

# Developing Reading Instruction Plans That Work in Large Classes

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## Part 1

### Introduction

Teachers need to make the best use of learners' time for them to become skilled readers through sound instructional decisions and active involvement. In most Namibian government schools, teachers are saddled with large numbers of learners who have different needs and experiences with relation to reading proficiency. Teachers need to develop their own plan of action to promote reading in the classroom environment by, for example, making use of group work to attend to learners' different needs and preferences (Rasinsky & Padak, 2000).

In any large class, there is usually a wide range of literacy skill attainment, and all learners can be involved in the interplay of giving and receiving in the teaching process. Every learner can either be a teacher/example for a struggling

reader or be a learner of a more independent reader (Hubbard, 2008). Such a large class can be seen as akin to a multigrade class where there are different skill levels possibly requiring different teaching strategies.

While doing math grouping strategies for a PhD study, I realised that in rotational workstation grouping, more skills can be covered in one well-prepared learning session. When applying this realisation to reading instruction, more skills, such as identifying high-frequency words, sight words, phonics, spelling, writing, word sorts, working with words, exposure to preparatory reading activities (depending on learners' stage, level of experience, and interaction with literacy events) can be addressed.

Young learners exhibit reading and writing behaviours as a precursor to the acquisition of conventional literacy skills. Many children grow up in an environment where print is valued, but there are also many learners "who begin schooling without having any exposure to reading" (Ramrathan & Mzimela, 2016, p. 1). By applying meaningful group work activities, acceleration, enrichment, and/or learning support strategies can be implemented. Some learners may first need preparatory activities to accelerate print concepts. Preparatory activities include finding differences between two pictures to later differentiate between the different letters and numbers; identifying partial letters; building puzzles; interpreting pictures; matching letters and words; seeing print displayed to develop incidental reading skills, and many others. See Part 2 of this document for more details about preparatory activities.

In this document, various suitable activities and strategies that can be used to promote reading development in large classes are discussed. Teachers can select those strategies that appeal to them and that match their level of experience and interest.

It is a fact that teachers have little time and many subjects to do justice to during the school day. This makes planning and strategising a very important aspect of daily routines. In the junior primary timetable, flexibility is possible. For example, if the teacher devotes one-and-a-half hours to meaningful reading activities one day, the reading aspect can be omitted the next day and that time on the timetable can be allocated to other tasks such as meaningful mathematics knowledge and skills development. There should be no excuse for the poor reading skills of learners. In Namibia, for example, the Ministry of Education prescribes how many hours and minutes should be spent on each subject. Period allocation for each subject is determined by the required time. Teachers may focus on the number of hours and minutes allocated for certain subjects instead of focusing on the subject placement on the timetable to plan sound instruction.

## **Part 2**

### **A Guide for Teachers on Some Meaningful Literacy Activities**

If teachers have an understanding of literacy activities that promote literacy development, it is easier to decide on a group work strategy that will match the literacy activity. Group work strategies with examples, using the activities mentioned below, will be discussed later in this document.

## 2.1 Preparatory Reading (Pre-reading Pre-Alphabet Development)/Emergent Reading

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| <p><b>Visual and auditory skills are important.</b></p> <p>Objective: Students can spot differences and can hear and identify sounds in the environment.</p> | <p><b>Examples of activities that promote visual and auditory skills</b></p> <p>Teachers can have students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>do visual perception activities such as finding the difference between two similar pictures and/or finding an item amongst others.</li> <li>place pictures of a story in linear sequence.</li> <li>recognise familiar print. Identify a shape from other overlapping shapes. Listen to a sentence and identify the picture being described.</li> <li>sequence pictures of a story. Respond to the name whispered.</li> <li>hear rhymes. Close eyes and describe a sequence of events based on hearing.</li> <li>copy images drawn on block grids (spatial orientation).</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Language and vocabulary development in the language of reading is the basis for phonological awareness.</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read frequently to children from good literature; discuss the pictures, characters, storyline and “good” words that were used.</li> <li>Sing songs, say rhymes, dialogues.</li> <li>Create opportunities for talking, such as show and tell: Two/three learners at a time bring something from home on a Friday, show it to class, and tell them about it.</li> <li>Discuss stories or factual books after reading. Retell stories with and without pictures.</li> <li>Talk about the different words and word order in a sentence to see how the language is structured.</li> <li>Do semantic word listing, such as of objects found in a house, kinds of pets. Making meaning is important.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Learners need to develop their concepts of Print</b></p> <p>Objective:<br/>Motivation/Love for reading</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do shared reading from a big book. Talk about the cover page, picture on the cover, what do they think the book will be about, title, how we handle a book, where we start on a page, the first letter of the word, how to identify a word. Have students find words that start with the same letter as their name.</li> <li>Read the text a few times over days and let learners also “read” (pretend reading and writing). Glide finger from left to right and top to bottom to show the direction of reading. Discuss pictures.</li> <li>Make loose letters in capitals and lowercase and keep it in a box. Learners can pair the capital and its lower case letter and they can build words.</li> <li>Provide authentic opportunities to pretend to read, e.g., a birthday card, an easy book where the pictures support what is written.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Signs of emergent literacy development</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners notice environmental print, show interest in books, pretend to read, retell stories using picture cues and predictable phrases they have heard, identify some letters, recognise five to ten familiar words, write letter-like forms, understand directionality when reading, write their names, copy familiar words.</li> </ul>  |

## 2.2 Phonological Awareness Development

**PHONEME AWARENESS; The purpose is to hear, identify, and manipulate individual speech sounds; Phonemic awareness may require various skills, such as, e.g., identifying rhyme, initial sounds, ending sounds, middle sounds, blending sounds, substituting sounds, segmenting compound words, segmenting the**

sounds that make up a short word. **PHONOLOGICAL SKILLS** may include, e.g., alliteration; segmenting words in a sentence, counting the number of words in a sentence;; onset-rime endings to make other words containing the same pattern.

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| <p>Students should learn syllabification then phonemic awareness of the alphabetic system.</p> | <p><b>Activities to promote</b></p> <p>Teachers can have students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• find all items in a picture that have the same initial sound.</li> <li>• paste pictures of items that start with the same sound as their name.</li> <li>• identify words that rhyme; provide a word that rhymes.</li> <li>• clap names in syllables.</li> <li>• play a game in which, for example, students replace the first letter that starts their name with an <i>M</i>. For example, Sara becomes Mara, Tomas becomes Momas, etc.</li> <li>• identify one word out of four that does not rhyme.</li> <li>• discuss names that start with the same letter and that looks the same so that students begin to link phoneme with letter.</li> <li>• learn the alphabet song.</li> <li>• see familiar songs and rhymes in print (incidental reading based on phonemic awareness).</li> <li>• do phonemic awareness activities daily in kindergarten and grade 1, such as the game I Spy using objects in the classroom; stretching out words, e.g., <i>t...r...eee</i> and having students say what word they hear; slowly saying words letter by letter, e.g., <i>c/a/t/</i> slowly and asking which letters they could hear in the word.</li> <li>• let learners sort objects according to the letter they begin with or have in the middle or at the end (short consonant-vowel-consonant, C-V-C, words).</li> <li>• provide writing materials to play with, model reading.</li> </ul> |
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### 2.3 Early Alphabetic Development

Learners are required to do decoding using phonics, finding shorter words in a long word, do syllabification, read certain words on sight, use rime patterns to write new words.

**The Alphabetic principle includes knowing the names of letters and sounds of the letters (phonics). Decoding and encoding skills help with phonological development.**

**Decoding** = grapheme to phoneme

**Encoding** = phoneme to grapheme

### Activities to promote

Teachers can have students:

- learn phonics by using their names.
- use letter stamps and ink pads to make letters and stamp out names.
- listen to stories about the letters and how to write them.
- feel and identify letters made with sandpaper.
- say nonsense syllables with consonant-vowel (C-V, *la, le, li, lo, lu*) and vowel-consonant patterns (V-C, *al, el, ol, ul*).
- sound out C-V-C words with short vowels. Identify the vowel by listening to the vowel in the middle of words.
- learn the alphabet song. Learn the names of letters and the sound they make in words (if applicable in the target language).
- pair loose uppercase and lowercase letters.
- say the names of the letters in their name. Say the sounds of the letters in their name.
- say and clap syllables. Regularly use these skills in writing and reading.
- use rime to create or identify new words.
- identify uppercase and lowercase letters.
- show the relationship between letters and sound (phoneme to grapheme) that create written language (which enables learners to read and spell quickly and accurately).
- play speed games that require students to segment given words or build words with loose letters. For example:

**/t/r/ē/**  
↓ ↓ ↓  
**t r ee**

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| <p><b>Orthographic awareness entails being aware of the patterns and sequences of letters in words.</b></p> | <p><b>Activities to promote</b></p> <p>Teachers can have students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• do activities that combine phonemes and phonics.</li> <li>• Learners can be required to copy letters, use letter patterns, build words.</li> <li>• Learners demonstrate skill in reading input and writing output.</li> <li>• play games with letters, e.g., letter dominoes, matching letters to familiar words, matching words to words, building words with loose letters, making shorter words from long words, guessing a word from the word wall which the teacher is describing (for example, It starts with a c./It has three letters. /You can buy a soda in it.)</li> <li>• say a three-phoneme word given, for example, □□□. Learners put a counter in the box as the word unfolds: <i>d-o-g</i>. Then they write the letters in the boxes. Use familiar words to ensure success and later challenge students more.</li> <li>• match loose words to the words of a model sentence.</li> <li>• build their own words.</li> <li>• sort pictures into boxes that contain a specific letter.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Handwriting skills</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handling pencils, crayons paintbrushes, good sitting posture,</li> <li>• Refine motor control, e.g., cutting with scissors, threading beads, drawing, painting, copying letters, writing name.</li> <li>• Correct formation of letters to promote faster speed later; learn letter formation with stories of songs; spacing between letters, words, and lines;</li> <li>• Watch teacher modelling formation and then practise.</li> </ul>   |

## Part 3

### Launching Literacy Skills: Some Ideas to Trigger Creativity

There are certain strategies that a teacher can use to promote literacy development in young learners. In the following table, we have assembled ideas from several sources (Tompkins, 2007) (Wilson, Hall, Leu, & Kinzer, 2001) (Vacca et al., 2008) (Rasinsky & Padak, 2000).

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| <b>Writing words and sentences</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling at this stage is still phonetic, but it shows understanding of the alphabetic principles.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Word study activities (to promote spelling)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phonic families or rime endings: e.g., picture of a child <b>at</b> home. Read <i>at</i>. Which words end/rhyme with <i>at</i>?</li> <li>• Learners build words with loose letters and write them: <i>bat, fat, hat, cat</i>, etc. (using the particular language of instruction).</li> <li>• Weekly spelling tests of the words.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Word recognition</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are words that learners should recognise instantly and automatically to promote fluency, leaving space in their memory to analyse unfamiliar words. The number of sight words needs to be increased substantially during the course of the year.</li> <li>• This skill requires the learning of words' unique letter sequences. This helps with spelling as well. Each language has high-frequency words that feature in texts and also sight words that should easily be recognised, e.g., <i>days of the week</i> and words that cannot easily be decoded such as <i>could</i> in English.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Word identification</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach word identification strategies, such as phonic analysis (<i>man = m-a-n</i>), using analogies (e.g., other words that have the same onset or rime ending, e.g., <i>m(at), f(at)</i>, syllabic analysis (<i>bet/ter</i>), morpheme analysis (morpheme plus root word), e.g., <i>stay(ed)</i>.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Reading fluency</b>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners should read about 100 words per minute with accuracy. Repeated reading is helpful, e.g., paired/threesome reading in which a more skilled buddy reads first and then the less skilled buddy rereads the text.</li> <li>• The teacher models and requires the phrasing of sentences into meaningful chunks while reading.</li> <li>• Reading to dolls or toys can create meaningful ways to reread texts.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Writing fluency</b>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners need to form letters swiftly and spell words automatically, such as high-frequency words.</li> <li>• Copying from the board has not been found to promote writing fluency; rather, it is a passive process and no active creativity in sentence forming or focusing on spelling is involved. Children should instead write sentences that express their own thoughts.</li> <li>• Develop correct use of punctuation.</li> </ul>  |



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| <p><b>Oral language competence and vocabulary expansion</b></p>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A good way to develop learners' incidental acquisition of a good vocabulary range is when the teacher reads aloud from appropriate texts. Well-written stories with rich texts and figurative language should be selected, e.g., in "The Napping House" by Audrey A. Wood (YouTube: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uhyQqXs-8E">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uhyQqXs-8E</a>; click <b>HERE</b> for the pdf version of the story), the following words for <i>sleeping</i> can be used: <i>dozing, snoring, snoozing, slumbering</i>. Learners use the vocabulary in oral storytelling and develop word banks of words they can read.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Key features of the reading process when reading a new book or text</b></p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Pre-reading:</b> Picture walk or text walk of first few pages; connect to personal experience, world, or other familiar texts; make predictions.</li> <li>2. <b>Reading:</b> Make predictions and summarise as reading proceeds, apply skills and strategies, reread parts to grasp the text.</li> <li>3. <b>Responding:</b> Participate in discussions, draw or write about what was read, do a graphic organiser, show what was comprehended about the story, make inferences.</li> <li>4. <b>Exploring:</b> Reread parts, learn new vocabulary, make connections to personal experiences, the world, and other related texts; word wall activities to use later for spelling and recognition practise purposes.</li> <li>5. <b>Applying:</b> Learners can do projects based on the book, e.g., create a word map of the story using a word from the story and expanding information about the word and mention other texts in which the word appeared; write about incidents in the story; create a table of words used to describe a character.</li> </ol>  |
| <p><b>Meaningful reading experiences</b></p>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Model reading:</b> Read to learners regularly using appropriate literature on a level above their independent level to promote vocabulary expansion and hear good phrasing and intonation.</li> <li>• <b>Shared reading:</b> Introduce, talk about, and read a new story. Questions: What did they like about the story, how did the character relate to themselves or someone else, how did the actions of the character affect them? What was interesting about the information the book provided? Retell story in own words, reread and let learners chime in at familiar phrases. Encourage learners to read the book for themselves.</li> <li>• <b>Interactive reading:</b> The teacher reads aloud, and learners actively engage in listening and talking about the text to share ideas and comment when viewing an illustrated text or picture book.</li> <li>• <b>Guided reading:</b> This is used when a group of learners demonstrate similar reading behaviours and can read similar levels of texts. The teacher supports each reader's development by teaching strategies for improved reading skills.</li> <li>• <b>Independent reading:</b> The learner can read with comprehension and accuracy at 95–100%.</li> </ul> |

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| <p><b>Facilitating comprehension</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Listen and respond:</b> Learners listen to the teacher reading a text and then draw or answer questions.</li> <li>● <b>Read and respond:</b> Learners read a short text and answer questions in writing.</li> <li>● <b>Fluent reading:</b> Learners read text a few times to really understand the text and overcome the unfamiliar words.</li> <li>● <b>Nonfiction:</b> Learners retell important facts about the topic.</li> <li>● <b>Writing with comprehension:</b> Readers write sentences to convey their own thoughts.</li> <li>● <b>Role-playing:</b> Learners act out the story.</li> <li>● <b>KWL chart:</b> Make a chart with the class before reading to determine what learners KNOW, WANT TO KNOW, and LEARNED from the story.</li> <li>● <b>Building background knowledge:</b> Use the eight comprehension strategies (Tompkins, 2007: 203).</li> <li>● <b>Predicting:</b> Learners guess what will happen and read to confirm or refute their prediction.</li> <li>● <b>Connecting:</b> Learners use their background knowledge to make text-to-self, text-to-other-texts, or text-to-world links.</li> <li>● <b>Visualising:</b> Learners create mental images from the text.</li> <li>● <b>Questioning:</b> Learners ask questions about the text.</li> <li>● <b>Identifying the big ideas:</b> Learners comment on important information from the text.</li> <li>● <b>Summarising:</b> Learners use the big ideas or incidents to summarise the text.</li> <li>● <b>Monitoring:</b> Learners reread parts when they become confused.</li> <li>● <b>Evaluating:</b> Learners comment on the text and make critical observations, e.g., how a character could behave differently, or why other characters behaved in a certain way.</li> </ul> |
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| <b>Using the Language Experience Approach</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Language Experience Approach is an approach to reading in which the child's own language and experiences are used to create reading material.</li> <li>• This instructional strategy allows children to turn their experiences into a learning opportunity by using their own words to help them read familiar texts with understanding by using the vocabulary they know, language patterns, and their experiences to create a reading text.</li> <li>• The teacher writes what the learners suggest and uses correct language and punctuation while guiding the development of the created story.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Reading and games</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Word war:</b> Players have the class' word bank cards (all on same size cards), and the cards are distributed upside down. Each player keeps the received cards upside down on a pile in front of him/her then turns a card over and reads it. The player with the longest word and who can read the word gets all the displayed words. IF two players have the same number of letters, they select another card from their pile to determine the winner.</li> <li>• <b>Hangman:</b> Play Hangman by using words from stories learners have read. Each participant gets only two guesses to provide possible missing letters.</li> <li>• <b>Match:</b> Learners get twenty cards consisting of duplicates. The cards are arrayed upside down in rows and columns. Each learner picks up two cards and reads them. If they are similar, the person keeps them; otherwise, the cards are replaced in their original positions. The winner can select two cards again. The winner will be the one with the most cards.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Selecting appropriate texts for different reading levels</b> | Poems, fiction, nonfiction, tongue twisters  |
| <b>Phonics, onset, rime, consonant patterns, vowel patterns</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consonant patterns may consist of consonant clusters of two or three consonants, e.g., consonant digraphs (<i>ph, sh, th, etc.</i>); consonant blends (<i>bl, spl, etc.</i>) and consonants (in English) where certain letters have more than one sound when they are used in certain contexts (<i>c in can, c in price</i>).</li> <li>• English also has silent consonant patterns (e.g., in <i>tall</i> only one <i>l</i> is pronounced; in <i>knife, k</i> is not pronounced).</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Word meanings using context</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reader's background knowledge helps a lot to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.</li> <li>• For struggling readers or experience-deprived learners, it is important to have pre-reading talks.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Integrating language arts</b>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy is about listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing.</li> <li>• For example, if the nature table display (environmental education) is about frogs, the teacher can display books and pictures about frogs. Learners can then be required to read from the books to draw a picture of a frog from a book and write about what they found interesting about frogs. Then they tell the class what they found interesting for an oral assessment mark.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Creating books</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children can draw pictures of, for example, their family. The teacher writes on the picture what the learner tells about their picture.</li> <li>• The learner "reads" to the class what was written.</li> <li>• The teacher assembles the pictures in a book and learners can read the familiar texts about the family of the different learners in the class on their own.</li> </ul>   |

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| <b>Differentiated instruction with a tic-tac-toe chart</b> | <p>A tic-tac-toe chart consists of nine blocks with activities related to a book or theme the class is working on. Each learner chooses any three activities that are ordered in a straight horizontal, vertical, or diagonal line on the chart. The teacher arranges the activities so that different language arts and skills will be required from learners. Learners will choose what they will find to be manageable based on their level of experience and skills. For example:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="544 394 1235 629"> <tr> <td data-bbox="544 394 772 483">Create words with letter cubes and write them down.</td> <td data-bbox="772 394 1000 483">Do a writing activity.</td> <td data-bbox="1000 394 1235 483">Do pair reading.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="544 483 772 573">Write a song or rhyme.</td> <td data-bbox="772 483 1000 573">Phonics: How many words can you make from the word.....</td> <td data-bbox="1000 483 1235 573">Sort words and write the selected words.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="544 573 772 629">Do a drawing activity.</td> <td data-bbox="772 573 1000 629">Read for a recording.</td> <td data-bbox="1000 573 1235 629">Complete the graphic organiser.</td> </tr> </table> | Create words with letter cubes and write them down. | Do a writing activity. | Do pair reading. | Write a song or rhyme. | Phonics: How many words can you make from the word..... | Sort words and write the selected words. | Do a drawing activity. | Read for a recording. | Complete the graphic organiser. |
| Create words with letter cubes and write them down.        | Do a writing activity.   | Do pair reading.                                    |                        |                  |                        |   |  |                        |                       |                                 |
| Write a song or rhyme.                                     | Phonics: How many words can you make from the word.....  | Sort words and write the selected words.            |                        |                  |                        |   |  |                        |                       |                                 |
| Do a drawing activity.                                     | Read for a recording.  | Complete the graphic organiser.                     |                        |                  |                        |   |  |                        |                       |                                 |
| <b>Drama or readers' theatre</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners can enact the story using vocabulary words from the story.</li> <li>• <b>Readers' theatre:</b> The teacher can write a script based on a story or proficient learners can write their own script for a story. Then, without props or costumes, the group reads their parts to an audience with expression. Learners practise for the readers' theatre by rereading repeatedly (fluency) as practise to deliver a good performance.</li> </ul>  |   |                        |                  |                        |   |  |                        |                       |                                 |
| <b>Recording reading</b>                                   | <p>Children can practise a piece of text and then the teacher can record and play back the smaller group's reading from her/his cell phone.</p>  |   |                        |                  |                        |   |  |                        |                       |                                 |
| <b>Play-to-learn activities</b>                            | <p><b>Letter cubes:</b> The teacher can make cubes (die shapes) and paste vowels and consonants on them that learners have learned. The learners roll up to five dice and see which word they can create from the letters.</p>   |   |                        |                  |                        |   |  |                        |                       |                                 |

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| <p><b>Word family activities</b></p>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creating rhymes, writing a nonsense sentence that contain as many of those words possible.</li> <li>● Create <b>tongue twisters</b> with selected onset: Learners are challenged to create tongue twisters from words with a new digraph, for instance <i>sh</i>: Sharon's shoes shine showily in the shop.</li> <li>● Creating <b>rhymes</b> with rime endings, for instance: <i>at</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A fat cat sat on the mat.</li> <li>○ He was eating a big fat rat.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Word banks</b></p>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A word bank is a set of word cards consisting of words a learner comes across in reading texts and still finds difficult to read and wants to identify quickly.</li> <li>● The words are written on cards of the same size created by the teacher or learner that relates to the core content and academic material the learner is learning.</li> <li>● The word bank provides the learner with access to key vocabulary and helps with vocabulary development, spelling, and writing.</li> <li>● The teacher can also assemble a classwork bank that learners can use during group work, e.g., to do word sorts. These words can be duplicates of words on the word wall.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Word sorts (open and closed)</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To focus the attention of beginning readers on the letter patterns in words, they can do word sorts, e.g., put all the words with the short <i>a</i> sound in a pile.</li> <li>● An open word sort activity is when the learner chooses the criterion for making a specific pile and the others in the group must say why the specific words are in that pile.</li> <li>● A closed word sort is when the teacher gives the instruction according to which characteristics a word should be selected, e.g., words related to objects.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Paired reading</b></p>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A more skilled reader works with a less skilled reader. First, they read the part together (the pair), then the skilled reader reads and then the less skilled reader reads the same part.</li> </ul>   |

**Phonics and transfer of phonics use**

(Cunningham, 2000)

- Learners learn the different phonics and letter patterns to help them identify words when reading and for writing words. Therefore, it is not enough for learners to recognise and write the single phonic or letter pattern; they also need to transfer the knowledge to create words.
- Each language has its own most useful consonants, vowels, and letter clusters. The teacher creates loose letter cards with the lowercase letter on one side of the card and the uppercase letter on the flip side.
- The teacher carefully selects about five familiar phonics that include vowels and consonants initially (later up to ten phonic cards), e.g.,

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | d | n | s | t |
|---|---|---|---|---|

- In such an activity the teacher displays the vowels first in alphabetical order and then the consonants in alphabetical order, e.g., a d n s t to build words. Learners have similar cards to build words in a well-**planned instructional sequence by the teacher to make learners aware of how the change in letters changes the word and that the order of the letters in a word are important**, e.g., we can have *rat*, *tar*, and *art* with the same letters. See the following example of a planned sequence (Cunningham, 2000: 9). Each learner has the same letter cards and organises it as displayed by the teacher in her/his example for all to see.
  - Learners hold up the selected letter card and say the phonic sound of the letter and read the lowercase and uppercase letter. Now learners build words according to the teacher's instruction.
  - Take two letters and make *at*. We are **at** school.
  - Take the *t* away and add a different letter to make *an*: I ate **an** apple.

- Add a letter to *an* to make the word *and*: I like apples **and** bananas.
  - Now do a trick with *and*. Move the letters around so that they spell *Dan*. Which letter do you hear first? And last? Dan is a person's name so which *d* must we use?
  - Take the *d* away and add a letter to make *tan*: I got a **tan** from the sun.
  - Now move the letters around to spell *ant*: The **ant** is tiny.
  - Start over and make another three-letter word such as *sat*: The boy **sat** down.
  - Take the *t* away and add another letter and you can spell the word *sad*: He was very **sad**.
  - Now spell a four-letter word. Add one letter to *sad* to can spell *sand*. Let's all say *sand* so that you can hear which letter we need to add and where it will fit: She digs in the **sand**.
  - The last word in every lesson is the secret word. It contains all the letters we have. Add one letter to *sand* and you can spell another word. Who can figure it out? Everyone **stand** up.
- Learners also get the words that were built on cards of the same size and order them according to the first letter:

|     |       |     |     |
|-----|-------|-----|-----|
| at  | sat   | Dan | tan |
| an  | sad   |     |     |
| and | sand  |     |     |
| ant | stand |     |     |

- **Transfer:** The teacher says some words in sentences, and the learners repeat the words and decide which letter they begin with: *dog top sun add apple teacher doctor sister*.

### Writing prompts

Source:

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/658510776744175632/?d=t&mt=signup>

<https://www.pinterest.com/wasanananayakka/comprehension-for-grade-12/>



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/486670303463132035/?d=t&mt=signupOrPersonalizedLogin>

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/211598882479686919/>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?**

Which bug is the scariest?

 OR 

spider OR bee

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Read the sentence. Answer the question and highlight the sentence.

She has an apple.

What does she have?

an apple  an egg

The girl can sing.

What can the girl do?

swing  sing

The dog can dig.

What can the dog do?

swim  dig

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Writing a **Narrative**


Title

First, \_\_\_\_\_ Next, \_\_\_\_\_

Then, \_\_\_\_\_ Last, \_\_\_\_\_

Closing, \_\_\_\_\_



|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <p><b>Graphic organisers</b></p> | <p>A graphic organiser is a blank diagram or guide that the teacher creates to support learners in grasping content or features from literacy text or subject-related content text that the learners will read. Older learners can also be guided to make their own graphic organiser, e.g., a Venn diagram, a spiderweb layout.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Cowley, J. (1987) "Ratty-Tatty." The story is about a rat that stole food from different people, e.g., an egg from an old woman, bread from a man, fish from a cat; but Ratty was too clever and was never caught.</p> <p>The teacher can give learners a matching graphic organiser to fill out:</p> <div data-bbox="539 548 1236 1025" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>He stole:</b></p> <p>egg from.....</p> <p style="text-align: right;">..... from the man.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Ratty-Tatty</b></p> </div> <p>..... of the</p> <p>Cheese from the.....</p> <p style="text-align: right;">cat.</p> <p>Ratty-Tatty was fast / big / clever / grey.</p> </div> |
|----------------------------------|---|

## Part 4

### Approaches and Activities to Help a Large Group of Learners Develop Successful Reading Skills

#### Group Work

Group work is meaningful to help teachers attend to learners' different needs and preferences (Rasinsky & Padak, 2000). In a large class, it becomes very challenging to achieve effective individual learner growth. A teacher who allows learners to engage in group work needs to prepare suitable teaching and learning materials for the groups. In light of limited resources in many schools, the group work examples that follow contain little photocopying and rather focus on materials teachers can make; moreover, if carefully organised and stored after use, they can be utilised repeatedly in different activities, e.g., loose letters for learners and high-frequency words on flashcards written on the insides of



discarded cereal boxes. These activities should enrich and promote literacy knowledge and skills.

**Note:** Although the examples for group work activities are predominantly for English, teachers using other mediums of instruction can adapt the activities to suit that particular language.

As there are varying degrees of literacy development in learners, teachers need to build upon literacy concepts that need strengthening or have been acquired. All elements of literacy development develop interactively and supportively: listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and illustrating (Antonacci & O'Callaghan, 2004). Learners take different paths to master literacy, and teachers need to plan literacy development according to their strengths and needs (Antonacci & O'Callaghan, 2004).

In large classes, e.g., 45–60 or more learners, grouping becomes necessary to focus on the identification of literacy needs of individual learners while they are in a smaller group.

Tompkins (2007) recommends that successful group work requires the establishment of a cooperative classroom community so that learners take responsibility for learning and use opportunities for meaningful engagement, self-monitoring, and self-assessment. As classroom manager, the teacher should instil organisational routines for the first two weeks of the year to make the classroom setup predictable and promote cooperative learning. The teacher needs to clearly explain and let learners practise what they need to do, e.g. moving into groups, workstation procedures, handing out and submitting work, how to participate in classroom activities, raising a hand to talk, demonstrating positive behaviour towards others, how paired reading will work, how working in groups will work. The teacher models how learners need to interact with each other, how to respond and respect others. They should praise

learners for positive behaviour and show appreciation for expected behaviour beforehand. During the course of the year, the teacher reinforces classroom routines and establishes additional ones as the literacy skills of learners advance. Learners need to learn to become examples of “positive pals” for others in and out of the classroom.

The teacher can make use of different methods to establish groups (Joubert, 2008), e.g., proximity, birthdays in the same month, needs, practical grouping to use space optimally, paired groups of a more successful reader and a less competent reader, peer teaching groups, similar needs groups. Groups should not be static but change according to learners' development.

To make cooperative group work function, **each** member of a group needs to have a role, and the group activities need to be interesting and meaningful, e.g., play-to-learn activities. The roles should be changed regularly. Groups should preferably consist of no more than six learners per group; however, in large classes too many groups may be counterproductive. Below are some possible roles that can be allocated, written on cards, and displayed on each person:

1. leader and “teacher” who ensures the task is executed with minimal noise
2. motivator and noise-level commander
3. scribe
4. spokesperson
5. fetcher
6. tidy-upper
7. vocabulary collector and meaning finder
8. word wall; word poster
9. handing-out person, e.g., self-assessment sheets, activity sheets
10. timekeeper

## **Group Work Setups**

Group work can sound noisy for outsiders who might think the teacher has no control, but this should not deter teachers from doing it because learners learn a lot from peers (and little ones cannot be expected to sit like little robots!) It should be “educational noise” in which learners learn to interact meaningfully with others by following the instructions and restrictions for group work and taking on the group member roles. The teacher can allocate, for example, tokens for good group behaviour. After earning five tokens, a group can exchange it for a prize, such as having a soft toy sit with them for the whole day or having their photos displayed in a special place in class.

It is important for the teacher to set a timer to ring when the allocated time for group work expires, e.g., after twenty minutes. The teacher might allocate up to an hour or bit longer to have enough time if students are doing rotational activities.

## **Whole class teaching followed by individual work**

Example: The teacher gives a mini-lesson on the use of punctuation for the full stop/period and for new sentences starting with a capital/uppercase letter.

Learners identify sentences in a given page of text and count how many sentences they find on the page. They then copy one sentence into their book.

OR

The class, together with the teacher, creates a story about two objects, e.g., a pencil and an eraser, using the Language Experience Approach. The story is written on a sheet of blank newspaper or sheets of A4 paper. The class rereads its story.

The next day the learners can write the sentence they like

best and illustrate it.

### **Whole class teaching followed by breakaway groups**

The class can be organised into three groups for this strategy. One group of learners will have acquired strong literacy skills (the fish group), the second group will display beginning literacy skills (the bird group), and the third group (the goat group) will still need repetition and more experience for literacy development to take off.

The teacher teaches a strategy to the whole class, then two groups break away as instructed to do an assignment while the other group stays with the teacher to do either reinforcement or enrichment, depending on the teacher's planning.

Example: The teacher flashes high-frequency words for the learners to read in chorus intermingled with familiar phonics cards. The fish group then breaks away and has to circle all words they can immediately identify on a piece of the given text. They file the page in their flip files and compare it with others in the group who could read the most.

The remaining two groups each get a word or letter card, and each learner has to show the card to the group while reading what is on the card. Then the bird group breaks away, and they have to circle ten words in the given text that they can easily read. They then compare with friends in the group which word was the most popular. They file the page in their flip file.

The goat group remains with the teacher to play a game, e.g., the words are set up like the rungs of a ladder and individual children see how high they can climb on the ladder by reading the words until they take too long to identify a word. Then another learner gets a chance to climb the ladder. The winner is the learner who climbs the highest.

### **Subject-alternating strategy**

The teacher can use an hour with this setup. Learners will not get tired so easily as they will be refreshed when getting a new task activity after twenty minutes.

The class can be divided into the groups (e.g., fish, birds, and goats).

| <b>TIME</b>       | <b>BIRD GROUP</b>   | <b>FISH GROUP</b>   | <b>GOAT GROUP</b>   |
|-------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>20 minutes</b> | The bird group reads a prepared reading for the teacher and receives guidance for new text to be practised. | The fish group draws a picture in their environmental education books about saving water.               | The goat group plays with a die and stacks towers with blocks corresponding with the number thrown. |
| <b>20 minutes</b> | The bird group draws a picture in their environmental education book about saving water.                    | The fish group plays with a die and stacks towers with blocks corresponding with the number thrown.     | The goat group reads a prepared reading for teacher and gets guidance for new text to be practised. |
| <b>20 minutes</b> | The bird group plays with a die and stacks towers with blocks corresponding with the number thrown.         | The fish group reads a prepared reading for teacher and receives guidance for new text to be practised. | The goat group draws a picture in their environmental education books about saving water.           |

After groups have participated in the various activities, the teacher harmonises the class as a whole again by, for example, letting them sing a song or say a rhyme.

### **Groupings for cooperative tasks**

Over the course of four days (e.g., Monday to Thursday), the teacher can give learners literacy experience tasks where the group cooperates for the duration of the period. Over the four days, each group gets to do all the different activities, and on the fifth day (e.g., Friday), there can be an assessment of what was done.

Example:

| Day              | Group W  | Group X  | Group Y  | Group Z  |
|------------------|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Monday</b>    | Do paired reading.   | Do closed word sorts with class word bank                                    | Write collaboratively using a writing incentive paper of choice.             | Fill in missing words in given sentences individually, then compare answers. |
| <b>Tuesday</b>   | Do closed word sorts with class word bank.                                   | Do paired reading  | Fill in missing words in given sentences individually, then compare answers. | Write collaboratively using a writing incentive paper of choice.             |
| <b>Wednesday</b> | Write collaboratively using a writing incentive paper of choice.             | Fill in missing words in given sentences individually, then compare answers. | Do closed word sorts with class word bank.                                   | Do paired reading.   |
| <b>Thursday</b>  | Fill in missing words in given sentences individually, then compare answers. | Write collaboratively using a writing incentive paper of choice.             | Do paired reading.   | Do closed word sorts with class word bank.                                   |

### **Rotational groupings for small group instruction**

For small group instruction and with the purpose in mind of strengthening or enhancing reading proficiency, a smaller group needs to be with the teacher during each rotation. Many small groups will be too difficult for the teacher to manage on a single day; therefore, this strategy may have a duration of three days or more so that the teacher has the opportunity to pay attention to each individual. For example, the rotations could take place over four days with four groups.

At the start of the literacy period, the teacher organises which group should do what for the duration of the period, makes sure each leader knows what the group has to do, and hands out learning materials the group will use.



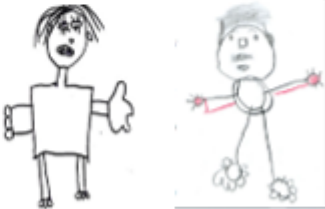
| Day and time allocation     | Group W   | Group X   | Group Y   | Group Z   |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Day 1:</b><br>35 minutes | Follow key features of reading a new short text with learners   | Create a tongue twister with the onset <i>s</i> or rhyme with rime ending <i>un</i> .   | Write at least three sentences about your pet, and draw a picture in your book.   | Each learner gets loose words that form a sentence. The learner builds a sentence, and the group reads the different sentences. |
| <b>Day 2:</b><br>35 minutes | Create a tongue twister with the onset <i>s</i> or rhyme with rime ending <i>un</i> .   | Follow key features of reading a new short text with learners   | Each learner gets loose words that form a sentence. The learner builds a sentence, and the group reads the different sentences. | Write at least three sentences about your pet, and draw a picture in your book.   |
| <b>Day 3:</b><br>35 minutes | Write at least three sentences about your pet, and draw a picture in your book.   | Each learner gets loose words that form a sentence. The learner builds a sentence, and the group reads the different sentences. | Follow key features of reading a new short text with learners   | Create a tongue twister with the onset <i>s</i> or rhyme with rime ending <i>un</i> .   |
| <b>Day 4:</b><br>35 minutes | Each learner gets loose words that form a sentence. The learner builds a sentence, and the group reads the different sentences. | Write at least three sentences about your pet, and draw a picture in your book.   | Create a tongue twister with the onset <i>s</i> or rhyme with rime ending <i>un</i> .   | Follow key features of reading a new short text with learners   |

### Individual work on tasks

The teacher might have tic-tac-toe activities on a sheet of blank newspaper, and the learners choose three activities and

do them.

Example: Four-block tic-tac-toe for kindergarten learners. The teacher can use guiding pictures to help children remember the instruction that was read.

|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
|  <p>Draw a picture of your pet.<br/>Write what it is.</p>   |  <p>Choose a book you like, and tell the story to a friend by looking at the pictures.</p> |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
| <p>Find the loose cards that look the same, and put them together.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="156 862 547 1059"><tr><td>s</td><td>3</td><td>b</td><td>g</td></tr><tr><td>a</td><td>e</td><td>s</td><td>f</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>g</td><td>a</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>e</td><td>2</td><td>f</td><td>b</td></tr></table> | s   | 3 | b | g | a | e | s | f | 3 | g | a | 2 | e | 2 | f | b | <p>Draw a picture of you and your friend, and write your names.</p>  |
| s  | 3   | b | g |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
| a  | e   | s | f |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
| 3  | g   | a | 2 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
| e  | 2   | f | b |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |

[https://www.clipartkey.com/view/woxho\\_childrens-drawing-clip-art-cartoon-child-drawing/](https://www.clipartkey.com/view/woxho_childrens-drawing-clip-art-cartoon-child-drawing/)

<https://za.pinterest.com/pin/534521049519104632/>

<http://getdrawings.com/get-drawing#picture-of-a-person-drawing-36.jpg>

<https://www.safecom.org.au/child-detention.htm>

### **Workstation technique**

The teacher can lay out activities at four workstations before school. When school starts, the children receive clear instructions of what to do at each station while walking with the teacher to each station (The group leader can come and verify later if a group forgets.) The teacher rings a bell after fifteen minutes, and the groups move to a new station in clockwise rotation. Groups can be formed with letters, e.g.,



W, X, Y, Z.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>A</b> Six word cards are displayed. There is a packet or envelope for ten children (for example) with letters. Each child builds three words by looking at the word cards.</p> | <p><b>B</b> There are pictures of five ladders with eight rungs. There are five envelopes with ten high-frequency words. Learners work in pairs or triads. One learner places eight words on the rungs, and the partner reads the words. They then change roles.</p>   |
| <p><b>C</b> The teacher sits at this workstation, and learners read to her after identifying four vocabulary words from a story they have read previously.</p>                       | <p><b>D</b> There are many blank cards cut from recycled paper printed on one side only. Learners create a word chain, with the last letter of the previous word becoming the first letter of the new word to be added. Learners write the words and stick them to the wall with Prestik. For example: dog-go-octopus-say-yes-sun.</p> |

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