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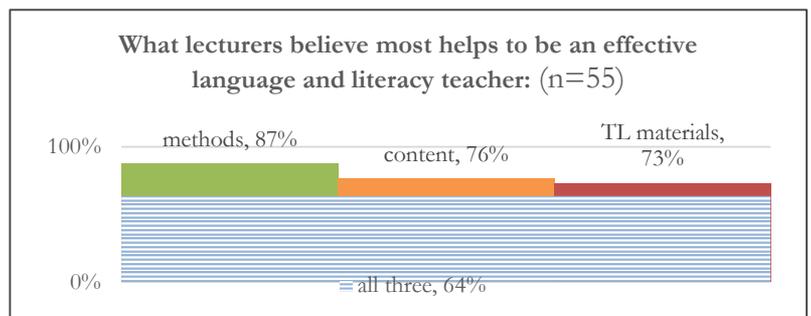
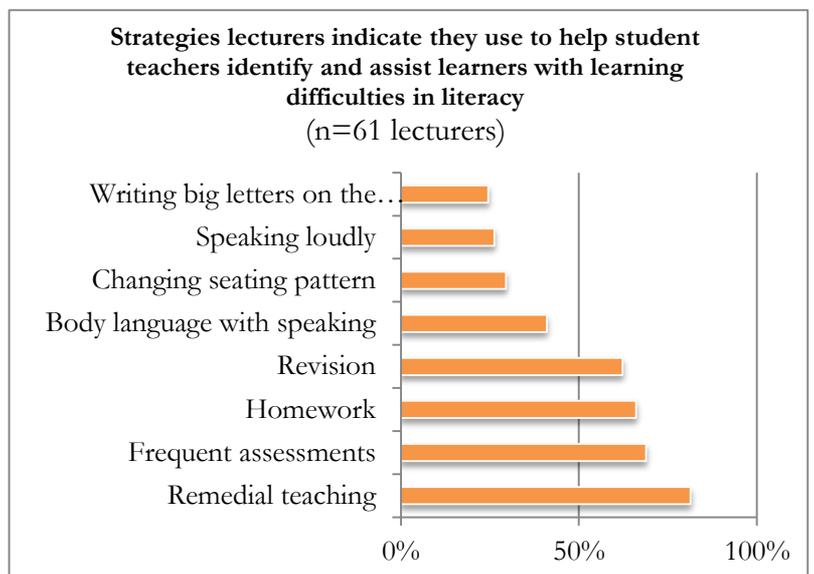
Student Teacher Preparation for the Realities in Zambia’s Schools

Teacher training colleges experience varied challenges and successes in student teacher preparation. The majority of lecturers believed that they are doing their best to equip teachers with various teaching strategies amidst curriculum related challenges. There exists a demand among lecturers for authentic teaching and learning materials to enable them to effectively train teachers of literacy and language. Most lecturers said the automatic promotion of children from one grade to another has a negative effect on literacy and language teaching.

Finding 1: Lecturers view teacher training in pedagogy as most critical to addressing low literacy levels and viewed teacher led methods as important

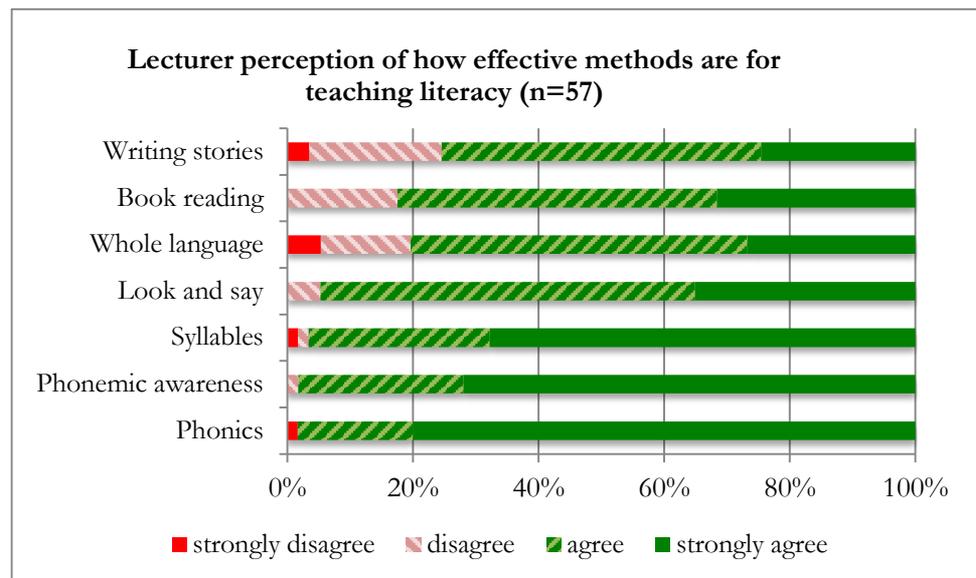
For effective teaching and learning to take place, there is need for lecturers to equip trainee teachers with various strategies in order for them to handle large classes and assist learners with different learning difficulties in literacy using various methods and content.

- More than half of the lecturers indicated that they routinely suggest 4 strategies to student teachers to identify and assist learners who face literacy difficulties. Remedial teaching appears to be the most common strategy lecturers suggest to help student teachers identify and assist learners facing difficulties in literacy, followed by frequent assessments, homework, and revision.
- While most lecturers (64 %) felt that methodology, content, and teaching



and learning materials were all important in the teaching of literacy and language, methods tended to be viewed as more important than content or teaching and learning materials across lectures (see chart).

- Phonics and phonemic awareness are among the top methods lecturers believed were effective for teaching literacy, while writing stories, book reading, and whole language have some who had



doubts among lecturers (see chart). Notably, phonics, phonemic awareness, syllables, look and say, and whole language are all teacher led methods to teach literacy. Book reading, and writing stories tend to focus on students reading or writing themselves and are likely more student-centered where students guide their own learning more than other methods indicated.

Finding 2: Lecturers are Concerned About How Well Teachers are Prepared to Teach in Large Classes and Automatic Promotion of Pupils to the Next Grade

Supporting student teachers is a vital part of the preparation process alongside the methodologies used in their coursework.

- 85% of the lecturers (n=67) believed student teachers were given adequate peer support during teacher training and school experience while 15% did not feel so.
- In contrast, only 60% of the lecturers (n=67) believed that student teachers are trained on how to teach more than 40 pupils in a class, while 40% did not feel so.
- 88% of lecturers suggested that automatic promotion of pupils from one grade to another has a negative impact on raising the reading and writing levels compared to 12% who disagreed.

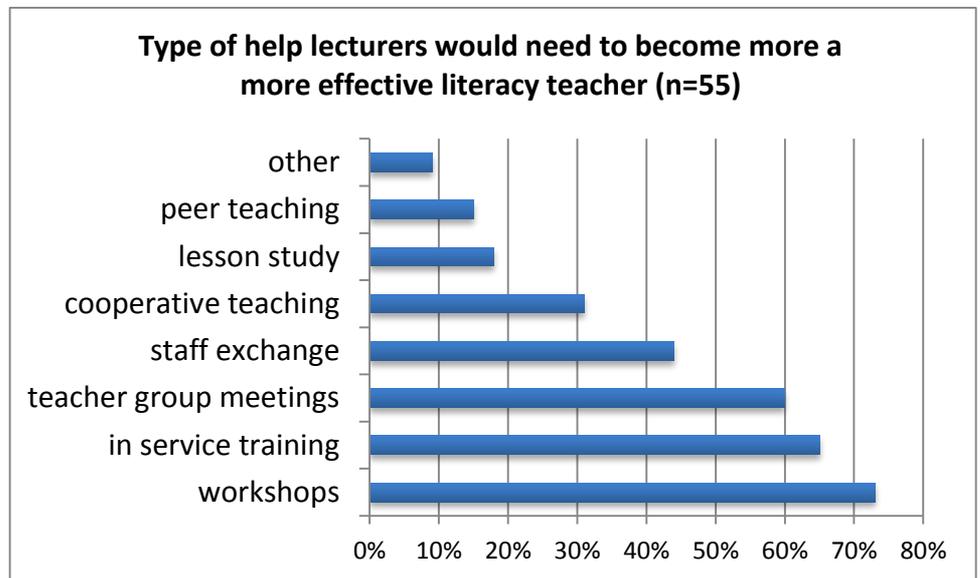
In sum, lecturers believed students received adequate peer support during their teacher training, but there appears to be some gaps in preparation to teach more than 40 pupils in a class. Another reality that teachers face is having students in their classes that may have been automatically promoted (advanced to the next grade without having mastered the previous grade). If a teacher encounters a class with many automatically promoted pupils that is also large, teachers face a double burden that they may not be adequately prepared for according to lecturers. Lecturers tended to believe that the policy of automatically promoting students to the next level has a negative impact on student literacy, so this practice should be reviewed. Automatic promotion of pupils and large class sizes may not in fact be a preparation problem, rather a policy issue to consider changing across the system.

Finding 3: Lecturers desire to be more integrated into the education system as a Valued Human Resource

Lecturers are key contributors to improvements in the educational system since they prepare teachers in pre-service training efforts. Overall, lecturers were confident in this role, further involvement and support are needed to use this valuable human resource.

- 72% of lecturers (n=50) indicated they were comfortable teaching methodology and content for language and literacy, 20% were more comfortable with content, 6% with methods, and 2% with neither.
 - 55% of lecturers (n=51) were trained as a primary and secondary teacher, 12% as a primary teacher only, and 33% as a secondary teacher only. Since lecturers who are involved in literacy instruction were asked to take part in this study, it is a concern that some may not have primary level teaching experience.
 - 22% of lecturers (n=63) have had some in-service training since their initial teacher training. This is concerning because most lecturers had an average year of service of 18 years (with as little as 1 year of service and as much as 31 years of service). Only 10% of the sample had less than two years of service, so this suggests that there were *at least* 13% of lecturers who had over two years of service and had no in-service training as a lecturer. As can be seen in the next result, lecturers want more training, particularly workshops.

- 73% of lecturers said there was need to intensify workshops and 65% suggested intensification of in-service training for them to become effective language and literacy lecturers. Overall, the findings suggest that literacy



teachers need more training and peer to peer engagement to become more effective. The five lecturers who indicated “other” specified: “refresher courses in literacy teaching,” “research findings on what is pertaining in schools,” “symposium,” “to get literature on the same,” and “team teaching.”

The suggestions from lecturers to improve literacy and reading in the system revealed a strong demand for the provision of a variety of teaching and learning methods for both lecturers and student teachers. With such evidence, lecturers should ensure that both content and methodology are taught effectively to student teachers. Additionally, lecturers should be supported to advance their own instruction.

Policy Action Points

Lecturer preparation

- Lecturers should continue to have professional development on methods and strategies in teaching literacy and language. This would also suggest that more support should be given to in-service activities.

Teacher preparation

- Trainee teachers should be prepared to teach and manage large classes in response to the current reality in schools.
- Emphasis should be given to methodologies, content and teaching and learning materials to enhance effective teaching and learning of literacy and language. Opportunities to share strategies should be availed to advance the teaching of literacy across all colleges.

Policy considerations

- Class size standards should be reviewed and adhered to given the opportunities and constraints in the system.
- The automatic promotion practice should be reviewed and guidance on acceptable standards for promotion to the next grade established.
- Lecturers should be involved in pre- and in-service training efforts to ensure that the most up to date and best practices are spread throughout the system.