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Mother tongue literacy in a refugee setting: A Sourcebook for the Massalit literacy program

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Background & Context

Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this Master's Capstone Project is to synthesize information and answer questions related to a mother tongue literacy program among Darfur refugees in eastern Chad.

As the literacy specialist providing technical assistance to this program, I have selected questions that, from my perspective, are relevant to the program at this particular point in time. Some, like "Can children learn to read in two scripts at the same time?" or "How can we assess literacy development in a feasible way?" are questions that I wanted to revisit. Others, like "How can we create a literate environment at school, at home, and in the community?" are potential priorities for the program going forward.

While looking for research related to my program, I found very little literature that addresses all the aspects of our context—a mother tongue literacy program in a non-dominant language, encompassing both adult and children's literacy in a refugee camp environment.

There is a growing body of literature on refugee education and education in crisis and conflict settings. There are longitudinal studies of mother tongue-based multilingual education efforts. There are guides to community-based mother tongue literacy programs. And there are reports of adult literacy programs and early grade reading interventions in developing countries. However, whether in peer-reviewed journals or in the grey literature, articles are usually relevant to one or two of the aspects above, not all of them.

Thus, this is my attempt to review the literature and apply it to our context.

Some of the features of this context are:

- Learners' L1 or home language is Massalit, a non-dominant language with strong oral presence but little environmental print, spoken on both sides of the Chad-Sudan border. Massalit orthography conforms to the Chadian National Alphabet, using a Roman script.
- Learners' L2 or second language is Arabic; they may have oral exposure to colloquial Sudanese Arabic and some environmental print in Arabic. Formal schooling is in Modern Standard Arabic, and there are also Quranic schools in the camps.
- Learners' L3 or third language, if applicable, is often English or French, which is taught in school or in adult learning classes; there is little environmental exposure to these.
- Learners are Sudanese Massalit refugees living in a refugee camp environment in eastern Chad. Camp populations range from 20,000 to 40,000 people in each camp. Most refugees were subsistence farmers in Sudan, with little access to education.
- The camps are located in a rural setting near the Chad-Sudan border. The inhabitants fled the Darfur crisis in Sudan in 2003-2004. The situation is thus a protracted one.
- The main motivation for mother tongue literacy among the refugees is a desire to preserve their cultural heritage and identity.

There are two program components:

- A community-based adult literacy program, started in 2007. Currently 5 levels of classes are offered, all in Massalit. Most of the learners are youth and young adults.
- A school-based children's literacy program, started in 2012. Massalit is taught as a supplementary subject in Grades 3, 4 and 5 in 14 primary refugee schools.

I work in an NGO that provides support to both program components in two refugee camps. There are independent mother tongue literacy initiatives in four other camps which use the materials that we produce.

Format of the Sourcebook

Since this is practitioner-oriented project, I wanted to format it in a way that would be useful for people working in a field location. The Sourcebook is meant to be a synthesis or summary of information related to each topic addressed. It should serve as a quick reference to key concepts and knowledge that may be useful for literacy programs in similar contexts.

Each section starts with "Key Takeaways", which is like the Executive Summary of the section. This is followed by "Key Documents" and perhaps a main "Illustration" that serve as primary references for the topic. Then comes "Findings", which is a mini literature review. Here, I summarize key findings and ideas rather than just referencing them, assuming that some of the original source materials will not be accessible to the reader (particularly academic books and journals). I close with "Recommendations", which are practical implications of the review for the literacy program, and a list of "References" for the section.

With regards to types of literature, I looked at organizational/NGO literature and reports as well as peer-reviewed journals, since much of the knowledge about these types of programs is in the 'grey' literature. I also leveraged secondary sources such as landscape reports and review articles which summarize the latest thinking in the field. I intentionally focused on practical and applied knowledge, looking for concrete examples which may be used in organizational capacity building and teacher training. In training modules, specific stories from real situations can be useful as illustrations and to demonstrate the efficacy of new methods.

Finally, I start the Sourcebook with a collection of visualizations and charts, because I wanted to offer an overview of effective literacy programs in a way that would be useful for practitioners. Rather than reproducing the excellent summary reports and articles that already exist, creating graphics allowed me to synthesize the 'best practices' information and develop my own mental models. These graphics can be adapted for training teachers and other literacy personnel.

Basic models for literacy programs: Charts and graphics

This section contains visual representations and charts that attempt to summarize major ideas related to effective adult literacy and early grade reading programs. These graphics could be adapted for use in training of teachers, trainers, curriculum developers, managers, etc.
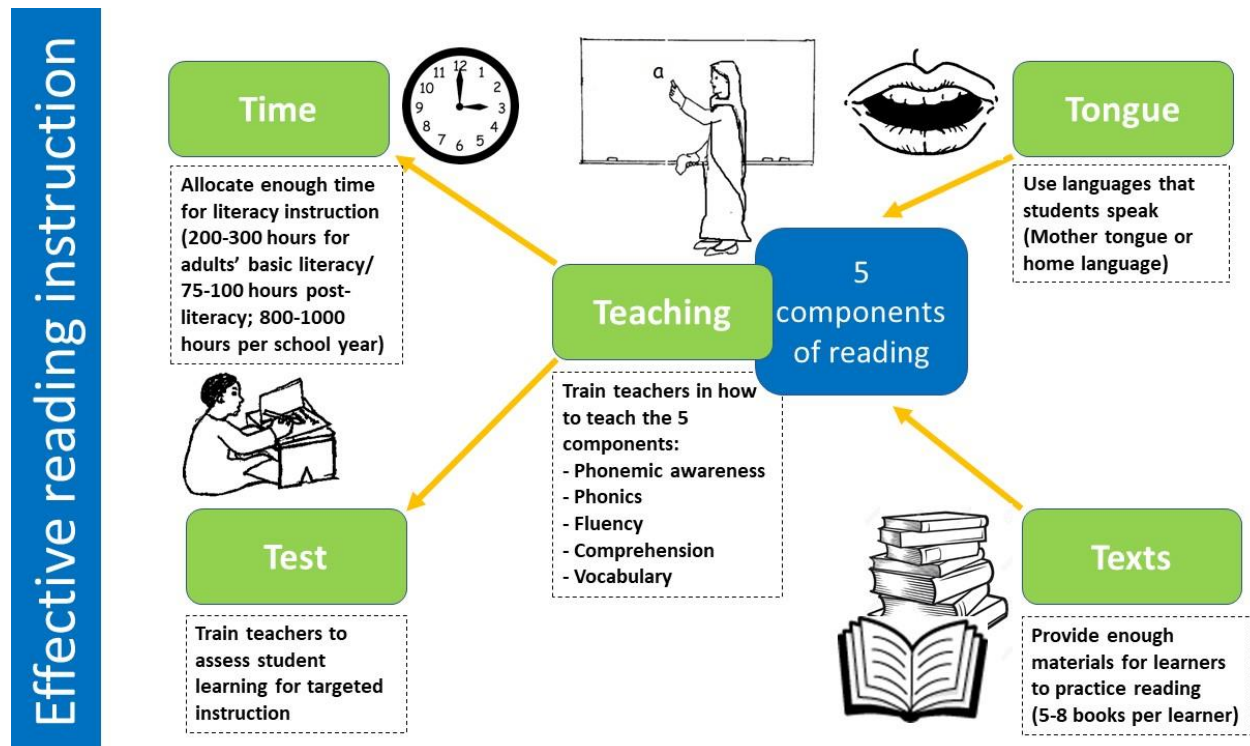
Since I do not have a design background, my objective was to consider the information to be included in each graphic rather than the actual design.

Ideally, the graphics should have a clear, simple layout (so they are easy to interpret), not rely on color (so that they can be printed in grayscale or black and white), not be too dense (in terms of amount of information), so that they are easy to translate and adapt, and can be used in low-resource, low-literacy contexts.

5 T's for effective reading instruction

The 5T's framework for effective reading instruction was developed by USAID for use in their early grade reading improvement projects, adapted from Allington (2002)'s 6T's for effective literacy instruction. Details here are primarily from Kim et al. (2016) and Comings (2005).
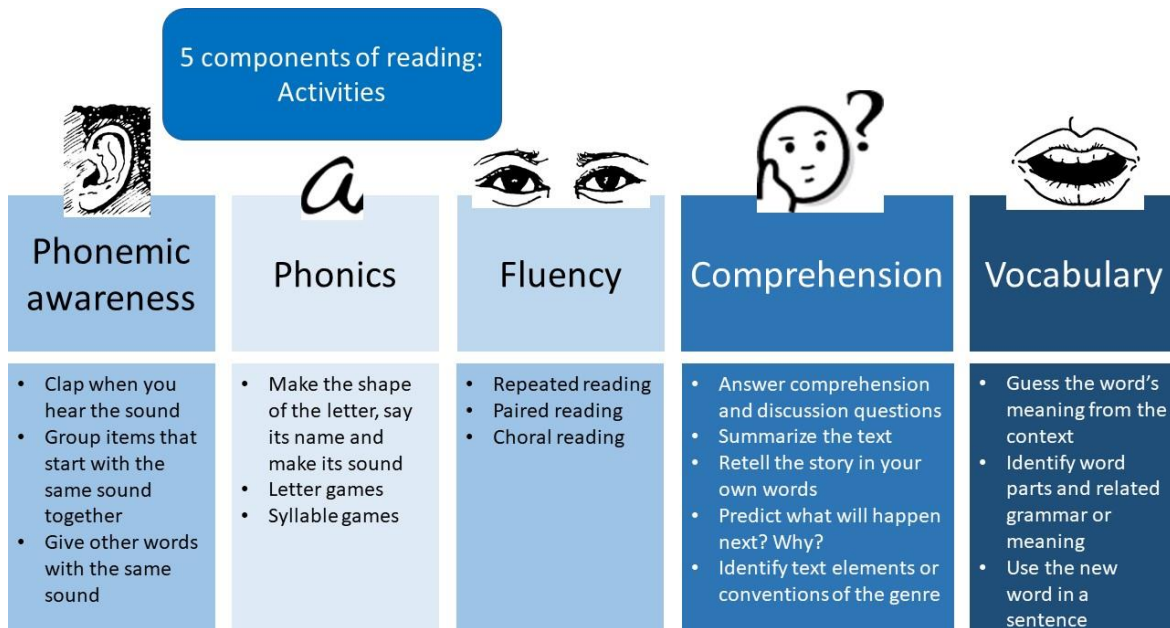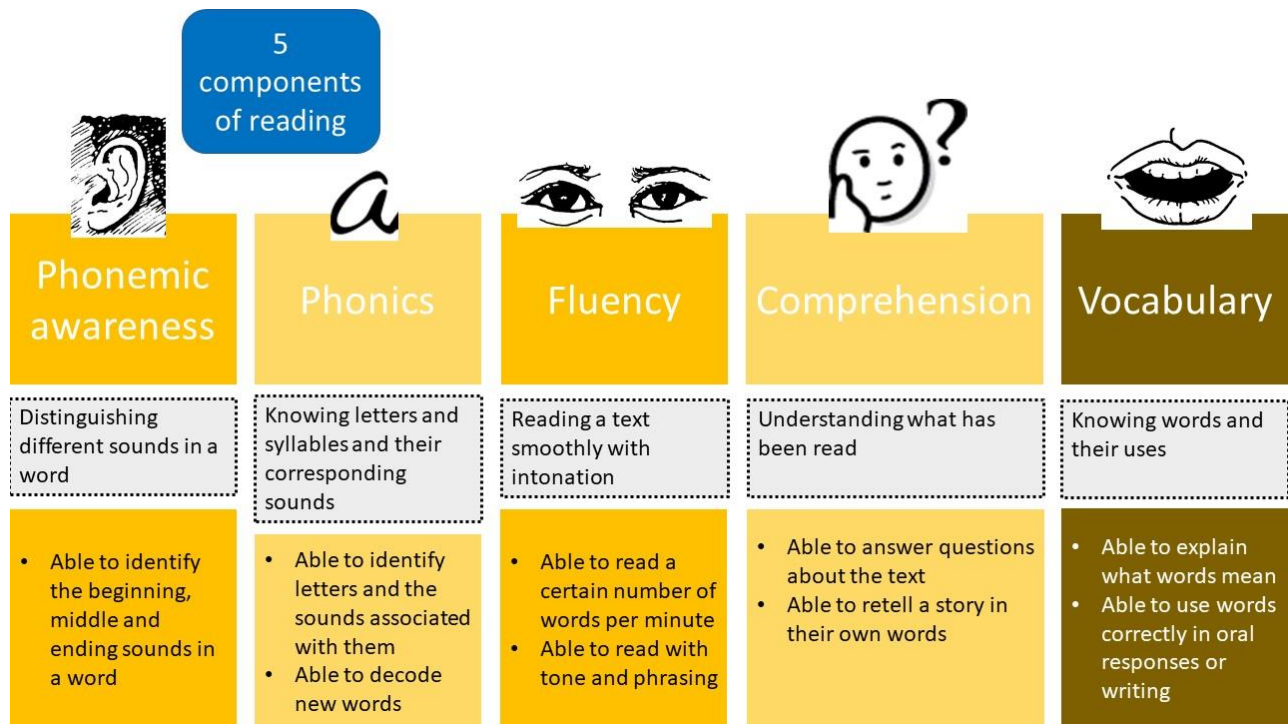
Note that the 5T's as a mnemonic device works well in English but not necessarily in other languages. Alternative models could use icons or symbols or a metaphor with five components, e.g. a hand with five fingers. Ideas should be developed in collaboration with local teachers and trainers, who would know better what symbols or metaphors will resonate in their community.

Effective reading instruction

Time
Allocate enough time for literacy instruction (200-300 hours for adults' basic literacy/ 75-100 hours post-literacy; 800-1000 hours per school year)

Tongue
Use languages that students speak (Mother tongue or home language)

Teaching
Train teachers in how to teach the 5 components:
- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Comprehension
- Vocabulary

5 components of reading

Test
Train teachers to assess student learning for targeted instruction

Texts
Provide enough materials for learners to practice reading (5-8 books per learner)

Creating visual representations of these frameworks could also be a learning activity in the context of teacher training.
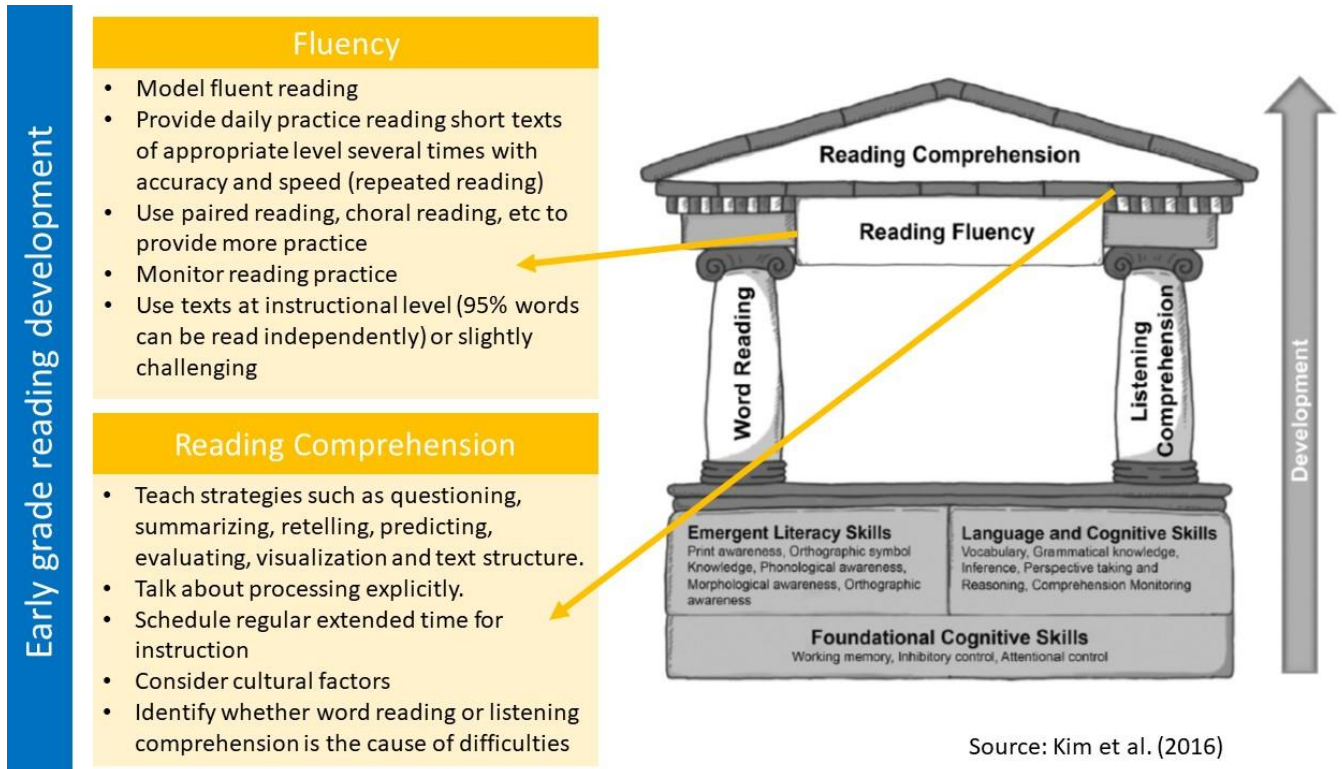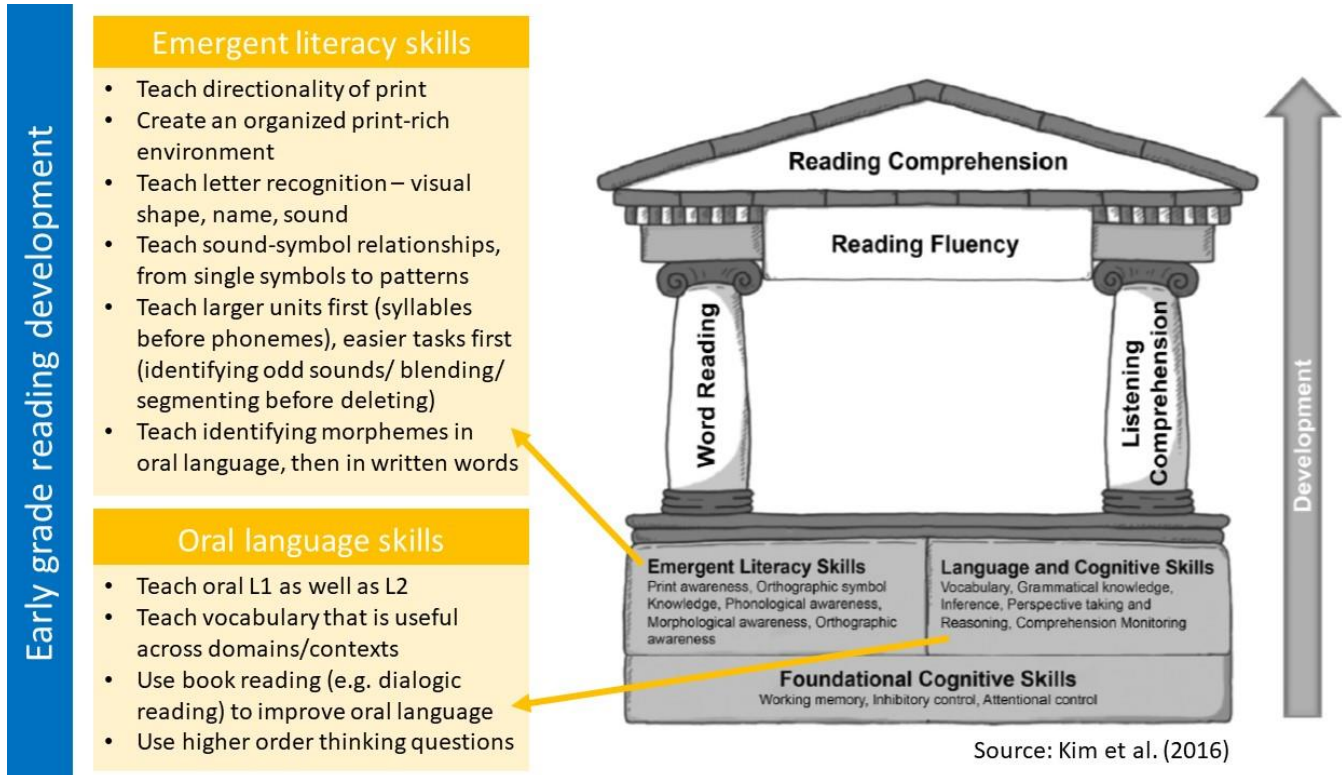
The five components of reading

The 5 components of reading were identified by a National Reading Panel commissioned by the U.S. Congress to evaluate current research and its implications for teaching children how to read. The panel was convened in 1997 and published their report in 2000. The components are often incorporated into other frameworks—they come under "Teaching" in the 5T's framework and "Instructional design" in Comings' (2014) three pillar model for early grade reading.

5 components of reading

Phonemic awareness	Phonics	Fluency	Comprehension	Vocabulary
Distinguishing different sounds in a word	Knowing letters and syllables and their corresponding sounds	Reading a text smoothly with intonation	Understanding what has been read	Knowing words and their uses
• Able to identify the beginning, middle and ending sounds in a word	• Able to identify letters and the sounds associated with them • Able to decode new words	• Able to read a certain number of words per minute • Able to read with tone and phrasing	• Able to answer questions about the text • Able to retell a story in their own words	• Able to explain what words mean • Able to use words correctly in oral responses or writing

5 components of reading: Activities

Phonemic awareness	Phonics	Fluency	Comprehension	Vocabulary
• Clap when you hear the sound • Group items that start with the same sound together • Give other words with the same sound	• Make the shape of the letter, say its name and make its sound • Letter games • Syllable games	• Repeated reading • Paired reading • Choral reading	• Answer comprehension and discussion questions • Summarize the text • Retell the story in your own words • Predict what will happen next? Why? • Identify text elements or conventions of the genre	• Guess the word's meaning from the context • Identify word parts and related grammar or meaning • Use the new word in a sentence

Early grade reading development: Instructional strategies

Following is a summary of the early grade reading development model and suggested strategies by Kim et al. (2016).

Early grade reading development

Emergent literacy skills

- Teach directionality of print
- Create an organized print-rich environment
- Teach letter recognition – visual shape, name, sound
- Teach sound-symbol relationships, from single symbols to patterns
- Teach larger units first (syllables before phonemes), easier tasks first (identifying odd sounds/ blending/ segmenting before deleting)
- Teach identifying morphemes in oral language, then in written words

Oral language skills

- Teach oral L1 as well as L2
- Teach vocabulary that is useful across domains/contexts
- Use book reading (e.g. dialogic reading) to improve oral language
- Use higher order thinking questions

Source: Kim et al. (2016)

Early grade reading development

Fluency

- Model fluent reading
- Provide daily practice reading short texts of appropriate level several times with accuracy and speed (repeated reading)
- Use paired reading, choral reading, etc to provide more practice
- Monitor reading practice
- Use texts at instructional level (95% words can be read independently) or slightly challenging

Reading Comprehension

- Teach strategies such as questioning, summarizing, retelling, predicting, evaluating, visualization and text structure.
- Talk about processing explicitly.
- Schedule regular extended time for instruction
- Consider cultural factors
- Identify whether word reading or listening comprehension is the cause of difficulties

Source: Kim et al. (2016)

Stages of literacy development

Following is a synthesis of stages of reading and writing development from Roskos et al. (2009) and Literacy Bug (n.d.), based on Chall's (1983) six stages of reading development.

Stages of literacy development					
	Emergent (Pre-reading)	**Novice/Initial (Decoding)**	**Transitional (Confirmation)**	**Fluent (Learning)**	**Expert (Synthesis)**
Reading	Develops oral language and vocabulary; relies heavily on pictures in text; pretend reads; recognizes rhyme	Aware of sound-symbol relationships; reads simple texts with high frequency sight words and phonically regular words; uses decoding to figure out words	Develops fluency in reading; recognizes patterns in words; checks for meaning and sense; knows a good stock of sight words	Reads to learn; applies reading strategies; expands reading vocabulary; comprehends from a singular point of view	Analyzes what is read; reacts critically to texts; deals with layers of facts and concepts; comprehends from multiple points of view
Writing	Prints own name and plays with books, pencils and paper; scribbles	Moving from scribbling to non-phonetic letter strings; starts to use invented spellings	More conventional spellings; uses writing conventions (e.g. capital letters, punctuation)	Writing for diverse purposes	Writing is purposeful, strategic, often specialised and anchored
Level/ Age	Before Grade 1 (6 months – 6 years)	Grade 1 (6 – 7 years old)	Grade 2 – 3 (7 - 9 years old)	Grades 4 – 8 (10 - 14 years old)	Grade 9 – College (15 - 18 years old)

Following are literacy development milestones from Roskos et al. (2009), mapped to the stages above and to current adult and children literacy program levels.
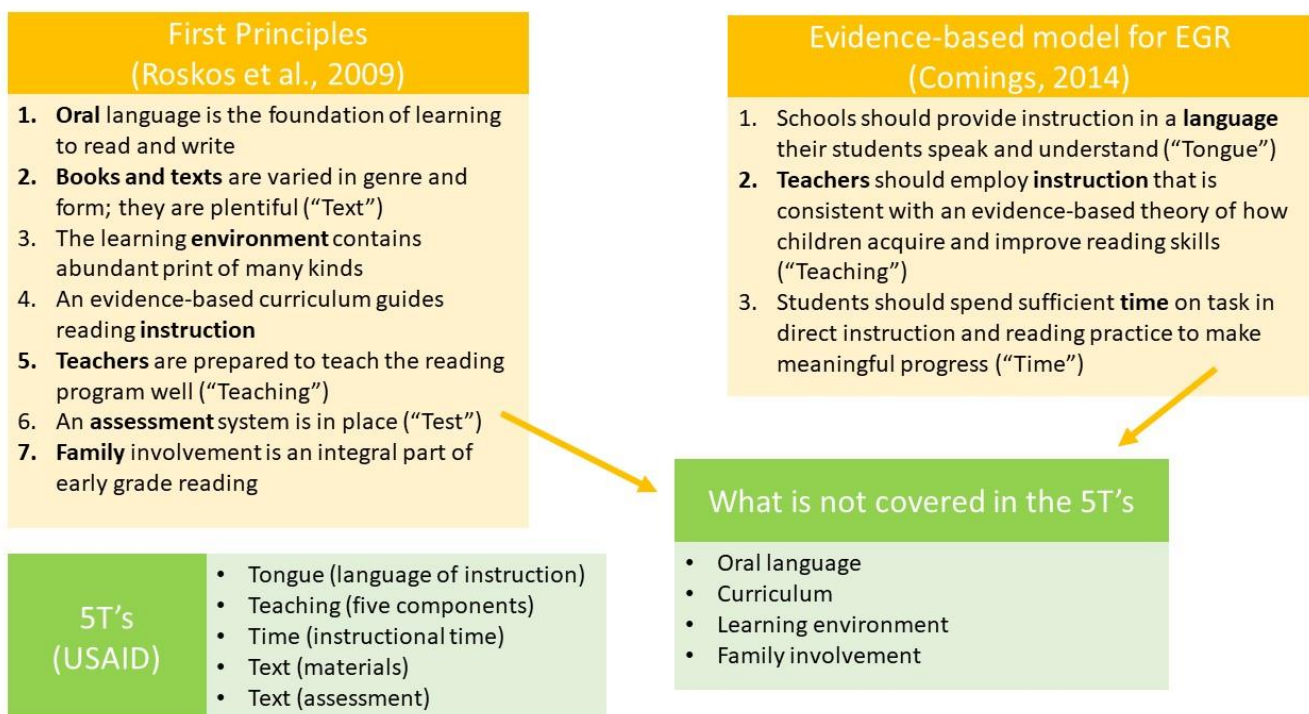
Emergent - Novice	Milestone One
• Children pre-primer level • Adult primer level	Note: Print referred to in these milestones can be locally written or commercially published and, ideally, should include both. • Familiar with the uses and structures of print • Know the format of books and other print resources • Familiar with how print works at the sentence, word, and sound level • Demonstrate phonemic awareness • Write most letters of the spelling system • Show interest in book experiences

Novice - Transitional	Milestone Two
• Children primer level • Adult primer level	• Recognize some words at a glance • Know connections between phonemes and spellings accurately and fast • Familiar with comprehension strategies, such as predicting, drawing inferences, and summarizing the main idea • Understand the uses and purposes of books and print • Compose fairly readable drafts with some correct spellings; increasingly comfortable with a variety of writing formats • Engage in a variety of literacy activities voluntarily

Source: Roskos et al. (2009)

Fluent	Milestone Three
• Children post-primer level • Adult post-primer level	• Show automatic word recognition, spelling skills, and reading fluency • Familiar with structural analysis of words • Use comprehension strategies to understand texts • Monitor own reading comprehension for understanding • Familiar with many different print resources, such as dictionaries, atlases, and reports • Learn from texts • Produce a variety of written work, such as essays, reports, and personal "published" books • Read voluntarily often

Following are stages of adult literacy learning in an L1-L2 program, integrating stages of reading development from Chall (1987) and Norman & Malicky (1987), mapped to Malone's (2004; 2013) levels for community-based mother tongue literacy classes and materials.

Stages of adult literacy learning (L1-L2)				
	Primer level, L1 (Novice)	**Post-primer level, L1 (Transitional-Fluent)**	**Bridging to L2**	**Lifelong learning in L1/L2 (Expert)**
Reading level/ Content	Learning to read and write; Print-based processing; Able to read materials at grade levels 1-3	Develops reading fluency; Integrated processing (knowledge- and print-based strategies); Able to read materials at grade levels 4-8	Builds oral fluency in L2; Learns L2 literacy; Builds content knowledge in L1 and L2	Participates in formal, nonformal, vocational, or other continuing education programs
Types of materials	Familiar topics, reinforces prior knowledge; Written in L1 Short, easy sentences	Familiar topics, introduces new knowledge; some new topics Written in L1 Longer, more complex sentences	Familiar topics in L2; Bilingual materials Simple to moderate sentences	Varies; includes unfamiliar topics translated into L1 from other languages
Level of complexity	Initial: 4-10 pages, 1-2 short sentences per page Later: 8-12 pages, 2-3 sentences per page 1 illustration per page	Initial: 10-20 pages, 2-4 sentences per page Later: 15-30 pages, 3-6 sentences per page 1 illustration per 1-2/2-4 pages	Varies	Varies

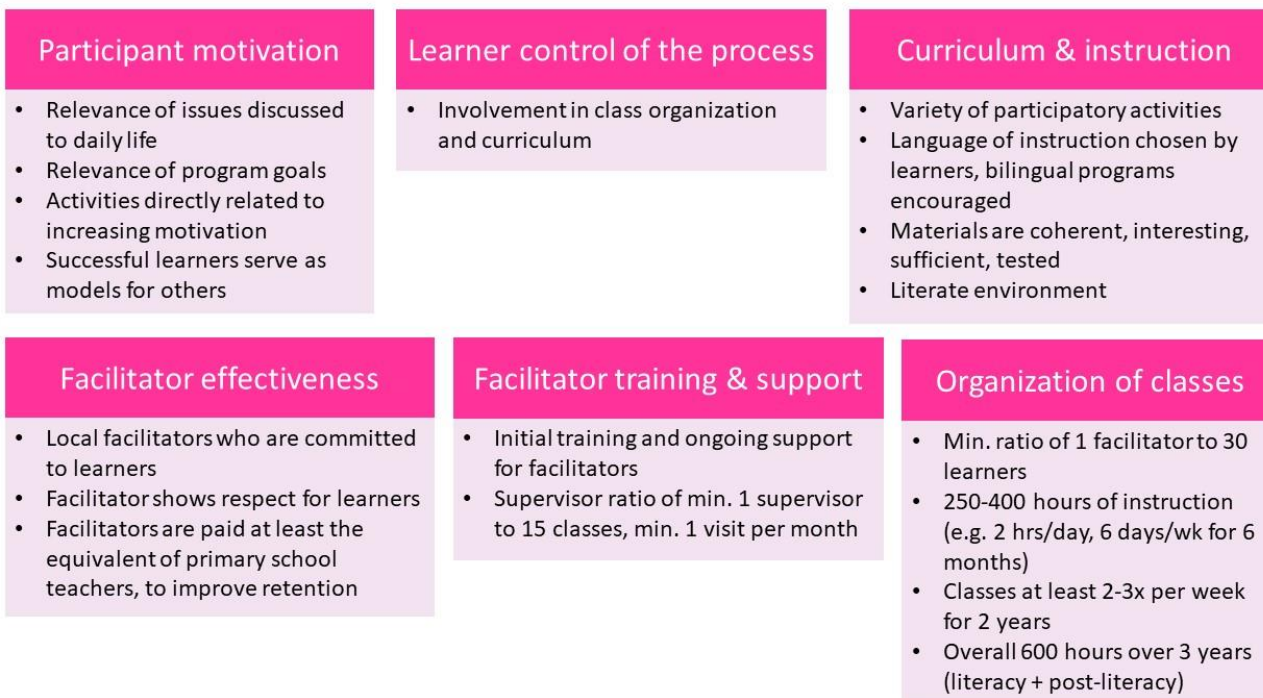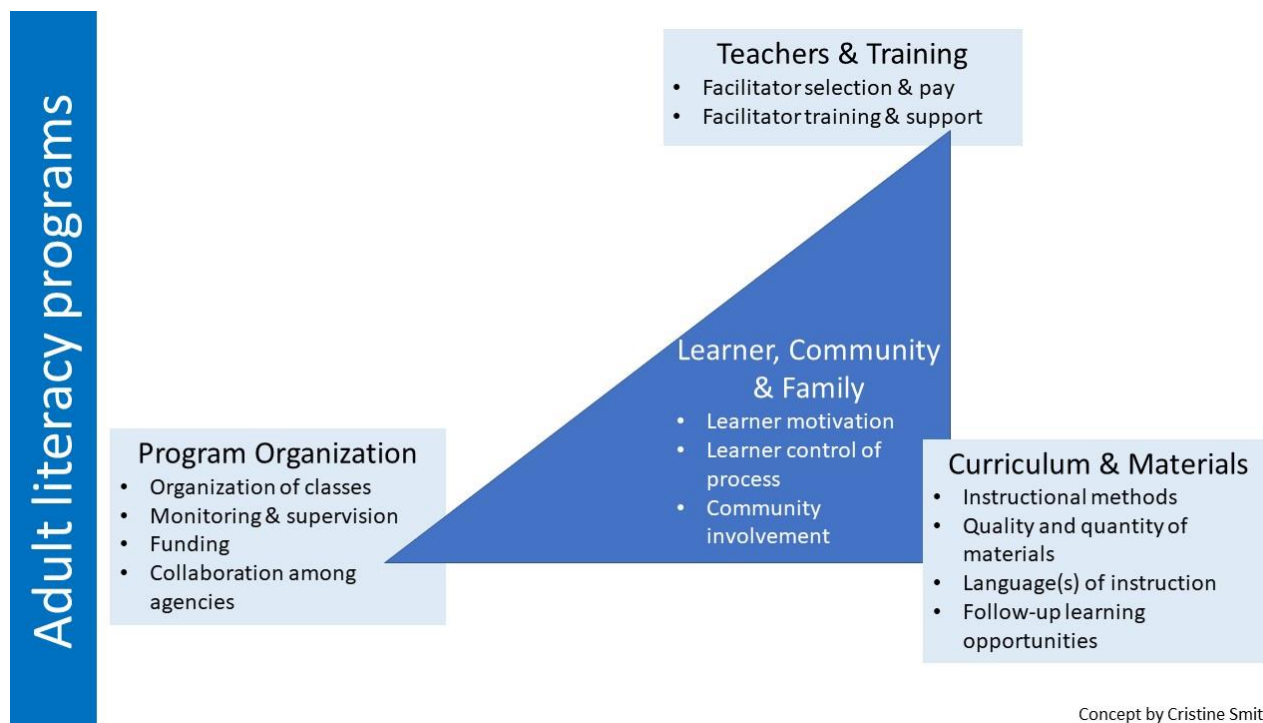## Models for effective early grade reading programs

Following is a summary of Roskos et al. (2009) and Comings (2014), and how they relate to the 5T's framework:

First Principles (Roskos et al., 2009)

1. **Oral** language is the foundation of learning to read and write
2. **Books and texts** are varied in genre and form; they are plentiful ("Text")
3. The learning **environment** contains abundant print of many kinds
4. An evidence-based curriculum guides reading **instruction**
5. **Teachers** are prepared to teach the reading program well ("Teaching")
6. An **assessment** system is in place ("Test")
7. **Family** involvement is an integral part of early grade reading

Evidence-based model for EGR (Comings, 2014)

1. Schools should provide instruction in a **language** their students speak and understand ("Tongue")
2. **Teachers** should employ **instruction** that is consistent with an evidence-based theory of how children acquire and improve reading skills ("Teaching")
3. Students should spend sufficient **time** on task in direct instruction and reading practice to make meaningful progress ("Time")

5T's (USAID)
- Tongue (language of instruction)
- Teaching (five components)
- Time (instructional time)
- Text (materials)
- Text (assessment)

What is not covered in the 5T's
- Oral language
- Curriculum
- Learning environment
- Family involvement

Models of effective adult literacy programs

Following is a summary of key elements for successful adult literacy programs, based largely on Archer and Fry (2005), Comings & Soricone (2006). I also referred to Smith et al. (2009), Oxenham (2008) and UNESCO (2015).

Adult literacy programs

Teachers & Training
- Facilitator selection & pay
- Facilitator training & support

Learner, Community & Family
- Learner motivation
- Learner control of process
- Community involvement

Program Organization
- Organization of classes
- Monitoring & supervision
- Funding
- Collaboration among agencies

Curriculum & Materials
- Instructional methods
- Quality and quantity of materials
- Language(s) of instruction
- Follow-up learning opportunities

Concept by Cristine Smith

Participant motivation
- Relevance of issues discussed to daily life
- Relevance of program goals
- Activities directly related to increasing motivation
- Successful learners serve as models for others

Learner control of the process
- Involvement in class organization and curriculum

Curriculum & instruction
- Variety of participatory activities
- Language of instruction chosen by learners, bilingual programs encouraged
- Materials are coherent, interesting, sufficient, tested
- Literate environment

Facilitator effectiveness
- Local facilitators who are committed to learners
- Facilitator shows respect for learners
- Facilitators are paid at least the equivalent of primary school teachers, to improve retention

Facilitator training & support
- Initial training and ongoing support for facilitators
- Supervisor ratio of min. 1 supervisor to 15 classes, min. 1 visit per month

Organization of classes
- Min. ratio of 1 facilitator to 30 learners
- 250-400 hours of instruction (e.g. 2 hrs/day, 6 days/wk for 6 months)
- Classes at least 2-3x per week for 2 years
- Overall 600 hours over 3 years (literacy + post-literacy)

Collaboration

- Involvement and support of families and wider community
- Involvement of diverse local agencies, government and NGO
- Links to local development projects

Funding

- Average cost per learner USD 50 – 100 per year for 2-3 years (initial literacy and follow-up learning) (Archer)
- Potential funding sources: learner contribution (but exempt those unable to afford it), community contribution, local government, national government, external donors
- Budget allocation: 30% facilitators, supervisors, trainers; 15% facilitator training; 13% materials development; 13% organizational capacity building; 4% monitoring and evaluation; 10% microfinance and savings schemes; 15% administrative overhead (Oxenham)

Follow-up learning

- Follow-up opportunities for learning
- Post-literacy activities

Monitoring & evaluation

- Assessment of learner outcomes
- Supervision

Social-emotional learning, peace education, and global citizenship education

Following are examples of teacher and learner skills desired in social-emotional learning and peace education programs, based on the Safe and Healing Spaces (SHLS) toolkit (IRC, 2016a; 2016b); Healing Classrooms program (IRC, 2011); Learning and Wellbeing in Emergencies (LWiE), an adaptation of Literacy Boost (Save, 2018); UNHCR/INEE Peace Education Programme (PEP) (Sommers, 2001); and global citizenship education (Moul, 2017; UNESCO, 2015). Note the overlaps between the different approaches in skills desired.

Education in emergencies

Save the Children Learning and Wellbeing in Emergencies (LWiE)

An adapted literacy learning program with 3 pillars:
1) Community action
- Book banks
- Reading activities outside of school
- Sessions for caregivers

2) Teacher training
- Teacher wellbeing
- Student wellbeing
- Classroom literacy activities
- Focusing on meaning
- Diversity of learners
- Guided writing

3) Learner assessment
- Literacy assessment (e.g. EGRA, Literacy Boost)
- SEL assessment (e.g. ISELA)

Source: Save (2018)

IRC Safe and Healing Learning Spaces (SHLS) approach

A cross-cutting program to mitigate toxic stress consisting of 4 interventions:
1) Social-emotional learning
- Brain building, emotion regulation, positive social skills, conflict resolution, perseverance

2) Reading and math
- Print concepts, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, writing
- Problem solving, number sense, operations, measurement and data, geometry

3) Parenting
- Stress management, positive parenting, strategies to support children's and adolescents' psychosocial needs

Source: IRC (2016a)

INEE Training Pack for Primary School Teachers in Crisis Contexts

A teaching training guide focusing on 5 domains:
- **Teacher's role & wellbeing** – role, code of conduct
- **Child protection, wellbeing and inclusion** – SEL, positive discipline
- **Pedagogy** – engaging instruction, questioning, inclusion
- **Curriculum & planning** – objectives, assessment, lesson plans
- **Subject knowledge** (not covered in pack)

Source: TICCWG (2016)

Social emotional learning skills (IRC SHLS Toolkit)	Peace education skills (UNHCR PEP)	Global citizenship education skills (UNESCO GCED)
1. Brain building • Listen actively; follow directions; focus attention; cultivate working memory **2. Emotion regulation** • Identify types of emotions; identify own emotions; identify actions to manage and control emotions **3. Positive social skills** • Empathy; identify impact of actions on others; appreciate individual and group similarities and differences; positive communication skills; teamwork **4. Conflict resolution** • Identify problems; avoid negative interactions; implement conflict resolution behaviors and strategies **5. Perseverance** • Develop a sense of control; organize steps; set goals; apply decision-making skills; develop positive self-concept and hope for the future	**1. Communication** • Listening; understand perceptions and misperceptions; understand emotions and their effect on communication; empathy; being fair to all sides; understand bias, stereotypes, discrimination, prejudice **2. Appropriate assertiveness** • Understand self and others; similarities and differences; assertion, aggression, submission **3. Cooperation** • Understand own and others' strengths and weaknesses; build trust **4. Critical thinking** • Analysis; fact vs opinion; problem solving **5. Conflict resolution** • Negotiation; mediation Sources: IRC (2016b), Sommers (2001), UNESCO (2015)	**1. Cognitive** • Identify local, national and global issues **2. Social emotional** • Recognize how we fit into and interact with the world around us; develop interpersonal and intrapersonal skills; illustrate differences and connections between groups **3. Behavioral** • Explore ways to take action; identify how choices and decisions affect others and the environment

SEL & Peace Education (side label)

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First Principles Self-Review Tool

Principle	Focus	Element	Indicator			Evidence
1	Foundations	Connecting Instruction	☐ oral language foundation			
			☐ language arts			
			☐ subject matter			
2	Environment	Access to Books and Print	☐ > 8 books per student	☐ 5–8 books	☐ < 5 books	
			☐ paper/pencils			
			☐ classroom library			
3	Environment	Abundant Print	☐ environmental print			
			☐ displays of student work			
			☐ various forms of text			
4	Active Teaching	Knowledge of Expectations	☐ policy documents			
			☐ written curriculum			
			☐ curriculum planning			
			☐ developmentally appropriate instruction			
		Skills and Strategies	☐ explicit instruction			
			☐ follow-up practice			
			☐ integration with language arts			
		Scaffolding	☐ goal oriented			
			☐ teacher modeling			
			☐ guided practice			
			☐ independent practice			
			☐ individual needs			
5	Teacher Development	Knowledge Base	☐ learn-to-read process			
			☐ reading approaches and methods			
			☐ organizing for large groups with few resources			
			☐ assessing reading progress and achievement			
		Appraisal	☐ demonstrates content knowledge in reading			
			☐ demonstrates pedagogical knowledge and skills			
6	Assessment	Tools and Strategies	☐ assessment system			
			☐ curriculum-based assessment			
7	Home–School	Family Involvement	☐ regular program			
			☐ classroom connections			
8	Learner Success	Student Progress in Reading	% below:	% at:	% above:	
		Student Motivation to Read	☐ personal reading log			
		Student Wide Use of Reading	☐ effective use of instructional time			

Source: Roskos et al. (2009)

What roles can cultural heritage and oral tradition play in literacy programs?

Key takeaways:

- In African contexts, there are often three educational systems at play—indigenous or traditional education, Islamic-Arabic education, and Western colonial education. Mother tongue literacy and education has the potential to integrate elements of different systems and to nurture both cultural grounding and innovation.
- Motivations for literacy among marginalized groups are not necessarily tied only to instrumental or economic needs. Cultural heritage and identity can be a strong motivator for adult literacy among ethnolinguistic minorities.
- Literacy programs can include proverbs, riddles, word games, puzzles, stories etc from the oral tradition as part of classroom practice as well as in literacy materials. Storytellers and musicians could be hosted at literacy activities. Careful consideration should be given to how oral forms and content are 'translated' into written contexts.
- Emerging literate communities incorporate literacy into oral culture in diverse ways. They provide organizational and communal spaces where both literate and non-literate members can participate and contribute towards a common goal or purpose. They encourage literacy skill development through these shared activities. Successful spaces integrate both oral and literate practices, both traditional and new knowledge.

Key documents:

- *Handbook of African educational theories and practices: A generative teacher education curriculum* (2001) edited by Bame Nsamenang & Tchombe
- *The making of literate societies* (2001) edited by Olson & Torrance
- *Signposts to Identity-Based Community Development (IBCD)* (2013) by Smith & Wisbey

Illustration:

Source: Smith & Wisbey (2013, p. 12)

Source: Four well-beings of community sustainability, from New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage (2006: 8).

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Findings:

Mother tongue literacy programs are often closely connected with cultural heritage, as language is closely associated with identity and culture (Smith & Wisbey, 2013). While literacy is often valued for its instrumental uses in terms of economic development, it can also play a crucial role in cultural sustainability and development, particularly for minority ethnolinguistic communities. Literacy programs in minority communities need to take into account matters of culture and tradition in order to be effective in those particular contexts, and to be sensitive to the potential role of education in these communities.

Indigenous education and oral tradition in Africa

Gwanfogbe (2011) provides a useful overview of Africa's triple education heritage: indigenous or traditional African education, Islamic-Arabic education, and Western colonial education. The influence of all 3 educational traditions can still be seen in post-colonial countries like Chad today, and should be taken into account when considering the shape and form of literacy programs, whether in formal or nonformal educational settings.

The role of indigenous education and oral tradition are of particular interest, as they are closely linked to language, and constitute an important part of culture in many communities, whether acknowledged or not, alongside the Western-style schools.

A significant point of contrast between traditional African and Western colonial education is that traditional African education was very much integrated into daily life and learning in context, through "observation, imitation and participation" in adult life (Gwanfogbe, 2011). Western education, is often decontextualized, emphasizing learning in a classroom from textbooks with a school teacher.

Traditional African education was embedded in the life of the family and the community. Parents played a primary role as teachers, with other adults also obligated to correct and help in the upbringing of any child in the community. As the child grew, peer and cohort groups became important as well (Gwanfogbe, 2011).

Children learned through play, interaction with the natural environment, songs, storytelling, games, and other activities. They received both direct and indirect instruction in tasks related to everyday life (hygiene, household chores, animal husbandry, trade, etc) (Gwanfogbe, 2011). In most societies, this education was meant to fit them for adult roles according to gender, but was otherwise holistic rather than specialized—young people "acquire[d] a variety of skills which made them productive in many ways. An individual in most non-literate communities could, therefore, embark on a variety of occupations without difficulty" (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003, p. 433).

Cultural wisdom and heritage were transmitted and intellectual development stimulated through language and the arts as part of celebrations, family and community practices. Forms include songs, stories, poetry, wordplay, tongue-twisters, proverbs, riddles, and simulation games (Gwanfogbe, 2011; Reagan, 2004). Proverbs and riddles, in particular, were vehicles for

developing reasoning and intellectual capacity in children. They could encapsulate wisdom about life, the natural world, and social and cultural phenomena (Reagan, 2004). Word games, rhymes and puzzles were used to teach mathematics. Myths and fables transmitted a society's beliefs and values to the next generation (Reagan, 2004).

We see, therefore, that most African education was informal, rather than formal (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003), and much traditional wisdom and knowledge was passed down via the oral tradition. In refugee communities, many of customs and rhythms of village life have been broken by trauma and displacement. In this context, preserving at least some of the oral wisdom by writing it down may be one way to reclaim some of this heritage. In addition, "helping [children] to learn to use language creatively and effectively" (Reagan, 2004), an important part of the oral tradition, could also be something that is addressed in mother tongue literacy classes.

There has, of course, been much written about the change that occurs in putting something in writing—a danger of 'fixing' (in the sense of making permanent) something that was not meant to be fixed; taking ideas out of the context in which they would normally be discussed and taught; changing the message by changing the medium (Postman, 2006). These are concerns that should be considered when choosing what to include and the context in which to publish.

Culture is not static, and cultural choices may vary over time. Smith & Wisbey (2013) provide a guide which emphasizes dialogue and reflection as a way to help communities consider the role of culture in development. For example, they propose reflecting on questions of identity ("What makes you part of X group?"), on changes that are happening in the community (and whether they undermine or support culture, whether they are positive or not), on physical and cultural assets in the community.

Some of the tools and processes referred to may be useful in considering how to incorporate elements of the oral tradition in literacy programs. Processes include the "U-process," which identifies surface values, then underlying systems, before developing a common plan of action. Tools for reflection include a cultural change timeline, archetype stories, and cultural art forms. Additional guides and toolkits for appreciative inquiry and participation are referenced.

Overall, Smith & Wisbey (2013) advocate an iterative action learning cycle of reflection, planning, and action. They recommend working in the local language, locating dialogues in "sovereign spaces" where people feel comfortable, learning the stories of the community, connecting with existing local decision-making activity, investing in local people (e.g. by providing training in facilitation), and being clear about the facilitator's own beliefs.

When the issue is not just literacy but also formal education, such as in the case of mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE), a holistic view of education should be considered when designing curriulum.

According to *A history of education in Nigeria* (Fafunwa, 1974, cited in Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003 and Reagan, 2004), the seven cardinal goals of African traditional education were to:

- develop the child's latent physical skills
- develop character
- inculcate respect for elders and those in position of authority
- develop intellectual skills
- acquire specific vocational training and a healthy attitude toward honest labor
- develop a sense of belonging and to participate actively in family and community affairs
- understand, appreciate, and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large.

We should note, in particular, the communal goals and nature of African traditional education, in contrast with the often individualistic perspective of contemporary Western education. Western education often seeks to create citizens of a democratic society, which functions by majority rule rather than by traditional authority, communal governance or consensus (Reagan, 2004). Communal norms are still strong in many African societies today, and a communal lens is indispensable in program planning.

At the same time, a key weakness of African traditional education was an emphasis on fear, obedience and submission, as opposed to innovation, enterprise and the generation of new knowledge. (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003). Educational philosophers such as Dewey in the United States and Tagore in India critiqued Western education of the early 20th century for similar issues (Dewey, 1938; Tagore, 2009). African educators, too, need to grapple with the legacy of their own indigenous and colonial education systems and consider how to both leverage and move beyond them.

Language as a factor in postcolonial literacy and education

Moving beyond is where African languages in education may play an important role. Prah (2001) argues that postcolonial Asian countries have been able to better absorb and resist Western models at the same time because they have their own strong indigenous written cultures and traditions. Because of this, he argues that "literacy for development in Africa must be based on African languages" (p. 126).

In his view, African development must be based on indigenous cultural models, closely tied to the use of local languages—African countries cannot create their own type of development by relying on colonial languages and the accompanying mindsets that come from education in those languages. He speaks eloquently of the potential alienation of the Western-language speaking/acculturated elite, and the educational disconnects that ensue:

> While a Ghanaian or Nigerian graduating student may cope handsomely with University of London examination requirements, what they learn is unable to make a difference in the construction of roads, sewerage systems, or the manufacture of even needles, in the societies in which they live... (p. 136)

Similarly, refugee students desperately want and need official certification in education, while at the same time the education this affords them does not necessarily help them in daily life (Dryden-Peterson, 2017).

Prah (2001) contends that "the African intellectual enterprise should be Africa-centred in the sense that it should deal with African realities informed by African history, language, and culture. Only then can we make a meaningful and worthwhile contribution to a truly universal fund of culture; otherwise we remain mere scholastic appendages of the West" (p. 140).

Fagerberg-Diallo (2001) deals with similar ideas in a more concrete way, describing a community-based movement for Pulaar literacy in West Africa. Pulaar, also known as Fula or Fulani, is a regional language spoken across the Sahel, from Senegal to Sudan.

Factors that contributed to the movement included 'external' factors such as the need to manage new community development projects, 'internal' factors such as social and cultural pride in Pulaar literacy, and 'promoted' factors such as the presence of engaging literature in the language. Historically, there was a small elite who wrote Pulaar in Arabic script, conferring prestige on the idea of Pulaar literacy, but it was not until the late 1960s-early 1970s when an official orthography (using a Roman script) was agreed upon and recognized by governments. Literacy classes began among the diaspora in Paris and Cairo, and were later organized by governments and NGOs in nonformal literacy programs across West Africa. Pulaar publishing groups were also formed in Senegal.

Pulaar literacy was valorized in different contexts due to the existing literacy tradition, reach as a regional language, competition with Wolof in Senegal, as a symbol of opposition to the political regime in Mauritania, demonstrated efficacy as a medium for community-based adult education, competition between Pulaar-speaking zones, emigration, charismatic leaders, engaging books, mobilization via radio, an active language association, and the advent of desktop publishing.

Interestingly, Fagerberg-Diallo (2001) positions mother tongue education as a possible third way, beyond the "linear, progressive, non-repetitive, individualized, cumulative" path of Western education, or the "circular path travelled by one's predecessors... around the circle of eternal wisdom inscribed by God at the beginning of time and of the world" of Islamic-Arabic education (quoting Hale, p. 154).

She sees Pulaar literacy and education not as a line, or a circle, but a spiral—"one goes back to one's roots, in order to make the step forward" (p. 154). In other words, Pulaar literacy is a way to produce "constructive interdependence... the ability to integrate new skills and information into a culturally grounded worldview, both contributing to a dynamic and creative process..." (Kuenzi, 1996, cited in Fagerberg-Diallo, 2001, p. 155).

> ... the type of cultural pride [that Pulaar literacy] instills is a healthy one as those trained in literacy appear to not only have an enhanced sense of their cultural identity, but also

an increased openness to those from the exterior and new ways of doing things. (Kuenzi, 1996, cited in Fagerberg-Diallo, 2001, p. 155).

The Pulaar literacy movement, therefore, was a way in which Pulaar-speaking communities could retain a sense of groundedness which gave them confidence in navigating a changing world.

Incorporation of literacy in oral cultures

As we consider how oral tradition can be integrated in literacy programs, we should also recognize that in most cases, the reverse occurs—literacy is appropriated by or incorporated into oral cultures, which may use literacy in diverse ways.

Rockwell (2001) points out that literacy and orality are not two separate categories, but instead they interact in complex ways. Analyzing the narratives of Cleofas Galicia, a literate weaver and elected local official in Mexico, she notes how in Cleofas' experience, oral discourse was necessary to frame and give power to written documents and vice versa.

Cleofas frequently employed "oral strategies for using written documents… Not only was oral mediation necessary to make papers "talk", it was also the preferred mode of transmission" (p. 235, 242). Cleofas used written documents to legitimize oral arguments that he was making, or conversely, decide not to sign or submit documents in order to keep certain issues in the oral realm.

In this rural Mexican town, "literacy appears a resource to be used, or actively not used, for persuasion, negotiation, litigation, or simply for conversation [and co-construction of oral histories and stories]" (p. 243). Literacy existed alongside and interacted with orality.

Doronila (2001) argues that literate communities are not to be measured by how many individuals are literate, but by the extent to which literacy is integrated into essential community activities. She documents a range of oral and literacy practices in marginal communities in the Philippines, highlighting a disconnect between traditional knowledge and formal schooling. Traditional knowledge that is related to seafaring, construction of rice terraces, herbal lore, weaving, metalwork etc, and the communal rules of society, including governance and leadership, are orally transmitted in local languages. None of this is recognized in formal schooling, which deals with subjects unrelated to daily life in these marginal communities, and uses English or Filipino as the medium of instruction.

Literate practices in these communities are mainly used for dealing with outside elements such as the legal system and markets. There is little to no integration between oral (traditional) and literate (new) knowledge, even in areas where such integration could be useful, such as in agricultural practices. Development efforts, therefore, are impeded, she says:

> Development projects… consistently ignore the community folk's traditional knowledge, wishing to trade it for new or modern knowledge, which then becomes difficult to integrate into the existing system… resulting in the failure of the development project

and the continued inaccessibility of new knowledge and technology to marginal community folk (p. 270-271)

Religious observance appears to be the main sphere where both oral- and literacy-related practices are significant. Another is the political sphere, which includes participation in protests and elections, and community organizing to solve common problems.

In one community, radio is a medium where both oral and literate knowledge and practice are nurtured—news and development programs demand and disseminate literate knowledge; poems, songs and letters read or performed on air promote literate practices, all using a very oral medium. Here, again, we see orality and literacy mixing in different ways.

Emerging literate communities

What these and other examples have in common is that these emerging or neo-literate communities provide a space where both literate and non-literate members can participate and contribute towards a common goal or purpose, often related to tangible change in political situation or livelihood.

These communities encourage literacy skill development because their activities include literate practices and knowledge, for example in community mobilization to defend legal or political rights. Their organizational and communal spaces integrate both oral and literate practices, traditional and new knowledge.

> In such literate communities, the literate practices would have transformed the character of the community activities and the manner in which people think about and engage in these activities... literate practices are integral to community life (Doronila, 2001, p. 258)

Both political standing and practical communication were impetuses for the development of indigenous literacy among the Cherokee in the United States in the 19th century. Sequoyah observed the prestige associated with literacy among the white settlers, and created a writing system that his people quickly adopted for letter-writing, and which was reinforced by use for both Bible translations and for recording of traditional medicinal wisdom. King Ibrahim Njoya of Cameroon, similarly, seeing the power of literacy in other contexts, created a syllabary for his language to help his people become literate, but his efforts were thwarted by French colonists (Gnanadesikan, 2009).

It is worth noting, therefore, that external factors can play a significant role in either inspiring or suppressing emergent literacy in communities; however, at the core, change must come from within—communities need to explore and discover how literacy can be profitably incorporated into their way of life, how it can benefit them, whether by valorizing their identity and traditional knowledge, facilitating political or economic change, or promoting their rights in a wider arena.

Islamic-Arabic education in Africa

The Islamic-Arabic educational heritage also has implications for literacy instruction, particularly in light of the importance of the memorization of the Quran, and a corresponding significance for memorization in learning in general.

According to Boyle (2004, 2014), Quranic schools were traditionally focused on memorizing the sacred text for devotional use, with an objective of 'embodying' it. Memorization is thus considered a first step toward lifelong learning. Quranic schools today often run in parallel to the formal/Western education system. There are also an increasing number of 'integrated' Islamic schools in Nigeria, Mali and other countries, which are part of the public education system and teach other subjects as well (Boyle, 2004; 2014).

Arabic literary culture may also have had some influence in African Muslim societies, with poetry, for example, seen as a prestigious art form. These types of factors should also be taken into consideration in planning and implementing literacy programs in these contexts.

Some implications of Quranic memorization for mother tongue literacy instruction are suggested in the section on "Can children learn to read in two scripts at the same time?".

Recommendations:

- Embrace a celebration of culture and language as an important component of mother tongue literacy programs, rather than just educational attainment. Consider the heritage component when designing curriculum, materials and operations.
- Facilitate reflective dialogue with stakeholders about elements of culture that should be carried forward or that may require transformation, as part of curriculum design and materials development processes.
- Investigate and reflect on the uses of literacy in the current environment (e.g. the social uses of literacy) and consider how the literacy program can build on or support these uses, and whether this should be part of the program objectives.
- Consider the diversity of influences when looking at the educational landscape, and the impact they may have on the literacy program. Look for areas of synergy and dialogue.

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Is literacy development different in adults and children?

Key takeaways:

- Most research on literacy development focuses on children rather than adults. However, it seems like the practical implications for instruction are similar—attention to the five components of reading and getting sufficient practice are essential for both adults and children in learning to read; mastering transcription skills and self-regulation strategies such as planning and revising are instrumental in learning to write.
- Adults come with oral language skills and life experience that should be leveraged in literacy classes. Older adults may face physical and cognitive difficulties in learning to read and write compared to younger adults (under the age of 30). Adults who have had some schooling or exposure to literacy as children are likely to find it easier than those who have had no prior education.
- It can be difficult to find sufficient literacy materials that are suitable for adults in early stages of reading, i.e. texts that are interesting to adults but simple to read.
- Adult literacy programs should take into account learner interests and motivations and often have to make more decisions about program organization since they are usually non-formal education programs. Children's literacy programs need to take into account national curricula, learning environments and family engagement; they often operate as part of official school systems.

Key documents:

- Norman, C. A., & Malicky, G. (1987). Stages in the reading development of adults. *Journal of Reading, 30*(4), 302–307.
- Abadzi, H. (2003). Improving adult literacy outcomes: Lessons from cognitive research for developing countries. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Illustration:

See "Stages of literacy development" and "Stages of adult literacy learning (L1-L2)" above.

Findings:

Research in literacy development seems to focus mostly on children. Chall's (1983) six stages of reading development and the U.S. National Reading Panel's (2000) report both focus on how children learn to read. Research in adult literacy development is rare, and tends to focus more on those with learning disabilities. Since much research is conducted in the U.S. context, it is likely that a significant proportion of low-literacy adults (not counting immigrants or non-English speakers) are those with learning difficulties. There does not appear to be much reading research on adults in developing countries.

But is adult literacy development the same or different than that of children? What implications does this have for adult literacy programs?

Reading development

Chall (1987) believes that adults and children go through similar stages of reading development, and have roughly similar instructional needs at each stage. Both adults and children must learn decoding and word recognition, and move from simpler texts to more complex or abstract texts. This view seems to be the prevailing one, although Norman and Malicky (1987) note that there is some difference of opinion among researchers as to whether adults have an emergent literacy stage or not. While this may depend on context, e.g. in terms of print awareness, it does seem that in terms of writing, at least, most adults would not start with scribble or even perhaps invented spelling, as adults tend to want to 'get things right' and be wary of making mistakes, much more than children. Adults do use pre-phonetic or non-phonetic spellings, however (Greenberg et al., 2002).

One major challenge in adult literacy instruction highlighted by Chall (1987) is a lack of suitable literacy materials for adults in the early stages of reading, what are now known as "high interest, low reading level" books. If such books are not available, she suggests that adults could read children's books to/with children, to gain more practice.

Today, there are more 'high interest, low reading level' books in the English book world. However, it is worthwhile keeping this need in mind in adult literacy programs that are developing materials in other languages.

Chall (1987) notes there is insufficient evidence to indicate whether adults progress faster or slower than children, but emphasizes that individual progress, whether for a child or for an adult, may vary greatly in any case.

Some major advantages that adult learners may bring to a literacy program are: 1) oral language competency, 2) life experience and social skills, and 3) exposure to print and other literacy practices.

According to Kim et al. (2016), oral language skills are foundational for reading development. Adults have had a lifetime of exposure and practice in using oral skills. If the literacy program is in a language they already speak, they should be able to apply these language skills to help in vocabulary and comprehension, two of the five component skills of reading.

Still, adult learners may not use their language skills as much during the early stages of learning to read. Comparing errors made in reading by adults and children at similar reading levels, Norman and Malicky (1987) concluded that adult literacy learners reading at Grade 1-3 levels relied much more heavily on print-based decoding strategies, and only when reading at a Grade 4 level onwards began to integrate their language abilities and prior knowledge into their reading. They proposed two stages, which roughly correspond to "learning to read" (Grades 1-3, "print-based processing"), and "reading to learn" (Grades 4-8, "integrative processing").

However, Lytle (1991) and Foorman (1991) highlight the fact that adult literacy learners bring competencies with them that are often not recognized in literacy programs. "Participants in an

oral subculture, adult learners bring with them collaborative skills that are an unrecognized resource for learning" (Fingeret & Jumro 1989, cited in Foorman, 1991, p. 104). Lytle (1991) advocates for adult learners to have more power to shape the literacy curriculum and manage the program, including applying their nascent skills to program organization. Meanwhile, Norman and Malicky (1987), citing Chall (1987) and Jones (1981), recommend that adults take control particularly in the "reading to learn" phase, after basic print concepts have been absorbed and learners are more concerned about reading for meaning.

Adults' life experience can also be leveraged in literacy programs that seek to promote critical thinking and reflection (Lytle, 1991). The whole point of Freire's literacy circles was, after all, conscientization of the masses. In any type of program, adult learners should be encouraged to apply their practical, social and intellectual skills in class discussions.

In terms of prior exposure to literacy, ethnographic studies, particular of the New Literacy Studies school, have shown that even in low-literacy societies, so-called illiterate adults may be familiar with and participate in everyday reading and writing practices (Openjuru et al. 2016) as well as other literacies, whether in boat carvings or weaving or packaging methods (Maddox & Overa, 2009).

Lytle (1991) cites an ethnographic study where "individuals participate in the same literacy practices with different modes of engagement. Some actually handle the materials while others provide knowledge or expertise, or offer a social perspective" (p. 115-116). This is similar to Doronila's (2001) account of literacy practices in marginalized communities in the Philippines.

At the same time, adults are also likely to face more cognitive challenges than children in literacy learning. Cognitive research has shown how unlike language, literacy is not 'naturally' acquired, and requires formation of new neural pathways (Bender & Larkin, 2009). With less brain elasticity than younger learners, a certain amount of extra effort is likely to be needed for adults to learn to read and write. In fact, adults who have had some schooling seem to learn faster than those who have never had any (Abadzi, 2003), which is consistent with the idea that forming the required pathways is easier at a younger age.

This could account for the difficulty of adults in developing phonological skills. Greenberg et al. (2002) cite studies that found that adult learners tend to have stronger orthographic knowledge (how the word looks) than phonological skills (discerning sounds and matching sounds and symbols). In their own research, comparing 72 adults with 72 children at the same reading grade level, they found that the adults tended to rely more on visual or orthographic strategies than on decoding or phonological strategies in trying to read or spell. However, they note that they had not taken into account how the adults were being taught, as opposed to how the children were being taught. Also, this study was conducted with English readers, whereas it would be interesting to see if the results are similar with Arabic readers, or populations who had acquired literacy in Arabic versus those who acquired literacy in a Roman script language (see section *"Can children learn to read in two scripts?"* for a discussion of Arabic literacy instruction).

Abadzi (2003) highlights the importance of achieving automaticity in reading ("By the end of a literacy course, learners should read a word in about 1-1.5 seconds with about 95 percent accuracy", p. 2), and postulates that adult learners often remain slow readers because they have a shorter working memory, and find it harder to perceive letter patterns, whereas children and youth seem to be able to achieve automaticity more quickly. She recommends more time and practice that focuses on improving speed and accuracy among adult learners.

Comings and Soricone (2005) note that the eyesight of adults in developing countries may decline earlier that of those in industrialized countries, i.e. before the average age of 45. They review studies in industrialized countries that found that adults under the age of 30 were more likely to improve their reading skills, while learning new skills in general becomes more difficult after the age of 20, though building on existing skills becomes easier. They postulate, therefore, that adults under the age of 30 who have had some exposure to text and no disabilities would be the easiest to serve. The next group would be those under 30 with no disabilities who have not had prior exposure (pp. 13-14).

Thus, while we do not have much information on adult reading development, it seems like the practical implications in terms of reading instruction are similar—the five components of reading and sufficient practice are essential for both adults and children. The difference is likely to be in actual instructional activities chosen as well as the materials used.

Writing development

In terms of writing development, Graham and Harris (2000) identify both use of self-regulation strategies and mastery of transcription skills as key aspects of improving writing quality. Reviewing the research, they find that "developing writers become increasing self-regulated with age and schooling" and "teaching self-regulatory strategies improves writing" (pp. 6-8). In addition, self-regulation strategies can also help improve a writer's self-efficacy.

The most common self-regulation strategies studied were planning and revising. Other strategies include setting goals, gathering information, making notes, organizing, self-evaluating, finding a suitable time and place to write, rewarding self for tasks accomplished, asking for help, and selecting writing models to emulate. The emphasis is on establishing a feedback loop where the writer is able to actively monitor his or her progress and make adjustments accordingly, as opposed to a linear process where the writer just puts down one thing after another, with each idea or sentence as the stimulus for the next one.

Similarly, mastery of transcription skills—spelling and handwriting—are seen as essential, since if the writer is struggling with transcription, this may interfere with higher order writing skills such as organization. The studies reviewed showed some correlation between spelling performance or handwriting fluency and writing output or quality in primary school children.

Most of the self-regulation and the transcription studies were with children, though some were also with college students and anecdotal evidence from professional writers was examined. None of the research focused on low-literacy adults. However, the U.S. Teaching Excellence in

Adult Literacy (TEAL) Center endorses teaching self-regulation strategies in writing instruction for adults (TEAL Center, 2011). We can also readily see how transcription difficulties in new learners, whether young or old, can hamper further writing development as the mechanics of the task make the already complex challenge of writing even harder. Graham and Harris (2001) note that even some professional writers prefer to dictate rather than write or type, in order to free themselves of the constraints of transcription.

We can postulate that adults would be receptive to learning self-regulation strategies in writing, as they may already apply some of these to other areas of life. Graham and Harris (2001) observe that self-regulation increases with age and maturity. When teaching writing strategies, therefore, it could be worth exploring ways that adult learners currently or could potentially apply similar strategies in life in their particular context, and drawing explicit correlations with this during the class.

In terms of transcription, older adults in particular may have difficulty with some of the fine motor skills related to writing. Practising with larger characters or using fingers or chalk rather than pens at first could be helpful. Combining the idea of adults relying more heavily on orthographic information (Greenberg et al. 2002) and also requiring more practice to achieve automaticity (Abadzi, 2003) in reading, finding creative ways to provide additional practice in spelling and writing common or productive words may help.

A fun activity that we have used in teacher training to help literacy teachers improve their blackboard writing could perhaps be adapted for learners as well. In daily 'blackboard races', participants are given a few minutes to review the words to be written, then they go to the board (book in hand) and at the signal, write or copy the 4-6 words as quickly and clearly as they can. The fastest participants are acknowledged, but accuracy also counts. All the entries are read from the board together, which provides another opportunity for review. The low-stakes competition element provides a degree of excitement and turns the exercise into a game. One important aspect is that each group of participants should selected to be fairly evenly matched, so that no one person is left working at the board for a long time after the others have finished. The number and difficulty of words can also be adjusted depending on the participants' ability.

Adult vs children's literacy programs

Comparing models of effective adult and children's literacy programs, common elements in both programs are:

- The 5T's of reading instruction (Time, Tongue, Teaching, Test, Texts)
- Oral language (with an emphasis on L1 for children)

In addition, adult programs need to consider the following:

- Aims of the program (functional, livelihoods, life skills, health, accelerated education)
- Program management and administration
- Who pays for the program costs, materials, etc.

- How teachers are recruited and whether/how they are paid
- How often classes are held

There is more flexibility or variation in these elements in adult programs because they tend to be non-formal programs, as opposed to children's programs, which are often part of the official school system.

Children's programs often include the following elements that may not be highlighted in adult programs:

- Learning/classroom environment
- Family and community engagement

In terms of curriculum and instruction, Lytle (1991) recommends attention to adult learners':

- Beliefs – about literacy acquisition, teaching and learning
- Practices – the range of literacy practices in their daily lives
- Processes – ways they manage reading and writing tasks
- Plans – what they want to learn and why, their goals and objectives

Curriculum and instruction for children's programs will likely need to adhere to the official standards and content mandated in the national curriculum. Within that framework, attention should be paid, as far as possible, to prioritize authentic tasks and learning that enables children to relate school to daily life (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). This is particularly important in refugee or marginalized communities where the national curriculum may not be very relevant to immediate realities. In these contexts, creating a bridge between the two will be important.

Recommendations:

- Discuss the advantages and challenges of learning to read and write as an adult with adult learners as part of the literacy class, to identify ways that adult learners can leverage their prior knowledge and skills to assist in their learning and also areas where increased practice and attention is needed. The goal of these discussions would be to help learners have more ownership and control of their learning and for the learning process to be a collaborative one between teacher and learners. Design modules that integrate this orientation across the literacy program and train teachers accordingly.
- As far as possible, have separate classes for older adults with no prior schooling and younger adults who may have prior schooling, so that the pace of the class can be tailored to the needs of the particular learner group.

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Can children learn to read in two scripts at the same time?

Key takeaways:

- Young children (4 to 7-year-olds) are able to grasp that different scripts hold different conventions, and are able to assign the correct convention to the correct script. In literate environments, they may develop these understandings even without formal instruction.
- If children mix languages or scripts, this does not mean they are confused or that there is interference in literacy development. They may be exploring the boundaries and differences between languages, and will come to a better understanding of the conventions as they develop competence. Or they may understand the conventions well but are making errors from switching between systems, seen in the ability to self-correct.
- Literacy development in emergent bilingual/biliterate children may proceed at a different pace from that of native speakers of the school language, and thus their progress may not adhere to what is mandated in official curriculum standards based on monolingual speakers.
- While there is no cognitive barrier to learning two scripts in parallel, the question is whether marginalized children have access to the quality of instruction, environmental print and sociocultural literacy practice necessary to develop literacy competence in either or both scripts and languages.
- Any potential benefits from transfer of literacy skills from one script to another depends on the learners' level of language proficiency and the degree of similarity between the writing systems.

Illustration:

Buckminister and Lo (2002)'s model of foundational vs surface literacy awareness:
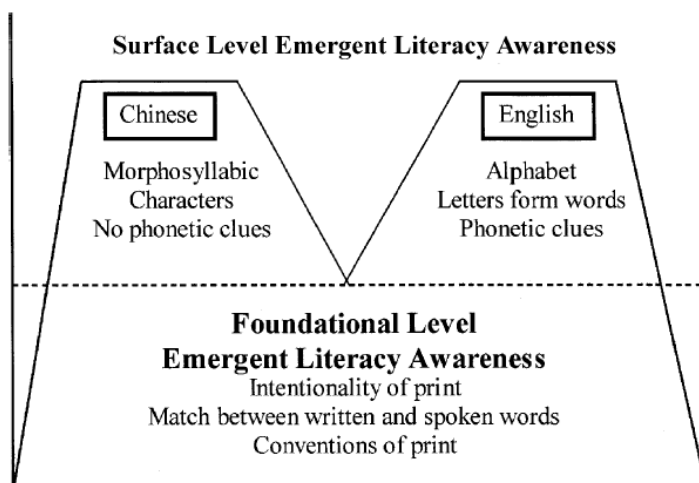
Fig. 14.

Findings:

People from multilingual societies are often literate in more than one language and script. In India, children may learn English, Hindi, and another Indian language or two such as Marathi or Bengali, each with their own unique scripts. In Malaysia, students may learn both Roman script for Malay and English as well as Arabic, Mandarin Chinese or Tamil orthography, according to their ethnic and religious heritage.

Studies on biliteracy development deal with Roman script languages, e.g. English and Spanish, as well as with Roman and non-Roman script languages, e.g. English and Arabic/Hebrew/Farsi. Some deal with alphabetic versus non-alphabetic scripts, e.g. English and Chinese. The key question for the Massalit project is Massalit and Arabic, which approximates English and Arabic or English and Hebrew, where English is L1 and Arabic or Hebrew is a second language.

Case studies of individual children show that developing literacy in different languages in parallel did not result in confusion but that they were able to distinguish between the conventions of different writing systems.

Helvaara (2002) analysed the literacy learning of Ikram, a British Pakistani boy from ages 5-7, who was learning English at school, classical Arabic in Quranic classes at the mosque, and Urdu (which uses an Arabic script) in an after-school class. The Pakistani children in the Urdu class did not necessarily speak Urdu at home, but rather Pahari. She found that Ikram was able to distinguish between the conventions of each learning situation and was gaining literacy skills and meta-linguistic awareness in his non-English classes that were not necessarily acknowledged or put to use in his English class, which privileged cultural knowledge that he did not possess from his own home environment.

Buckwalter and Lo (2002) found that Ming, a 5-year-old boy who had recently moved from a Mandarin Chinese-rich language and literacy environment in Taiwan to an English-rich language and literacy environment in the U.S., had developed 'foundational level awareness' of the intentionality of print, the match between spoken and written words, and the conventions of print, in both languages. Over the course of the study, where researchers conducted and recorded weekly sessions of reading, writing and games in both languages, they found that Ming was able to distinguish, with 'surface level awareness', between the conventions of Chinese and English writing, despite having no prior instruction in Chinese orthography.

Analysing Ming's emergent literacy in two languages, the authors note the significant role of learner attitude, as Ming declared a strong preference for English as his 'favorite language' and a desire to assimilate to his new day-care, as well as the influence of parental beliefs on Ming's beliefs about literacy (e.g. writing must be 'correct').

Bringing it all together, Kenner et al. (2004) followed six 5 to 6-year-old children in London, who were learning English at primary school and Arabic, Chinese or Spanish at a community language school at the same time. All the children had language and literacy-rich environments in the home, with active help from parents and siblings, for both languages. Their team found

that as above, the children were able to identify and distinguish both salient and subtle differences in orthographies, whether the logographic vs alphabetic principle with Chinese, right-to-left directionality and multiple letter forms in Arabic, or differing sound-symbol relationships with Spanish. These understandings were demonstrated during reading and writing activities, and in particular through peer teaching sessions, where the bilingual children were asked to teach one or two classmates to write in Chinese/Arabic/Spanish. The 'students' in these peer groups also showed some alertness to orthographic principles that were emerging in these lessons.

Note that most of these studies followed children in developed countries, where learners had access a favorable environment for literacy development—teachers, parents, siblings, personalized attention, print-rich surroundings and many home literacy practices—very different conditions from those in a refugee camp.

While there appears to be no cognitive barrier to learning to read in multiple scripts at the same time, are there any benefits to be gained? Studies of bilingual and monolingual children show that transfer of literacy skills from one language to another depends largely on the learners' level of language proficiency as well as the similarity between the writing systems.

In a study of 204 monolingual English, bilingual English-Chinese (Cantonese), and monolingual Chinese (Cantonese) children aged 5-6 years old, Bialystock et al. (2005a) found that phonological awareness but not decoding ability was transferred across languages between English and Chinese. Wang et al. (2005) reported similar results in a study of Chinese (Mandarin) immigrant children in Grades 2 and 3, for whom Chinese was L1 and English was L2.

This is consistent with other results indicating phonological awareness as a foundational literacy skill that is transferable even across languages with different writing systems (Kim et al 2016).

Bialystock et al. (2005b) also compared 132 monolingual English, bilingual English-Spanish, English-Hebrew and English-Chinese children in Grade 1, and found that the English-Hebrew and English-Spanish bilinguals showed more advanced phonological awareness and decoding ability than English monolinguals and English-Chinese bilinguals. The additional gains for the Hebrew and Spanish bilinguals compared to the Chinese bilinguals was likely due to the higher similarity between writing systems of Hebrew or Spanish with English.

Are there any specific points of interest regarding literacy development in Arabic?

Al-Ghanem and Kearns (2015) note that Arabic reading instruction has traditionally focused on orthographic skills—letter recognition and whole-word reading—rather than on phonological skills or decoding, in the early grades, while some morphological skills are introduced in later grades. Aside from features of the writing system itself, which includes subtle differences in use of diacritics and multiple letter forms, the diglossic nature of Arabic (where literacy is taught in Modern Standard Arabic, which is phonologically different from the Spoken Arabic Vernacular) could contribute to the emphasis on orthographic rather than phonological skills. Also, the use

of infixes (vowels) to elaborate a root word rather than prefixes and suffixes, may make morphological skills less evident in Arabic, as it makes the root more difficult to discern.

Reviewing five studies on orthographic skills in children from Grades 3-8, the authors conclude that sublexical (letter-level) orthographic skills are correlated with both vowelized and unvowelized word reading, but results are inconclusive for lexical (word-level) orthographic skills. Reviewing nine studies of phonological skills in students from Grades K-12, the authors find that "the importance of phonological skills in appears to be strong *in the early stages of learning to read*, declines as students become more proficient readers, and increases again when they transition to *reading unvowelized words*" (p. 103, emphasis mine). Moreover, poor reading appears to be correlated more with phonological skills than with orthographic skills. In terms of morphological skills, there were insufficient studies to draw conclusions.

Phonological awareness is thus important for Arabic literacy as well as for other languages, despite the lack of explicit instruction in it. At the same time, fluent Arabic readers rely much more on context when reading, as every third word in an unvowelized text may be a homograph (words that look exactly the same) (Abu-Sabia, 1995). This implies that Arabic language proficiency (grammar, vocabulary) is extremely important in becoming a fluent Arabic reader.

In a review of early grade reading research and results in Arabic-speaking countries, Boyle et al. (2014) highlight these very points as important for developing literacy in Arabic: early exposure to Modern Standard Arabic, ability to identify individual sounds in the language and recognize letters (phonemic awareness and phonics), as well as "recognizing clues from word morphology and using sentence context" for vocabulary and comprehension (p. xiv). They note that many of these reading skills are not explicitly taught in the classroom.

These studies help explain our own observations that low-literacy Massalit learners and potential teachers who have been learning to read in Arabic have great difficulty in decoding and phonological awareness activities. Many do not try or expect to be able to decode new words. Both Massalit literacy instruction and teacher training in these contexts, therefore, will need to put a particular emphasis on phonological awareness, and not assume that learners and teachers who have learned to read Arabic are familiar with decoding strategies.

Recommendations:
- Encourage teachers to discuss similarities and differences between languages and writing systems, in language(s) that learners understand. Comparing and contrasting can strengthen metalinguistic awareness (help children understand how languages work), a key cognitive advantage of multilingualism.
- In phonemic awareness lessons, when children offer words associated with certain sounds, accept words in 'other' languages as well as the target language, if they arise.
- In Muslim communities, it may be useful to explicitly draw the contrast between learning objectives in Quranic lessons, where memorization and recitation of the *sacred* text is

prized, and in literacy lessons, where the ability to decode and understand *new* texts is the main objective.

- Emphasize phonological awareness and decoding skills, particularly in Massalit literacy instruction. It may be useful to explain that these skills, while not emphasized in Arabic instruction, are essential in Roman script systems such as Massalit, English and French, and will be useful for Arabic reading as well.
- Ensure there is sufficient environmental print and literacy materials in both languages.
- Conduct literacy instruction in both languages, including explicit instruction of orthographic conventions.
- In general, allow use of the non-target language in class when the objective is to make meaning. (See 'translanguaging')
- Build oral language proficiency in both languages.

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How can we assess literacy development in an accurate and feasible way?

Key takeaways:
- Types of assessment include classroom and program-level assessments, individual and group assessments. Assessment may be used for formative or summative purposes.
- International reading assessments include EGRA (for children) and LAMP (for adults). Reading assessment tasks measure component skills such as phonological awareness, nonword reading, fluency, comprehension, oral vocabulary, and functional literacy.
- Teachers need specific and ongoing training in how to conduct formal and informal assessments and how to use them to inform their practice.
- A graduated or portfolio-style assessment may be useful in enabling teachers and learners to track progress of individual learners.
- Program-level assessments for monitoring and evaluation purposes may be conducted by random sampling to minimize costs.
- Assessment systems may include benchmarks that allow comparison of how learners are doing relative to others at the same level.
- Build capacity and motivation for assessment by training leaders and facilitators to analyze and use assessment data to improve practice.

Key documents:
- *Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Toolkit* (2nd ed.) (2016) RTI International/USAID.
- *Learner Assessment Portfolio (LAP)* - McKay, V. (2015). Measuring and monitoring in the South African *Kha Ri Gude* mass literacy campaign. *International Review of Education*, 61(3), 365–397. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-015-9495-8

Findings:
The purpose of assessment as one of the T's in the 5T's early grade reading framework is to monitor student learning and provide learners with ongoing support (Kim et al. 2016).

Literacy assessments may be carried out:

- Before entering a class—to assign learners to appropriate-level classes
- At the beginning or in the first few weeks of class—to diagnose learner levels and needs, and provide a baseline
- During the class year—to help teacher and learners see where they are
- At the end of class—to see what learners have achieved

Reading assessments may measure (Kim et al., 2016):

- Phonological and phonemic awareness
- Word reading, nonword reading, novel word reading

- Reading fluency
- Reading comprehension
- Oral language vocabulary and listening comprehension (sentence-level, story-level)
- Functional literacy (ability to understand real-world documents)

Writing assessments may measure (Kim et al., 2016):

- Spelling (through dictation)
- Composition (using a rubric which may include idea development, organization, vocabulary and sentence use, spelling, punctuation)
- Productivity (number of words written)

Assessment tasks and tools

Assessments can be divided into informal and formal assessments, where informal assessment is usually more ongoing and used for monitoring student learning and formative purposes, and formal assessments are more standardized, for measuring student achievement and summative purposes.

However, "informal" and "formal" may have different meanings in different contexts. For this text, I believe a more useful distinction would be "classroom" assessments, which are planned and carried out by the class teacher, and "program-level" assessments, which are planned and carried out by people other than the class teacher.

Classroom assessments can be conducted through observation, homework assignments, tests, projects, presentations, and portfolios of student work. The program may provide training and ideas for and recommend or mandate certain types of assessment at the classroom level, but it is the class teacher who ultimately decides the content and timing of the assessments. The class teacher is the one who evaluates the learners. Classroom assessments should involve all learners.

Program-level assessments can be conducted through similar means, though most often they are done through tests or exams. In this case, the content and timing of the assessments are decided by the school or program, and the evaluation is standardized across classes. The class teacher(s) may or may not be involved in the assessment and evaluation process, but in any case, they do not determine the questions or the rubric. Program-level assessments may sometimes be conducted via random sampling rather than with all learners.

Children's literacy assessments

The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) is used with a sampling method as a diagnostic tool for system-wide improvement in reading instruction for children in the early grades of school (Grades 1-3) in developing countries. It assesses skills that are predictive of later reading achievement and those that can be improved through instruction, so that governments and program administrators obtain insight into student performance in different areas and provide support accordingly (RTI International, 2016).

Following are EGRA assessment tasks or sub-tasks, with verbatim descriptions from the *EGRA Toolkit* (RTI International, 2016, pp. 23-28, 41).

Task	Ability	Description	Component
Letter name identification / Letter sound identification	Can the learner identify a letter's name or sound?	Children are given a written list of capital and lowercase letters (and diphthongs or digraphs if appropriate) in random order and asked to articulate either the name or the sound of each.	Phonological awareness (alphabetic knowledge)
Syllable identification	Can the learner identify a syllable sound?	Same as above, except for syllables	Same as above
Nonword reading	Can the learner decode?	Children are given a written list of pseudowords that follow the phonological and spelling rules of the language but are not actual words in the language. Children are asked to read out loud as many of the nonwords as they can, as quickly and carefully as they can.	Phonological awareness (phonics)
Familiar word reading	Can the learner read familiar words?	Same as above, except for grade-level that learners are likely to have seen before	Lexical knowledge / Word recognition
Dictation (letter / word / sentence)	Can the learner identify sounds in isolation or in context?	Listen and write	Alphabetic knowledge / phonics
Sound identification/ discrimination/ segmentation	Can the learner identify phonemes?	Identify/differentiate the onset/rime sounds of words, or the initial or final sounds of words, or segment words into phonemes. The assessor and then the student reads the phonemes aloud.	Phonemic awareness
Listening comprehension	Can the learner understand the meaning of words and of a story they hear?	Assessors read children a short story on a familiar topic and then ask children three to five comprehension questions about what they heard.	Oral language and vocabulary
Oral reading fluency	Can the learner read quickly and accurately?	Children are given a short written passage on a familiar topic and asked to read it out loud "quickly	Fluency

	(Expression is not measured)	but carefully." Number of correct words per minute is calculated.	
Reading comprehension	Can the learner understand what he/she has read?	After reading the passage above, children are asked three to five comprehension questions, both explicit and inferential, that can be answered only by having read the passage.	Comprehension

Four of these are considered 'core' tasks:

1. Listening comprehension
2. Letter identification
3. Nonword reading
4. Oral reading fluency with comprehension

Additional tasks commonly included are the phonemic awareness and familiar word reading tasks. Samples of actual tasks and instructions in different languages are provided in the Toolkit (RTI International, 2016, pp. 42-68).

While EGRA is employed for large-scale standardized assessments, it is a useful resource for assessment tasks that could be used for classroom and program assessments on a local level. These types of tasks are also commonly used in reading research studies around the world.

Other standardized literacy assessments for children include Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), developed by the University of Oregon Center for Teaching and Learning, which measures similar component skills to EGRA (Good & Kaminski, 2002).

Adult literacy assessments

In adult literacy classes, a quick diagnostic assessment can be done at registration, and/or a few weeks into lessons.

- The initial assessment should be quick and simple so as not to discourage new learners—it could be a matter of asking the learner what background (if any) they have in reading and whether they are starting from the beginning, or if they know some letters of the alphabet or words in the primer, what schooling (if any) they have had, and what language(s) they speak and/or read and write in.
- A more specific, formal assessment can be carried out in the first few weeks of class, once learners have had a chance to experience the class and the teacher has a better sense of them as well. Here, a simple test could be administered in order to diagnose specific needs and also (if possible logistically and culturally) to reorganize learners into appropriate-level classes.

If the goal is to compare results from the beginning and end of a class, the assessments used at the beginning and at the end should be at the same level of difficulty.

Some examples of assessment in adult literacy programs around the world are as follows:

- In Mozambique, learners are assessed after course registration with an oral test, and the facilitator also asks learners about topics of interest so they can let them know what materials are available and also note new materials to be developed. At the end of the course, learners take a written test including reading simple words, linking words and images, grammar, constructing words from syllables, writing a short composition (3-5 lines), and simple numeracy (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2016).
- In South Africa, facilitators have to submit a Learner Assessment Portfolio (LAP) for each learner, which consists of 10 literacy tasks and 10 numeracy tasks. The LAP was conceived as a method of continuous assessment for the learner and also as a monitoring tool for the program. Tasks in the LAP booklet provided by the program are to be completed at various points throughout the program. The LAP suggests when learners should be able to complete each activity, but this is flexible to accommodate different paces of learning. Learners are required to repeat the task if they were not successful the first time, and to complete all tasks to complete the program. The LAP is marked by the facilitator, monitored by a supervisor, and submitted to a central office at the end of program. In this way, the facilitator is able to gauge the learner's progress during the class, the supervisor is able to monitor the quality of assessment, and the program is able to measure learner retention and improve overall facilitator accountability. Quality control of the system includes spot checks where an external evaluator administers a writing test to learners and compares it with their LAPs. The LAP is seen as a non-threatening, friendly, integrated and portable assessment method that encourages self-evaluation and self-regulation of learning and motivates adult learners by helping track their progress (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2016; McKay, 2015).

The following chart shows a summary of LAP activities (from McKay, 2015, p. 386):

Learner's marks

Each time the learner successfully completes an activity, enter his or her marks in the space next to the relevant activity number:

Mother tongue							Numeracy
	ACTIVITY NUMBER		Mark	ACTIVITY NUMBER		Mark	
	1	Writing my name		11	Writing numbers		
	2	Filling in a form		12	Counting		
	3	Reading signs and words		13	Numbers and counting		
	4	Reading speed		14	Addition and subtraction		
	5	Telling the time		15	Multiplication and division		
	6	Calendars and dates		16	Fractions and shapes		
	7	Comprehension		17	Compiling and calculating		
	8	Comprehension		18	Reading for information		Total combined mark
	9	Writing a description		19	Measurements and distance		
	10	Writing a letter to the Minister		20	Revision		
	Mother tongue TOTAL out of 50			Numeracy TOTAL out of 50			____ %

Fig. 2 *Kha Ri Gude* mark sheet assessing language and numeracy skills *Source* DBE 2012, p. i

McKay (2015) notes that facilitators faced a number of difficulties in implementing the assessments initially, and required additional support and training to enable them to do so. When working with community volunteers, it is important to provide sufficient training in whatever assessment method is being used. Group meetings where facilitators can do the marking together is often helpful, as well as ongoing support from a supervisor.

With the LAP method, marking criteria were provided in the booklet and a 5-point scale was often used (McKay, 2015, p. 383):

1. Learner requires immediate remedial action or referral
2. Facilitator should give learner more attention in particular sections; learner should re-attempt when more competent
3. Learner has an average level of competence
4. Learner is almost fully competent
5. Learner is fully competent

Rubrics were provided in the booklet itself so that both learner and facilitator could see and understand the assessment criteria, contributing to 'transparent assessment'.

Adult literacy programs are sometimes designed with equivalency to the formal education system in mind. For example, South Africa's *Kha Ri Gude* mass literacy campaign was designed to be equivalent to Grade 3 in the school system, and the assessments are calibrated to national standards (McKay, 2015). In Chad, some programs offer learners the option of sitting for the national primary school certificate exam at the end (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2016).

International adult literacy assessments include the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), and its predecessors the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and the Adult Literacy Life Skills Survey (ALL). However, these surveys were developed and used in high-income OECD countries and may not be as relevant for low-literacy contexts. In the United States, an Adult Literacy Supplemental Assessment (ALSA) was developed specifically for "least literate adults", as a component of the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL).

ALSA tasks use materials such as "simple labels or signs, such as a beverage bottle, food box, or medicine bottle; medium-complexity materials, such as a magazine ad insert, sale flyer, or water bill; and more complex documents, such as a bus schedule or atlas" (NCES, n.d.). Examples of the types of questions include (NCES, n.d.):

- What letter is this?
- Please read this [number] for me.
- Please point to the word "water."
- What does the label say people should do if they take too much of this?
- What kind of information does this section provide?
- Have you ever seen this before? [to determine participants' background knowledge]

The UNESCO Literacy and Assessment Monitoring Programme (LAMP) was developed to measure adult literacy rates in the developing countries and consists of 5 levels of proficiency: unable to complete basic tasks (Level 1), able to complete very simple tasks (Level 2), able to cope with most tasks in daily life (Level 3), and higher order information processing (Levels 4-5).

LAMP has three testing domains: prose reading, document reading, and numeracy.

In the assessment tasks, LAMP measures reading component skills such as letter recognition, familiar word recognition, nonword reading/decoding, sentence processing and simple text processing (UNESCO, 2012; UNESCO, 2017). Tasks were field-tested in different countries, languages and scripts (Roman, Arabic, and Cyrillic).

In prose reading, participants are asked to "identify literal, concrete information" in a short paragraph or in job notices, product labels or vaccination information (Level 1), in longer, more academic texts (Level 2), or in more challenging complex texts (Level 3).

In document reading, participants are asked to identify information in graphs or tables.

In numeracy, participants are asked questions involving basic operations (addition, subtraction), whole numbers and decimals (in money), fractions, multiplication, and data in tables, and related to money, time and weight (UNESCO, 2017).

Adult literacy assessments thus are similar to those for children (in terms of component skills), but may include additional tasks that relate to everyday life.

Writing assessments

Literacy involves not just developing reading but also writing skills. While it is more difficult to assess writing development, a common approach is to use rubrics.

According to Isaacson (1996), rubrics for assessment of writing may consider:

- Fluency, content, conventions, syntax, vocabulary
- Ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation ("6+1 traits")

Fluency in writing refers to the learner's ability to express their thoughts on paper. This may be measured simply counting the number of words written. At least 3 writing samples should be used in the measurement.

Content may include organization, accuracy, creativity, and adherence to discourse patterns.

Conventions may include adherence to standard spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and having legible handwriting.

Syntax development may be assessed in the following levels: sentence fragment; repeating a single pattern; using a variety of simple sentences; first expansions (adding adverbial phrases or

combining sentences), complex sentences (adding subordinate clauses). The level is determined by the type of sentences most often used in the sample.

Isaacson (1996) also includes a number of rubrics for the different items, as well as a rubric based on Clay (1993) which assesses early writing development:

Figure 2. Rating a child's early attempts at writing (Clay, 1993)

Language Level
Record the highest level of linguistic organization used by the child: 1. Alphabetical 2. Word (any recognizable word) 3. Word group (any two-word phrase) 4. Sentence (any simple sentence) 5. Punctuated story (of two or more sentences) 6. Paragraphed story (two themes)
Message Quality
Record the number for the best description on the child's sample: 1. He has a concept of signs (uses letters, invents letters, used punctuation 2. He has a concept that a message is conveyed 3. A message is copied 4. Repetitive use of sentence patterns such as "Here is a…" 5. Attempts to record own ideas 6. Successful composition
Directional Principles
Record the number of the highest rating for which there is no error in the sample of the child's writing: 1. No evidence of directional knowledge 2. Part of the directional pattern is known: start top left, move left to right, or return down left 3. Reversal of the directional pattern (right to left and return down right) 4. Correct directional pattern 5. Correct directional pattern and spaces between words 6. Extensive text without any difficulties of arrangement and spacing of text

Figure 6. Assessment summary sheet

Writing Portfolio Summary	
Student:	Teacher:
Date:	Genre:
Fluency	
Number of Words	
Approximate Time	
Content	
Structure (Beginning, middle, end; story schema or other text structure)	
Cohesion (Adherence to topic; use of key words)	
Originality (Unique point of view; attempts at humor)	
Conventions	
% Correct Word Sentences	
Spelling Problems, punctuation or capitalization errors, grammar, other	
Syntax	
% Fragments	
Level 1 (simple repeated)	
Level 2 (simple varied)	
Level 3 (expansions)	
Level 4 (complex)	
Vocabulary	
Unique/Mature Words	

Figure 5. Diagnostic analysis of conventions

About Sell My Cow

I go to the Ranch at 5:30 in morning. I Ride my Horse with My Dad. get my Cow in the Barn. I Leave My cow and Calf. My DaD gave Shot to Calf. We took My Calf to Downtown. My fReind ride my horse. My horse is Black. My freind have red horse. But I need my cow to Born in feB 1st 1992. I am sell my Cow to calf for town But I have fun in Ranch in town. But I Like my money Back to for sell my Calf. But I need money Back to me. My Dad Siad no money back now Wait to little to me.

Convention	Strengths	Errors
Spelling	Almost all words spelled correctly	Reversals in vowel combinations: ie/ei (friend), ai/ia (said)
Capitalization	Begins all sentences but one with uppercase letters.	Irregular use of uppercase where not required and even in middle of words. Month ("feB") not capitalized.
Punctuation	Correct ending punctuation in every sentence but one. Use of colon for time (5:30).	No comma in date (feB 1st 1992) or before the word but in compound sentence.
Grammar	Simple sentences are grammatically correct.	Inconsistent use of past tense. Missing articles ("My DaD gave Shot to Calf.") Problems with gerunds ("am sell"/am selling).
Handwriting	Legible. Good spacing and alignment.	

Kim et al. (2016) also provide a sample rubric for assessing writing in the early grades:

Table 3. Sample rubric of writing quality on a scale of 1–4.

Criteria	1	2	3	4
Idea development	Little evidence of ideas is present.	A sense of a main idea is emerging.	Ideas are overall coherent but lacks focus. Details are found.	Main are coherent, focused, logical, and novel. Details are appropriate.
Organization	No evidence of organizational structure	Emerging evidence of organizational structure	Logical organization but some mishaps	Logical and effective of organization
Vocabulary and sentence use	Little evidence of effect use of vocabulary and sentences (few words and sentences)	Vocabulary words are mostly common words and sentence structure is simple.	Some interesting and descriptive vocabulary words are used, and attempts to use varied sentences are made.	Vocabulary words are precise. Sentence structures are appropriate for expressing the main idea clearly.
Spelling	Few words are spelled correctly.	Many high frequency, one-syllable words tend to be spelled correctly.	Many words are spelled correctly, but many errors are found for multisyllabic words.	Spelling is mostly correct.
Punctuation	Punctuation is not used.	Punctuation use is limited.	Commonly used punctuations are correctly used.	Various punctuations are attempted and used correctly.

They identify 3 major areas of writing assessment: spelling (via dictation), which may be analyzed to identify areas of confusion in sound-letter relationships; composition (writing on a given topic), which is evaluated using a rubric such as the example given; and productivity, or number of words written (equivalent to fluency above).

In addition, they identify 3 principles for assessing writing (p. 41-42):

- establish clear and consistent criteria
- consistently apply evaluation criteria (includes inter-rater reliability)
- use multiple writing samples

Group assessments

Assessments can be on an individual or on a group basis. While individual assessments are necessary to discern each learner's needs and progress, group assessments should also be considered. Teachers of large school classes can use group assignments and peer-to-peer evaluation to provide ongoing feedback to learners while keeping a feasible workload. Group assessments can also be appropriate and enjoyable in communal cultures where people are used to doing things together, and can be a friendlier way to assess learners in adult classes.

Ideas for group reading assessments include:

- Groups practise and present a dramatic reading of a story, with different members taking different roles. Both group and individual feedback is given.
- Groups practise and present a choral reading and receive a group grade or feedback.
- Groups self- and peer-evaluate repeated reading attempts. (Each person receives a score from themselves and their peers).

Ideas for group writing assessments include:

- Groups produce a common product and receive a group grade or feedback
- Groups produce a common product and receive both group (based on product, evaluated by the teacher) and individual (based on effort, evaluated by group members) grades or feedback
- Groups produce a portfolio containing both group and individual products.

Groups can also work together on literacy-related activities such as:

- a scavenger hunt (to find a list of items that are written down)
- reading a story and answering questions about it in writing (they read the story together and discuss answers, then every member must write their own answers or every member takes a turn to write an answer on a group sheet).
- writing letters to other groups and reading letters received from those groups

While group assessments can be used during the class for continuous assessment, there also needs to be individual assessments, particularly at the end of the class. Assessment tasks should

be introduced early on and used periodically throughout the year so that learners are familiar with them and understand how they will be assessed at the end.

Benchmarks

Assessments sometimes come with benchmarks, which provide concrete indications of what learners should achieve at a certain level. These benchmarks are often set based on data about what similar learners have actually achieved at that level (the indicators are 'norm-referenced').

For example, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) guide includes benchmark 'goal' and 'risk' scores for each assessment task for kindergarten to 6th grade (Good & Kaminski, 2002). Learner scores can be compared with the benchmark scores to see if the learner has similar skills to others at that level or if they are behind or ahead, and what level of support they need to improve in that particular skill. The 'risk' score in DIBELS is set at the lowest 20th percentile and the 'goal' score at the 40th percentile. Anyone below the 'risk' score needs intensive support, between 'risk' and 'goal' means strategic support, and above the 'goal' only core support. For instance, at the Grade 1 level, a Letter Naming Fluency score of 0-32 indicates the need for intensive support, 33('risk') to 37 needs strategic support, and 38 ('goal') and above indicates core support (Good & Kaminski, 2014).

An interesting thing about the DIBELS benchmarks is that they are meant to be predictive, i.e. if a student achieves a 'goal' score, that means they have level of skill necessary to move forward to the next level, while if they fail to achieve a 'risk' score, they do not have the necessary skills to continue progressing (Dynamic, 2016; Good & Kaminski, 2014).

A common benchmark for reading fluency is 45 words per minute, though benchmarks need to be adapted to specific languages (McKay, 2015; RTI, 2017). For example, RTI used 50 words per minute as a benchmark for Kiswahili in Tanzania, and 40 or more words per minute for assessments in Uganda (Gove et al., 2017).

Levelled readers may be used to assess learners' reading levels. 'Leveling' of texts is based on measures of text difficulty or 'readability', which may include length of words, number of syllables in a word, frequency of word use, number of words in a sentence, sentence structure, and grammar, vocabulary, content, pictures, etc. There are many different reading level systems in the U.S., including the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Guided Reading/ Benchmark Assessment System by Fountas & Pinnell, and the Lexile Framework for Reading.

Some common formulas for assessing text 'readability' include the Flesch formula and the Fry graph, both of which use average sentence length and average number of syllables per word. Note that these were developed and used primarily for English language texts.

For benchmarks in languages other than English, a recent EGRA research report included the following recommendations (quoted verbatim from RTI, 2017):

- "Language-specific benchmarks should be set, because orthographies and other factors influence the rate of fluency acquisition.

- Fluency assessments need considered approaches to counting words in languages with ambiguous word boundaries including: counting characters or syllables rather than words, focusing on errors in word segmentation rather than accurate word segmentation, or convening experts to adjudicate on the count of words.
- Tentative conclusions from research to date are that oral reading fluency is a good proxy for comprehension across languages but this assumption should be tested when working in new languages
- Fluency should be assessed separately in different language forms—such as with and without diacritics" (pp. 1-2).

Obstacles to assessment

In the field, there are multiple barriers to carrying out assessment activities, as literacy personnel may have limited time or technical ability or the large numbers of learners (in school classes) may be simply overwhelming.

Oxenham (2008) cites practical obstacles to monitoring, evaluation and assessment in adult literacy programs: poorly paid teachers and supervisors have with little time or energy to devote to the extra burden of data collection (including enrolment, attendance and completion rates); supervisors and program officers may lack training in how to analyze and make use of the data; deciding on appropriate measures and methods for literacy assessment in a particular program can be contentious. He notes that personnel may not see the value in evaluation, particularly if "literacy and education are self-evident goods" that do not need additional justification (p. 109).

Options for overcoming these obstacles include: persuading facilitators by demonstrating the usefulness of the data; offering incentives; simplifying procedures to reduce time and labor involved; use sampling methods (p. 111).

While he is not speaking exclusively about literacy assessment, these points hold and should be carefully considered in designing and implementing assessment systems.

Recommendations:
- Develop a **basic assessment system** for both adult and children's programs, which includes a simple diagnostic for adult literacy placement, recommended classroom assessment strategies for adults and children, and a program-level assessment plan.
- Consider a **graduated assessment** system, where the assessment tasks go from easiest to most difficult (e.g. from recognizing pictures to letter recognition to word matching to short phrases to short texts). In this way, the assessment also acts as a levelling or diagnostic tool, and can be used as both a pre- and a post-test. (An adult booklet and a children's booklet could be developed, along with guidelines for administration and use. The adult booklet could be an individual learner's tool—each learner keeps their own booklet across levels, while the children's booklet could be a teacher's tool—the teacher consults the booklet for appropriate assessments to administer in each grade level.)

- Use random **sampling** to carry out more rigorous or detailed program-level assessments with a smaller number of learners. Conduct sampling in a transparent way (e.g. all names are put in a bag, and learners are invited to pick the names in front of everyone).
- Consider using different types of **content** in program-level assessments, e.g. material related to class texts and to contemporary life.
- Train **teachers** in different methods of individual and group assessments that are feasible and useful in their particular contexts and provide ongoing support in using these methods, including conducting group marking sessions.
- Build capacity of literacy program leaders, supervisors and teachers to **analyze** and use assessment data to improve practice.

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How can large classes be effectively managed?

Key takeaways:

- Large class sizes offer a particular challenge to teachers in developing countries, who are called upon to manage many learners with minimal training, few instructional resources, limited classroom space, and often a demanding curriculum.
- Teachers should be trained in proactive strategies for classroom management—setting the physical environment; getting to know students and building rapport; setting class norms, roles and routines; planning and conducting engaging lessons; using collaborative work effectively; as well as reactive strategies—dealing with noise; insubordination; passive learners; distracted learners; bored learners, and more.
- Establishing positive norms and routines is an essential element for effective teaching of large classes, as well as being enthusiastic, planning and conducting lessons with a variety of activities, and using skilled questioning techniques.
- Start with simple strategies and make small changes to see how they work in practice.
- Share "what works"—discuss effective classroom management strategies with fellow teachers. Encourage school leadership to facilitate whole-school strategies and codes of conduct that help maintain discipline in a positive manner.

Key documents:

- *Training for Primary School Teachers in Crisis Contexts* Training Pack (Modules 2-3)
- UNESCO *Practical Tips for Teaching Large Classes* and *Positive Discipline* booklets
- *Teaching Large Classes* training guide by Jason Anderson (2015)

Findings:

Large class sizes and overcrowded classrooms are a reality in both urban and rural contexts in many African countries. Whether due to lack of planning, resources, teachers or classrooms, the situation is unlikely to change in the near future. In our own refugee camp context in Chad, normal primary school class sizes range from 60 to 140 learners per class.

While class size is not necessarily correlated to quality of learning (Benbow et al, 2007; O'Sullivan, 2006), large classes pose significant challenges for teachers, both in terms of teacher stress and motivation (Marais, 2016; Muthusamy, 2015) as well as in quality of instruction. It is essential that teachers in these contexts are provided with training and strategies that can help them successfully manage large numbers, particularly in low-resource conditions where instructional materials as well as space are limited.

The normal way of dealing with large classes is often teacher-centered lecture or recitation (Dachs, 1998; Kewaza, 2013; van den Heever, 2000). In primary schools, where no teacher can really hold kids' attention with a lecture (more often used in higher education), a call-and-response method is sometimes employed, where teachers read the text and the students repeat the lines in a chant, and questions are also often answered in chorus. The recitation or choral

chanting method is useful as it keeps all the children nominally engaged and following the lesson, and requires minimal skills on the part of the teacher. However, while this method helps to keep discipline, it is difficult for the teacher to tell whether and what students are actually learning in class. This method also makes students totally reliant on the teacher for any new knowledge rather than stimulating interest in finding things out for themselves.

Guides for the management of large classes in developing countries today highlight the use of class routines, cooperative/collaborative work, and positive discipline as key management strategies. Those designed for crisis and conflict settings are concerned also with teachers' own wellbeing and children's social-emotional needs (Anderson, 2015; IRC, n.d.; TCCWG, 2016; UNESCO, 2015).

Studies of actual teacher practice in developing countries find that effective teachers establish routines, praise students, demonstrate a high level of energy and enthusiasm, plan and conduct a variety of activities, and actively monitor student work. In an analysis of four 'good' lessons in large classes of 70-100 pupils in Uganda, O'Sullivan (2016) points out that:

> teachers praised the children, asked a lot of questions, explained clearly, scanned the classroom constantly, used eye contact with as many of the children as possible, and used repetition effectively in that it did not degenerate into mindless boring chants.

The teachers had detailed lesson plans and used interactive whole-class strategies such as effective questioning, as well as employing and actively monitoring group and individual work.

Stevenson and Lee (1995) describe effective whole-class instruction of mathematics in Japanese and Chinese schools by highly skilled teachers who employed strategies such as:

- carefully planned lessons which begin by placing the lesson in a *meaningful context* right from the start by *posing a problem, situation or questions* that students are asked to solve
- *any student* could be called on to share or to comment on another student's contribution
- "summarizing, clarifying or elaborating" on student contributions
- using a variety of materials and techniques; energy and enthusiasm in the classroom
- helping individual children outside of class time.

Seatwork was employed in 90% of Japanese lessons, was actively monitored, and required new solutions or approaches, with learners encouraged to experiment, rather than just being routine practice. Chinese lessons were similar, except that they proceeded at a faster pace, with an average of 20 activities per lesson compared to 14 activities in Japanese lessons (and 10 in American lessons).

The researchers point out that the teachers in Japan were able to prepare effective lessons, help students outside of class time, collaborate with other teachers and have more energy for the classroom because they had a lower teaching load and spent more hours outside of class than American teachers in the study. Also, every 40-45 minute class was followed by a rowdy 10-15 minute break, where children let off steam, and were quietly attentive again for the next class.

Some group work was employed using *long-term*, mixed-ability groups working together to solve academic problems, as well as in other school activities such as cleaning and games. Group identity may help motivate slower learners to improve and faster learners to help their group members. However, over 95% of class time in both Japanese and Chinese schools was spent in whole class instruction, using the techniques above to create lively, dynamic lessons.

Although class sizes were much smaller (average of 40 learners) than many African classrooms and cultural factors must be considered as well, the East Asian model may provide helpful strategies, since many African classrooms are heavily teacher-centered, and will likely continue to remain so. In a study of upper primary classes of 50-60 learners in South Africa, Dachs (1998) found that classes were dominated by teacher talk—81% of the time, with 62% of lesson time addressing the whole class, although there was also some interaction with groups of learners (9% of lesson time) as well as with individual learners (10% of lesson time).

On the other end of the spectrum, some authors have looked to the past for inspiration, citing innovations like the system of *petites écoles* in 19th century France, where a highly organized system of peer monitors was used to provide basic literacy and numeracy education to large numbers of children with only one teacher (Nomaye, 2006; Valerien, 1991). Advantages of a peer tutoring system are that tutors are able to consolidate and further their own learning, enjoy a sense of responsibility, and exercise their gifts, while tutees receive personal attention, assistance and assessment. Barriers to using a peer tutoring system include the need to train the tutors, design a curriculum and to manage a system without too much rigidity.

Having sufficient instructional materials can help to alleviate matters in large classes, by avoiding a situation in which students are fighting for textbooks, enabling students to follow along in their own books even if they are far from the board, and facilitating group and individual work (Benbow, 2007; Dachs, 1998; O'Sullivan, 2016).

Finally, class size should not be seen as merely a challenge but also as an opportunity (Renaud et al, 2007)—teachers should seek to leverage the numbers and seek ways in which students can help rather than hinder learning. Learners could benefit from the greater breadth of experience represented by their classmates and from the necessity of helping each other since the teacher cannot give personal attention to everyone. The number of families represented could perhaps also be an advantage in harnessing home and cultural resources for special lessons (parents or older siblings could be invented to help and/or supply materials from home).

Classes in the refugee schools in Chad are organized such that learners stay in their own grade-level classroom. Teachers may be assigned to a particular class and teach most of the subjects for that class, or they may be assigned a particular subject and come and go between classrooms. Recommendations in the next section are for teachers in both categories (assigned by class or by subject), and can be selected according to each teacher's particular context and role and/or for discussion on an all-staff basis, to generate ideas for the whole school.

Recommendations (General):

- Design curricula that are appropriate and achievable within the realities of the classroom (as teaching and learning activities take longer in large classes).
- Design literacy lessons to have a meaningful, engaging opening, and integrate an instruction-practice-feedback model with a variety of activities in each lesson.
- Train teachers specifically in strategies for managing large classes.
- Train teachers in effective whole class instruction and use of peer groups.
- Allow time for teacher preparation and lesson planning, and for teacher collaboration and professional learning, when deploying teachers.
- Provide sufficient instructional materials (textbooks etc) to mitigate the impact of class size and to facilitate group and individual work.
- Leverage class numbers to enliven discussion, generate ideas, maintain discipline, and source materials. Consider how students can act as resources rather than as burdens to each other and to the teacher.

Recommendations (For Teachers):

While large classes can be difficult to manage, they also present an opportunity for students to learn to help each other and to take responsibility for their own learning, rather than always waiting for a teacher. Helping students to become *active, independent learners* will help them not just in school but in other aspects of their lives as well. Encouraging *collaboration* and *respectful interaction* will also prepare them to be members of the community. Basically, you want your class to be a model of how you want the children to behave in the world outside.

Tips and strategies for proactive management of large classes

a) Physical environment and use of space

Many refugee school classrooms have little room to maneuver. Either they are packed with heavy desks (which seat 3-5 learners each) or the learners sit on mats but there are so many learners that there is not much space to move around. In either case, **at a minimum: make sure there is a center aisle**, so that you can move easily from the front to the back of the classroom among the learners. Your near presence is sometimes all that is needed to refocus learners on their work, if they are distracted. Here are some ideas to consider (*Note:* if you are not the sole teacher using a classroom, discuss any potential changes with the other teachers!):

- Remove any unnecessary furniture. Think about the best way to arrange any remaining furniture. Think about the best way to seat your students, so that they can **see** you (and you can see them), they can see the blackboard(s), and they can see each other. What is the best arrangement so that both you and the students can **move around** the classroom with minimum difficulty?
- In a classroom with desks, try to leave space on both sides of the desks so that students can get in and out easily, with minimal disruption.
- In a classroom with mats, think about different configurations of how students could be seated for different types of activities.

- In a classroom with a combination of desks and mats, think about the best arrangement and use of the desks and mats. Which students should sit on mats and which at desks? Could you swap some desks for mats from another classroom or vice versa, to get a suitable proportion and more room to maneuver?
- Try a new arrangement for at least two weeks before deciding whether to change.
- Think about how to brighten up the classroom and make it a welcoming space. Is there a way to display posters and charts and student work? Is there a way to run strings across the room and/or the walls to post things?
- Ask your class students for ideas about the room arrangement and displays. They may have good ideas, and may be more responsible in taking care of the furniture and the displays if they are involved in making them.
- Make a plan for keeping the classroom clean and tidy, with your students and any other teachers who use the classroom. Have a designated trash can, and a simple cleaning routine for students to do at the beginning and end of school each day. If this works well, talk to your principal about making it a schoolwide policy (if there isn't one already).
- Use the outdoors - when would it be good to take the class (or half of the class) outside? Some possibilities include for small group work, for practising writing in the sand, for literacy games, or for language experience activities. Plan where you will situate the outdoors class, and how you will organize the students there. Explain your plan and what you want students to do BEFORE you leave the classroom, so that you do not have to shout outside. Agree on a signal for getting attention and for returning to the classroom.

b) Getting to know students and building rapport

Take advantage of the fact that students trickle in at the beginning of the school year, and that classes start with a smaller number than full capacity. Learn your students' names and establish classroom norms early on so that when other students come later, you have less new names to learn, and the earlier students can help the later ones learn classroom routines. Here are some ways to get to know your students in the first few weeks:

- Rolling introductions. Ask one row of students to introduce themselves each day. In each row, each student has to say their own name and all the names that came before him/her. The next day, one person (teacher or student) should repeat the previous day's row before a new row starts.
- Make a seating chart. Ask students to keep the same seats for the first few weeks. Draw the arrangement of your classroom and write the students' names on the chart according to where they sit. Study the chart and memorize one row or group at a time.
- Make name cards or name tags for students. A name card is a piece of folded card that sits on the desk in front of the student. A name tag can be pinned to the clothes or worn on a string around the neck. An advantage of a name card/tag is that it can help beginning students to learn to read and write their own names.

- Call on students by name during the lesson, with the help of the seating chart or name cards/tags, or by asking the student to state their name before they answer or ask a question. Use students' names as often as possible.
- Use distinguishing features to help you remember students, whether physical or otherwise. For example, ask students to introduce themselves with their name and one thing about themselves (e.g. which block they live in, how many siblings they have, what clan their family is from, what their favorite subject is, etc.)

Even if you cannot remember every single student's name, they will appreciate that you are making the effort. Positive attention from the teacher helps motivate students to learn. Use the students' names as much as possible inside and outside of class throughout the year.

c) Setting class norms, rules and routines

Think of your class as a community and encourage your students to do the same. Establish class norms and expectations from Day One and continue to reinforce them when new students come and throughout the year. Children need structure and to know where the boundaries are, and they can learn to transition smoothly from one activity to another through the use of routines. Children can also assist in the smooth running of the class through the assignment of roles. Here are some ideas for setting class norms and routines:

- Create **class rules** together with your students. Ask them what rules they would like to institute to make the class a conducive and happy place for learning. Display the rules clearly on the board or on a poster and refer to them regularly. Rules should be simple and easy to remember, and there should only be a few of them. Rules should emphasize positive behaviors. Some sample rules include: "Always respect each other; Always listen, Always be helpful" (Sesame Street, 2013). More specific possibilities include: only one person talks at a time; keep your hands and feet to yourself; speak softly. Also, "Be in your seat and get ready to work as soon as you enter the classroom; Listen and keep quiet when someone is talking; Put up your hand if you want to attract the teacher's attention; Respect other people's property" (van den Heever, 2000). Agree with the class on clear **sanctions** for disobeying rules as well. Choose sanctions that reinforce the desired behaviors, e.g. extra cleaning duties if caught littering.
- Be consistent in enforcing rules. Children will always push the boundaries. Don't make rules you can't keep or sanctions you will not execute. Also, be careful that your class rules are consistent with school rules. If possible, create core principles for the whole school together with your principal and fellow teachers.
- Praise students who are **obeying** the rules (don't wait for students to disobey).
- **Routines** are consistent ways of doing something. When children know what to expect, they can do it quickly and smoothly. Consider having routines for: the start and end of the period and/or the day, cleaning, and taking attendance; handing out or turning in materials, getting students' attention, getting students in and out of groups; how learners ask permission (e.g. to go to the bathroom), how they ask and answer questions;

how learners use exercise books, how you use the blackboard, how you assign homework (TCCWG, 2016; Anderson, 2015; UNESCO, 2015)

- Some ideas/examples of routines:
    - Start of a class period: When the teacher enters, students put away all other books and have the relevant book and exercise book and a pen or pencil ready on the table. While the teacher sets up, students open their book to the previous lesson and take turns reading the lesson to each other in pairs.
    - Taking attendance: Use name cards – assign each student a number and a name card, and prepare a pocketboard (made of cloth/rice sack) with numbers. When the student comes to class, they insert their name card into the relevant pocket. The teacher can see at a glance who is present and who is absent. (Idea and illustration from Anderson, 2015).

    Julia's Register Pocketboard

    - Use of the board: Agree with other teachers to have a box in one corner of the board with the day and date, student rotation assignments, and any other consistent information that should not be erased between classes.
    - Getting students' attention. Establish routines such as:
      1) When students hear the signal (a whistle or a simple shaker made with rice or beans), they should stop talking and look to the teacher for instructions.
      2) Say in a normal tone of voice and clap accordingly: "If you can hear me, clap once; if you can hear me, clap twice; if you can hear me clap three times". Each time more students should hear and clap together, until everyone does.
      3) Raise your hand without saying anything. Anyone who notices the raised hand must immediately stop talking and raise theirs also, until everyone has done so. A variation of this is to have one hand and the other hand covering the mouth.
- Students can be assigned a variety of **class roles**, such as: blackboard monitor (erases the board after a lesson); cleanliness team (sweeping, disposing of trash); attendance monitor (takes attendance); attention monitor (takes names of those not paying attention when it is called for); homework monitor (collects or distributes homework); resource monitor (helps distribute or collect library or other materials); group leader (leads a small group) (Anderson, 2015; TCCWG, 2016)
    - In large classes, teams rather than individual monitors will likely be necessary for most of the tasks, both for efficiency and also in case of absences.
    - Devise an appropriate rotation system so that more popular and less popular jobs are fairly distributed. Establish a routine for announcing and posting roles.
    - Give timely and specific recognition for jobs well done.
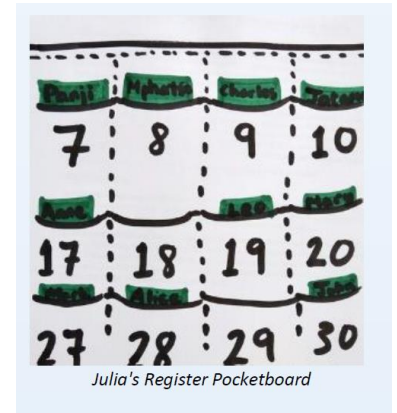
d) Conducting engaging lessons – lesson planning, facilitation, whole class strategies

Most of class time should be spent in instructional (teaching and learning) activities. Conducting well-planned, engaging lessons are a major way to keep children's attention and help them learn.

- o Plan a **variety of activities** during the 50-minute period. Children have short attention spans. Each activity should be no more than 10-12 minutes. Thus, in a one-period class, you should plan for at least 3-5 activities, including reviewing the previous lesson. As a teacher, you need to monitor your students' attention and know when to switch to the next activity so they do not get bored and lose focus or start to fidget. At the same time, you want to provide enough practice time for them to process and consolidate their learning.
- o Explain the **purpose** of each activity and the main thing that you want them to learn through it.
- o It is very difficult for a teacher in large classes to monitor and hold all the students' attention all of the time. Plan for at least half of class time to involve **pair or group or individual work**, so that *all* the children can be actively engaged in the learning or practice activity. A simple model is for 1) the teacher to present new material or give a demonstration to the whole class, 2) have the class work individuals, in pairs or in small groups to consolidate and practice what they have learned, based on the model. The teacher actively monitors the work, then 3) calls the class back together to give feedback, reinforcing certain items before moving on to the next section.

> "Active learning strategies help students understand and internalize new information – we remember 20% of what we hear, 40% of what we see, and 80% of things we do" (TCCWG, 2015 Module 3, p. 31)

- o When teaching the whole class …
  - o Show enthusiasm and energy for the subject.
  - o Speak clearly and slowly enough for students to understand, but fast enough that they do not get bored. Vary your tone and pace of voice.
  - o Be clear and authoritative about where you want learners to focus, whether on the board or on their books, etc. If possible, sometimes teach from different parts of the classroom, not just from the front.
  - o Use the three-step model above (Instruction-Practice-Feedback, from Stevenson & Lee, 1995) instead of long lectures or chanting.
  - o Ask questions to continually assess understanding and to keep students alert
  - o Call on students by name to answer questions.
  - o Make eye contact, use silent gestures or just move nearby to warn a troublesome student, without disrupting the lesson.
  - o Have quick breaks or energizers that you can use to refocus students if their attention is wandering. For example, "Stand up, stretch up, sit down"; "Stand up, shake it out, sit down." Consider some outdoors time for more physical activity.

- When asking a question...
  - Plan meaningful questions *in advance*, and state them clearly. See the Questioning Ladder below (Handout 3.3A in TCCWG, 2015) for different kinds of questions.
  - *Wait* and provide enough time for the learner(s) to think and reply (e.g. count to 10 silently); do not immediately talk or move on to the next question.
  - With discussion questions, you could have learners first discuss them with a partner or in a group, before discussing as a whole class. Or use a version of "Think-Pair-Share", where the student first thinks about the question individually, then talks to a partner, then shares the pair shares to the group.

Level 3 Judge/Create	What is **your opinion** about? What **do you think** will happen next? Can you **create your own** ending to the story?
Level 2 'Why?'	**Why does** water evaporate in the heat? **Why did** the boy run away? **Explain how** you know that that is the answer?
Level 1 'What?'	Can you **name** the planets? Can you **describe** the story? Can you **list** all the prime numbers?

- When a student answers a question...
  - With factual questions, rephrase the question to prompt students if they need help. If the answer is correct, praise the answer and explain why it is correct. If the answer is wrong, give a hint or ask another student to help. Ask the original student to repeat the correct answer.
  - With discussion questions, thank the student for their answer, and highlight what is relevant in it or link it to other contributions. Invite other students to build on the answer. Refer to students' answers when summarizing the discussion.
  - Remember that 'incorrect' answers are also valuable because they help to bring to light false assumptions, and may even lead to new avenues of thought.
  - Ask follow-up questions (examples from TCCWG, 2015):
    - How or why: Ask the students to explain *how they arrived* at the answer
    - Give an example: Ask the students to *offer an example.*
    - *Another way*: Ask the students to solve the same problem using a different set of skills.
  - If a student answers too softly for everyone to hear, instead of asking them to repeat it, ask another student who was able to hear to repeat it. This involves other students as well and encourages students to speak up.
- When selecting students to answer....
  - Choose students from different parts of the room, girls and boys, stronger and weaker students, etc. in an even fashion.
- Use the blackboard wisely...
  - Decide what is important for you to write on the blackboard and what the learners can read in their books. Since every learner in the literacy program is provided with a textbook, not everything needs to be written on the board.
  - To save time, write recurrent items like songs on posters that you can bring to class instead of having to write them on the board.

- If you need to write a lot on the board, plan your lesson so that you do this while learners are doing something productive. Get learners started on their work before you start writing. Do not waste class time by spending a long time writing on the blackboard while learners fidget and get bored.
- Consider allowing advanced learners to write parts of the lesson on the board, while you are monitoring group work. This will make the writing faster as well as give them a sense of achievement and responsibility.

e) Using collaborative work and seat work effectively

- Explain the rationale behind group work and make sure learners understand the objectives and what they should do in that particular session. If the process is unfamiliar, model it in the large group first so that everyone can see clearly what is expected.
- Teach learners *how to work* in small groups, such as how to take turns, how to speak respectfully, how to listen to each other, how to encourage each other, how to resolve conflicts. Do this by explaining, modelling, giving examples, and asking students to give examples.
- Have learners take on *different roles* in groups, such as leader/facilitator, writer/recorder, reader/reporter, timekeeper, encourager, fact-checker, noise monitor etc. For reading groups, roles could include leader/facilitator, accuracy assistant, expression assistant, summarizer, character describer. For writing groups, roles could include leader/facilitator, storyteller, writer, spelling assistant, story editor (checks for inconsistencies, etc.), artist and reader. Explain and model how the roles should be carried out. Rotate roles so that all group members get to do all roles.
- Actively monitor group work—walk around and check in with groups to see that they are on track. Provide assistance where needed, but do not spend too long at any one group.
- Reflect on group processes with the learners.
- Provide positive reinforcement and recognition for group achievements.
- Keep group sizes small to minimize "free riders", and if possible assign roles for each member of the group.
- Use a combination of group and individual assessment.
- Prepare a 'stage two' activity for groups that finish faster than other groups, e.g. taking the activity to the next level, or doing quiet reading from the class library.
- For peer tutoring… (between classmates or with older and younger children)
  - Make sure 'tutors' and 'tutees' know what they are supposed to do.
  - Keep the same tutoring groups so that the 'tutors' get to know and provide individualized help to their 'tutees'.
  - Rotate roles whenever possible, as 'tutors' often learn more (in the process of teaching) than the 'tutees'.
  - Example activities for literacy include paired reading, reciprocal reading, spelling drills, and literacy games.
- For independent work…
  - Make sure learners know what to do
  - Actively circulate, monitor and assist individuals
  - Have a 'stage two' activity ready for those who finish their work quickly

Tips and strategies for reactive management of large classes

a) Dealing with noise
- Establish routines for getting students' attention without shouting (see above).
- During group work...
  - appoint a 'quiet monitor' in each group to keep the noise down.
  - have a pre-determined sign or object that you place at a 'noisy' group to signal them to lower their voices, and remove it when they quiet down.
- Ask learners for ideas of how to keep noise levels down. Add to class rules if appropriate.
- Appoint 'quiet monitors' to raise a sign when the noise level is too high in class.

b) Dealing with insubordination
- Students sometimes act out in order to get attention. Ignore misbehavior when possible, and praise positive behavior instead.
- Give the student the "stern eye" but do not speak.
- Stand close by to the student rather than far away.
- Target-stop-do: Talk to the student quietly by name, identify the behavior to be stopped, tell the student what he is expected to do at that moment, let him make the decision about what he does next.
- Keep calm and be polite. Do not get into fights or confrontations in class. Talk to the student after class if needed.
- Do something unexpected - lower your voice, change your voice, talk to the wall.

(Most items above from UNESCO, 2015a)

c) Engaging passive learners
- Use pair work and "Think-Pair-Share" type protocols so that shy or quiet learners are able to participate.
- Give these learners a particular role or job to involve them in the class or group.
- Integrate topics that are relevant or that students are interested in.

d) Refocusing distracted learners
- Stand close by to the student, or tap them on the shoulder without speaking.
- Ask a direct question.
- Change the activity.

e) Motivating bored learners
- Keep a stock of supplementary activities or materials for more advanced learners who finish their work quickly.
- Ask questions that help learners relate the lesson to their own lives.
- Appoint advanced learners as tutors or mentors to help weaker learners, or ask them to help in distributing materials or to write part of the lesson or answers on the blackboard.

Ideas for class assessment and evaluation
- Decide what is important to focus on when you are assessing or correcting.
- Provide in-class feedback during seat or group work.
- Use oral questions in class to monitor learning.
- Put answers on the board so students can self-correct exercises.
- Design group assignments, e.g. small groups work on and turn in a common piece of writing, and a group grade is awarded.
- Use peer checking. Teach students how to give feedback to each other and to check each other's work in a respectful way. Walk around and help pairs or groups while they do this. At the end, highlight common mistakes or errors for the whole class.
- Teach students how to assess work using a clear rubric that you provide. Do spot checks to see if they are applying it correctly.
- Show samples so students know what is expected.
- Consider different ways that students can show their learning, whether to you, to their classmates, or to their families.

Ideas for supplying class materials
- Have learners help make resources as part of the lesson. For example, in the primer class, learners can make letter cards for word-building games—every time they learn a new letter, they make new cards, so that each learner builds their own set. A group can make word cards for sentence-building games, with each member of the group taking responsibility for certain words, and by putting the words together the group can make sentences.
- Learners and parents can also help to collect resources—early childhood programs have often enlisted the help of community members to collect local items such as bottle caps and corncobs to create manipulatives and counting materials for preschool classes. Annual work days could be held to transform the items into instructional materials.
- Ask learners to bring objects from home to serve as writing prompts. Organize for items of cultural interest to be brought to class by a parent or community member.
- Use rice sacks to make sturdy posters that can be hung around the classroom. The sacks can be cut open and hemmed to prevent fraying. (Idea from Amy Parker).

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Appendix: Sample teaching rubric from Roskos et al. (2009) (not specifically for large classes, but includes many of the elements mentioned)

Active Teaching Rubric

The Active Teaching Rubric is an observation tool. It describes the extent to which a program emphasizes and supports each of the active teaching elements.

Active Teaching Rubric	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The teacher displays **enthusiasm** for the content the students are studying.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The teacher creates a **positive learning environment** (climate)—more than just the absence of negativism and criticism—and a safe and positive space for learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The teacher presents the learners with **challenging but appropriate** learning goals and materials.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. The teacher is **clear and accurate** in the presentation of the material to be learned.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. The students are **engaged** (attentive and motivated) in the instruction.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The teacher organizes time, space, movement, and learner behavior to achieve "**flow**" within a lesson.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. The teacher **moves** around the classroom (rather than remaining at his or her desk or at one place in the classroom).	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. The teacher **invites responses** from students with questions but also opens spaces for students to initiate talk.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. The teacher **listens carefully** to the comments and responses of learners and **builds on** their ideas.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. The teacher **adapts instruction** for special needs learners.	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. The teacher uses a **variety** of instructional methodologies.	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. The teacher **assesses** and uses data to **adapt** teaching and inform future instruction.	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. The teacher uses **instructional aids** effectively to support teaching and learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. The students have opportunities to engage in **discussion** about the content (concepts and skills).	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. The teacher helps the students to **connect the learning** inside of school to the uses of knowledge outside of school.	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. The students have opportunities to write/**author texts** for themselves and the others that support learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Overall Active Teaching Rating				
None	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
1	2	3	4	5

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How can we create a literate environment at school, at home, and in the community?

Key takeaways:
- A literate environment is essential for both motivation and practice for literacy learners. Supporting literacy as a social practice engages and sustains interest, and creating a wide range of accessible literacy materials generate interest and allows learners to practice and improve their reading and writing skills.
- Providing more reading materials is not enough—training teachers, parents, and volunteers in how to use materials, whether as part of classroom instruction or after-school tutoring or home-based literacy, is important to facilitate use.
- Ideas for literate environment at school include: a) enlist the support of school principals and parent associations to help teachers and learners display appropriate print materials and student work in the classroom; b) create and maintain classroom or school libraries which are integrated into classroom instruction; c) offer after-school reading and writing clubs; d) create and maintain a school notice board.
- Ideas for literate environment at home include: a) train parents and older siblings in dialogic reading, paired reading and other home literacy practices; b) train family members in how to access reading materials through a community library, by creating their own materials, and/or organizing a sharing system among neighbors; c) encourage learners to bring home and read materials from school; d) produce affordable print materials for ownership at home.
- Ideas for literate environment in the community include: a) display posters and 'wall newspapers' at strategic places; b) create and maintain a community notice board; c) post signs in relevant languages at key locations; d) set up a regular story-time or reading/writing booth in the market or other neighborhood locations.
- Consult and enlist parents, teachers, school leaders, youth and children to determine what types of materials are of interest and how they can be more accessible to them.
- Both adult and children's literacy classes could provide training in ideas of how to use literacy skills and materials outside of the formal classroom. Class assignments and time could be used to create materials that can be used at home and in the community.

Key documents:
- *Learning together across generations: Guidelines for family literacy and learning programmes* (2017), UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.
- *Out-of-school parental and community involvement interventions: Literature review* (2014), USAID.

Illustration:

Overlapping spheres in literacy (Source: Hanemann et al., 2017, p. 12)
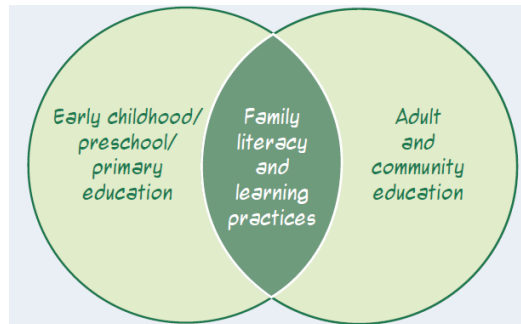
Findings:

Early discussions of the literate environment saw it as a necessary partner of adult literacy programs, focusing on the availability of environmental print and relevant materials that motivate learners to practise their nascent reading skills, so as not to relapse into illiteracy.

A regional brief on Africa from the EFA Global Monitoring Report (2006) proposed a three-pronged approach to moving toward literate societies: improved quality of **children's** schooling, scaling up of youth and **adult literacy** programs and the "development of **environments** conducive to the meaningful use of literacy" (p. 3):

> The presence of *printed and visual materials* in households, neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces and the community encourages individuals to *become* literate and to *integrate* their literacy skills into their everyday lives.

My treatment of this topic similarly focuses on increasing access to and availability of literacy-related materials.

However, it is also worth noting Easton (2014)'s much wider definition, which looks at supply and demand and focuses on *activities* rather than materials:

> a literate environment can be best understood as one that both ***supports*** and ***impels*** the acquisition and use of literate skills (p. 234)

That is, a literate environment creates demand for literacy because it is a necessary or beneficial skill for functioning in that society. Easton (2014) describes how this demand has emerged in low-resource environments in Africa—by creating increased economic and livelihood opportunities (agricultural cooperatives in Niger, microfinance programs in Ethiopia), a need to improve community development and local management (community development and livelihood initiatives in Ghana and Benin, community initiatives to establish community schools in Kenya, grassroots campaigns to register and weigh babies, and to advocate the end of female circumcision in Senegal). There was also demand for literacy for religious or cultural purposes.

He argues that communities must see some real use or benefit of learning to read and write in order for effective learning to take place.

In his view, therefore, a literate environment is not just an abundance of text and print materials in the community, but the *availability of activities and desirable opportunities for which literacy is necessary*.

One way to link this conception with the narrower emphasis on materials is by insisting that any type of literacy program which addresses the literate environment or family literacy or both, must be defined by the larger aims and objectives of the community (Hanemann et al., 2017, pp. 48-50). In fact, community libraries in Nepal and other countries have evolved to become not just a hub for literacy but for other programs related to livelihood, vocational skills and savings (Hanemann & Korlak, 2017). The library functions, in essence, as a community development and learning center, providing opportunities to put literacy skills into practice and creating a demand for literacy at the same time.

Effect of parental literacy and support for children's education

There is ample evidence of a correlation between family engagement or a literate environment and student achievement in literacy and/or schooling, although the exact mechanisms and relationships between them are not well understood.

Parental literacy has been shown to be a significant factor in children's enrolment and achievement in schools in rural India (Chudgar, 2009; Banerji, 2013), as well as in Uganda, Ghana, Nepal, Bangladesh and Mozambique (Lauglo, 2001 and Handa, 2002, cited in Chudgar, 2009).

Chudgar (2009) found that higher parental literacy in the home was correlated with a 9-21% higher probability that children would be enrolled in school and a 10-18% higher probability that they would complete primary school. Also, a higher percentage of literate adults in a village led to more gains in school enrolment and completion than school feeding programs and access to a middle school in the village. Maternal literacy, in particular, was shown to have a significant impact.

(Note that there is a distinction between parental literacy and parental education or schooling, though parental education level is also correlated with children's education level (Azomahou & Yitbarek, 2016)).

In addition, statistical analyses indicate that family and *home literacy culture* may have a significant impact on children's retention and achievement in school (Evans et al., 2010; Evans et al., 2014).

In a study of 27 mostly Western countries, but also including China, Chile and South Africa, Evans et al. (2010) investigated what they called "scholarly culture"—parents' commitment to literacy, as measured by the number of books owned. They found that "children growing up in homes with many books get three years more schooling than children from bookless homes, independent of their parents' education, occupation, and class". Also, having more books at

home had a larger impact in poorer, less-educated families compared to the impact in richer, more well-educated families.

In a later study of 42 countries, Evans et al. (2014) found this effect repeated not just in terms of years of schooling but also for cognitive skills and children's achievement in school, as measured by PISA reading performance scores.

Bracken and Fischel (2008) provide a more fine-grained look at home literacy practices, in their study of 233 preschool children from low-income backgrounds enrolled in the HeadStart program in the U.S.. Parents were surveyed on literacy practices such as how often they read with their child (shared reading), number of minutes spent reading to the child yesterday, number of books in the home for the child's use, how often the child asks to be read to, how much the child enjoys being read to, how often the child looks at books by themselves, how often the parent takes the child to the library, and number of minutes the parent spends reading per day. Results showed that indicators of Parent-Child Reading Interaction and Child Reading Interest were significantly related to children's reading readiness and emergent literacy skills such as vocabulary, story and print concepts, letter knowledge, etc.. Parent Reading Interest did not appear correlated with children's literacy skills, except for vocabulary. In contrast with the Evans et al. (2010, 2014) studies, higher parent education level played a significant predictive role in children's skills and was strongly correlated with all three types of home literacy indicators.

An interesting new development in understanding of family literacy and family learning is an expanded definition of both literacy and family, in the new UNESCO guide on intergenerational learning (Hanemann et al., 2017, p. 13):

> The term 'literacy' does not refer just to the acquisition of reading and writing skills (often also embracing numeracy skills), but also to language, culture and orality.

> Families include children, adolescents and the people who look after them, such as parents, foster parents, step-parents, guardians, grand-parents, aunts and uncles, siblings, cousins and community members.

These understandings are more in line with cultural realities particularly in African communities, where orality is central to learning and successful functioning in culture, where the specific shape of multilingualism in a particular society must be taken into account, and extended family is often as important and engaged as the nuclear family.

Types of interventions and their impacts

In a USAID review of parent and community interventions, Cao et al. (2014) found that family early literacy interventions had mixed impact on children's literacy skills; *community-focused interventions* which promote parental involvement, community libraries, etc., showed little or no impact; *dialogic reading, paired reading and hearing reading* (in a home/family literacy setting) may have had some impact; whereas *tutoring programs* using community volunteers such as

older children or peers, as well as interactive radio and educational television programs, showed a positive impact. In general, more highly structured and intensive programs which taught parents specific skills and techniques seemed to be more productive.

A 2016 Save the Children report highlighted *8 principles for effective literacy action*, including:

- creating print-rich environments and supportive language interactions for young children
- developing a variety of age- and context-appropriate reading materials
- engaging parents and community members in supporting children's language development and reading skills
- ensuring ample opportunities for children to practice their literacy skills, both inside and outside of school.

Activities in programs such as Literacy Boost (Save, 2016; Friedlander & Goldenberg, 2016) and other family and community interventions (Menendez, 2015; Epstein, n.d.; EDC, n.d.) have included:

- **Mothers' literacy classes and individual parental engagement instruction** via home visits (using a "Child and Mother Activities Packet (CHAMP)"). The combination of the classes and the individual engagement interventions were shown to have more impact than either intervention separately (Banerji at al. 2013). This is similar to the findings from projects in Nepal, where combined literacy and life skills classes were shown to be more effective than either literacy or life skills separately (Smith, 1997, cited in Smith et al., 2012).
- **Parental literacy and parenting education** – LABE Uganda, Tostan Senegal (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2016; Tostan Web site)
- **Home reading programs,** where parents are taught specific techniques for reading with children, such as dialogic reading and paired reading, or to encourage children to read, such as hearing reading (Cao et al., 2014a). These could be conceivably taught in workshops and/or via small group sessions in the community.
- **Providing parents with training and guides** around how, when and why to read to your child, as well as other related activities that they could do (Dowd et al., 2015; Terrey & Waters, 2013). Suggested activities include talking, telling stories, singing songs, creating a learning corner in the home, and enrolling children in reading activities. Literate parents are also encouraged to read regularly with their children, make reading materials with the child, display print in the home, sharing reading materials among neighbors, and pointing out environmental print on signs and packages (Dowd et al., 2015; Saeni & Waters, 2013).
- **Tutoring by volunteers,** whether youth (EDC, 2015), peers (Cao et.al, 2014a) or other community members. In a program in Senegal, youth volunteers were trained and assigned groups of students to tutor, using session plan templates; they also made home visits. The program also included summer reading camps and reading competitions for

students (EDC, 2015). Similar activities include assigning 'reading buddies' (paired reading with an older child) and holding reading clubs (led by a trained community volunteer) (Save, 2016). It seems likely that the intensity of the intervention, e.g. how many times per week the sessions occur, and the capacity of the tutor (level of literacy skills and training) would play a role in the effectiveness of the intervention.

- **Providing more literacy materials**, whether by regular text messages with short stories sent to mobile phones, providing book banks or starting community libraries. Note that providing materials in itself does not usually have much impact, and should be paired with training (Kim et al., 2016). One reason why just providing reading materials may not have seen much impact, is that low-literacy communities may not able to derive benefit from these resources without other supports, such as direct reading instruction, trained librarians, etc. Also, community or shared resources may not be as accessible as books owned in the home.

- **Literacy promotion via reading celebrations, competitions and book fairs**. The direct and long-term impact of these is likely to be limited due to the one-off nature of such events. However, they may still have indirect benefits such as creating a more positive image of literacy in the community.

- **Encouraging the community to create their own materials** from available resources, often to be used in schools or in literacy classes – this may include collecting materials for program use, helping to create a more conducive learning environment in the classroom with murals, mats, and posters, as well as toys and manipulatives for younger children, collecting and writing cultural stories, especially in local languages, to be used as local language reading material. Some presentations at the recent CIES conference featured these types of initiatives.

- **Elders tell stories and learners draw pictures** to illustrate them; learners can also write and illustrate the stories that they have heard. In Nepal, children and elders were selected and provided separate orientations (children were trained in writing and illustration, elders discussed and selected stories to tell) before they were brought together. Elders told stories, which were recorded, and the children asked questions. Children produced draft storybooks based on the storytelling session and help from recordings and facilitators; the drafts were then reviewed by the elders before revision and publication (Hanemann & Korlak, 2017, pp. 57-62).

In a review of case studies of dynamic literate environments, Hanemann & Korlak (2017) include initiatives that use ICTs to increase motivation for literacy learning, intergenerational approaches that promote a culture of reading in disadvantaged families, community and mobile libraries to serve local literacy needs and interests, and diverse programs to support a literate culture in prisons.

There have also been programs targeted for the refugee camp environment.

Dajani (2017) presents a case study of We Love Reading, a read-aloud program aiming to promote a love of reading among refugee children. The program was first designed for Syrian refugees in Jordan, and later also implemented in South Sudanese refugee camps in Ethiopia. The program provides volunteers with a 2-day training and a bag of 25 books. Each volunteer establishes a library and a time and place to read to the children in their neighbourhood. Children who attend a reading session are allowed to borrow a book, returning it during the next session. The program has been well-received, with positive responses from children, parents and volunteers. Children's engagement was measured in attendance, inviting friends, requests for books, and investments in buying books. Books were chosen to include themes related to social-emotional needs, and volunteers reported improved behaviors among children, such as less aggression, improved discipline and less fear/shyness.

Meanwhile, Save the Children adapted their Literacy Boost program for the refugee context, and implemented it in South Sudan and Egypt. Mckinney & Keenan (2017) report that the pilot program in South Sudan was initially implemented without the usual community action component, in order to focus on teacher capacity. However, this component (including reading festivals, book banks, peer tutoring) was added in the second year of the program, as community members expressed interest in being more involved in children's learning. In contrast, Syrian parents in Egypt were engaged in their own children's learning, but reluctant to engage in community activities with other parents or school staff. The authors speculate that this could be due to cultural differences or differing views of displacement, but it could also be that the South Sudanese parents saw the community activities as a way to build their own capacity to support their children's education.

In general, all these programs and initiatives can be analyzed in terms of:

- Who is being targeted and why:
    - **Parents of school-going children**, to encourage them to be more involved in their children's learning and in the sustainability and functioning of the school
    - **Parents of young children**, to encourage them to create a conducive home environment for learning and language development
    - **Parents and older siblings who can read**, to encourage them to read to and with younger children
    - **Illiterate parents**, to provide them opportunities to learn how to read, to encourage them to send their children to school, and to engage with their children's learning
    - **Mothers**, given their prime involvement in child development
    - **Youth**, who are more likely to be literate, and have the time and energy to help younger children
    - **Children**, who can provide peer support and learn collaboratively
- Where and how interventions happen:
    - **Workshops** for parents and tutors

- o **Home visits** by a community worker or tutor
- o **Ongoing** activities for learners, e.g. literacy classes and clubs
- o **Event-based** activities for learners, e.g. camps and celebrations
- o **Guides** for parents and tutors
- o **Reading materials** for parents and tutors
- Strategies that are being taught or recommended for literacy in the home:
  - o **Dialogic and paired reading** to develop fluency, comprehension and love for reading
  - o **Singing, talking, storytelling** to develop oral language proficiency
  - o **Hearing reading**, asking questions about schoolwork, providing reading materials and a designated learning corner to develop 'scholarly culture' at home (even if the parent is illiterate)
  - o **Shared writing activities** and displaying student work in the home
- Types of parent and community involvement in the school:
  - o Engagement in parent associations
  - o Contributing to the school environment and infrastructure, through labor and/or materials (for buildings, trees, class materials)
  - o Volunteering as teaching aides or cultural resource people in the classroom
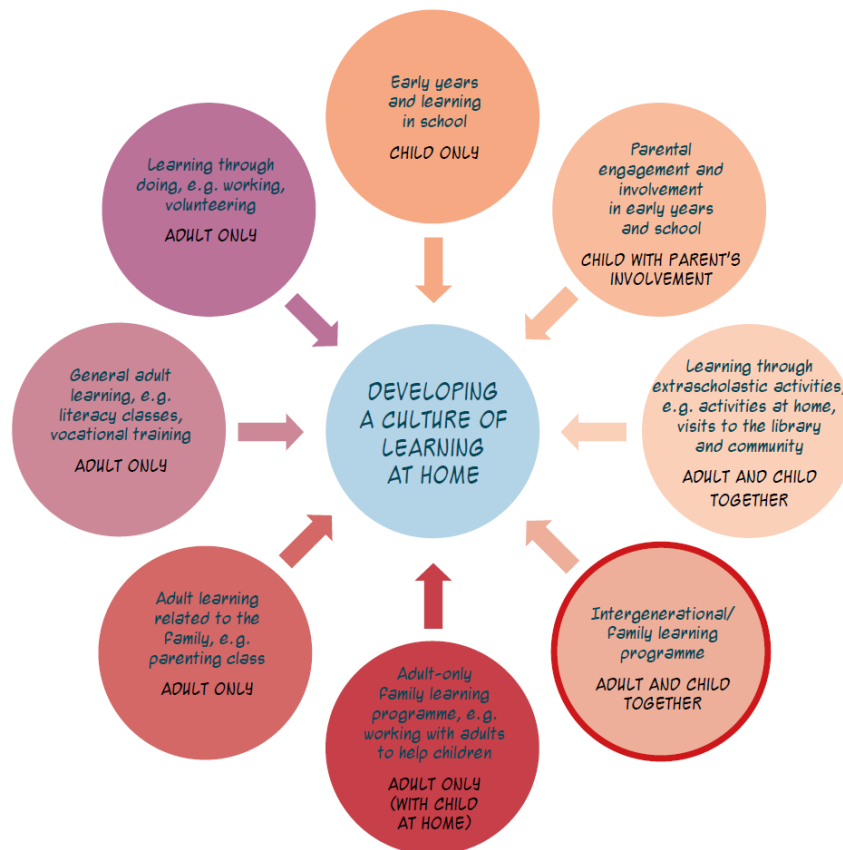
Adapted from *Family Learning Works* (NIACE, 2015, p. 13)

Options for family literacy interventions (Source: Hanemann et al, 2017, p. 139)

Hanemann et al. (2017) provide useful guidelines for developing and implementing intergenerational family literacy programs, including how to do a **needs assessment**. They recommend that such assessment should consider wider policy and socioeconomic contexts—which has implications in content and provision of materials—as well as the literacy and educational needs of the community, and include mapping cultural resources such as elders who would be willing to contribute cultural knowledge to the program.

The guide also highlights **family bonding**, social cohesion and relationship-building as a key aim of family literacy programs, as well as literacy and numeracy skills. It also considers potential obstacles such as parents feeling that they lack time or knowledge to be involved in children's learning, or that it is the school's responsibility to educate their children.

Suggestions for promoting participation include garnering the support of community and opinion leaders, making sure activities are enjoyable and practical, offering 'taster' events, and paying attention to individual learners as well as the group as a whole (pp. 35-40).

Types and quantities of materials needed

Guidelines for children's literacy programs recommend that first graders read 100-125 books per year, and older children 50-75 books per year (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, as cited in Neuman, n.d.); a classroom library should have 5 to 8 books of different genres per student (Roskos et al, 2009). Preparing for a bilingual education program in a minority language group in China, community members aimed to produce "an average of 60 stories per grade for the six grades of primary school and another 120 stories for independent reading" (Malone, 2004, p. 14).

For literacy and adult education programs in minority language communities, Malone (2004) recommends four levels of reading materials: for new readers, for learners becoming fluent readers, for people who are literate in the mother tongue and are now learning to read another language, and for people continuing to read in both languages for a variety of purposes.

A government adult literacy program in Indonesia called "Package A" consisted of 100 booklets of increasing complexity, with supporting posters, leaflets and folders. A learner who completed the first 20 booklets was considered literate, and completing all booklets was considered equivalent to four years of primary school (Oxenham, 2008, p. 85).

Note also that 'functional' primers for adults need to be careful not to be telling people what they already know. It is best to actually consult the target population in developing materials rather than assuming what they already know or do not know (Oxenham, 2008, p. 63)

Types of materials that may be produced thus include:

- 'read aloud' picture books for an adult to read to young children
- levelled books for scaffolded and independent reading
- story cards (single laminated sheets rather than books)
- a regular newsletter
- community notice board and posters

- bilingual books for language learners
- accessible non-fiction books on topics of interest
- jigsaws, letter and picture cards, flashcards, calendars, board games

Lack of available reading materials in local languages in northern Ghana has been a barrier to sustainable adult literacy in the communities—letter writing is not popular, perhaps because it was not practised in class or lack of people to write to; periodic newspapers that appear are not reader-friendly due to the absence of standardized spellings (Goody & Bennett, 2001).

According to McQuillan (1998), the average child growing up in a middle-class family in the United States has been exposed to 1,000 to 1,700 hours of one-on-one picture book reading, while the average child growing up in a low-income family has only been exposed to 25 hours of one-on-one reading.

Hanemann et al. (2017) recommend that materials developed for a family literacy program should allow for self-exploration and independent use by learners; be action-oriented and relate directly to real life experiences; be accessible and reproducible at low-cost; available for learners to take home; attractive and compatible with the culture and context; and flexible enough to be adapted to different teaching and learning styles (pp. 94-95).

Involving community members in creation of materials is a given in minority language programs (Malone, 2004) but is also a useful strategy in low-resource communities where there are few materials.

The Literacy Association of the Solomon Islands (LASI) provides a list of interesting strategies for community-created materials for home literacy, including: each family keeps an exercise book where they write their own stories, and they swap books with their neighbors; families make and collect books for a community library box; have children draw something and tell a story which a literate person writes down for them, and collect the stories; collect life histories from elders in an exercise book; keep a language dictionary notebook; make a family tree, lists of things you want or that you are thankful for, calendars of notable events, name cards of animals and plants (Saeni & Waters, 2013).

Initiatives to increasing the availability materials using new communication technologies include sending short daily stories by SMS, creating smartphone apps with access to e-books, and providing e-reader tablets which are loaded with materials (UNESCO, 2014; Wagner, 2014).

Many of these ICT-based initiatives are still in the pilot phase. Some have had promising results, while others have encountered challenges in access and maintenance of the electronics (Jaffe, 2014; Lovenburg, 2017). It is likely that these types of programs will become more relevant as access to technology and mobile devices increases.

With both the context and current knowledge in mind, an integrative literacy intervention involving both adult and children's literacy programs could have two aims:

- To increase **opportunities for reading and writing practice** for both older and younger learners
- To increase the **supply of reading materials** and environmental print for both older and younger learners

Following are selected activities or interventions that could be carried out by different groups:

a) Activities for youth in the adult literacy program

- Conduct a survey/observation of home literacy practices as part of a needs assessment (Cao et al., 2014b)
- Analyze results of the survey and propose and implement strategies for supporting home literacy practices and developing a literate environment
- Create additional reading materials for older and younger learners—collect cultural knowledge from the older generation, create a newsletter or "wall newspaper", write stories, songs and poems, translate useful information and write it in an accessible manner for children and/or for peer and community outreach
- Learn family literacy strategies for use in the home—dialogic and paired reading, study skills and strategies, oral language development strategies
- Participate as volunteer tutors in a structured reading program aimed at younger children

b) Activities for children in the school literacy program

- Bring home their class work and reading materials provided by or produced in school and talk about them with their parents
- Read and write at home with neighbor children and older siblings
- Ask parents to tell stories and songs that can be used in school writing assignments
- Collect community resources to make literacy materials (e.g. cardboard, bottle caps, etc.)
- Participate in an after-school reading club facilitated by volunteers

c) Activities for school authorities, literacy committees and parent associations

- Start a reading or tutoring program for children (with youth from the adult literacy program and/or more advanced child learners as tutors)
- Recruit parents and youth from the adult literacy program to serve as teacher's assistants in the children's literacy classrooms
- Organize structured workshops/events to train parents in family literacy and student support strategies, with follow-up home visits by trained volunteers or association members
- Organize adult literacy classes specifically for illiterate parents, especially mothers

In short, **family literacy strategies should be taught explicitly as part of the adult literacy program**, and **activities to promote a literate environment** could be included as part of adult classes. Learners in these classes should employ home literacy activities to improve their own skills as well as to help younger children. Also, creating new materials for personal and class use would provide opportunities to hone both reading and writing skills, as well as deepen linguistic, cultural or other relevant knowledge (health, peace-building, etc.). In addition, activities like conducting a needs assessment, implementing an intervention, then monitoring and reflecting on the results, could provide learners with valuable experience in problem-solving and community organizing.

For the school-based children's program, school teachers and principals should also be **trained in family literacy strategies for their own use**, so that they can model the practices in the community, as well as to bring it into their teaching, and encourage children to talk about their studies at home. They could also implement in-class literacy activities that engage parents' linguistic and cultural knowledge.

For school authorities, literacy committees and parent associations, an initial step could be organizing a **workshop on family engagement and literate environment** issues for them and their constituents, and see what further steps these groups would be interested in and able to take.

Glossary of selected home literacy practices

- **Paired reading:** Two readers of similar ability or one stronger and one weaker reader. The readers take turns to read or read aloud together. When reading together, the weaker reader can indicate with a pre-arranged signal that they want to continue reading on their own. If the weaker reader hesitates too long or makes an error, the stronger reader helps. When the difficult word or error is corrected, read together until the weaker reader again indicates they want to read on their own. Readers should praise and encourage each other frequently.
- **Shared reading:** A fluent reader reads aloud to an individual or group of children, but involves them by asking questions. Discuss the title, author, cover illustration. Ask the child(ren) to make predictions about the story at the beginning and along the way. Read with fluency and tone. Ask questions as you go along. After the story is over, discuss with the child(ren). Ask for their comments and reactions. They may also retell the story in their own words. (This is the method that is used with Big Books in a classroom setting, but may be used in a home setting when reading with a child as well).
- **Dialogic reading:** For reading aloud to young or preschool aged children. The adult **prompts** the child to say something about the book, **evaluates** the child's response ("that's right!" or "are you sure? Look at the..."), **expands** on the response, and **repeats** the prompt or the response, or the section. For example:

	Step	What you do	Why you do it	Example
P	Prompt	Ask a simple question to start the conversation. Avoid using questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no"	Gives your child the opportunity to engage in conversation.	What is this?
E	Evaluate	Think about the child's response. Make necessary corrections and praise your child!	Moves along the conversation and teachers child important information.	You're right, it is a caterpillar! Or, it looks like a worm but it's actually a caterpillar.
E	Expand	Follow answers with more questions	Keeps the conversation moving.	What color is the caterpillar? Where did we see a caterpillar?
R	Repeat	Let your child know the answer is correct by repeating it back, or give your child the opportunity to practice new vocabulary.	Re-enforces vocabulary	Yes, it's a green caterpillar. The green caterpillar wiggles. Can you say "wiggles" with me?

Source: https://raisingareaderma.org/program/dialogic-reading/

The prompts can be about the story: **Complete** a phrase or **Recall** details, or about the pictures: **Open-ended questions** (e.g. "Why did…?") or **WH questions**, or about how the story relates to real life: **Distancing** questions.

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What elements are required for sustainable literacy in a community?

Key takeaways:

- **Sustainable literacy** in a community occurs when literacy practices are embedded in individual and community life and there are sufficient opportunities for children and adults to achieve a level of literacy that enables them to participate in these and other practices.
- **Sustainable literacy programs** must be relevant to the community, receive financial and moral support from individuals and organizations within and outside the community, employ appropriate language(s), writing system(s) and curricula, have a system for recruiting, training and supporting program staff, have a system for creating, testing and producing new materials, and continually evaluate all aspects of the program
- **Local leadership** of a community-based literacy program needs to be able to: mobilize the community and outside agencies in support of the program; help assess learning needs; raise and manage funds; provide direction for and make decisions about the program.
- **Funding** for community-based programs needs multiple streams, including the local community, the diaspora, relevant NGOs and government departments.
- **The refugee camp** is a complex and uncertain environment. Building trust and productive relationships with and among the various actors, particularly refugees and host governments, is vital to sustainability of community-based initiatives in this context.
- **Adult literacy classes** that include discussions and training for committee functioning can be an effective first step to building capacity of local committees and associations.

Key documents:

- *Manual for developing literacy and adult education programmes in minority language communities* by Susan Malone, 2004 (UNESCO Bangkok)

Illustration:

The Components of Sustainable Multilingual Education Programs

Secured Funding · Approved Curriculum · Information for Decision Making · Ongoing Evaluations · Community Ownership · Training Staff · Accepted Orthographies · Graded Reading Materials · Supportive Political Environment · Informed and Engaged Partners

Diagram concept by Susan E. Malone, Ph.D. www.sil.org/literacyandlanguage/MLE_Chart.pdf

Source: SIL International (2009)

There are two ways to think about sustainability in the context of literacy programs in low-literacy communities. First, how to enable sustainable literacy, i.e. a literate community. Second, how to facilitate a sustainable program that the community can manage and run by itself.

Sustainable literacy - becoming a literate society

For literacy in a community to be sustainable, literacy practices need to be part of community life, and there need to be opportunities for children and adults to learn to read and write.

Scribner (1984) describes a particularly interesting community, the Vai people of Liberia and Sierra Leone, who have practiced literacy in their own indigenous script for over 150 years, writing letters, keeping diaries, maintaining personal records related to births, deaths and marriages, dowries, accounts and commercial transactions, as well as recording maxims, traditional tales, and clan histories. Literacy in the Vai script has been passed on in a "tutorial fashion" without formal instruction, alongside Arabic and English (p. 78).

Recent ethnographic studies show how informal literacy practices and 'vernacular literacies' may be in use even when formal education is scarce. In a study of Bangladeshi fisherfolk, Maddox and Overa (2009) show how literacy is used in the decoration of canoes, for record-keeping related to credit, sales, and accounting, in business agreements, and for mobile phones. They show how practices and the role of different literacies are changing as 'demand' changes with the changing environment.

Openjuru et al. (2016) describe how men and women in Uganda are engaged in literacy practices related to livelihood (financial records, loans, etc), health (e.g. children's weight, health cards, medications), and religion, and note how much of this was learned informally, from friends, family, neighbors and colleagues, through social interaction, observation and trial-and-error, although some of them also had schooling or attended non-formal education classes.

Doronila (2001) shows how literacy made a difference in the lives and cognitive abilities of new literates and their communities only where their literacy skills were integrated into daily activities and community practices.

These observations are in keeping with historical trends, where writing was first developed in many societies in order to keep lists and records for administrative purposes, and later used for religious purposes and literary pursuits by the elite (Gnanadesikan, 2009). Mass literacy in Europe and North America was driven by Protestant religious convictions and by the spread of formal schools, public and private. In fact, "in most world regions, the spread of mass primary schooling in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries became the motor for rising adult literacy" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 196). Many countries also organized mass literacy campaigns, driven by Communist/Socialist ideologies or post-Independence fervor, though some were more effective than others. Conversely, literacy rates have been adversely affected by prolonged armed conflict, displacement, and in economically disadvantaged or marginalized communities (UNESCO, 2006). Efforts to increase societal literacy often only succeed when there is

institutional support for the development and promotion of written language, and when literacy is tied to social and economic development (Elwert, 2001).

Effective literacy programs thus provide enough instruction and materials for learners to achieve sufficient competence in reading and writing to continue learning and improving on their own. They also promote a literate environment and support literacy as a social practice so that learners are motivated to acquire and have opportunities to practice literacy skills.

Figure 7: Sources of local literate competence
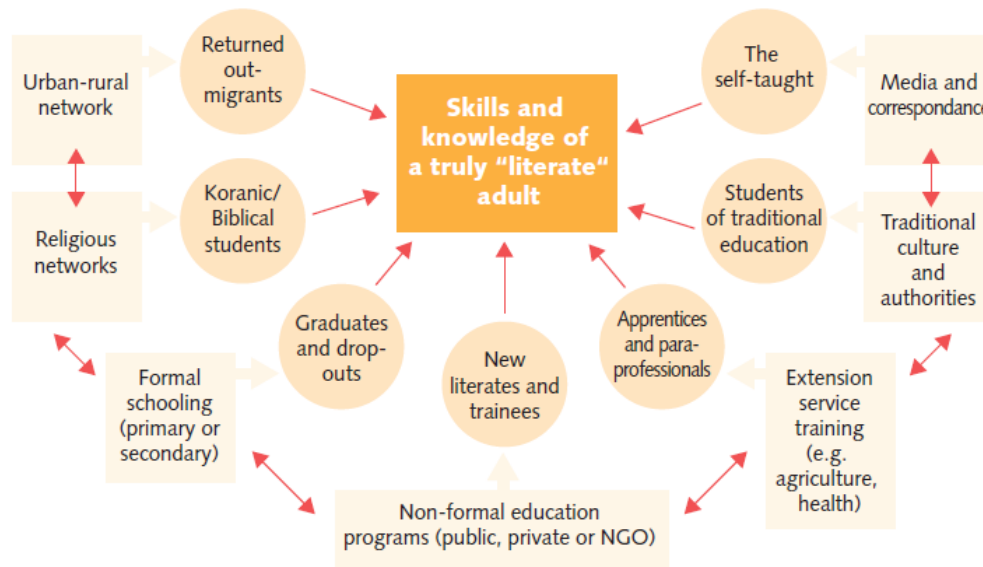
Source: Easton (2014) p. 196

Sustainability of mother tongue literacy programs

Community-based mother tongue literacy programs seek to be sustainable by being led by and responsive to the needs and desires of the community.

According to Malone (2004), mother tongue literacy programs should be relevant to the community, receive support from individuals and organizations within and outside the community, use an appropriate writing system and curriculum, have a system for recruiting, training and supporting program staff, a system for creating, testing and producing new materials, and must continually evaluate all aspects of the program, in order to be sustainable.

Ideally, respected community members are involved in and responsible for the entire process of program design and implementation, from conducting a needs assessment to monitoring and evaluation. External trainers or consultants build relationships with the community and serve as facilitators rather than as decision-makers.

In this model, "the community establishes its own association or cooperative which takes responsibility for the program and for promoting other development activities. The association also develops relationships with agencies (government, NGOs, etc.) outside the community" (Malone, 2004, p. 20).

An effective and sustainable program has the following features (Malone, 2004, p. 111):

- *The community* at large supports the program because it "serve[s] specific needs of the learners and contribute[s] to the general welfare and development of their communities"
- *Instruction* uses the learners' mother tongue, builds on learners' prior knowledge and focuses on issues that are important to them.
- *Materials* are diverse—engaging, appropriate to reading levels, available in mother tongue and official languages, are available to learners and to the general community.
- *Resources* in the community have been identified and harnessed,
- The program is *linked* to other formal, nonformal and informal education opportunities to promote continued learning.

Crucially, in terms of program leadership and support:

- The community has the "*capability and commitment*" to plan, implement and sustain the program.
- The program is *supported* by organizations and agencies both within and outside the community – i.e., there need to be structures that help keep the program going, and links to NGOs and/or government agencies that provide support to the program.

It is clear, therefore, that program leadership needs both *capacity* and *motivation* to sustain a program, and that the community needs both internal structures and external help and support to keep things going.

In terms of capacity, what does program leadership need to be able to do? How can program leadership and community motivation be sustained?

Trudell (2004) describes 3 language committees who manage community-based minority language programs in Cameroon, where leadership is in the hands of local elites—"educators, local authors, members of the traditional authority system and members of the elite who are interested" (p. 200), who constitute the executive committee, while everyone who speaks the language is considered to be also part of the wider committee (or association).

She notes that the inherent authority of the committee members is instrumental to their success, both in terms promoting the program and in sustaining it by mobilizing a network of support from local institutions and authorities, including traditional leaders (e.g. tribal kings), local government and education offices, local church denominations, and members of the elite and diaspora from the language community (who have achieved success in the official language).

The committees actively solicit funding from all these sources, as well as development agencies and local councils, but the uncertainty of available financial resources from year-to-year makes it difficult for the committees to budget and plan for growth, as well as maintain their current activities when the fiscal environment deteriorates.

Funding of community-based programs

The issue of funding for community-based organizations, particularly in low-resource contexts, is often raised, as marginalized communities find it difficult to contribute to educational programs, even when the amount or type of contribution solicited is relatively low. As an example, the Kuo language association in the south of Chad asks each participating village to contribute USD 10 – 20 toward their literacy classes each year, but villages are sometimes unable to do so (Tyler, 2015).

FAPLG (Federation of Associations for the Promotion of the Languages of the Guera), a regional association or umbrella body that supports 15 language committees in the central Guera region of Chad, is a local civil society organization that won a UNESCO prize for literacy in 2013. However, it relies heavily on foreign donors and had to close literacy centers as well as suspend funding to a number of language committees when a major donor dropped out in 2012. They now attempt to operate with 80% of the budget from donors and 20% from local contributions (e.g. a literacy teacher's stipend is 80% from FAPLG and 20% from the local community) and have begun to facilitate income-generating projects so that each literacy center can support its own teacher and provide its own class supplies (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2016). They hope to channel future donor funds into micro-credit for language committees to strengthen their income-generating activities, but how well this will work remains to be seen.

Another common issue in the funding of community-based programs is that while community members may be happy to volunteer their time and services for free or for a small incentive at the start of the program, this is difficult to sustain in the long term (Goody & Bennett, 2001; Hanneman & Scarpino, 2016; Kante, 2005; Rugh & Bossert, 1984; Trudell, 2014; personal observation). Even the most dedicated members of the community often find themselves unable to continue participating at the same level without some kind of tangible return. Given that these are low-resource and often impoverished communities, extended voluntary work may simply be unrealistic for many, particularly when living conditions deteriorate and any time spent volunteering in the literacy program means time lost from essential livelihood activities.

There have been models of village solidarity in terms of planting a field or providing services to support a teacher in the past. However, this type of support is sometimes no longer forthcoming or is insufficient today. An experienced literacy specialist in Chad has advocated for income-generating projects to be initiated in a village right from the beginning, even before a literacy class is established, so that they come to fruition at the right time to help support the program; this has not yet been tried. In any case, developing and managing multiple revenue streams (government, NGO, local) seems to be the only solution and sustainable option for the funding of community-based programs at the moment.

Creating umbrella bodies or networks for support

FAPLG provides training and capacity building for the language committees, coordinators and supervisors, as well as monitoring, evaluation and reporting to fulfil donor requirements. They also conduct internal financial audits of the committees. Language committees are responsible for training their own teachers and managing their own literacy centers, funds, and personnel (Hanemann & Scarpino, 2016).

The establishment of a language committee or association, as in the cases described above, are examples of the traditional model for mother tongue programs in minority languages facilitated by SIL, and is still in use today, although the trend is also towards a cluster approach and forming regional associations (such as FAPLG) and national networks which can advocate for and secure government and other donor funding for their programs.

A combination of these approaches may be suitable for the Massalit literacy program, which has many similar features to the Cameroon programs in terms of implementing both adult literacy and children's classes, as well as producing mother tongue publications. However, due to how the Massalit program developed, each refugee camp has its own committee. There is no single language association or committee which has overall responsibility for the language, although committee leaders have expressed interest in meeting to form an umbrella body. Such a body could perhaps be conceived along the lines of a regional association in the FAPLG model, except that the association would also have authority over language questions.

Otherwise, the association could function similarly to FAPLG as an advocacy and accountability entity, as well as supporting training, while the local committees supervise day-to-day program operations and respond to the needs of their particular communities. Certain association functions or responsibilities could be 'outsourced' to different local committees according to the particular strengths of each site. However, the question of finances and how the expenses of the association would be covered needs to be explored, as well as issues of power, administration, and how to ensure equitable attention and support to each camp or community. The legal framework in which the association would operate also needs to be determined. (If it is composed entirely of Sudanese refugees, it would not be eligible to be registered as an association under Chadian laws, which is one reason for the lack of an association to date).

School management committees and community schools

Further insight into community participation in educational initiatives can be found in the experience of community schools and school management committees in developing countries.

In a review of 21 models of community participation in schools, Russell (2009) shows that there is a great diversity in terms of what committees are responsible for. He classifies these into six "decision areas" and 19 "decision points" in **personnel management** (hiring and firing, salaries, training), **pedagogy** (scheduling, curriculum), **maintenance & infrastructure** (buildings and supplies), **budget** (oversight, mobilizing resources), **planning & policy** (goals, action plans), **students** (monitoring attendance, assisting needy students).

He notes that community schools generally had more decision points than formal schools, and that the most common decision points relate to *resources and accountability*, while the least common are around internal educational questions. (This last is a point of difference with mother tongue literacy programs, which are usually built around community participation in curriculum and materials development). Also, communities may not make the most of opportunities to influence programs due to a *perceived lack of capacity*, highlighting a need for capacity-building for both committees and for community members in general, who are only able to keep committee members accountable if they are aware of their responsibilities.

In terms of the composition of committees, some are oriented toward *power*-sharing among school personnel, parents, community and government, while others are majority parents or community members. Students are sometimes but only rarely involved. Teachers are sometimes concerned about losing power to parents when committees are instituted, a factor which should be taken into consideration in planning for such structures, as lack of buy-in or a strained relationship between teachers and the committee is counter-productive.

Nishimura (2017), in a similar review, puts a much-needed spotlight on the role of *culture* in the success of these committees—organizational culture as well as the sociocultural and political context. She highlights how social or cultural norms regarding obedience to authority, entrenched hierarchical attitudes among both teachers and community members, and a lack of consensus-building, preparation and confidence among community members undermine efforts to encourage communities to take ownership of school management. Also, higher levels of parental education were associated with more community participation, and the structure of the committee itself may favor educated males who are familiar with its formalities.

Both authors comment on how existing *social and political inequities* are often reproduced in committee structures. The issue of 'elite capture' and whether the local elite become gatekeepers who exclude marginalized populations within their own community is important and programs need to discuss how and whether this is the case in their own context. A 'cultural outsider' (Rugh & Bossert, 1998, p. xv) can be a key contributor here, in facilitating such a discussion. Community-based programs need to strike a delicate balance between leveraging the authority and connections of the local elite while ensuring that underrepresented groups are not overlooked.

In practical terms, facilitating community participation involves *time and effort and resources*. Rugh & Bossert (1998) provide an interesting perspective in their review of programs, emphasizing careful planning and consideration of the purposes and desired outcomes of participation, and a "productive link to technical experts" (p. xiv) to facilitate educational quality. They draw a distinction between programs that seek to improve educational service delivery—where technical issues may be more important—and those that seek to increase access and opportunity to education in underreached areas—where community initiative is key.

They also note the difference between programs where community participation contributes as a means of service delivery and where it is considered an end it itself, i.e. in the promotion of democratic values and capacity; the latter is seen as more ambitious and costly. The role of culture is highlighted, and they question approaches that seek to enact drastic behavioral changes that conflict directly with local traditions, rather than allowing behavior to "evolve slowly while building the necessary structures to support change" (p. xvi).

Like others, they observe that more significant participation is observed in situations where there is a *demand* for education, but the government is unable to deliver. They posit three possible models for participation, according to existing availability of services and parent commitment to education. The refugee camp context seems to have elements of all three situations, with perhaps the second (partnership model/high community involvement) and third (demand model/communities request specific services) becoming more relevant as NGOs cut services but remain involved in the camps.

Figure 4. *Factors to consider when establishing a pilot family learning programme. Source: LABE, 2016*

Source: Hanemann et al. (2017), p. 62

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Community participation and sustainability in the refugee camp context

In fact, *community-based participation in the refugee camp context* has its own particularities.

Social cohesion has often been disrupted and may be more difficult to achieve in a refugee camp, particularly given its size—smaller communities tend to be more cohesive and likely to mobilize than larger ones (Boardman, et al., 2011; Zakharia & Bartlett, 2014).

Nevertheless, Smith et al. (2009) recommend that adult literacy programs in conflict-affected areas establish small education committees that have at least similar monitoring functions to those in other development settings, to help sustain programs over time.

The refugee camp in a protracted situation is a complex environment that combines the humanitarian needs and uncertainties of a refugee crisis with the development needs of a quasi-urban environment (large numbers of people in close proximity), even in a rural setting.

Mendenhall (2014) examines sustainability of education delivery in the relief-development transition in conflict-affected countries, and identifies challenges such as operational frameworks and mandates of different organizations, lack of long-term planning, difficulties in handing over and integrating education projects into government systems, and the erratic and unpredictable nature of international funding.

UNHCR (2008) provides checklists and guidance for analyzing refugee community demographics, power structures, resources, interaction with host communities, and culture before displacement. It also provides tips for *establishing contact* with the community, including: meeting leaders; understanding community practices and traditions; meeting informally with people; being aware of 'gatekeepers'; identifying existing community associations to pass messages; developing outreach strategies for certain groups; using languages that everyone understands; and being on time for meetings (p. 44).

In *forging partnerships* with communities, the guide recommends showing genuine interest in people's lives; not making assumptions; explaining who you are and why you are there and reasons for activities; being honest about what you can and cannot do; providing accurate information about resources; discussing follow-up actions; not suggesting solutions immediately but listening to concerns and facilitating a discussion about how to respond; agreeing on ground rules and responsibilities as well as feedback mechanisms.

It suggests *mobilizing* the camp community by mapping community management structures (which may have been disrupted by displacement and/or are being reproduced in the camps) and facilitating community-based responses and solutions. It also recommends taking a human rights-based approach, dealing sensitively with and not avoiding cultural issues, considering marginalized groups and representation, and facilitating community action research and planning. The guide recommends:

- Raising awareness of community members as both "rights-holders" and "duty-bearers"
- Encouraging groups to chart their own course

- Building strong communication skills (for both internal and external audiences)
- Developing action research capacity
- Building awareness-raising and empowerment into all activities
- Fostering strong leadership by training community-selected leaders in literacy, leadership and management
- Tackling internal as well as external injustice through problem-solving and conflict resolution processes
- Forging alliances with and among local groups and associations
- Avoiding early failure by accurately assessing the situation
- Balancing external and internal contributions
- Creating a context for learning through two-way communication and information-sharing. Do random checks to see if everyone has received information, especially those who are house-bound or are a minority in the group.

Overall, the accent is on **taking the time needed to build trust** with and between refugee communities, host communities, host governments, NGOs, donors and other international actors. A similar point is made in Harding & Varadan (2010), who describe how a legal assistance project among refugees from Burma in Thailand helped to forge better relationships between the Thai government and the refugees, resulting in a more holistic legal framework and justice system for issues arising in the camps, to the satisfaction of both parties.

Thus, *host governments* and host communities need to be part of the equation in any discussion of sustainability in a refugee situation. Mendenhall (2014) found a broad consensus from practitioners that engaging both governments and communities in educational programs was important for sustainability, and that validation of refugee education or skills training by the government was important in order for refugees to pursue further educational or employment opportunities. Integration of educational programs into government systems was seen as absolutely necessary.

One practical recommendation in this regard was to use a **'two-pronged approach'**, i.e. to build government capacity by involving government offices in the work from the beginning (while also implementing the program directly). In the case of the Massalit literacy program, there is a built-in interest and ready-made framework for such collaboration with the Ministry of Education, since there is also a significant population of Chadian Massalit villagers in the area, as well as Sudanese Massalit refugees, and the literacy program could be relevant to both.

Summary of case studies

Type of entity	Responsibilities	Funding sources	Notes	Reference
Language committees, Cameroon	• Advocate and generate support for mother tongue literacy in the community	• Traditional leaders • Local government entities	• Committee members draw no salary, are members of the local elite. • Sustained by collaborative	Trudell (2004)

	• Implement adult literacy and schoolchildren's MT education programs • Produce MT publications • Decide on linguistic and orthography questions • Maintain quality control of publications • Recruit, train and supervise MT teachers in schools	• Education authorities • Churches • Elite/Diaspora • National literacy network • NGOs • Community	networks and partnerships	
Regional language association, Chad	• Support implementation of adult literacy, MT pre-school and functional literacy programs • Monitor activities of member associations through visits, data/report collection, financial audits • Train committee members, coordinators, supervisors and teachers • Write funding proposals and report to donors	• INGOs, foreign donors • Government • Community	• Governing Council of representatives from member associations • Executive Board with director, coordinators, technical advisors • Heavy dependence on external aid	Hanemann & Scarpino (2016), Tyler (2015)
School parent associations, Mali	• Ensure educational access, equity and quality in schools • Take notes, read minutes, record and read who is responsible for what • Record finances, track inventory • Monitor and promote school attendance	• INGO	• Illiterate board and community members were offered adult literacy and math classes to help boards function more effectively and increase female participation • Post-literacy class materials included topics on educational management, educational quality, parent association documents and accounting. • Special classes for treasurers (use of calculator) and secretaries (note-	Kante (2005)

			taking) were also held.	
Grassroots school management committees (Harambee), Kenya	• Mobilize resources through fundraising events, etc • Manage difficulties that arise in schools • Organize parent days, PTA meetings, events to bring parents and school together • Raise parents' concerns and demand accountability from school	• Local politicians, businessmen, VIPs, through fundraising events • Community members, via per-capita assessment or voluntary events • Student fees • Government departments, district offices, foreign agencies	• Must be managed by a recognized body, e.g. a church • Composed of local chiefs, teachers, clergy, etc. • Headmaster has most authority in daily operations • Projects are initiated by insiders • High degree of bottom-up mobilization	Rugh & Bossert (1998)
Non-formal school management committees (BRAC), Bangladesh	• Maintain and keep the school clean, free of vandalism • Set school schedules together with parents • Make sure students attend regularly • Monitor teacher attendance • Find a parent substitute if teacher is going to be absent	• Funded by international donors • Careful not to burden parents, who are required only to replace slates, mats and maintain school facilities. Books and schools supplies are provided free	• Committee composed of 3 parents, a community leader and the teacher. • Close support & supervision from a BRAC staff member, who meets weekly with the committee, visits schools twice a month, and holds monthly parent-teacher meetings • High level of contact between parents and school staff	Rugh & Bossert (1998)
Village education committees for girls' schools (CSP), Pakistan	• Request formal contract and recognition from the government • Provide school classroom facilities • Manage instructional materials and supplies • Monitor student and teacher attendance regularly • Follow up on dropouts • Check progress through syllabus monthly	• Funded by international donors • Government support (instructional materials, teacher salaries)	• Committee composed of 5-7 men whose daughters attend the school • Elected by 75% of parents • No members from the same family or related to the teacher • "Ordinary" villagers encouraged to serve; still, tend to be	

	• Ensure school security and smooth operations		prominent and literate • Committee undergoes a 3-month probationary period before govt recognizes the school • Separate women's committee (mostly grandmothers) encourages mothers to send children to school.	
Community schools and centers (FYA), Bolivia	• Community roles vary greatly by location • School as a community center for cultural events and rural development projects • School construction and maintenance • Food and supplies (for boarding schools)	• International donors • Government (teacher salaries, training) • Student fees • Community	• Close relationship with local community and with government	Rugh & Bossert (1998)
Experimental school project steering committees (IMPACT), Philippines	• Public relations with the community • Calm the fears of parents during town hall meetings • Motivate community members to volunteer time and contribute resources	• Government • Local education authorities and school staff (due to insufficient allocation) • Community	• Committee were members of local elite and failed to involve parents in decision-making • Parents were against the instructional model of peer tutoring and proved unable or unwilling to provide material or instructional support.	Rugh & Bossert (1998)

In summary, a community-based literacy program needs the following types of support:

- **Political** – a legal framework for the program to operate; approval and endorsement by relevant authorities.
- **Financial** – funding for program operations, including support for personnel, cost of publications, training, supplies, logistics (communications, transportation), premises, public relations and advocacy

- **Personnel** – technical advisors, administrators/coordinators, supervisors, teachers, trainers, editors, writers, artists, advisory committee/board/council
- **Material** – buildings, instructional materials, class supplies, other equipment

It needs a *governing* body or committee or association comprising committed members with a certain amount of standing in the community, who are able to advocate for the program and forge collaborative partnerships both within the community and with other entities such as local and regional authorities and other actors.

It also needs an *executive* body (which could be the same or different from the governing body) that oversees program implementation, including design and evaluation. The people in this structure should be able to monitor the quality of instruction and publications, as well as handle finances and personnel issues.

Program leadership needs to be able to mobilize the community and outside agencies in support of the program; help assess learning needs; raise and manage funds; provide direction for and make decisions about the program.

Community members need training and support so that they can be confident and effective in these roles, and those who are not part of the leadership are able to keep the leadership accountable and motivated.

A good place to start in capacity-building in low-literacy communities would be to provide adult literacy classes specifically for committee members and potential members, which could help improve committee functioning by enhancing members' literacy and numeracy skills, providing insight into the learner's experience, and facilitating discussion of ideas and concepts related to program aims and operations (Kante, 2005).

Strong local leaders or a 'local champion' is often essential to a community project or local committee's success (Boardman et al., 2001; personal communications). Efforts should be made to identify and empower these potential change agents to lead the program.

Recommendations:
- Find out what literacy practices are present in the community and what motivates or would motivate community members to acquire or improve literacy skills.
- Identify and recruit interested, respected community and educational leaders to be involved in program leadership. Recognize that different types of leaders may be needed at different stages of the program.
- Establish organizational structures for:
  - Overall management of the program:
    - Community mobilization and advocacy
    - Relationships with other organizations
    - Collection, management and disbursal of funds
    - Priorities and direction for the program

- Monitoring and program evaluation
    - Technical aspects of the program:
        - Training and supervision of teachers
        - Development and production of new materials and publications
        - Organization and management of classes and supplies
- Train program leadership in the areas above and implement a coaching or mentoring system to provide ongoing support (particularly in the first 3 years of the committee) and as the program develops. Plan for turnover in personnel and ways to identify and integrate capable new people.
- Discuss ways to improve inclusion and representation in program activities and direction. Possibilities include training program leadership in participatory methods, facilitating meaningful representation among the ranks of leadership, and creating channels that routinely solicit feedback (an activity which can sometimes serve a dual purpose of awareness-raising) from diverse groups of stakeholders.
- Arrange for general community members to learn about and participate in program decision-making, so that they remain interested in and support the program and its leadership, including recognizing their work and keeping them accountable in their responsibilities. Build on existing cultural ideas and traditions such as the work party to organizes community work days and fundraising events (see Harambee example in Rugh & Bossert, 1998).
- Identify ways to motivate and support program leadership and personnel over the long-term.
- Provide adult literacy classes for committee members and potential members, which also address specific issues and skills related to committee work.
- Build capacity to access a range of funding sources both within and outside of the community (including local elites and diaspora), to manage funds in a manner acceptable to these sources, and to report or demonstrate effective use of funds to the community as well as to other entities.
- Find ways for local leadership from different programs or different sites of the same program to meet and exchange ideas.
- Explore ways to divide responsibilities between an umbrella language association and local committees. Which functions should be centralized (e.g. oversight of materials development, curriculum development, training of trainers) and which ones decentralized (e.g. class supervision, teacher training)? Facilitate a series of summits or workshops in which these matters can be discussed and solutions decided upon, tested, reviewed and refined.
- Engage with local educational authorities in efforts to develop the literacy program.

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Conclusion: No easy answers

This Sourcebook attempts to distil useful information that will provide an evidence base which contributes toward more effective practice and improved program outcomes. However, those of us who are practitioners know that there are also multiple challenges to planning and implementation, as well as changing conditions that impinge upon a program.

Wider systemic issues influence the camp and policy environments in which we operate. Changes in the political environment, the security situation, the national economy, can have a direct impact on NGO activity in the camps. Changes in the world economy, global policy trends, and media attention mean changes in funding, which in turn affects food distribution, health and education services, and other camp conditions. Refugees in the camps have virtually no voice or power in the national or international policy arenas that decide their fate. Their opinions may be solicited but do not necessarily carry much weight when balanced against other considerations.

In the realm of education, even if there is a thriving, effective, high quality education system in the refugee camps, whether in non-formal or formal education, what should it teach? As Dryden-Peterson explains in a 2017 article, refugee education is "education for an unknowable future". Will refugees be able to return home to their country of origin? Will they stay and be integrated in the current host country? Will they (usually a small fraction) be resettled in a third (usually Western) country? For many Massalit refugees in Chad, none of these options are currently viable.

Many refugees see education as a pathway to a brighter, more secure future. Where does the education offered in refugee camps really lead? Where should it lead? Where can it lead?

Adult literacy programs have long known that learning is tied to motivation, and responding to the felt needs of learners is essential to success. Children's education has often been viewed more as preparation to be useful members of society, though recent constructivists often cite John Dewey and others to argue that education must be relevant to children's lives now. In view of the uncertain future that refugees face, making literacy and education as relevant as possible to current realities, while preparing for a better tomorrow seems to both make sense as well as be a very tall order.

Both can be achieved only through close collaboration with refugees themselves, as well as with governments and other agencies. Do we really listen to what refugees have to say? What role can and should education play, in the landscape of challenges that refugee face? What systemic changes are needed to create a more just and favorable environment for all? There are no simple solutions.

Reference: Dryden-Peterson, S. (2017). Refugee education: Education for an unknowable future. *Curriculum Inquiry, 47*(1), 14–24.

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