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Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

EARLY GRADE READING ACTIVITY

READING INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Teaching Reading with Supplementary Readers Refresher training

JULY 2015

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Early Grade Reading Activity

Teaching Reading with Supplementary Readers

Refresher training Module 4

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Abbreviations

EGRA	Early Grade Reading Activity
LB	Learners' book
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NPC	National Primary Curriculum
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PTA	Parent teacher association
SMC	School management committee
TALULAR	Teaching and learning using locally available resources
TG	Teachers' guide
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Introduction

The Early Grade Reading Activity (EGRA) is a 40-month United States Agency for International Development (USAID) intervention aimed to enhance the quality of primary education in Malawi. EGRA provides technical assistance to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) in implementing teacher education support and literacy materials development. Building on the achievements of previous activities and in particular on the Malawi Teacher Professional Development Support Program, it also features a strong element of community mobilisation and of inclusive education for learners with special learning needs. EGRA targets teacher trainers, teachers, school administrators, parents, and other key community members in 11 districts, with a special focus on improving literacy skills at the lower primary level.

To improve early grade reading, EGRA and MoEST are implementing an early grade literacy intervention in Chichewa and English in these 11 districts that is geared toward the development of basic literacy skills and knowledge. Focusing on schools and the wider community within which the schools operate, the program provides training to teachers, head teachers, and primary education advisors (PEAs) on how to effectively teach reading in the early grades. An additional focus is the use of **supplementary readers in Chichewa and English** that can be used to strengthen reading skills and develop a culture and love of reading, in class, at home and in community reading centres. This training manual provided guidance in the managing the stock of readers, using them for guided reading and for children to take home to read with parents and in community reading centres.

Teaching Reading Using Supplementary Readers

Programme

Time	Session
8:00–8:10	1-Welcome, devotions and introductions
8:10-8:15	2-Expectations
8:15-8:25	3-The objectives of this training
8:25-9:10	4- Identifying challenges in the use of supplementary readers
9:10-9:40	5- Overview of the supplementary reading materials provided in EGRA
9:40-10:10	6- The materials register
10:10-10:25	BREAK
10:25-10:55	7- Teaching learners with reading difficulties
10:55-11:25	8- Taking care of the books
11:25-11:45	9- When to use the supplementary readers
11:45-12:00	10. Managing the use of the readers for home and community reading
12:00- 1:00	Lunch (1 hour)
1:00- 2:00	11 - Tiwerenge Nkhani and story cards: differentiated group reading
2:00-2:15	12 – Storage and Management of supplementary readers
2:15-2:20	13- Summary and closure
2:00-2:15	Break (15 minutes)

Teaching reading using supplementary readers

1. Registration, welcome, devotions and introduction (10mins)

Welcome to this training on teaching reading using supplementary readers. Now we had an experience of observing and implementing English and Chichewa teaching and learning according to this learner-centred approach. Therefore this training will draw a great deal on your own experiences. We expect that this will ensure lively participation in problem-solving and information sharing about best practices on the use of supplementary readers. Due to time limitation this is only one day training. So it is the responsibility of all to maximize use of time and to ensure that all questions, issues and concerns about the use of supplementary readers are addressed.

2. Your expectations of this training (5mins)

Thank you for devoting your time to attend this training. Having implemented or observed implementation of teaching reading with supplementary readers, you must have expectations as to what you will gain from this training. Share these expectations with your facilitator who will write them on the flip chart sheet. This will be posted on the wall and as the training progresses; we will try to ensure that all or most of the expectation are met.

3. Objectives of this training:

(10 mins)

Participants will:

- ❖ Learn from each other and from reflection about the use so far of the supplementary readers.
- ❖ Be familiar with all the titles, their levels, and the quantities provided of each.
- ❖ Know how to store, care for and provide books/story cards to learners for home reading
- ❖ Practise facilitating a guided reading session with groups reading different texts
- ❖ Develop guidelines for management and use of the supplementary readers
- ❖ Explain how to assist learners with reading difficulties

Read through the above objectives and in plenary, discuss or ask questions for clarification

4. Identifying challenges from using supplementary readers (45 mins)

This session will do the following:

Provide a forum for teachers to brainstorm the challenges they have faced in implementing the teaching using supplementary readers.

Engage teachers to develop and implement solutions to these challenges

Activity

Noting that we have already in the previous trainings, identified the need for supplementary readers, and also noting that you have now had experience of using them, in plenary, spend five minutes brainstorming a list of the challenges that you face in implementing teaching using supplementary readers. Focus on those challenges that have negative impact on learner performance. The facilitator will write the challenges down on the board or chart paper until all challenges are exhausted.

- Discuss challenge in turn, starting with the challenges that participants feel are most important
- Why does this challenge have a negative impact on teaching and learning?
- What can be done at the school level to alleviate this problem?
- Can other members of the group provide examples of successful strategies they have used to deal with each challenge?

Discuss which of the following five elements of the use the teaching using supplementary readers present the greatest challenges in implementation. How can implementation of each element be improved?

- Meeting the needs of learners with special learning needs
- Making sure that learners can not only read, but can **understand** what they are reading
- Use of the supplementary readers (including how to turn pages, take care of the books etc.)
- Mobilizing parental support for reading
- Getting benefit from coaching and school based support

5. Overview of the supplementary readers provided in EGRA (30 mins)

Your facilitator will show samples of the three types of reading materials that the Early Grade Reading Activity {EGRA} is providing

- **Decodable readers- Tiwerenge Nkhani**
 - Sets of 30 short stories in Chichewa, packaged in three volumes, each with ten stories.
 - The name *decodable* means that the texts have been developed according to the sequence that letter sounds are taught. In this case we are referring to Maziko a Kuwerenga and to the National Primary Curriculum (NPC) Chichewa Standard I course.
- **Levelled readers**

- Sets of 10 Chichewa and 5 English readers.
 - The difference between decodable readers and levelled readers is that levelled readers resemble the books in libraries or sold in book shops for reading pleasure. They have colourful illustrations, and the language of the text is not as carefully graded as in decodable texts. So, in general, levelled readers may be harder to read, but the content may be more complex and interesting.
- **Story cards**
 - Sets of 10 Chichewa and 5 English laminated cards with stories on one side and questions on the reverse.
 - The Chichewa texts are taken from the Tiwerenge Nkhani series, and the English texts are taken from the levelled readers series. The re-utilisation of these texts will provide enhanced opportunities for learners to read on their own. This will encourage the fluency that is so necessary for them to become fluent, independent readers; making meaning from text.
 - The main purpose of the story cards is for home and community-based reading. The questions about the text on the back of the card develop learners' reading comprehension skills.

6. The materials register

(20 mins)

Facilitator: Ensure that all participants are able to see a copy of the register

These books are allocated to the Standard 1 teachers, all of whom have been issued with 4 materials registers for management of the books, and for record-keeping of each learner's reading progress.

Activity: Getting to know the materials register

In your groups, take 10 minutes to look at the materials register and answer the following questions:

- ❖ What is the colour coding for each level?
- ❖ How many Chichewa story card titles are there?
- ❖ How many English levelled readers are there?
- ❖ Where should the teacher write the number of copies of each title?
- ❖ What should the teacher write when a learner takes a book/story card?
- ❖ What should the teacher write when the learner returns the book/story card?
- ❖ Where are the guidelines for teaching a guided reading session?

Although these books are developed for Standard 1, children's reading abilities develop at different paces, and there are probably Standard 2 and 3 learners who will enjoy or may even find some of these texts difficult to read. So the schools are encouraged to make the books and story cards available across Standards 1, 2 and 3.

Schools can make their own plans, and it is a good idea for the head teacher to convene a meeting with staff from Standards 1-3 to plan how to share the books. However the following is a proposed strategy:

Three boxes are acquired for three book collections for Standard 1, 2 and 3 (one plastic box will be provided by EGRA in Term 3, but for now, the school should adopt a TALULAR approach to accessing the necessary boxes).

If the classroom is not secure, the boxes should be carried to a safe place at the end of the school day, and brought back again the following morning.

The Standard 1 teacher(s) consider the reading skills of their learners, taking note of the very able readers as well as the average and slow readers.

A selection of decodables, story cards and levelled readers is made for Standard 1. These are kept in the Standard 1 book box.

On the materials register, the Standard 1 teacher records the quantities of all the titles that have been retained in the Standard 1 book box.

The Standard 2 and 3 teacher(s) together consider the reading skills of their learners and from the remaining books, allocate some to the Standard 2 book box and some to the Standard 3 book box.

The Standard 2 and 3 teachers each complete a separate materials register, indicating the number of each title in the box.

7. Teaching learners with reading difficulties in a classroom (30 min)

Learners differ in many ways in a classroom. They differ in interests, personalities, intelligence, cultural background and learning styles. In some learners, eyes are a key to their learning while some benefit much from hearing the information. Other learners learn better by doing, and touching. While another group of learners experience difficulties in learning. Therefore teaching such a diverse class requires teachers who are creative, innovative and organized.

Tips for assisting learners experiencing difficulties in reading

Activity: Explain how you would assist learners with reading difficulties in your class.

Consolidation points for the facilitator

Some learners struggle with reading so when planning a reading lesson, it is important to adapt their learning styles. Below are some of strategies that can assist in adapting the lesson:

- keep reading materials short and simple
- be patient and provide extra time for reading
- adapt reading lessons to the learners' level

- Reading materials must be in accessible format e.g. large print, braille, simple
- Always monitor closely what the learners are doing
- Ask simple questions from a passage to check understanding
- Ask questions on things read from all sources of reading

Praise the learner for what he/she has done right instead of concentrating on what is wrong

8. Taking care of the books

(30 mins)

Books last longer if:

- ❖ They are covered.
- ❖ Children wash their hands before reading.
- ❖ They are not used as a fan to keep cool with.
- ❖ They are not used as a weapon to bash other children on the head with.
- ❖ Children are taught how to turn the pages carefully.
- ❖ Children do not read with a pen or pencil in their hands.
- ❖ ... can you think of any other indicators?

Activity: Making a presentation about taking care of books

Because learning by doing is more powerful than learning by telling, in your groups, with everyone holding one book, practise correct handling of books. Then have two volunteers come forward and demonstrate how they will teach the learners to care for books (correct picking a book from the box, holding the book, page turning, and returning the book to the box).

After each demonstration, participants should provide constructive feedback.

Break (15 minutes)

9. When To Use The Decodable Readers: Tiwerenge Nkhani

(15 mins)

Nditha Kuwerenga and the National Primary Curriculum (NPC) Learners' books are both decodable readers. They give learners chance to practise reading and sentences that contain the letter- sounds that they have been taught.

In Tiwerenge Nkhani, learners get more opportunities to read a range of different decodable texts to *become* fluent readers.

Activity- familiarizing with 30 texts in Tiwerenge Nkhani

Divide into three groups (if they are more than 40 participants) for the rest of the group. Each group should receive one copy of each volume. In your groups, divide again into three sub-groups. Each subgroup should read all the stories/texts in one of the volumes and prepare to describe the contents. Use the following questions to guide your presentation:

- How many stories/texts are in the volume?
- How many new letter sounds are presented in the volume?
- Which/texts do you think, is the most interesting for learners
- Read that story out to your group and say why you like it?

10. Managing the use of the readers for home and community reading (30 mins)

While Nditha Kuwerenga and the Chichewa Learners' books are meant for whole class use, the supplementary readers are meant for individual use and for taking home to read with families and in the community reading centres. The story cards in particular have been laminated so that they are durable enough for home reading and use in reading centres.

Teachers are encouraged to set aside time at the beginning and end of each school day to hand out and take back the story cards that learners take home. If the teacher has an assistant, this is a task that she/he can be responsible for. The materials register is the means of keeping track of the stock of books and story cards and also of recordkeeping about learners' reading progress. It is the role of head teacher and the PEA to assist and continually support the establishment of a book/story card borrowing system in the school.

Each school is expected to ensure that learners take book/story cards out of school for reading at home and in the community.

Activity: Sharing experiences of managing the use of the readers

In plenary, share your experience so far of managing the use of readers. If you have developed good strategies in your school or classroom, let others know so that they can learn from you. If you have experienced problems with the management of the books, also share. Then, together think of solutions to these challenges or problems. Your facilitator will note down the solutions on the chalkboard or flipchart.

Activity: Establishing guidelines for taking readers home and into the community

Now, all schools should sit together as a team to reflect on the solutions from the above discussion and to improve their school/class guidelines for taking the decodable and levelled readers and story cards for home and community reading. The guidelines should be clear to learners, teachers, the SMC, mother groups and the PTA.

First discuss the schedule and then take a flipchart sheet to write up the guidelines. These should be clear and understandable by learners and parents.

When the guidelines are completed, each school should post them on the wall for others to read and learn.

To round up this session, ask participants to indicate how the guidelines from others' schools have helped clarify their own strategies.

Facilitator's notes: For this session in ToF, the PEAs should work in groups to develop PEAs guidelines for schools on the same topic

Lunch Break (60 mins)

11. Tiwerenge Nkhani and story cards: differentiated group reading (1hr)

With fewer copies of books or story cards, you can facilitate a group reading session with groups reading different texts. This requires careful management. Learners, who are used to reading as a whole class, will need to be trained in this approach. It will take patience and a few repeated tries of practising the routines before you and the learners adapt to it.

However, this activity is very important because it helps learners to develop independent reading strategies, which are necessary for all areas of the curriculum.

Before going into groups to prepare for a differentiated group reading session, consider the following:

- Learners need to be grouped according to their reading levels.
 - Unless you plan to do paired reading where you deliberately pair a stronger learner with a weaker learner for peer support. However, this might be difficult to manage with more than 64 learners per class.
- Decide on the grouping before the group reading session begins.
- Group leaders should be used to collect, distribute, gather in and return the story cards or books. Before the session begins, call the group leaders to you, and take a little time to explain what you expect them to do.
- It should not take more than five minutes for the learners to move to their groups, and for the books or story cards to be handed out. If you need learners to move to different groups for reading, practise a few times getting them to move quickly and quietly.
- Choose texts that are just at the right level or even slightly easy for most of the learners in the group.
 - If the text you choose is too difficult, learners will become demoralised, distracted, and start to disturb other groups.

- If the text is too easy, learners will read through it too quickly, and become distracted and start to disturb the other groups.
- Choose one learner in each group to play the part of ‘the teacher’. She/he should lead the group in trying to predict what the story will be about by referring to the title and to the picture(s).
- Learners should then read aloud softly, following steps 13, 14, 15 and 16 of the guided group reading guidelines (see above and on the back of the materials registers).
- After some weeks of this type of activity, you may wish to give special attention to one of the groups. However, until the learners have become familiar with this approach, do not stay with one group. After providing clear instructions to all the groups, making sure that the books or story cards have been distributed, move around the class to listen to the reading and provide support where needed.

Activity: Presenting a group reading session with learners reading different titles

Select four different stories, story cards or books with stories in them. (They should all be the same language, ie either all Chichewa or all English). Referring to the bulleted guidelines above, prepare as a group to give instructions to the ‘whole class’ and then have four different groups doing shared reading.

Facilitator’s notes: Have at least a group present. After the presentation, take feedback about the achievements, challenges and learning points for implementing this activity with learners in the practicum.

12. Storage and management of supplementary readers (10 mins)

Ideally, the readers should be stored in a secure box in the classroom. The box should be available to the learners so that they can learn how to choose books, and how to be responsible for taking books and bringing them back.

Store the decodable readers, levelled readers and story cards in separate sections of the book box. Where there is colour-coding, keep all the same colour-coded titles together.

You also need to record on the materials register the books taken home by each learner, and tick the register when it is returned.

13. Summary and closure (5 mins)

Thanks to all participants. We will all be excited to see the children’s reactions to the availability of so much new and different reading materials. PEAs during coaching visits will provide support where challenges arise; success stories about improved learner reading and interest in reading will be most welcome. Good luck with your use of the supplementary readers.

Annex 1: Supplementary readers register template

Annex 2: Answers to the questions about the materials register

- ❖ What is the color coding for each level?
Blue, green and yellow
- ❖ How many Chichewa story card titles are there?
10
- ❖ How many English levelled readers are there?
5
- ❖ Where should the teacher write the number of copies of each title?
- ❖ What should the teacher write when a learner takes a book/story card?
- ❖ What should the teacher write when the learner returns the book/story card?
- ❖ Where are the guidelines for teaching a guided reading session?
At the back cover of the materials register