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# New approaches to literacy learning

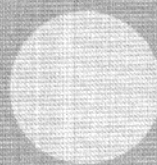
*A guide for teacher educators*



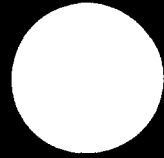
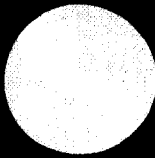
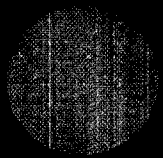
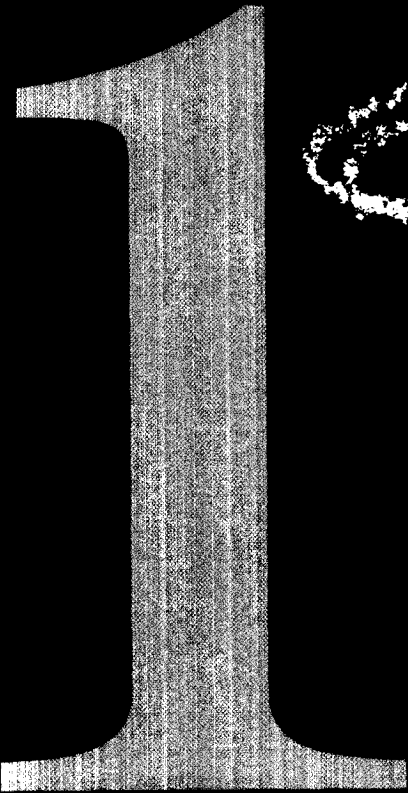
Prepared by  
V. Elaine Carter, Ph.D.  
UNESCO consultant

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# Table of contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	4	<i>Section 4</i>	
<i>Foreword</i>	5	<b>Strategies to foster the comprehension of text</b>	<b>22</b>
<i>Section 1</i>		Preparing for reading, pre-reading plan	22
<b>The changing nature of the reading process</b>	<b>7</b>	Developing vocabulary	23
A comparison of behavioural and cognitive views of the reading process	8	Text structure	24
Reading process	10	Questioning	25
		Information processing	25
		Summarizing and sequencing	26
		Voluntary/recreational reading	27
<i>Section 2</i>		<i>Section 5</i>	
<b>Classroom environment for literacy learning</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Assessment of literacy learning</b>	<b>28</b>
Materials	12	Observations	28
Equipment	12	Sampling student work through portfolios	29
Accommodation, furnishing, and lighting	13	Questions and interviews	29
		Using surveys, inventories and checklists	30
<i>Section 3</i>		Self assessment by students	30
<b>Teaching for literacy</b>	<b>14</b>	<i>Section 6</i>	
Beginning reading	14	<b>Home-school partnership</b>	<b>31</b>
Language experience approach	15	<i>Appendix</i>	
Supporting the use of both the mother tongue and the English language	16	<b>References</b>	<b>32</b>
Word identification	16		
Sight words	17		
Linking word recognition to other aspects of literacy	17		
Developing vocabulary	18		
Facilitating reading comprehension	18		
Using multiple intelligence for literacy learning	19		





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4

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V. Elaine Carter  
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# Foreword

**T**he ability to read is increasingly recognized as one of the most reliable indicators of whether a child will attain the competence needed to achieve academic success in school, and to contribute actively to society. However, many children of varying cultures around the globe have not attained this level of competence, despite global and national efforts to improve literacy. This implies that educators of children, in the pre-primary and primary years, have a most important role to play in fostering literacy development in learners.

The outcome of the Dakar Conference on Education for All has strengthened the cause for renewing emphasis on the teaching of reading. The Collective Commitment has set a target for reducing adult illiteracy by 50 per cent by the Year 2015. This manual has been developed to assist teacher trainers to achieve this worthwhile objective. While the various topics outlined in this manual relate to the role of the teacher in enhancing literacy in the primary grades, and in helping parents to do likewise, it is envisaged that the activities proposed will address literature and literacy as positive transforming agents in the lives of children.

If all the children enrolled in primary schools today, and those enrolled in the next 5 years, could be permanently literate and numerate by the end of the primary cycle, there would be substantive progress towards the Dakar target of a 50 per cent reduction in adult illiteracy by 2015. However, to achieve this objective, it would be necessary to focus on the skills of literacy and the promotion of a

reading environment. There should be a revitalization of all the institutions responsible for training teachers, and a true renaissance in the teaching of reading.

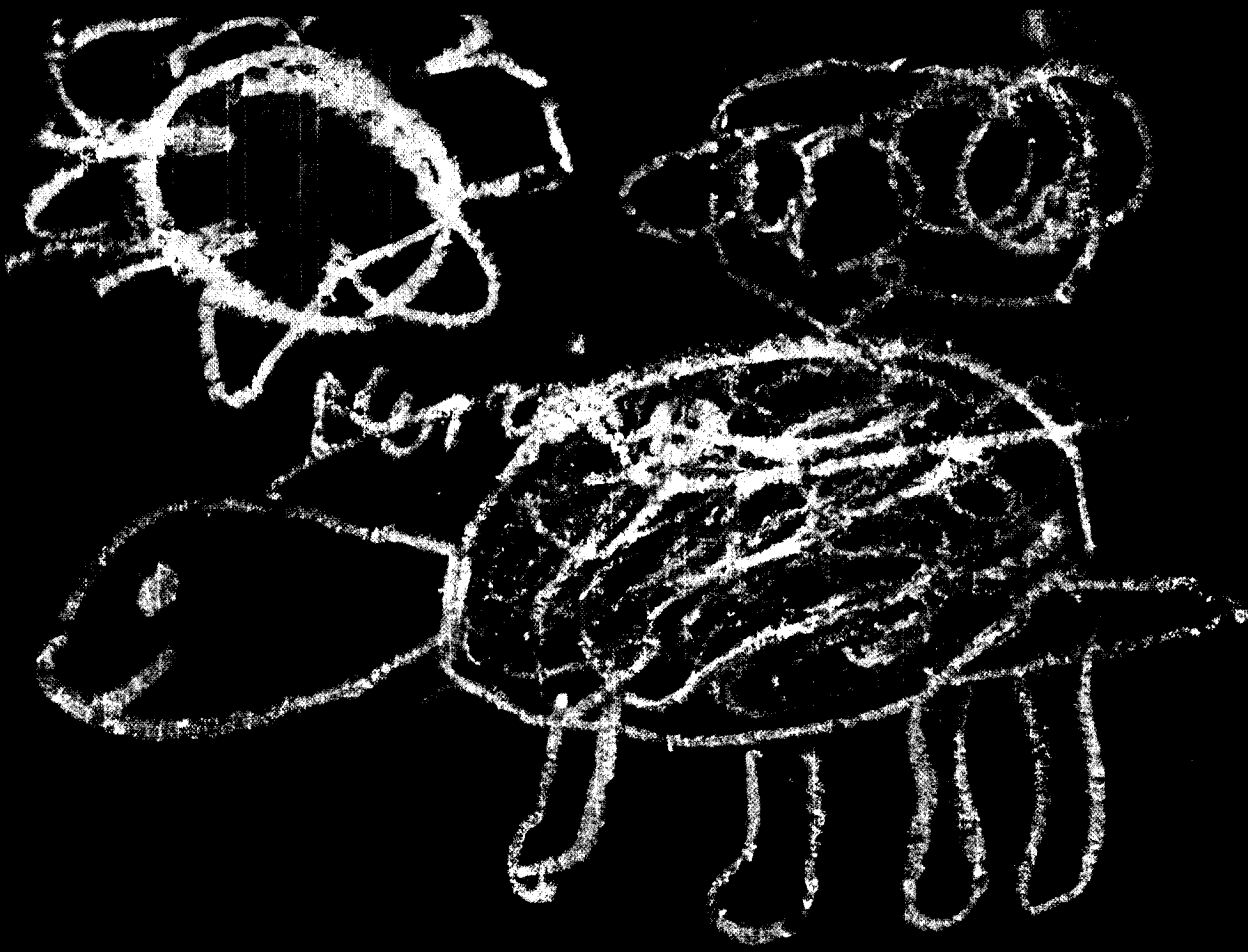
Literacy is one of the most basic learning needs of children, young people and adults, and is thus at the very heart of basic education. It is an ageless concept, it is developed both in and out of school, through formal, non-formal and informal learning systems, and is a lifelong process. Literacy is also an essential requisite for citizenship and human and social development. The right of every individual to education, as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is strongly rooted in the right to literacy.

This guide was prepared by a group of teacher trainers, inspectors of schools and teachers, with the help of a consultant provided by UNESCO. Much of its content is based on the experiences that they shared, and on what they expected from primary education.

It is hoped that the information offered in this manual will provide a framework that helps the user to make improvements in the delivery of instruction, and enables learners to attain the competence needed to achieve the high standard of literacy demanded today. It is a guide for teacher trainers, which helps them to modify ideas to suit local needs, and engage in research in their classrooms.

Jacques Hallak  
Assistant Director-General  
for Education a.i.







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## Section I

# The changing nature of the reading process

**T**he changing concept of reading as a set of skills to be learnt in a certain order, to an interactive process involving the reader, the text and the context, has led to efforts to determine instructional processes that enable learners to foster literacy growth.

In examining three basic views of the reading process, namely: bottom-up, top-down, and the interactive, they can be summarized in this manner:

The bottom-up theory emphasizes the recognition of words, and considers comprehension as information obtained solely from the text. The top-down model relates to an extension of the language acquisition process, and views the process of reading as predictions

confirmed by inspecting the text, and comprehension is obtained by reorganizing the meaning given to the reading. The interactive model views reading as involving both the bottom-up and top-down models, and the process of reading comprehension as the interaction of the reader and the text, depending on the particular situation.

Despite the context in which reading takes place, the nature of the reading process changes as students mature. Specific processes may vary among individuals and according to purpose. During the early stages of reading the identification of words demands greater concentration. As readers progress they should be able to use their ability to interpret written



*Class in session outdoors in Uganda*





language for a variety of purposes. In order to attain this level of competence readers must use appropriate strategies before, during, and after reading.

Some of these strategies reflect cognitive views and are supported by research findings, such as integrating new information with prior knowledge, and engaging in meta-cognitive or self monitoring procedures.

This change in the teaching of reading comes mainly from the demand of societies that schools meet the obligation to produce graduates with the required competence in reading. The impact of globalization, and the technological advances and social changes being experienced worldwide, are strengthening the links between knowledge and development. This global acceptance of literacy for the develop-

ment of the individual in society, has created the need to ensure that teachers are able to support literacy development in all children.

The current view of reading, based on cognitive principles, emphasizes the student as an active learner, capable of integrating information with existing knowledge, and capable of engaging in self monitoring procedures, thereby making the process student-centred. Traditional approaches to the teaching of reading, based on the behaviourist theory, viewed the process as teacher-directed, as skills taught in isolation, and regarded students as passive learners.

The characteristics of both theories given below provide an overview of aspects of the traditional and the integrated approaches.

## A comparison of behavioural and cognitive views of the reading process

Behavioural	Cognitive
◆ Learning is based on the analysis of language skills.	◆ Learning is based on the learner's state of language development
◆ The learner reproduces meaning	◆ The learner constructs meaning
◆ Learning activated by others is common	◆ Learner-activated learning is stressed
◆ Motivation tends to be directed by others	◆ Motivation is self directed
◆ Learning is text driven	◆ Learning is learner driven
◆ Learning stresses stimulus-response bonding	◆ Learning stresses metacognitive mediation
◆ Learning is linear and ordered	◆ Learning is holistic and patterned
◆ Learning features skill development	◆ Learning features problem solving
◆ Effective comprehension requires automatic basic skills.	◆ Effective comprehension relates learning to prior knowledge and experience.
Source: The Literacy Dictionary – The Vocabulary of Reading and Writing	







*Students engaged in writing in a classroom in Uganda*

**T**he changing concept of reading, which emphasizes the interactive process, has encouraged a shift from traditional approaches in teaching reading, to a greater emphasis on methodologies reflecting cognitive principles. Research findings stress the importance of language exposure and experience to children's growth and cognitive development, helping to arouse interest in modifying the reading experience of young children, and fostering literacy development through all grades.

More recently, the areas of growing literacy and phonemic awareness are being emphasized to enhance the literacy development of young children. The need for rich language experiences is critical to the cognitive and language development of young children, and while this must be encouraged in homes, teachers also need to continue to provide these experiences for children when they start their formal education.

In addition, aspects of the affective domain related to reading success, which teachers should ascertain before beginning formal literacy instruction, and continue to

monitor, include: students' interests, self concept, personality, or emotional and physical factors. These can be ascertained from previous teachers, parents, observation by teachers, and the completion of appropriate checklists and inventories. Without the appropriate affective conditions, cognitive responses to printed materials may not occur.

If beginning reading instruction is to be effective, there must be a balance of activities designed to improve word recognition. These should include: opportunities to use the oral language, rapid recognition of the letters of the alphabet through association, the association of sound patterns in speech, and phonics teaching provided in a connected, formative manner, often engaging in the use of text. Children should also be able to learn sight vocabulary in context rather than in isolation. Providing opportunities for children to listen to stories read to them, or for them to read to the teacher, and reading individually and in groups, will encourage progress in literacy, and stimulate an interest in learning the language of the school.



## Reading processes

Reading processes that involve both independent and interactive reading and writing experiences are as follows:

- ◆ Reading aloud to children
- ◆ Shared reading
- ◆ Guided reading
- ◆ Paired reading
- ◆ Independent reading
- ◆ Language exploration
- ◆ Writing and reading

10

### Reading aloud to children

Reading aloud to children from children's literature should form part of the reading activity in the classroom. This should include both fiction and non-fiction.

Reading aloud helps to familiarize children with the language of books and patterns. It fosters listening habits and provides a model for children to emulate.

### Shared reading

Shared reading is an interactive process of reading involving the whole class. Children participate in the process by reading key words and phrases they know, while the teacher reads aloud. Children read more and more of the text on other occasions, until they can read it independently.

### Guided reading

Guided reading is an approach in which the teacher provides the structure and purpose for reading, and for responding to the material being read. Monitoring, and evaluating progress, are done during this reading.

### Paired reading.

During this process the students work in pairs, and assist each other in learning how to

read. The combination of each pair may vary in ability and age.

### Independent reading

Children need time to read appropriate texts by themselves. There should be materials for students to read independently. A wide variety of reading materials in the classroom, or school library, encourages independent reading.

### Language exploration

This involves literacy activities that further the development of any experience through discussion, reading, writing, art, music, drama and other activities. This fosters use of all the communication skills.

### Writing and reading

Writing and reading are interrelated, and should be encouraged in a variety of ways, namely:

- ◆ Daily writing
- ◆ Model writing
- ◆ Process writing
- ◆ Guided writing
- ◆ Structured writing
- ◆ Content writing

### Model writing

In model writing, the teacher records words and punctuation marks as the children dictate sentences. The teacher facilitates decision making, and modelling the way people think as they write. The language experience approach is a form of model writing.

### Language experience approach

This approach is based on the idea that children's experiences can be talked about, and recorded by the teacher, and form part of the



reading material. The teacher records children's thoughts using their language; teacher and children reading as it is recorded. Repeated reading enables children to identify words, and to read on their own.

### Process writing

Children are encouraged to write by recording what is personally meaningful. Teachers can model each aspect of journal writing, and these can be reviewed.

### Guided writing

As the name implies, the teacher works with the individual student, offering guidance in sound/symbol relations, eliciting what the student knows, and giving guidance to help the student to experience success in the writing process.

### Structured writing

Structured writing provides the opportunity for children to model and reinforce, print conventions and the accurate use of grammar. In this process, the concept, letter, word and sentence are reinforced. Using developmental



*Teacher giving individual attention*

spelling, children will supply, or correct words in missing spaces, read the sentence, and then write the complete sentence.

### Content writing

This process encourages responses to a topic in an organized manner. Children are able to use research skills, summarize facts, and draw conclusions.





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## Section 2

# Classroom environment for literacy learning

12

**T**he classroom environment is of the utmost importance for motivating children, and enhancing their progress in reading. It should be an environment that provides opportunities for the integration of literacy with other areas of the curriculum, and with all aspects of the language arts, namely; reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing. Both social and physical factors are important for creating an appropriate environment for success in literacy acquisition and development. The interactions with others, and texts, teach children the social functions of reading and writing.

Learning centres should be established to provide children with the opportunity to work independently, or in small groups. These should include: reading, writing and listening centres for younger children. Interest centres can also stimulate oral and written activities.

### Materials

**C**hildren should be provided with all the books and materials they need to create interest and stimulate the wish to read.

Materials should include a variety of narrative and expository books of varying levels of difficulty, and those which meet the interests of the individuals, and the selections made by them. In addition, there should be newspaper articles and collections of materials

– including stories, books, maps, jokes, riddles, recipes, local proverbs, poetry, and song lyrics written by teachers and students, and which can be sung to familiar tunes. Where possible, creative work in writing and art should reflect all areas of the curriculum, and the use of local materials should be encouraged. Each classroom should maintain a bulletin board, weather chart, timetable, news board, health bulletin, duty list, monthly calendar for the current year, and a birthday chart.

### Equipment

**A**tape recorder enhances listening activities, which include oral reading, taping and listening to folk tales, other stories and assignments in the listening centre.

Television and radio sets enhance viewing, and listening to educational programmes. Additionally, teachers need to use multimedia presentations (the interaction of text, sound, video or graphics) whenever possible.

Computer stations are unique learning areas in classrooms, as they provide opportunities for children to construct knowledge about literacy socially. The computer station should be a focal area in the classroom, which encourages children to engage in a variety of creative and imaginative activities, including: print-outs of student work, book jackets, and classroom information.



Teachers, together with their pupils, can create “book boxes” and reading corners, where children are able to read from charts and read to each other.

## Accommodation, furnishing and lighting

**C**areful attention to the physical classroom design is essential to the success of teaching and learning. Classroom space must be adequate to accommodate each student comfortably when writing and engaging in whole class instruction. Additional space must be made available for small-group activities, and facilitating freedom of movement.

Sufficient chairs or benches, and adequate space at the table or desk, must be

provided. Adequate space must also be provided for the table and chair used by the teacher, and for conferencing.

The classroom can be arranged in centres with sections assigned to specific activities, or content areas, such as: literacy, social studies, science, mathematics, art, music, and drama. Centres can be separated by the cupboards which store materials. Adequate natural or electric light is required throughout the school day.

*Children in a pre-reading class*





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## Section 3

# Teaching for literacy

14

**R**esearch has shown that for many children literacy development begins early, is ongoing, and should be encouraged to continue throughout life. This developmental perspective of literacy brings new challenges. In any classroom, teachers encounter a wide range of individual differences among beginners, and this increases the difficulty of providing instruction to meet individual needs.

The findings of research indicate that children who have had earlier meaningful experiences with print, including being read to often, seeing print in their daily lives, and experimenting with writing, are better prepared for literacy learning than those who lack such experiences. Consequently, no single approach is likely to benefit all children. Parents, who are often the first teachers, must be encouraged to help prepare children for literacy.

Although there are various types of resources and degrees of support for early literacy in many homes, conversation takes place in all families. Since language development begins in the home, and is learned through practice, aspects of the language arts can be fostered in this setting, and help to accelerate the process of communication when children go to school.

Young children's literacy concepts develop from experiences with print. They remember what is written in texts, and their experiments in writing and drawing support development in understanding about reading, writing and print, namely:

- ◆ It represents speech.
- ◆ It reads from left to right, in some languages from right to left, and from top to bottom.
- ◆ Books have a front, back, beginning, middle and an end.
- ◆ The minimal units of writing are letters, and these are grouped together to form words.

## Beginning reading

**W**hen beginning reading, children should be given the opportunity to develop concepts about the process. It is suggested that "Big Books" with predictable text, for example books with rhythm and rhyme, repeated patterns, logical sequences, relevant illustrations, and story structures, should be used to aid the remembering of the text.

Big Books enable the teacher to model many aspects of print, including direction, correspondence between the spoken and written language, and the concept of the word in print. The teacher can, depending on students' experiences, read the text, pausing before a word that can be determined by the picture and the text, to encourage children's participation and their reading, with the teacher. The children should be encouraged to ask questions and make comments. The teacher may point briefly to words to model direction during reading, and model how to confirm



answers or predictions from the text. One important advantage of the book is that it permits a group of children to read a single book together. This is particularly important in cultures where children are accustomed to being in groups.

## Language experience approach

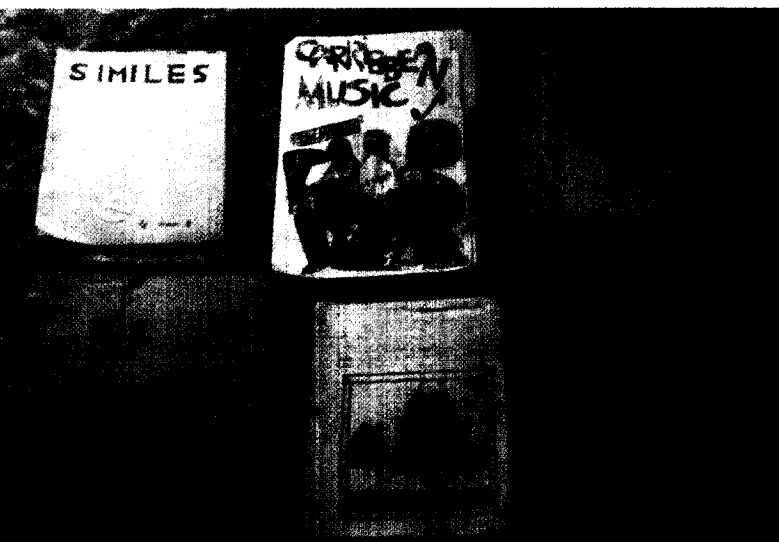
This can be done with individuals, small groups, or an entire class. Children's language and experiences are related, and the teacher records on a large sheet of paper or chalkboard, while the children relate. The dictated story is read to the class while pointing to each word. The teacher and the children read the story. Individual students read the sentence which each has contributed. Children can draw illustrations to match the story. The material can be placed in the classroom to enable students to try to read independently.

In another form of the Language Experience Approach the teacher provides the

stimulus, or any item of interest that has been brought by the students can be used. The teacher initiates the discussion, encouraging the use of the senses where appropriate. Children decide on an appropriate title and make individual contributions to the story, while the teacher writes and reads to the class. Children read with the teacher. Stories can be used for independent reading.

This approach can be modified to benefit older learners, who should be encouraged to write on their own, and then share it with the class.

*Learning aids made by teachers and pupils*



## Supporting the use of both the mother tongue and the English language

Since there is increasing support for the use of the mother tongue in the classroom, teachers need to engage students in activities that support this.

16

Strategies should include the following:

- ◆ Using print in the mother tongue in the classroom
- ◆ Encouraging reading and writing with older students, and parents, who assist younger learners in the use of the mother tongue
- ◆ Using tapes produced by the students, or commercially, in the familiar language of the students, and in English
- ◆ Engaging in play acting in response to life and literature.

While teachers facilitate learning through the use of the mother tongue, appropriate activities are also often needed to support learning in the official language.

The following activities are recommended for this purpose, but are beneficial to all the students:

- ◆ Provide opportunities for children to engage in dialogue
- ◆ Designate a period for reading stories to the children
- ◆ Make students aware of the routine for specified periods
- ◆ Plan activities in reading and writing, e.g.: diary writing, dialogue, journals, response to literature, and story telling.
- ◆ Encourage individual and group activities involving the Language Experience

Approach, where individuals or groups relate stories, and these are written down and read by the teacher and students, and also used for independent reading.

## Word identification

Research in word recognition emphasizes the difficulty of helping children to become skilled in identifying words. Although book reading, listening to stories at an early age, and learning to read simplified stories, appear to enhance reading development, children must also develop phonemic awareness, i.e. an awareness of the sounds that make up spoken words and understand spelling – to sound correspondence, and progress to apply their knowledge of letter patterns and syllables.

Literacy requires an awareness that words in books, on signs, and elsewhere, are intended to convey a message. Children first become aware that language can be observed, and broken into words and letters, by seeing its written form in familiar contexts in the home or the community.

Children's learning of word identification involves marked developmental stages. They usually change from identifying words, one by one, to identifying words using different approaches based on a knowledge of context, letter sounds and syllable patterns.

As children observe others read, and try to read by themselves, they realize that printed words can be differentiated on a page. They might remember words by the initial letter, which are often words with the same letter as their names. In the initial stage of writing they might overuse letter names, e.g. – spelling "see" as C. Hearing nursery rhymes, stories, interesting words, engaging in inventing spelling and writing, tend to relate to early reading performance. Context cues, provided by pictures



and sentences, make it easier for beginners to identify words.

Another activity, that could prove helpful in word identification, is the introduction of initial sounds of words through the use of alphabet books for young children, highlighting the first letter in a word, and the end sounds of words through rhymes. Breaking spoken words into syllables by clapping could be useful for beginners, and individual phonemes could be introduced later.

## Sight words

**S**tudents need a set of words that they can recognize instantly. These should be those used in speech, or frequently heard. These much used words are often irregular in spelling or pronunciation. These are taught as sight words. Basic sight words lists include words such as: the, and, you, was, with, they, have, in, on.

It is recommended that basic sight words should not be taught in isolation, but in a phrase or sentence used both orally and in written form.

## Linking word recognition to other aspects of literacy

**I**t has been suggested that school programmes for introducing written words would be more effective if children could practise reading and writing informally.

Educators support the view that children commence reading by using various context supported materials, which foster the sense of text meaning, and use pictures, letters and sentence formation to begin reading. Phonics instruction alone is not sufficient to build proficient word identification skills. Teachers should encourage children to decode words by analogy. Teachers should provide opportunities for children to listen to stories, and read and write by themselves. This will support the development of other word identification strategies, and it is believed that reading development will proceed more rapidly if children engage in all aspects of the process at once. Children can also learn to read accurately if they are permitted to use invented spelling, a near accuracy in text reading, and story re-readings. Linking word recognition to other aspects of literacy will help to accelerate literacy learning.



## Developing vocabulary

18

It is not possible to teach children many words in a fixed period of time. Words must be acquired informally, and outside the school, mainly through voluntary reading. Children who engage in a wide range of reading, and other experiences, encounter many words in a meaningful context, and learn from many of them. Teachers should encourage voluntary reading, and provide instruction to children which encourages the acquisition of vocabulary. This is important in all areas of learning, since word recognition and a knowledge of meanings, lead to text comprehension.

As a starting point for vocabulary instruction, teachers need to determine what partial, or analogous, knowledge students have relating to the words they are going to learn. This could be done by brainstorming and displaying students' knowledge of keywords or concepts. This can be followed by initiating a discussion on the relationship of words/concepts to a larger schema (cognitive structures that are abstract representations of events or objects stored in the brain).

In order to enhance comprehension, and provide a basis for reasoning about the meaning of new words relating to various contexts, instruction must build on concepts. For example, in an exposition, or a field trip, words related to the main concept would link new words to background knowledge, a larger schema and the contexts of instruction.

Another instructional component to enhance comprehension, and familiarize learners with patterns in English, is to read many stories to children and discuss words and meaning in context. Teachers also need to know that not all words in a text can, or should be, taught. Students must be helped to understand unfamiliar words. After reading a story, allow students to look back, identify a word and deduct its meaning.

Many strategies are needed for identifying words, and for building vocabulary. Simple processes of memorization, letter sound association, or word meanings, are insufficient. Teachers must ensure that children are fascinated with words, and are motivated to develop their vocabulary.

## Facilitating reading comprehension

Researchers have found that competent readers are readers who actively construct meaning through an integrated process, in which they interact with the word, integrating new information with pre-existing knowledge structures. They are self motivated and self directed; they use metacognitive processes to monitor their own comprehension by questioning, reviewing, revising and re-reading.

Initially the reader previews the text by noting print size, pictures and headings. As reading begins, the following kinds of knowledge are used in the processing of the information:

- ◆ Knowledge of letters and sound correspondences.
- ◆ Knowledge of words and word forms.
- ◆ Knowledge of syntax – the grammatical structures of sentences and their functions.
- ◆ Knowledge of meanings and semantic relations.

The competent reader follows a plan for many different kinds of texts. This entails activities before, during, and after, reading.

### Before reading, the reader engages in the following:

- ◆ *Previews the text* by looking at the title, the pictures, and the print to evoke relevant thoughts and memories.





*Child involved in a reading class*

- ◆ *Builds background* by activating appropriate prior knowledge through self-questioning about what is known about the topic, the vocabulary, and the format of presentation.
- ◆ *Sets purposes for reading*, by asking questions about what the reader wants to know.

**During reading, the reader engages in the following:**

- ◆ Checks understanding of the text by paraphrasing the author's words.
- ◆ Monitors comprehension by using context clues, to figure out new words, and by imaging, inferencing, and predicting.
- ◆ Integrates new concepts with existing knowledge, continually reviewing purposes for reading

**After reading, the reader engages in the following:**

- ◆ Summarizes what has been read by retelling the plot of the story, or the main idea of the text.

- ◆ Applies ideas in the text to situations, broadening these ideas.

Although there is still indecision among educators as to whether or not comprehension can be taught, there is increasing evidence in many different studies, that comprehension instruction has been effective. Now that reading instruction is changing from the teaching of fragmented component skills approaches, in which sub-skills dominate the teaching, to an integrated approach, in which comprehension is viewed as a unitary process, elements of comprehension instruction should be incorporated in literacy instruction.

The following are examples of a process approach to reading comprehension, built on the principles that learners construct meaning from text: Reader Response to Literature and Reciprocal Teaching. These methods acknowledge that readers have to construct meaning based on their experiences and knowledge. The following categories of activities have proved to be successful in helping students develop comprehension abilities:

*Girls and boys learning to read*





**Categories:**

- ◆ Preparing for reading
- ◆ Developing vocabulary
- ◆ Understanding and using text structure knowledge
- ◆ Questioning
- ◆ Information processing
- ◆ Summarizing
- ◆ Note-Taking
- ◆ Voluntary/recreational reading

These categories of activities will be developed in the next section.

## Using multiple intelligence for literacy learning

**T**he Multiple Intelligences theory is concerned with differences in the process of learning. Multiple intelligence, as outlined by Howard Gardner, includes the areas of Linguistic Intelligence, Spatial Intelligence, Bodily Kinesthetic Intelligence, Musical Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, and Intrapersonal Intelligence. The theory forges a relationship between thinking and learning, with the rationale of meeting the needs of all learners. This can be accomplished if teachers help students to use their combination of The Intelligences to be successful in school.

In applying this theory, it is expected that this will create a change from teaching and learning as a teacher-centred activity, to a

*Children taking dictation*



student-centred one. The varying facets of multiple intelligences help children to understand differences in individuals, and create the opportunity for individuals to use their strengths to work on weaknesses. This gives each learner an opportunity to experience success, and be motivated and creative.

One approach that teachers could use in teaching through the intelligence, is to plan activities to develop students' skills in particu-

lar disciplines, by presenting new topics or integrated units, or providing learning activities through various intelligences.

Since the theory of multiple intelligence facilitates student-centred activities, learners must be given the opportunity to become involved in the planning and execution of activities relevant to individual strengths, and which endeavour to use the strength in one area to develop competence in others.

### Literacy learning using all intelligences

#### Verbal/linguistic

- Reading to students
- Individual student reading
- Choral reading
- Discussion/literature circles
- Journal keeping
- Creative writing
- Debates

#### Logical/mathematical

- Outlining
- Problem solving
- Predicting
- Semantic maps
- Story maps
- Word webs

#### Visual/spatial

- Guided imagery
- Patterns/design
- Painting/drawing
- Mapping
- Visual displays
- Transparencies
- Videos

#### Body/Kinesthetic

- Role playing
- Creative
- Physical gestures
- Mime
- Physically manipulating
- Cards, objects, bodies
- Every student response

#### Intrapersonal

- Brainstorming
- "Wait time"
- Metacognitive strategies
- Journal reflections
- Personal reactions to stories
- Autobiographies
- Creative writing

#### Interpersonal

- Students giving feedback to others
- Sharing feelings
- Co-operative learning techniques
- Partners share
- Partners collaborate
- Group projects
- Taking others' perspectives

#### Musical/Rhythmic

- Choral reading
- Composing and performing
- Composing original songs
- Composing songs to familiar tunes
- Use of instruments, percussion
- Sound effects in rhythm
- Oral repetition in rhythm





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## Section 4

# Strategies to foster the comprehension of text

22

## Preparing for reading, pre-reading plan

**T**he teacher selects a word, phrase, or picture about a key concept in the text or topic. Next, the teacher initiates a discussion to induce concept-related associations.

### Example:

*Topic: Protecting our environment*

Teacher: "What comes to mind when you hear the word environment?"

Responses are written on the chalkboard.

Reflection Stage – Teacher: "Why do these ideas come to mind?"

There is evidence that the social context of this activity will advance students' understanding, expand or revise their knowledge through

listening to, and interacting with, peers. In the final stage students might be asked the following question:

Teacher: "Have you gained any new ideas about the environment?"

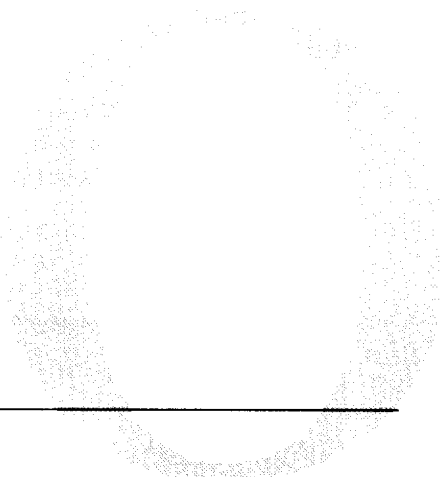
### Previewing

The teacher prepares a preview of the text to motivate students by activating prior relevant experiences, builds background knowledge, and establishes a framework consistent with the author's model.

### Anticipation Guide

*Topic: Protecting our environment*

Students will predict the information which they believe will be in the text, then they read the text, and compare their predictions with the information contained in the text. This active form of processing enhances the development of effective comprehension strategies.

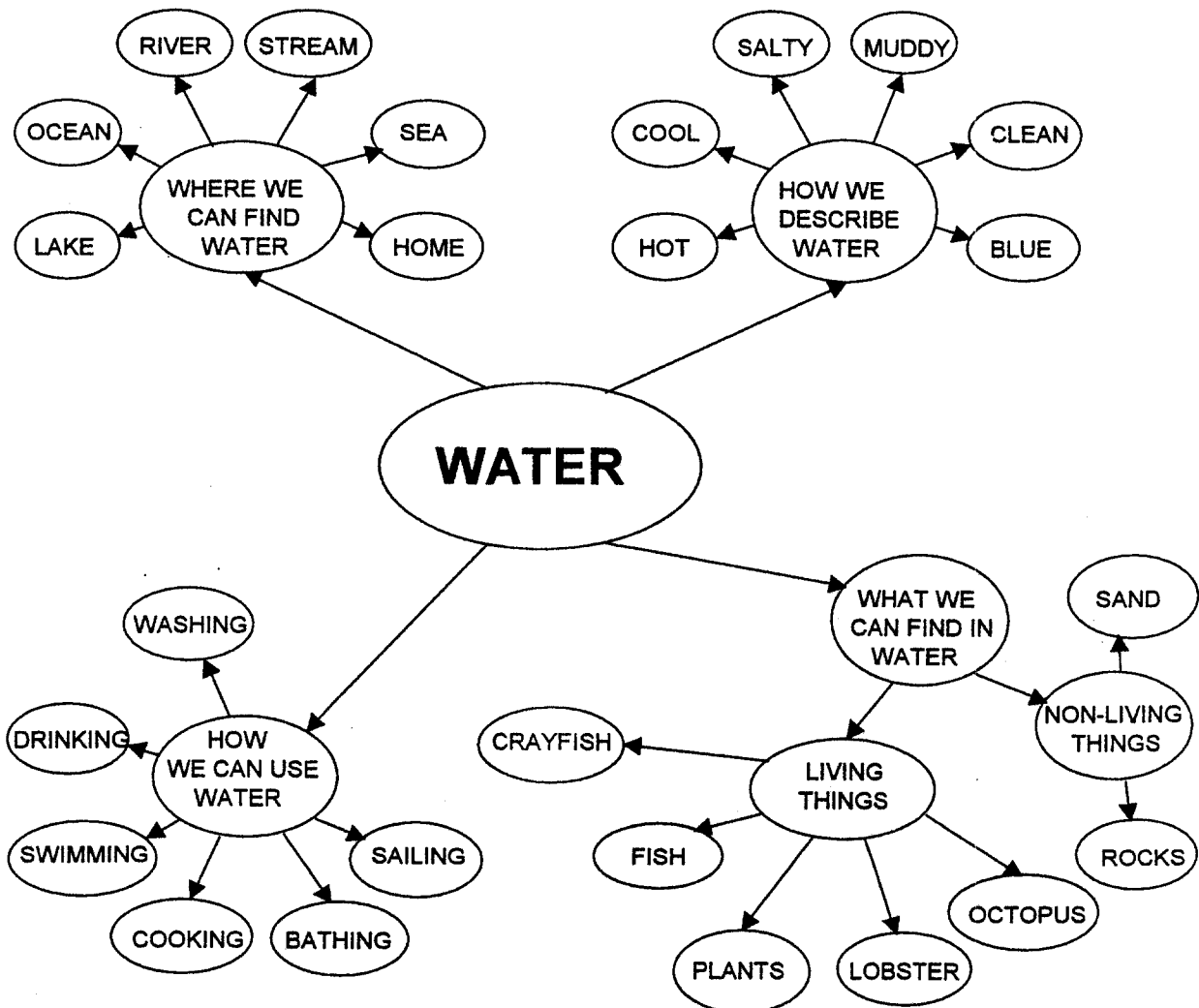


# Developing vocabulary

## Semantic mapping

Take one key word and develop categories and sub-categories of words and related words. Students can add to the map as they read.

*A sample of semantic mapping*



## Text structure

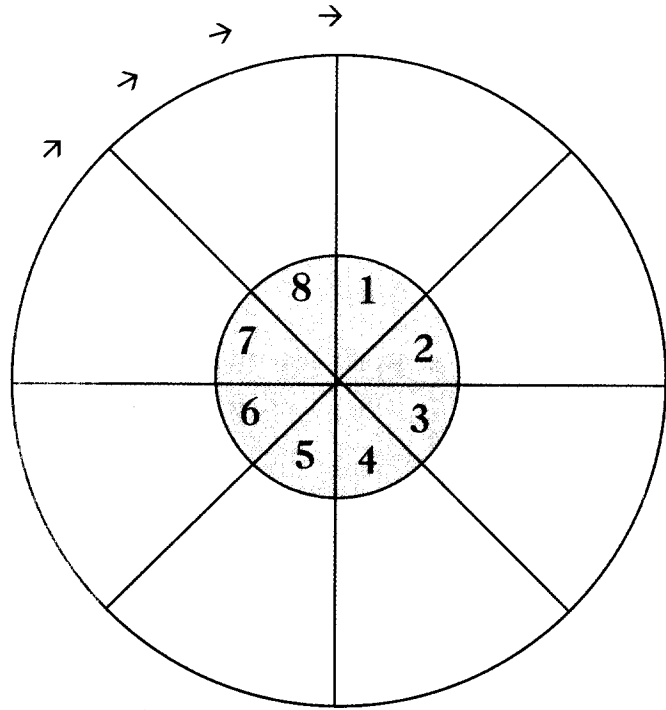
Various patterns of ideas are embedded in the organization of text. Examples are: description, narrative, cause/effect, comparison/contrast, problem/solution, story structure and sequence.

### Story circles to aid sequencing

24

Numbers enable students to develop the sequence in the proper direction. After reading the story, the teacher and students record events outside the circle.

Students illustrate appropriate events to the number of the pie-shaped segments in the Story Circle.



Story circle



The use of the story circle  
in training of trainers in Uganda



## Questioning

Strategy for generating answers

Questioning/Answer Relationship (QARs) was developed by Raphael in 1984. An activity which has shown that students are capable of generating and answering questions which facilitate their comprehension, and lead to an independent processing of text.

### Procedure:

The teacher demonstrates the key elements of QARs, then guides the students to engage in an activity of their own

The first question answering strategy, **Right there**, is to find the words used to formulate the question, and look at the other words in that sentence to find the answer. The answer is within a single sentence.

**Right there**

The second QAR strategy, **Think and search**, involves a question that has an answer in the text, but this answer requires information from more than one sentence or paragraph.

**Think and search**

The third QAR strategy, **On my own**, represents a question for which the answer must be found in the reader's background knowledge, but would not make sense unless the reader had read the text.

**On my one**

The fourth QAR strategy, **Writer and me**, is a slightly different interpretative question. The answer might be found in the reader's own background knowledge, but would be related to the reading of the text.

**Writer and me**

Teacher preparing for the class



## Information processing

What we **Know**, what we **Want** to find out, what we **Learn** and still need to learn (KWL). The KWL procedure, developed by Ogle in 1986, emphasizes the responsibility of the reader to decide what is known, and what needs to be learned. It is intended to activate, review, develop background knowledge, and to



**A KLW design.**

Know	Want to Know	Learned

set useful aims and tasks that will enable the student to be an active and independent learner.

Initially students will activate prior knowledge to record what they know about the topic, then list what they want to know, after reading they will list what they have learnt.

## Summarizing and sequencing

The ability to summarize apparently increases with age, but children in the middle and upper primary grades are able to delete important information in a text, and this gives practice in sequencing.

**Procedure:**

The teacher introduces a story, the students read silently to see how the plot develops. The teacher guides the students to develop the story frame, and instructs the class in writing one or two sentence summaries for a small portion of the text.

On the second reading of the text, the students will be assisted in determining the most important ideas, and how to combine these ideas, and summarize each page.

Children code summaries, and cut summary statements, and mix them; then they rearrange them in sequence. Children can make their own summary strips from other texts.

**Writing summaries:**

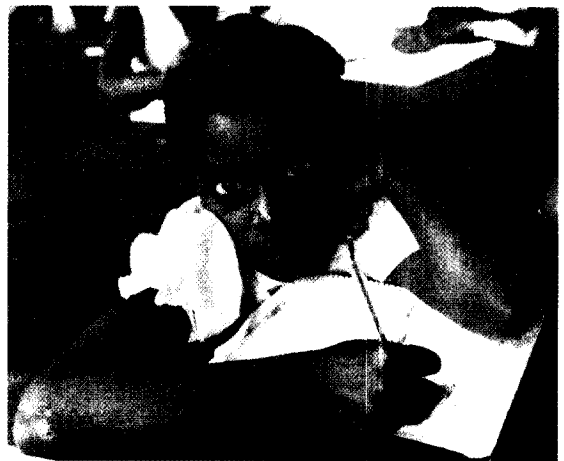
1. Look for the most important ideas that help us know about the problem, or the solution
2. State important ideas in your own words.
3. Combine ideas into one or two sentences.
4. Delete anything that repeats information.

**Note-taking:**

The recording of a group discussion about the text is another form of note-taking.

Thinking aloud has been found to be effective during reading as a means of facilitating recall and, during writing, as a means of organizing written work.

Thinking aloud: A metacognitive technique or strategy in which the teacher verbalizes aloud, while reading a selection orally, thereby modelling the process of comprehension.





Children in reading class

## Voluntary/ recreational reading

**S**tudies have shown that few children or adults choose reading as a source of information, or as a recreational activity. In order to enhance literacy, projects and programmes involving voluntary reading should be developed in schools, and public libraries, by making available a variety of reading materials which reflect children's interests.

This will motivate learners, and foster the self selection of materials by students, to encourage personal meaning-making. Teachers and students can also write and display materials. Parents, friends and relatives should be encouraged to give books to children as presents, and increase the number of printed materials in the home.



Grade 1 class in Uganda

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## Section 5

# Assessment of literacy learning

28

If children in the primary grades are to achieve literacy, the process of gathering data in order to understand better the strengths and weaknesses of students, must be integrated into classroom decision making. Also, teachers must become more adept at carrying out the process, and using information gathered, to modify instruction where necessary.

Teachers will need to be aware that assessment procedures should be based on identified goals, the programme established for literacy learning, including the integration in other areas of the curriculum, and student assessment of themselves. Some aspects of assessment procedures must be ongoing, as one-off measures do not facilitate knowledge of the development of students' progress.

Classroom based assessment for literacy learning includes the following:

- ◆ Observations
- ◆ Questioning and interviewing
- ◆ Sampling student work through portfolios
- ◆ Listening to oral reading tapes
- ◆ Using surveys, inventories and checklists
- ◆ Self assessment by students.

## Observations

Observation for assessment purposes involves more than examining classroom behaviour. Actions and speech on the playing field, and in the cafeteria, can produce useful information.

During classroom observations, teachers look for answers to specific questions, note many attributes of individual working styles, and observe what students can do individually and collectively. As students work in the various contexts of the classroom, teachers gain insight into their knowledge and strategies.

Teachers cannot document all observations, but noting some of them can facilitate reflection, and the sharing of information with students, parents, the principal, and the grade teacher.

Examples of documentation are: use a checklist, with appropriate statements as a guide to the observation of children's library selection strategies, observe the kinds of objects they bring to school, study a log of daily activities, and listen to conversations regarding current affairs.

*Use of rhythm  
in reading class*



## Literacy conference observation record

Student's name				
Date	Action during reading	Action during speaking	Action during writing	Self directed uses of literacy

## Sampling student work through portfolios

**P**erformance based assessments of reading often use written samples, such as summaries of what has been read, literature logs, or journals. Using writing to assess reading reflects the recognition of reading and writing as being interdependent.

Samples of children's work of all kinds complement teachers' observations, and provide a guide to the developmental stages of the learner. Samples offer concrete evidence of what students are doing and thinking. Analysis of the samples helps teachers to determine the new challenges for each learner, as well as guiding the teacher's instruction.

## Questioning and interviewing

**Q**uestioning and interviewing involve teacher/student interaction in the classroom. Questioning denotes the interaction between teacher and students which occurs in the classroom, while interviewing implies more structured interactions.

These interactions usually take place among individual students.

When classes are large, questionnaires or surveys which involve written responses can be used, e.g. to ascertain interest in the selections of topics for writing or reading.

*A question/answer relationship*, which has been mentioned elsewhere in this guide, serves for questioning. Story structured elements form useful guides for teachers in interactions about comprehension and composition, as a means of obtaining students' ideas for encouraging critical, thinking skills.

Examples of aspects of reading awareness that can be used as an instrument for an interview are given below:

Before you begin to read, what plans have you made to help you to read better?

1. You never make any plans. You just begin to read.
2. You select a comfortable seat.
3. You think about why you are reading.



## Using surveys, inventories and checklists

**S**urveys, inventories and checklists can be useful assessment guides, either in the written form, or by questioning. These instruments, if properly developed, and truthful responses are given, can reveal much about students' experiences in literacy, and about their attitudes, attributions and strategies.

A self report has been shown to be a valid way of assessing students' reading. This is an open-ended questionnaire, which examines many aspects of a student's life relating to leisure activities, family interactions, radio and television selections, clubs, pets, the library, wishes, career preferences, and favourite sport.

An Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) can be useful for identifying a student's reading levels (independent, instructional, and frustration), and provide an initial look at a student's strengths and weaknesses, based on analyses of word recognition miscues, and on the comprehension of passages read orally or silently. Teachers can construct and/or administer, and interpret, an IRI.

Checklists are very useful. A reading interest checklist comprises categories from which publications are available, and students indicate preferred choices. Another is a checklist, with appropriate statements, of a guide to the observation of children's library selection strategies.

## Self-assessment by students

Developments in literacy instruction indicate a greater student involvement in planning and monitoring learning. While students are taught strategies to enhance literacy learning, they will have to take responsibility for applying these strategies appropriately. Self-evaluation forms in specific areas of the literacy process can aid students in monitoring their competence.

Portfolios should include a diary or journal, in which students reflect on the progress they note in the entries.



*Writing is a pleasure*





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## Section 6

# Home – school partnership

**P**arental involvement must be fostered if literacy and learning are to be attained, and this should begin in the early years. Parents are the first teachers, and although there might not be a match between their cultural expectations for literacy and those of the school, efforts must be made by the school to encourage families to share literacy activities with children, and encourage conversation in the home.

In cultures that are rich in oral traditions, parents can share folk tales with the children. This enables them to appreciate storytelling in the classroom and helps to foster literacy in the language of the school. When teachers find themselves with much diversity in the classroom, attention must be given to what children bring with them as a framework, building on these experiences, in order to introduce them to more global forms of literacy. The activities of the school can be extended to the home, where parents can become partners in the learning process.

Partnership between the home and the school can be achieved if there is trust between teachers and parents, and efforts must be made to establish, and maintain, this under-

standing. An advantage of such a relationship is that teachers can know more about the home environment and the students, and be better able to help them to learn. Parents will also be more comfortable when visiting the school, and participating in parental activities.

Teachers must provide the structure for parents to help their children with reading, through suggested guidelines and activities. Parents also need to monitor homework, the selection and duration of television viewing, and listening to radio programmes, and provide materials to encourage reading and writing in the home, and establish family reading time.



*Mother and child reading*





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# Appendix I

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