REFLECTIONS ON THE USE OF LESSON PLANS TO IMPLEMENT CAPS: SUCCESSES AND GAPS

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DBE August 2017
THE PURPOSE OF FOUNDATION PHASE

Launching children on **successful** reading trajectories in Grade R and Foundation Phase is a priority.

In schooling systems around the world, by the end of Grade 3 children are expected to be able to **read fluently, with meaning and enjoyment**.

It’s important to get it right from the start. A faltering initial reading trajectory creates cracks in literacy development which “in time become gaps, and finally...chasms in learning” (Johnson, 2012).

This assumes that teachers know what reading success looks like in the Foundation Phase.
| COMMON CLASSROOM PRACTICES  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH IN SOUTH AFRICA  2004-2015</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole class/collective teaching (little or no differentiated teaching)</td>
<td>Children in primary school who can hardly read and write</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole class chorusing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little attention to meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little or no attention to higher order skills (focus on the literal)</td>
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<td>Little or no explicit instruction</td>
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<td>Little and ineffective feedback</td>
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<td>Low expectations, easy tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching reading from the blackboard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher reads a line and learners repeat it</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very little time spent on reading</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No/little reading homework given</td>
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<td>Print poor classrooms</td>
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<td>Few books in classrooms</td>
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<td>Slow pace of teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor time management in classrooms/teaching time wasted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimal and ineffective assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very little writing done in classrooms</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Children who struggle with higher order thinking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Passive, dependent learners</td>
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<td></td>
<td>An education system producing mainly semi-literate and semi-numerate children;</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Research shows that a lot of instructional time is wasted in schools (De Stefano et al. 2010)

Studies in developing countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia show a strong correlation between amount of engaged instructional time and the average reading fluency of students.

Engaged instructional time is too low to overcome students’ disadvantages, especially in the early grades.

Little time spent engaging in or practising reading in class – ranging from 4-6% of class time (Gove & Cvelich 2010)

More effective training and support needed for unskilled or poorly trained teachers.

Skills associated with good teaching are not necessarily obtained through certification in education systems in developing countries
De Stefano et al. (2012)

• Time on task matters in the classroom
• Engaged time increases academic learning time
• Amount of time that individuals need to reach a particular level is also a function of a student’s starting point
• Effective teachers provide structured lessons, reinforce correct work, provide practice time, keep learners on track, maintain a brisk pace
The CAPS documents are very comprehensive and specify with great detail what should be taught and how.

- **Time allocation** for Languages (HL and FAL) are set out.
- Different **Language skills** are identified for FP, viz. *Listening and speaking*, *Reading and Phonics*, *Writing and handwriting*. *Thinking and reasoning* and *Language structure and use* are integrated into the four language skills in FP. Time allocations clearly specified per grade per week for each of the four terms.
- CAPS refers to the **five main components of reading** identified by the NRP, viz. phonological awareness, word recognition (sight words and phonics), comprehension, vocabulary and fluency. All except vocabulary are briefly discussed.
- Different **types of comprehension questions** are identified and teachers encouraged to ask a range of question types.
- CAPS emphasises four different **reading methods** to be adopted in FP (Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading, Paired Reading and Independent Reading).
- CAPS specifies **core and support materials**, and states what materials teachers should have.
- CAPS specifies the different types and **genres of text** that should be dealt with across the grades.
- The recommended **length of texts** for English FAL across the grades is given (the recommended length of texts is questionable and seem too short).
- **Assessment codes** ranging from 1 (Not achieved) to 7 (Outstanding) and percentages are given for reading and reporting in the IP (but these are not conventional reading measures used to assess reading).
- In the English FAL CAPS, **vocabulary ranges** are suggested for Grade 1 (700-1,000 words), Grade 2 (1,000-2,000) and Grade 3 (1,500-2,500) (p22). A list of the most common 300 hundred words in English is given on pp87-89.
THE WHAT AND WHY OF LESSON PLANS

• To maximise efficient use of teaching/learning time (engaged time)
• To increase pace of teaching/learning
• To align teaching with the curriculum – to show teachers how to manage differentiated teaching (a form of role modelling)

INPUT
- Workshop training
- Lesson plans (hard copy/digital)
- Resources
- Tasks
- (Coaches)

THE MIX
- Teacher knowledge
- Teacher agency
- Classroom environment
- Classroom practices

OUTPUT
- Learner performance
WHAT MAKES A GOOD READING TEACHER?

What do they know (about reading)?
(CONTENT K)

What do they do?
(PEDAGOGIC & CURRICULUM K)

What are their values and attitudes?
(PROFESSIONAL K?)

Lesson plans?
SHIFT FACTORS

ENABLING FACTORS THAT SUPPORT LITERACY

PRINT-RICH CLASSROOMS
ROUTINES and PLANNING
LEARNER SELF-REGULATION

CLASSROOM LITERACY PRACTICES

GROUP GUIDED READING
PAIRED READING
GROUP WORK
WRITING

SHARED READING

SHIFTING TO MORE DIFFERENTIATED TEACHING AND LEARNING

DEVELOPING A SENSE OF TEACHER AGENCY

EXPLICIT PHONICS TIME
ASSESSMENT
READING CORNERS – opportunities to read, promote a value system
THEME TABLES — build bilingual vocabulary, stimulate interest, make connections, promote thinking and reasoning
WORD WALLS - promote vocabulary
PLANNING AND ORGANISATION –

provide structured learning environments for literacy and numeracy, enable learning, create expectations, support self-regulation
CLASSROOM ROUTINES - provide boundaries and structure, support self-regulation, raise expectations, enable learning
GROUP GUIDED READING –
identifying cracks, modelling good reading, providing practice
PAIRED READING

- provides practice opportunities, develops self regulation
WORKING GROUPS
- practice opportunities, self-regulation
GETTING IT RIGHT FROM THE START

A faltering initial reading trajectory creates cracks in literacy development which “in time become gaps, and finally...chasms in learning” (Johnson, 2012).

We can only identify cracks and gaps if we know what reading success looks like.

Can lesson plans help teachers know what reading success looks like?
If we don’t know what success looks like, how can we tell if our learners are successful?

What does decoding success look like?

Dumile can sound out 19 letters correctly per minute.

• Is this A Good Thing? Does it matter?

Sipho reads at 28 words correct per minute (wcpm) in Zulu.

• Is this A Good Thing? Does it matter?

Speed matters in perceptual processing – milliseconds count.
NORMAL GROWTH, BACKSLIDING AND PLATEAU EFFECTS - PASSING THE BATON

ORF growth

- Grade R
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3

ORF School A
ORF School B
ORF School C
### DECODING PERFORMANCE - what could success look like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter sounds</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(sounds correct per minute)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>min – max</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0-70)</td>
<td>(0-77)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ORF</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(words correct per minute)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>min – max</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0-36)</td>
<td>(0-58)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Time
More time devoted to instruction in the elements of reading

Teaching
Improve teacher knowledge of and skill in teaching reading

Materials
Assure use of rich set of materials to support learning to read

Language
Interventions supporting L1 to L2 transition

Assessment
Introduce assessments to identify reading levels and to track progress

At a minimum, intervene to assure more time for reading instruction and that teachers understand and know how to teach reading.

Ongoing Professional Development and Support
TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

Change happens slowly and unevenly
Teachers/schools respond differentially
Different components of reading are taken up differentially
Two steps forward, two steps sideways and one step backwards (backsliding and plateau effects are common)
The entire FP should ideally be involved (Grade R-3)
HOD training is very important – concurrently with the phase training
Start with components of reading that can give quick wins (e.g. changing the classroom)
Some topics should only be tackled later (assessment and supporting struggling readers)
Revisit/reteach topics and make time for consolidation
VOCABULARY WORD LEVELS

High frequency words – oral discourse

Mid frequency words – they occur in books

Low frequency words – they occur in books

1,000-2,000

3,000

Academic words (580)

5,000

10,000

BICS – ORAL INTERACTION

CALP – the language of books and literacy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level Description</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>GAINS 2015-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1 (2,000 frequency)</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2 (3,000 frequency)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 (5,000 frequency)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4 (academic words)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>+5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5 (10,000 frequency)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>+3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>+6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Gains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Top school in vocabulary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance:</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School showing greatest vocab improvement:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.4%</td>
<td>52.03%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lowest performing school:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher SM</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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