

Every child is a National Asset



basic education  
Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# The findings from the case studies and implications for teaching

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For an RCTs to produce 'useful knowledge' beyond its local context, it must illustrate some **general tendency**, some effect that is the result of a **mechanism** that is likely to apply more broadly.

Deaton, 2010 p. 448

# What are the theory of change?

- Lesson Plans (Setswana)
- Quality Learning Materials:
  - Graded Readers: Vula Bula Books
  - Posters
  - Flashcards
  - Handwriting book
  - Exercise Books
  - Assessment Rubrics and Guides
  - DBE Workbook
- Instructional Coaching
  - Classroom visits
  - Cluster meetings
  - Informal Whatsapp groups



## Two sets of case studies

1. Independent consultant with researcher assistant
2. PI and university-based early grade literacy specialist

### ■ Case study sampling

- Team 1: Average (four schools across entire province)
- Team 2: Extreme (two strong, in one district)

### ■ Data collection

- Lesson observations
- Teacher, HoD and Principal Interviews
- Document review

Classroom environment

Literacy and language instruction

Time on task and curricular pacing

Learner's opportunities to listen and speak, read, write

Teachers' and learners' use of books and other learning material

Level of cognitive demand

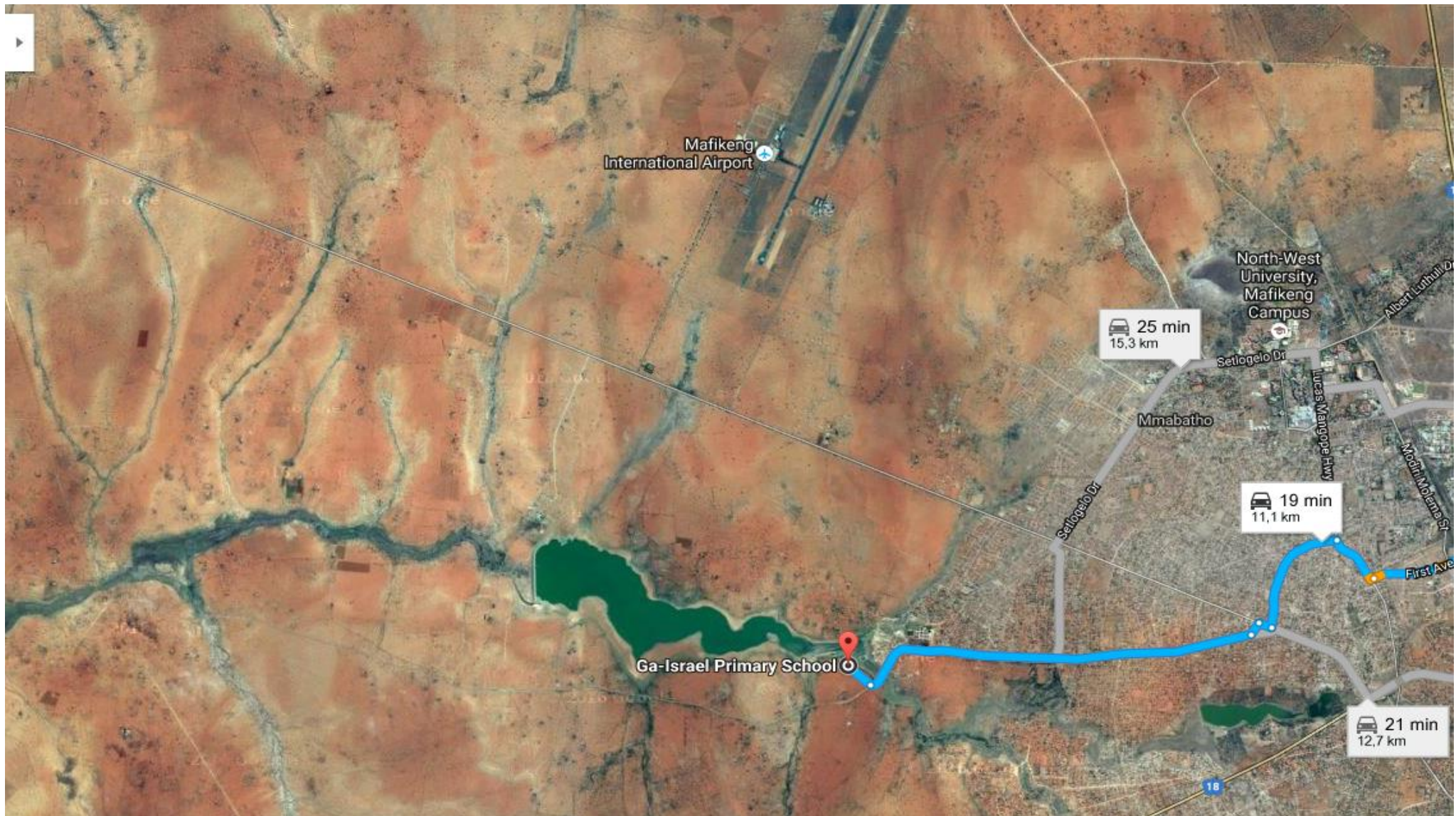
In-class assessment of learners

# ABOUT THE SCHOOLS

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# Mmabatho (Community)





# Molopo (Community)







- Infrastructure in all but one schools was good/very good.
- Running water and electricity in all schools.
- All classes had qualified teachers, some teachers had advanced qualifications (e.g. FDE).
- All teachers were female, ages ranged from 39 – 62 years, with the majority in their 40s and early 50s.
- Class sizes on the day of the visits ranged from 28 to 60, most in the upper 40s and lower 50s.



# ABOUT THE CLASSROOM AND INSTRUCTION

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# Team 1: Elements of the interventions which appear to be successful

## Evidence of structured literacy instruction

Phonics instruction

Handwriting instruction

Creative writing instruction

Group guided reading

Shared reading

Listening and speaking

- Teacher confidence and attitude
- Print rich classrooms and organisation and storage of learning material/Reading corners and carpets or mats
- Use of lesson plans
- Sufficient instructional time for Setswana Home Language
- Frequency of written work
- Appropriate division of time in lessons/internal lesson coherence
- Strong classroom management
- Assessment and records of assessment
- Collaborative discussions with other teachers



# Team 1: Elements that appear to be constraining impact

- A culture of dependency
- Absence of a culture of reading for enjoyment
- Less than optimal use of time and opportunities for reading
- Undifferentiated literacy tasks
- Insufficient understanding and knowledge of what it means to teach learners to read independently

## Team 1: Conclusion

Whilst it is difficult to separate out the most probable sources of possible improvements, the scripted lesson plans, pace setter and the 'curriculum pacing/tracking' messages teachers receive via WhatsApp do appear to be working to help teachers cover the Grade 2 Setswana HL curriculum.

Based on past observations in similar schools (see Reeves 2008; Reeves 2010) it certainly does seem that aspects of teachers' classroom practice have changed. For example, teachers spent time teaching phonics and handwriting; they asked learners to identify where text began or the beginning and end of sentences; they demonstrated punctuation, upper and lower case, etc.; they made regular use of a reading series and provided group guided reading; they used illustrations in the readers provided to support learners in understanding text; all learners had records of work covered in class and were writing regularly in their workbooks and exercise books.

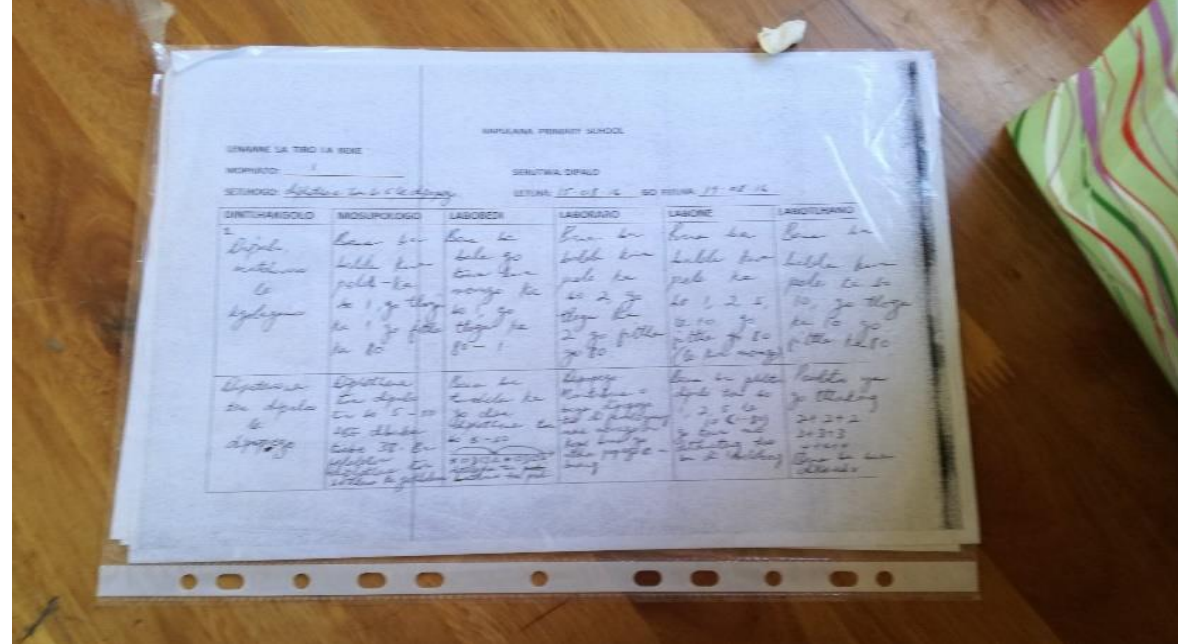
## Team 1: Conclusion

The four EGRS teachers seem to have gained an instrumental understanding of literacy instruction and development rather than a principled understanding. For example, they do not necessarily understand the principles underpinning the concept of differentiation in group guided reading; or what it really means or takes to teach children to read, write and speak independently.

... it also seems unlikely that very marked gains in the quality of writing and especially reading outcomes will be evident in the EGRS schools in the short term. Findings in the four case study observations showed that that learners are not yet being provided with sufficient opportunities to practise reading extended text and with adequate and appropriate opportunities to practise generating more complex spoken and written texts or to produce their own texts.

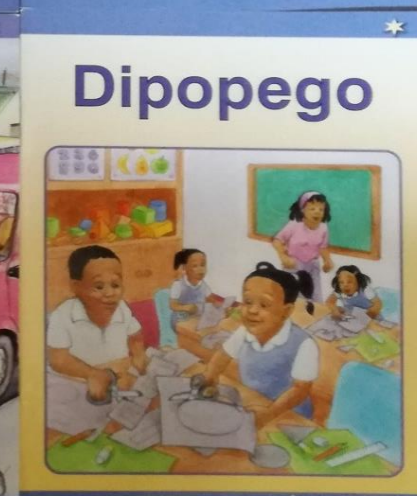
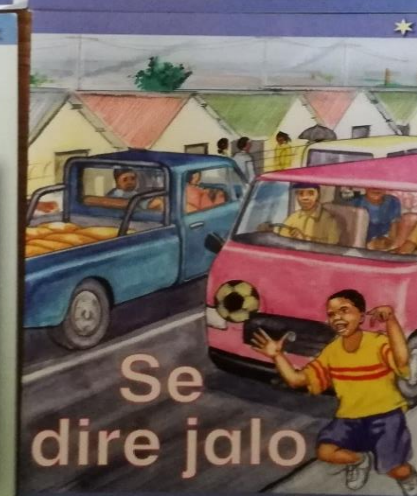
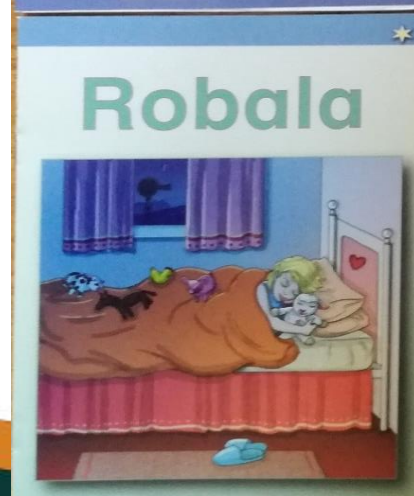
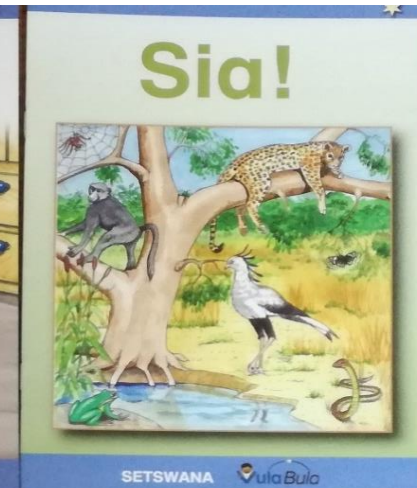
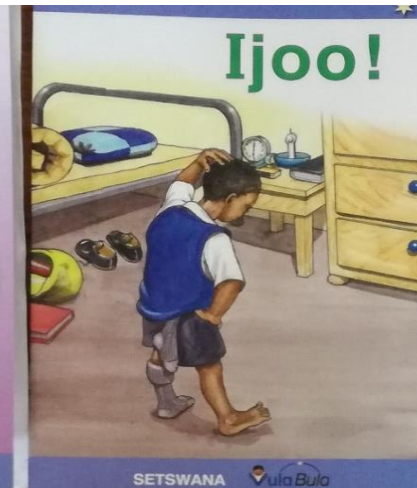


## Team 2: Lesson Plans



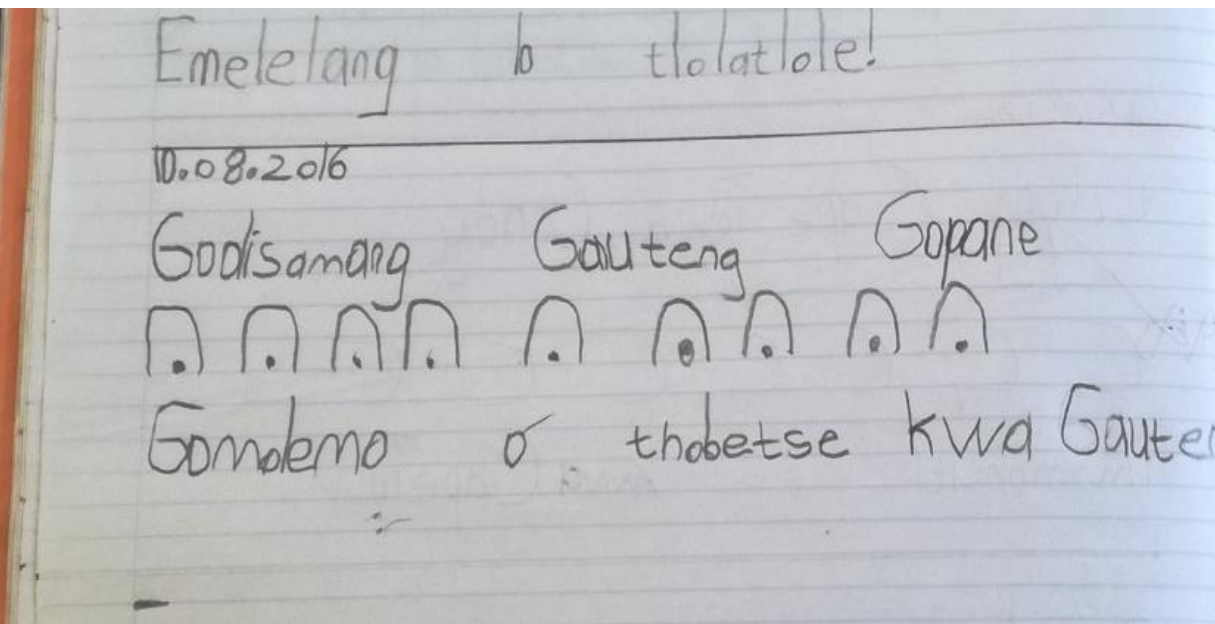
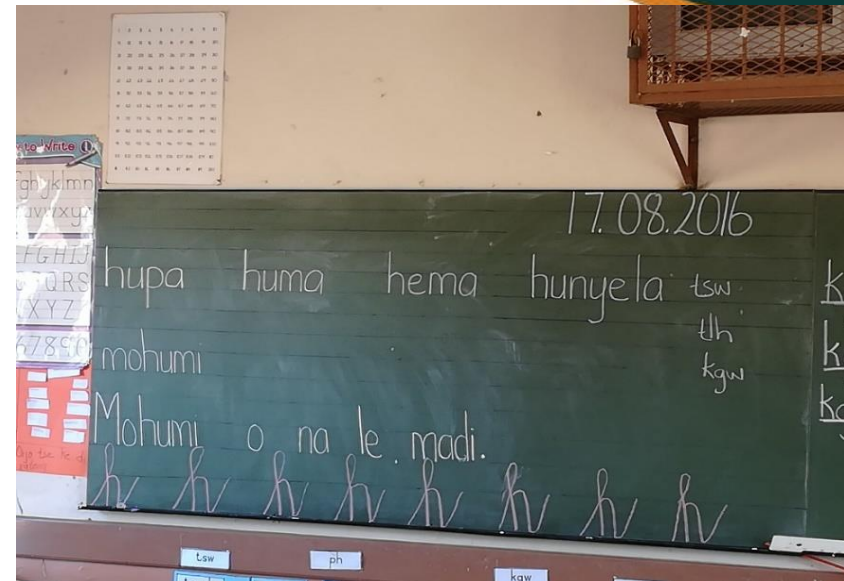
*Firstly it was difficult...even if we were trained....I didn't know where do I look for group and individual teaching. It is nice that everything is written there, that everything is written step by step...the children enjoy them and I also enjoy them [the stories]. The children are talking a lot. (MmGr2D)*

*'It saves you time...you have everything in hand'.*  
Gr2RMG





# Systematic and structured pedagogy



*'I have seen that even if it is not all of them, but most, most, of the children they can write, they put them [letters and words] properly in the lines.... Yes I have seen a difference.'* (RG2D)





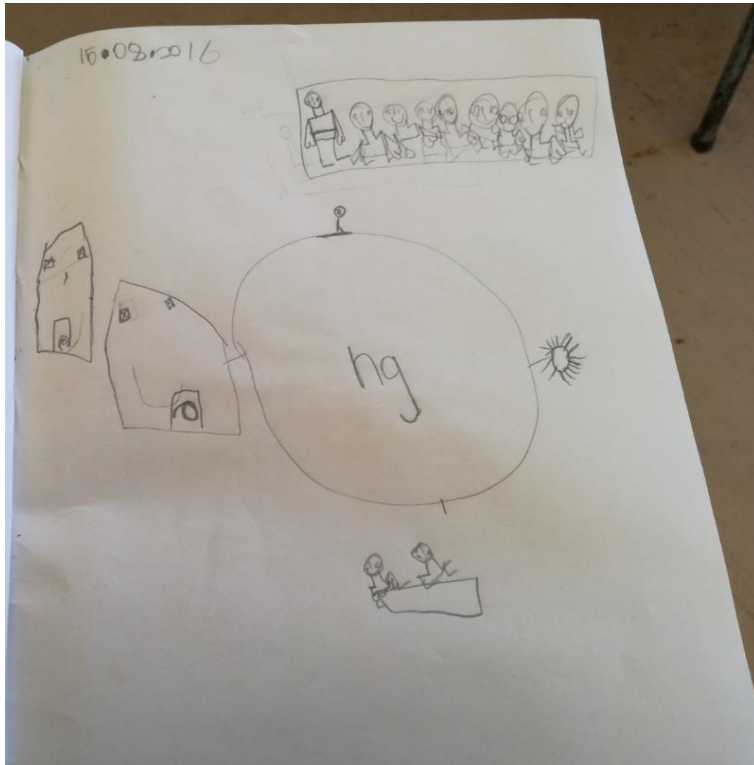
## Coaching

*‘Very helpful.... When I don’t understand and I phone she explain to me.... if we have a problem we just WhatsApp her and ask for clarification’  
(MmGr2L)*

*S: Yes. So that’s how I started to enjoy to teach both readings, group guided and shared reading.*

*(RGr1SM)*

# Problem areas



- Phonics teaching is inadequate and teachers have no technical language to describe phonics practice.
- Choral chanting during group-guided reading activities
- No differentiation of reading level

# What about the mechanism?





# Instructional Time

Treatment	1	2	1	2
School	Anna	Baloyi	Major	Bagele
Day of observation	Monday	Thursday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Duration of lesson observed	90 minutes	90 minutes	76 minutes	67 minutes
Timetabled	90 minutes	90 minutes	90 minutes	60 minutes

Teachers and Grade	Mrs D Grade 1	Mrs S Grade 1	Mrs M Grade 2	Mrs R Grade 2
Day of observation	Monday	Monday	Wednesday	Wednesday
Duration of lesson observed	Observed numeracy EFAL lessons	95 minutes	80 minutes	100 minutes
Timetabled		90 minutes	90 minutes	60 minutes



Duration	Activity			Materials used	Learners
½ minute	Transition period: Introduction of visitors to class.				
½ minute	Whole class 'kinesthetic' activity: Singing 'Heads and shoulders' (in Setswana) touching parts of their body to settle class.				Speaking (singing)
10 minutes	Whole class phonics instruction with interaction.			Chalkboard	Phonics
1 minute	Verbal instructions for individual seatwork task.				Listening
5 minutes	Transition period: Setting up for group guided reading and phonics task.				
16 minutes	First group guided reading: 7 learners	Materials used: Flash cards Vula Bula reader	Individual seatwork. Rest of the class reproducing phonics spider word diagram.	Rulers Pencils Phonics exercise books Eraser	29 learners writing  7 learners reading (12 minutes reading 4 minutes listening and speaking)
½ minute	Transition period: Group returning to their desks;				

# The Use of Space





# Organisation of space: resources





# Conclusion

We're making progress, but we're not there yet.

President Obama, 2011

- Case studies show improved instructional practice -- more time, more educational resources, varied methods of instruction.
- Key insight involves the effective use of time, both macro and micro and space by teachers within their classrooms.
- Teachers took to methods that were familiar, the programme gave them an opportunity to extend and systematise and structured.
- Next stages needs to focus on independent reading, deeper understanding and practice of key methods, particularly Group Guided Reading, more comprehensive understanding of the theory of reading, and love of reading.



External Intervention



Instructional practices



Improve learner achievement or outcomes



Thank you

