

Module 6: Integrating the reading components in the classroom



Sesotho and IsiZulu Reading Project Study Materials

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Different individuals were involved in the writing of various modules. There were also language specialists who were involved in editing and versioning the modules into the various languages, and reading specialists involved in quality assurance. All names of individuals involved in these modules in some way or another are listed below:

Aitchison, JJW. University of KwaZulu-Natal

Cassiem, A. University of Johannesburg

Cele, RG. University of KwaZulu-Natal

Dawber, AEM. Literacy consultant

Hadebe, M. University of Johannesburg

Khasu, N. University of Johannesburg

Khohliso, X. University of Pretoria

Land, S. Durban University of Technology

Lyster, E. Literacy consultant

Magwaza, S. University of the Witwatersrand

Marais, LM. North-West University

Mthembu-Ngema, W. University of Zululand
Murray, S. Rhodes University
Nel, C. North-West University
Ntsala, S. University of the Free State
Phindane, PA. Central University of Technology
Posthumus, L. University of Johannesburg
Pretorius, EJ. University of South Africa
Ramabenyane, M. University of the Free State
Sibiya, D. University of Johannesburg
Simelane, FW. University of Johannesburg
Taylor, N. Jet Education Services
Theletsane, TT. University of the Free State
Thusi-Sefatsa, Z. Durban University of Technology
Vaz, M. University of Johannesburg
Xulu, SC. University of Zululand

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The purpose of this module

The purpose of this module is to help you integrate all the information about reading that you have gained from the different modules so far so that you can see, in a practical way, how knowledge of reading underpins and feeds into your daily classroom practice in Foundation Phase and reflects your professional attitudes and values as a reading teacher.

After working through the previous modules, student teachers will have gained a broader and deeper understanding of reading, its components, how it develops, and ways of teaching components. This module helps you integrate the previous content knowledge and pedagogic knowledge that you have gained about language and teaching reading in ways that are compatible with the curriculum and provides guidelines on how to plan and organise the literacy resources and activities in your classroom. This will help learners develop strong reading skills.

Outcomes

After studying this module, student teachers should be able to:

- understand the importance of organisation and planning in literacy teaching
- be able to organise, plan and manage the enabling factors in your classroom
- be able to organise and plan the Home Language literacy periods for the year/term/week and day (Read Alouds, Phonics, Handwriting/Writing, Shared Reading, and Group Guided Reading)
- be able to organise, plan and manage opportunities for language and vocabulary development in your classroom.

What literacy teacher standards are covered?

Module 6 is an integrative one. This means that essentially all the standards are covered. These standards can be downloaded from:

<https://www.jet.org.za/clearinghouse/projects/primted/standards/literacy-teacher-standards/literacy-teacher-standards-2020-1.pdf>

Unit 1: Seeing the bigger picture and its parts

Introduction

The English expression “*You can’t see the wood for the trees*” refers to a situation where one is so overwhelmed with details (the individual trees in a wood or forest) that one loses one’s way and cannot see the wood as a whole and where one is supposed to be going (the road through the wood or forest). The wood represents the bigger picture or **whole**, while all the different trees represent the **parts** that make up the wood/forest.

The whole that Foundation Phase teachers are aiming for is that all learners should be able to **read fluently, with comprehension and enjoyment**. Each and every grade teacher contributes to the achievement of this goal on a daily basis in different ways, by focusing on the different parts that contribute to the whole and making them work together.

Teachers often feel overwhelmed because reading is a complex phenomenon (it is made up of many different components) and the curriculum makes a lot of demands on them (teachers are expected to implement and coordinate lots of different activities to make learning happen). Teachers need to develop the skill of understanding the relationship between the whole and its parts in order to achieve the goal of learners reading with comprehension. This module adopts a step-by-step approach, shifting between the whole (a bird’s eye view or bigger picture) and its parts (the details).

In this first unit an overview is given of current official *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements* (CAPS) activities recommended by the curriculum (Department of Basic Education 2011) and also of typical enabling factors in the classroom, and then it zooms in on details, giving practical guidelines for what to do and how to do it, so that you can be an effective reading teacher. It also refers to the *National Framework for the teaching of Reading in African Languages in Foundation Phase* (Department of Basic Education 2021).

Although organisation and planning are dealt with specifically in Unit 2, they are common themes that occur throughout this module. References are also made to the previous modules so that all the information about reading and writing provided across the modules comes together in practical application.

Teaching is a very rewarding and fulfilling profession. However, it can also be challenging, especially when there are many barriers to learning. Sometimes teachers blame their learners, the parents or the schools for poor achievement. While these can indeed be real barriers to learning, in this module we focus on the aspects that teachers have control over. If you become aware of all aspects that you can manage and control in your classroom, you will avoid the ‘blame game’ and instead find yourself adopting an empowering ‘How can I best deal with it?’ approach to any problems that might arise in the classroom.

Some introductory terms and concepts

Certain assumptions are made about teaching and the curriculum in this module. Technical terms about instructions and teaching are used. Below are three comments about our assumptions and one about terminology related to instruction.

A learning-based approach to teaching

The traditional way of teaching is teacher-based where for much of the time the teacher stands in front of the class and teaches, and learners remain seated at their desks and listen to the teacher talking. While this way of whole-class teaching has some benefits (it is an efficient way of presenting knowledge to big groups), research has shown that learners learn better when they themselves are involved in different activities, in groups, pairs or on their own (particularly when they have to change their ideas in the process). This has been termed a learner-based approach. But this has sometimes led to extreme learner-based teaching where the teacher hardly teaches at all.

An alternative approach for optimum learning (adopted in this module) is to focus on what approach best promotes learning in the classroom for a particular purpose, referred to as a learning-based approach. At times this can be teacher-based and at times it can be more learner-based, and sometimes it can be a bit of both, depending on what the teaching/learning focus is and when in the daily schedule it happens, and it can involve the whole class, groups, pairs and individual activities.

The gradual release model of teaching (Pearson & Gallagher 1983; Fisher & Frey 2011, 2013; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 2018) is an example of learning-based teaching. The model typically has four stages:

- **I do it** [tell/show] – the teacher starts by explicitly explaining and modelling something [direct instruction by the teacher]
- **We do it** [guide] – the teacher gets the learners to do it, with the teacher facilitating the process [practice guided by the teacher]
- **You do it together** [collaborative work] – the learners collaborate to practise [practise, with reduced guidance from the teacher]
- **You do it alone** [individual work] – then the learners do it on their own [independent practice]

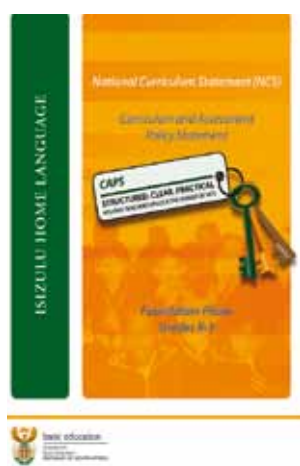
The **I do it** part is teacher-based, while the other parts are progressively more learner-based. **We do it together** and **You do it alone** parts are learner-based, thus combining the approaches in a way that helps focus attention on the appropriate learning process.

The reading and writing curriculum

The word curriculum originally comes from the Latin noun ‘curriculum’, which meant ‘a race, a racing chariot or a racetrack’ (Cassells Latin/English dictionary 1966). Applied to education, ‘curriculum’ is commonly used to mean the subjects comprising a programme or course of study in a school or college. It is the overall structure and content of what is taught, how it is taught, the learning intended and how it is assessed. Sometimes the meaning is expanded to cover the total provision of an educational institution.

The official curriculum is what is laid down in the syllabus or curriculum policy statements of the providers of education. It is often formal with an explicit, organised or timetabled curriculum that is certificated. The actual curriculum is what really happens in the learning and teaching situation. This may include intended, unintended and unfulfilled learning outcomes.

When it comes to the teaching of reading and writing in South African schools there are two main official curriculum documents and it is important for teachers to familiarise themselves with these documents:



Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) of 2011 for Grades R to 9 (left)



National Framework for the teaching of Reading in African Languages in Foundation Phase of 2021 for Grades 1 to 3. (right)

Terms used in relation to teaching

The terms ‘approaches’, ‘strategies’, ‘methods’ and ‘techniques’ are often used in describing teaching and instruction. Unfortunately, these terms are often used in loose and variable ways. Generally, teaching **approaches** and **strategies** refer to the broad way the instruction is conceptualised and delivered, and **methods** and **techniques** are the more specific ways of implementing the programme of instruction.

An **approach** includes educational principles and philosophical, theoretical, political and scientific ideas and beliefs about what happens in teaching and how learning takes place. It is the way the curriculum or teachers view teaching and learning, which is translated into specific classroom activities.

A **strategy** is how the overall plan of teaching will be implemented, for example it might be

largely lecture-based or use only groupwork, and usually includes the overall sequencing and timetabling of a programme or course. The strategy chosen will influence the choice of methods and techniques.

Based upon the purpose of the programme or module and its strategic plan, at a tactical level, appropriate instructional **methods** are chosen. These could be, for example, individual, group, or mass or online methods. The methods chosen will depend on whether the purpose is to communicate information or knowledge, develop skills or performance, or change attitudes or values (or all three), as well as the nature of the target learners, the time and resources available, as well as whether one- or two-way communication is involved. There is a huge range of methods and even more specific **techniques** appropriate to various group sizes and activities.

Sometimes **CAPS** refers to the specific methods and techniques used in teaching learners as ‘strategies’. This is not to be confused with the well-known term, reading strategies, that is used in the field of reading.

The term **methodologies** is also frequently misused as a synonym for any of the above. The term ‘methodology’, correctly used, refers to **the systematic, theoretical study of methods applied to a field of study**, not to any particular method or set of methods. It should not be used as a synonym for teaching method or methods.

The CAPS curriculum

The *Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)* is a general but detailed curriculum outline and also a very detailed syllabus of topics (the curriculum statement for isiZulu is 128 pages and for Sesotho 140 pages, while that of English home language is 142 pages).

Because the **CAPS** documents for African languages were translated rather than versioned from the English, adjustments for the differences between teaching reading in English and the African languages needed to be made. This was addressed in *The National Framework for the Teaching of Reading in the African Languages in Foundation Phase*, which provides more detailed guidance for the African languages.

CAPS encourages differentiated teaching, which means that teaching and learning activities vary between whole-class teaching, group and paired work, or children working individually. In other words, teachers are expected to move away from using traditional, whole-class teaching methods all the time and instead adopt a more ‘gradual release of responsibility’ learning-based approach.

To do so, **CAPS** requires Foundation Phase teachers to develop learners’ reading and writing skills (in both home language (HL) and First Additional Language (FAL) through the use of seven main teaching strategies/methods and two support techniques, namely:

- Listening and Speaking (L&S)
- Shared Reading (SR)

- Phonics
- Handwriting
- Writing
- Group Guided Reading (GGR)
 - Paired Reading (PR)
 - Independent Reading (IR)
- Read Alouds.

Paired Reading and Independent Reading are techniques best used alongside Group Guided Reading, when the teacher is busy working with a specific group of learners, as these provide reading practice and can be done by learners on their own.

In this module these CAPS strategies will be referred to as methods (to avoid confusion with the term ‘reading strategies’ that is commonly used in the field of reading and which refers to specific techniques that learners can be taught to help them read better). CAPS recommends that all these methods should be organised in roughly 15-minute slots or mini ‘lessons’. They have been summarised and colour coded in Figure 1 below.

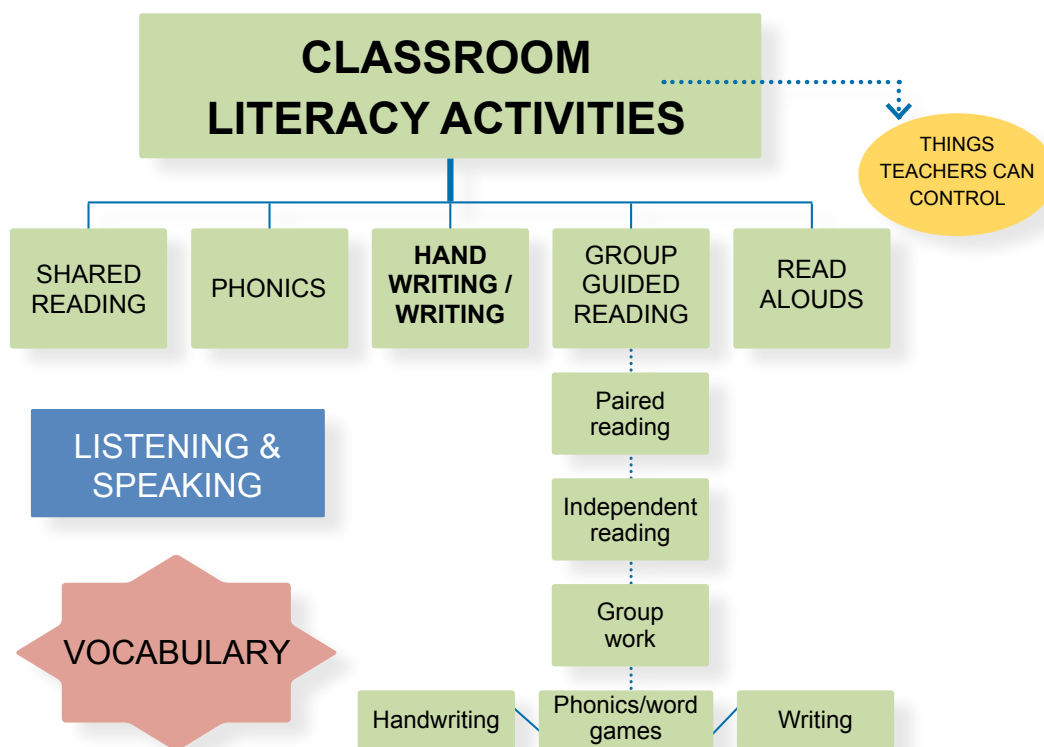


Figure 1: Main CAPS methods for developing language and teaching reading and writing

The block in blue (Listening & Speaking) focuses primarily on spoken or oral language while the blocks in green include teaching/learning activities that focus primarily on written language

(reading and writing). Though oral language is used to teach about written language, you can clearly see that the main pedagogic focus is on helping children become familiar with written language.

Vocabulary is not listed as a separate component in **CAPS** and it does not have its own 15-minute slot. This is not because it is unimportant but because vocabulary is integral to all the other activities and should be taught in all of the six main methods and further reinforced or developed in paired reading, individual reading and in writing activities.

CAPS allocates specific times to be spent on the different components (usually 15 minutes), according to the grades. Grade 1 times are given in Table 1:

Table 1: CAPS Allocation of Grade 1 Home Language teaching time

Method	Time allocation	Time per week
Listening and speaking	15 minutes per day on 3 days	45 minutes
Phonics	15 minutes per day on 5 days	1 hour 15 minutes
Shared Reading	15 minutes per day on 3 days	45 minutes
Group Guided Reading	30 mins per day (2 groups each for 15 minutes) on five days	2 hours 30 minutes
Handwriting	15 mins per day on 4 days	1 hour
Writing	15 mins per day on 3 days	45 minutes
	Total time per week	7 hours

No times are specifically allocated for Read Alouds, the assumption being that they will be slotted in wherever possible – they can even be done in the Life Skills part of the curriculum, where a story can be used to exemplify the theme of the week.

There will be some shift in the time allocated to Phonics because Phonics needs to be taught only for as long as it takes to cover all the phonemes (and blends) of the language. That should be done by the first or second term of Grade 2. Thereafter the focus in Phonics shifts to developing reading fluency.

Table 2 below shows how the overall goal of the Foundation Phase is supported in each of the reading methods and activities and which aspects of literacy each method develops (as will be detailed in later units of this module).

Table 2: Summary of the different methods recommended by CAPS

Method	What it does
Listening and Speaking	Helps develop oral language proficiency and vocabulary, which supports oral communication skills. Language proficiency and vocabulary make learning to read and write easier, and support decoding, reading comprehension, background information and cognitive development.
Phonics	Letter-sound relationships are explicitly and systematically taught; learners are taught how to blend and segment letter-sounds so that they can recognise new words. Used to develop decoding to high levels of mastery.
Group Guided Reading	This has learners reading aloud from the same appropriate level book in a guided ability reading group with the teacher. The teacher gets each learner in the group to read aloud from the same text. This enables her to know each learner's progress, identify problem areas early and remedy them promptly. Can be used to focus on honing decoding, fluency or reading comprehension, depending on the needs of each ability group.
Shared reading	<p>The teacher models how to read a text to the whole class over several rereads. It often involves the teacher holding an enlarged size text (a "big book") which has a limited amount of well structured, repetitive and predictable text and good, clear illustrations. The teacher takes the learners through three readings of the text on different days, constantly checking that they are following the text.</p> <p>The teacher can do different things: draw attention to language (e.g. vocabulary, agreement, tenses) or text features (punctuation, sentence/paragraph boundaries); model reading strategies, discuss story elements, etc.</p>
Paired Reading	<p>Learners work in pairs, taking turns to read to each other and providing corrective feedback. They can practise decoding, fluency or reading comprehension, depending on their needs.</p> <p>The text should be reasonably easy. This encourages them to read well in a supportive environment. Often a stronger reader is paired with a weaker reader.</p> <p>In paired reading two readers read aloud in unison. In echo reading a fluent reader reads a section of text (sentence or paragraph) aloud and the less fluent reader repeats the text aloud as they point to the words they are reading.</p> <p>For learners who come from homes where there is little homework support, paired reading provides valuable reading practice time in school hours.</p>

Independent Reading	<p>Learners with sufficient decoding skills to read on their own can go to the Book Corner and select a book to read quietly on their own. This provides practice time for decoding, fluency, comprehension, exposure to new words in print, and opportunities to enjoy the benefits of reading.</p> <p>Learners who develop good decoding skills can switch to silent reading. For some good readers this can happen in Grade 2 already. Though silent reading is obviously harder to monitor than reading aloud, teachers can regularly check whether learners have comprehended a text. Independent silent reading should certainly start by Grade 3, but still be backed up by regular oral reading in Grade 3.</p> <p>Independent reading can be done during Group Guided Reading while teacher is busy with a specific group, or when learners have completed their work.</p>
Handwriting/Writing	<p>The alphabetic writing system (letter sounds) and its conventions (spelling, punctuation, sentence/ paragraph/ argument development) and handwriting are explicitly taught.</p> <p>In Writing, learners are given guidance and practice in how to structure their thoughts in writing in a coherent way, using paragraphs, and how to write different types of text according to genre conventions.</p>
Read Alouds	<p>The teacher models fluent reading of a text and nurtures enjoyment of a story. Children develop vocabulary and reading comprehension skills and increase their general knowledge through exposure to different topics in the texts and both narrative and information texts.</p>

These are all aspects of reading over which teachers largely have control. How well teachers plan and organise these literacy activities and how well they teach them influences how well the learners learn to read and write.

Later units in this module (Units 5-8) show in greater detail what a weekly CAPS timetable can look like and how all components can be fitted into daily and weekly classroom practices.

The National Framework for the Teaching of Reading in African Languages in Foundation Phase

This document was published by the Department of Basic Education in 2020 and is intended to provide more specific support and guidance in the teaching of early reading in African languages. It still conforms to the **CAPS** timetabling hours and much attention is given to the **CAPS** focus on Group Guided Reading.

It provides clear exposition of the systematic teaching needed for reading and it gives attention

to decoding (p. 12, 19-24), automaticity and oral reading fluency (pp. 13-14), comprehension (pp. 37-65) and reader response (pp. 66-69).

Decoding is highlighted, as seen in this quote from page 12:

Teaching children to decode in the early years of schooling (i.e. in Grade 1) is very important as this gives them entry into the written word. Without strong decoding skills, learners will be unable to develop comprehension skills which enables them to become fluent and independent readers. However, decoding itself is not reading – it is a component of reading. It is a means to reading, not the end point. Together with decoding, teachers also develop reading comprehension abilities and build up learners' language and vocabulary skills. All these aspects of reading happen in tandem.

Each component of the **Framework** is presented in a way that clearly informs the teacher of the following:

- What is the component?
- Why is it important?
- When do I teach it?
- How do I assess it?
- What resources are needed?
- How do I identify cracks? [the barriers learners experience]
- What do I need to remember?

The **Framework** also gives attention to the need to integrate all the language components in the lesson (pp. 86-98) and looks at the enablers that impact on effective literacy teaching (pp. 101-103).

Pause and think

Why are the instructional periods fairly short in Foundation Phase?

South African research on classroom practices in the Foundation Phase found that teachers often spend 40 minutes or more on a single activity in a teacher-fronted way, such as when teaching phonics (Hoadley 2012; Khosa 2021). When asked about this, many teachers say that CAPS does not provide enough time for teaching.

What do you think?

Does a teaching/learning activity of 40 minutes in Foundation Phase align with what we know about the early cognitive development of young learners? Will it produce better results?

Food for thought

The main reason for having short 15-20-minutes lesson is because young learners have a short attention span and can usually only effectively concentrate and learn in short time frames, with a change of activity every 15-20 minutes. By the time learners move to Intermediate Phase they are better able to cope with longer lessons.

Spending much more time teaching an activity does not necessarily produce better results. In Khosa's (2021) study, teachers who spent far more than 15 minutes on phonics did not teach it explicitly or effectively; they used whole class chorusing activities where all the learners read whole words from flashcards, and the teachers never checked whether individual learners could read the words or identify letters/sounds within syllables or words. The learners had very poor phonics knowledge at the end of the year and very few could read any words.

Well-organised Foundation Phase teachers use their teaching time to maximum effect in shorter slots, use methods that have been shown to be effective, stay clearly focused on their lesson aims and keep their learners engaged and busy on their tasks.

Enabling factors

We turn now to something else that influences what happens in teachers' classrooms – the so-called enabling factors. These are factors in the classroom over which teachers have control.

An enabling factor is something that supports or helps something else. An enabling factor makes something else easier or possible. There are several important enabling factors for literacy, some of which are listed here, that are present either outside the classroom (home and environmental factors) or inside the classroom, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Enabling factors outside and inside the classroom

Factors outside the classroom	Factors inside the classroom
Physical well-being	Safe and supportive classroom which is well organised with well-established routines
Safe and orderly environment	
Socio-economic well-being	Well-resourced classroom
Language and vocabulary use in the home	Language use in the classroom (rich teacher talk)
Home language	Language of instruction same as mother tongue

Literacy environment in the home	Literacy environment in the classroom (print-rich classroom)
Literacy environment in the community	
Parents' level of literacy	Teacher's level of literacy
Encouragement of child's (emergent) literacy	Encouragement of child's motivation and self-regulation

Teachers cannot do much about the literacy environment outside the school, but they have a lot of control over the literacy environment inside the classroom.

Key enabling factors include a classroom that shows **good organisation, planning and routines**, a **print-rich** and **language-rich classroom**, teachers who create a **safe and supportive classroom environment** with clear **routines**, and teachers who help learners to **self-regulate their behaviour** and who **motivate** them effectively. Figure 2 shows these enabling factors in relation to the literacy activities recommended by CAPS.

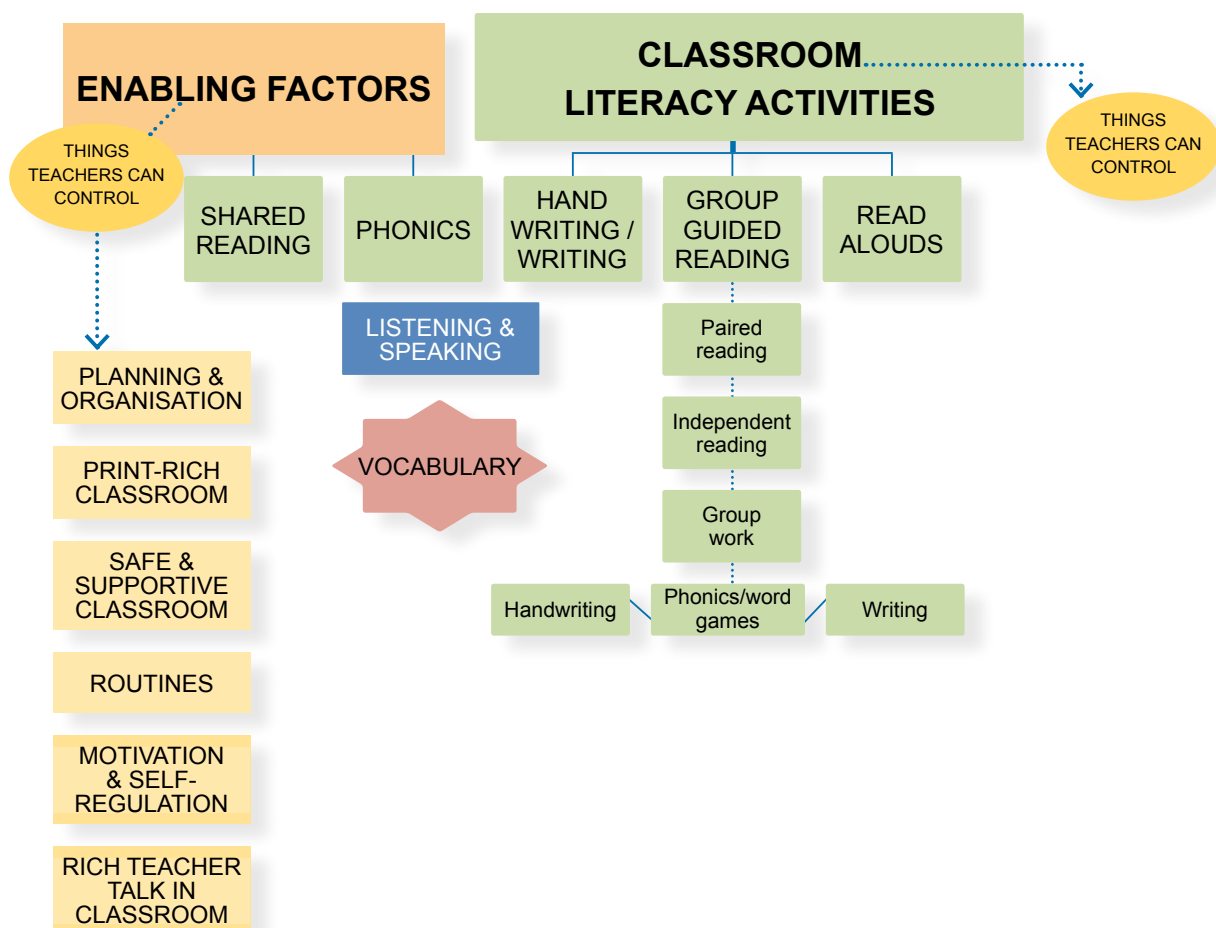


Figure 2: Enabling factors that support literacy development in the classroom

Conclusion of overview

This unit has provided an overview of how all the different trees (the different curriculum methods and enabling factors) together form the larger wood or forest (the whole / the bigger curriculum picture) of early language and literacy teaching.

In the next two units of this module all the different parts and how they fit into the whole are examined. First the enabling factors **in the classroom** are discussed, starting with organisation and planning (Unit 2), because these skills determine everything else that happens in the classroom. Then the focus shifts to routines, motivation and self-regulation (Unit 3) and the importance of a print-rich classroom and rich teacher talk (Unit 4). Thereafter, in Units 5-8, attention shifts to the different **teaching methods** and lesson slots recommended in the curriculum.

Self-assessment activities

These are ‘quickie’ assessment activities to check how well you have understood key concepts discussed in this unit and whether you are able to perceive the pedagogical implications of such concepts in the teaching of reading.

Note: The key to these self-assessment activities is given in the Appendix at the end of this module. If you score less than 6/8 (75%) for these questions you are advised to re-read the unit again to strengthen your content and pedagogic knowledge.

1. In each of the statements below provide **the appropriate missing word (or words)**. (6)
 - a) By the end of Foundation Phase all learners should display three abilities when reading: they should be able to read _____, with _____ and _____.
 - b) The gradual release model is associated with a _____-based approach to teaching.
 - c) _____ teaching is a teaching approach that caters to each child and varies between whole-class teaching, group and paired work, or children working individually.
 - d) Paired Reading and _____ Reading are two reading techniques that learners can do on their own in Group Guided Reading while the teacher is busy with a specific group of learners.
 - e) In _____, learners are put in same ability groups so that they can practise reading at their level.

2. Indicate which one of the following statements is **false**. (1)

- a) Most of the literacy activities in Foundation Phase comprise short 15-20-minute lesson slots to accommodate the shorter attention span of young learners in Foundation Phase.
- b) Planning and organisation are done by senior teachers and those in leadership positions in schools so that teachers are freed up to focus on teaching details in the classroom.
- c) Teachers who are aware of how the daily lesson details fit into the bigger literacy goal in Foundation Phase are more likely to adopt a solution orientation to reading challenges that learners face.
- d) In Read Alouds, a teacher can draw learners' attention to a particular topic and as such, Read Alouds can also be done in teaching time allocated to Numeracy or Life Skills.

3. Indicate which of the following statements is the **correct** one. (1)

- a) Vocabulary is not a separate lesson slot in CAPS because it is not as important in Home Language since learners can speak the language.
- b) Vocabulary should be taught mainly in Listening and Speaking.
- c) Vocabulary is not a separate lesson slot in CAPS because it can be taught throughout the day.
- d) Vocabulary should be taught mainly in Listening and Speaking and Group Guided Reading.

Unit 2: Organising and planning

Preliminary reading

National Framework for the Teaching of Reading in African Languages in Foundation Phase

Section 4: The enablers that impact effective reading programmes (pp. 101-103)

Introduction

Organisation and planning are important in the school context. Surprisingly, however, few Bachelor of Education programmes explicitly train students to be efficient organisers and planners. This unit provides teachers with guidelines and tips for coordinating all the different aspects of literacy so that they can put their classrooms in order, keep it safe, and create enthusiasm and harmony in the class.

Pause and think

What are classrooms like?

Imagine you are doing your teaching practice and you are looking round the school where you have been placed. Look at the photographs below taken in Foundation Phase classrooms in typical schools in South Africa.

Place a circle around the tick ✓ (Yes) if you would like to teach in, or be a learner in, the classroom where each photo was taken, or put a circle around the ✗ (No) if you would not like it.



①

Yes ☐ No ☐



②

Yes ☐ No ☐



③

Yes ☐ No ☐



④

Yes ☐ No ☐



⑤

Yes ☐ No ☐



⑥

Yes ☐ No ☐



⑦

Yes ☐ No ☐



⑧

Yes ☐ No ☐



⑨

Yes ☐ No ☐



⑩

Yes ☐ No ☐

What did you find?

Think what it was you liked or disliked about each photo that made you put a tick or cross next to it. What does the appearance of the classroom suggest about the teacher?

You will probably find that the photos to which you gave positive ticks (2, 3, 4 and 8) are ones that show aspects of a well-organised classroom – these pictures create a good impression because they show that things are tidy, one can find things easily, the teacher seems to know what is going on and has things under control. She seems to care because she has tried. She also cares about the welfare of her learners because she does not expect them to carry a bag on their back all the time (as suggested in photo 5) and gets them to store their bags neatly against a wall instead (photo 6).

Research shown a relationship between organisation and planning and learner performance – learners with well-organised teachers and orderly classrooms learn better than those who have disorganised and messy classrooms.

What is organisation and planning?

Being organised means being able to sort out different things, see how they are related and use them together. Words or phrases associated with ‘organise’ include to *coordinate* different things, to *harmonise*, to *straighten out*, to *put in order*. One can organise one’s space (e.g. a classroom, a cupboard), one’s time (how much time one spends on an activity) or the things one uses on a regular basis (e.g. classroom furniture, classroom resources, print resources).

Planning refers to preparing for something in advance so that one has a clear idea of what one needs to do and how to do it. One can plan things in one’s head (e.g. *What will I wear tomorrow? What will I have for breakfast tomorrow before I leave for school?*), but when one plans something more complex (*What am I going to teach this term/week and how?*), it is best to put one’s plan down on paper, otherwise some details might be forgotten or overlooked. Part of organisation and planning is also **maintenance**. It is no use organising things or planning to do something if you do not follow up on your plans and manage them on a daily and weekly basis.

Of course, you need to be well organised to have time for planning! Organisation and planning go hand-in-hand. You can plan more effectively if you have a good plan in your head – and on paper.

Planning takes place at three levels:

1. **Macro** (large) planning refers to bigger-picture planning over a longer stretch of time, like a year. One always starts one’s planning with the bigger picture in mind, and with the end goal in mind.
2. **Meso** (middle) level planning – this refers to middle-level planning, like the term.
3. **Micro** (small) planning refers to shorter-term planning, like for the week or the day or for a lesson. Planning at the micro level helps one achieve one’s macro and meso level plans. So micro planning also involves planning across the week (*When am I going to teach Shared Reading this week?*), and for each day (*What am I going to do on each day that I teach Shared Reading?*).

Why are organisation and planning important?

Good organisation and planning apply to all aspects of our lives and are important life skills. They help us manage the complexity of life, they help us chunk activities into smaller, manageable pieces, and they give us a sense of direction. There are advantages to having organisational and planning skills in the workplace – people who are successful in their professions are usually good at organising and planning. Research has shown that good teachers tend to be well organised and plan different teaching activities in advance.

Being a good teacher requires a high level of organisation and training. Being a good Foundation Phase teacher in particular requires good planning and organisation for three reasons:

1. A Foundation Phase teacher does not only teach one subject but has to teach literacy, numeracy, and life skills.

2. Reading is complex and comprises different components (phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary), all of which require instructional time and different ways of teaching them.
3. The *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)* is a detailed and demanding curriculum that requires teachers to apply different teaching methods and at the same time cater to the needs of learners with different ability levels and at different stages of learning. The *National Framework for the Teaching of Reading in African Languages in Foundation Phase* is also detailed and complex.

All these reasons call for good planning and organisation. Good organisation and planning in the classroom context are important for the following reasons:

- They make you aware of the relationship between the whole and the parts (the bigger picture of what the curriculum requires and how the details fit into the bigger picture).
- They help to ensure that you cover the curriculum. They make you aware of what you need to do for the year, term, week and day.
- They ensure that **all** language and literacy skills (whether in home language or first additional language) are taught in a comprehensive and well-balanced way.
- They help you to use the resources you have in the most efficient and effective way.
- They allow you to reflect on what you have taught and consolidate your work.
- They allow for differentiated teaching that is tailored to the individual learner's different needs.
- They help you to know what to assess and when.
- They help you to maximise teaching days and teaching time. Well-organised teachers are less likely to go over time, waste time or be absent.
- Done successfully they give you a sense of achievement and at the same time make you aware of areas that still need attention.
- They enable you to have the right information when you need it, and that helps to build your confidence as a professional. If the subject advisor, principal or Head of Department pays an unexpected visit to your classroom or asks you about your class's progress, or if a parent comes to see you about their child's progress, you will have a much better idea of what is going on, you won't be defensive about your teaching, and you will be happy for them to visit your classroom.

Guidelines for organising

Things that can be organised in the classroom include the following:

- **Teacher's cupboard:** Is it a mess, cluttered and full of old or torn things not used anymore? Clear it out, clean and reorganise it; decide what you will store on each shelf. Use labels for each shelf to help you stick to this plan.

- **Teacher's table:** Is it cluttered and messy, piled high with unsorted, dusty papers and leftover food? Clear it, clean it, put a cloth over it. Decide what you will keep on your table, what goes into the cupboard and what goes into the dustbin.
- **Book corner:** Is there a book corner? Is it neglected and unappealing? If you don't have bookshelves, use planks and bricks or boxes stacked on each other. Sort out the books into levels of difficulty and language – have one section for home language books and another section for first additional language books. Label each section clearly. Put a Poster above with Rules for handling books. Place a small mat and three to four cushions on the floor where learners can sit comfortably. Make the corner look inviting.
- **Classroom layout:** How is the furniture (desks, chairs, table, cupboards, bookshelves, etc.) arranged in the classroom? Can it be arranged differently, in a way that is more learning centred and allows for more mobility? Is there broken furniture? Take it out and ask for it to be fixed or replaced.
- **Resources:** Do an audit of all the resources in the classroom. These include:
 - ▶ *books, textbooks, readers, dictionaries, atlas*
 - ▶ *exercise books*
 - ▶ *flashcards*
 - ▶ *files*
 - ▶ *posters*

Throw out old, dusty and torn resources, fix those that can be fixed. Tidy up the resources and find proper places for them to be stored.

Guidelines for planning

When it comes to planning use the following guidelines:

1. Always start with the bigger picture, the **macro** plan. In Foundation Phase this should be done at the start of the year with the whole Foundation Phase team (Grade R, Grade 1, 2 and 3 teachers plus the HOD for Foundation Phase). Take note of the Foundation Phase goals for the year for each grade (benchmarks, thresholds), when public holidays and school holidays occur, and when important school events occur (e.g. sporting or cultural events). Each teacher should have a year calendar at hand to highlight these non-teaching days and plan around them.
2. Next, move on to the **meso** level. This involves planning for the term ahead. This should be done separately for each grade, with all the grade-level teachers working in three separate groups (or four groups, if Grade R teachers are involved in the planning). Take note of public holidays or other events that will result in non-teaching days.
3. Finally, plan details at the **micro** level, indicating what you are going to do across the

week (horizontal plans) and details for each day (vertical plans). You will need a plan for the week, including what resources you will use. You can develop a weekly template for your micro-level plans. You can do your weekly plans with a colleague, or all the grade-level teachers can plan this together each week, or the teachers within a grade can take turns to plan each week.

4. It is helpful to have a diary in which you make notes and keep track of things. Make sure you have access to a calendar that shows the whole year, the months and the weeks. You can print weekly calendars from the Internet for your micro weekly lesson plans or you can create your own template for weekly plans. The HOD or grade head might have a template for your use.

The different levels of planning are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of the different levels of planning

	Type of plan	Length of time	When	Who	Resources	Goals
1	Macro	Year	Start of year	HOD and team	Year calendar	For the whole Foundation Phase for the year
2	Meso	Term	Start of term	Grade team (e.g., all Grade 1 teachers)	Term calendar	For the term
3	Micro	Week	Friday afternoon or weekend	Teacher	Week calendar	For the week
4	Micro	Day	Friday afternoon or weekend	Teacher	Lesson plans for the day	For each day

A lesson planning aid



Watch videos from the **Funda Wande** website (<https://fundawande.org/video-resources>). They can be freely downloaded. Each video is quite short (about three to four minutes), so it won't take up much time but each one is inspiring and thought-provoking. They are in isiXhosa but have English subtitles.

Video 91 is about the different CAPS activities (in Reading for Meaning Course Module 1), while video 249 relates to planning (in Reading for Meaning Course Module 12).

Tips for Professional Growth

Not everyone is well organised, and some people are better planners than others. If you are not typically a tidy, organised or methodical person you might find this aspect of your teaching challenging. However, because organising and planning are so important for quality teaching, these are skills that you will need to develop.

Below are some tips

1. Take small steps. Sort out and organise one thing first. For example, start with the teacher table: is it dusty and untidy? What impression does it create for someone stepping into your classroom for the first time? How can it be improved?
2. Take another small step with planning. Plan one thing first: for example, start with your phonics lesson, which is fairly straightforward and follows a predictable structure. Once you've got used to organising and planning your phonics lessons and the resources you need for it, then start on the next lesson activity, e.g. Listening and Speaking or Shared Reading.
3. Share your weekly planning with a colleague, either by planning the weekly lessons together or taking turns. A shared problem is a halved problem. This helps you bounce ideas off someone, it makes the planning process more interesting, and less onerous, and it enables you to discuss what worked well and what did not work well.
4. Maintenance is an important part of organisation and planning. Look after your spaces – if they get cluttered up and untidy again, tidy them up. At the beginning of each term, take stock of your classroom – what needs to be tidied, improved, made more orderly?
5. Take 'before' and 'after' photos of your classroom, the teacher table, the cupboard, the walls, the book corner, etc. Print them out and paste them in a project book or keep a digital file, recording dates when you took the photos. Have a look at them at the end of each term to remind yourself what you have achieved so far, and what can be changed or improved in the term ahead.
6. Keep a journal or diary (for your eyes only) in which you write about concerns and problems and what solutions you found for them (e.g. *Jabu comes to school looking very tired and fell asleep in class twice this week – I must contact his mother. My weak ability group don't know their letter sounds well yet – I need to give them extra practice activities*), or about nice and rewarding things that happened during the week (*For the first time this term Sipho could read all the words of the week fluently without a mistake. Lerato told me that she read a book this weekend on his own. Nathi's mother came to see me, and she said my classroom looked nice.*) This helps you keep focused and also serves as a reminder of all the challenges you have already overcome.

7. Set small short-term goals for yourself each week. These easy-to-achieve goals give you an immediate sense of achievement and encourage you to keep going.

Organising, planning and managing a safe and supportive classroom environment

To be able to create and maintain a safe and supportive classroom environment where learning happens, teachers need to be aware of the different aspects that make up a safe and supportive classroom and how to plan and manage the different parts to make the whole effective.

What is a safe and supportive classroom?

A safe and supportive classroom is one in which learning can happen more easily because learners feel secure, respected and supported. There are clear rules, boundaries and routines in the classroom and learners know what is expected of them. It is also a classroom where learners have been taught to self-regulate their behaviour (discussed below). The classroom is a physically safe space (there are no sharp objects or obstacles in the room that can hurt a child) as well as an emotionally and mentally or cognitively safe space (there is no unkindness, bullying or mockery, and learning is taken seriously). Learners can express their feelings or ideas or make mistakes without fear of being chided, mocked or laughed at.

Why is a safe and supportive classroom environment important?

Teachers and learners spend up to six or more hours a day together in the same room, often under fairly cramped conditions. It is important that this time is spent in harmony rather than in stress and conflict. A safe and supportive classroom provides the following advantages:

- It nurtures good relations between teacher and learners and between learners. Learners enjoy their lessons so there is less learner absenteeism. Teachers enjoy teaching and there is less teacher absenteeism.
- It enables cooperation and companionship. There are many children in the classroom, all with different personalities, interests and abilities. They need to learn to work together and be tolerant of their differences. The teacher models and helps this and shows them how to behave accordingly.
- It supports learning. Many learners may come from chaotic, dysfunctional, and even abusive homes where cooperative behaviour is not valued. The classroom should be a safe haven for them where they can flourish to be the best they can.

Guidelines for organising and maintaining a safe and supportive classroom environment

Think carefully about what kind of ‘house rules’ will be helpful for you and the learners in creating a safe and supportive classroom so that the literacy time is used effectively to achieve the goal of learners becoming good readers.

At the start of the year:

- Ask the class what their hopes and expectations are for the year (you might be surprised and moved by their answers!). Then talk to them about what your expectations and hopes for them are (e.g. you expect them all to become good at numeracy and reading), and that you are there to support all of them to achieve this goal.
- Explain that learning does not just happen, that we need to concentrate, work hard, practise new things, and that we make mistakes along the way, that mistakes are a normal part of learning. Remind them of this throughout the year. (This is part of a growth mindset, motivation and self-regulation, which are discussed below.)
- Ask them what kind of classroom environment they think is beneficial or favourable for learning and discuss this with them.
- Explain that you need some ‘house rules’ in the class (what kind of behaviour you expect from them).

Have a theme that links the house rules with what you’re trying to achieve. An example is given in Figure 3 below, where **Rules for Learning** is the main theme with three supporting subthemes – being **considerate** of others, being **efficient** in what one does and **engaging** with learning and one’s work. Although the focus here is on learning, in the process children learn general life skills of being respectful and tolerant, of working together in harmony with others and of self-regulating their own actions and behaviour.

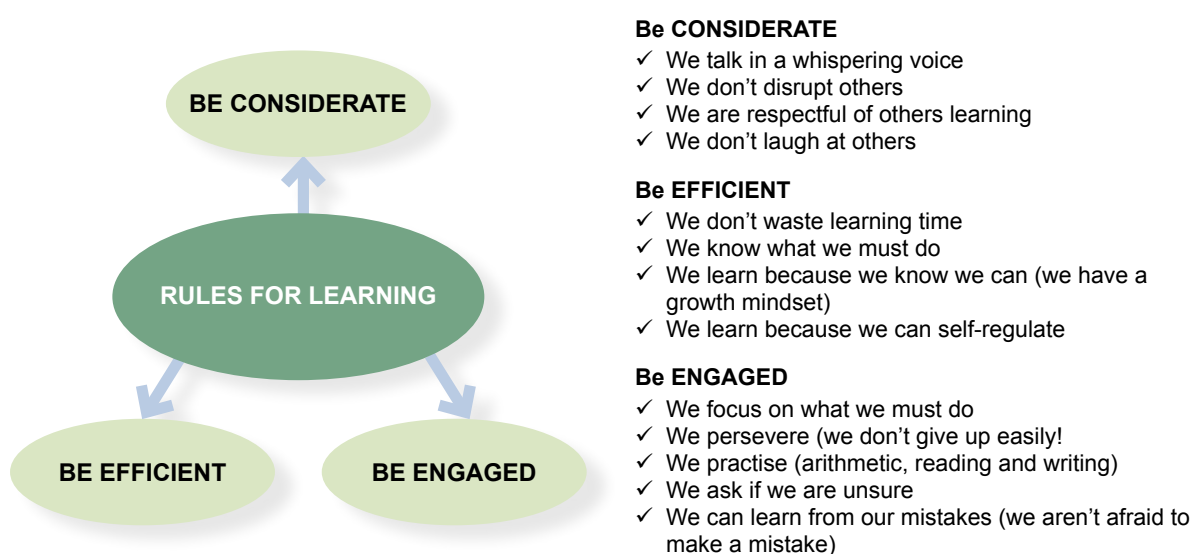


Figure 3: Rules for learning in a safe and supportive classroom

- Make a poster of your classroom rules and put it in a prominent position on the wall. Explain each of the subthemes and make sure that learners know what they are. You can make it in the learners' home language or make it bilingual, so that they also learn the rules in English.
- Develop a **discourse** around these rules (enrich your teacher talk!) – teach them the meanings of big words like “considerate”, “efficient” or “engaged”, and big statements with verbs like “abide by the rules” or “violate/infringe/transgress a rule”. Children can readily learn and use big words when the teacher models and explains this process.
- Whenever a learner or one of the groups makes a noise or becomes disruptive, refer them to the classroom rules and ask them which of the rules they are violating. This raises their awareness of their own and others' behaviours and helps them learn to identify specific behaviours that are unhelpful. For example, if a group is being noisy and off-task, they are not being considerate (they are not talking in a whispering voice and are disrupting others), they are not being efficient (they are wasting time) and they are not being engaged (not focusing on what they should do). You will find that soon learners will start to regulate their peers (*Hey, Sipho, stop making a noise – self-regulate!*) and themselves better (*Whoops, I'm wasting time, I'd better self-regulate!*), and will develop a discourse for talking about what helps them learn or what is creating a barrier to learning.

In your daily interactions with learners keep the following in mind for creating and maintaining a safe and supportive classroom:

- Make sure that there are no sharp scissors in the classroom (have scissors with rounded or blunted edges for the learners to use) or any other objects that can hurt them. Report broken windows to your Senior Management Committee (SMC) or principal so that they can be replaced.
- Clearly explain the routines that you will use for different slots, and make it clear what they must do in this slot. This makes your lessons structured and predictable, which enhances learning.
- Be kind and supportive, encourage learners, and remind them that real learning needs effort, perseverance and hard work, with the whole class cooperating to reach this goal.
- Keep a look out for bullying in the class. Talk to them about bullying, give them examples of bullying (it can be verbal and mental as well as physical) and remind them that bullying is not tolerated in the classroom or outside during break.
- Make learning to read and write fun and desirable – a ‘cool’ thing to do.

Tips for Professional Growth

Teachers are only human, and they may not always be aware of the things that they do or say in class that may create stress or negative feelings. Teachers also often tend to teach in ways that they were taught when they were at school, often repeating old and rigid classroom practices that do not align with current classroom practices.

- Think back to your early school days. Are you perhaps unconsciously repeating negative teaching patterns that do not contribute to a safe classroom environment conducive to learning?
- We often have days when we feel stressed or grumpy. Do you let these 'off days' influence how you talk or behave in class in ways that may have a negative effect on your learners? Before you step into your classroom each day, try to put all your personal problems into a mental bag. In your head, imagine yourself leaving this 'bag of problems' outside the door of your classroom. You can pick up your bag of problems again after school but try not to let your problems interfere with your teaching and the safe learning environment you need to create in your own classroom.

Conclusion

This unit drew attention to an issue that is seldom explicitly dealt with in teacher training or development, namely, planning and organisation, yet it forms an important enabling factor in the classroom and contributes to the creation of a safe learning environment. Learners do not learn effectively in classrooms with teachers who are poor in planning and whose lessons are poorly organised. Even though not everyone is good at planning and organisation, there are many things that individual teacher trainees can do improve this aspect of their professional lives so that their future classroom environments and practices can enhance language and literacy learning.

Self-assessment activities

These are 'quickie' assessment activities to check how well you have understood key concepts discussed in this unit and whether you are able to perceive the pedagogical implications of such concepts in the teaching of reading.

Note: The key to these self-assessment activities is given in the Appendix at the end of this module. If you score less than 6/8 (75%) for these questions you are advised to re-read the unit again to strengthen your content and pedagogic knowledge.

1. In each of the statements below provide **the appropriate missing word (or words)**. (6)
 - a) Planning which sounds you will teach in phonics in Grade 1 for Term 2 involves planning at the _____ level, while planning the weekly details of each phonics lesson in Term 1 involves planning at the _____ level.
 - b) A safe classroom environment is one where children feel physically, emotionally and _____ safe.
 - c) A learner taunting or teasing another learner can compromise a safe _____ learning environment.
 - d) Broken windowpanes in a classroom can compromise the _____ safety of a classroom, but this does not mean that a teacher cannot create an emotionally or cognitively safe environment.
 - e) Teachers can organise their lessons and classrooms at various levels, for example, a _____ level, a temporal level and a cognitive/mental level.
2. Indicate which one of the following statements is **false**. (1)
 - a) Teachers who say that they do not tolerate bullying in the classrooms because they stop learners hitting or pushing other learners are probably unaware that bullying can be emotional too.
 - b) A good classroom environment can nurture cognitive growth by providing a safe space for learners to answer questions and try and solve problems, even if they make mistakes in the process.
 - c) Teachers who teach in disadvantaged schools will find it difficult to create a safe classroom environment as they have little control over factors that contribute to a safe classroom environment.
 - d) Initially planning and organising good lessons take up lots of time, but over time as teachers build up resources and copies of successful lesson plans, the time for planning and organising diminishes, but not the need for it.
3. Indicate which of the following statements is **the correct one**. (1)
 - a) A well-planned lesson will enable teachers to reflect more critically on what may

have gone wrong if learners had difficulty grasping the main ideas during teaching than a lesson that is poorly planned.

- b) If a teacher expresses impatience when a learner gives an incorrect answer this reflects that she is strict and has high standards.
- c) Not all people are good planners or organisers so it is unrealistic to expect teachers to be experts in this area.
- d) The HOD of Foundation Phase is responsible for planning and organising reading lessons. Individual teachers should not be expected to do so.

Unit 3: Classroom routines and building motivation and self-regulation

Introduction

This unit looks at the importance of establishing good routines in the classroom, it describes the different facets of motivation, alongside a positive ‘**mindset**’; wanting to grow in learning of and self-regulation of one’s own learning behaviour.

Organising, planning and managing classroom routines

As noted before, CAPS encourages differentiated teaching, which means that teaching activities vary between whole-class teaching, group or paired work, or learners working individually. This requires different routines to facilitate the transition or shift between these different activities with minimal loss of learning time.

To be able to establish effective routines, you need to be aware of the different kinds of routines and what they comprise, and how to plan and manage the different parts to make the whole (all your classroom routines) effective.

What are classroom routines?

A routine is a usual or fixed way of doing things. Classroom routines refer to those ways of doing things according to a certain pattern, for example, how teachers start or end the day, how learners ask to leave the room and when, how learners get into groups when they are required to do group work, etc.

Classroom routines should be organised and managed in ways that don’t subtract from learning time.

Why are classroom routines important?

When learners have to shift around in a classroom from whole class to group or **mat work** and it is not well organised, it can lead to disorderly movement, pushing and shoving, increased noise levels and waste of teaching/learning time.

Classroom routines provide order and structure to shifts in classroom activities. Disorderly or chaotic classrooms are not conducive to learning; children thrive when there is structure in their lives. Research has found that learners learn more effectively in a classroom where routines are in place and where children know what to do and how to do it.

Guidelines for organising and managing classroom routines

You will need to have routines for the following activities:

- Greeting and starting in the morning
- Where to put satchels/school bags (under the desks, in a bookshelf. Over the chair or stacked against a wall)
- Mat work (e.g. for when you do Listening and Speaking and Shared Reading)
- Group Guided Reading (what the group that works with the teacher does; what the other groups do)
- Using the Book Corner
- Paired Reading
- Handing out resources (e.g. books, scissors/crayons/glue) and collecting them again
- Requesting permission to leave the classroom (e.g. for the toilet)
- Moving from one classroom to another
- Goodbye and ending the day

You will need to plan your routines at the beginning of the year and explain each routine to the learners and provide practice time so that learners get used to performing the routine. Below are some general guidelines to keep in mind.

Explain to the class what the routine is and when it is used. Make it clear that you expect the routine to be done as quickly and quietly as possible.

- ▶ *Describe the behaviour you will teach them: I'm going to show you how ... (e.g. ask permission to go to the toilet).*
 - ▶ *Model the behaviour: Listen and watch me ...*
 - ▶ *Ask the learners what they noticed: What did I do? What else did you see me do?*
 - ▶ *Ask for volunteers to model the behaviour: Who will show the class how to ...?*
 - ▶ *Ask the rest of the class what they noticed: What did they do correctly? What should we remind them about?*
 - ▶ *Have the class practise the routine sure that everyone knows what to do: Now, let's all practise how to ...*
 - ▶ *Provide feedback: Well done, ... you got it right or ... Let's try again, but this time remember to ... Let's do it faster this time.*
- If you do not have a large carpet or blankets for your mat work, get small carpet squares (get off-cuts from a carpet shop) and stack them somewhere suitable in the classroom. Get learners to pick up a square, per row, on their way to the front of the classroom

(or wherever you do your mat work). Likewise, after mat work, they should return the squares to the stack in an orderly way, row by row.

- It is advisable for learners to move per row (or sets of desks), otherwise there is too much overcrowding and shoving.
- Provide opportunities for practice. You lose valuable teaching/learning time if learners are slow and disorganised in their routines. Set aside time in the first few weeks of the first term for everyone to get to know the routines. Get a whistle and blow it to signal when the routine must start. If the learners make too much noise or are disorderly, blow the whistle again and send them back to their seats to start over again.
- Time them the first few practice rounds. Each time, tell them how long they took (draw a line on the board indicating the time they took, e.g. 30 seconds) and ask them if they can do the routine again, more quickly and quietly next time. They will see their line getting shorter as they get better at the routine. Praise them for enacting good routines.
- When you do mat work, make sure that learners take turns to sit in the front. Don't let the same desk row/group sit in the same position on the mat every time as this disadvantages learners who always end up sitting at the back.

Tips for Professional Growth

Some teachers tolerate quite high levels of noise and disruption in their class, without realising that these can negatively affect learning in the classroom. Some teachers also complain that their learners don't listen and don't follow routines properly. However, don't fall into the blame trap. Bear in mind that routines are aspects of classroom behaviour over which you, the teacher, have control, so do not blame learners if things are chaotic in the classroom. Here are some tips to help you along the path to creating efficient routines in the classroom that enhance harmony and learning.

- Reflect on your classroom practices. Which routines take quite a long time? How can these be made more efficient?
- Which routines pose challenges for the learners – have they been properly explained to the class? Have you practised them adequately with the class and given your learners feedback?
- Take a video on your cell phone of the class when you ask them to perform a certain routine (e.g. coming to the front for mat work). Watch it after school and think about ways to streamline it and make it more efficient.
- Reflect on our own response – are you consistent in what you expect of your learners? Are you perhaps strict one day and then overlook rowdy or chaotic routines the next day? Be consistent in your own behaviour and expect the same high standards from your learners every day.

Organising, planning and managing growth mindsets, motivation and self-regulation

The attitudes, emotions and mental states of learners are very important as they affect how well and easily learning happens in the classroom. To be able to inspire learners, motivate them and teach them to self-regulate, you need to be aware of the different components that make up these concepts, and how to plan and manage the different parts to make them effective.

Because these are three distinct (but related) concepts, each concept (their ‘what’ and ‘why’ aspects) will be dealt with separately.

What is motivation and why is it important?

(Refer to Module 2 *Oral language proficiency development, vocabulary building and motivation for reading for information on motivation.*)

Everyone knows that motivation is important for achieving anything in life (*I want to become fit, I want to lose weight, I want to do well in my studies, I want to stop smoking, I want to become a soccer star, ...*).

Pause and think

Some teachers say that they motivate their learners but when asked what they do to motivate them, they usually reply that they tell their learners that reading is important because it gives knowledge and that they should become good readers.

What do you think?

Think about things that you have achieved, goals that you have reached – what factors helped you achieve those goals? What factors created challenges in helping you achieve your goals and how did you overcome them?

Why do you think that telling someone that something is important is not necessarily going to change their behaviour or make them achieve a goal?

Not everyone knows what motivation really is and how to maintain it. We might start off with well-intentioned goals and good resolutions but as the weeks go by and problems and distractions arise, we find it more difficult to maintain our motivation and we find ourselves making excuses and slipping back into bad habits.

Motivation is quite a complex phenomenon and consists of different components, all of which

work together to keep us focused on our goal and mobilise us. The North American researcher John Guthrie and his colleagues spent many decades studying the nature and role of motivation in reading development. According to Cambria and Guthrie (2010), motivation reflects our values, beliefs and behaviours. Guthrie identifies three dimensions to **motivation**, as shown in Figure 4 below:



Figure 4: Three dimensions of motivation

Interest: It is difficult to be motivated about anything if you are not interested in it. Building interest is therefore an important component of motivation.

Dedication: Motivation does not just ‘happen’ – learning new things, changing one’s habits, thinking differently about something requires effort and hard work. Building dedication is therefore an important component of motivation.

Confidence: You may want something quite badly (*I want to be a good soccer player*) but if you secretly doubt your ability to achieve this (*Everyone seems so much fitter and better than me. Maybe I’m not really a sports person*) it will undermine your interest and dedication in achieving your goal. Building realistic confidence in one’s ability to achieve one’s goal is therefore an important component of motivation.

Research has shown a strong relationship between motivation and reading ability. Learners who are motivated to read have a positive attitude to books and are inclined to read more, and because they read more, they get better at it, and their increased reading skill further motivates them to keep on reading.

However, motivation on its own will not necessarily lead to skilled reading. Simply telling learners that reading is important and that they should be motivated to read is not going to do the trick! Even if a struggling learner is motivated, if the teacher doesn’t also provide additional instruction and support for a learner struggling with decoding, motivation alone won’t build that skill.

It is important for teachers to harness motivation as an enabling tool to support reading

development. As a teacher you need to be aware of the different dimensions of motivation and cultivate conditions in the classroom that will nurture these aspects in learners.

Teaching learners to self-regulate will also help build useful motivational qualities in learners, as explained below.

What is a growth mindset and why is it important?

Linked to the concept of motivation is that of a ‘mindset’, based on the work of Carol Dweck, of Stanford University in the USA. A mindset refers to an attitude or belief about something. It is how your mind, all your beliefs and ideas, are “set”. It’s that little voice in your head that tells you what you can or can’t do when you face a challenge (e.g. *I’m good at Maths, I wasn’t born with a maths brain* or *Reading is for girls, I’m not going to bother with this. This is so easy*).

Dweck (2006) identifies two important mindsets related to learning and academic performance, namely a Fixed Mindset and a Growth Mindset.

The fixed mindset

People with a fixed mindset believe that success is determined by factors such as intelligence, sex, or the level of difficulty of problems. They think that some people are clever and can do things (like mathematics, reading, playing the guitar), while others struggle, or that some people are born to do certain things (like run fast, fix cars, fly aeroplanes) while others can’t do them. They feel that people are judging them as being smart or stupid, so they try their best to look smart. They avoid challenging problems as they make them feel stupid (*People may think ‘I’m not good at this’ or ‘I’m not clever enough to solve this’*), so they choose easy problems. That little voice in their head is saying things like: *‘Oh you’d better not make a mistake, you’d better look smart’* or *‘Avoid this situation, act like this doesn’t interest you – you have better things to do.’*

The growth mindset

In contrast, people with a growth mindset believe that no matter who you are, you can always become a great deal better. They believe that everyone can learn, and that success is a result of the effort you put into learning. They feel good about themselves when they’re working really hard on something difficult and making progress. That voice in their head is saying things like: *‘Here’s an opportunity, here’s a mistake I can learn from’* or *‘Let me give this a try. Let me start with baby steps and see how far I get’*.

Based on years of research with children at different ages, Dweck found that children who were praised **for their effort** did better than those who were praised for their intelligence or for being clever. She concluded that learners who are praised for effort keep trying and persevere with difficult problems. They say to themselves *‘It just needs more effort.’* Learners with a growth mindset can always change and improve a situation by putting in more effort. She recommends that teachers encourage their learners to develop a growth mindset.

What is self-regulation and why is it important?

Pause and think

Consider the following scenario:

A teacher leaves the classroom for a few minutes or turns her back on the class to attend to a learner. What happens? Noise levels go up, learners go off-task and may start misbehaving by playing, laughing, arguing or even fighting, and learning time is lost. This may happen several times during the day. Learners seem to keep quiet and stay on track only when the teacher tells them what to do and keeps a close watch on them.

What do you think?

Why do you think this situation arises? What do you think are the consequences for learning if this happens several times during the day? What do you think the teacher can do to avoid this kind of behaviour?

The scenario above is an indication that learners have not been taught how to work independently, how to regulate their own behaviour and actions, and how to cooperate with others. This can result in a stressful and disharmonious classroom environment and cumulative loss of valuable learning time.

Often teachers don't know how to manage learners so they either give up and tolerate off-task behaviour (or pretend they don't notice it) or else they become very strict and authoritative.

Self-regulation refers to the ability to control one's behaviour, emotions and mental processes (e.g. paying attention, staying focused).

Research (Smith, Borkowski & Whitman 2008) shows that learners who can self-regulate do better both socially and academically at school and in later life. Far more learning happens in classrooms with learners who can self-regulate. Successful learning in the classroom depends on children's ability to listen to instructions, to focus attention on the task at hand (not get distracted) and to work cooperatively with others. Self-regulation helps learners to do this.

Learners don't learn to control themselves simply by being told "Control yourselves!" Teachers need to be aware that young children do not naturally self-regulate and need to be socialised into it. As children grow older, they gradually become more independent as they learn to control themselves physically, mentally and emotionally. However, not all children do so at the same rate or in the same way, and some children grow into adults who struggle with self-control all their lives.

Learners who come from chaotic or dysfunctional homes, or from homes where there is little structure or routine, find self-regulation especially difficult. All learners benefit from being shown how to self-regulate and this can happen as early as in the Foundation Phase.

Motivation, developing a growth mindset and self-regulation are mutually reinforcing and beneficial – motivated learners and learners with a growth mindset learn self-regulating strategies more readily than unmotivated learners or learners who have a fixed mindset. And in turn, learners who learn to self-regulate realise that if they apply themselves and try, they develop a growth mindset, start to take an interest in their subjects and become motivated to make progress.

You can see why it is important teachers to harness motivation and develop growth mindsets and self-regulation in learners – it will help to make teaching and learning fun and rewarding and help reduce noise, stress and conflict!

Pause and think

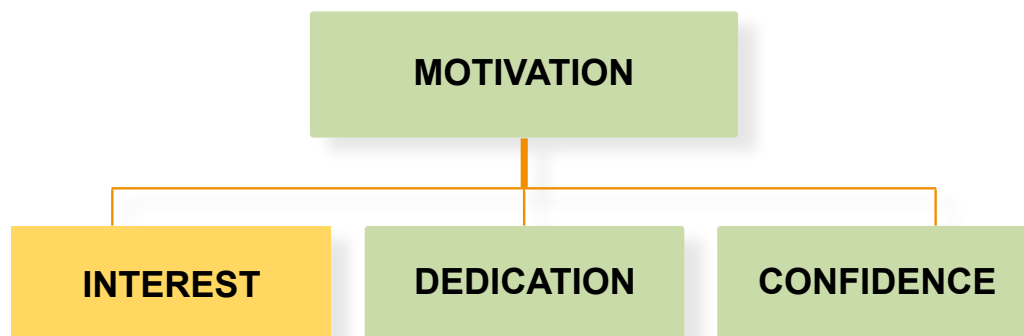
If you have access to the Internet, you should be able to watch a video on research originally carried out at Stanford University on self-regulation by Prof Walter Mischel. Four-year-old children were given a marshmallow, one-by-one. They were told that they could either eat it straight away or else, if they waited for 10 minutes, they would get two marshmallows as a reward. In other words, it was a test to see if a child could wait – resist the impulse to eat one marshmallow now and get two marshmallows later! This became known as the Marshmallow Test. The same children were followed over several years in the research study. It was found that the children who resisted eating the marshmallow when they were young did better at school and were more successful as young adults. These were children who could self-regulate their behaviour and overcome temptations for immediate self-gratification. Since then, psychologists have found that all children can be taught to self-regulate and that this has positive effects on their behaviour generally and on school performance.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLtQaRrDsC4>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8M7Xzjy_m8

Guidelines for organising and managing motivation, growth mindsets and self-regulation

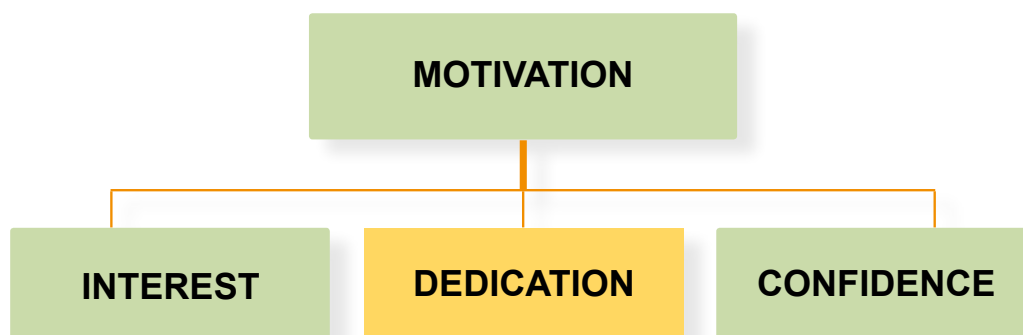
Interest



To build motivation for reading, focus on qualities such as enthusiasm, excitement and enjoyment. Make sure that you show these qualities when you do Shared Reading, Phonics, Group Guided Reading, and Read Alouds with learners, and they will soon adopt the same qualities.

- Always read with enthusiasm and enjoyment: introduce a new book with a sense of excitement and enthusiasm. This helps stimulate interest and curiosity in the story.
- Use small rewards to jumpstart the process – if a learner reads well praise him or her.
- Praise books and authors – display them on your table, talk about them, share them. Tell learners about authors in their HL, put pictures up of them on the wall.
- Create a ‘Hall of Fame’ space on a wall where you display news about books and authors in the Home or Additional Language.
- Do Read Alouds often, and with enthusiasm and enjoyment.
- Celebrate learners’ own stories and display them on your walls.
- Have a space above the Book Corner with the caption: My favourite book this week is _ and learners can write the title of their favourite book on a strip of paper with their name and stick it up there (only if they have read the book!)

Dedication



To build dedication for reading motivation and for growth mindset, teach learners the following:

- Trying – learning to read doesn’t come naturally, nobody is born a good reader, everyone needs to work at it. Everyone can become a good reader if they keep trying.
- Persisting – if reading seems difficult at first, don’t give up but keep going. It gets easier.
- Using strategies – when coming across a new or difficult word, use ‘word attack’ strategies to tackle it, e.g. use your phonics knowledge to identify the first letter and its sound, then the following sounds and then blend them to identify the word.
- Praise learners for their **effort** and **persistence**; say things like *Well done, Vusi, you kept going even though that sentence was tricky to read* or *Nice work, Lindiwe, you used word attack strategies all on your own to read that long word!*
- Value reading: When discussing books or stories, say phrases like *Reading is important to me* or *Reading gives me the knowledge I want* so that learners see that you value reading and books.

Confidence



To build confidence for reading motivation, you need to do the following:

- Create a classroom environment where learners feel safe from fear or mockery if they struggle with reading or make mistakes.
- Build their foundational reading skills. Ensure that your Phonics, Handwriting, Shared Reading and Group Guided Reading lessons are clear and well prepared so that learners have good opportunities to learn and practise decoding, fluency and comprehension skills.
- Praise learners for their dedication in becoming good readers – this builds their confidence.
- Teach learners phrases that encourage a growth mind set, like *Reading is something I can do* or *The more I do this, the better I get*.

Self-regulation

There are three areas that need self-regulation and all three can affect learning:

- Physical self-regulation: Learners need to learn to resist the impulse to do certain things (e.g. shouting out, jumping up or running around in class), and they need to learn to do things that they may not find easy to do (e.g. putting up their hand before speaking, sitting still at their desk to work on a task).
- Emotional self-regulation: Learners need to learn to control their emotions. For example, they must learn not to push or hit another child even if they are angry or grab something they want out of another child's hand.
- Mental self-regulation: Learners need to learn to control their mental processes. For example, if the teacher asks a learner to apply word attack strategies, they must keep in mind when to apply it (*Eish, here's a word I can't read*), what is required (*What's the first sound? What comes next?*), monitor progress (*If I blend these sounds together what word do I get?*) and develop comprehension strategies so that the goal is achieved (*If I read this sentence again does this word make sense?*)

Metacognition is an important aspect of self-regulation. Metacognition refers to the awareness and knowledge of one's own behaviour and mental processes during thinking, learning or reading, being aware of problems and how to solve them during the thinking/learning/reading process.

Self-regulation initially requires deliberate effort and is thus also strongly linked to a growth mindset – *I can do this if I try*. Learners need practice to get used to the new ways of behaving, thinking and interacting with others and internalise them so that they can do them without thinking. It should become a habit.

Teachers need to show learners how to self-regulate by explaining how it helps their learning and then gradually handing over control to the learner – also known as the Gradual Release model of teaching. Five ways of doing this are:

1. **Modelling:** Model the desired behaviour in a clear, step-by-step manner, e.g. *When I ask a question to the class, I don't want you to shout out the answer, even if you know it. Instead, you put up your hand, like this (shows them). Can you all do that? Show me?*
2. **Explaining:** Explain why you want the desired outcome and engage them in a discussion of it. This helps them see the link between behaviour and consequences. For example: *I know you all like to give me answers when I ask questions, but why do you think I don't want you to shout out the answer? There are 48 of us together in this classroom, so what do you think? Yes, Themba, why do you think shouting answers is not good in the classroom? ...*
3. **Cueing:** Give the class a sign or signal to remind them to do something or to desist from doing something, for example, raising a hand with the palm outwards to indicate stop, as when noise levels go up, or putting the fingers of both hands to your lips to indicate a whispering voice. For example: *Zebra group, look at me! (Put fingers of both hands to your lips.) Too much noise! What voice do we use when we read to each other in Paired Reading? Yes, quite right, Lebo, it's a whispering voice. And why should we use this voice?* Refer them to the routines you taught them for Paired Reading and point to the Paired Reading poster.
4. **Rehearsing:** Practise the desired behaviour with them and reteach each procedure if necessary to reinforce it until it becomes a routine practice for all learners. For example, learners must self-regulate their behaviour when practising routines for mat work. Each group (or row) takes turns to move to the front quietly without running, pushing or shouting, and sit quietly in semicircle rows in front of the teacher's chair. The teacher blows a whistle when learners get too noisy or shove each other, and says *OK, why did I blow the whistle? Who was noisy or pushing? Who was not self-regulating?* The teacher times them each day until they can do the routine quickly, quietly and cooperatively. This will help them to feel competent and see that they are improving and reaching the desired goal.
5. **Habituation:** After learners have had enough practice, they should do the actions or

procedures by themselves. It should become a habit and they shouldn't have to think about it consciously in a step-by-step way anymore.

Helping learners to self-regulate helps them develop a growth mindset and is closely related to establishing classroom rules for learning and for acceptable social behaviour, and to routines.

- Good relationships are an important foundation for learning to self-regulate. There needs to be an atmosphere of care, kindness, consistency and trust in the classroom.
- The teacher's expectations of learners in terms of their behaviour and their ability to manage their own learning must be clear and transparent.
- It is important to create clear and consistent structure and boundaries for what is acceptable and what is not (and why it is not acceptable), establishing routines for different activities and appropriate behaviour during those activities, and ways for the learners themselves to check their own behaviour. Learners are better able to regulate their own behaviour when their environment is predictable and structured.

Learners learn to self-regulate both inside and outside the classroom. Self-regulated learners can resist the impulse to do things which are immediately enjoyable (e.g. pretending the eraser is a small car and 'driving' it around the desk instead of listening to the teacher) and think ahead to the possible consequences of their actions (e.g. if they don't listen to the instructions, they won't know how to do the activity and will lose an opportunity to learn).

Learners generally respond well to self-regulation. They want to show that they are responsible learners who understand how the classroom is managed, even if the teacher is not there. Motivated and self-regulating learners with a growth mindset make it possible for the teacher to manage a variety of activities which the curriculum requires, even more complex ones like Group Guided Reading.

Tips for Professional Growth

It is part of a teacher's professional responsibility to motivate learners, to encourage a growth mindset and help them self-regulate to enhance their learning opportunities and inspire them to become the best they possibly can be. However, sometimes teachers are themselves not very good at developing the good habits in themselves that they try to instil in their learners! Here are some questions to ponder about your own behaviour and whether you tend to say one thing but do something else.

- Do you have a fixed mindset about some things that affect your teaching? For example, do you say things like *"Oh, I'm not good at planning and organising, so I'm not going to bother with that"* or *"I'm not good at Phonics so I'm going*

*to ignore **CAPS** and teach my way.” Try to develop your own growth mindset and see how it improves your teaching practices.*

- Are you a member of a library? Join a library close to you (even if you are in a rural school and the library is several miles away in a neighbouring town). It's difficult to motivate others to take books and reading seriously when you yourself don't do so.
- Do you use your cell phone in the classroom? Do you self-regulate your use of the cell phone during classroom time? Create professional boundaries and inform family and friends of your breaktimes and say that you cannot be interrupted during class time, only during breaktimes or after school.
- Do you sometimes lose your temper and shout at your learners? Teachers are human too and there are days when you may get a headache, not feel well, feel grumpy, or just generally have an 'off' day. Be aware of how you are feeling and how it's affecting your behaviour. Try not to take it out on your learners. Develop a strategy to cope with those times when you feel you're losing control, e.g. turn your back to the class, close your eyes and count backwards from 10 to 1, or step outside the classroom, close your eyes and breathe deeply in and out five times. Small actions like these can help you self-regulate by breaking the emotional anger connection and help you decide more rationally how you will deal with the situation.

Conclusion

The focus in this unit was on enabling factors such as routines, motivation and instilling positive learning ideas and behaviours in learners so that they can learn to self-regulate their own learning in the classroom. The complex concept of motivation was unpacked into three different aspects of interest, dedication and self-confidence, and guidelines were provided of how teachers can harness these dimensions in practical ways in their language and literacy activities.

Self-assessment activities

These are 'quickie' assessment activities to check how well you have understood key concepts discussed in this unit and whether you are able to perceive the pedagogical implications of such concepts in the teaching of reading.

Note: The key to these self-assessment activities is given in the Appendix at the end of this module. If you score less than 6/8 (75%) for these questions you are advised to re-read the unit again to strengthen your content and pedagogic knowledge.

1. In each of the statements below provide **the appropriate missing word (or words)**. (5)
 - a) A person who avoids doing something because they fear failure is likely to have a _____ mindset.
 - b) The three components of motivation are interest, _____ and _____.
 - c) The ability to be aware of what one is doing and to reflect on one's behaviour is referred to as _____.
 - d) Children can be taught to self-regulate in various ways, physically, _____ or cognitively.
2. Indicate which one of the following statements is **false**. (1)
 - a) Motivation is an important factor in reading but if children are not taught decoding skills properly it will be more challenging for them to love reading.
 - b) A person may be highly motivated to do something but if they do not have perseverance, then high motivation alone will not lead to success.
 - c) Teaching children to love reading is the single most important factor in teaching children to read. Everything else follows from that.
 - d) Motivation can be an important factor in encouraging children to learn to read but acquiring mastery of letter sounds and how to blend them to form words can in turn motivate learners to read more.
3. Indicate which of the following statements is **the correct one**. (1)
 - a) There are many adults who find it difficult to self-regulate so it is unrealistic to teach children to self-regulate in Foundation Phase.
 - b) House Rules or Rules of Conduct on their own do not teach children to self-regulate; teachers need to show children how to self-regulate through modelling, discussion and practice.
 - c) When children make a noise or go off task when a teacher is out of the classroom it is clear that there are no House Rules or Rules of Conduct in the classroom.

- d) A teacher who requires children to follow routines as they switch from one activity to another is being overly strict and has missed sight of the joy of teaching.
4. Consider the following scenario and then select only **the option which is an accurate reflection** of this scenario. (1)

After working through Unit 3 Teacher Zaza is trying to change some of her teaching practices. She has organised her class into different ability groups. She is working with the Flamingo Group during Group Guided Reading to listen to them read individually. Siphso is trying to read a word but finds it difficult. She reminds him to segment the letter sounds in the word from the beginning and then to blend them to arrive at the correct word. He does so and when he finally reads the word accurately, she says “Well done, Siphso! You persevered and made an effort! That’s how we learn to do things!”

- a) The teacher should rather have praised the learner for being clever in reading the word as that would have boosted his self-confidence.
- b) The teacher should rather have asked the learner to look at the pictures and guess the word from the context.
- c) The teacher’s feedback shows that she is helping the learner develop an interest in reading.
- d) The teacher’s feedback shows that she is helping the learner develop a growth mindset.

Unit 4: A print-rich classroom and rich teacher talk

Introduction

The previous unit discussed enablers that are generic: they apply to all learning of school subjects in the classroom. In this unit enablers that are specific to literacy are discussed. The unit discusses how teachers can have a print-rich classroom and engage in “rich teacher talk” that builds vocabulary and use of language.

Organising, planning and maintaining a print-rich classroom

Teachers need to be aware of the different parts that make up a print-rich classroom and how to plan and manage the different parts to make the whole (the print-rich classroom) effective.

What is a print-rich classroom?

Print material includes any aspects of written language and visual aspects (pictures, charts, drawings, flashcards, labels, etc.) that relate to language, reading and writing and content/topics/themes that learners are learning about. A print-rich classroom has interesting and colourful print material (e.g. books, charts, posters, labels, word walls, pictures, etc.). Below are some features of print-rich classrooms:

- The classroom has bilingual print, in the learners’ home language as well as the first additional language. For example, printed bilingual labels are stuck on doors, windows, and furniture, and the word wall contains words in both home and first additional languages.
- There are bookcases or shelving containing various kinds of children’s books. The Book Corner contains books in the home and first additional languages.
- There is a theme table containing interesting objects that relate to the current theme, and bilingual labels naming the different objects.
- There are various posters and charts on the walls containing information related to classroom rules, language, reading, birthdays, etc.
- Examples of the learners’ writing or drawings are displayed.
- Taken together, all the things in the classroom convey a message to the learners: “*We take literacy seriously here!*”

Some kinds of print material are commercially available and can be bought or may be issued by the school or district (e.g. alphabet friezes, charts, posters), but much of what makes up the print

in the classroom should be produced by teachers (e.g. flashcards, labels, word cards for the word wall). Do not become a victim of your circumstances; do not use external factors (“*This is a poor school*”) as an excuse for not having a nice classroom. Well-organised, proactive teachers create print-rich classrooms in any context.

Common print materials for a print-rich classroom

Table 5: List of common print materials in a classroom

Alphabet frieze
Phonics word wall (for decoding)
Magic word wall (for vocabulary growth)
Theme table/chart (for building knowledge and vocabulary)
Labels (stuck around the classroom, in HL and FAL)
Stationery (crayons, pencils, highlighters, rulers, erasers, glue sticks, scissors). Keep these in old yogurt containers or brightly painted tins.
Book corner
Teaching resources such as letter, syllable cards and flashcards. Store these in A4-size plastic sleeves or old ice-cream containers.
Posters of classroom rules
Posters of aspects of language (e.g., 1st and 2nd person pronouns / noun classes / synonyms / antonyms / tenses / ...)
Time charts and calendars (day of the week, months of the year, a clock with moveable hands showing hours and minutes, etc.)
Weather chart / seasons / phases of the moon / types of clouds/wind, etc.
Birthday charts
Names of groups for Group Guided Reading (and lists of learners)
Names of learners stuck on their desk
Display of learners' work (writings, drawings)

Why is a print-rich classroom important?

- It helps to create a welcoming, enticing and interesting space in which to learn. Learners' eyes light up when they enter it because they see it as a place of learning. Visitors to the classroom are impressed and say ‘*Hhawu!*’, ‘*Wow!*’
- It shows the different functions of print and helps to remind learners about the alphabetic writing system and its conventions.
- It provides learners with additional exposure to written language and opportunities to practise seeing letters, words, sentences, recognising them and understanding their meaning.

- It displays examples of the learners' drawing and writing and makes them feel proud and gives them a sense of belonging.
- It provides ready access to books in the Book Corner.
- It sends a signal to learners that written language is important and is valued in this classroom.

Print-rich classrooms are especially important for learners who come from disadvantaged backgrounds where there are few print resources in their homes and community.

Guidelines for organising, planning and maintaining a print-rich classroom

Wallpaper is glued onto walls and is expected to last several years. Print material is not wallpaper. It supports learning so it should be changed, updated and refreshed throughout the year in response to the daily or weekly teaching/learning focus.

Some kinds of print material can stay up for longer (e.g. alphabet frieze, classroom rules, birthday chart), while other kinds should be updated on a termly basis (e.g. ability groups may change if some learners show progress and can be moved to another group; if so, change the lists for the groups; posters).

Resources used on a weekly basis (e.g. flashcards for the phonics word wall, vocabulary flashcards for the magic word wall, items on the theme table) should be prepared for the lessons for each new week.

At the beginning of each year, take stock of all the print resources in the classroom.

- What do you have in the way of books, charts, posters, labels, word walls, pictures, etc.?
- Are they in good condition? If not, can you fix them to make them look better, or should you throw them away and make new resources?
- How will you display your resources? Decide where you will put your print materials. Do not stick them too high on the wall – Foundation Phase learners cannot read things that are above the level of the blackboard.
- Do you have a good place to store resources that you don't need right now but will need in future? Always have containers for storing print material when it is not in use or for material that gets rotated quite often.
- Being in a school with limited resources is no excuse for having a print-poor classroom. Remember, this is an aspect of teaching over which you have control, so don't wait for handouts. You can make many resources yourself quite cheaply, so use your creative and artistic talents!

Storing and labelling

- Collect plastic containers for storing stationery, letter/syllable cards/labels, flashcards, etc. In Grade 1 it is a good idea to store single consonant letter/syllable cards separately from the digraphs, trigraphs and complex consonant sounds so that you can practise these with the learners in a focused way. In Grade 2 and 3 you can store these together, as by then the learners should know them quite well. Label each container clearly and have specific shelves in your cupboard for storage.
- Use plastic A4 sleeves or different colour folders for storing larger labels, flashcards, pictures.
- Roll up larger picture charts, posters, etc., and secure them with a rubber band to keep them in their shape. Label them on an outside corner for easy identification. They take up space and get bent in a cupboard, so stand them upright in a plastic bucket or a box next to your cupboard.

Tips for professional growth

If you are not typically someone who notices details in your workspace you might find this aspect of your teaching challenging. However, you can train yourself to become more observant of and sensitive to important little classroom details and change your classroom into a more stimulating and interesting print-rich space for your learners. Below are some tips.

1. Take 'before' and 'after' photos of your classroom so that you have a record. This will remind you of the progress that you have made and motivate you to continue to find ways to stimulate and motivate your learners to become good readers and writers.
2. Take small steps. Start with your more 'permanent' resources such as your alphabet frieze, classroom rules, birthday chart, etc. Are they in good shape or do you need new ones? Will you keep them in the same place or put them somewhere different? You can find lots of interesting and inspiring ideas for ways to design your posters and charts on the Internet.
3. Start next with bilingual labels (Home Language (HL) on one side and First Additional Language FAL (usually English) on the flip side) – what can you label in your classroom? Use Prestik to stick them to the surface. Make five to six new labels each week for the term and be creative about them (do you have a ceiling label stuck on the ceiling, or a screw label showing a screw on some furniture?). Tell your learners to look out for the new labels each week – don't tell them where you've put them, let them find them themselves. Flip the labels so that some show the HL word and others the EFAL word. This will engage them in noticing the resources in your classroom.

4. You can also play a game with the learners. During break, you change all the labels and put them next to wrong objects. When the learners come in after break, ask one group to fix all the labels and the other groups to assess their performance. The groups can take turns to see who performs the best. This will engage them in vocabulary building and reading and help them notice the resources in the classroom!
5. If your school has a laminating machine, laminate your labels and flashcards as this will help to protect them and they will last longer.
6. Visit other classrooms (in your own or different schools) to be inspired and get new ideas on what you can do to make your classroom more print rich. You can also get good ideas from browsing the Internet.
7. Invite a colleague to your classroom before you make changes and ask her to rate your classroom honestly in terms of print richness on a scale of 0-5 (0 = very little; 5 = a WOW rating, rich and interesting). Tell her to have a good look, as you are going to change it. Invite her back again after a few weeks and ask her to rate it again and give you feedback on improvements.
8. Set small short-term goals for yourself each week for enhancing the print resources in your classroom. You can use the weekend or evenings to make resources that you need. They will give you a sense of achievement.

Organising, planning and managing rich teacher talk in your classroom

Teachers need to be aware of their own language use, how they talk and how well they speak, in both the home language and first additional language, so that they can plan and manage the different aspects of their teacher talk to make it more effective.

What is rich teacher talk?

Foundation Phase teachers spend about six or more hours with their learners for five days of the week. Much of this time is spent talking to learners, teaching them new things, asking them questions, responding to their answers or their questions, telling them what to do (giving them instructions), reading or telling them stories, praising and encouraging them or admonishing them for rowdy behaviour, and so on. All this language produced by teachers is called ‘teacher talk’. Although all teachers ‘talk’ to their learners, research has shown that there is a lot of variation in terms of how much teachers talk (quantity). Some teachers talk more (increased quantity of teacher talk) and some teachers talk differently (quality of teacher talk).

Because children in the Foundation Phase are still young, it is no surprise that Foundation Phase teachers tend to use fairly straightforward, simple language in the classroom. Much of the teacher talk is about the ‘here and now’ (*OK class, stop drawing now. Put the crayons in the crayon tub / What colour is the bird in this picture? / How many fingers do we have on one hand?*). Teachers tend not to use ‘big’ words; instead, they use common, high-frequency words. But children don’t learn new words if they are exposed to talk containing only common, high-frequency words.

Research has found that some teachers produce *more* teacher talk and use more diverse language in their classrooms than their peers, and this is what is called rich teacher talk. Although teachers who use rich teacher talk also talk about the ‘here and now’, they also extend their language, use big words as well as common high-frequency words, they ask more questions, give their learners more opportunities to express themselves, and they use language in a more decontextualised way, especially during storybook reading.

‘Rich teacher talk’ thus happens when teachers engage in more verbal interactions with learners (e.g. initiate discussions with their learners), use a wide range of words when they talk (including big words), use more complex grammar when they speak, ask learners open-ended questions, respond to learners’ answers and elaborate on them.

Why is rich teacher talk important?

Since teachers and learners spend so much time together, it is logical to conclude that children’s language development during the course of a school year will be influenced by the ‘teacher talk’ to which they are exposed in the classroom.

Research has found that learners in classrooms where teachers produce rich teacher talk show stronger language development during the year than children whose teachers produce ordinary teacher talk, i.e., teacher talk that is not rich.

The following extract (Pretorius & Murray 2019) shows some of the quantitative and qualitative differences between how teachers talk within a short period of about five to eight minutes.

Consider the two classroom scenarios depicted below in Table 6:

Table 6: Two classroom scenarios

Classroom A	Classroom B
<p>Teacher A: OK, everyone. Look at your books on page 14. Let's start reading the paragraph at the top. Everyone read aloud.</p> <p>Learners chorus together: Sipho's uncle bought a lottery ticket every week for ten rand. His aunt was not happy.</p> <p>Teacher A: We say 'bawt' not 'bowt' (Writes 'bought' on the board and says 'bawt' again.) Say it: 'bawt'</p> <p>Learner chorus together: 'bawt'</p> <p>Teacher A: Now read the sentences again properly.</p> <p>Learners chorus: Sipho's uncle bought a lottery ticket every week for ten rand. His aunt was not happy.</p> <p>Teacher A: Ok, now read the next paragraph.</p>	<p>Teacher B: OK, everyone. OK, everyone. Look at your books on page 14. Let's start reading the paragraph at the top. Legodi, will you start, please.</p> <p>Legodi: Sipho's uncle 'bowt' a lottery ticket every week for R10. His aunt was not happy.</p> <p>Teacher B: Legodi, remember we say 'bawt' not 'bowt' (She writes <i>bought</i> on the board and says 'bawt' again.) It's the past tense of <i>buy</i>. It's like other words – <i>fought</i> and <i>ought</i>. (She writes them under bought on the board and says them aloud.) Do you see the same pattern -<i>ought</i>?</p> <p>Teacher: Say it again, Legodi: 'bawt'</p> <p>Legodi: 'bawt'</p> <p>Teacher B: Good. And what does it look like in the present tense?</p> <p>Legodi: Buy – bought.</p> <p>Teacher B: Good! Ok, the rest of the class. How do we say this word? (Pointing to <i>bought</i> on the board.) And how do we say it in the present tense?</p> <p>Learners chorus together: 'bawt'- buy</p> <p>Teacher B: Great! Ok, now read the paragraph again, Legodi.</p> <p>Legodi: She reads the paragraph fluently and pronounces <i>bought</i> correctly as 'bawt': Sipho's uncle bought a lottery ticket every week for R10.</p> <p>Teacher B: Well done, Legodi. Now can anyone tell us what a lottery ticket is?</p> <p>David: Is gambling.</p> <p>Teacher B: Yes, David, buying a lottery ticket is a form of gambling, but what is a lottery ticket?</p> <p>Sam: Is special ticket to win money.</p>

	<p>Teacher B: That's right, Sam. We buy a lottery ticket in the hope that it will win us even more money. Each lottery ticket has a special number. Each time a number is chosen as the winner, and if the number on your lottery ticket is chosen, then you win money.</p> <p>Teacher B: Why do you think Sipho's aunt is not happy?</p> <p>Neliswa: She thinks the uncle, he wasting money.</p> <p>Teacher B: Yes, she's not pleased because she thinks that her husband is wasting his money. Thousands of people buy lottery tickets every week, but very few people win money. She thinks he should not spend ten rand on the lottery every week, mm? What do you think? Do you know anyone who buys lottery tickets?</p>
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Although this is just a short snapshot of classroom life, you will notice two important differences between the teacher talk in classrooms A and B.

- **Quantity:** Firstly, there is a difference in the quantity of language being used. In Classroom A the teacher used 39 words, whereas in Classroom B the teacher used 225 words, five times the amount of A! This type of exposure to language is cumulative – every day, every week, over time, the learners in Classroom B are getting a lot more teacher talk than those in A. This increases their opportunities for language and vocabulary development.
- **Quality:** Secondly, there is a difference in the quality of language use. In Classroom A the teacher corrects pronunciation only without providing any explanation. The learners are not guided to understand what they are reading (accuracy in reading is important, but so too is comprehension). By contrast, in Classroom B the teacher provides rich teacher talk by talking about **meaning** and **interacting** with the learners through **question-and-answer** routines and **elaborations (extensions)**. She too corrects pronunciation of words during reading, but she also checks that the learners understand what they are reading, she draws their attention to patterns in English spelling and pronunciation, and she helps them engage with the text by asking them open-ended questions about things or events in the story. Even when a learner does not produce a grammatically correct sentence (e.g. “*Is gambling*”), she extends the learner’s utterance by providing a correct version. In other words, she models a correct way to answer the question by elaborating on what the child said. Notice too how she models a more precise way to give a definition of something (“*What is a lottery ticket?*”). She also connects the text to the learners’ own

lives by asking if they know people who buy lottery tickets and what their opinion of this issue is. In this way she engages them in a discussion. She models how to discuss a topic and provides reasons for her point of view.

This short example shows differences in the quantity and quality of teacher talk – learners in Classroom B will have far more opportunities to develop their language than learners in Classroom A. Their vocabulary and grammar will develop more, how they interact with and talk to each other, how they talk about new things that they have learned, and how well they learn to read will all be better in Classroom B.

In sum, rich teacher talk can be a very powerful means for language learning. The richer your own use of isiZulu/Sesotho is, the richer the isiZulu/Sesotho language development of learners!

Understanding and recognising different kinds of rich teacher talk

There are three main types of teacher talk, depending on what teachers are doing and what their aims are.

Management talk

Examples:

- *Ok, class, let's do mat work now. I want you to come to the front of the class quickly and quietly, please.*
- *Lerato! What are you doing out of your desk? Please go back to your desk and do your work.*
- *It's time for Group Guided Reading now. Group leaders, please come to the front to get the resources that you group needs. Giraffe group, please go to the book corner for Independent Reading, and Buffaloes, please come to the mat.*
- *Thank you, Buffaloes! You all read very nicely today. I can see you're all working hard at your decoding – keep it up!*
- *Zebras! Too much noise! Keep quiet and get on with your work!*
- *No Sabelo, don't grab the crayons! That's not how we behave in class.*

In these examples, the teacher is managing her class: her aim is to regulate their behaviour, reminding them what to do and what not to do, and often giving them feedback on their behaviour or performance.

This kind of teacher talk is called class **management talk**. Much of management talk involves the 'here-and-now' and uses everyday language familiar to learners, especially verbs, to urge them to pay attention (*Listen, Look at the board, Turn to page 1*), behave appropriately (*Go to the*

mat, Put your books away quietly, Get into your group) and desist from inappropriate behaviour (Stop staring out the window! Don't do that! No shouting allowed! etc.).

Much of the management talk may involve negative utterances where the teacher admonishes or reprimands learners (examples 2, 5 and 6 above), especially in the early days when learners are still learning the classroom rules and routines. Sometimes a teacher's management talk may also be positive (example 4).

Content talk

Examples:

- *"Our new theme this week is ...? Who can guess? Who noticed the theme table this morning when you came into class? Have a look at the theme table, what do you see? Yes, Banele, what do you think the theme is?"*
- *"Today we are going to focus on the sound /s/ and the letter we use to show this sound. When I say these two words stems **-fika, -sika**, in which word can you hear the /s/ sound? In **-fika** or **-sika**"?*
- *The teacher holds up a flashcard that contains a sentence with a big full stop at the end. "Let's read the sentence here. USipho ujabule esikoleni. What do you see at the end? Yes, there's a dot at the end. In writing we call dots like these **full stops**. When we write, we put a full stop at the end of each sentence to show where the sentence ends and where the new one can start. Now look at the story on page 6 of your reader. Do you see any dots in it? Do you see these in the paragraph? How many can you see, Ntsiki? Show us where they are. Good! There are three sentences, each with a full stop at the end.*

In these examples, the teacher is 'teaching' her class: her aim is to convey information to them and she does this by drawing their attention to something, asking questions, telling them things. This kind of teacher talk is called **content teacher talk**. Much of what happens in the classroom involves teacher talk related to content that teachers are imparting to their learners, in either Numeracy, Literacy or Life Skills lessons. They generally try to keep their language fairly simple so that the learners understand them. Even when teachers have conversations with their learners about different topics, as in Listening and Speaking, much of the teacher talk is about the 'here and now', using topics that the children already know something about and building on this in ways that expand their knowledge. Some of this talk may introduce new terminology (*We call these dots full stops*) or words or things which may be unfamiliar (*Do you see these dots in the paragraph?*).

More decontextualised (story)book talk

Now consider the following teacher talk while the teacher reads the story *Izinyo* with her Grade 2 class during Shared Reading.

Teacher reads from the book: “Ulwazi wavula incwadi ekhasini elinezilwane. Kwakukhona isithombe sehubesi elizama ukuhlasela isilwane, lifuna ukusidla. Wasebenzisa isibuko esandisayo uLwazi ukuze abone amazinyo alesi silwane, wayesebuka izinyo aliphethe.”

Teacher: Ok, so why did Lwazi look in a book, children? ...

Answer from child:

Teacher: Yes, thank you, Portia. Books contain information, we learn things from them, so Lwazi is looking for information in a book about ...? About what, Maria? ...

Answer from child:

Teacher: Correct, Maria. Nicely put. Yes, he wants to find out more about lions and what kind of teeth they have, so he’s reading about lions in a book ...

*Teacher: Now let’s look at these words: **wavula**, **ifuna**, **wasebenzisa**. We call these verbs because these words tell us what a person is doing. What does the **wa-** part tell us – is this about something that happened in the past, or is it about the present, now? ...*

Teacher: Lwazi looked at the tooth, he examined it. What did he use to examine the tooth so closely? What do we call that thing that he used – do you know Nozi? ...

Teacher: Let’s read some more: “Wabona ukuthi amazinyo enyoka made acije njengenaliti. Kodwa izinyo elisesandleni sakhe laliyisicaba futhi liyisikwele.”

Teacher: Now, if we want to see if things are the same or different, we compare them, we make a comparison. Can you compare the snake’s tooth to the tooth that Lwazi found, Nathi? Are they the same or different? Explain to us what is the same and what is different ...

This kind of teacher talk is also content-related ‘teaching’ talk, but unlike the other examples, it takes learners beyond the ‘here’ and ‘now’. It is about topics that are more advanced and that are in books, not in everyday talk. It is almost as if the teacher shifts into a higher level – this kind of teacher talk includes conversations with verbs about the past (or future), about more abstract topics (the past tense, the relationship between books and knowledge), it uses new words that are not just common, high-frequency words (*magnifying glass*).

The teacher goes beyond the present context. Through the story in the book the teacher is taking the learners where they have never been, and to what they have never experienced – the tooth of a lion. Their context has expanded. They have been taken even more out of their present context by the teacher talking about abstract decontextualised things – time, comparisons, the very concept of ‘different types of teeth’.

These three kinds of teacher talk are shown in Figure 5 below:

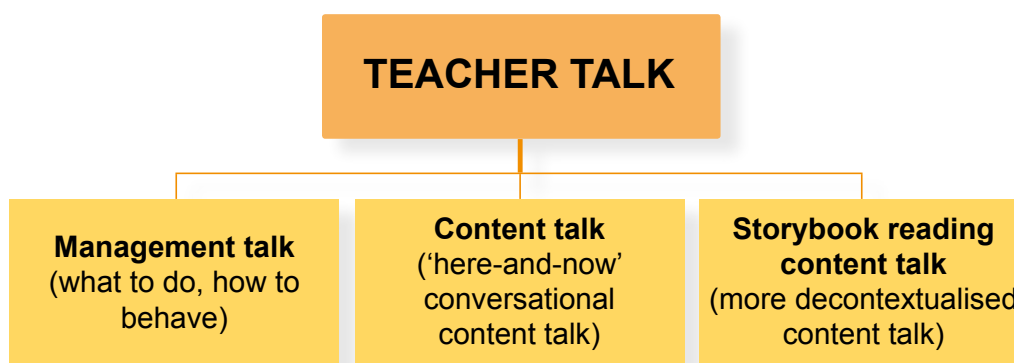


Figure 5: Three kinds of teacher talk

Research has found that when teachers read and discuss storybooks with their class they tend to use more ‘bigger’, less common words that go beyond the bounds of everyday talk. It is this kind of talk in particular that increases learners’ vocabulary and exposes them to more complex language and to a wider world of knowledge.

Teachers who use only easy books in class (with easy, straightforward language) or who seldom do Read Alouds or seldom discuss stories in class tend to have limited teacher talk, quantitatively and qualitatively.

Children learn their language from two main sources of input – **incidental learning** happens when they are engaged in everyday life, doing something else (e.g. watching TV, playing a game with friends) and learning something new (a word, a phrase, new information) in the process. They also learn through **direct instruction**, when the teacher explicitly explains or teaches something new, and introduces them to new words and ways of speaking. The three main kinds of teacher talk above all provide opportunities for both incidental language learning as well as explicit teaching/learning.

Guidelines for organising and managing rich teacher talk in a classroom

- Prepare lessons well. Think about what the aim for each lesson is [What specific thing do you want learners to focus on and learn? What resources will you need, and how you will explain new content in your lesson?] Poorly prepared lessons yield poor teacher talk.
- Think of ways to enrich your teacher talk in Numeracy and Life Skills lessons.
- Although classroom management talk uses everyday language, once learners know the routines and classroom rules, think about fun ways to enrich management talk. For example, use synonyms to expand their vocabulary [*don’t push* > *don’t shove*; *don’t make a noise* > *lower the volume of your voice*; *move quickly and quietly* > *move rapidly and silently*].
- Think about the way in which you conduct Listening and Speaking – are you only using easy, everyday language with words learners already know or are you conducting

interesting conversations with learners in incorporating rich content talk and some new, 'big' words?

- Prepare your Shared Reading lessons well – read the story in advance, plan which words you will focus one for vocabulary building over the three days, work out the open-ended questions that you will ask.
- Select interesting books for your Read Alouds, ones that are slightly above the reading level of your learners and which contain some new and more sophisticated words, taking learners beyond their familiar worlds.
- Ask open-ended questions and listen properly to your learners' responses, then expand on them where possible.
- If learners speak a particular dialect of isiZulu/Sesotho, remember to show respect for it. If you also speak the same dialect, you can use it in class to reinforce understanding and meaning, but it is important to also expose learners to standard forms of the language as this is what they will encounter in written form and books. Help them become bi-dialectal so they not only know words in their dialect but also learn the more formal standard forms used in the literacy context.

Tips for Professional Growth

Research in South Africa has found that although many teachers say that reading is important, very few teachers are themselves voluntary readers! Vocabulary size is strongly related to book reading. People who do little reading in their home language have smaller vocabularies than people who read a lot.

Here are some tips to help you along the path to producing richer teacher talk in your classroom.

- Try to read more in your home language to increase your vocabulary and strengthen your use of more sophisticated language structures. Try to read at least two or three articles in an isiZulu/Sesotho newspaper every day.
- Join a municipal library near you. Check out their isiZulu/Sesotho book collections. Try to read at least one novel in your home language each month.
- Make a recording of one of your Shared Reading sessions. That afternoon/evening, listen to your lesson and transcribe it. Count how many words you used. Listen to how you explained things, how you asked questions, how you responded to learners' responses. Are there features of rich teacher talk in your transcription? Could you have said things differently to make your talk richer?

- You and a trusted colleague could share transcriptions and discuss them together, suggesting ways to help each other talk more richly to learners.
- Watch some video clips of other people reading storybooks aloud to children and observe their teacher talk, before, during and after reading. Do you recognise some of the features of rich teacher talk?

Conclusion

Unit 4 focusses on two enabling factors that provide important input for language and literacy growth, namely a print-rich classroom and rich teacher talk, factors over which teachers have control. Although the need for creating a print-rich classroom is often discussed in teacher training, the need for teachers to use rich language when they teach is a topic that is seldom explicitly raised in preservice teacher training courses, yet it is vitally important. Given that learners spend between 5-6 hours a day with their teacher in Foundation Phase, the quantity and quality of teacher talk will influence their language and literacy skills in both the Home Language and the First Additional Language. Guidelines are provided in this unit for how teacher trainees can be mindful of the importance of these two enabling factors over which they have control.

Self-assessment activities

These are ‘quickie’ assessment activities to check how well you have understood key concepts discussed in this unit and whether you are able to perceive the pedagogical implications of such concepts in the teaching of reading.

Note: The key to these self-assessment activities is given in the Appendix at the end of this module. If you score less than 6/8 (75%) for these questions you are advised to re-read the unit again to strengthen your content and pedagogic knowledge.

1. In each of the statements below provide **the appropriate missing word (or words)**. (5)
 - a) When teachers tell learners what to do or remind them of classroom rules this is called teacher _____ talk.
 - b) The _____ of teacher talk refers to the diversity of rich language used in her talk, while the _____ of teacher talk refers to how many words learners are exposed to in her classroom.
 - c) When a teacher rephrases a learner’s grammatically inaccurate or incomplete sentence to model the correct version this is called an _____.

- d) The way in which teachers ask questions and encourage discussion on a topic during _____ helps to model appropriate turn taking during conversations.
2. Indicate which one of the following statements is **false**. (1)
- a) Some aspects of a print-rich classroom can remain on the wall all year (such as an alphabet frieze) but some aspects (such as flashcards for the Phonics wall or Magic Word Wall, or ability groups each term) need to be changed on a regular basis.
 - b) If teachers plan and organise some of the Listening and Speaking lesson slots according to the weekly theme, then the learners will have a better chance of learning new words systematically.
 - c) If children speak different versions or dialects of the Home Language in Listening and Speaking, teachers should discourage this as these are not the standard language of written texts.
 - d) Developing learners' Home Language is not restricted to Listening and Speaking but can also be done at other times of the day such as during Numeracy and Life Skills.
3. Identify which of the following statements is **the correct one**. (1)
- a) The repetition of words and linguistic structures in storybooks is beneficial as it provides additional exposure to new words and structures and consolidates learning.
 - b) A teacher does not need to ask any questions before, during or after a Read Aloud as it is not a formal lesson for teaching reading.
 - c) Because many storybooks contain repetition of words and linguistic structures, teachers only need to read them once as reading them more times will make them boring for children.
 - d) The main purpose of a Read Aloud is to teach new words to learners.
4. Consider the following scenario and then select **the option which is an inaccurate reflection** of this scenario. (1)

In a study of the vocabulary that Home Language teachers use when teaching their learners

in Foundation Phase, a researcher recorded ‘slices’ of teacher talk at regular intervals across various lessons from each of four different teachers. The following features are summarised in a table:

	<i>Teacher A</i>	<i>Teacher B</i>	<i>Teacher C</i>	<i>Teacher D</i>
<i>number of words used on average per lesson ‘slice’</i>	164	187	123	192
<i>‘big’ words used on average</i>	5	<i>none, only high frequency words</i>	<i>none, only high frequency words</i>	4
<i>average no of expansions of children’s utterances</i>	2	0	1	3
<i>feedback given when a learner answers a question</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>seldom</i>	<i>sometimes</i>	<i>always</i>

- a) Teacher A seems to produce fairly rich teacher talk, especially with regard to less common words.
- b) Although Teacher B seems to talk a lot, there is little rich quality of input in her teacher talk.
- c) The learners in Teacher C’s classroom are advantaged by quality of teacher talk but not quantity.
- d) The learners in Teacher D’s classroom are exposed to the richest teacher talk.

Unit 5: Listening and Speaking and Read Alouds

Introduction

In the following units the methods and techniques teachers use in teaching reading and writing and the different **CAPS** methods are discussed, and guidelines are given for how teachers can best organise, plan and manage them so that they enhance the literacy development of their learners.

Throughout these units an example weekly timetable of how the **CAPS** components can be accommodated is used. Different schools may have different timetables, and short and long break times differ from school to school, but the basics should be covered in more or less the same way.

What is Listening and Speaking?

Listening and Speaking refers to the time set aside in the timetable for creating opportunities for learners to develop their oral skills of listening and speaking. In the classroom, oral language development happens primarily through exposure to language via two main sources of input – through rich teacher talk and through peer talk, where learners speak to each other, as shown in the diagram in Figure 6 below:

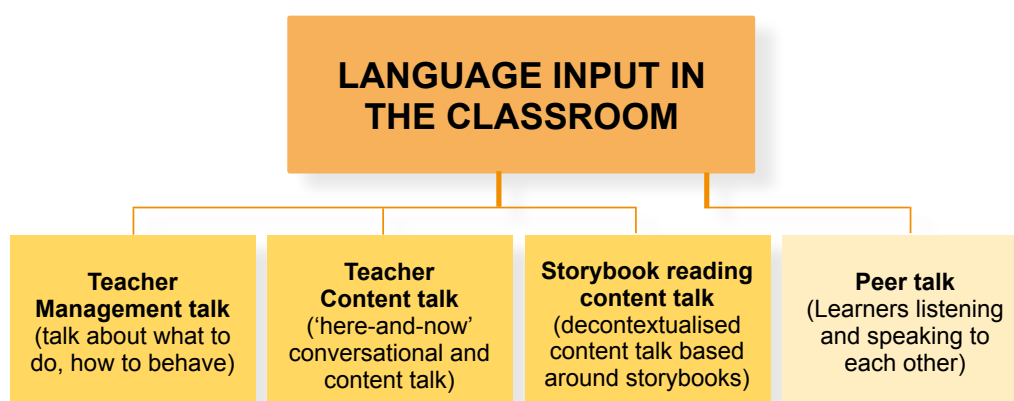


Figure 6: Different sources of language input for oral language development

Why is Listening and Speaking important?

The oral language development of learners is critical for their reading development and for their general academic performance in school. Learners who know more words and who use more complex grammatical structures when speaking learn to read and write more easily, have better comprehension skills and generally do better in their school subjects than learners with weaker language skills. This applies to both home and first additional language.

Language development happens through exposure to language, incidentally or explicitly. The more language exposure children have (quantity), and the richer the language to which they are exposed (quality), the richer the children's language development.

Research has found that there can be big differences (i.e., inequalities) between children in terms of how well their home language is developed when they come to school, due mainly to differences in exposure to the language in the home environment. The classroom can compensate for this language inequality to a large extent, but only if teachers use rich teacher talk and provide print-rich language and literacy classrooms for learners.

The conversational turn-taking that happens in Listening and Speaking sessions helps learners express ideas and explain things; they learn how to elaborate on information and they learn to be more sociable and cooperative.

Using brain scans, research from the LENA project in the United States of America (Romero et al. 2018) showed that the cumulative effect of turn-taking with an adult increases brain growth, language development and reading skills in children! Children who had more opportunities to have turn-taking conversations with an adult showed greater brain growth and neural connectivity (which deepens learning) than children who engaged in less turn-taking with an adult.

Research has also found that exposure to oral storybook reading (listening to stories through Read Alouds) can help children become more considerate of others, empathetic and tolerant. Through stories they learn how to solve problems, how to resolve conflicts, they learn that others who are like them can be different from them, or that others who are different from them can be similar to them. In a multilingual, multicultural country such as South Africa, it is important for children to learn tolerance and empathy from an early age.

When to plan for Listening and Speaking

CAPS sets aside four periods of 15 minutes each week for Listening and Speaking. These can be used for more informal conversational sessions (talking about the day, date, weather, birthdays, special events, 'show and tell', etc.) at the start of each day, or more focused activities such as discussions of pictures from a poster, storybook reading and discussion, or storytelling and discussion. Listening and Speaking can also be done during Life Skills, e.g. in Creative Arts (e.g. Drama, where a story can be dramatised).

The table below shows how Listening and Speaking can be arranged in the weekly timetable. **CAPS** only offers suggestions on how the weekly timetable is constructed. Though minimum time allocations are provided it does not prescribe how to break down the minimum time into the different components although it makes suggestions for each grade.

Weekly Plan: Table 7 shows how Listening and Speaking can be organised during the week. (The HL Listening and Speaking activities are highlighted in green and the FAL activities in yellow.)

Table 7: Listening and Speaking in the week

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.00-9.15	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics
9.15-9.30 15 min	HL: Listening and Speaking	HL: Listening and Speaking (Read Aloud)	HL: Shared Reading	HL: Listening and speaking	HL Shared Reading
9.30-9.45 15 min	HL Shared Reading	HL: Phonics	HL: Phonics	HL: Phonics	HL: Phonics (quickie assessment)
SHORT BREAK					
10.00-10.15 15 min	HL: Phonics	Handwriting HL	Handwriting HL	Handwriting HL	Handwriting HL (quickie assessment)
10.15-10.45 30 min	HL: Group Guided Reading Group A	HL: Group Guided Reading Groups B	HL: Group Guided Reading Group C	HL: Group Guided Reading Group D	HL: Group Guided Reading Group E
10.45-11.00	HL: Writing	FAL: Shared Reading	HL: Writing	FAL: Shared Reading	HL: Writing
11.00-11.15	FAL: Shared reading	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Shared reading	FAL Listening and speaking	FAL: Shared reading
11.15-11.30	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Phonics	FAL: Phonics	FAL Phonics	FAL: Phonics
11.30-11.50*	Story time or vocab games*	Story time or vocab games*	Story time or vocab games*	Story time or vocab games*	Story time or vocab games*
LONG BREAK					
12.20-13.30	Life Skills Read Aloud in the last 15 minutes	Life Skills	Life Skills Read Aloud/ Drama in the last 15 minutes	Life Skills Read Aloud in the last 15 minutes	Life Skills Read Aloud in the last 15 minutes

Guidelines for organising and managing Listening and Speaking

Some teachers think that they don't have to plan for Listening and Speaking as they just chat with learners. However, thoughtful, well-prepared teachers produce better outcomes in learners than teachers who just 'wing' it (do it spontaneously without preparation).

- Greet learners cheerfully in the mornings when they come into class so that they look forward to learning new things, take an interest in them, say goodbye to them when they leave at the end of the day. Show them through your conversational interactions that you care about them and want them to be successful learners.
- Plan the more focused activities of Listening and Speaking lessons carefully so that you use rich teacher talk and build vocabulary around specific topics, e.g. from posters or pictures, or from storybooks.

- In informal conversations with learners during Listening and Speaking, the teacher and learners take turns to talk about something. The teacher asks questions to guide the conversation and seek further clarification and expands on what learners say.

Example:

Teacher: *Ntombi, tell us what you did this weekend (using positive tone of voice).*

Ntombi: *Went to Shoprite.*

Teacher: *OK, so you went to Shoprite to buy food, to buy groceries. That must have been fun! And who did you go with?*

Ntombi: *My mother and and ... eh ... uNathi.*

Teacher: *And who is uNathi?*

Ntombi: *My brother ... Is small brother.*

Teacher: *Oh, so Nathi is your little brother. He is a sibling. He is still small, is he? Could he help you put the food in the trolley? ...*

In this way learners learn the ‘give-and-take’ of taking turns during a conversation, asking questions, listening, providing information, and generally being cordial.

- Talk in a positive tone of voice to learners. Treat them with respect, ask thoughtful questions, listen to their answers and respond accordingly. They learn a lot from the teacher, so by being a conversational role model, you show them how to be considerate, sociable and cooperative.
- Help learners identify their emotions and talk about them, and help them see the link between emotions, behaviour and consequences.

Example:

*Sipho, I **feel** disappointed when you hit your classmate Lebo. I **know** you are **feeling** a bit angry today, but it's not Lebo's fault that you are **feeling** angry. It hurts Lebo when you hit her and makes her feel sad.*

*Nozi, I **understand** that you are **feeling** excited and want to give an answer, but it was Koliswa's turn and in this classroom, we **like** to give each other turns to talk.*

The highlighted words are called mental state verbs (like, feel, think, believe, hope, love, hate, wish, imagine, etc.). By using such verbs, you unconsciously draw children's attention to their and others' mental states and make them more sensitive to emotions and feeling. This in turn helps them self-regulate better.

- Reading and listening to stories help learners make inferences about the feelings and attitudes of characters in a story, their aims and intentions, what makes them do certain things or behave in certain ways.

- Exposure to stories can help learners become considerate of others, empathetic and tolerant.

Tips for Professional Growth

Given our multilingual country, with its 11 official languages and different dialects and accents across these languages, it is likely that there will be a lot of variation in the way that teachers speak and use their home language in the classroom.

- Pay attention to the way that you and your colleagues use the home language and think of ways to enrich this so that your learners can learn how their variety of the home language differs from / is the same as the standard form used in the written language. Use the standard form in your Listening and Speaking lessons as your learners need to become familiar with it so that their reading and writing can improve.
- Listen, via radio and TV, to good language speakers to expose yourself to rich and diverse language use.
- Find out who good authors are in your home language and read their works. Written language is also an important source of rich language use. In this way you will be exposed to more complex language structures and bigger words than are usually used in spoken language.
- Watch some of the videos on Listening and Speaking from the Funda Wande website, such as videos 104, 130, 246, etc.
<https://fundawande.org/video-resources>

Read Alouds

What is a Read Aloud?

A Read Aloud is when a teacher reads a story aloud to the whole class. Usually, the book selected for a Read Aloud is slightly above the level that most learners read on their own. The purpose of a Read Aloud is to share an interesting story with learners, to model fluent reading and to nurture enjoyment of a story and a love of reading.

A Read Aloud differs from Shared Reading in the following ways:

- In Shared Reading, the text must be appropriate to the grade and one that learners can read. In contrast, in a Read Aloud, the text can be more sophisticated and advanced because it is the teacher who is reading.

- The focus in Read Alouds is on enjoyment, so it is less ‘teachy’ than Shared Reading.
- Although some before, during and after strategies can be done during a Read Aloud, less time is spent on them than would be the case in Shared Reading. During a Read Aloud, more time should be spent on actually reading and ‘getting the story across’.

Why are Read Alouds important?

- It gives the teacher an opportunity to model fluent reading.
- It provides opportunities for incidental language and vocabulary learning. Through listening to a story that is slightly above their level, learners are exposed to new words or structures that they might not otherwise encounter. If teachers repeat a story that the learners liked a few days or weeks later, the repeated exposure to the new words gives them time to consolidate their learning.
- It also provides opportunities for explicit vocabulary learning. Teachers can focus on three or four new words in the story which are added to the **Magic Word Wall** and can be revisited and reused during the course of the week.
- It exposes learners to literature in their home language and to different authors and illustrators and helps to nurture pride in their language and literature.
- Through questions and answers, teachers model how to discuss a story to enjoy it on a deeper level.
- It expands the learners’ horizons and exposes them to different contexts. The themes dealt with in the story provide opportunities for teachers and learners to talk and think about important issues in life and learn important life skills in the process.
- Weaker learners can sit back and enjoy the story without feeling the pressure of having to ‘perform’; this helps them develop a positive attitude to reading and books even though they may struggle to read themselves.
- It strengthens the bonds between teacher and learners. Learners come to love the storybook reading sessions, and the enjoyment that arises nurtures strong relationships.

Many teachers skip the Read Alouds, saying that it is not in the CAPS timetable, or they say that they have too much to do every day and don’t have time for storybook reading. However, this deprives learners of exposure to stories that provide rich language and expand their world.

How to organise and plan Read Alouds

Unlike the other methods used in **CAPS**, Read Alouds do not have a separate lesson slot. However, there are two places where you can fit them in: they can either be done in one of the Listening and Speaking slots or done in Life Skills, where the last 15 minutes can be spent on reading a story related to a theme being dealt with in Life Skills, as shown in the timetable below.

Storybooks are an ideal way of sharing cultural or national values, drawing attention to possible dangers or pitfalls in life or demonstrating courage, good thinking and decision making, and they thus lend themselves well to the themes dealt with in Life Skills.

Table 8: Planning Read Alouds during the week

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.00-9.15	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics
9.15-9.30 15 min	HL: Listening and Speaking	HL: Listening and Speaking (Read Aloud)	HL: Shared Reading (15 mins)	HL: Listening and speaking (15 mins)	HL Shared Reading (15 mins)
9.30-9.45 15 min	HL Shared Reading	HL: Phonics (15 mins)	HL: Phonics (15 mins)	HL: Phonics (15 mins)	HL: Phonics (15 mins)
SHORT BREAK					
10.00-10.15	HL: Phonics (15 mins)	Handwriting HL (15 mins)	Handwriting HL (15 mins)	Handwriting HL (15 mins)	Handwriting HL (15 mins)
10.15-10.45	HL: Group Guided Reading Group A	HL: Group Guided Reading Groups B	HL: Group Guided Reading Group C	HL: Group Guided Reading Group D	HL: Group Guided Reading Group E
10.45-11.00	HL: Writing	FAL: Shared Reading	HL: Writing	FAL: Shared Reading	HL: Writing
11.00-11.15	FAL: Shared reading	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Shared reading	FAL Listening and speaking	FAL: Shared reading
11.15-11.30	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Phonics	FAL: Phonics	FAL Phonics	FAL: Phonics
11.30-11.50	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games
LONG BREAK					
12.20-13.30	Life Skills Read Aloud in the last 15 minutes (related to LS theme)	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills Read Aloud in the last 15 minutes (related to theme)

Guidelines for organising and planning Read Alouds

Follow these five basic steps for planning Read Alouds:

1. Select two or three storybooks a week. You can repeat the same story a day or two later or the following week. Children benefit from repetition and quickly pick up many of the words or phrases in the story, often ‘appropriating’ the stories and correcting you if you deviate from the text! It reinforces the new vocabulary words and language structures.
2. Read through the stories carefully beforehand so that you are familiar with the language and storyline and select three or four words (or phrases) from each story that you will

use for vocabulary development that week. (Remember, you will also be teaching new words in other slots throughout the week, so three or four words from three Read Aloud stories per week will contribute, explicitly, to at least 10 to 12 new words per week. The learners will also be picking up words incidentally during the Read Alouds.)

3. Make flashcards for these words. Write the English word on the back of the flashcard so that you can use the same flashcards to develop EFAL vocabulary.
4. Stick the flashcards up on the Magic Word Wall and try to use these words in your teacher talk during the week. Informally test learners' knowledge of these words during the week, for example at the start of your Listening and Speaking sessions (*Who can remember what means from our Read Aloud yesterday?*)
5. Write the titles of the stories used for Read Alouds in your diary or weekly plans and record the words from each story that you highlighted for vocabulary development. This helps you keep track of how many stories you read to the learners and how many words you explicitly taught them. It also helps you when you plan your Read Alouds for the following year.

To ensure that Read Alouds are effective, make sure that you read the story well – with good intonation and fluency, making it sound like spoken language. Adopt different voices for the different characters in the story. Teachers who read in a boring way and make mistakes will not nurture a love of reading in their learners.

When organising and planning Read Alouds for the week, bear the following in mind:

- Get to know what storybooks are available in your home language. You will soon become familiar with their different styles and the topics they write about. You will also become familiar with the different illustrators and their style of drawing. In this way you build up knowledge of children's literature and you will find it easier to select enjoyable books for Read Alouds.
- If your school has a school library, visit it and become familiar with all the isiZulu/Sesotho storybooks or information books in it.
- Join the local library in your area and ask the librarians to show you what isiZulu/Sesotho books they have for children. Borrow these books to use in your Read Aloud sessions.
- Do **not** read a story 'cold'. In other words, be prepared – read the stories that you have selected for your Read Alouds for the week, beforehand. Make sure that you know how to pronounce all the words, that you know what they mean, and that you can modulate your voice appropriately according to the different characters and drama in the story.
- Read the story well. It is important that you model good and fluent reading to the learners, so practise reading the story aloud to yourself before you read it to your class. Practise using your voice effectively – change the pitch (low/high) and volume (soft/loud) of your voice according to the different characters.

- Because Read Aloud texts are usually more advanced than your own learners' reading abilities, there will usually be quite a number of words in the text that may be new to them or challenging. Select only about three or four new words for each Read Aloud session. If you select too many you may run out of time and your Read Aloud becomes too 'teachy'. Make sure the words you select occur more than once in the text. Make sure you can explain the meaning of the words in a clear way to learners.
- Don't just select stories that reflect worlds or events that are familiar to learners. Stories provide an ideal vehicle for learning about the world beyond our boundaries. Help learners travel the world through stories.
- Make sure that you know what the big idea is in the story so that you can ask the right kinds of questions and facilitate the discussion of the story.
- Consider wearing something unusual or funny when you do a Read Aloud. For example, you may decide to wear a funny hat, or a colourful scarf, or a funny pair of spectacles (or all three!) every time you do a Read Aloud. When you put these on it signals to learners that a Read Aloud is about to begin, and this heightens their anticipation of and excitement for the story.

Tips for Professional Growth

Fluent and skilful storybook reading is an art. You may initially not feel confident about your storybook reading abilities, and you may feel too shy to dramatise it. However, you will find with practice you become much better at it, you will lose your shyness, and soon you will become an expert! Here are some tips to help.

- Practise reading the book aloud to yourself. You need to get used to hearing your own voice.
- Read the story at least three to four times so that you become used to saying the words, and learn where to pause or change the pitch of your voice,
- Watch some video clips of other people reading storybooks aloud to children and see how they do it.
- Ask a trusted colleague to record you (on your cell phone) doing a Read Aloud to your class. Watch the clip afterwards and think about where and how you could improve your delivery.
- A term later ask your HOD or trusted colleague to come and listen to you do a Read Aloud to your class. Ask them for feedback on your progress and to identify areas that still need work.

Read Aloud resources

Watch videos from the **Funda Wande** website

(<https://fundawande.org/videos-resources>) on Read Alouds: 12, 33, 36, 41, 52, 53 (Reading Academy Booklet 3) and 1C, 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F, 38, 39, 40, 45, 46, 50, 52, 53, 54, 75 (Reading for Meaning Module 1) and 244, 245, 246 (Reading for Meaning Module 9).

The **National Framework for the Teaching of Reading in African Languages in the Foundation Phase** has several references to Listening and Speaking (pages 11-12, 23-24, 39-40, 88-89) and to Read Alouds (pages 75-76).

Refer also to Module 5 *Children's Literature and teaching reading*.

Conclusion

This unit focusses on two lesson types or methods that can be used to stimulate and enrich children's language and literacy development, namely Listening and Speaking and Read Alouds. Practical guidelines are given for how these can be planned and organised in the timetable and the specific skills that they target are identified, like language and vocabulary development, awareness of what skilled reading sounds like, motivation and enjoyment of storybook reading.

Self-assessment activities

These are 'quickie' assessment activities to check how well you have understood key concepts discussed in this unit and whether you are able to perceive the pedagogical implications of such concepts in the teaching of reading.

Note: The key to these self-assessment activities is given in the Appendix at the end of this module. If you score less than 6/8 (75%) for these questions you are advised to re-read the unit again to strengthen your content and pedagogic knowledge.

1. In each of the statements below provide **the appropriate missing word (or words)**. (5)
 - a) CAPS recommends at least _____ Listening and Speaking periods a week.
 - b) _____ are important for modelling fluent reading and instilling a love of storybook reading in children.
 - c) In Read Alouds the teacher selects a story that is at a slightly _____ level than what the learners can currently read themselves.

- d) Research has found that when children are exposed to verbs like *feel, think, believe, hope, like, hate, wish, imagine* in daily teacher talk and are encouraged to use such verbs in their own talk, it helps children become more sensitive to their _____ and helps them to self-regulate more effectively.
- e) It is unwise to do a Read Aloud without first rehearsing the story to oneself because reading a story cold can negatively affect the teacher's _____.
2. Indicate which one of the following statements is **false**. (1)
- a) The way in which teachers ask questions and encourage discussion on a topic during Listening and Speaking helps to model appropriate turn taking during conversations.
- b) If teachers plan and organise some of the Listening and Speaking lesson slots according to the current theme then the learners will have a better chance of learning new words systematically.
- c) If children speak different versions or dialects of the Home Language in Listening and Speaking, teachers can use this as an opportunity to celebrate linguistic diversity and to show children how they can say the same thing in their version and in the more formal standardised version of the Home Language.
- d) Developing learners' Home Language is restricted to Listening and Speaking.
3. Indicate which of the following statements is **the correct one**. (1)
- a) The repetition of words and linguistic structures in storybooks is beneficial as it provides additional exposure to new words and structures and consolidates learning.
- b) When doing a Read Aloud the teacher must make sure that the book is at the level that the learners can read.
- c) Because many storybooks contain repetition of words and linguistic structures, children tend to tune out these repetitions when the story is read to them.
- d) The main purpose of a Read Aloud is to teach new words to learners.
4. Consider the following scenario and then select **the option which is irrelevant to or an inaccurate reflection** of this scenario. (1)

The theme of the week is 'My body'. Teacher Tintswalo has written a little story about a brother and sister getting dressed and ready for school which she reads aloud to the Grade 1 class during Listening and Speaking. She has included many phrases in her story that refer to a body part (e.g. Sipho nearly bumped his big toe when he got out of bed... He pulled his socks up to his knees ... He put his left foot into his shoe first ...Maria brushed her teeth and put cream on her cheeks ... Sipho rolled his sleeves up to his elbow. ...Maria nearly twisted her ankle while running to school). The teacher reads the story through the first time without interruption so that the children can know what the story is about. Then she reads it a second time, and this time she asks the children to clap once whenever a part of the body is mentioned in the story. She then gives learners who have clapped turns to say the body word and show where on their body it is.

- a) By asking the learners to clap whenever they hear a word relating to the body helps them concentrate and engage with the story.
- b) The teacher is drawing the learners' attention to names of body parts that are common (*teeth, foot*) and also those that are less common (*knee, elbow, ankle*).
- c) Children pay attention and learn more readily when they are having fun.
- d) Asking the learners to clap whenever they hear a word relating to the body will disrupt the story and spoil its enjoyment.

Unit 6: Phonics, handwriting and writing

This unit discusses Phonics, which teaches the letter-sound relationships that help learners to decode written text, and Handwriting/Writing, which is the way of encoding spoken language into text. In Grades 1 and 2 it is important for Handwriting to come immediately after Phonics as writing helps to reinforce the letter-sounds that learners learn in phonics.

In order to use Phonics lessons effectively teachers need to understand what the purpose of Phonics is, and how it can be best organised to make the teaching method effective.

Preliminary reading on Phonics

Module 3 *Decoding: alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency and morphological awareness* is an essential foundation for the planning of Phonics teaching. The **National Framework for the Teaching of Reading in African Languages in the Foundation Phase** often refers to Phonics (especially pages 17-31).

Phonics

What is phonics?

Phonics refers to two things, as shown in Figure 7:

- From a pedagogical perspective, it refers to the explicit and systematic teaching of letter-sound relationships in an alphabetic orthography.
- From learners' perspectives, it refers to the knowledge of letter-sounds in an alphabetic orthography and developing the skills of how to segment and blend letter-sounds into syllables and words, and how to spell and write words correctly.

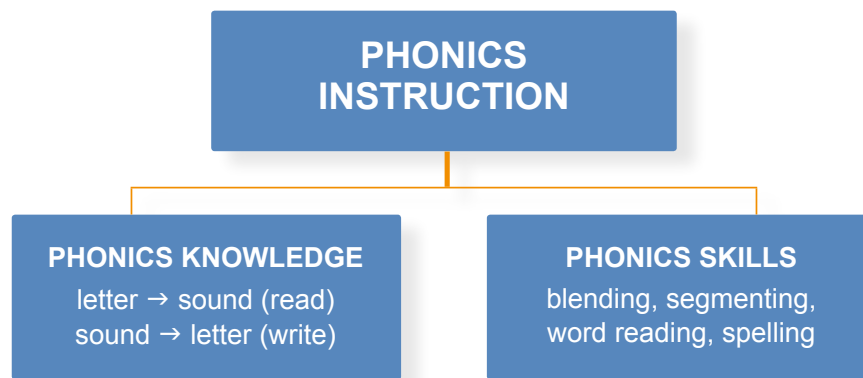


Figure 7: Phonics instruction, phonics knowledge and phonic skills

Why is phonics important?

In the synthetic phonics approach to teaching reading, phonics is considered to be very important and letter-sound relationships are taught directly and systematically. (The term ‘synthetic phonics’ comes from the English word *synthesis*, which means combining separate elements into a unified thing – like combining letters into words.) Research across all alphabetic languages consistently yields the following findings:

- If children do not know the letter-sound relationships well, they struggle to read words.
- Children who are explicitly taught phonics develop letter-sound knowledge more quickly than those who are expected to figure out letter sounds on their own.
- Young children do not automatically ‘pick up’ letter-sound relationships, and they benefit far more from being taught them explicitly, especially children from high poverty backgrounds who are not exposed to storybooks in the home, and children with learning difficulties.
- African languages have a large set of graphemes involving several single graphemes as well as digraphs, trigraphs and consonant blends. Reading development lags behind if learners do not know these letter-sounds well.
- The Benchmark Project (Ardington et al. 2020; Wills et al. 2022), commissioned by the Department of Basic Education, used a very large set of longitudinal data (i.e. tracking learners over several years across the grades) from across the African languages as well as EFAL and Afrikaans. Analysis of the data showed that learners who could identify at least 40 letter-sounds per minute at the end of Grade 1 became good readers in Grade 2 and 3. Those who knew fewer letter-sounds became weak readers in Grade 2, they read slowly and inaccurately, and didn’t catch up in Grade 3 — even in Grade 7 these learners had still not caught up on phonics knowledge and were still struggling to read. As a result of this strong research evidence, the Department of Basic Education recommends a benchmark of 40 phonemes-graphemes correct per minute by the end of Grade 1.

It is therefore important for Grade 1 teachers to ensure that all their learners are able to identify at least 40 phoneme-graphemes correct per minute by the end of Grade 1 otherwise their learners will not be able to read properly.

When to plan for phonics

Phonics is generally a whole class teaching activity. According to CAPS, teachers should do phonics every day of the week for 15 minutes. It is advisable, especially in Grade 1, to do handwriting after phonics lessons, as writing the letters reinforces learning to recognise them. However, having the phonics-handwriting sequence may not always be possible every day in the school timetable.

Phonics knowledge can be reinforced throughout the day, especially in Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading and Handwriting/Writing.

Table 9: Planning Phonics (and Handwriting/Writing) during the week

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.00-9.15	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics
9.15-9.30 15 min	HL: Listening and Speaking	HL: Listening and Speaking (Read Aloud – Book B)	HL: Shared Reading (15 mins)	HL: Listening and speaking (15 mins)	HL Shared Reading (15 mins)
9.30-9.45 15 min	HL Shared Reading	HL: Phonics	HL: Phonics	HL: Phonics	HL: Phonics (quickie assessment)
SHORT BREAK					
10.00-10.15	HL: Phonics	Handwriting HL (15 mins)	Handwriting HL (15 mins)	Handwriting HL (15 mins)	Handwriting HL (15 mins) (quickie assessment)
10.15-10.45	HL: Group Guided Reading Group A	HL: Group Guided Reading Groups B	HL: Group Guided Reading Group C	HL: Group Guided Reading Group D	HL: Group Guided Reading Group E
10.45-11.00	HL: Writing	FAL: Shared Reading	HL: Writing	FAL: Shared Reading	HL: Writing
11.00-11.15	FAL: Shared reading	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Shared reading	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Shared reading
11.15-11.30	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Phonics	FAL: Phonics	FAL: Phonics	FAL: Phonics
11.30-11.50	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games
LONG BREAK					
12.20-13.30	Life Skills Read Aloud in the last 15 minutes	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills Read Aloud in the last 15 minutes

Many teachers mistakenly think that phonics is the most important part of reading instruction and spend up to 40 minutes or more per day teaching phonics. While phonics is undoubtedly important, especially in Grade 1 and 2 when the foundations of reading are being laid, reading is far more than phonics alone. It is also important to keep your phonics lessons brisk and to the point and stick to the allocated time so as not to overburden learners' concentration spans.

Guidelines for organising and planning phonics

From the year and term planning, teachers should have a clear idea of how many letter-sounds and which letter-sounds to teach each term. Weekly phonics plans should be adapted from these bigger plans.

Phonics should be taught explicitly and systematically. (See Module 3:Unit 4 for a detailed discussion of good phonics lessons.)

To teach phonics **explicitly** means to:

1. tell the learners what letter-sound will be focused on in the lesson.
2. show them what the letter looks like (they must learn to recognise its shape).
3. explain what sound the letter represents (they must learn the letter-sound relationship – also in word context).
4. give them lots of opportunities to develop their letter-sound knowledge through 'see-and-say' (i.e., seeing and saying the letter-sound) and 'listen-and-write' (i.e., listening to you say the sound and writing the appropriate letter – in the handwriting slot).

Part of explicit phonics instruction is building up learners' phonics skills by teaching them word attack strategies, using segmentation and blending.

5. Show them how to segment the written word into graphemes and match the corresponding sound (phoneme) to each grapheme.
6. Show them how to blend the consonants and vowels to form syllables and words.
7. Teach them to use their phonics knowledge and skills to sound out new words and to spell words correctly.

To teach phonics **systematically** means to:

- Follow a plan relating to which sounds will be taught first, in what order they will be taught, and ensuring that learners reach a high level of mastery (i.e., make sure that they know their letter-sounds well through regular informal assessments). For example:
 - ▶ Since there are only five vowel letters in isiZulu and seven in Sesotho, it makes sense to teach learners the vowels up front, alternating them with high-frequency consonants such as b, m, f, and k. One can form a large number of words just by combining the vowels and the few consonants, and this quickly gives learners a

sense of accomplishment and pride in being able to read or write words and form short simple sentences.

- ▶ It is a sound principle to teach the high-frequency single letter consonant sounds first (e.g. l, b, d, m, g, k, f) during the first term of Grade 1 so that the learners' eyes get habituated to the shapes of the letters and letter identification.
- ▶ In Term 2 and 3 of Grade 1 introduce the digraphs (e.g. kh, ph, ng, th, hl) and trigraphs (tsh). The vowels, single consonants, digraphs and trigraphs are all representations of single speech sounds and they form the basis for teaching reading and writing. Delaying the teaching of these sounds makes it difficult to read text in African languages since these sounds occur so commonly in African languages.
- ▶ Consonant blends are not 'new' sounds, they are a sequence of separate graphemes which have already been taught, for instance (nd (<n+d), mp (<m+p), nhl (<n+hl), ndl (<n+dl), tsw (<ts+w)). When the word impuphu is pronounced, the consonant sequence mp does not form a single sound, it still comprises the phonemes m and p. The consonant blends should be introduced systematically once the constituting graphemes have been taught. That means that the consonant blend mp will be introduced once both the m and p graphemes have been taught.
- ▶ Even though the consonant blends seem to be complex, the reason for teaching them in Grade 1 is that they occur with great frequency in words in the African languages. It is challenging to find a paragraph in any African language text without consonant blends.
- ▶ It is very important to teach phonics to a high level of mastery, i.e., learners must be able to identify and say letter-sounds accurately and quickly. Initially learners will make mistakes (mistakes are a normal part of learning) and may take a few seconds to recognise the letter sound, but this kind of knowledge must become so ingrained after intense repetition that it is done without thinking about it – it becomes knowledge available at one's fingertips (i.e. immediately available in memory without thinking).

Other guidelines for sound phonics teaching include:

- Include phonological awareness activities in the Phonics lessons in Grade 1, where learners listen to and orally manipulate syllables and sounds in words. It is useful to do these activities first, before introducing the new letter- sound for the day, as this helps activate the learners' phonological knowledge.
- Make letter cards, syllable cards and phonics word flashcards for each lesson. Make them large enough for learners to see them properly. Have plastic containers or zip lock bags to store these resources for future use.
- Learners understand letter-sounds more easily when the words used as examples are already known to them. Phonics is not about vocabulary development; it is about the

alphabetic code and teaching learners to recognise letter-sounds in words that they already know. Thus, when selecting phonics flashcards, try to use high-frequency words that they are already familiar with. For example, when doing the letter sound f, use Sesotho words or stems, such as *-fa* ‘give’ or *-fiela* ‘sweep’ to illustrate this sound rather than *-fadimehela* ‘guard against’ or *-feteletsa* ‘make worse’, or the isiZulu verb stems *-fa* ‘die’ or *-fika* ‘arrive’ instead of the stems *-fohloza* ‘smash’ or *-folokotha* ‘bring down/cause to collapse’. It is easier for the beginner reader to learn to read words already known than unfamiliar, unknown words.

Make several sets of letter cards and syllable cards (store them separately, each in their own zip lock plastic bags). These can be handed to pairs of learners to practise making syllables and words during Group Guided Reading while the teacher is busy with one of the groups. Develop a routine where learners put all the letter/syllable cards back into the plastic bags at the end of the lesson.

Tips for Professional Growth

Although many teachers spend a lot of time on phonics, the time is not always spent efficiently and effectively. All the current South African research shows that learners across all the grades in Foundation Phase have very poor phonics knowledge and phonics skills, which means that they cannot use their phonics knowledge to read words.

Here are some tips to help you become an expert phonics teacher:

- Make phonics lessons fun. There are lots of phonics games that can be played, and children enjoy them tremendously and become quite competitive and motivated to build up their phonics knowledge.
- Knowledge of letter-sounds is a form of procedural knowledge, i.e., it is foundational knowledge that must be learned early and be executed quickly, without conscious thought, in order for more complex skills (like word reading) to occur. Many people criticise phonics for being boring and leading to meaningless drill activities. However, such critics regard all knowledge as the same and seem to be unaware of the nature of procedural knowledge and so dismiss it as being ‘mechanical’. Think of all the drills and procedural training that dancers and athletes have to do before they can perform adequately.
- Because phonics knowledge is procedural, expect high levels of mastery from learners. To gain mastery of something means to have knowledge and skill ‘at your fingertips’ (you can accurately and quickly access the knowledge from memory without consciously thinking about it). Even though learners need to practise recognising letter-sounds, this can be lots of fun and it builds learner confidence as they get better and faster at it. (It’s very similar to doing mental maths every day, and as beneficial.)

Phonics resources

Watch videos from the **Funda Wande** website (<https://fundawande.org/videos-resources>) on Phonics teaching. The activities recommended by Teacher Zara are appropriate for all African languages, for example videos 26, 42, 93, 96, 110, 111 (Reading Academy Booklet 1); 51 (Reading for Meaning Module 2); 102, 103, 109 (Reading for Meaning Module 3); 29, 94 (other videos).

Handwriting and Writing

Writing resources

Because the focus in this module is primarily on reading, for a more detailed look at the teaching of writing and handwriting, consult the Primary Teacher Education Project study guide on **Teaching and Writing** (<https://www.jet.org.za/clearinghouse/projects/printed/materials/language-and-literacy-materials-repository/printed-teaching-reading-study-guides/ptrsg-seven-writing.pdf>)

What is Handwriting and Writing?

Handwriting refers to the skill of forming letters, words and numbers clearly. Learners need to learn how to hold the pencil correctly, how to form letters, their starting point, size, shape, direction of movement and how letters are positioned on the line. All this needs practice, so the basis of good handwriting is repetition. By the end of the Foundation Phase all aspects of handwriting such as correct letter and figure formation, size, spacing, clarity, legibility of print and script should be mastered.

Writing (also referred to as ‘composing’ or composition) refers to the act of telling a story or sharing ideas or information in writing to an audience (a reader).

Because different types of **genres** and **text types** (e.g. narrative, information, report, recipe) have different purposes and are structured differently, learners need to learn the conventions of each genre in order to produce written texts in these genres.

Why is Handwriting important?

It is essential that learners master the skills of handwriting. Handwriting may be supplemented

by technical aids such as text messaging on cell phones or word processing on computers, but it can never be replaced completely.

The development of handwriting in the early years plays a vital role in the development of early reading. Reading and writing develop in tandem and support one another. Developing handwriting skills supports phonics knowledge and spelling, while developing writing skills supports reading comprehension of different text types.

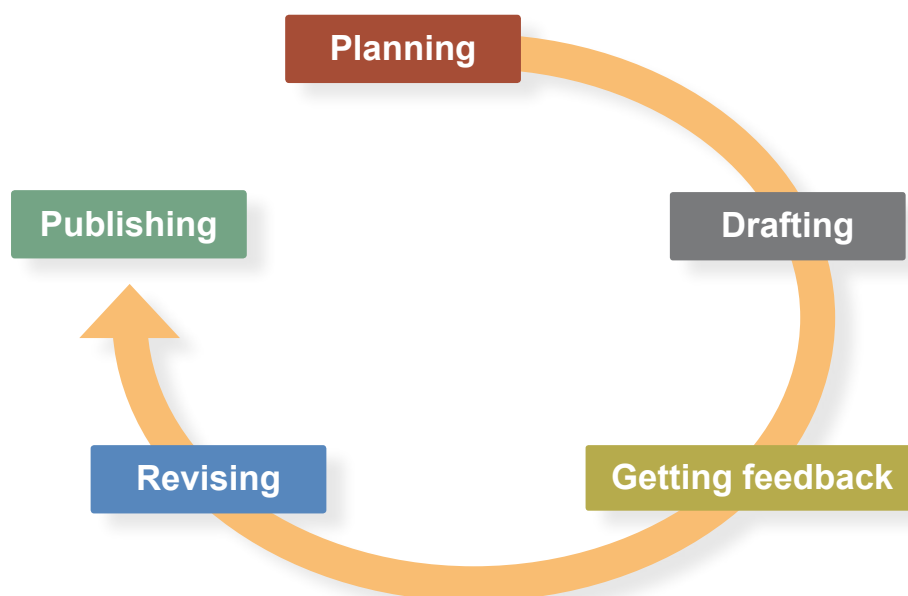
Learners' handwriting skills develop slowly in the early stages; speed is developed gradually. However, research shows that developing fast, automatic handwriting can influence learners' writing/composing (Berninger et al 2006; Medwell et al 2007). Research shows that the production of slow handwriting interferes with learners' ability to compose text.

Why is Writing important?

Being able to compose texts clearly, in a systematic and coherent manner, is a very important skill in the learning context because nearly all assessments in later primary school and in high school are via written tests or examinations.

There are many different approaches when it comes to teaching writing/composing. There are two useful approaches that can be effectively combined, namely teaching writing as a process and explicitly teaching about writing genres. **CAPS** supports the use of this combined approach to writing.

Writing is a process



No one writes a perfect text at their first attempt. Learners need to understand that writing well takes time and goes through several drafts. It requires thinking, planning, reading, drafting, talking, revising, rewriting and then publishing (sharing it with an audience). Plan your writing lessons in such a way that learners have time to plan, draft and revise their written texts.

Genres and text types

Learners need to be aware that different kind of texts have different purposes, language usage, ways of arranging information and different audiences. Learners need to be explicitly taught how each text (genre) is different so that they can write these genres. When learners know why a text is written, who is written for and what needs to go into the text, they are better able to create their own texts.

When to plan for Handwriting and Writing

CAPS specifies four lessons of 15 minutes each for handwriting a week, and three periods for writing of 15 minutes. By the end of Grade 1, learners should be able to form both lower-case and upper-case letters quickly and accurately. During Grade 2 they learn to write cursive, and by the end of Grade 3 they should be able to write cursive effortlessly and accurately. Because FAL in Grade 1 is still largely oral based, no formal writing time is assigned to it. Some teachers might like to include some basic FAL writing in the second half of Grade 1.

Table 10: Planning (Phonics and) Handwriting/Writing during the week

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.00-9.15	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics
9.15-9.30	HL: Shared Reading (15min)	HL: Listening and Speaking (15 mins)	HL: Shared Reading (15 mins)	HL: Listening and speaking (15 mins)	HL Shared Reading (15 mins)
9.30-9.45	HL Listening and Speaking (15 mins)	HL: Phonics (15 mins)	HL: Phonics (15 mins)	HL: Phonics (15 mins)	HL: Phonics (15 mins)
SHORT BREAK					
10.00-10.15	HL: Phonics (15 mins)	Handwriting HL (15 mins)	Handwriting HL (15 mins)	Handwriting HL (15 mins)	Handwriting HL (15 mins)
10.15-10.45	HL: Group Guided Reading Group A	HL: Group Guided Reading Groups B	HL: Group Guided Reading Group C	HL: Group Guided Reading Group D	HL: Group Guided Reading Group E
10.45-11.00	HL: Writing	FAL: Shared Reading	HL: Writing	FAL: Shared Reading	HL: Writing
11.00-11.15	FAL: Shared reading	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Shared reading	FAL Listening and speaking	FAL: Shared reading
11.15-11.30	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Phonics	FAL: Phonics	FAL Phonics	FAL: Phonics
11.30-11.50	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games
LONG BREAK					
12.20-13.30	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills

Guidelines for organising and planning Handwriting and Writing

- Make sure that in Grade 1 a handwriting lesson always follows a phonics lesson, as learning to write letter shapes helps to reinforce letter-sound knowledge.
- Remember that when it comes to the letters of the alphabet, learners need to identify and associate three different but related things, namely (1) the shape of the letter, (2) the name of the letter and (3) the sound the particular letter represents. Likewise, when learners hear a sound, they must be able to write the letter that represents that sound and name it.
- In handwriting spoken words are converted into visual images, so visual and motor coordination plays an important role in handwriting. The hand and eye must coordinate to achieve this skill. Learners need to be taught how to do this and be given lots of practice to master this skill.
- Dominance refers to the preference to use one particular hand or side of the body (left or right) to perform physical actions, such as writing, kicking a ball, putting a key into a lock, etc. Teachers in Grade R and 1 should look out for signs which show which side (right or left) a child favours. Teachers should never force a left-handed learner to write with their right hand. Left-handed children have different needs and teachers should support them, e.g. by showing left-handers how to position their paper at an angle so that they can see their writing, or by providing special scissors for left-handers.
 - ▶ A left-hander should sit on the left side of a right-hander so that they don't bump each other.
 - ▶ Left-handed children should hold their pencils as if pointing at 2 o'clock (and not arch their hands over the paper).
 - ▶ Left-handed learners will find it easier to make horizontal letter strokes (like in capital A or of a lowercase t) from right to left rather than left to right, so that they pull, rather than push the pen.
- It is important for teachers to know that learners go through different stages of writing development. Teachers should bear in mind that stages overlap, which means learners in the same grade may be at different stages. Current research shows that many learners in South Africa do not even reach the more advanced writing stages.
- It is important for teachers to match their teaching to the writing level of each learner. Knowing these stages helps teachers to recognise where learners are in a particular phase of their development and how to get to the next stage by providing the right input in terms of content and writing ideas.

There are many articles and websites that you can consult to help you build up your knowledge of handwriting and writing and how they develop. Not only do they provide important information about this aspect of literacy, but they also provide very useful tips for teachers.

*Primary Teacher Education Project study guide on **Teaching Writing** (<https://www.jet.org.za/clearinghouse/projects/printed/materials/language-and-literacy-materials-repository/printed-teaching-reading-study-guides/ptrsg-seven-writing.pdf>)*

*Eastern Cape Education Department **Handwriting Guidelines, Grade R-3**. Bisho: Eastern Cape Education Department (<https://eccurriculum.co.za/FoundationPhase/2013Guidelines/Handwriting%20Guidelin%20Gr%20R%20-%202.pdf>)*

*Watch videos from the **Funda Wande** website (<https://fundawande.org/video-resources>) on Writing and Handwriting including the Reading for Meaning Modules: (Module 2:70); (Module 5: 175); 153, 154, 155, 173-175, 190, 192-199 (Module 6); (Module 8: 218); (Module 10:237); (Module 11 247); 166, 171, 176, 180 (other videos).*

*For general information and videos on teaching handwriting, including to left-handed learners see **The Happy Handwriter Blog** by South African occupational therapist, Buntz McDougall (<https://thehappyhandwriter.co.za/left-handed-development-and-teaching-lefties-to-write/>)*

Conclusion

This unit focusses on Phonics and Handwriting/Writing, two aspects of early grade teaching that are focussed directly and explicitly on written language and learning how to read and write it. Attention is drawn to qualities of an effective phonics programme, namely one that provides explicit and systematic instruction in how the alphabetic code works and the conventions of written language, as well as regular opportunities to practise newly acquired phonics skills, in both reading and writing.

Self-assessment activities

These are ‘quickie’ assessment activities to check how well you have understood key concepts discussed in this unit and whether you are able to perceive the pedagogical implications of such concepts in the teaching of reading.

Note: The key to these self-assessment activities is given in the Appendix at the end of this module. If you score less than 6/8 (75%) for these questions you are advised to re-read the unit again to strengthen your content and pedagogic knowledge.

1. In each of the statements below provide **the appropriate missing word (or words)**. (5)
 - a) In the synthetic phonics approach, the sounds that individual letters represent are taught in an _____ manner.
 - b) The letter-sound benchmark at the end of Grade 1 is _____ letter sounds a minute.
 - c) The reason why handwriting should be taught after phonics in Grade 1 is that writing letter shapes helps to _____ the learning of letter sounds.
 - d) A left-handed learner should sit on the _____ side of a right-handed learner so that they don't bump each other.
 - e) 'Listen-and-write' is an important component of handwriting, while '_____ and _____' is important in Phonics.
2. Indicate which one of the following statements is **false**. (1)
 - a) An important part of phonics teaching is getting children to learn to blend letter sounds to form syllables or words.
 - b) Research shows that if learners don't learn their letter-sounds properly in Grade 1 then they will slowly catch up by Grade 7.
 - c) While the curriculum provides guidelines for the order in which letter sounds should be taught, a teacher has control over how well she prepares her phonics lessons and explicitly teaches letter sounds and blending.
 - d) While it is important for teachers to explicitly teach letter sounds in phonics, they also need to provide opportunities for learners to practise them.
3. Indicate which of the following statements is **the correct one**. (1)
 - a) Teaching Grade 1 learners to recite syllables such as *ba be bi bo bu* helps them to identify phonemes within syllables.
 - b) A teacher needs to prepare relevant flashcards before each phonics lesson, using new words to practise the letter sounds.
 - c) Because curriculum documents provide guidelines on the order in which letter

sounds should be taught, teachers do not need to spend much time on the planning and organisation of their phonics lessons.

- d) The main purpose of each Phonics lesson is to systematically teach the sounds that letters represent and to show learners how to blend sounds to form syllables and words.
4. Consider the following scenario and then select **the option which is an inaccurate reflection** of this scenario. (1)

In the whole class Phonics lesson slot, Teacher Zaza first spends a few minutes revising previous letter sounds that the learners have been taught. When introducing the new letter sound, she first says the sound out aloud two or three times and asks which learners have that sound in their name. She asks them to clap the syllables in their names and to identify in which syllable this new sound occurs. She then shows them a large letter card with the letter sound on it and says the name of the letter and the sound it makes. She has prepared 5 flashcards with high frequency words that contain the letter sound. Once she has guided the learners in segmenting the sounds in each word and then blending them, she walks up and down the rows showing various letter cards with the new sound and some previously taught letter sounds asking learners to say them, after which she does the same with the flashcards in random order to see who can read the word correctly.

- a) Teacher Zaza has included some phonological awareness activities in her phonics lesson.
- b) The reason Teacher Zaza shows the flashcards in random order is to make sure that learners do not memorise words in a particular sequence.
- c) By making flashcards with common words containing the letter sound, Teacher Zaza has missed an opportunity to teach new vocabulary during Phonics.
- d) Teacher Zaza builds some practice opportunities in her phonics lesson for the learners to recognise the target letter sound alone and in words.

Unit 7: Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading and Paired Reading

Preliminary reading on Shared and Group Guided Reading

Modules 3, 4 and 5 on Decoding, Reading comprehension and Children's literature and teaching reading are all foundations for the planning of Shared and Group Guided Reading lessons.

*The **National Framework for the Teaching of Reading in African Languages in the Foundation Phase** refers to Shared Reading and Group Guided Reading on pages 77 to 90.*

Shared Reading

What is Shared Reading?

Shared Reading is when the teacher reads to the whole class from a book, usually a big book, pointing to the words as she reads, modelling how to read the story, asking questions about the text and the pictures, and generally guiding learners through the story and teaching the strategies that can help them understand the text at a deeper level.

Why is Shared Reading important?

Shared Reading is important because it provides opportunities to model different aspects of the reading process. It is a useful 'all-purpose' lesson because it can be used to focus on decoding, spelling, language, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Teachers can use it to explain and model decoding and reading comprehension strategies, draw attention to punctuation and text structure, and enhance vocabulary.

For example:

- By pointing with a ruler or stick to words, teachers show Grade 1 learners how to read words in a text, line by line, from left to right, and how to turn pages.
- By doing a 'picture walk' through the story, teachers flip through the story quickly to summarise the main events in the story and to draw learners' attention to the accompanying visuals and show them, through questions and modelling, how visuals can be used to add to enjoyment and comprehension of the text.

- Teachers can show learners how to apply word attack strategies and use phonics knowledge when encountering unfamiliar or long words that are difficult to read.
- Teachers model fluent reading, modulating their voices and pausing appropriately to convey meaning.
- Teachers show learners how to apply reading comprehension strategies before reading, such as activating background knowledge (from the title or pictures), making predictions, and making inferences about what will happen from the title and from visual cues in the pictures.
- Teachers show learners how to apply reading comprehension strategies during and after reading, such as making links between sentences and paragraphs, identifying main ideas, checking on comprehension and thinking about the ‘big idea’ in the story.
- Teachers use the text to build up learners’ vocabulary and conceptual knowledge.
- Teachers show learners how information has been structured across paragraphs in narrative (setting, characters, problem, resolution) or information texts (description, comparison, cause-effect, etc.).
- Teachers use the text to show learners how the writer makes use of language, punctuation or specific words to convey positive or negative connotations, to portray feelings and attitudes, to present a particular perspective or point of view, or to convey humour.

Books for Shared Reading

The Vula Bula series has eight Big Books

(<https://vulabula.molteno.co.za/readers-by-language/89/all>), each with four stories in them, in order of increasing length and complexity. For each story, specific words are identified for attention, and they provide rich language and vocabulary.

The Department of Basic Education also has some graded readers and big books for downloading ([https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/LearningandTeachingSupportMaterials\(LTSM\)/GradedReadersandBigBookHL.aspx](https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/LearningandTeachingSupportMaterials(LTSM)/GradedReadersandBigBookHL.aspx) and [https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/LearningandTeachingSupportMaterials\(LTSM\)/IILALResources.aspx](https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/LearningandTeachingSupportMaterials(LTSM)/IILALResources.aspx))

When to plan Shared Reading lessons

Shared Reading is a whole-class activity for both home language and first additional languages, usually involving mat work. The learners come to the front of the class to sit on a mat around the teacher’s chair.

According to CAPS Home Language Shared Reading should be done at least three times a week for 15 minutes.

Table 11: Planning Shared Reading during the week

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.00-9.15	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics
9.15-9.30 15 min	HL: Listening and Speaking	HL: Listening and Speaking (Read Aloud – Book B)	HL: Shared Reading	HL: Listening and speaking	HL Shared Reading
9.30-9.45 15 min	HL Shared Reading	HL: Phonics	HL: Phonics	HL: Phonics	HL: Phonics (quickie assessment)
SHORT BREAK					
10.00-10.15 15 min	HL: Phonics	Handwriting HL	Handwriting HL	Handwriting HL	Handwriting HL (quickie assessment)
10.15-10.45 30 min	HL: Group Guided Reading Group A	HL: Group Guided Reading Groups B	HL: Group Guided Reading Group C	HL: Group Guided Reading Group D	HL: Group Guided Reading Group E
10.45-11.00	HL: Writing	FAL: Shared Reading	HL: Writing	FAL: Shared Reading	HL: Writing
11.00-11.15	FAL: Shared reading	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Shared reading	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Shared reading
11.15-11.30	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Phonics	FAL: Phonics	FAL: Phonics	FAL: Phonics
11.30-11.50*	Story time or vocab games*	Story time or vocab games*	Story time or vocab games*	Story time or vocab games*	Story time or vocab games*
LONG BREAK					
12.20-13.30	Life Skills Read Aloud in the last 15 minutes	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills Read Aloud in the last 15 minutes

CAPS recommends that the same story is used for each of the three days, focusing on a different aspect of the story on each day. For example:

- On the first day teachers can do a picture walk through the text and read the whole story, recapping the main events or ideas.
- On the second day teachers read the story again, this time focusing on decoding the words, showing learners how to apply word attack skills with longer and more tricky words. With Grade 2 and 3 learners who can already decode, fluency can be focused on. Show learners how to use punctuation to guide intonation and comprehension while reading and draw attention to vocabulary and language structures.

- On the third day teachers can focus on modelling reading comprehension strategies before, during and after reading the text, and discuss elements in the story (setting, characters, problem, resolution, the big idea).

Guidelines for organising and managing Shared Reading

Because the same text is used for three Shared Reading lessons in the week, this means that teachers need to plan and organise well in advance.

- Select the book to be used and read it carefully so that you can decide what you want to focus on for each of the three days. What will you do on the first Shared Reading day? What will you do on the second day? What will you do on the third day?
- Make sure that you do not repeat the same things on each day otherwise it becomes boring for the learners – draw their attention to new aspects of the text on each of the three days.
- It is advisable to do mat work with Shared Reading. In that way you can share the book with them easily, and you create a close and companionable environment. Because they are all closer to you, it is also easier to see who is paying attention or who might have problems following what is in the text. You can see more easily who is scrunching up their eyes when looking at the book and may need to have their eyes tested.
- If you do not have enough big books, select other books that would be suitable. Books with small print will not be suitable as learners further back will not be able to see them.
- Make sure that your learner knows the routine for moving from their desks to the mat quickly, quietly and in an orderly manner. Let them take turns for sitting in the front row on the mat.

Cautions about Shared Reading

- Shared Reading is intended to show learners how texts and written language work. Because Shared Reading is a group activity, it is not suitable for practising decoding. In South African where large classes are often the norm, only learners sitting in the front rows can see the text properly. When the whole class reads the text aloud, learners learn to memorise the text and do not actually read the words. Decoding practice must be done in Phonics, in Group Guided Reading and can also be done in Paired Reading. If learners are given reading homework, then they get additional practice in decoding texts.
- A danger in Shared Reading is that, through repeated hearings of the same story, learners memorise the words though they may not be able to read them. Teachers need to check that when they ask specific learners to read a portion of the text that they are not simply reading from memory.
- During Shared Reading teachers should discuss pictures and show how they support comprehension. However, although pictures can help enjoyment and comprehension, they are no substitute for being able to decode the text and actually read it. Learners must

learn to decode the words on the page using letter-sound knowledge, not guess what the words say from the pictures.

The *Vula Bula* series has eight Big Books, each with four stories in them, in order of increasing length and complexity. For each story, specific words are identified for attention, and they provide rich language and vocabulary.

NB: These books can also be used for Read Alouds – if the language is above the level of the learners (for example, Big Book 1 can be used with Grade 1s for a Read Aloud), or they can be used for Shared Reading, provided the language is at the level that the learners can cope with (e.g. Big Book 1 can be used with Grade 2 learners for Shared Reading).

Tips for Professional Growth

Shared Reading is a very useful, all-purpose reading method for modelling reading and for demonstrating and talking about language, text and story, and for sharing enthusiasm and motivation for reading, especially if many of your learners come from homes where there is little literacy support.

Sadly, however, local research based on classroom observations has noted two problematic areas concerning Shared Reading:

- Many teachers do not seem to properly understand the difference between Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading and Read Alouds and tend to present them all in the same way.
- In some classrooms it is not always clear what the point of the Shared Reading lesson is, probably because the teacher has not planned the lesson properly. The teacher reads the story pointing to the words, but there is little explaining, modelling, asking questions or showing learners how to apply strategies, and teachers show little enthusiasm during reading.

To avoid these pitfalls, here are some tips to help develop reading and vocabulary in Shared Reading lessons:

- Improve your content knowledge of Shared Reading. Make sure you understand how it differs from Group Guided Reading and Read Alouds.
- Make sure that for each of the three days of Shared Reading you have a clear but slightly different aim and focus, something specific that you want the children to learn, e.g. draw attention to how written language works (Day 1); vocabulary and prosody (Day 2); story structure (i.e., setting, characters, problem, resolution and the 'big idea' or message in the story) or comprehension strategies (Day 3).

- Present lessons in a positive tone, show interest in the text and speak with enthusiasm so that learners associate reading with enjoyment and with learning new things.
- Use Shared Reading to develop learners' growth mind set by reminding them that anyone can become a good reader through effort, practice and perseverance, and show them how to do so on each of the three days.
- Ask a trusted colleague or your HOD to observe you for 15 minutes during Shared Reading and give you constructive feedback on how you're doing. Although it's always nice to receive praise for things one is doing well, one learns the most from honest, critical and constructive feedback, not from praise!

Resources on Shared Reading

Watch videos from the **Funda Wande** website (<https://fundawande.org/video-resources>) on Shared Reading found in the **Funda Wande** Reading for Meaning Modules: 1H, 55-56, 61-65 (in Module 1); 107, 109, (in Module 3); 157 (in Module 5); 209 (in Module 7) which also has 205, 215, for EFAL); 226 (for EFAL in Module 8); 60, 14 (in other videos).

Group Guided Reading

What is Group Guided Reading?

In Group Guided Reading (GGR) teachers work closely with a group of learners (about seven to nine learners) while the rest of the class is occupied with reading or writing activities. Teachers give each learner in the group a chance to read and give individual feedback to them. Teachers can focus on any aspect of reading (decoding, fluency or reading comprehension), depending on the level of the group and their needs.

Why is Group Guided Reading important?

Most teachers have classes of 40 or more learners, which makes it difficult for learners to get individual attention. Group Guided Reading provides an ideal way for teachers to do differentiated teaching and get a chance to hear individual learners read and monitor their reading development.

Through Group Guided Reading teachers can:

- Get to know learners better and form close bonds with them
- Get to know the individual reading abilities of each of the learners
- Identify learners who have reading problems early on and help them
- Track individual learners' progress in reading
- Provide practice opportunities for reading and writing for the rest of the class while busy with one group.

How to organise and plan for Group Guided Reading

According to CAPS, teachers should do Group Guided Reading every day of the week for 30 minutes.

There are two steps to managing Group Guided Reading:

- Step 1 involves organising and planning activities for the rest of the class, to keep them busy and on track while you are busy working with one group.
- Step 2 involves organising and planning activities for the group with whom you are going to work on that particular day. Because the groups are different and have different needs, you will need to adjust your plan according to each group's particular level and needs.

Although CAPS suggests that teachers work with two groups a day for 15 minutes each, some teachers find this difficult to manage. Keep your timetable simple; start by working with one group a day until you are used to the rhythm and routines.

If you have a class of around 40 or more learners, you can have five ability groups of about eight learners per group. You can afford to have at least eight to nine learners in a group because you work with one group a day for 30 minutes (and not just 15 minutes), so you will have enough time to listen to each learner in the group read.

Table 12: Planning for GGR during the week

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.00-9.15	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics
9.15-9.30 15 min	HL: Listening and Speaking	HL: Listening and Speaking (Read Aloud – Book B)	HL: Shared Reading (15 mins)	HL: Listening and speaking (15 mins)	HL Shared Reading (15 mins)
9.30-9.45 15 min	HL Shared Reading	HL: Phonics (15 mins)	HL: Phonics (15 mins)	HL: Phonics (15 mins)	HL: Phonics (15 mins)
SHORT BREAK					

10.00-10.15	HL: Phonics (15 mins)	Handwriting HL (15 mins)	Handwriting HL (15 mins)	Handwriting HL (15 mins)	Handwriting HL (15 mins)
10.15-10.45	HL: Group Guided Reading Group A	HL: Group Guided Reading Groups B	HL: Group Guided Reading Group C	HL: Group Guided Reading Group D	HL: Group Guided Reading Group E
10.45-11.00	HL: Writing	FAL: Shared Reading	HL: Writing	FAL: Shared Reading	HL: Writing
11.00-11.15	FAL: Shared reading	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Shared reading	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Shared reading
11.15-11.30	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Phonics	FAL: Phonics	FAL: Phonics	FAL: Phonics
11.30-11.50	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games
LONG BREAK					
12.20-13.30	Life Skills Read Aloud in the last 15 minutes	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills Read Aloud in the last 15 minutes

**Group Guided Reading in EFAL is not done in Grade 1, only Grades 2 and 3, which is why it is not reflected in the timetable above.*

Guidelines for organising and planning Group Guided Reading

Of all the CAPS lessons, this is the one that requires the most planning. Once you have learned the basics of planning and managing Group Guided Reading you will find it easy to implement and manage.

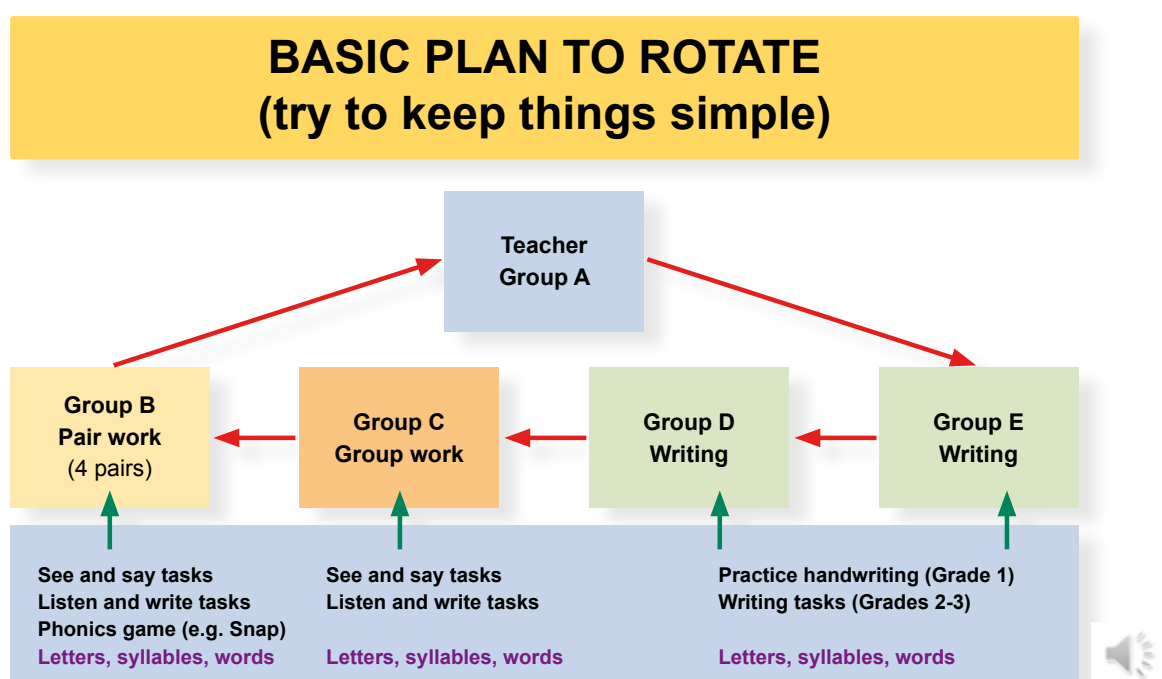
It is also important that you teach learners to self-regulate, as the rest of the class will be busy with activities at their desks while you work with one group.

- There should be a poster or timetable up showing the different groups and the days on which they come to the mat for Group Guided Reading.
- Before you start working with a group, tell the rest of the class what they must do for the lesson (you will have planned and prepared this beforehand).
- Make sure your instructions are clear.
- Appoint leaders for each group and rotate them each week so that everyone in the group has a chance to be a leader.
- The leaders must be responsible for ensuring that everyone in the group has the right resources to do the activity that has been planned for the day and that they stay on task and do not disturb others in the group.



- Routines are very important: learners must know to which groups they belong and what the routines are for working on the mat with the teacher or working on their own.
- Teaching learners to self-regulate is very important for ensuring the effectiveness of Group Guided Reading sessions. Remind the learners of the ‘Rules for Learning’ in the classroom – Be Considerate, Be Effective, Be Engaged!
- Keep things simple and consistent. Don’t try to organise too many different activities for the different groups and stick to the same procedures every day so that learners know what is expected, as shown in Figure 8.

Keeping Group Guided Reading rotation plans simple



[‘practise’ bottom right]

Figure 8: Basic rotation plan for Group Guided Reading

Step 1: Guidelines for organising, planning and managing the rest of the class

While you are busy with one group you can plan for the rest of the class to be busy with activities in three ways:

Group work: every learner in the group participates in the same activity

- These can be **handwriting or writing** activities, where learners practise writing letters, syllables and words. Writing activities also include those in the DBE books or writing simple texts on a given topic.

- Group work can also include phonics practice activities (especially important in Grade 1), for example **See and Say** exercises (where the leader holds up a letter card / syllable card / word flashcard and learners in the group take turns naming them). Or **Hear and Write** activities, where the leader reads sounds/syllables/words from a list and everyone in the group writes them down as quickly as possible. The learners in the group collectively provide corrective feedback to one another until everyone can perform at a high level of mastery.
- Learners must use a whispering voice when they work together in a group.

Pair work: learners in a group work in pairs

- For example, they can play a phonics game with letter/syllable/word cards (e.g. Snap) to practise their letter-sounds.
- They can also do **See and Say** or **Hear and Write** exercises as above, the only difference this time being that they work more intensively in pairs and give each other feedback. More advanced learners can do Paired Reading. (Refer to the section below on Paired Reading.)
- Learners must use a whispering voice when they work together in pairs.

Individuals: learners in one group do an activity on their own

- For example, each one can go to the Book Corner and select a book to read on their own (in Grade 1 organise this only once the learners can read some words on their own).

Each group gets a chance to do different literacy activities every day, as shown in Figure 9. Once you've done this a few times, learners will know the pattern and what to do. You will find that they can then engage in the activities to practise skills and self-regulate. This frees you to pay attention to the group you are working with.

PATTERN REPEATED DURING THE WEEK				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
TEACHER GROUP A GGR	TEACHER GROUP B GGR	TEACHER GROUP C GGR	TEACHER GROUP D GGR	TEACHER GROUP E GGR
GROUP B Pair	GROUP C Pair	GROUP D Pair	GROUP E Pair	GROUP A Pair
GROUP C Group	GROUP D Group	GROUP E Group	GROUP A Group	GROUP B Group
GROUP D Writing	GROUP E Writing	GROUP A Writing	GROUP B Writing	GROUP C Writing
GROUP E Writing	GROUP A Writing	GROUP B Writing	GROUP C Writing	GROUP D Writing

Figure 9: Pattern of activities repeated during the week

Step 2: Guidelines for organising, planning and managing the groups

Because the groups are different and have different needs, you will need to adjust your plan according to each group's particular level and needs.

- The group must know on which days they come to the mat for individual work with the teacher.
- They must know the routines for coming to the mat.
- Make sure beforehand you know which books or texts you are going to use with that particular group and have enough copies so that each learner reads from their own texts.

Group Guided Reading is a very flexible method to use. The wonderful thing about working with a group in Group Guided Reading is that you can do 'reading work' in whatever component of reading you feel the group needs most practice.

- For example, if you have a weak Grade 1 group that still struggles with letter-sounds, do **See and Say** activities with them using letter cards, syllable cards or word flashcards until they know them well. Use letter cards before syllable cards. Learners must learn that syllables are made up of individual sounds.
- With average or stronger readers who can read sentences quite fluently, you can do reading comprehension work where, after they take turns reading through the story, you discuss text structure (e.g. setting, characters, problem, resolution, the big idea for narratives, using a story glove) or identify main ideas in each paragraph for information texts.
- Make letter or syllable sticks from ice cream sticks (readily available from The Crazy Store shops in South Africa), using some Prestik. Give each learner a stick and when you call out a letter or syllable, they hold theirs up. You can say: *Who can make the word 'leli'?* and the learners holding *le* and *li* must put their sticks in sequence and show everyone the word.



Ask learners to make the words *lelo lolu*, *leli*, and the verb stem *-lula*, and the verbs *lilola*, *lilole*, *lulola*, *lulole*, *lilala*, *lilale*, *lulala*, *lulale*, *lihula*, *lihule*, *lulula*, *lulule*.

Play with syllables by making up nonwords, or nonsense words ('amagama abhedayo') for instance: *Ok, now let's have fun and make up a nonsense word – luloli! Who can make the word luloli? Who can make the words lilo, lule lalo, lali, luloli, lolali, lullila, lilulalelo, lulolilale?*

You can hold sticks and ask different learners to say the syllables (but remember to jumble the sequence every time so that they don't memorise the sequence).

Activities like these with small groups of learners in Grade 1 enable teachers to quickly identify who is having difficulty with basic sounds so that appropriate remedial action can be taken and progress tracked from week to week.

- With average or stronger readers who can read sentences quite fluently, you can model different comprehension strategies and get them to apply the strategies while they read (predicting, making **inferences**, checking vocabulary, monitoring comprehension, etc.). Use strategy sticks. Before reading the story, give each learner a strategy stick (they can be duplicated) and during the reading of the text, you call on learners by turn to ask them to show how they would apply a strategy, e.g.



Ok, let's stop reading. Who has an inference stick? Yes, you Ntsiki. What inference can you make between the two sentences that Lwazi read? Which words or phrase in those sentences helped you make that inference?

Tips for Professional Growth

Group Guided Reading is one of the most flexible and powerful methods that teachers can use to get to know learners, picking up reading problems, and monitoring their reading progress. Yet, sadly, research shows that many teachers in South Africa are not doing Group Guided Reading properly or not doing it at all, thus depriving learners of opportunities to improve reading skills.

Here are some tips to help you to become an expert Group Guided Reading teacher.

- Read about Group Guided Reading and make sure that you understand its purpose well and read about different ways of working with different ability groups during Group Guided Reading.
- Group Guided Reading needs good planning and organisation – this may be one of the reasons why some teachers avoid it, because it requires an effort. However, once you've planned a few sessions of Group Guided Reading you will quickly become used to the structure and rhythms and find that it becomes easy to manage. You'll find yourself looking forward to Group Guided Reading as you'll want to see what progress learners in each group are making!
- If you find that while you are busy with one group the other groups don't self-regulate well and go off-task, then focus on managing the different activities with all the groups for a few days (without working with a single group); let them

practise until they get used to the structure and rhythm and remind them of the need for self-regulation. Praise them for their efforts when they self-regulate and stay on task and give small rewards to the group that works well together without making a noise or going off-task (e.g. give all the learners in the group a new pencil).

- Keep a notebook on your lap when you work with the single groups in Group Guided Reading. Jot down notes to remind yourself what you did with each group and take note of learners who struggle (or who make good progress), so that you can work with them the next time. Go through your notebook when you write up reports at the end of term to refresh your memory.
- Ask your HOD or a trusted colleague to come and watch you and your class do a Group Guided Reading session and ask for honest and supportive feedback. Work on improving those areas they identified.
- If you have a colleague who struggles with Group Guided Reading, invite them to your class to show them what you do in Group Guided Reading and how you do it. This may inspire them to try it too!

Resources on Group Guided Reading

Watch videos from the **Funda Wande** website (<https://fundawande.org/video-resources>) on Group Guided Reading in the Reading for Meaning Modules: 13, 20-22, 59 (in Module 1); 210 (in Module 2); and 67 (in Module 12).

Paired Reading

Some teachers avoid organising Paired Reading because they say it is noisy, or because they feel it complicates things when there is already too much to organise.

However, Paired Reading provides important opportunities for learners to practise decoding and fluency skills. This is especially important for learners who come from poor homes where there are few support structures in place for reading homework.

If you plan and organise it beforehand, Paired Reading can help learners' decoding and fluency skills develop more quickly.

Set up clear routines and rules for Paired Reading. Discuss these routines and rules with the whole class beforehand, so that they know what is expected and they can practise them under your watchful eye.

Rules and routines for Paired Reading

- How to sit: One way of doing Paired Reading is for the learners to sit cross-legged on their mat squares, elbow-to-elbow and knee-to-knee. This method is called EEKK in English!
- How to hold the book: The book must be placed between the two readers so that each can see the text clearly.
- How to read: For example, use a soft, whispering voice so that other learners are not disturbed.
- How to behave: Take turns to read a page/book. Support one another. Do not get impatient with your partner or laugh if they make a mistake.
- How to give supportive feedback:
 - ▶ For correcting a decoding error, say Read that word again or Look at that word again. What is the first sound? And the second? Blend them to read the syllable. Can you read the rest of the word that way?
 - ▶ For positive feedback on fluency, say You read that smoothly / You read that without making a mistake.
 - ▶ For corrective feedback on fluency, say Try not to be so choppy when you read / Don't emphasise each syllable, try to read the words as if you're talking.



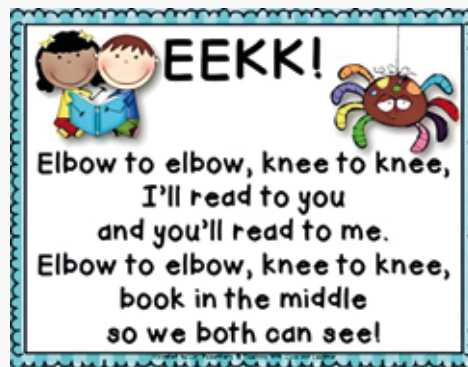
When you are satisfied that learners know what to do and how to do Paired Reading, then you can start incorporating it into Group Guided Reading activities.

- Make a poster with the rules for Paired Reading and display it in a prominent position in the classroom.
- Remind learners of the rules when they get into pairs. If they transgress the rules, point out the rules on the poster.

Below is an example of rules for Paired Reading.

1. One partner in each pair fetches the book quickly and quietly.
2. The other partner in each pair fetches two square mats to sit on.
3. Sit in the correct EEKK position for paired reading.
4. Read to each other in a soft, whispering voice so that you don't disturb the other pairs.

5. Use your eyes and your ears while reading (follow the text in the book and listen to what your partner is reading).
6. Do not waste time: start straight away.
7. Read the whole time.
8. Support one another in reading.



Paired reading resources

Watch videos from the **Funda Wande** website

(<https://fundawande.org/video-resources>) on Paired Reading, for example videos 82, 83, 85, 89 (Reading Academy Booklet 4) and 84 (Reading for Meaning Module 1).

The **National Framework for the Teaching of Reading in African Languages in the Foundation Phase** has many references to paired reading and a section on it on pages 80-81.

Conclusion

Unit 7 focuses on three ways to teach and support literacy development during the week, namely Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading and Paired Reading. In all cases, these reading methods work effectively if teachers plan and organise them well beforehand, if they teach the learners the different routines for each, the house rules for effective learning in the classroom, and if they encourage their learners to self-regulate.

Self-assessment activities

These are ‘quickie’ assessment activities to check how well you have understood key concepts discussed in this unit and whether you are able to perceive the pedagogical implications of such concepts in the teaching of reading.

Note: The key to these self-assessment activities is given in the Appendix at the end of this module. If you score less than 6/8 (75%) for these questions you are advised to re-read the unit again to strengthen your content and pedagogic knowledge.

1. In each of the statements below provide **the appropriate missing word (or words)**. (5)
 - a) One of the great advantages of _____ is that it enables a teacher to identify learners who struggle with reading.
 - b) CAPS recommends that Shared Reading should be done at least _____ times a week.
 - c) In _____ it is important for learners to use a soft, whispering voice so that other learners are not disturbed.
 - d) In _____ the same story can be used during the week to focus on different aspects of written language.
 - e) Big books are typically used in _____ so that everyone sitting on the mat can more easily see the book.
2. Indicate which one of the following statements is **false**. (1)
 - a) Although Group Guided Reading requires teachers to plan and organise well, once the pattern has been well established it becomes a very important part of the day for practising and consolidating reading skills.
 - b) In Grade 1, Group Guided Reading can be used for opportunities for learners to practise their decoding and encoding skills in groups, pairs or individually.
 - c) Shared Reading provides an ideal opportunity for the whole class to practice their decoding skills.
 - d) When working with a particular group in Group Guided Reading, a teacher is better able to identify who is struggling with reading than in a whole class.

3. Indicate which of the following statements is **the correct one**. (1)
- a) Paired Reading only works with learners who are already skilled readers.
 - b) For Paired Reading to be effective, it is best if teachers first explain the routines and ‘house rules’ for Paired Reading and give the whole class opportunities to practise it in pairs under their watchful eye.
 - c) Paired Reading can be used in combination with Shared Reading three times a week.
 - d) Learners who have been taught to self-regulate will take advantage of Paired Reading to make a noise or disturb others.
4. Consider the following scenario and then select the **option which is irrelevant to or an inaccurate reflection** of this scenario. (1)

*It is Term 2 and Teacher Thandi is using Group Guided Reading in her daily classroom practice with her Grade 1 learners to practise decoding skills. She calls the Green Group to the mat and while they settle down, she reminds the other groups of the handwriting activities and word building activities what they must do while she is busy with the Green Group and she hands out the activities to the group leaders. Then she gives each learner in the Green Group a small bag with letter cards. Teacher Thandi reminds them that they are going to practise building words from the letter cards. She says the word **baleka** out loud. She says the word again more slowly, drawing out the sounds so that learners can hear them ‘b-a-l-e-k-a.’ She then asks each learner to use their letter cards to build the word. When they have done this, she asks each one to read his/her word aloud and provides feedback to each learner.*

- a) The teacher is providing the learners in the group with practice in segmenting and blending letter-sounds into words.
- b) By working with the group in this way the teacher is able to see who is struggling with letter-sounds and with segmenting and blending them.
- c) The teacher is providing the learners in the group with individual instruction in letter-sounds.
- d) While the teacher is working with this group, the other groups are given opportunities to practice decoding and encoding letter-sounds.

Unit 8: Vocabulary development

Preliminary reading on vocabulary development

Refer to Module 2 *Oral language proficiency development, vocabulary building and motivation for reading*

The Primary Teacher Education Project study guide on **Vocabulary** provides detailed and useful information for the whole primary school and secondary school curriculum (<https://www.jet.org.za/clearinghouse/projects/printed/materials/language-and-literacy-materials-repository/ptrsg-six-vocabulary.pdf>)

The *National Framework for the Teaching of Reading in African Languages in the Foundation Phase* refers to Vocabulary on pages 39-42. There are many other sources.

What is vocabulary development?

Vocabulary refers to knowledge of words and their use in a language. It includes knowledge of the sound and form of a word (how it sounds / what it looks like), its meaning, its function in a sentence (whether it is a noun, verb, etc.), and its connotations and use in context (whether it has positive or negative associations, whether it is used in formal or informal language, etc.).

Vocabulary size refers to how many words people are estimated to know in a language, while vocabulary depth refers to how well those words are known.

We usually start off by recognising words (we have heard or seen them before) and we know more or less what they mean. Gradually we get to know the meaning of the words well and can use them appropriately in different contexts in spoken or written language, and we learn other members of the word family (e.g. *sifunda, sifundisa, sisafundisa, umfundi, umfundisi*, etc.).

Why is vocabulary development important?

Although all children have acquired a basic vocabulary of words in their home language by the time they start school, they do not all come to school with the same vocabulary knowledge – some children know many more words than others.

The size and richness of a child's vocabulary in the home language is important because it affects practically all aspects of language, literacy and academic development. The disparities in word knowledge between children can result in disparities in reading success and school achievement. Learners who know more words have the following advantages:

- They learn to read more easily.
- They can express themselves more easily and clearly in both oral and written communication.
- They understand things better – their vocabulary knowledge supports their comprehension.
- They do better in the content subjects.

When to plan for vocabulary development?

There is no specific teaching slot for vocabulary development suggested in **CAPS**. This is because vocabulary is integral to all the lessons in a timetable. Opportunities for teaching vocabulary and for vocabulary development in the home language arise across numeracy, literacy and life skills, which is why all the slots have been highlighted in the timetable below!

Table 13: Planning for vocabulary during the week

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.00-9.15	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics	Mental maths & Mathematics
9.15-9.30 15 min	HL: Listening and Speaking	HL: Listening and Speaking (Read Aloud – Book B)	HL: Shared Reading	HL: Listening and speaking	HL Shared Reading
9.30-9.45 15 min	HL Shared Reading	HL: Phonics	HL: Phonics	HL: Phonics	HL: Phonics (quickie assessment)
SHORT BREAK					
10.00-10.15 15 min	HL: Phonics	Handwriting HL	Handwriting HL	Handwriting HL	Handwriting HL (quickie assessment)
10.15-10.45 30 min	HL: Group Guided Reading Group A	HL: Group Guided Reading Groups B	HL: Group Guided Reading Group C	HL: Group Guided Reading Group D	HL: Group Guided Reading Group E
10.45-11.00	HL: Writing	FAL: Shared Reading	HL: Writing	FAL: Shared Reading	HL: Writing
11.00-11.15	FAL: Shared reading	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Shared reading	FAL Listening and speaking	FAL: Shared reading
11.15-11.30	FAL: Listening and speaking	FAL: Phonics	FAL: Phonics	FAL Phonics	FAL: Phonics
11.30-11.50	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games	Story time or vocab games
LONG BREAK					

12.20-13.30	Life Skills Read Aloud in the last 15 minutes	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills	Life Skills Read Aloud in the last 15 minutes
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Guidelines for organising and managing vocabulary development

Very little research to date has been done on word learning in African languages. Research in English-speaking countries shows that English children on average learn about 2,000 – 3,000 new words a year (provided they are exposed to rich language input). Vocabulary development happens incidentally as well as explicitly.

Teachers need to make sure that the classroom provides opportunities for word growth through both incidental and explicit input.

Nearly all Foundation Phase teachers, when asked about vocabulary, will say that yes indeed, they all teach new words to learners. Sadly, however, when asked for examples of words taught or examples of vocabulary tests, there is very little evidence of systematic or explicit vocabulary teaching.

Many teachers associate vocabulary development mainly with teaching a first additional language, usually English, and don't seem to pay much attention to vocabulary development in the home language. Many teachers say that they only use 'easy' language in their class so that learners can understand them.

How then are learners going to learn new words in their Home Language? Try to approach vocabulary building more systematically. Start by developing a vocabulary building plan for the year and organise how you will implement it each term, keeping a record of all the new words that you explicitly taught learners. This will give you a stronger sense of how learners are developing their vocabulary and whether you are providing adequate rich input and motivation for this very important process. See the Primary Teacher Education Project study guide on Vocabulary (Units 4, 5 and 6, pages 15 to 26 for useful guidance here).

- **Set long-term and short-term goals:** Start by setting yourself a realistic vocabulary goal for **explicit** teaching.
- For example, there are about 38 school teaching weeks in the year. Decide how many new words you think are feasible to teach in a week (this is part of your explicit word learning plan for each year). For example, if you aim to teach around 15-20 new words a week, that works out to about 3 to 4 words a day. Considering that you will discuss at least five words in Listening and Speaking, five words in Shared Reading and three to four words in Read Alouds during a week, that is a manageable aim to achieve. In all, 15 new words per week times 38 = 570 new words that you will explicitly teach learners. One can, of course, aim higher, but around 570 new words a year is a manageable, feasible and adequate long-term vocabulary goal to start with. Remember, of course, that other

unplanned new words might also be taught throughout the day, and learners are also learning new words incidentally, through exposure to language in the home, classroom, playground and in books.

- Start with realistic, achievable goals and after a year you can re-assess them and decide if you want to aim for higher goals. Write down your goals so that you are reminded of them.
- Have a separate notebook (or sections in your file) where you keep record of all the new words that you plan to teach during the week. You can update this week by week as you do your weekly planning. Your weekly planning for Listening and Speaking, Shared Reading and Read Alouds will help you with this.
- Create **enthusiasm** for learning among learners. Tell them how important it is to know lots of words (or ask them why they think it is important to know lots of words!). Compare their heads to banks – just as we put money in the bank to become rich, so too we put new words in our head to become ‘word rich’.
- Together with enthusiasm, create **word awareness** among learners. The ‘noticing hypothesis’ in language learning argues that we cannot learn anything properly unless we first notice what it is that we want to learn. Have a discussion with learners about what their response to new words is – do they let the new words just ‘wash’ over them, do they perhaps ‘tune them out’? Encourage learners to start a new habit, that of becoming aware and taking notice of words, really hearing or seeing them, writing them down, looking at them, thinking about them, saying them to themselves, playing with their sounds and spelling, using them in context and above all, enjoying words! Let words become their new hobby!
- **Share a word:** You can start a Listening and Speaking lesson by asking who heard a new word and giving two learners each day an opportunity to share their new word. Teach them to explain things like where they heard the word, and how they found out its meaning, as this helps them take notice and build awareness. For example: Learner: *I heard a new word yesterday while ... (watching TV, listening to my mom and aunt talking over a cup of tea). The word is ... I asked my mother what it means. It means to ...* You can have a **Sharing words chart** on the wall where you write up and display the two (or more) new words each day. Learners become very proud of their words displayed on the wall and it helps them remember new words and build their vocabulary.
- Have two separate word walls – a **Phonics Word Wall** and a **Magic Word Wall**, as each word wall serves a different purpose:
 - With the Phonics Word Wall you put up all the flashcards that you used in the phonics lesson for the week. The phonics words are usually already familiar to learners. The main purpose of the phonics flashcards is to familiarise learners with the shapes of the words and their letters, and to enable them to read the words easily.

- ▶ The Magic Word Wall (*Amagama Amasha* – because words are powerful ways of helping us learn things!) is specifically for vocabulary development. This is where new and ‘big’ word flashcards are put up, with their meaning (and English equivalent) written on the back of the card. All the new words discussed in Shared Reading and Read Alouds or new words in Numeracy and Life Skills should be displayed here for the whole week. Have a quick oral mini test in the first five minutes of the day where you hold up a new word flashcard and ask the learners to say the word, read it and say what its meaning is.
- Let learners form pairs of **Word Buddies/Word Friends**. Word buddies help each other learn new words and they share new words with each other. They also test each other once a week on all the new words they have collected during the week. They can become quite competitive about this!
- It is important to try to teach words thematically, e.g. words and events related to the weather; words and events related to growing things (crops, vegetables, fruit); words and events related to natural disasters, etc. Research shows that words are better remembered when they are associated with other words and can link with them. The themes dealt with in Life Skills provide ideal opportunities for word building, and you can set up a theme table with objects and labels for each new theme.
- Remember that vocabulary knowledge is closely tied to spelling, which is essential for writing. It is sensible to combine the learning of new words with writing them with correct spelling. Spelling in African languages is of course much easier than in English, which has its own set of special problems (see the Primary Teacher Education Project study guide on Vocabulary (Unit 11, pages 39-40) for useful guidance here).

Tips for Professional Growth

Few teachers teach vocabulary systematically. Here are some tips to help you become an enthusiastic word developer.

- Try to build up your own vocabulary and expand your repertoire of words in your own home language. This raises your own word awareness and word noticing, and you can share your enthusiasm for words with learners. Reading every day is a powerful way of building your own vocabulary.
- Become familiar with the genre of children’s literature by taking out and reading children’s books in your local library. Community libraries have a good supply of children’s books, ranging from books for preschool children to adolescents. There are also far more children’s books available in isiZulu and Sesotho these days than was the situation 20 years ago. In this way you will get to know different

authors and illustrators. The language in children's books is easy, repetitive and provides readers with rich language input that has been standardised to some extent.

- Doing regular Read Alouds is the best way to create opportunities for incidental learning. As you are aware, the main aim of Read Alouds is reading for pleasure and entertainment, but exposure to the same stories at least three to four times during the term creates rich opportunities for word learning.

Resources on Vocabulary

Watch videos from the **Funda Wande** website (<https://fundawande.org/video-resources>) on Vocabulary in the Reading Academy 91, 117-118, 123 (Book 2) and in the Reading for Meaning modules: 104, 117, 119-120, 123-126, 129-132 (Module 4); 122, 189, 206-208, 228 (Module 7).

Refer to the discussion on vocabulary in Module 2.

The **National Framework for the Teaching of Reading in African Languages in the Foundation Phase** refers to the place of vocabulary development on many occasions, and specifically on pages 39-42.

Conclusion

This final unit in the module focusses on vocabulary. Although this topic is dealt with in some depth in Module 2, this unit provides practical tips on how to plan, organise and integrate the daily timetable in ways that enable a teacher to give both direct, explicit attention to vocabulary development as well as to ensure that vocabulary learning can happen indirectly, through exposure to rich oral language and to the richness of written language in storybooks and information books.

Self-assessment activities

These are 'quickie' assessment activities to check how well you have understood key concepts discussed in this unit and whether you are able to perceive the pedagogical implications of such concepts in the teaching of reading.

Note: The key to these self-assessment activities is given in the Appendix at the end of this module. If you score less than 6/8 (75%) for these questions you are advised to re-read the unit again to strengthen your content and pedagogic knowledge.

1. In each of the statements below provide **the appropriate missing word (or words)**. (5)
 - a) According to the _____ hypothesis in language learning, learners learn aspects of language more easily if they consciously pay attention and notice the input, such as a new word.
 - b) How well a learner knows a word (its meaning, its morphological form, its connotations, etc) is referred to as vocabulary _____ while how many words a learner knows is called vocabulary _____.
 - c) Developing word _____ in learners helps them pay greater attention to words instead of tuning out or ignoring words that they don't understand.
 - d) Read Alouds provide powerful opportunities for some explicit vocabulary teaching as well as for learning new words _____ through exposure to the rich language of storybooks.
2. Indicate which one of the following statements is **false**. (1)
 - a) Vocabulary development in African languages is an area of exciting new research possibilities.
 - b) A vocabulary conundrum is that children need to learn new and 'bigger' words in Foundation Phase, yet Foundation Phase teachers tend to use common, 'easy' words in the classroom when they talk to their learners.
 - c) Home Language learners are very similar in terms of the number of words that they acquire before they start school.
 - d) It is easier to remember new words when they are associated with other words in a topic or theme than to remember new words as they occur randomly in the course of classroom activities.
3. Indicate which of the following statements is **the correct one**. (1)
 - a) The quantity and quality of a teacher's vocabulary knowledge in the Home Language will have an impact on the language and vocabulary development of the learners in the classroom.

- b) A teacher has no control over incidental learning that occurs either inside or outside the classroom.
 - c) Most children acquire new words through incidental exposure; there is not enough time in the daily timetable to teach new words explicitly in the classroom.
 - d) Phonics is an ideal lesson time in which to teach not only letter-sounds but also to teach new words in which the letter-sounds occur, using flashcards.
4. Consider the following scenario and then select **the option which is an inaccurate reflection** of this scenario. (1)

Teacher Nhlanhla uses 5 minutes at the start of each morning to call two pairs of his Grade 3 Word Buddies to the front of the classroom and asks them to share with the class one new word and its meaning that each pair has learned that week. Each pair of Word Buddies must also explain where they encountered the new word.

- a) By asking learners to notice the context in which they hear or see new words Teacher Nhlanhla is strengthening word awareness in his learners.
- b) By giving Word Buddies an opportunity to share their word learning experiences with the class, Teacher Nhlanhla is helping his learners take responsibility for independent learning.
- c) Giving Word Buddies an opportunity to share their word learning experiences with the class provides an opportunity for learners who struggle with decoding to participate without fear of reading failure.
- d) This scenario with Word Buddies shows how a teacher can set aside time to explicitly teach new words to learners.

Conclusion

In this module attention was drawn to things that teachers can control in the classroom – the enabling factors and the reading literacy methods recommended by CAPS and also the *National Framework for the Teaching of Reading in African Languages in the Foundation Phase*. First the big picture was discussed and then details of each component in the big picture were focussed on.

Planning and organisation are important themes throughout the module – how well you plan and organise the enabling factors and the CAPS methods and activities depends to a large extent on you. How well you plan and organise these things will in turn influence how well learners learn to read and write and develop their language.

Do not underestimate your influence on the future well-being of learners – and the economy of the country. The future success of individual learners and the economy of a country depend on strong literacy abilities, and these must be laid in the Foundation Phase.

Even though the school environment for many teachers may not be ideal, there are lots of things that teachers can control to make a positive difference in their learners' lives.

We wish you well on your teaching journey!

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Appendix

Key to self-assessment activities

Key for Unit 1

- 1a **fluently, with comprehension and enjoyment.**
- 1b **learning-based** approach
- 1c **Differentiated** teaching
- 1d **individual** reading
- 1e **Group Guided Reading**
- 2b
- 3c

Key for Unit 2

- 1a the **macro** level ... the **micro** level.
- 1b **cognitively/mentally** safe
- 1c a safe **emotional** learning environment.
- 1d the **physical** safety
- 1e ..a **physical/spatial** level
- 2c
- 3a

Key for Unit 3

- 1a fixed mindset
- 1b dedication (or perseverance) and self-confidence
- 1c metacognition
- 1d emotionally
- 2c
- 3b
- 4d

Key for Unit 4

- 1a **management** talk
- 1b The **quality** of teacher talk the **quantity** of teacher talk
- 1c an **expansion**

1d during **Listening and Speaking**

2c

3a

4c

Key for Unit 5

1a **four**

1b **Read Alouds**

1c **higher**

1d **emotions/feelings**

1e **fluency/prosody/intonation**

2d

3a

4d

Key for Unit 6

1a an **explicit** manner

1b **40** letter sounds a minute

1c **reinforce/consolidate**

1d **left** side

1e '**see-and-say**' is important in Phonics

2b

3d

4c

Key for Unit 7

1a **Group Guided Reading**

1b **3** times a week

1c **Paired Reading**

1d **Shared Reading**

1e **Shared Reading**

2c

3b

4c

Key for Unit 8

1a the **noticing** hypothesis

1b vocabulary **depth** ...vocabulary **size**

1c word **awareness**

1d learning new word **incidentally**

2c

3a

4d

Examples of summative questions requiring longer, more detailed responses

The questions given here serve as *examples* of summative assessment questions that are typically given in formal written assignments or examinations.

These are longer essay type questions that require students to demonstrate their content knowledge of reading and its application to classroom instruction in ways that are **clear** and **systematically** presented.

The mark allocation for questions provides a *rough* guide of how long your answer needs to be in relation to the total marks allocated to the examination paper. A question of 10 marks would require at least 1-1½ pages, while a 20-mark question requires a more detailed and extensive exposition of about 2-3 pages. When in doubt, rather write more than less. Remember, your response to a question is a display of your knowledge, so short answers suggest superficial and inadequate knowledge.

A rubric has been provided at the end to give you an idea of the different aspects of an essay that are taken into consideration, e.g. planning and logic; content, argumentation and examples; use of sources; language usage; technical finishing.

Note: When questions require examples to be provided, it is important for students to give their own, original examples and not simply copy examples from the module. Examples demonstrate whether students understand the content. Students who copy examples from the module will not be given credit for them; only original examples will be accepted.

1. Describe the three main components of motivation according to Guthrie. In each case explain how they are relevant to the teaching of reading and how teachers can build them into their reading activities. (40)
2. Draw up a table (as shown below) in which you describe and compare the main differences between Shared Reading and Read Alouds, using the following headings: What is it? Why is it important? Main teaching features? (40)

	Shared Reading	Read Aloud
What is it?	(5)	(5)
Why is it important?	(5)	(5)/
Main teaching features?	(10)	(10)

3. *“Group Guided Reading is an important method to use for differentiated teaching and helps to wean teachers away from reliance on whole class teaching for most of the day.”*

Explain what this quote means. In your explanation include an explanation of what ‘differentiated teaching’ and ‘whole class teaching’ mean, and show how Group Guided Reading can make reading instruction more personal. (20)

4. *By the end of Foundation Phase, all learners should be able to read fluently, with meaning and enjoyment.*

Show how a Grade 2 teacher can develop fluent reading, either directly or indirectly, by using the following language and literacy methods recommended by CAPS: Phonics, Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading, Paired Reading, Read Alouds. (30)

5. *‘Ah ha’ (Yebo-ke!) experiences of a teacher trainee: A personal journey.*

[An ‘ah ha’ moment is when one has a sudden moment of realisation, insight or inspiration that helps one shift one’s view of something; it is a realisation or insight that can change one’s understanding and subsequent behaviour.]

As a future reading teacher, use this heading to describe your own personal journey regarding any two topics dealt with in Units 1-4 in this module. Describe what your personal views and feelings were about these two topics before reading this module, what has changed since then, and in what way this has inspired you to become an expert reading teacher. (15)

(This is a more personal assignment in which there are no right or wrong responses, only interesting, authentic views that you share, in a coherent way, about your journey to becoming a reading teacher.)

Rubric for longer essay type assessments

The rubric below can be used to mark summative assignments. The mark allocations are examples only to show how different aspects of the essay are evaluated. They can be adjusted proportionately to the total mark of an assignment.

CRITERIA	Below expectation	Progressing towards expectation	Meets expectation	Exceeds expectation	Score
Planning and logic of exposition	The work lacks proper planning; no problem statement/aim/purpose statement; no logic exposition. Findings reported unsystematically. No conclusion/recommendations.	Planning mostly lacking; exposition difficult to follow; findings could be reported more clearly. Headings and subheadings reflect some organisation.	Provides a satisfactory exposition and discusses the topic logically and clearly. However, there are areas that need improvement. Not all facets of the topic have necessarily been adequately addressed.	The exposition of the assignment is excellent; the argumentation is logic and absolutely clear; the reader has no problem following the discussion.	
Maximum 20	1-5	6-11	12-17	18-20	
Content, argumentation and examples	The content is poor. The arguments do not build up systematically. Examples are inappropriate.	Parts of the content is relevant. There are instances of staccato-like argumentation. Some examples illustrate the principles well while others don't.	The content is relevant and well structured. The argumentation is systematic. The examples are appropriate for the purpose they have been used.	The content is excellent. The examples have been integrated excellently in the text to strengthen the argumentation.	
Maximum 30	1-9	10-17	18-25	26-30	

Information gathering and use of sources	No sources used, or seminal sources not consulted. Sources misinterpreted. Improper recognition of sources.	Some authoritative sources have been used; there are errors in the recording of sources; in some instances recognition has not been given to sources.	Consulted sources have been duly listed. The most important sources have been consulted. The sources have been interpreted correctly. There are a few errors in terms of information gathering though.	Authoritative sources have been consulted; all consulted sources have been listed correctly. The referencing is correct, and sources have not been misinterpreted or misrepresented.	
Maximum 20	1-5	6-11	12-17	18-20	
Language usage	The formulation is clumsy and there are many grammatical and/or spelling errors in the text. Sentences often make no sense.	The formulation is fair but there are instances of poor sentence structure/grammar/spelling errors.	The language usage is very good. There are no instances of poor formulation or grammatical errors; there may be a few spelling errors.	The academic language usage is excellent. There are no instances of poor formulation or grammatical or spelling errors.	
Maximum 15	1-3	4-8	9-13	14-15	
Technical finishing	The formatting is poor. The assignment lacks headings; it lacks cohesion; there may be repetitions; punctuation is also wrong in places.	The formatting is not always good; the headings may be inappropriate or confusing; there are instances of poor punctuation.	The formatting is very good; headings are appropriately used. There is cohesion and coherence in the text. Punctuation is good.	The formatting is excellent; headings and subheadings are immaculate; cohesion and coherence are excellent. Punctuation is exceptional.	
Maximum 15	1-3	4-8	9-13	14-15	
Notes to student:					

