provide students with direct instructions with expectations on personal practices. Yet, this is a problematic method since there is no literary training with teachers' supervision. Ogunnaike & Sonde (2019) advocate for the use of Literature-in-English as an instrument for achieving global sustainable development goals. For instance, Praskidou et al. (2024) accounts that the process of memorising complex dance steps, songs and game activities by students provides solutions on recreating relevance for those who have intellectual disabilities. Daryanti et al. (2025) also add that the real-life demonstration of learnt literary theories enables students to possess physical, cognitive, emotional growth, with also social cooperative capacities. This would

maximise the benefits of learning literature. Recently, Quramo Festival of Words (2025) featured of supra-interactive panel sessions on characterisation in creative writing, legacies of writing, artificial intelligence awakening in the creative web and word slam. Giving students opportunities and platforms to participate in such gatherings would gradually ensure them global recognition from literature.

Empirical Studies

Recent empirical studies continue to demonstrate the strong relationship between creativity, employability, and skills development. Mugabirwe, Mugabe and Muhumuza (2026) investigated the mediating role of skills development in the relationship between creativity, innovation, and employability among 312 graduates of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions in Uganda. Using correlational analysis and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), the study found significant positive relationships among creativity, innovation, skills development, and employability. Skills development was found to partially mediate the influence of creativity and innovation on employability. The study recommended integrating competency-based skill development into educational curricula to enhance graduates' employability.

Similarly, Chukwurah and Atah (2026) examined the influence of work-related skills on the employability of 300 undergraduate students at the University of Calabar, Nigeria. Adopting a descriptive survey design, the researchers found that communication skills and digital literacy significantly enhanced students' employability and workplace readiness. They recommended strengthening communication training, ICT integration, industrial training, and practical skill acquisition programmes in universities.

Yusuf, Okanlawon and Metu (2018) investigated lecturers' perspectives on enhancing graduate employability in Nigerian universities. Their findings revealed that lecturers strongly supported the development of transferable skills, internship opportunities, work experience, and effective guidance and counselling services as essential strategies for improving graduates' employability. They concluded that higher education institutions should strengthen practical learning experiences alongside classroom instruction.

Römgens, Scoupe and Beusaert (2019) synthesised research on employability in higher education and workplace learning. Their review conceptualised employability as a multidimensional and competence-based construct involving knowledge, skills, attitudes, adaptability, and lifelong learning. They argued that graduates require a combination of disciplinary expertise and transferable competencies to thrive in an increasingly dynamic labour market.

The UNESCO (2026) report, *Skills and Employment in the Culture and Creative Industries: Strategic Frameworks and Promising Initiatives*, highlighted the importance of creative skills for innovation, inclusion, and economic diversification. The report emphasised the need for educational institutions to align skills development programmes with labour market demands through employer partnerships, apprenticeships, and community-based learning initiatives. It concluded that strengthening creative competencies enhances employability and sustainable development within the cultural and creative industries.

Pham (2026), writing for the University of Bath's Academic and Employability Skills initiative, argued that employers increasingly value creativity as the ability to observe, solve problems, experiment with new ideas, and improve existing processes rather than merely artistic talent. The article further emphasised that reflective practice enables university students to recognise and demonstrate creativity through evidence-based experiences, thereby strengthening graduate employability.

Collectively, these empirical and practice-based studies demonstrate that creativity, cultural understanding, transferable skills, digital competence, and experiential learning are fundamental to enhancing graduate employability. They therefore support the argument that Literature Education should integrate cultural literacy and creative competence as core pedagogical priorities for achieving global relevance.

Cultural Literacy and Creative Competence in Literature Classrooms

The classrooms for literature serve as flexible spaces for developing these acts, cultural literacy and creative competence. The two acts ensure effective education in literature and preparation of students for employability and global relevance.

Cultural literacy in classrooms begins with examining the influence of students' cultural background on their interpretations and compositions. The cultural backgrounds of students also affect their respective capacities to understand a concept or text as intended by the teacher or writer. The cultural interests of students can be positive if a topic shares a strong relationship with the former.

Howell (2010) advises that teachers can pay attentive role to the literary interests of each student in order to help them develop their interpretative and reporting skills with critical questioning and review. Similarly, Irvine and Armento (2001) states that a culturally responsive pedagogy is culturally responsible, culturally appropriate, culturally compatible, culturally relevant and multicultural in order to describe a variety of effective approaches in culturally diverse classroom. When students observe that their teaching is modified in order to pay attention to their varying environment, they in turn develop interest in their mates and initiate works on underreported cultures among them- through language, dressing, attitude, social norms and others.

This eventually makes literature learning more practical and experiential. Adesina (2025) reports that the phenomenon of language is complex and therefore needs a sophisticated approach to study it: linguistics. The environment of literature makes linguistics more interesting and somewhat unconscious when students employ a given language and other elements from a recommended text in order to engage well with a topic. Indoctrination also takes place when students believe something regardless of the evidence. Students are grouped for joint working for subjective analysis, response or gathering of thoughts concerning a subject matter. Comparative reading of both national and foreign texts from class discussions on societal themes and reflective writing cultivates students to enjoy the flow of multiple cultural perspectives. Hence, students gain the confidence to mingle with wider audiences; hereby framing a personal visibility and global relevance.

Creative competence emphasises the ability of students to express their experiences with a unique use of imagination. When students participate in classroom activities like writing various topics, composing social essays, dramatising plays and producing perspectives on topics; there is an emergence of artistic identity and originality. For instance, Akpuda (2026: mentioned in Authors' Hub Panel Discussion) explains when he encourages his students to write poems, he switches the poetry manuscripts among students for critiques and these students feel encouraged over the observed strengths and weaknesses. Hence, students begin to write more since they can have their works given respective constructive literary feedback. Ultimately, creative competence serves as a reliable route for students to advertise their discovered abilities and begin a literary presence beyond the classroom.

Adeosun (2020) recommends that teachers should strengthen theoretical understanding of creativity from passion and instructional contexts so that the general creativity of students can be enhanced. A teacher should be able to welcome questions and perceptions that are mature and different from anticipation of lesson plan. Literature education is an open space and not built on closed fundamental elements. When these perceptions are discovered when students are still vibrant and restlessly productive, they should be continuously guided in their creative innovations rather than left with enough unmarked tasks and creative practices. The purpose of this is to ensure that the creative competence of students matches with social context. Mallik (2023) states that education is not about preparing for a future career or acquiring skills; it is about shaping our character, broadening our horizons and providing us with tools for a fulfilling life as education is life itself. Therefore, this points out that what makes education good is more than developing competencies; the competencies must be counted as part of a professional life.

In unison, the acts of cultural literacy and creative competence transform the learning of literature into active literary rebirth, personal branding, professional positioning and global confidence. When pedagogic activities are linked to practical applications, literature becomes a reliable vehicle for the labour market.

Pedagogical Strategies for Employability and Global Relevance in Literature Education

Literary pedagogy can also be called literature pedagogy. Ongodia (2019) describes literary pedagogy as the instructional approaches to teach literature with focus on language, culture, critical thinking and moving beyond traditional remote memorisation. It is a student-centred engagement. It is important to note that Idowu (2024) identified that learners' output and contributions to societal growth as development of a programme of instructional objectives. Therefore, satisfactory teaching style should be in line with the changing nature of the society with a concentrated attention on what the society needs. Definitely, there is a need to call for constant review of the pedagogic strategies, considering many undesirable states of lives of Nigerian citizens.

Effective literary pedagogy should integrate cultural literacy and creative competence as core competencies. It is within this framework of social visibility and professional engagement that certain pedagogical strategies become necessary. They are:

1. The guiding of learners to compare cultural values, societal norms and narrative styles. For instance, comparing a Nigerian folklore with a European short story enables students to identify cross-cultural differences and similarities. This would enhance the critical thinking and interpretative skills. This strategy would help students learn how to speak about culture in a way that others can understand; this is an important step toward global relevance.
2. Personal reflection through cultural journal is also a reliable strategy, telling students to tell how their personal background affects their interpretations of a text. This drives the students to show how a text is related to their personal experience and they build a clear sense of thematic identity which is essential when preparing for a wider audience.
3. Self-expression through creative writing is a special strategy with the use of certain socio-conscious endings (How I Wish I Voted, These are the Ways to Grow Nigeria...), composing poems or responding creatively either to text of observant literature. This makes them own the study of literature. They discover the strength and style with a sense of confidence and visibility among peers and in the school.
4. Text to life performance is another common strategy that needs to be sharpened. Students should be allowed to dramatise scenes, recite poetry so that they can experience the text. This makes them learn voice control as they switch characters. These skills that enable students to interact effectively in interviews, presentations and public spaces.
5. The use of digital platform is an effective strategy that would make students eager to present ideas either by recording poems, sharing analysis, presenting a story line. Teachers and other media facilitators can help them to publish and promote their works on digital platforms. Consequently, gradually advertising their abilities to a wide audience.
6. Students should be introduced to opportunities as part of their academic assessment, such as writing competitions, school magazines, literary events that would put them beyond paper assessments. Such that, students begin to identify themselves as scholarly contributors and not mere passive learners.
7. Students should be asked to relate literary themes to real societal issues so that literary texts become relevant. This would command a sense of purpose and responsibility which is mandatory for global engagement. Hence, there is a connection of literature to real-life issues.
8. Peer-review and inter-school literary exchange is a unique strategy. After students review the works of one another. Literary experts can work with teachers for editorial functions and these works can be published as anthologies, booklets, magazines or journals. The published work can be exchanged, shared or sold within the school or outside the school, creating connection and visibility.
9. Students can be assisted by teachers to keep their collection of best works: essays, poems, reflections and performances. Overtime, the portfolio becomes an evidence of ability and growth. This also serves as a vehicle for academic, professional and global opportunities whenever opportunities arise from various sectors of the societies comes.
10. Students should be allowed to initiate and enjoy arguments over characters and authorial lessons with textual pieces of evidence. When they do this, they become careful of public literary suggestions because they are similarly conscious of how to defend any claim they make. This eventually reproduces them as navigators of academic and social literary participants.

Classroom-Based Evidence ENT 1000 Stage Performance Exhibition as Classroom-Based Evidence



A recent classroom-based initiative supporting the integration of creative writing and performance in teacher education is the ENT 1000 Professional Entrepreneurship Stage Performance Exhibition organised by the Department of Language, Arts and Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, Lagos State University, Ojo, from 6–10 July 2026. The exhibition, themed Education Is Beyond the Classroom, involved approximately 500 students from the English Education, Arabic Education, and French Education programmes. Students developed creative and academic works into public presentations through stage drama, storytelling, spoken-word poetry, panel discussions, literary exhibitions, and other performance-based activities. Their presentations were assessed by external academics and professionals using criteria such as creativity, communication skills, teamwork, audience engagement, content development, stage management, and presentation quality. Observations from the exhibition indicated improvements in students' confidence, communication competence, creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and professional presentation skills. The exhibition also introduced participants to career opportunities in broadcasting, publishing, theatre, creative writing, digital content creation, entrepreneurship, and public speaking. Feedback from assessors further promoted reflective learning and continuous professional development. The outcomes of the exhibition demonstrate that performance-based learning provides practical opportunities for developing both disciplinary knowledge and employability skills. The initiative therefore provides classroom-based evidence that experiential literary pedagogy can reposition Literature Education as a pathway to global relevance, professional competence, and sustainable career development.

CONCLUSION

This purpose of this paper is to establish that cultural literacy and creative competence are two competencies that need more pedagogic concentration for the repositioning of literature as a pathway for employability and global relevance. This shows that if literature learning classrooms are properly modified, the learning of literature would move beyond being in its usual passive form. Hence, students would develop confidence, professional identity and creative independence. Therefore, literature education begins to come out of the mere academic grades for self-promotion and diverse audiences. Ultimately, the field of literature is a pathway to academic prowess, personal fulfillment, economic relevance and sustainable career development in the contemporary world.

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