

PRIMARY SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAM: A SCHOOL FEES PILOT
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RECENT LITERACY
PROGRAMS PILOTED IN MALAWI
&
MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE
BEGINNING LITERACY PROGRAM OF MALAWI

January 2009

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AC	Assistant Coordinator
BLP/M	Beginning Literacy Program of Malawi
CERT	Center for Educational Research and Training
CPEA	Coordinating Primary Education Advisor
DCE	Domasi College of Education
DEM	District Education Manager
DTED	Department of Teacher Education and Development
EFA	Education For All
EMAS	Education Methods Advisory Services
FPE	Free Primary Education
GoM	Government of Malawi
LAC	Literacy Across the Curriculum
MANEB	Malawi National Examinations Board
MBTL	Malawi Break Through To Literacy
MCM	Mobilization Corps of Malawi
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Education
MTTT	Mobile Teacher Training Troupes
NSTED	National Strategy for Teacher Education and Development
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
PCAR	Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform
PEA	Primary Education Adviser
PTA	Parents Teacher Association
RTW	Reading Through Writing
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SIP	School Incentive Package
SMC	School Management Committee
TALULAR	Teaching and Learning Using Locally Available Resources
TCC	Teacher Conference Committee
TTC	Teacher Training College
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
ZOC	Zonal Coordinator

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The introduction of FPE in 1994 originated from a political campaign promise. Nonetheless, it fulfilled one of EFA's Dakar Framework for Action of free and compulsory education for all children by 2015. The resultant surge in enrollment exerted pressure on the existing challenges of teacher shortage of both quality and quantity, inadequate infrastructure and instructional resources, and a generally internal inefficiency in the system. Declining quality of teaching and learning has been a persistent major challenge facing the Government of Malawi (GoM). Massive efforts by both the donor community and GoM have focused on improving quality through increasing teacher production and pre and in service teacher education to enhance teacher competences, and provision of instructional resources (National Education Sector Plan (NESP), 2008 National Strategy for Teacher Education and Development (NSTED), 2002).

A major indicator of limitations of these efforts has been the low learning outcomes of pupils in primary schools. Numerous media columns and a number of studies have reported that pupils spend up to five to six years of schooling without attaining basic literacy skills and competences. A mere six percent of Malawian standard six pupils were able to meet grade level competences on an English achievement tests of the Southern African Consortium for Measuring Education Quality (SACMEQ) (Milner et al. 2001). Recent studies (Chilora and Mchazime, 2003) have reported similar low levels of proficiencies after four or five years of schooling. Performance rates at standard 8 are equally low and this pattern continues to secondary school, including the existing grade (form 4) (Chiuye, 2005). Low learning outcomes bring with them issues of inefficiency of the system and value of education. Pupils who persistently perform poorly are likely to miss school, repeat a grade, and eventually leave school before acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills necessary for economic livelihood.

The United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognizes that quality education is necessary if EFA goals and Millennium Development goals are to be realized. The organization's publication focused on addressing and meeting measures for quality education for all by 2015. The quality imperative issue highlights quality education as a right for all children and that education systems must ensure quality instruction for its learners. Poor literacy proficiency contributes to learning across the curriculum because literacy is a tool through which content is learned (Vacca & Vacca, 2005).

It is against this background therefore that current efforts in Malawi focus on quality of learning outcomes. To address these inadequacies, at least three literacy programs have been piloted between 2004 and 2008 with success. The Primary School Support Program: A School Fees Pilot (PSSP: SFP) considered this an entry point to provide a low cost and sustainable literacy program (Beginning Literacy Program of Malawi) for improving the acquisition of literacy skills in standard one. BLP/M adopts a balanced literacy approach based on familiar Chichewa songs and stories written on Song Posters and Big Books, respectively. The Malawi Breakthrough to Literacy (MBTL) adopted the Language Experience Approach (LEA) to teach literacy and focused on making words and sentences while also targeting reading fluently and writing accurately. Finally, the Literacy Across the Curriculum (LAC) adopted the Reading Through Writing (RTW) approach that integrated teaching literacy from part to whole.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation was twofold. The first purpose was to conduct a comparative analysis of the literacy programs. A second focus was a midterm evaluation of the BLP/M to guide its sustainability. These results will provide useful feedback to the Ministry of Education (MoE) on frameworks, major strengths, and weaknesses of the programs as it makes decisions on the way forward with literacy reform to improve acquisition of literacy in the first years of formal schooling. Specifically, the evaluation intended to:

1. Review documents related to each of the literacy initiatives
2. Review current practices in training teachers in early literacy, pre- and in-service
3. Analyze cost implications for the government to roll out any given program, or integration of programs
4. Develop a framework that includes features, strategies, support mechanisms, role of stakeholders, impact on learning outcomes, teacher performance and other aspects considered important for all three programs
5. Observe training for BLP/M term 2 and observe BLP/M classroom practices
6. Analyze existing data collected on teacher performance

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The report is organized into two parts. Part A discusses the comparative analysis of the three literacy programs Chapter 1 provides an overview of the methods followed in conducting the comparative study: sample and sample selection, instruments for collecting data, and data analysis. Chapter 2 presents findings from the comparative analysis. For each program, the findings discuss training, materials, established mechanism for support, impact of the program on teaching and learning, community participation, key strengths and weaknesses, and best practices.

Part B of the report focuses on the midterm evaluation of BLP/M. An introductory chapter opens Part B to provide a context for BLP/M and methods used during the evaluation. Chapter 2 presents findings related to skills and competences taught in BLP/M, impact on teaching and learning, application of BLP/M strategies, skills learners are developing, indicators for achieving intended outcomes, and the nature and use of materials provided to support the program. Chapter 3 includes a brief discussion, conclusions, and recommendations for adapting BLP/M.

Part A:

**COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
RECENT LITERACY
PROGRAMS PILOTED IN
MALAWI**

I. METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the modus operandi adopted in the design and implementation of the evaluation study. The chapter opens with a brief overview of the research design and then describes the sample and sampling procedures, and concludes with a section on the data collection and analysis.

I.1 OVERVIEW OF STUDY DESIGN

A team of six research assistants and one consultant employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches to generate data for the evaluation. Data was solicited from several levels of the education structure: national, district, school, and community levels. The unit of analysis for the study was the literacy programs and necessitated selection of a purposeful sample of districts and schools. Face-to-face interviews using structured and an unstructured guides were conducted with district level personnel and program staff. A structured questionnaire integrated with interviews was used with headteachers, teachers, and community members. A review of instructional materials and documents (project descriptions and reports) was also conducted. Qualitative data from the interviews and document reviews were analyzed by coding to generate patterns and emerging themes. SPSS software was used to enter demographic information of headteachers, teachers, and pupils.

I.2 SAMPLE SELECTION

Districts and Schools (Appendices 1 & 2): A total of 30 schools were purposively sampled and PSSP staff guided much of the selection. Staff at the district education office included the District Education Manager (DEM), Coordinating Primary Education Advisor (CPEA), and the Desk Officer for Primary Education (DOPE) where they were available. School performance in implementing the literacy program was used as based on criteria designated by program staff. Both high and least performing schools were selected. A total of 30 headteachers and 34 teachers were part of the sample. Additional stakeholders were community leaders, and parents around the selected schools, PSSP staff, MoE (Director for Basic Education and Deputy Director for EMAS), and five tutors studying at Chancellor College.

I.3 INSTRUMENTS USED

The purpose of the evaluation necessitated a number of ways to be used in collecting data. These included structured and unstructured interviews, and document reviews.

Structured Interviews

There were three structured guides for the headteacher, teacher, and community. The headteacher and teacher guides solicited both quantitative and qualitative information pertaining to literacy program objectives, training, supervision and support; community involvement, pupil literacy competences, beliefs about teaching literacy, teacher performance in implementing the program, challenges faced in implementing the program, and components of the program that could be adopted.

In addition, the teacher guide addressed issues of support from school and district personnel, activities and literacy strategies used, integration of literacy and other subjects, resources used for teaching literacy, best practices, and challenges they encountered in implementing their respective program.

The community guide investigated their knowledge and participation in the program, benefits of the program, role in the program, their assessment of standard one learners' reading performance, and care of materials used during the program.

Unstructured interviews

Unstructured interviews were conducted with district, MoE (Director of Basic Education and Deputy Director of EMAS), and program staff about the program objectives, support they provided to schools, challenges they faced, ways to address them, best practices that could be adopted, and components of the program that the district could sustain.

In addition to these questions, participants from TTC were asked about the content and approach adopted in training teachers in early literacy. One of the tutors participated in both LAC and MBTL while the four were currently studying a bachelor's degree at Chancellor College. The Deputy Chief of Staff and PSSP staff responsible for BLP/M was also interviewed.

Document Reviews

A comprehensive review of available documents and materials for all three programs was conducted to gain a better understanding of the programs. Documents included program descriptions, reports and evaluations of baseline studies, midterm evaluations, and periodic reports (quarterly, annual). Resources that were developed and distributed in schools to use for implementing the different programs were also reviewed for relevance to promoting acquisition of literacy and learners' needs and readiness, adequacy, gender sensitivity, and authenticity and relationship to learners' lived experiences. For BLP/M the documents included: the PSSP: SFP 2007 Annual Report, 2007-2008 quarterly reports, pupil assessment data reports (baseline and follow-up), TOT manuals, teacher guides, cycle training manuals, and instructional resources (Song Posters, Big Books, and alphabet charts-see section 3.2.1). Documents for MBTL included the teacher's guide, two program evaluation reports, and instructional resources (Sentence Makers and Holders, Phonic Flip Chart, and Conversation Posters-See section 3.2.2). There was only a report on LAC available for review.

I.4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Training: A total of eight Research Assistants (RAs) underwent a three day training session that covered topics on interviewing techniques, reviewing items on the questionnaires, simulations of interviews, and appropriate conduct in schools. On the third day, the instruments were piloted in two schools in Zomba and feedback incorporated for field work.

Procedures: Prior to the study, a formal letter was written to the DEM of each of the participating districts informing them of the study and seek assistance in communicating to the sampled schools on the purposes, activities, and dates of the research teams. In addition, on arrival in a district, the team made a courtesy call to the DEM's office, conducted interviews with the DEM, DOPE, and CPEA, and then visited the schools.

Data were analyzed in two phases. The first stage was descriptive data generated from entering data using SPSS software. This generated mean ages, years of service, and qualifications. In the second phase, qualitative data from interviews and document reviews was synthesized to generate patterns and themes.

I.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE EVALUATION

There were a number of factors that limited the evaluation:

1.5.1 Timing

- For both MBTL and LAC, the study was conducted years after their implementation process was concluded. Some of the participants were finding problems to remember issues, especially for LAC. It is possible that some of the data might not be accurate. There was no way to verify if they really carried out the practices they mentioned.
- A relatively short time given to conduct the study and coincided with a time when the country was experiencing fuel shortages

1.5.2 Reform Approach

- Unlike the MBTL and LAC programs, BLP/M was couched under a larger district wide holistic school reform program and so may have some aspects from which it may draw advantages. For instance, the PSSP: SFP provided grant money for school development such as school libraries and established Mobilization Corps of Malawi (MCMs) to manage them and initiate reading, math and other school and community level clubs. MCMs also supported teachers in classroom instruction and creating TALULAR, established income generating activities (IGAs), vocational skills, and play parks. At the community level, MCMs participated in community sensitization through Theatre for Development (TFD), and involvement in Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs), among other volunteer activities. BLP/M also provided grant money for school development activities and included a strong community mobilization and sensitization campaign that brought on board partners traditionally left out of the education sphere. It is likely these initiatives disproportionately benefited BLP/M.

1.5.3 Data Sources

- There was only one summary document for LAC and the participants in the study, including the resource person for the program were unsure of some issues.
- No instructional materials from LAC were available for review except the Initial Letter Chart reproduced in a report.
- For both MBTL and LAC, the contact persons referred to do not have useful information to help in estimating costs- they had no knowledge of the exact copies produced, how much was spent on what, and specific resources bought.

1.5.4 Absence of Literacy Achievement Tests

- Achievement tests in standard 5 would be useful for M BTL and LAC to help determine whether pupils retain literacy skills they acquired in standard 1. The results would inform BLP/M if pupils will be able to retain and apply skills they are acquiring now.
- A standard 1 assessment for BLP/M would also be informative. Although there is a built in assessment in the PSSP: SFP, this study would draw a different sample of pupils from the 59 cluster sample used for the assessment.
- In the absence of results from tests administered outside those designed in the program, there is no mechanism to substantiate teachers' claims that pupils' reading and writing skills have improved. Similarly, the absence of such results deny a basis for triangulation for the results from the PSSP: SFP's own assessments

2. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The chapter opens with a presentation of findings pertaining to key features of the programs, their impact on teaching and learning, benefits of each program, complementing PCAR, community participation, and continuing best practices.

2.2 KEY PROGRAM FEATURES

All three programs advocated teaching literacy in children's mother tongue, using lived experiences, learner centered approaches and the use of teaching and learning materials. This section discusses the key features of each of the programs including the goals and objectives, theoretical underpinnings, training, instructional/program resources and materials (See Table I).

Table 1: Summary of Program Information

Prog.	Literacy Framework and Features	Overall Program Goals	Key Strategies	Support Mechanisms	Impact on Teaching /Learning
BLP ¹	<p>Balanced approach to literacy instruction</p> <p>Focus on the essential components of reading and writing</p> <p>Thematically based lessons that integrate Chichewa Songs Stories and Pupils' life experiences</p> <p>Built in formative assessment</p> <p>High community involvement through literacy fairs</p>	<p>Read short familiar passages fluently</p> <p>Write simple sentences and stories</p> <p>Develop a love of reading and writing</p>	<p>Teacher Read Aloud</p> <p>Teacher Think Aloud</p> <p>Story Star</p> <p>Character map</p> <p>Creating Class Books</p> <p>Theme Web</p> <p>Interactive Writing</p> <p>Collecting Environmental Print</p> <p>Class Trips</p>	<p>ZOC</p> <p>MTTT</p> <p>AC</p> <p>PSSP: SFP staff</p> <p>Cluster leaders</p> <p>TCC</p> <p>Community</p> <p>MCM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewed passion for schooling • Learn to read fluently and write accurately • Leadership skills • Community participation • Increased resources • High learner engagement • Learner creativity • Multiple opportunities for teaching and integrating literacy
MBTL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced approach to literacy • Print rich environment • Mother tongue • Language Experience Approach • Continuous assessment • Learner centeredness • Curriculum integration • Individual and peer interaction • Talking walls • Class library • Teaching corner • School Notice Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the writing system • Move from hearing or saying to reading and writing a sentence • Write stories at least three sentences long • Reading class readers fluently • Building up words using prefixes and suffixes • Arrange words alphabetically • Have a vocabulary of at least 250 words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One sentence a day • Word making • Conversation on familiar themes • Ten minute activity slots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molteno team • Headteacher • Infant section heads • Zonal support team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good handwriting • Learn to read fluently and write accurately • Leadership skills • Community participation • Improved learning in other subjects • High learner engagement • Teacher collegiality • Improved pupils' reading skills

¹ All information on BLP/M was taken from the BLP/M Teacher's guide developed by Nancy Clair (2007) pages 6-7 and 17-23.

Prog.	Literacy Framework and Features	Overall Program Goals	Key Strategies	Support Mechanisms	Impact on Teaching /Learning
LAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using mother tongue to acquire literacy • Reading Through Writing • Learner centeredness • Double shift system • Teaching corners • 60 learners per class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equip teachers with learner activating methods • Facilitate the learning process by engaging learners in meaningful context from learners lived experiences • Increase level of effectiveness of Chiyao and Chitumbuka orthographies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Letter Chart • Phonics-parts to whole • Sound- letter correspondence • Classroom rituals • Group work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project team • Headteacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to read and write • Leadership skills • Developed a reading culture among pupils • Improved learners' reading skills • High learner engagement • Rekindled interest for schooling • Created a child friendly environment • Brought learners' mother tongue orthography

2.2.1 Beginning Literacy Program of Malawi (BLP/M)

Description of BLP/M

Based on the notion that what learners can say can be written and what can be written can be read, BLP/M teaches literacy in Chichewa using thematically based songs and stories². The songs are written on posters while the stories are read from Big Books. The framework adopted in the program is a balanced approach to teaching literacy instruction that builds on learners' lived experiences, and focuses on the essential components of reading and writing. For reading, these components include: print concepts, phonological awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. For writing, they include: writing concepts, the writing process, and grammar and mechanical conventions (Clair, 2007. pp. 3; Burns, et.al, 1999). To complement these components the program also engages the whole village by involving parents and communities in learning activities to support their children's literacy development. A literacy fair displaying teacher and pupils' work is organized at the end of each term for the community. A monthly formative assessment is conducted to assess learners' reading and writing skills. The United States Agency for International Development supported (USAID) this program and was piloted in all 226 schools in Dowa with Dedza as a control district.

A total of 15 strategies are used in teaching BLPM. Nine of those strategies are key; that is, they are research based and focus on the essential components of reading and writing. All strategies are repeated throughout the BLP/M so that teachers have the opportunity to master and deliver them effectively. For pupils, the repeated teachings ensure multiple exposure to help them internalization the strategies to develop for automaticity of their application in reading and learning.

Categorized loosely, there are strategies that deal with reading, those teaching writing, while some promote learning of vocabulary, comprehension, and learner interaction³. For example, the Teacher Read Aloud models fluent reading and helps readers develop comprehension and critical thinking skills. On the other hand, the Think alouds help pupils develop metacognitive skills while the Story Star supports reading comprehension and helps pupils learn the elements of a story. The Character map supports reading comprehension through analysis of thoughts, feelings, and actions. The Theme web also supports reading comprehension and preparation for writing by activating and building pupils' background knowledge. Creating a class book assists pupils in understanding print concepts and the proper way to handle books, while interactive writing activities foster writing skills such as writing concepts, the writing process, and some grammar and mechanical conventions. Games like Bingo, Line up game, bottle cap letters, Scavenger hunt, and collecting environmental print help pupils build and expand vocabulary, practice phonological awareness, letter-sound correspondence, and letter recognition. Showing appreciation also develops pupils' oral skills and particularly builds respect for other's work. Finally, although all these strategies promote learner interaction, the Think-pair-share, going on a class trip, the various games, and interactive writing actively engage pupils in the learning process. Nonetheless, these strategies cannot really be separated and demarcated as addressing one component of literacy but rather complementary to each other to enhance the acquisition and retention of the processes of reading, writing, speaking, listening, visualizing, and drawing. The strategies are taught in one hour long lessons.

² Based on the PSSP:SFP Annual Report of January-December 2007 and the teacher's guide developed by Nancy Clair (2007)

³ BLPM Teacher's Guide pages 13-28.

Training

The training was a two-part process. The first part was organized around six cycles each covering a different thematic issue: introduction to literacy and literacy strategies, management of large classes, teacher code of ethics, supervision, numeracy, reflective teaching, continuous assessment, community mobilization, data management, and Teacher Conferences. A Training of Trainers comprising 13 Zonal Coordinators (ZOCs), 3 teachers, 3 tutors, 2 Mobile Teacher Training Troupes (MTTTs), 1 MANEB staff, 1 Domasi College of Education (DCE) staff and MoE representatives at headquarters, division, and district levels.

The second component of the training, focused on BLP/M training. Three separate trainings were conducted prior to the beginning of each term. A BLP/M Training of Trainers (TOT) was conducted before a roll out training of headteachers, ZOCs, BLP/M Trainers, Assistant Coordinators (ACs), and standard I teachers was done. BLP/M secretariat produced three TOT manuals to guide teachers during rollout training⁴ and serve as reference materials. Thus these beneficiaries played a duo role: first as trainees in which they learned about the different literacy strategies for the first time, and then turn around and train others on the same.

The three TOTs followed a developmental approach. For example, Term 1 training focused on Song Posters, teacher Read aloud through BLP/M Big Books, and creating TALULAR. In Term 2 training, participants practiced using the Song Posters and Big Books and then focused on the Story Star, Class Map and Creating Class Big Books. In Term 3, the emphasis was on interactive writing such as writing a letter to the community inviting them to the literacy fair and writing based on a Theme Web.

Activities throughout the training included lesson demonstrations, strategy explanations, and guided practice in applying the strategies just learned. Teachers received a guide that contained unit and lesson plans, Big Books and Song Posters on which the guide was based and other materials for the upcoming term. Pupils received pencils and exercise books.

Support Mechanism

An expanded support base was established for frequent monitoring and supervision. PSSP: SFP project staff, BLP/M troopers, ACs, district education office staff (DEM, CPEA and sometimes the PEA), and headteachers monitored and supervised teachers. As part of the strong community mobilization campaign, the Village Development Committee (VDC), chiefs, and other community members also monitored teaching and learning in some of the schools.

Besides existing structures, BLP/M established new ones to provide and oversee professional development for improving classroom practice. Teams of Teacher Conference Committee (TCCs) and Mobile Teacher Training Troupes (MTTT) coordinated the exercise supported by ZOCs and ACs. MTTTs comprised retired subject specialists who spent up to one week at a school observing classes, providing feedback, and demonstrating best practices. Drawn from each school, TCC managed conferences at school level. TCC activities included:

⁴ Nancy Clair developed three BLP/M Training of Trainers Facilitator's Guide for all three terms Each guide contained what strategies to focus on, number of training days, and step by step procedures for conducting the roll out training for teachers and other beneficiaries.

- visiting schooling
- identifying and selecting challenging areas
- identifying and organizing expert teachers in topics
- demonstrating best practices
- holding conferences for teachers to share experiences
- providing feedback to teachers

Midway through each term, headteachers, standard I teachers, PEAs, ACs, and BLP Troopers conducted review meetings to share experiences, check on the progress of the program, and trouble shoot any problems encountered.

Reference and Instructional Materials

A number of BLP/M materials were provided to support the teaching of the 15 literacy strategies for all three terms. Reference materials included modules and teacher guides while instructional materials were Song Posters, Big Books, alphabet charts, and graphic organizers (See Table 2).

Table 2: Instructional Materials to Support Application of BLP/M Literacy Strategies

	TERM ONE	TERM TWO	TERM THREE
BIG BOOKS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kam'dothi Thawa Mvula 2. M'tsikana wa Dengu Lowuluka 3. Kalulu Akana Kukumbanawo Chitsime 4. Mada Woyiwalayiwala 5. Moto Kumudzi 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mponda wa ku Mponela 2. Ine ndi Anzanga 3. Kukaona Anthu Kumudzi 4. Wadzilodza Wekha 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tsiku Lobzala Mitengo 2. Sitolo La Mayi Mataya 3. Mbiri ya Dziko Lathu 4. Mbiri ya Vera Chirwa 5. Mbiri ya Rose Chibambo 6. Mbiri ya Masauko Chipembere 7. Mbiri ya William Kamkwamba
SONG POSTERS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Galasi N'landani 2. Ine Ndine Mwana 3. Joni Mwana wa Chipongwe 4. Kachule Kam'dambo 5. Kodi Mnyumba Mwasesa? 6. Kodi Nonse Mwasamba 7. Kusukulu Nkwabwino 8. Kwiwokwiyo 9. Moni Alesi 10. Mwana Joni Walira 11. Mwezi Uwale 12. Zowola Zoipa 13. Pa Mchenga 14. Tambala Walira Kokoliliko 15. Tosapano Tatha Kuphunzira 16. Pakhomo Pamunthu Pafunika Ziti 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Msewu Siwako 2. Birimankhwe 3. Kachiwala Kam'dambo 4. Ena Saadya Therere 5. Lafika Dzinja 6. Kangaude Wapanga Ngozi 7. Kutola Mtedza 8. Madzi Ndiwo Mankhwala 9. Pokwera Njinga 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Timapanga Nsapato 2. Fulu Chigoba pa Msana 3. Ntchito ya Udotolo 4. Zivute Zitani 5. Anthu Aku Malawi
POEM POSTERS		1. Mzanga Shawa	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dziko Lalira 2. Mlesi 3. Nyimbo ya Fuko Lathu
Graphic Organizers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Story star (Nyenyezi ya Mtambasula Nkhani) 2. Character map (Kalondolondo wa Atengambali) 3. Theme Web (Kangaude wa Mfundo) 4. Alphabet Chart 		

2.2.2 Malawi Breakthrough to Literacy (MBTL) Program

Description of MBTL

The MBTL program adopted the Language Experience Approach (LEA) by engaging learners in their lived experiences and oral skills they bring from home to teach literacy⁵. The overall objective of the program ensured that children learn to read fluently and write easily and accurately in their own mother tongue. Specifically, MBTL helped children understand the writing system, move from hearing or saying to reading and writing a sentence, reading class readers fluently, and building a vocabulary of at least 250 words⁶. Breaking through to literacy was organized around three stages: prereading skills, core vocabulary, and independent reading. A built in assessment was done at the end of each stage. The LEA was based on Conversation Posters whereby a teacher initiated class discussion through a question and answer session. Another feature was the hands-on activity of constructing one sentence a day using word and letter cards from the Sentence Maker and arranging them on a Sentence Holder or copying them in their story books. Pupils were drilled in the whole word rather than syllables. Other strategies were “Look and Say, phonics instruction and the use of corners—a teaching/sharing corner, a reading corner, and a work station. Talking walls were used to display learner’ and teachers’ work (items, print, and other artifacts from the environment) to enrich, stimulate, and expand learners’ literacy skills. The Department for International Development (DFID) supported MBTL. It was piloted in all 135 Ntchisi schools, 16 Zomba Urban and two additional schools, with Dowa and Blantyre Urban as control districts.

Training

MBTL was based on a similar program piloted in neighboring country of Zambia. Materials were therefore translated into Chichewa before training commenced. A team of South African staff from the Molteno project conducted the training for standard I teachers, head teachers, heads of infant sections, support team members at zonal level, tutors, PEAs, SEMAs and the MBTL team members⁷. Training was done according to the three stages but teachers implemented each stage before attending training for other stages. The program began with a study tour to Zambia to learn the implementation process. A secretariat was then set up at MIE and a Coordinator appointed. Orientation of MoE officials and sensitization of school heads, teachers, and community members followed. In addition, MBTL provided bicycles to zonal support teams to ease transport problems during monitoring of the program and bring supervisory and support services closer to teachers.

Support Mechanism

Headteachers and heads of infant sections monitored and supervised at the school level while a 5 member zonal support team comprising the PEA, the AC, and three standard I teachers provided similar support for the zone. Each team was provided with 4 bicycles (PEAs are already provided with motorcycles). Besides the district office providing fuel and allowances for monitoring, it also demanded PEAs to produce progress reports about the program⁸. The Molteno team members also formed part of the supporting staff but were unable to continue the service upon expiration of their contracts. The teams observed lessons and provided feedback for improving classroom application of the strategies learned.

Reference and Instructional Materials

A kit was produced containing resources and materials (see Table 3 below) to support the teaching and learning of literacy. The kit included a teacher’s guide containing lessons, specific methods and activities to follow, and resources to facilitate learning. A Sentence Maker containing pockets that

⁵ Proposal to the Ministry of Education Malawi: Implementation of the Breakthrough to Literacy (2004).

⁶ Taken from the Teacher’s Guide used during the pilot phase of the MBTL.

⁷ As described in the Internal Evaluation of the Malawi Breakthrough to literacy (MBTL Pilot Study).

⁸ As reported in the Evaluation of the Malawi Breakthrough to Literacy Programme by Frank Sampa.

held word cards was included. Each class received up to eight Sentence Makers for use in groups and the teacher kept a separate set with larger word cards. The Sentence Maker along with its word cards was used in tandem with the Sentence Holder on which to hold sentences made each day. Another resource was the Phonic Flip Chart that contained 51 Phonic Posters and 12 activities for facilitating pre-reading activities. In addition, each child received a Learners' Activity Book (LAB) and a storybook (where they drew a picture from a Conversation Poster and then wrote a sentence describing it), a pencil, sharpener, and a rubber. Other resources included a set of 4 Conversation Posters to initiate discussion, two small chalkboards, and classroom furniture (2 tables and 4 benches per group (15 pupils) per class.

Table 3: Instructional Materials to Support MBTL

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers' guide • Teacher's sentence holders • Group sentence makers • Learners' sentence holders • A set of 4 Conversation posters • Phonic flip chart • Word cards • Learners' Activity Books (LAB) • Readers (1 set of 10 readers) • Group slate (2 small chalk boards)

2.2.3 Literacy Across the Curriculum (LAC) Program

Description of LAC

LAC program adopted the "Reading Through Writing" (RTW) approach to the teaching of literacy. The RTW approach is grounded on the premise that reading and writing are the same cognitive processes⁹- both use language- in that where as reading is using language to decode meaning, writing is thought encrypted in language. Emerging from this conceptualization, the RTW approach embraces the phonics method of teaching reading based on the premise that a word is segregated into its parts i.e. syllables first. LAC used a skills-based approach by teaching the parts to the whole- letters and syllables before teaching the whole word. Children first learn literacy in their home language and were expected to transfer the skills when learning other languages. Learner centeredness and recognition of children's eagerness to learning were additional features of the LAC program. The program purported to facilitate the learning process by engaging learners in meaningful context from their lived experiences, equip teachers with learner activating methods, and increase level of effectiveness of Chiyao and Chitumbuka orthographies. The program was piloted in three different languages- Chichewa, ChiTumbuka and Chiyao and three districts Mangochi, Rumphii, and Ntcheu, respectively. The German Technical Foundation (GTZ) provided funding for the program.

Strategies in teaching literacy included teaching the Initial Letter Chart (ILC)- an equivalent of a mother tongue alphabet that associated initial letter sounds with pictures of objects to promote sound-letter relations (spoken and written language correspondence), using classroom rituals, a corner system, and variations of group work. In terms of organization, a class size not exceeding 120 pupils was mandatory in order to make the program work effectively. Classes were split into a "double shift"¹⁰ system and classrooms organized into four corners namely the Teaching corner,

⁹ Taken from A report of LAC- A Study piloting children's first language and learner centered teaching methods in standard one classes (2005)

¹⁰ For the LAC program, double shift meant splitting a class into two groups of 60 learners each with one group (Group I) learning literacy for 1 hour starting from 7:30. During the next hour, Group II stayed for another hour for their literacy lesson while Group I moved to do independent tasks

Reading Corner, Writing Corner, and Numeracy Corner. Each group was subdivided into 4 groups of 15 pupils to facilitate learning. The one hour literacy class was organized into 10 minutes of instruction at the teaching corner, and the other 30 minutes spent rotating in the three corners. To conclude the session, the teacher brought the whole class together at the teaching corner to consolidate and evaluate the lesson.

Training and Support Mechanism

LAC program involved a small number of stakeholders: a six member team of local specialists from MIE and TTC, a German specialist for RTW, and piloted in six schools only. PEAs, headteachers and two teachers from each of the six schools were trained. Some of the key staff at the district education office (DEM and DOPE) were left out- like in Rumphu district. Teachers attended a five day initial training at MIE and thereafter returned for two more trainings before each term opened. One extra teacher from each of the selected schools was invited for training to serve as a “backstopper” that replaced the teacher when not available and to provide support with lesson planning. The Center for Language Studies (CLS) translated materials into ChiYao and ChiTumbuka based on the existing curricular and resources. Each term, two supervisory visits were made to the schools.

Teaching and Learning Materials

A LAC program kit included ILC chart, letter cards, memory and domino games, sack for storing materials, and plastic containers for number values¹¹. Other materials were for preparing teaching aids such as paper plates, cardboard, wooden pegs, paper clips, wooden dice, a 5 meter string, wall hangers, and envelopes. In addition, pupils received an exercise book, a pencil, a plastic slate, a rubber, and a sharpener.

Table 4: Instructional Materials to Support LAC

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial letter Chart• Letter cards• Memory and Domino games• A sack• Laminated pictures of letters of the alphabet in all three languages• 3 small hangers• 1 big Wall hanger• Envelopes• 50 paper clips• 25 paper plates• 15 Plastic containers• 6 wooden dice• 60 exercise books• 60 sets of plastic slate, 1 rubber, a sharpener, and a pencil

¹¹ Taken from A report of LAC- A Study piloting children’s first language and learner centered teaching methods in standard one classes (2005)

2.3 CONCLUSION

The program description has shown that there were similarities in that all three programs advocated using pupils' mother tongue in the teaching of literacy, basing learning on pupils' lived experiences, and incorporating peer interaction. Each program produced a set of references and instructional materials to support the teaching of literacy. However, there were major differences in the materials, literacy activities, and provision of support mechanism. While participating teachers and other staff were trained in all three programs, LAC had the fewest teachers and support team trained as well as the least number of schools (6) piloted, yet it was the only program to teaching literacy in three different mother tongue languages. Of the three programs, LAC contained the most number of game activities, and taught from part to whole approach, while both MBTL and BLP/M adopted the whole language approach. Although the latter two programs adopted a whole district wide pilot program, only BLP/M established new structures to expand the support base. In addition, by far, BLP/M contained the largest provision of instructional materials in form of Big Books, Song Posters, and well detailed unit and lesson plans compared to one set of 10 readers in MBTL and none in LAC. Although MBTL provided bicycles to ease transportation for supervision, BLP/M achieved this through new structures. Finally, BLP/M generated the most community engagement with schooling activities because of its focus on community mobilization campaign.

2.4 IMPACT OF PROGRAMS

Arguably the most critical purpose of piloting a program is to investigate the impact (or lack thereof) to inform decisions about their full scale implementation. In general, all three literacy programs were described to demonstrate a positive impact on learners, teachers, and the community. The programs influenced teachers' practice in the classroom as well as their students' learning. Overall, study participants (headteachers, teachers, and district office staff) mentioned a number of ways in which the programs influenced the teaching and learning process. The teaching process is separated from the learning process. There were more ways mentioned for influencing learning than for teaching. In itself this demonstrates teachers' increased levels of awareness on the pupils' learning and reflection on their own teaching practice.

2.4.1 Impact of Program on Teaching

Overall, there were no major differences among responses in terms of the impact of the programs. Participants in all three programs reported that the program had influenced the way they conducted lessons; encouraged them to be resourceful, develop, and use materials to support teaching and learning; and use learner centered approaches. For example, teachers in the LAC program felt that the many games that were a large component of the program influenced how they perceived the value and role of games during instruction. In addition, the LAC teachers revealed that the program influenced their teaching by introducing new ways of teaching such as picture walk and discussion as introductory activities to reading, as well as making teaching easy:

For teachers in MBTL, the experience with the program assisted them in managing PCAR because they were familiar with the learner centered approaches.

I was influenced in that teaching became easy and joyous because learners could easily grasp the skills and knowledge (Waliro)

A small proportion (15%) of BLP/M headteachers mentioned that the program influenced assessment of teaching because of the inbuilt formative assessment since teachers were able to teach while simultaneously assessing learning. In addition, teachers more than headteachers in the BLP/M, felt that the program encouraged the use of effective literacy strategies in other classes and content areas as exemplified in the textbox below:

BLP methodologies are used in higher classes. The character map, theme web were used in English as well as other content areas like environmental topics in classes other than standard 1 (Lufe and Kamphenga schools)

ZOCs in the BLP/M also mentioned that the program enhanced teachers' commitment to their career, development of teacher efficacy and encouraged the use of effective strategies such as learner centered methods, grouping slow and fast learners to learn from each other, and literacy strategies. Most of all, ZOCS regarded BLP/M to have expanded teachers' knowledge and skills for both academic/content and pedagogical base. The six cycle trainings provided teachers with a repertoire of skills to improve classroom practice, manage and actively engage pupils, design and develop a variety of teaching aids, and conduct professional development activities both at school and cluster levels.

District office staff, teachers, and headteachers in the other programs similarly mentioned the use of teaching materials, learner centered methodologies, and implementation of effective teaching strategies. Other influences shared by teachers in all three programs involved promoting learning how to read and write and included: using children's home experiences; talking walls; teaching corner; and creativity of using pictures and telling stories during instruction.

2.4.2 Impact on the Learning process

Teachers in MBTL explained that the program affected learning among their pupils:

- Renewed interest and passion for learning. Teachers found BLP/M to rejuvenate motivation, interest, and a liking to learning.
- BLP/M was also mentioned to influence interaction among learners and between learners and teachers. Teachers have found the learner centered approaches as greatly improving the learning process.

In addition, BLP/M teachers reported that the program helped children make connections between school and home life experiences because they required them to ask their parents or family members about topics, songs, stories, and other issues which the teachers use on the following day. For example, the teacher at Mponela I started her lesson on roles of family members and teaching *Kodi Mnyumba Mwasesa* Song Poster by asking pupils to share what their parents and family told them about the different family members and chores they are expected to perform. The lesson plans in the teacher guide encourages teachers to ask pupil's to ask parents information¹².

Participants in schools implementing MBTL similarly observed that the program influenced learning among pupils by increasing interaction among learners through group work. Other ways included:

- Accelerated pupils' acquisition of reading skills
- Developed independent learning as shown when pupils take books from the class library on their own.
- MBTL had transformed learning into fun because of the games, story telling, and other creative activities. Learners learn while they play.
- Accelerated learning of literacy because of use of materials, improved handwriting, and learning to read and write through drawing.

¹² Teacher Guide Term 2

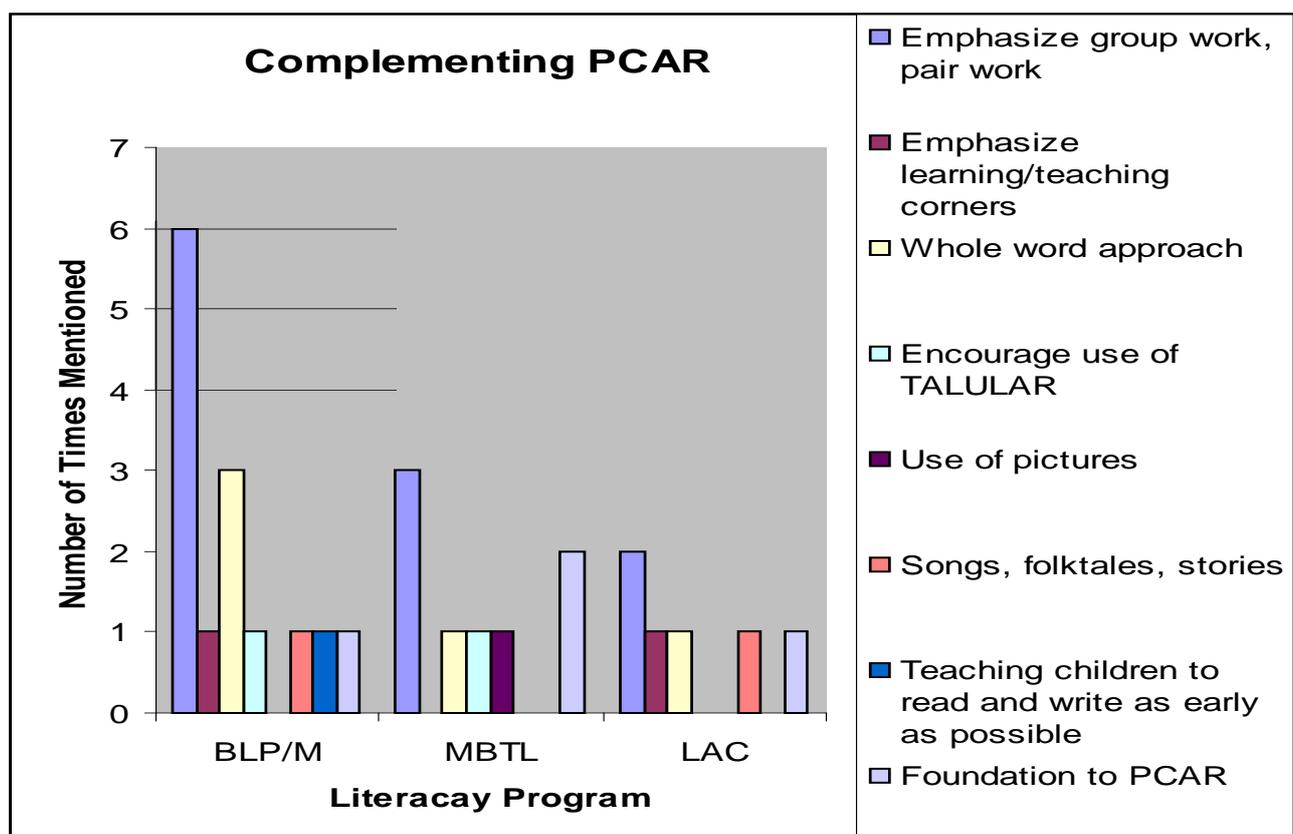
On the other hand, participants in schools implementing the LAC program mentioned:

- Drawing and use of pictures
- Use of the language learners understand as influencing learning among pupils-- use of the children's language of play improved learning by creating a conducive environment where pupils were able to understand the content because they were taught in their mother tongue language, unlike the foreign language used prior to LAC.
- Increase in interest to learn -encouraged to come to school to learn because of the interesting methods which teachers were using such as games (dominos, bawo, snakes and ladders), story telling, and group activities which made them creative, active, and concentrate more in class.
- Use of symbols on the alphabet chart coupled with question and answer sessions motivated pupils while simultaneously enriching pupils' understanding of concepts.

2.5 COMPLEMENTING PCAR

One of the objectives of BLP/M is to build on and supplement the PCAR curriculum. Realization of this objective necessitates a deliberate planning and configuration of themes, learning experiences, and teaching methodologies that align well with PCAR. Toward this end, PSSP: SFP developed a set of themes, lessons, and resources and materials to support the integration of BLP/M and PCAR. Although both MBTL and LAC were implemented before the curriculum reform, the teachers generally felt PCAR built on their programs. This section summarizes the results from participants on their assessment of how well the literacy programs in their schools complement the PCAR as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: How Programs Complemented PCAR



Overall, teachers in all three programs revealed that the literacy programs they were implementing in their schools supplemented PCAR. It was evident from the data that teaching methodologies more than content in all three programs complemented PCAR. A sizeable proportion (43 percent) of teachers in all three programs felt that both the literacy programs and PCAR emphasize learner centered approaches. A smaller proportion (18 %) of the teachers from all three programs found both PCAR and their literacy programs adopt the whole word approach to teaching literacy to young children, while slightly fewer (14 %) mentioned their literacy program was a foundation to PCAR. Additional ways included encouraging use of instructional materials, Outcome Based Education, emphasizing teaching children literacy at an early stage, pronunciation, and continuous assessment.

When compared by program, BLP/M teachers mentioned more ways in which PCAR complements their program than did teachers in MBTL and LAC:

PCAR is implementing our literacy program in the way it is tackling issues such as letter sound pronunciation, only that instead of telling pupils to sound each letter separately, pupils are told to sound the whole word

Teachers in the BLP/M program also regarded the built-in assessment and learner centered methodologies as components that complemented PCAR.

Despite this connection, teachers in all three programs mentioned a number of differences and limitations of PCAR in complementing the literacy programs. PCAR was largely faulted on its heavy content, too many activities for the teacher and pupils, learners given or told what to do, and activities that do not correspond to learners' abilities and needs. The table below summarizes these observations:

Table 5: Teacher Perceptions of Limitations of PCAR

- Word search, story star and other literacy programs are not included in PCAR
- Difficult words and long words given to pupils
- Sentences written for pupils but in MBTL pupils make sentences by themselves
- More work given for short time
- Start with giving standard I child a sentence instead of smaller unit of work but in LAC we start with the ILC
- Does not really emphasize on materials, neither does it provide but requires teachers to make their own
- Too involving for teachers and too much paper work
- Spends too much time on non academic activities like singing, dancing
- Does not do follow up to see successes and downfalls of their program
- Too much and too advanced work compared to level of children

Again, teachers in all the three programs suggested using literacy to teach standard I pupils' content of social skills and other subjects. Rather than pupils spending an entire school term getting acquainted with school life and its process, this could be the content on which to forge the teaching of literacy.

Generally, the programs, and more especially BLP/M, were found to support National Education Sector Plan (NESP). One of the NESP priorities under the primary education subsector is to

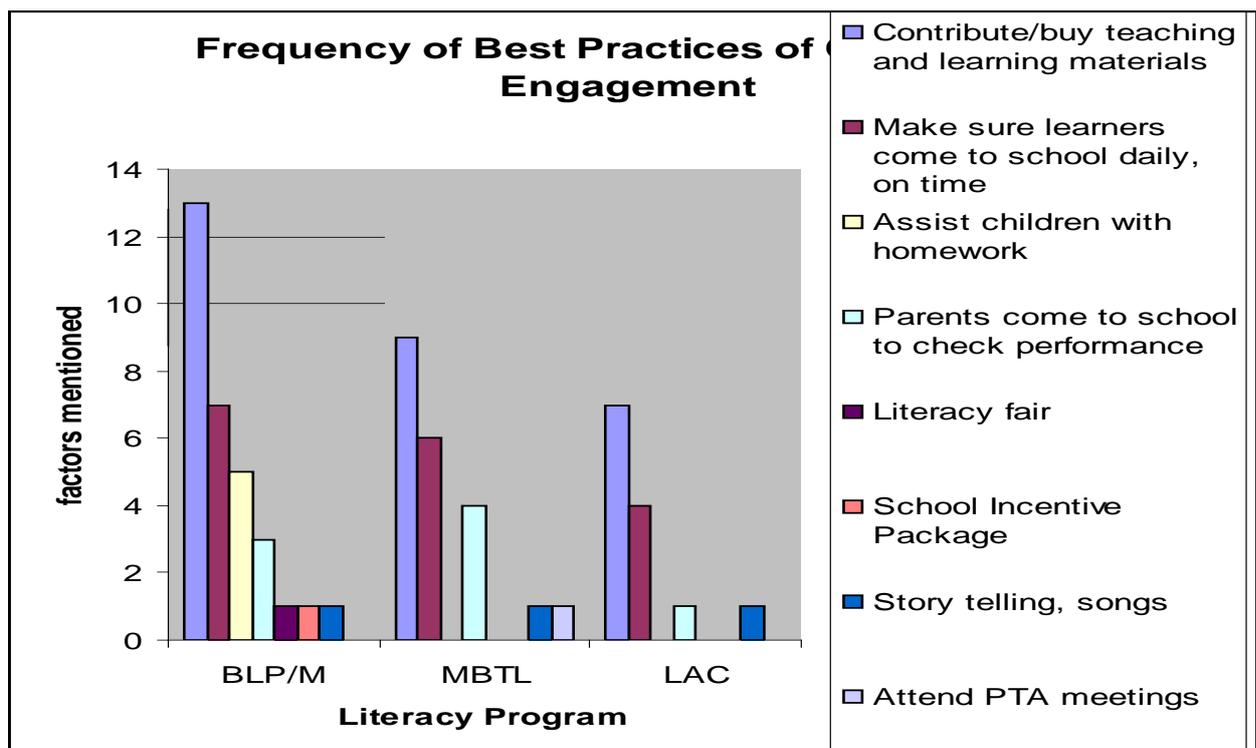
“improve teaching inputs to facilitate more effective learning and to increase learning achievement, including supply of books and other teaching-learning materials” (p. 16). PSSP: SFP provided teaching and learning materials both for teachers and learners as well as established libraries. In addition, the community sensitization and mobilization that resulted into increased parent and community engagement with schooling activities is in line with NESP priority to address poor participation of SMCs and communities in schooling activities. BLP/M therefore benefited greatly from these wider initiatives while both MBTL and LAC did not have the same advantage of being positioned in a similar case. Finally, BLP/M has instituted a strong support mechanism at the local base for monitoring and supervision of teaching and learning in schools. Again, this corresponds to NESP priorities, including decentralization of education services.

2.6 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

One of the key strategic objectives of PSSP: SFP was strong parental and community involvement with the program. There were expectations of high levels of parental engagement with schooling activities. Because of this, BLP/M developers created a strong community component in their program.

Overall, study participants noted that the sensitization and mobilization campaigns generated greater community engagement in attending school activities, strengthening home support for school, and monitoring teacher and pupil performance. Teachers in all three programs most frequently mentioned contribution of teaching and learning materials, encouraging children to come to school regularly and on time, and monitoring performance as indicators of increased parental and community participation. Figure 2 below indicates the number of times activities were interpreted as community participation.

Figure 2: Best Practices of Community Engagement by Literacy program



Specifically for BLP/M, greater community engagement was observed in increased home support for schooling, provision of materials, attending literacy fairs (as part of the BLP/M), contributing towards School Incentive Package (SIP), and visiting schools. During the evaluation, the ZOC and members of the Village Development Committee (VDC) visited Chikankha School to monitor lessons and check learners' performance. Again, these are benefits of the wider PSSP: SFP initiative.

For MBTL, community's expectations included: developing strong school policies that ensured sustainability of the program in a particular school, provision of learning materials for pupils, encouraging regular attendance, ensuring favorable school conditions especially for girls, assisting pupils to read at home, attending parents and open days, visiting schools, and viewing school notice board. Parents weaved mats and donated them for use at reading corners, visited schools to observe and monitor lessons, including teacher and children's work and performance. In the case of LAC, the roles of the community were to provide support in form of provision of learning materials, encourage attendance, and share stories and songs.

2.7 CONTINUING BEST PRACTICES

The pilot phases of each of the programs were meant to provide useful feedback in the implementation process of the program when adopted. Plans and strategies need to be put in place to continue the programs beyond the piloting phase.

2.7.1 Sustainability Structures Put in Place by Program

Of the three programs, only BLP/M contained well established structures for sustainability. The most notable structure in place was the orientation and training of standard 2 teachers in the district to continue the program as standard 1 pupils enter second grade. BLP/M remains on the timetable as a subject to be taught in the whole district. The holistic nature of the PSSP: SFP has allowed for an expanded list of beneficiaries of the initiative which in turn serve as stakeholders in sustaining the program. Trainers were local staff and possess capacity to continue the program. Others included the school, cluster, zonal, and district level structures and capacity to support the program. BLP/M provides Big books, Song Posters, and ready made lesson and unit plans that serve as models for reproducing more copies. A literacy conference for disseminating findings was organized to provide a platform for disseminating results of the evaluation as a component of sustainability efforts.

In the case of MBTL, the restrictions of copyright issues limit its sustainability. Although schools have the materials, they are not allowed to use them. Another problem with sustaining MBTL is the high costs of provision furniture for every classroom, bicycles to monitors, computers and other materials, and trainings that were conducted far from schools.

For LAC, there are challenges of producing training and instructional materials in the various languages across the country. The available materials in the three languages were seen as models for continuity but there was no evidence in the schools that teachers were using them in the standard 1 classes or indeed any other class they were presently teaching.

Overall, however, all three programs have created a community of educators that has begun to use a common discourse for literacy, learning, and schooling. In itself it should contribute toward capacity and structure for continuing the efforts. Teachers and stakeholders who participated in the programs should be involved with development of materials, training activities, and monitoring and supervision.

2.7.2 Stakeholders' Recommendations

Besides sustainability structures described above, a number of stakeholders across all three programs shared several guidelines for continuing the programs as shown in the Table 6 below.

Table 6: Stakeholders' Guidelines to Continue Best Practices once the project leave

Guidelines to Continue Best Practices for Beneficiaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support teachers to continue using the programs well past their pilot phase –teachers are best placed to make these classroom level decisions since they would have interacted with materials, methodologies, learners etc• Use existing structures and capacity to continue the programs- school based insets, and those at zone and cluster level are well established as well as teacher practitioners and ACs who participated in these programs. At the district office, zonal teams, DEM, CPEA, DOPE and college tutors have all been trained. These could be used to orient, train, and monitor and supervise teachers and other stakeholders, including the MoE personnel, as TOT team. Materials have already been developed and would need replenishing now and then.• The improved school and community relationship is a great opportunity to sustain engagement of parents and communities for participation in literacy fairs, provision of teaching and learning materials, encouraging children to go to school and send them on time.• Integrating literacy strategies across grades and the curriculum• Training of standard 2 teachers or simply allow standard 1 teachers to move with their students through the grades, especially the infant and junior grades.• Introduce early literacy instruction methodologies in preservice and inservice teacher education so that all teachers upon completion, possess the skills and knowledge for their classes.• Plan literacy conference to share the results of the study.• Before national roll out, teachers from neighboring districts/schools could visit the schools and learn –watch demonstrations of lessons, development and use of various instructional materials, community engagement etc. Alternate visits would involve the implementing school/district to go and see how it is being done.• Maintain the support mechanism at district level – DOPE could also double as desk officer for literacy since without support, any program would not progress well• Continue teaching BLP/M lessons• Empowerment and capacity building has trickled down even to class teachers so that they can identify a problem, produce training materials on different topics, and facilitate training.

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter described the three literacy programs: BLP/M, MBTL, and LAC. The major findings have revealed that there were similarities as well as differences among the programs.

All three programs positively impacted on teaching by encouraging teachers to use effective literacy methods, engage learners in peer interaction, conduct assessment, and use new ways of teaching. Among learners, the impact included rekindling interest with schooling, developing reading and writing skills, transforming learning into fun, and enriching understanding of concepts.

All three programs were also judged to complement PCAR because they served as foundation for managing PCAR, emphasized learner centered approaches, the use of corners, and adopted the whole word approach. The programs also improved school and community relationships by engaging parents in providing teaching and learning materials, monitoring and supervision of learning and performance, and contributing to the SIP.

In terms of mechanisms for sustainability, all three programs have created a community of educators with a common discourse about literacy and learning. Additional guidelines for sustainability included using existing structures, introduction of literacy courses at pre and inservice education, and maintaining the subjects on the timetable. However, only BLP/M has well planned mechanisms for continuing the program by training standard 2 teachers, expanding support by using existing structures and creating new ones, and planning literacy conferences. While limitations of costs and copyright restrictions discourage continuing MBTL, for LAC it was the target of multiple languages and involvement of few stakeholders. The next chapter presents a brief interpretation of results and conclusions.

3. INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Overall, efforts continue to be mounted to address challenges facing the education system. One such effort has been reforms in literacy instruction. The reforms have shown that using learners' mother tongue, learner centered methodologies, and providing instructional materials promoted pupils' acquisition of literacy skills. The impact on teaching and learning included encouraging use of effective strategies, renewed passion for learning, generated commitment among teachers and expanded community engagement with teaching and learning process, and complementing the new curriculum. Mechanisms for sustainability included creating a community of educators with a common understanding and language for teaching literacy, maintaining the subject on the school timetable, training of standard 2 teachers, and introducing literacy courses in pre and inservice training. This section interprets the findings as presented in the preceding sections.

3.2 KEY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE PROGRAMS

3.2.1 *Beginning Literacy Program of Malawi (BLP/M)*

The greatest strength of the BLP/M lies in its empowerment and capacity building that has trickled down to the teacher from which a host of other strengths emerge. Teachers are able to identify problem areas, develop relevant modules, and identify expert teachers among themselves to facilitate school and zonal based insets. The program can continue with this built in capacity.

Other strengths of BLP/M include the increased resource base for both teachers and pupils, ready made unit and lesson plans, adoption of effective literacy strategies, involvement of key stakeholders in the training and monitoring of the program, use of songs and stories learners are familiar with, and embedded in a holistic school reform program that complements PCAR.

In terms of pupil learning, the strengths include development of a repertoire of skills that comprise the essential components of reading and writing, in addition to critical thinking, communication,, creativity, and learner participation in the learning process. Most of all, standard 2 teachers have already been oriented to welcome the incoming learners.

These strengths notwithstanding, BLP/M areas of weakness include: insufficient materials exacerbated by large classes, poor timing of arrival of materials, and teachers who are unwilling to try out new methods of teaching. In addition, study participants mentioned that some of the text in the Big Books is dense and with multisyllabic words. Nevertheless, these weaknesses pale in comparison to the numerous strengths that it offers.

3.2.2 Malawi Breakthrough To Literacy (MBTL)

MBTL strengths were similar to those of BLP such as training both teachers and headteachers, complementing PCAR, using learners' experiences and mother tongue, good school and community relationship, and effective literacy strategies. Additional strengths included hands-on activities for constructing sentences, word play, provision of classroom furniture and bicycles to monitors, restrictions on class size (60), facilitating assessment, cultivated a reading culture, and promoted teacher collegiality.

For MBTL, copyright restrictions, costs of provisions of computers, furniture, and bicycles, lack of local office support, and incomplete training (stage 3) for the program undermined these strengths. If language is a barrier during training, there is bound to be problems of understanding concepts being taught which subsequently impact on how teachers will implement them in their practice. Translating readers from backgrounds that Malawian pupils lack will also work against the success of any large scale implementation initiatives. The lack of examples in the local language meant teachers had no models from which to create their own phonemic awareness/phonics activities, and at most, they would generate inaccurate examples.

3.2.3 Literacy Across the Curriculum (LAC)

The target of multiple languages in LAC strengthened the program and brought their orthography into the school. Learners and communities who see their own language as a medium of instruction are more likely to engage with the school and its processes, create friendly schools that promote learning, and promote a culture of reading.

The challenges of lack of corresponding sounds/syllables in the target language (especially ChiYao), limited training, introduction of foreign concepts, limited local support, underaged pupils, and translation will exacerbate the usual challenges of large classes, absenteeism, and inadequate materials rampant in Malawian primary schools.

If these programs are to be successful, these limitations need to be lessened. To have a strong literacy program will require reinforcing these strengths as plans for scaling up are drawn. The programs are already complementing the methodologies of the new curriculum, using learners' own experiences and language, with a team of trained teachers, headteachers, and support staff. Schools, districts, and MoE should facilitate rolling out.

3.3 FACTORS AFFECTING SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL-LEVEL LITERACY INSTRUCTION AND PROMOTION.

School level factors such as teacher capacity, teaching and learning materials, and community involvement can affect the implementation of programs.

3.3.1 Teacher Capacity

Teacher and headteacher' ages, qualifications, and length of service at school have implications on implementing programs. Over half of the teachers were between 25 and 38 years old. By implication, half of the teachers are therefore young and likely to stay in the system with only a minute proportion (5.8%) eligible for retirement. It is also assumed that they comprise a healthy teaching staff and reduce teacher absenteeism to improve contact hours a pupil has with a teacher.

In some schools, a number of teachers who participated in the literacy programs were absent. Thus teachers with expertise in the new paradigms being advocated are not implementing them, in turn pupils are not acquiring the skills and knowledge they need. Moleni and Ndalama (2004) reported that illness, attending funerals, official duties, and low and delayed salaries contributed to high levels of teacher absenteeism. Age also has implications on professional issues. For example, teachers who

are older, with “old school” conceptualization of teaching in general and teaching literacy in particular, may hold differing views from those advocated in the program. It will require a concerted effort targeting teachers to help sensitize and encourage them to use effective strategies advocated on a national scale.

Teacher academic qualifications also matter. Teachers with lower academic qualifications may have inadequate cognitive background and aptitude to understand and internalize the new teachings, their organization and management. Understanding how children learn how to read and write, and providing quality instruction towards that end requires more than a basic cognitive and academic skill. The concept of double shift in LAC, the extended one hour BLP/M lesson, and use of teaching corners were all concepts that required a certain level of academic prowess. This is especially warranted in the absence of ample time allocated for training.

More teachers in the evaluation had attained senior secondary education. This is a positive sign as primary school pupils who have teachers that attend school longer than themselves do better. Quality learning outcomes cannot be attained if teachers have not learned the necessary new skills to teach effectively nor are they more educated than the pupils they teach. These new academic levels also point to the expanded opportunities and self development for teachers to upgrade themselves.

Understaffing was also a challenge in many schools. Pupils do not learn adequately or do not learn at all in an overcrowded class or when there is no teacher. The available teachers, if available indeed, may be tempted to give pupils work to keep them busy rather than well thought out lessons that meet their instructional needs. Although the PIF, NESP, and the NSTED stipulate increased teacher production to meet a 1:60 teacher pupil ratio, this is far from being fulfilled. It will require a manageable class size to implement the learner centered approaches, model Think Aloud strategies and other literacy strategies. Pupils need an effective and strong foundation for literacy in their first year of schooling to support learning throughout their education.

3.3.2 Teaching and Learning Materials

Evidence from this evaluation has demonstrated that effective teaching of literacy requires well designed instructional resources. When schools have limited materials, teachers cannot adhere to the recommended procedures and practices. Such a situation might create a false negative result when in actuality the program is effective but has only been debilitated by limitations of supporting materials. Pupils are not likely to attain the desired learning outcomes and quality of education will be compromised.

Another finding revealed in the evaluation is that although teaching and learning materials were provided, some teachers in BLP/M and LAC were not using them adequately to support the teaching and learning of literacy. This tendency reflects wider school and education district tendencies whereby stacks of books are withheld in offices for future usage while pupils go without books. In some offices, these materials are in plain sight and sometimes offered as seats. Unpredictable material distribution may drive teachers to such extremes. It is flawed thinking to expect pupils to be engaged in meaningful learning experiences in the absence of materials that are designed to accompany lessons.

Whatever the reasoning is behind not distributing learning materials, materials must be available during instruction. In the BLP/M, materials in some of the schools were new and unused and pupils congregated to see them, while in LAC it was materials like museums that were not used to “the full extent”¹³. For MBTL, the Sentence Maker and holder were used extensively but it was the readers that were used less frequently. Although the results pointed to limitations of dense text and

¹³ Taken from A report of LAC- A Study piloting children’s first language and learner centered teaching methods in standard one classes (2005).

multisyllabic words, the benefits of exposing pupils to texts and using them heavily compensate for these shortcomings. To continue to teach without or with limited resources is counter to both NESP and PSSP: SFP goals of increasing resources at school level and improving quality of learning outcomes.

3.3.3 Community Involvement

It is well documented that our education system is plagued by inefficiencies as evidenced through low enrollment rates and achievement, high absenteeism, repetition, and drop out rates (Chimombo and Chonzi, 2000). The community has largely been left outside with very little to do regarding decision making, control, and management of schooling and its processes. Professionals and administrators manage overall schooling matters (Maclure, 1997). Understandably, parents and communities remain unsure of what to support and participate in and reasons for doing so. Consequently, parents and communities perceive schooling as a predominantly government matter.

The results discussed earlier demonstrated a shift in how parents and communities perceive school and their responsibilities. By tradition, parent and community participation is largely limited to school development projects through contributions of labor and supply of materials such as sand, water, and molding of bricks. In addition, communities have also taken on the responsibility of maintaining and rehabilitating school infrastructure.

What emerged in the present evaluation is that BLP/M, and to some extent MBTL, emphasized the new roles and responsibilities that parents and communities have taken up. These roles have transcended the usual community inputs to classroom practice. Besides developing literacy skills, learners have renewed their interest to schooling, attended school more regularly, and became more engaged in the learning process. These skills and practices cannot develop if parents and community are not there to support and encourage their children. The activities reported here have shown that when parents and communities are brought on board, they can rethink their perception about schooling: parents and communities' behaviors demonstrated efforts toward taking ownership for their children's education and cultivating a more favorable attitude toward education. To encourage children to attend school regularly and to go on time is a major step for Malawian parents and communities in ensuring that their wards get educated.

Besides the sensitization campaigns, parents and communities in BLP/M have embraced groups such as Gule Wamkulu and traditional councilors typically left outside the education system but generally function to thwart its efforts. Furthermore, to have parents contribute teaching and learning materials and assist with homework (BLP/M) are all positive signals for change that is needed to transform our education system. Finally, parents and community members ordinarily, also do not supervise and monitor the teaching and learning process. A domain left for professionals, communities in the MBTL and BLP/M took an active role in observing lessons, monitoring teacher and pupils' work and performance. During literacy fairs (a feature of the BLP/M), members have been known to call upon any pupil to read, write, or perform other academic tasks to demonstrate their literacy skills. If this is taken on nationally, it will definitely go a long way in increasing learner participation in schooling process.

Both the Policy Investment Framework (PIF) and the National Education Strategy Plan (NESP) underscore the crucial role that communities play especially now with decentralization of delivery of education services. The formulation of the National Strategy for Community Mobilization and Sensitization will strengthen efforts to engage communities in management and development of schools.

3.4 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR SCALING UP ON A NATIONAL LEVEL

The impact and strengths of the three programs reveal opportunities that exist for scaling up while the weaknesses reveal opportunities for thought.

3.4.1 *Preparing Teachers for Teaching of Literacy*

Since there is no subject specialization at primary school, literacy is offered as a subject in teacher training colleges. Called early literacy, the subject is loosely categorized into prereading and prewriting activities and is taught according to grade sections (infant, junior, and senior). In case of the infant section, preservice teachers learn about how to teach pre reading and reading to standard 1 and 2 learners. A similar organization of the content is followed for teaching writing. For the upper grades, the difference is the scope and breadth of these topics. The lessons also address teaching and learning materials to support the reading/writing lessons. Demonstration lessons are then presented for the preservice teachers as models of best practices in the teaching of literacy.

Admittedly, the amount of time devoted to literacy is very limited. The lessons learned point to a number of entry points for strengthening the preparation of teachers for teaching literacy.

- Create a comprehensive literacy curriculum. Design a number of courses, topics, and activities to strengthen the program. For example, although there is no subject specialization, stand alone courses in teaching literacy in infant and junior (elementary), middle (senior) classes would provide a broader scope as well as specific strategies for standards.
- Create course content around the essential components of literacy. For reading, these include: print concepts, phonological awareness, decoding and word analysis, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. For writing, they include: writing concepts, the writing process, using descriptive language, writing various forms, and grammar and mechanical conventions.
- Assign individual and group projects-Pupils in senior sections need to learn how to use literacy tools in learning content of other subjects, while those in infant might need early and emergent literacy, for example. Preservice teachers can be assigned individual and group project to develop unit and lesson plans for the various subjects and demonstrate how to integrate literacy.
- Develop a materials box. Teaching strategies and materials can be created that correspond to the essential components of literacy. Student teachers can develop a materials box for example in which they created = various resources and materials to support the teaching and learning of the concepts in the unit and lesson plans.
- Adapt existing materials to make them more appropriate for teaching-student teachers can work with materials to improve on dense text teachers mentioned.
- Prepare materials in their own languages

Preservice teachers could then be asked to present at seminar like setups where they share to classmates, faculty, and the public, teach several of these lessons at the demonstration schools, and during field placements. These could also be arranged so that they are a major component of the national examinations that preservice teachers take. At the end of their program, preservice teachers would be graduating with a secure knowledge base and repertoire of strategies and resources to guide and support them in their teaching. Field evaluation forms could focus on these attributes in lesson observation and assessment.

Insets whereby best practices are shared could also strengthen teachers' knowledge and use of literacy strategies. Other ways include:

- Teachers observing each other's lessons
- School exchanges/visits to see what others are doing
- Schools partnering with each other

These practices could go hand in hand with the various opportunities that the literacy programs offer. To begin with, all three programs use pupils' mother tongue, encourage group work, and use of teaching and learning materials to support instruction. Second, the programs have established a community of literacy experts who can guide the development of literacy efforts in Malawi. Third, the new curriculum complements some of the approaches in the three programs. Furthermore, communities have been sensitized and highly mobilized especially for BLP/M and demonstrated that they can contribute fully to the teaching and learning process by serving as resource persons, encouraging pupils to attend school, and provide materials.

Renewed interest and passion in learning is a great motivator among learners. GoM and the public have joined forces to demand improved learning outcomes while stakeholder support for the same has increased. Teacher capacity at TTCs is also improving. The first cohort completed a bachelor's degree in primary education with a focus on literacy instruction at Chancellor College. Finally, the availability of research, policy reports, and literature on literacy, and policy requirement for early literacy in NESP, EFA, and EEC provide a context and foundation for a new literacy program.

Especially for BLP/M, structures are in place, including the district education office, for training, professional development, and monitoring and supervision. Teachers need to work together and decide their professional development needs at school level.

MoE would use these decentralized structures for scaling up. Their knowledge and experience can provide guidance and support especially because teachers were also trainers and monitors who identified problems, developed materials and facilitated training.

More importantly however, is that Standard 2 teachers have already been trained to continue working with standard 1 pupils. Teachers in the LAC program presently teaching standard 4 or 5, were of the opinion that pupils did not transfer the skills they learned in standard 1 to learn English and Chichewa (Mangochi and Rumphu only). They felt the lack of continuity to standard 2 was the problem. MBTL also established structures but not to a similar extent. For LAC, the most important area offering opportunity for scaling up is the ILC that quickly moves pupils to letter and word recognition. The integration of literacy with other subjects is a great opportunity to provide teachers with models on using literacy as a tool for teaching and learning the content areas. Finally, the training of "backstoppers" was a great strategy to ensure there was always a trained teacher when one was absent

A number of challenges threaten opportunities for scaling up For MBTL, restrictive copyrights, lack of variety of titles for readers, foreign trainers, materials, and developers, and costs of provisions of classroom furniture and bicycles for monitoring all jeopardize any scaling up efforts. Nonetheless, critical methodological aspects and teaching corners were infused in PCAR.

In the case of LAC, costs for training, training and production of materials in multiple languages, new concept of double shift, and uncertainty of integrating numeracy limit large scale implementation.

The different understandings of BLP/M among teachers and communities, the inactivity of trained non education staff, and unsupportive communities may undermine scaling up efforts for BLP/M.

Of course other threats to scaling up any of these programs are the "routine" challenges plaguing our education system: poor infrastructure, large classes, inadequate materials, absenteeism, and hunger and poverty. Poor infrastructure means pupils are learning in dilapidated buildings, and for many standard 1 pupils, it means under a tree or in the open air. A print rich environment, talking walls, and simply a conducive learning environment cannot be created in such circumstances.

It also means poor or absence of permanent and lockable storage facilities for instructional materials. The literacy activities in the programs cannot be taught effectively in overcrowded classes: the 60

class size requirement for both MBTL and LAC cannot work well; groups are too big for meaningful peer interaction as well as supervision, exchange/use of materials, and rotation. Inadequate materials for implementing a program result in problems of cosmetic teaching and so deny pupils quality learning and pupils sharing materials and reduce exposure to print. Although there was consensus that attendance had improved, there was still widespread absenteeism during growing season and where schools were located close to trading centers. Poverty and hunger also affect attendance and participation in teaching and learning process.

The issue of language policy also compounds scaling up. Language is a social and political issue in Malawi and not an issue for MoE, where as language of instruction is. Until GoM resolves the issue of language(s), MoE is still in a limbo. Although a draft language policy directs schools to use the most predominant language of communities in which pupils reside for instruction until standard 5, it is not clear how this policy is translated. Undoubtedly, these conditions create difficult working conditions although teachers are doing their best to teach.

3.4.2 *Creating an Expanded Support Mechanism*

The study found that the BLP/M utilized existing structures extensively to expand support mechanisms for teachers during implementation. The resolve to bring on board ACs, retired teachers (MTTT), secondary school graduates (MCMs), and creation of zonal and cluster structures demonstrates the availability of resources at MoE's disposal. What needs to be done is to develop creative ways of utilizing them.

EMAS, under whose jurisdiction the PEA falls, needs to take a more active role in supervising and monitoring teaching and learning. EMAS will likely need professional development to understand what behaviors and instructional strategies they are expected to support so that their feedback is useful. If teachers are left without support and direction as to new ways of classroom practice emerging from research evidence, then no progress will be made. In the absence of decentralized effective monitoring structures, progress in new ways of thinking and teaching literacy will be limited and slow to come.

EMAS needs to design a framework for monitoring and evaluating the system. All this has implications for improving the quality of learning outcomes. Teachers who have not been supervised and advised on best practices and new thinking are not likely to apply effective methods. This evaluation has shown that lack of adequate supervision coupled with inadequate training time (MBT/L) contributed to teachers' problems in implementing some of the components of the program. Providing supervisors with bicycles means that advisory services were brought closer to teachers.

3.4.3 *Infusing Literacy across the Curriculum*

One of the best practices revealed in the study was that teachers were using the strategies beyond literacy lessons in both LAC and BLP/M programs. This is an entry point for integrating literacy with the teaching of the content areas. Since teachers already reported doing this, what might be needed is strengthening the practice by demonstrating more opportunities across the curriculum of how to use literacy strategies to teach content in other subject areas.

The use of the various graphic organizers (Story Star, Theme Web, and Character Map) the interactive writing, and thinking aloud in BLP/M have been well documented as effective in promoting comprehension and learning across the curriculum (Dale, 1983; Trelease, 2001, Vacca & Vacca, 2005). When pupils learn content in a vacuum without the literacy process needed to understand it, they fail to make meaningful connections between content and their home and personal experiences. The absence of this connection contributes to limited understanding of content and eventually poor achievement levels.

The Theme Web in BPL/M can assist pupils' comprehension of a topic and its related subtopics. Text accompanying many content topics and stories could be readily reduced by using these graphic organizers. Teachers need to explicitly demonstrate literacy strategies and their application. A BPL/M lesson observed at Mponela I showed the teacher modeling some of the processes of strategy instruction from activating and building on background knowledge, explaining procedures for story writing, modeling and demonstrating how to write the story, and providing guided practice as she actively engaged pupils to create the story.

Pupils can help collect environmental print (MBTL and BLP/M) for a topic in science, history or any other content area. They can also write a sentence a day, poems, (MBTL), creating big books and comic books (BLP/M), creating games and their rules, and ILC like poster highlighting the vocabulary and their symbols in a topic/unit (LAC). Finally, teachers can work in teams to develop curriculum webs (Beaty and Pratt, 2007) around the themes in the Song Posters and Big Books (BLP/M), readers (MBTL), and curriculum (LAC) as extensions of learning. These processes are likely to contribute to pupils' writing competences and cognitive development and applied to learning in other content areas.

Standard I teachers could be asked to come for a few minutes and demonstrate the strategies in the other content and classes and then allow the teachers proceed with the lesson. School based insets could team up standard I teachers with content area teachers to develop samples of lessons applying the strategies. It is at the school level where decisions about implementing reforms are transacted. For BLP/M, literacy coaches could be a natural transition of the subject specialists of MTTTs and teacher experts TCC identified to facilitate conferences and school based insets.

3.4.4 Implications for Enrollment and Attendance Rates

Learners in all three programs have developed literacy skills, interact meaningfully with others, and rekindled interest for school. Teachers reported that the learner centered approaches greatly improved the learning process as learners interacted among each other through discussions, peer teaching, and working together. In referring to attitude toward learning, BLP/M participants mentioned "renewed interest and passion for learning", MBTL used the phrase "transformed learning into fun because of games" while for LAC it was "increase in interest to learn". These influences have contributed to learners being able to read and write in standard one in all the three programs.

These observations contrast sharply with those from earlier research that reported learners who reach up to standard 4 and above without being able to read and write. Chilora and Mchazime (2003) found that learners in standard four in selected schools in Mangochi were not able to read nor write. In a study of south and eastern African quality on education, Chimombo et al. (1999) found that only 8 percent of the learners in standard 6 demonstrated proficiency in grade level competences.

All three programs also influenced pupil attendance in schools. The teachers observed that absenteeism among learners has reduced because pupils love stories, pictures, and playing games. This therefore gives merit to the observation that BLP/M has rekindled interest and passion for schooling. Nonetheless, the proximity of trading centers, agricultural demands and economic opportunities during the growing season, and family demands kept pupils at home. In addition, for MBTL, it was reported that the impact of HIV/AIDS, poor family background, hunger, mistreatment, low self-esteem and being orphaned contributed to absenteeism ¹⁴

The pattern of absenteeism was well exemplified at Mponela I. Half of the children in lower grades who come to school on a particular day proceed to class during the first block while the other half is

¹⁴ As reported in the Evaluation of the Malawi Breakthrough to Literacy Programme by Frank Sampa.

enticed by the blazing music and video shows at the trading center. After the first recess, the groups switch: those that were at the trading center come to class while those that were in class now go to the trading center.

The problem of absenteeism is supported by well documented evidence that some proportions of learners do not like learning or coming to school at all in the first place. For example, studies investigating absenteeism and drop out have found that learners absent themselves from school and eventually drop out (Chimombo and Chonzi, 2000; Kadzamira and Chibwana, 2000). Reasons given have ranged from inadequacies of food, demands of work at home and school factors like teasing, poor performance, poor infrastructure, and lack of instructional materials that have led to a dislike for schooling.

The low levels of learning outcomes that pupils demonstrate may also point to the general tendencies of low motivation and interest to schooling. The generally poor livelihood of primary graduates was mentioned as a reason for non attendance and drop out among both parents and pupils. The increased passion for learning established as early as standard I during the three programs may contribute greatly to learner participation and performance in schooling, subsequently advancing achievement of EFA goals.

3.4.5 Financial Constraints

Each of these programs required massive investments to make it happen. These are very rough estimates of the costs of MBTL and LAC programs. There was no information indicating exact known figures and amounts spent especially on training. The contacts given for both programs explained that they did not have the information since the project terminated three or four years ago. The costing was estimated by quoting current prices for the items and the multiplying by the estimated number of units (pupils, copies made schools etc when given). Although not exact, it provides some idea of how much the costs are for each program.

The most current financial information was only available for BLP/M. Because BLP/M was part of a district wide reform, it had the largest target of teachers, headteachers, BLP troopers, MTTTs, ZOCs, ACs, and MCMs, district staff, and community including special groups. It also had developed and produced the largest share of materials (section 3.2.1). Appendix 3 shows the estimated costs of BLP/M. As can be seen, the most costly component was the production of materials, especially Big Books in color, and the Song Posters. Teacher guides were comparatively the cheapest to produce. The training component was relatively cheap but more costly than amount spent on provision of writing materials to pupils.

At the time MBTL was implemented, the 135 schools in Ntchisi were demarcated into 9 zones, and 2 zones for Zomba urban. The estimates were calculated using current prices and number of units of items where they were available. In the absence of exact costs this is really tricky. For example, the training simply indicated a total figure of 617 without specifying how many were teachers to estimate training for Stages 1, 2, and 3. This component has been left out to avoid misleading conclusions. The estimated costs for materials produced are presented in Appendix 4. Similarly, production of the readers was the most costly component in MBTL but without costs for training and working only with rough estimates for all other items, it is problematic to make conclusive assertions. Also, limited titles per copy will deflate costs. The second most expensive component was provision of classroom furniture. The total number of pupils was not given but was taken from MoE's Education Management Information System (EMIS) data for the years 2003 and 2004 when MBTL was implemented.

Of all the three programs, the most problematic was LAC. For LAC, only 37 participants were trained including a six member monitoring team. Teachers received the ILC, strings, envelopes, paper clips, paper plates, plastic containers, sets of slate, pencil, sharpener, rubber and exercise book for each pupil, wall hangers, sets of games (dominos, bingo), and laminated pictures of letters in 3

different languages. CLS translated the materials but did not assess a charge because they were a service provider supporting MoE during the implementation process.

Although LAC is the least expensive, it targeted the least number of schools, teachers, and participants. The financial constraints of copyright issues along with the omission of training costs in MBTL are likely to inflate overall costs. The financial constraints play against scaling up the MBTL. The costs of producing Big Books in color were by far the most expensive item in BLP/M. But these could be produced in black and white to reduce costs although it might also lessen appeal to learners. In fact, since BLP/M focused on a larger target and cushioned under PSSP: SFP it could be the least expensive once materials are on the ground.

It remains unclear on what grounds Molteno project team claims copyright ownership of materials developed by Malawian teachers and staff using a universal philosophy and approach to teaching literacy. Forbidding teachers to use materials and strategies in which they received training denies them to teach effectively, let alone denies Malawian children their right to a quality education. Whatever justification warranted this restriction, there is need for reaching an agreement whereby Malawian teachers are allowed to use the materials. Teachers can create their own versions of Sentence Makers from used maize/corn and fertilizer sacks, used clothing, tent, and other materials that look appropriate and serve the purpose. Reeds, bamboos, grass, and other materials can be used in the construction of Sentence Holders so that they apply the strategies they were trained for to teach literacy. If no recourse is taken, then the whole implementation process was in vain.

4. SUGGESTED STRATEGIES FOR MODIFYING AND ADOPTING KEY PROGRAM ELEMENTS FOR USE BY MOE

All three programs have similarities, differences, strengths, and weaknesses. Most often, in underserved settings, any of these programs with sufficient training and materials distribution will get an initial bump in pupils' literacy scores. While trying to choose the best literacy program or adapting a number of programs has some value, it will not have sustained impact on pupils' literacy knowledge in the long run. (Clair, N. 2008 e-mail correspondence)

What is currently missing in Malawi is a comprehensive literacy framework and strategy that is housed in literacy standards and benchmarks (that is, what we want pupils to know and be able to do to be fully literate across grade levels.) The framework would include: principles of teaching and learning, teaching strategies that are aligned with the essential components of literacy, and assessments (Clair, N. 2008 e-mail correspondence)

This comprehensive literacy framework and strategy should come from the MoE. Then the MoE could recommend any number of literacy programs that fit into the National Literacy Framework. This framework would not only guide instructional program, it would guide teacher education (both in-service and pre-service) the development of national assessments, curriculum development and materials. (Clair, N. 2008 e-mail correspondence)

In the meanwhile a balanced literacy approach should be pursued. While MBTL and LAC followed a whole language approach using phonics instruction, BLP/M adopted a balanced approach to teaching literacy. The results have shown that LEA in MBTL and the RTW in LAC and the whole language in BLP led to pupils developing reading and writing skills. These philosophies reflect attempts at reaching a balanced approach to teaching literacy but that the issues of methodology, scope of teaching, and specific evidentiary contributions (Coles, 2003) come to play here. Therefore, no single program is better than the other but a call for merging elements and integration of multiple approaches to the teaching of reading. Basing on this realization, Wren (2002) argues that a comprehensive approach to reading should, among other things,

“emphasize large blocks of time for students to read authentic texts of their own choosing; phonics and word study; the explicit study of effective comprehension strategies; and on-going dialogue with caring, interested teachers”(p. 3)

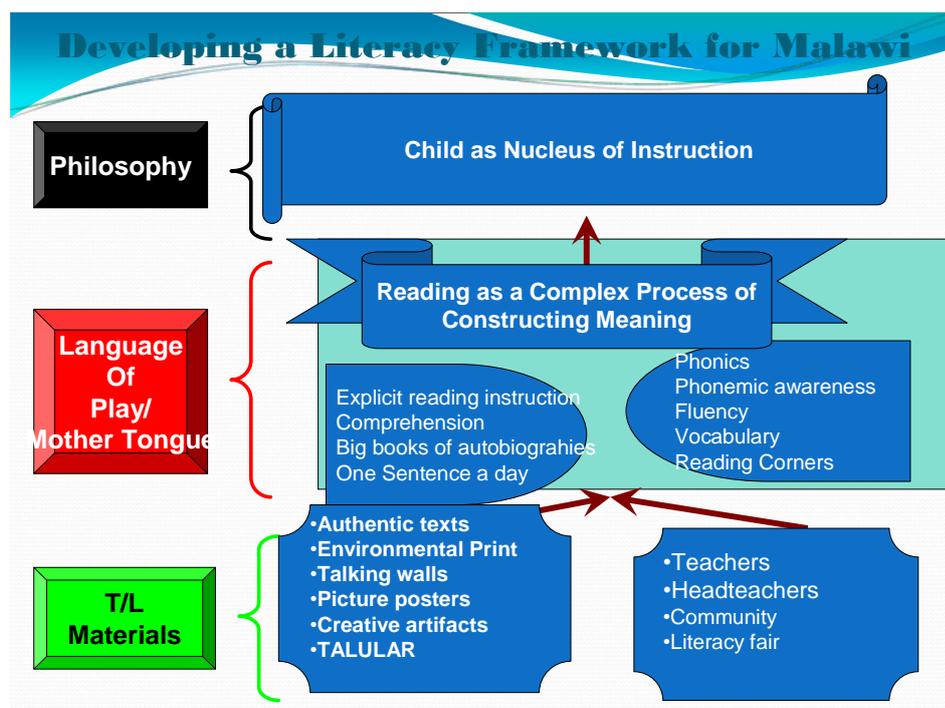
In addition, it is well documented that reading should be viewed as an act of constructing meaning (Tompkins, 2001; Vacca & Vacca, 2005; Wren, 2001). What is advocated here instead is the focus on the learner. Already advanced in all three programs and PCAR, in learner centered approaches the child is the nucleus of the instructional process. Decisions and plans should be based on the instructional needs of the child rather than on teachers, mandated lesson formats and topics, and contrived grade level competences that disregard what the child is and not able to accomplish. Answers to “whether a lesson is going to help a specific beginning reader to learn to read” (¶4) should guide instruction. Elements of differentiated instruction will need to be included as well.

The MBTL and BLP/M approach of drilling pupils in the whole word rather than syllables could be adopted using Big Books and Song Posters from BLP/M to compensate for the unfamiliar readers used in MBTL. Pupils need to be exposed to multiple books and other forms of print to support their literacy development. Teachers can construct their own sentence makers from sacks and holders from reeds and bamboos to provide a hands-on experience for making words. The BLP/M one hour literacy lesson should be expanded to include intensive reading where by every child is experiencing some reading-whether someone is reading aloud to them, doing a shared reading, taking a picture walk, and other active comprehension strategies.

Cognizant of the realities of the Malawian classroom contexts of classes in excess of 100 and even upwards of 200 in some cases, it is recommended that literacy be conceived as a school wide initiative to increase resources of personnel and time. As communities continue to take ownership of schooling for their children, they could be used during the first school hours to support the intensive reading block. A shared vision about the conceptualization and teaching of literacy and the demands it places will contribute to successful realization of such a vision. Not all teachers teach the first two or even the entire early morning block. If the concept of every teacher is a teacher of literacy is promoted, it will facilitate adoption of the intensive reading component. The concept of block as used in LAC could facilitate this. Finally, a school wide initiative is in line with the concept of “whole school development” advocated in NESP (p.12).

Other components being proposed here are making words where children manipulate letters to make words and sentences (Rasinski, 1999), writing prompts for fostering comprehension such as the one sentence a day, the most important thing, and big books of autobiographies (Smith and Read, 2005), the ILC, and creating artifacts from stories read. . For children with limited knowledge of reading, they need explicit teaching of skills but in the context of a literate environment. The teachers, community, headteachers, and other personnel will provide support in the reading corners. The framework will continue the use of teaching and learning materials. A graphic representation of the framework is shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Proposed Balanced Literacy Framework



Of course, this has financial implications. But in order to improve, we need to make sacrifices and invest in the process as well as our children. Although costly at the initial phase, such investments will prove to be cost effective as the system becomes more efficient: quality education that will improve learning outcomes leading to increased progression rates, improvements in performance, and persistence in the system. Instead of spending resources on repeaters who eventually drop out and become a burden to society, GoM will save resources and be able to allocate them where they are needed.

When adopting such initiatives, great consideration must be given for the local realities so that they are responsive and appropriate to the needs of the people. The advantage of an existing program is that a blueprint is available and one simply follows it. However, without due regard to local realities, the programs may prove a failure leading to wastage of resources and bring about confusion.

5. CONCLUSION

This evaluation has provided ample evidence that learners' mother tongue greatly promotes literacy acquisition. An overwhelming majority of the teachers, headteachers, staff from the district education office, and those from the project find the learner centered approach, the games, and other methodologies in the new programs to have contributed to a renewed passion for schooling, increased enrollment, and attendance. They acknowledge increased and expanded parental and community to transcend the traditional contributions of brick and sand to engage in the teaching and learning process. The teaching and learning materials have increased the resources available in schools as well as give pupils exposure to print.

The above has implications for teacher training, reconceptualizing literacy and how it should be taught, aligning the learner centered approaches being advocated in PCAR and the philosophy of teaching literacy, as well as pedagogical issues in NESP, and school reform to build on each other. As noted above, what is needed is a National Literacy Framework in addition to spreading best practices within the school, district, and teacher education institutions. The framework suggested

here centers in the child in the instructional process rather than the approaches to teaching reading. The loud incessant voice from the field necessitates a strong literacy campaign nationwide that strengthens what has been started in these programs. The evaluation has demonstrated that a holistic school reform was more effective than where just the school is targeted. It has also shown that school reform that responds to local realities and lived experiences generates more useful and meaningful results.

6. LESSONS LEARNED

A number of lessons can be learned from all three programs and are listed below:

1. Literacy and Language Approaches

- i) Mother tongue and personal experiences during instruction, proved to be effective on promoting learning of concepts as pupils made connections between their own experiences and concepts in a language they understand.
- ii) Literacy cannot be seen as a separate subject but as an integral component of any subject. Teaching literacy in isolation without any context does not help pupils learn. Literacy skills are tools for teaching and learning content in the other subjects
- iii) The introduction of a combination of learner centered approaches greatly contributed to meaningful engagement of pupils in the learning process. Pupils do not sit idly as the talk and chalk of the teacher takes center stage.

2. Teaching and Learning Materials

- i) The instructional materials in the three programs exposed pupils to print and literature. There a need to enrich these resources with challenging and excellent texts.
- ii) Teachers used stories and songs (MBTL and BLP/M) to teach literacy but some of the texts contained long words and too much text. Resources may need to be developed for more beginning readers and emergent readers.

3. Support Mechanism

- i) The practice of using teachers as resource persons during school based insets has proven effective but these teachers need they need to be rewarded through an incentive scheme. This needs to be promoted to instill and sustain confidence among teachers and to encourage other teachers to buy in the program. Teachers have gained a lot of experience, and especially practical experience, to augment the theory they are learning during training session of the programs.
- ii) Expanding the resource base by introducing MTTTs was a successful strategy to increase support, monitoring, and supervision but this exacerbates the problem of teacher shortage.

4. Program Adoption

- i) Parents and communities demonstrated that they can meaningfully engage with schooling activities beyond the red brick. They were a useful resource in both provision and development of teaching and learning materials. Deliberate and well planned community sensitization and mobilization promotes home support for and engagement with schooling process. The bringing on board of various sub sectors of the communities greatly benefited the programs.

ii) Information in form of supporting documents such as project descriptions, and periodic reports, provide useful knowledge about the program. There was one report available for LAC and it this made it challenging to gain useful insight regarding this program. The data through questionnaires informed much of the thinking on the program.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS:

In light of the above, the following recommendations suggest the use of existing structures and adoption of best practices to improve acquisition of literacy:

I. MoE/DTEd

i) As noted previously a National Literacy Framework based in literacy standards and benchmarks is needed to guide literacy curriculum development, program selection, national assessments, teacher education and education policy decisions related to literacy. This calls for extensive technical expertise working in partnership with education stakeholders in government, teacher training colleges, universities, and schools.

ii) MoE needs to provide strong leadership in direction of programs and functions as determined by existing policies, needs, and evidence from research, as well as promoting the sharing of lessons and experiences learned. MoE should strive to move forward with aspects of programs that are working and strengthen those that are weak.

iii) A comprehensive training of teachers is needed so that teachers gain adequately, the required skills and knowledge needed to implement the literacy reforms. Furthermore, local nationals are best placed to conduct the trainings because of their advantage on knowledge of the education system, and language structures. However, guidance and technical expertise from literacy experts is needed to support the reforms.

iv) There is need for instituting a national school and cluster based professional development structure by adopting the concept and organization of TTC in the BLP.M program. Such efforts will call for reviewing the PEA's current job demands and performance to allow for more engagement with professional development and support mechanism for teachers.

iv) There is an urgent need to transform the culture of teachers sitting idly while a colleague faces the 200+ pupils alone. Teachers cannot afford to continue to do business as usual, but collaborate during instruction to facilitate teaching and learning.

v) The role and involvement of Headteachers in the literacy reforms should evolve from managerial and administrative to instructional leadership. Headteachers participated in the training but need to take a strong leadership role at the school level to ensure compliance to concepts and practices of the reform, provide guidance and support in addressing challenges.

vi) Teacher education must be reformed to equip teachers with comprehensive understanding of how the reading process works by introducing more comprehensive literacy courses. Reading courses should be core curricular subjects so that it is a requirement for every teacher to take several literacy courses to make every teacher a teacher of literacy.

vii) Teachers need to be empowered to make both classroom and staff professional development decisions that have been successful in the BLP/M program. Perhaps MoE would recognize and reward teachers who engage in these locally based insets.

viii) There is still need for more public awareness, sensitization, and mobilization of communities to actively engage them in schooling activities as new reforms are implemented. Perhaps more importantly, as the strategy for community participation is implemented and

efforts toward achievement of EFA and MDGs are intensified, we need the support of parents and communities as children belong to these other units besides the school.

ix) MoE and GOM need to construct classrooms to improve learning conditions for children and allow teachers to create print rich environments

x) Training of teachers to reduce class sizes so that the adopted programs work effectively. In addition, teacher deployment needs to be changed to allow teachers to be posted where positions are not filled.

2. The Donor Community

i) There is an urgent need for forging communication among donors of the three literacy programs to exchange ideas and experiences to build on each other's program, reduce duplication of efforts, and move forward.

ii) Structures need to be well established for monitoring and supporting the implementation of reforms. Inadequate and irregular supervision does a disservice to the reforms and stakeholders/implementers do not have adequate information on performance to determine areas of strengths and those needing improvement.

iii) Adopting programs wholesale is not effective. Flexibility, practice, and ample time should be given when introducing new concepts to teachers (double shift in LAC, the one hour long BTL lessons, and the concept of corners) to allow teachers to master these and be able to develop the new ways of teaching. Furthermore, developers must be local to enhance understanding of the education system, local contexts, and language structure and its use. MBTL developers failed to provide local examples during training.

iv) Timely evaluations of reform efforts are helpful to provide useful insight and meaningful data. Only staff in the ongoing BLP/M program had information on costing while for LAC and MBTL the information was not available. Even attempting costing through estimates of production costs were irrelevant since the informant was uncertain of what the exact numbers of materials produced and copied.

v) Programs need to be developed with a long term approach to allow pupils to continue to learn in the cycle. Learners in LAC were unable to demonstrate transfer of skills in L1 to L2 two years after the program ended.

vi) Influential stakeholders need to be included in the programs to provide the necessary support and supervision. When left out, headteachers, district office staff, and community may feel alienated and therefore fail to function as partners in the process, and might in fact make efforts to jeopardize its success

3. MIE/DTED

i) There is need for DTED to get more actively engaged with the programs so that it integrates best practices in the design of pre and in service education literacy courses for teachers. In addition, DTED is also best placed to guide in continuing professional staff development. DTED and MIE can develop modules on the teaching of literacy, development of materials

ii) If the DTED is going to actively engaged, there must be extensive training on literacy including the essential components of literacy, effective strategies that link to the literacy components, what effective literacy classrooms look like, how to support teachers as they help pupils learn to read and write.

iii) Create a curriculum for teaching literacy that is based in the National Framework. Develop modules for its teaching so that all teachers share a similar conceptualization of literacy and how it should be taught. Literacy must be conceived in terms of a tool for

learning content rather than a stand alone subject. We need to define our own frameworks for defining and teaching literacy, and teachers must be a part of this process.

iv) The problem of large classes amplifies the challenges teachers face in teaching. The suggested group work strategy has not alleviated the problem as small classes within a large class have mushroomed. The problem is compounded by teachers' limitations on how to use group work effectively. DTED should come up with feasible group work management and instructional procedures for large classes.

4. School Level

i) Teachers need to collaborate across grades. Teachers who have been trained in the various literacy reforms can work with those in other grades and teaching other content. Thus these could be the literacy coaches and train other to apply the strategies in their content areas

ii) Teaching and learning materials can be developed as a whole school initiative (as done at LUFÉ) and deposited in a TALUALR bank so that all teachers have access to them when they need use them. No lessons can proceed without apparatus.

iii) Teachers should explicitly model teaching reading using print and non- print materials other than those prescribed texts such as old books, newspapers, magazines, and other environmental print.

iv) A strong focus on just reading would be more appropriate since for many learners, standard I is their first experience with instruction in literacy. Some recreation of preschool/kindergarten like environment for more language experience activities, play time, and just a nurturing environment to replicate the home would go a long way to help children transition from home to school life.

vi) To address the issue of copyright for MBTL material, teachers can create their own sentence makers and holders using reeds and bamboos. Their TALULAR experience should come into play here. The Sentence Makers could be made from sacks, and words and letters written on card boards, chart paper, maize husks etc.

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APPENDIX AI: BLP/M SCHOOLS BY PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES BY ZONE

Boma	Chigudu	Chimungu	Chimbuli	Kanyenje	Kamphenga	Katalima	Kayembe	Madisi	Mponela	Mvera	Nalunga	Senga
Kongwe 1 Mndunje James Dowa 1 Kafumphe Dowa 2	Mwangala Chigudu Thedze	Chimungu Kabulungo Tchawale	Sungeni Chimkoka Chinkhwiri	St Mathias Chankhungu M'bindo Kainja	Chimpeni Mduku Mdanjiri Kamphenga	Nyagra Ngala Katalima Chiwira Mdinga	Mlengwe Mdika Kayembe Sandulizeni	Mtaniila Madisi Mtiti Simbi Nauchi	Kachulu Kawere Mphimbi Mponela II2. Dzoole	Lufe Mvera FP Mkhalanjoka Mvera MDF	Kavuu Mtengenji Kabadwa	I.Chivala Kaputalambwe Funsani Senga
Category B. Average BLP/M Performing Schools												
Ch bwata Kasatsi Namatonje Kongwe 2	Mkanga Mtenthera Bwevu Ch banzi Kapatamoyo Chikudzo	Mtandawagalu Chambidzi Mtsilo Kanyangala Kolowilo	Bowe Dzalo Gudyu Katuntha Chimbuli Katengeza	Mpangweni Mtenje Msadelera Pheleni Kanyenje	Mduku Kafulu Chinziri Mwaza Longwe Milore Chisepo	Bweya Madzo Kal kulu Chinguwi Mambala Bwanyundo Kabuluzi	Chigongolero Manthimba Ch kankha Daimoni Mkwichi Chimbalu Kawale Kambokambo	Chakhaza Mphudzu Magantha Nambamba Chandawe Chikwawe	Kamwana Malambo Mponela I Aimalandiwo Mpatsa Nyengere Ch kwete Chimpeni	Kapita Thonje Banga Mbira Ching'amba Kalewa Kanyerere Mphande	Nalunga Kambulu Kaomba	Karonga Chunzu Simankhwala Mbalame Manondo
Category C. Below Average BLP/M Performing Schools												
Mwezowala Mpangiseni Chiwindo Chamvu Chamwala Ch bwana Changalu Mponda Tsache Mpalankhwali	Nakondwa Lingadzimlimi Maiwe Mpatawadzomb e Chamwavi Msambaimfa Matanda	Miwale Mauni Mafosha Longwani Chivutwe	Kasangu Msambaadzukulu Matesewa Chiwichiwi Kachipande Mtsukamakoza Chikhobwe Chilinde JP Sch Mbeleketete	Chigwere Chingondo Mgona Gawamadzi Katundu	Mtapo Mkanire Solomoni Mondwe Chitakadzi Chilimmimba	Chimwendo Kamongo Katsuka Chiliphiza Kaphiri Kapini Chilinkholi. Tchale	Kavunguti Chamitu Msokonezi Sindeya Nalikonda Mundundu Thiwi Chulu Kalulu	Malunje Kabwinja Mkhobola Mkuyu Mbawa Mbayo Chizolowondo	Ch bweza Msangu Diliro Samuel Chilima Mnkhamanga Kalipindire Nyengere Mwachiswa	Madzidzi Tsikiti Mtayafuko Mtengowopota Mpala Gogo Chimwankhuku Mtchakhatha Msipe Kawangwi	Katona Mdabwi Windu Kanyanyata Kambewa	Ng'ozu Mndolera Chinyimbo Chiundira Sidze Chakhala Mtunthama

Source: PRIMARY SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAM: A SCHOOL FEES PILOT (PSSP: SFP)

The sampled 15 schools have been highlighted.

APPENDIX A2: DISTRICTS AND ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS FOR THE STUDY

PROGRAM	NAME OF SCHOOL	DISTRICTS
MBTL	Mpalo, Kadayera, Kalema, Kapombe Knyenda, Kayoyo, Mbuyedziko, Mkondamwini, Malomo	Ntchisi
LAC	Lugola, Mtuwa, N'gonga, Waliro, Chirole, Zakazaka	Ntcheu, Mangochi, Rumphu

Part B:

**MID-TERM EVALUATION
OF THE
BEGINNING LITERACY
PROGRAM OF MALAWI**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The introduction of FPE in 1994 originated from a political campaign promise. Nonetheless, it fulfilled one of EFA's Dakar Framework for Action of free and compulsory education for all children by 2015. The resultant surge in enrollment exerted pressure on the existing challenges of teacher shortage of both quality and quantity, inadequate infrastructure and instructional resources, and a generally internal inefficiency in the system. Declining quality of teaching and learning has been a persistent major challenge facing the Government of Malawi (GoM). Massive efforts by both the donor community and GoM have focused on improving quality through increasing teacher production and pre and inservice teacher education to enhance teacher competences, and provision of instructional resources. A major indicator of a failing efforts has been the low learning outcomes of pupils in primary school. Numerous media columns and a number of studies have reported that pupils spend up to five to six years of schooling without attaining basic literacy skills and competences. A mere six percent of Malawian standard six pupils were able to meet grade level competences in English on a Southern African Consortium for Measuring Education Quality (SACMEQ) achievement test (Milner et al. Chimombo Recent studies (Mchazime, MIE) have reported similar low levels of proficiencies after four or five years of schooling.

To address these incompetences, literacy programs have been piloted between 2004 and 2008 with success but their costs are prohibitive for a national roll out. Primary School Support Program: A School Fees Pilot (PSSP: SFP) regarded this as an entry point for developing the Beginning Literacy Program of Malawi (BLP/M) to improve acquisition of literacy skills in the first year of formal primary schooling. The second part of the present study purported to conduct a midterm review of the BLP/M. analyze the literacy efforts piloted in last few years. The BLP/M teaches literacy in Chichewa language using thematically based songs and stories. Based on the notion that what learners can say can be written and viceversa, BLPM adopts a balanced approach to teaching literacy instruction in phonics and phonological awareness, uses learners' lived experiences, and focuses on essential components of reading and writing such as comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency to build a strong literacy foundation. A formative assessment conducted every fortnight is built in the program along with a literacy fair whereby parents and the community are invited to come and see displays of pupils' work done during the semester. A total of 15 strategies are used in teaching BLP/M lessons. Categorized loosely, there are strategies deal with reading, those teaching writing, while some promote learning of vocabulary, comprehension, and learner interaction. This aimed at evaluating the program midway into its first year of implementation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this second part study was to evaluate the effectiveness of BLP/M midway into its first year of implementation in standard I classrooms and suggest mechanisms for sustainability. These results will provide useful feedback to the Ministry of Education (MoE) on frameworks, major strengths, and weaknesses of the programs as it makes decisions on the way forward with literacy reform to improve acquisition of literacy among learners.

Specifically, the study intended to:

1. Observe how well teachers are applying the strategies using the Fidelity Tool
2. Observe training for BLP/M term 2
3. Conduct interviews with community members, teachers, and project staff
4. Suggest mechanisms for sustainability
5. Analyze existing data collected on teacher performance

Methodology

The sample for the study were teachers, headteachers, community members, Primary Education Advisors (PEAs), district education office staff (DEM, DOPE, and CPEA), who participated in BLP/M, ZOCs, AC, and PSSP staff. A total of 15 schools were purposively sampled from the 226 schools implementing BLP/M in Dowa district. Data was generated through questionnaires for teachers and headteachers regarding program objectives, training, monitoring and supervision, impact of program on learners, best practices, and challenges. The Fidelity Tool was used to observe BLP/M lessons to check appropriateness of unit and lesson plan, application of BLP/M strategies, use of materials, and learner engagement. Finally, evaluation of teaching and learning materials used during implementation of BLP/M was done to determine appropriateness to learners, usage, and management and care.

Summary of Main Findings

- i) Overall, the results showed that BLP/M is progressing well during its first year of implementation: teachers have been trained, materials produced and distributed to schools, and monitoring and supervision is conducted.
- ii) BLP/M has created a community of educators that has generated a common understanding and discourse for literacy, learning, and schooling.
- iii) Teachers and other beneficiaries have gained a repertoire of strategies that can sustain the program long after its project life. These included skills for classroom practice and management, literacy skills, design, development, and use of instructional materials, monitoring and supervision, and management of school records.
- iv) Learners are developing reading, writing, and drawing skills as seen in indicators such as literacy fairs, written work in exercise books, and performance on literacy tasks.
- v) Great extensions of reading but vocabulary and word naming and recognition were not emphasized.
- vi) Overall, the proportion of teachers applying the training concepts fell short (38%) of the set 60% target. A greater proportion of teachers were observed teaching only the teacher read aloud and song poster. This means that pupils are exposed to limited literacy strategies which subsequently influence their acquisition of skills for literacy. Vocabulary strategies are not emphasized, only 30% of the teachers taught word search.
- vii) As regards materials, a visual inspection of classrooms showed various materials such as alphabet charts, song posters, and big books displayed on walls, although some appeared to have been never used. In addition, teacher made materials and environmental print were also visible in some of the fifteen classrooms visited. Teachers generally judged the materials to be useful for acquisition of literacy, gender sensitive, and appropriate for learners' needs.
- viii) From the classroom observations, it was obvious that teachers were involving learners during instruction at varied levels of engagement. In 70 percent of the classes, teachers led the instruction through reading or singing while pupils followed after the teacher or the teacher completed the activity alone. Half of the classes, pupils lead the whole class in reading a word or a sentence while the rest of their classmates followed. Smaller proportions of teachers engaged pupils in character map, story star, word search, and making sketches of grasshopper, a character in a story read.

- ix) Teachers used action research tools of identifying a problem and finding solutions in schools like Lufe and Bowe facing acute understaffing challenges. Teachers at Lufe even found time to create the most resourceful school full fledged with a TALULAR bank. They demonstrate teachers reflect on their practice and can initiate change on their own.
- x) The observations also showed that pupils were learning the same content at the same pace. There was little evidence of differentiated instruction to meet individual levels of instructional needs.

Recommendations:

The analysis of the findings of the study calls for the following recommendations:

I. Improving Teachers' Ability to Teach and Promote Literacy

- xi) Teachers need to collaborate across grades. Teachers who have been trained in BLP/M can work with those who did not. There is need to intensify the concept of cluster leaders to develop literacy coaches to and train others to apply the strategies in their content areas and oversee the teaching and learning of literacy in schools.
- xii) Rearrange the timetable so that it comes in the morning. Both the teacher and pupils are tired by the time BLP/M came around.
- xiii) Teachers need to make deliberate plans for differentiated instruction to cater for the varied instructional levels of the pupils. Although at the back of their minds teachers may recognize the various instructional needs of their learners, without a well thought out plan to differentiate the content, materials as well as methods of teaching, it is unlikely that the goal will be achieved.
- xiv) Teachers should explicitly model reading behaviors beyond reading T/L materials (songposters, big books, class reader). Bringing books, newspapers and showing children that they are reading, sharing a book/article/story they read, and discussing books will model to children and promote a love for reading. Even with the same classroom materials could be used where this is not possible but deliberate efforts must be made to model behaviors of good readers
- xv) Comprehensive training of teachers is needed so that teachers gain adequately, the required skills and knowledge needed to implement the literacy reforms. Only few of the 15 strategies were taught.
- xvi) A more sustained time slot for pupils to engage and practice reading is needed. Although reading was done, it was done for a relatively short time as a spring board for other activities such as creating stories, singing, and writing. Reading requires frequent extended time for meaningful reading practice. Vocabulary and word naming and recognition skills could be infused during this time since they were not emphasized during the study.
- xvii) Teacher education must be reformed to equip teachers with comprehensive understanding of how the reading process works by introducing more comprehensive literacy courses. Reading courses should be core curricular subjects so that it is a requirement for every teacher to take several literacy courses to make every teacher a teacher of literacy.

- xviii) Integrate cascade training with other modes for training and more teachers to participate because they are implementers of reform.

2. Enhancing Literacy Teaching and Learning Materials

- vii) Materials need to move beyond the current themes of family and home to engage learners in challenging task. It is essential that initially learners experience familiar themes in the readings but then gradual adjusting to more challenging issues will promote both reading to learn.
- viii) More community engagement is needed to raise awareness and sensitize communities to keep school grounds and property safe. If vandalism of school property by community is lessened, teachers will be able to hang and store teaching materials. A permanent feature of talking walls in the classroom will also contribute toward encouraging pupils to read and develop a love of reading.
- ix) Teachers need to be encouraged to use the materials they have. Materials development should evolve as a whole school initiative (as done at LUFÉ) and deposited in a TALUALR bank so that all teachers have access to them when they need use them. If headteachers are nurtured as instructional leaders, they could lead this activity in the schools.
- x) Reduce text in songposters and big books, as well as using short syllables and repetitive and predictable pattern. For a beginning reader and even an emergent reader, it is more helpful to have smaller units of text than dense text that will strain the pupils' cognitive processing as they strive to decode and make sense of the language symbols. Some words contained too many syllables.

3. Mainstreaming BLP/M best Practices into Preservice and Inservice Systems

- v) Teacher education must be reformed to equip teachers with comprehensive understanding of how the reading process works by introducing more comprehensive literacy courses. Reading courses should be core curricular subjects so that it is a requirement for every teacher to take several literacy courses to make every teacher a teacher of literacy. The content used during training and implementation of BLP/M should be used in the reading courses.
- vi) Teachers could be encouraged to use action research in the teaching and learning of literacy. Assignments could require students to go into schools and identify problem areas and address them using knowledge and skills gained in their courses. They can then be asked to produce teaching and learning aids for the literacy problem they are addressing.
- vii) Preservice teachers could create their own big books and songposters. In the end, they would share these so that each teacher has a variety of stories and songs to cater for the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of learners when they go out to teach.
- viii) BLP/M teachers who have demonstrated exemplary teaching can be used as resource persons and help create BLP/M classrooms in the demonstration schools used by TTCs. The tutors can travel to the schools in Dowa to see for themselves and then take back the experience to incorporate into their own teaching.

I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 BACKGROUND

The introduction of free primary education (FPE) in 1994 originated from a political campaign promise to eradicate school fees. Nonetheless, it fulfilled one of Education For All's (EFA) Dakar Framework for Action goals of free and compulsory education for all children by 2015. The resultant surge in enrollment exerted pressure on the existing challenges of teacher shortage of both quality and quantity, inadequate infrastructure and instructional resources, and a generally internal inefficiency in the system.

Declining quality of teaching and learning has been a persistent major challenge facing the Government of Malawi (GoM). Massive efforts by both the donor community and GoM have focused on improving quality through increasing teacher production and pre and inservice teacher education to enhance teacher competences, and provision of instructional resources. The low learning outcomes have been a major indicator of the limitations of these efforts. Numerous media columns and a number of studies have reported that pupils spend up to five to six years of schooling without attaining basic literacy skills and competences. A mere 6 % of Malawian standard six pupils were able to meet grade level competences in English on a Southern African Consortium for Measuring Education Quality (SACMEQ) achievement test (Milner et al. 2001). Recent studies (Mchazime, 2003) have also reported similar low levels of proficiencies among pupils after four or five years of schooling. Some of the efforts to address these limitations, was the piloting of literacy programs between 2004 and 2008.

Primary School Support Program: A School Fees Pilot (PSSP: SFP) regarded this as an entry point for developing the Beginning Literacy Program of Malawi (BLP/M) to provide a low cost, sustainable program to improve acquisition of literacy skills in the first year of formal primary schooling.

The BLP/M teaches literacy in Chichewa language using thematically based songs and stories from the community. Based on the notion that what learners can say can be written and what can be written can be read, BLP/M adopts a balanced approach to literacy. Instruction builds on pupils' experiences and focuses on the essential components of reading and writing. For reading, these components include: print concepts, phonological awareness, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. For writing, the components include: writing concepts, the writing process, writing in various formats, and grammar and mechanical assessment. A formative assessment built into the program is conducted every fortnight. In addition, a literacy fair is organized at the end of each term for parents and the community to come and see displays of pupils and teachers' work. BLP/M teaches literacy using fifteen early literacy strategies.

I.2 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of Part II of the study is to evaluate effectiveness of the BLP/M midway into its first year of implementation, and to determine mechanisms for sustainability. Specifically, part II of the study intended to:

1. Observe training for BLP/M for term 2 and observe classroom practices during the implementation of BLP/M
2. Assess effectiveness of teachers' application of strategies they are teaching
3. Assess how well teachers are using and maintaining materials
4. Determine literacy competences(learning outcomes) learners were developing
5. Identify indicators that learners are achieving the intended outcomes

6. Suggest guidelines to provide policy makers to help them adapt the best practices from the BLP/M

I.3 APPROACHES USED

1.3.1 Protocols Used (See Part I)

The only additional protocol for this phase was a classroom observation tool. The BLP/M Fidelity tool developed by the PSSP was used. (See Appendix I) This tool was designed to collect data on the extent that teachers were using the literacy strategies that they learned in the BLP/M training. The lead consultant of this study attended one of the TOT sessions to learn more about the BLP/M and the fidelity tool. In addition, the CPEA, the ZOCs, and the AC at Dowa I provided further details of its benefits and how use during supervision.

The BLP/M Fidelity tool contains four parts: Unit and Lesson Plans, BLP/M early Literacy Strategies, Class Structures and Pupil Participation, and BLP/M learning environments. The Unit and Lesson Planning section investigates appropriateness of lesson, its objectives, and outcomes as well as being on the specified unit in terms of pacing of the work to align the lesson and the unit. BLP/M Literacy Strategies section assesses effectiveness of teachers' application of the literacy strategies and activities they are teaching. Class Structure and Pupil Participation component examines organization and allocation of independent, group, and whole class tasks to determine levels of pupil participation during instruction. Finally, the BLP/M Learning Environment section establishes teachers' effectiveness in creating classrooms/learning environments that promote teaching and learning of literacy by exhibiting Big Books, Song Posters, alphabets charts, pupils' work, environmental print, and materials teachers have developed to support the instructional process. Not only does the Fidelity tool check for these activities, it prompts the observer to provide evidence to support each entry recorded to validate the observation.

1.3.2 Selection of Schools

With guidance from the PSSP staff, 15 schools were purposively sampled. Performance of the schools in implementing BLP/M was the basis of criteria designated by program staff. Schools that the staff judged to demonstrate high levels of performance and those with least performance were selected for the study. The performance criteria included increased teacher use of materials and strategies of the program, improved learner literacy skills (writing and reading) as demonstrated on assessments given, and increased learner class participation as suggested by school supervision forms and project staff's guidance. Personnel at the district level included the DEM, CPEAs, and DOPE. Others were community members (PTA and SMC members, chiefs, and parents), ZOCs, PSSP staff, and AC.

1.3.3 Document Reviews

BLP/M documents and materials were reviewed to gain a better understanding of BLP/M. The documents included the BLPM Teacher's Guide, and three Training of Trainers (TOT) guides, The Teacher's Guide contains essential introductory content such as expected outcomes and features of BLP/M; how to use the guide in terms of components, adapting and models of lesson plans; frequently used early literacy strategies, games and other classroom activities on which BLP/M is based, and detailed syllabi and lesson plans for all three terms. A glossary and an appendix complete the guide. Each of the TOT guide contains notes to the facilitator, training program overview and objectives, specific literacy strategies to be reviewed and those to be introduced for the first time, step-by-step procedures for conducting training, literacy activities, suggested time frames for activities, and an appendix. BLP/M Big books and Song Posters were instructional materials reviewed for appropriateness to pupils' learning needs, nature and availability, adequacy, gender sensitivity, and use during instruction. Additional materials were alphabet cards, and graphic organizers such as Character Map posters, Theme Web, and Story Star.

1.4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Training: A total of eight Research Assistants (RAs) underwent a three day training session that covered topics on interviewing techniques, item review on the questionnaires, simulations of interviews administration, and appropriate conduct in schools. On the third day, the instruments were piloted in two schools in Zomba and feedback incorporated for field work.

Procedures: Prior to the study, a formal letter was written to the DEMs of each of the participating districts to inform them of the study and seek assistance in communicating to the sampled schools on the purposes, activities, and dates of the research. A courtesy call was made to the DEM's office. Messages were sent to the schools through PSSP staff and ZOCs who were visiting the PSSP offices.

Each aspect on the Fidelity Tool was analyzed separately. Once an aspect was picked, then all 15 observations were analyzed and tallied for that one aspect. Emerging issues and themes arising from the analysis were identified. The process was continued until all aspects were analyzed.

2. RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of the BLP/M component that focused on lesson observations to investigate how effectively teachers are applying the BLP/M literacy strategies. The results are presented in the following order: skills and competences; indicators for achieving outcomes; impact on teach and learning; impact of BLP/M on teaching and learning; and nature, availability, and usage of supplemental materials.

2.2 BLP/M PROGRAM DESIGN

2.2.1 Overall Skills and Competences

As a component of a district wide holistic school reform, BLP/M benefited from the trainings offered under PSSP: SFP. These trainings for teachers, head teachers and staff included a repertoire of skills and competences ranging from classroom practice and management, literacy skills, to development of materials, and professional staff development. The PSSP:SFP training occurred during six cycle trainings and built capacity of teachers ¹⁵in planning and using participatory methods in their teaching. An accompanying manual included strategies such as question and answer, debate, role-play, games, brainstorming, future's wheel, and discussion. In terms of teaching aids, teachers learned how to design, develop, and use various materials for teaching numeracy and literacy. Other skills covered techniques for displaying materials, arranging, and stocking books, use, and their care.

Another PSSP:SFP training session focused on managing administrative duties (progress report, enrollment, registers), and teaching (lesson plans and schemes of work) records. Additional focus was on designing and conducting school based insets for developing teachers' content (mathematics, science, and literacy) and pedagogical knowledge. This was a useful strategy because teachers generally have weak academic/content knowledge in some of the subjects they teach and this training expanded their content knowledge base. The concepts of MTTT, TCC, BLP troopers and other structures were a component born out of this focus. Finally, beneficiaries gained skills in supervision, handling large classes, and assessment, teacher's code of ethics and HIV/AIDS, and gender equality.

¹⁵ Information based on manuals for the Six Training Cycles.

2.2.2 BLP/M Teacher Skills and Competence

Apart from the above PSSP:SFP training, BLP/M course developers created a training program that targeted both trainers (TOT) and teachers (TTR). The overall goal of the TOT and TTR workshops is for trainers and teachers to use the BLP/M effectively so as to increase pupils' literacy skills. The materials and content for the TOT and TTR workshops were complimentary, but because the trainers(TOT) must train the teachers there are additional sessions in the TOT that include training practice and facilitation skills. (Clair, 2007).

The BLP/M literacy program, TOT and TTR workshops took a developmental approach to teaching literacy¹⁶. The content was organized in such a way that core literacy strategies and preparation for the TTR were reviewed during subsequent (Term I and II) training sessions.

The TOT and TTR workshops for Term I introduced participants to the BLP/M, its features and the 15 core literacy strategies. Participants learned the most predominant BLP/M core strategies: Using Song Posters and The Teacher Read Aloud using Big Books. In addition, participants learned about building a shared vision, creating high quality classrooms, instructional materials to support BLP/M lessons and integrating reading and writing in BLP/M literacy activities. In Term II, the TOT and TTR training focused on literacy components of Class Big Books, Story Star, and Character Map and how to use them in BLP/M lessons. Participants also learned procedures for creating Class Big Books, and preparation and management of literacy fairs. Term II also reviewed the Teacher Read Aloud using Big Books, Song Posters. Term III TOT and TTR focused on interactive writing to engage pupils in writing invitation letters to the Literacy Fair, components and application of Theme web, and creating Song or Poem Posters. Term III reviewed all literacy strategies covered in previous trainings.

2.2.3 Indicators for Achieving Intended Outcomes

Program Goals

The BLP/M consisted of three overall program goals and numerous learning outcomes articulated for each of the 21 units¹⁷. The overall pupil goals for BLP/M included: 1) read short familiar passages with fluency; 2) write simple sentences and stories; and 3) love reading and writing.

A number of indicators showed that pupils were achieving the intended outcomes. As regards to reading, pupils participated in chorus reading while following a teacher or a more capable classmate. Almost whole classes erupted in chorus reading as the leader/teacher read. Fluency was not determined with certainty but those few pupils called to read in front or lead others showed that they read with fluency. In terms of writing simple sentences and stories, pupils' exercise books showed that they could write sentences. In the case of stories, they appeared to be selected few sentences from a longer story. Finally, although the love of reading goal was not observed, teachers explained pupil behaviors of checking out new displays of Big Books and Song Posters as indicators for developing such goals.

BLP/M Learning Outcomes

The BLP/M course is built on learning outcomes that are the skills contained in the essential components of reading and writing. Each component has a number of outcomes. The learning outcomes become developmentally more demanding as the BLP/M lessons progress. For example, for comprehension, a learning outcome in Term I is predicting story events from illustrations (Appendix 2). In Term 2, the learning outcome becomes a bit more difficult, asking pupils to predict

¹⁶ Information based on the three TOT/TTR Facilitator Guides written by Nancy Clair

¹⁷ Taken from the Teacher's Guide and facilitator guides that contains a syllabus for each term written by Nancy Clair.

story events from illustrations and familiar words (Appendix 3). Finally, in Term 3, pupils are asked to predict story events from familiar and unfamiliar words (Appendix 4).

During the study, it was evident that pupils were developing a number of these skills and were at various levels of development. For example, close to 60 % of the pupils were able to identify target letters or words on the board. At Kawere, Chikankha, and Kamphenga schools, 100% of pupils called to the front were able to identify the target words on the board. Almost all learners knew how to handle books properly, read and write from left to right, and from top to bottom to show they developed print concepts, another essential component of literacy. In the case of phonological awareness, a moderate proportion of pupils recognized sounds of letters and words as well as identify words with similar sounds.

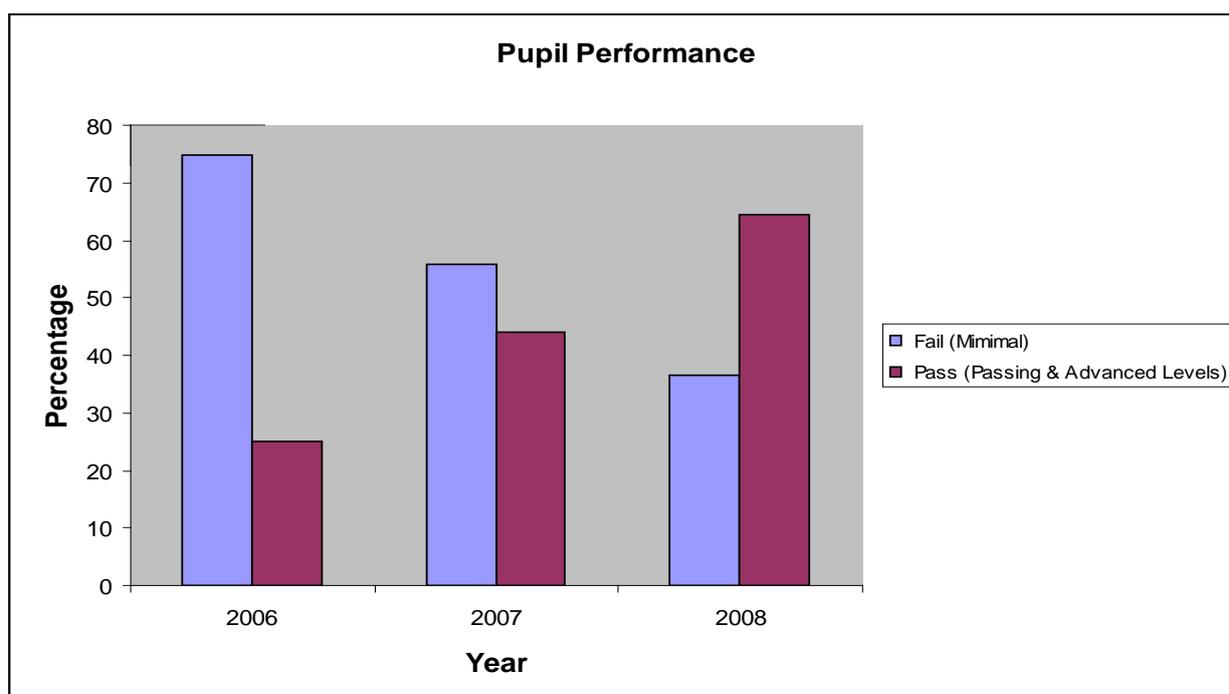
In terms of writing, pupils showed that they wrote a lot: copied letters, words, and sentences from the board onto their exercise books, including writing their names, and dates, but were at various levels of competences. There were no opportunities to observe pupils in retelling stories, writing in lists, map or description formats largely because this was Term 3 content and was yet to be covered.

Pupils were also learning how to predict stories and provide a reason for their thinking. At Mponela I for example, the teacher engaged pupils in a picture walk of *Kodi M'nyumba Mwasesa* Song Poster where pupils used the illustrations and the words the teachers pointed at to predict what would happen next and provide a reason for their thinking. Pupils also developed motor skills through drawing characters they read about in stories and pictures of themselves coming to school. Pupils also created Class Big Books.

In addition, pupils' performance on assigned tasks showed they were achieving intended outcomes. Literacy Fairs observed during the end of Term 2 that the children were learning. Community members randomly called pupils to read from the displayed charts, explain the geometric shapes, read the alphabet, and calculate simple math problems. Pupils showed that they could perform these tasks. Interviews with community members also revealed that BLP/M learners could read and write during their first two terms of schooling, unlike in the past where pupils could reach standard 3 or 4 without acquiring such basic skills.

Finally, results of the BLP/M's own assessments were an indicator of achievements of intended outcomes. Pupils took a thirty-minute literacy assessment in phonemic awareness, letter sounds, word naming, and word recognition. The performance levels were: minimal, passing, and advanced. During the baseline in 2006, 25 % of the pupils attained passing and advanced proficiency levels while 75 % attained minimal proficiency and designated to have failed. In a follow up assessment in 2007, the proportion of pupils who passed increased by 19 %. There was a significant improvement in performance during the closeout assessment in 2008. The proportion of pupils doubled (39 %) implying that more pupils had attained passing and advanced proficiency levels in acquiring literacy. Analysis by gender shows that more girls than boys attained passing and advanced literacy levels during both the follow up and the close out assessment.

Figure 1: Pupil Performance at Baseline, Follow-up, and Closeout BLP/M Assessments



2.2.4 Conclusion

Clearly, under PSSP: SFP teachers and other stakeholders gained a wide repertoire of skills and knowledge for teaching literacy, class and school management, and community interaction. These skills will readily contribute to sustaining the BLP/M program once its project life expires. The advantage of including a number of beneficiaries and topics is a strength for the program on which MoE and other key stakeholders can build. Teachers and other beneficiaries were introduced to BLP/M, its features, the 15 core literacy strategies, and organization and management of Teacher Training Roll (TTR) during three TOT sessions. Evidence for achieving the intended BLP/M outcomes were: pupils reading following a classmate or teacher, pointing to target words on chalk board, using BLP/M Big Books, and Song Posters, pupils' work displayed in classrooms, pupils' exercise books, performance on reading tasks given, literacy fair, and results of follow up assessment. Learners are using literacy skills in learning content from other subjects, already facilitated in the themes incorporated in BLP/M Big Books and Song Posters.

2.3 BLP/M IMPACT ON TEACHING: APPLICATION OF BLP/M STRATEGIES

2.3.1 Introduction

From a training perspective, the objectives of the BLP/M were to sensitize and improve teachers' skills, knowledge, and use of early literacy strategies. Each term, teachers received a BLP/M teacher's guide comprising well-detailed syllabi and lesson plans. This section summarizes the findings regarding how effectively teachers were applying the BLP/M literacy strategies. Data was collected using the BLP/M Fidelity Tool. The areas of focus include strategies taught, pupil participation, modeling reading behavior, and teacher beliefs.

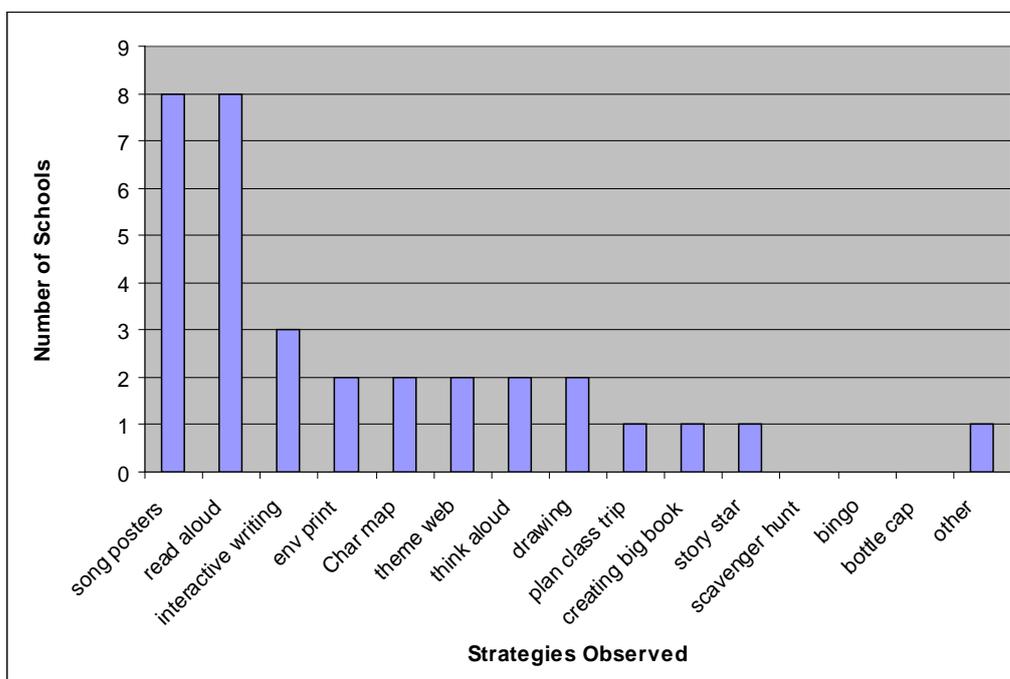
2.3.2 Strategies Taught

As described in Section 2.2.2 above, trainers and teachers received training in BLP/M and the trainers received additional training on TTR roll-out and facilitation skills. Adopting a developmental approach to teaching literacy, during each term, some of the literacy strategies were reviewed while

others were introduced for the first time. For example, training for Term 1 introduced and provided guided practice for song poster, Teacher Read Aloud through BLP/M Big Books, integration of reading and writing activities, and creation of TALULAR. While the training in Term 2 reviewed these strategies, it also introduced and modeled the Story Star and Character Map graphic organizers. Finally, in Term 3, the training focused on introducing and practicing interactive writing (letter for the literacy fair) and Theme Web, and reviewed Story Star and Character Map organizers.

In the case of applying literacy strategies, it was encouraging to observe that a greater proportion of the teachers were using a number of the 15 BLP/M strategies (Figure 1 below). As expected, the most commonly observed strategies were the Song Poster and the Teacher Read Aloud through Big Books. Term 1 training introduced and practiced this strategy while Term 2 BLP/M training reviewed this strategy. By Term 3, teachers had gained experience applying these two strategies with confidence. In 30 % of the classes, teachers applied interactive writing while in 13 %, teachers engaged learners in each of the following strategies: Character Map, Theme Web, environmental print, and drawing/scribbling. One class was planning a class trip (Kongwe I), while another was creating a Big Book (Dowa I), and still another used the Story Star (Mtunthama). Although interactive writing had just been introduced during Term 3 training, it demonstrated teachers' efforts and willingness to apply what knowledge gained during their training. Term 1 also introduced integrating reading and writing with BLP/M activities. The writing observed in the classes showed teachers' efforts toward integrating these two skills. Specific vocabulary building strategies of Scavenger hunt, Bingo, and using bottle cap letters were not observed during the study. Outside strategies of the BLP/M, word search was taught in 30 % of the classes.

Figure 2: Summary of BLP/M Strategies Observed in Action



2.3.3 Engaging Learners

Teachers frequently mentioned the one area of BLP/M influence was the integration of learner-centered methodologies in the teaching of literacy.. Group work was also the most frequently mentioned aspect in BLP/M that complements PCAR. Overall, it was noted that in 70 % of the classes, the teacher led the class through reading or singing while pupils followed. Similarly, in 50% of the classes, teachers engaged pupils by asking one of them to lead the whole class in identifying or

saying a letter, reading a word or a sentence and the rest of the classmates follow. Independent work was observed in 5 classes while only 3 teachers engaged pupils in pair work. One teacher (Mtunthama) engaged pupils in using the Story Star, Character Map, and games. At Bowe, after the teacher used the Song Poster, she engaged the pupils in copying sentences, doing a word search on the poster, and making sketches of *chiwala* (grasshopper).

When estimating the level of pupil participation, it was determined that there were high levels ($\geq 80\%$ of learners) of engagement in the nine of the fifteen classes (63%), while the rest were at mixed levels ($\leq 80\%$ but $\geq 50\%$ of learners). Despite the impressive levels of participation, learners were largely engaged in repeating after the teacher or fellow pupil through chorus reading from the song poster; big book, or chalkboard. Four teachers (Bowe, Mponela I, Kongwe I, and Lufe) engaged pupils in meaningful question and answer sessions. At Bowe for example, the teacher, following the BLP/M lesson, engaged pupils in question and answer session to predict the story (*Kachiwala Kam'dambo*) from the title, why/what/who of the picture. Text Box 1 below exemplifies a high cognitive level engagement of pupils throughout the reading process (pre, during, and after reading) as observed at Mponela I.

Text Box 1: Portrait of a Learner Centered Approach in Teaching Literacy from a BLP/M Lesson

The teacher began the class by asking pupils to report on the previous day's assignment about family member chores. She then introduced the Song Poster "*Kodi Mnyumba Mwasesa*" and leads them into singing. Later she asks a pupil to lead as she draws a table with two columns: one for family member and the second, the chores they do or are responsible for doing.

Then during a reading activity, she actively engaged them in filling the table by mentioning a family member and the describing the chores they perform. She completes this pattern for six different members, remembering to differentiate the two genders. She reads each chore, breaking the syllables to model to children and then ask them to repeat after her as she completes each family member's chores. As a post reading activity, she tells them, now we are going to write a short story about what we have just done. She revisits aspects of stories; that they contain a title, the story etc. She asks for suggestions for a title about their story. She takes several pupils suggestions and finally accepts one that was more appropriate. Afterwards, she models by offering the first sentence and writes it on the board. She asks pupils to offer sentences and she writes as they do until, surely but slowly, these little ones provided sentences until all family members' were done. She then reads aloud the entire story and asks them to read. She tells them that tomorrow they will make a Big Book. She ends with the children singing from the song poster again.

2.3.4 Modeling Reading Behavior to Pupils

To "create a nation of readers and writers through a sustainable literacy model"¹⁸, teachers must model good literacy habits and a love for reading. To achieve this, teachers are compelled to model and nurture good reading habits that will arouse curiosity, interest, and a love for reading. Learners with these habits will in turn apply them to their own learning and likely improve learning outcomes. The BLP/M therefore expected teachers to model meaningful reading habits by using the materials provided and the teaching methodologies they were trained for such as the Teacher read Aloud.

When asked if their learners had developed a love for reading, teachers readily described how they teach reading as ways of modeling good reading habits. For example: making sentence cards and

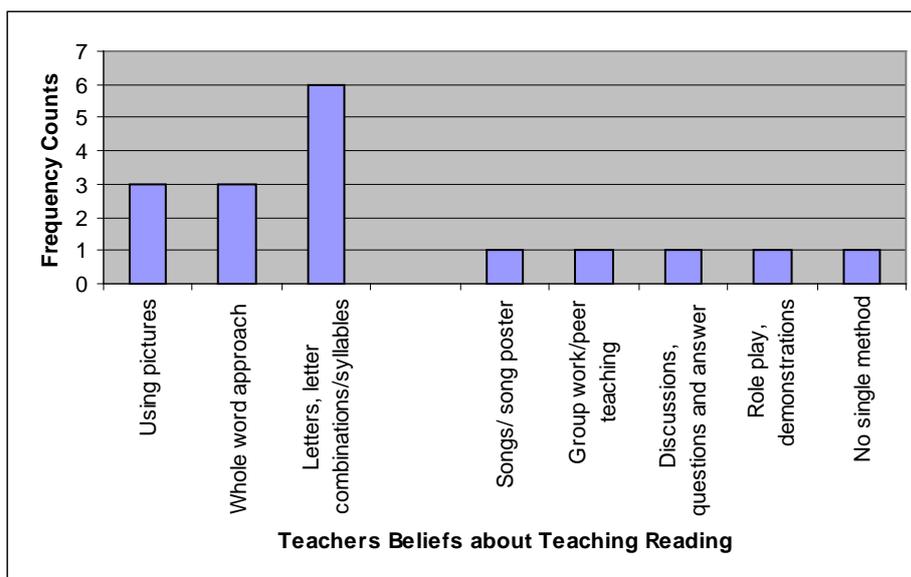
¹⁸ PSSP:SFP document

putting them in the reading corner, and using charts and using articles found in newspapers. Teachers were hopeful that through these methods, pupils would develop a love for reading. The teacher at Mponela I where children had congregated to check out Big Books and song posters she was displaying for the first time, interpreted this behavior as a sign of a love for reading.

2.3.5 Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching Literacy

What teachers believe about teaching children to read and write is a critical factor in implementing literacy reforms. Most often, the way teachers learned how to read and write and how they were taught to teach reading and writing shape their beliefs. Teachers whose beliefs align with those advocated in a reform initiative are more likely to be effective in implementing the program than those whose beliefs are different. The research team asked teachers how they thought children should be taught to read. Figure 2 below summarizes the teachers' beliefs.

Figure 3: Teacher Beliefs about Teaching Reading



Overall, teaching letters and letter combinations or syllables was the most frequently (6 times) mentioned belief about teaching reading and writing, followed by using pictures and the whole word approach. Teachers believed that children should be taught letters of the alphabet first then the letter combinations or syllables that make up words before reading the whole word. Examples of justifications supporting these beliefs:

- It is really difficult for a child to know words quickly
- Pupils should learn letter by letter not the whole word because they are not getting it, instead they just memorize

Another widely held belief for teaching reading and writing was using pictures or asking pupils to draw pictures. Thus teachers perceived the teaching of reading and writing to include visual cues to stimulate thinking and build interest among learners. Teachers considered showing pictures before teaching words was critical:

because when the child looks at the picture, the child should be able to say what s/he thinks about it...not being told what to do... the teacher should provide pictures and engage children in question and answer (Bowe)

Teaching the whole word was another belief teachers held. They felt that “pupils need to read the whole word at once so that they know it, not the single letters because there is no meaning there” (Mponela

l). Providing pupils with opportunities to work in groups as well as allow older students to teach those in early grades would promote the teaching of reading and writing. Teachers were aware of a greater number of approaches to teach reading. Teachers in these schools would therefore be able to integrate several approaches in teaching reading. To this effect, one teacher at Lufe school did not believe that there is a single method that surpasses all others but that *“all methods work together and the trick is for the teacher to know the levels of knowledge of the pupils and give them challenging tasks that will open them up”*.

2.3.6 Teacher Performance

One of the targets set for improving teacher performance was the number of teachers trained and applying literacy strategies. In 2007 and 2008, the targets were 60% and 80%, respectively. Prior to the launching of BLP/M, a teacher observation tool was administered in 2006. Upon completion of the 5 cycle INSET trainings, staff monitored and supervised teachers to assess classroom practice in 2007, while accommodating for the nation wide introduction of PCAR. In addition, the BLP/M Fidelity Tool was developed for conducting classroom observations but was not implemented until January 2008. The observation reports *“showed that teacher performance [is] improving...more teachers were using TALULAR such as name cards, set up science and reading corners, integration of learner participatory methods, and effective teaching of literacy (manipulatives, reading aloud to pupils, and using reading materials)¹⁹*.

When BLP/M rolled out in January 2008, the BLP/M Fidelity Tool was used for classroom observations. A composite score was calculated from the five constructs that the tool measures. A greater proportion (40%) of male than female (33.3%) teachers were observed to apply the strategies what they learned during the BLP/M trainings, although on aggregate, the proportion fell short (38%) of the set 60% target.

The present evaluation also estimated teacher performance from lesson observations (this section) and interviews with teachers and district staff. As already reported, a greater proportion of the teachers were applying BLP/M strategies emphasized during training for all three terms. In addition, reports of supervision that project staff periodically produced were reviewed. However, the summaries of these reports assessed teachers in general not necessarily the standard I teachers and generally assessed them to be doing well. Interviews with the *DEM, CPEA, and DOPE*, revealed similar judgments about teachers because *“children are writing after one term, doing a good job”*.

From a zonal perspective, ZOCs judged teachers' performance to be better than what it was prior to BLP/M, although the degree of change varied. Additional positive attributes teachers were developing included creating child friendly learning environments, increased self and teacher efficacy as shown in volunteering to serve as facilitators during insets, commitment to teaching as a career – *‘not as a subsidiary job’*, and a general positive change in attitude. They said teachers vowed that they *“haven't started yet, we have a good system of doing things”*.

2.3.7 Conclusion

The results in this section covered the impact of BLP/M strategies on teaching. A greater proportion of the teachers are mostly applying The Teacher Read Aloud and the BLP/M song posters. But a smaller proportion of teachers are also using The Story Star, Theme Web, Character Map, and Big Books. Teachers are using these literacy strategies to teach content. The theme-based organization inherent in the BLP/M materials facilitates this integration. Teachers engaged learners during instruction through read aloud, singing, interactive writing, copying words and sentences, and drawing sketches of characters read in big books or Song Posters. Teachers held a range of beliefs about teaching reading to children although more teachers believed that teaching reading through letters and their combinations was the most effective. Others also mentioned teaching the whole

¹⁹ PSSP:SFP document, page 64

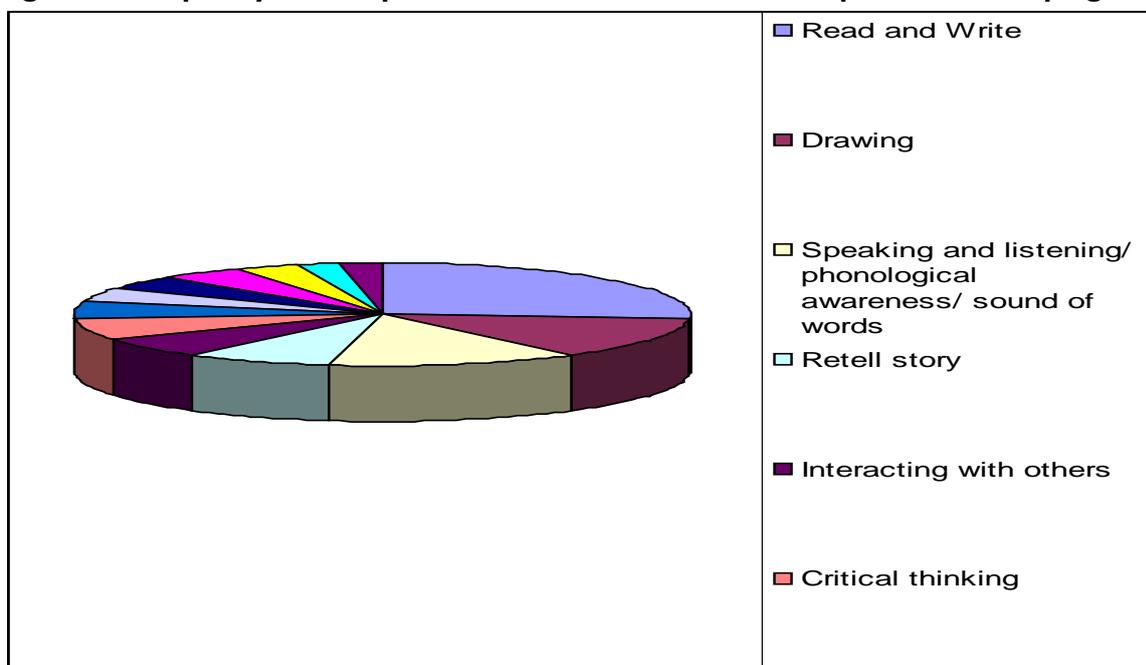
word was the best way. Other beliefs concerned using pictures to stimulate thinking and group work.

2.4. BLP/M IMPACT ON LEARNING

2.4.1 Literacy Competences

The evaluation investigated whether learners were achieving intended outcomes of BLP/M. Teachers described the skills learners were developing in the BLP/M as summarized in the figure below:

Figure 4: Frequency of Competences Teachers Mentioned Pupils are Developing



As shown in Figure 3 above, BLP/M learners are mostly developing reading and writing skills, drawing, and speaking and listening to gain phonemic awareness. Pupils were mostly reading as a whole class following the teacher or a more capable classmate. In few instances teachers called upon pupils to read sentences or point at target words on the chalkboard, in BLP/M Big Books and Song Posters. Other teachers (Boma, Dowa I, and Kawere) enriched the chorus reading with individual reading from these sources. Although a number of pupils were failing to read, it was more pronounced at Gawamadzi and Nalunga schools. Randomly selected pupils did best on identifying matching onsets of sounds of names of pictures but poorest on word naming and word recognition.

In terms of writing, a good proportion of pupils were able to copy from the board but others showed that they were still at the scribbling stage. An examination of their exercise books also showed the various stages at which children were. At Dowa I for example, while the class was engaged in creating a Class Big Book, as one of the BLP/M literacy strategy, up to 10 pupils just sat with their pencils but unable to write anything. The teacher explained that these pupils had just joined the class for the first time or were absent for a prolonged period. The same was true at Lufe school where some pupils still had name tags and failed to write even their names. The pupils drawn randomly to perform literacy tasks were also asked to write their names and a similar pattern was noted.

Drawing was another skill pupils demonstrated during the study. At one school, the teacher asked the pupils to draw a picture of themselves and tell a neighbor about it while at Bowe the pupils drew sketches of a character in a BLP/M Song Poster (grasshopper). In all classes, there was a lot of

singing and chanting. Teachers used these as a management strategy to signal an end to an activity, get pupils' attention, and singing from the song poster for instruction. In terms of retelling stories and critical thinking, no evidence was available to corroborate the teachers' claims.

2.4.3 *Developing a Love for Reading*

It was difficult to witness pupils love for reading except from teacher's own descriptions of what they did to model reading. These included making word cards and placing them in reading corners, and using charts. Other teachers mentioned that pupils come and look at Big Books or other materials they are displaying. For example, at Mponela I, the pupils congregated around a number of Big Books the teacher was displaying on a clothes line in the classroom. This can imply that the pupils would similarly check out books at the class library (reading corner) and the school library as well.

2.4.4 *Transfer of Literacy Skills to other Subjects*

The BLP/M Song Posters and Big Books purposefully integrated themes from standard one content areas. The evidence of literacy skills being transferred was that teachers were integrating content from other subjects and required pupils to read, write and draw in that content. The teacher would use a literacy strategy for engaging learners in the content. For example, at Mponela I, pupils composed a story about family members and their responsibilities using a chart. The Assistant Coordinator at Dowa I explained that she had observed a class where pupils created a short story about malaria using the Theme Web on a health topic. At Bowe the teacher used Story Star and Theme Web for content outside literacy.

2.4.5 *Conclusion*

BLP/M is building on skills that pupils bring from home (speaking, listening) and knowledge (stories, environment, agriculture etc) to teach reading, writing, and drawing. It was clear that pupils were at various stages of literacy development with others at beginning, emergent, and still others at advanced stages. Some of the pupils that failed to read and write were those that had joined school or were too young.

2.5 BLP/M LEARNING ENVIRONMENT/MATERIALS

2.5.1 *Nature and Availability of Reading Materials*

To support the acquisition of literacy among pupils, a number of materials were produced for the BLP/M program (see Part I section 3.2.). For the teacher, these included a Teacher's Guide with detailed unit and lesson plans. Teaching and Learning materials included: Song Posters, Big Books, Poem Posters, alphabet charts, Character Map Chart, Story Star, and Theme Web posters. The first term Big Books and Song Posters were generally fiction stories and characters in songs familiar to pupils. In Term 2, the Big Books and Song Posters dealt with themes or experiences of the immediate vicinity such as friends/friendship, visiting the village, and fire in the village. Third term materials extended these themes to embrace historical and political figures, occupational (socioeconomic), and life skills issues. The national anthem, stories of important political figures, history of the country, and the people of Malawi graced the content of the BLP/M Big Books and Song Posters. (See Appendix 4)

Teachers explained that there were not enough BLP/M materials to go round the overcrowded classrooms in both Terms I and II. Although only one Big Book and Song Poster is supposed to be used with the whole class, they may not be sufficient for all pupils especially those at the back of the class. Two or three copies in large classes might help ease this problem. Nonetheless, it was clear that materials were well supplied in some of the schools where they were visible.

2.5.2 Assessment of Resources and Materials

Teachers were asked to assess the materials in terms of appropriateness to pupils' learning needs and experiences, usefulness in supporting acquisition of literacy, and gender sensitivity. The materials for the third term were just arriving and teachers pointed out that they had not yet had an opportunity to assess them. Overall, teachers made positive observations about the materials. In terms of assessing if the content were developmentally appropriate for pupils, a greater proportion of teachers agreed stating that pupils bring with them skills and knowledge from home and BLP/M builds on those skills. For younger children who were below the entry age requirement, teachers felt they had not fully developed good coordination of their motor skills and cognitive prudence. In addition, teachers were of the opinion that doing a variety of tasks in one lesson was cognitively challenging for some of the pupils. Such pupils found it difficult to focus and persist with an activity and then move on to the next one. Some words and sentences were too long and posed hurdles for cognitive processing.

Teachers judged the materials, especially the BLP/M Song Posters and alphabet charts to be useful for teaching initial word recognition to young children. For children to see in print words they sing, and see individual letters was helpful. Teachers particularly mentioned that Big Books are making it easy for children to have exposure to print and learn the skills associated with print concepts.. Another feature of the Big Books was the illustrations that motivated and increased learners' interest to read as exemplified below:

The pictures are interesting and draw learners' attention to the story,... help them understand the story better as the pictures reinforce what they will read in the story, and show them where a story is taking place, or how the character will develop (Mtunthama)

Teachers judged books to be gender sensitive because they included girls and women. They cited *Ine ndi Anzanga* as a story about girls playing a predominantly male sport (soccer) in Malawi. Two of the Term 3 big books were about female political figures and one focused on a woman running a grocery store.

Other assessments dealt with the materials being readily usable as they reduced teachers' workload. They mentioned that they do not have to prepare any unit (schemes of work) and lesson plans because the teachers' guides contain specific methods, lessons, and activities to follow as well as resources. This greatly reduced their burden and freed them up to focus on other aspects of the teaching and learning process such as preparing instructional aids. Although ZOCs were generally in agreement with this assessment, they regarded the custom to have tended to kill teacher creativity in planning lessons and creating activities to teach: *now teachers want everything done for them* (ZOC meeting). The large font size was also another strength of the Big Books. Finally, teachers considered the graphic organizers -Character Map, Theme Web, and Story Star –as greatly extend children's comprehension of stories read.

2.5.3 Use of Materials to Support Literacy Development

Learning environment has notable influence on lesson delivery, learner motivation, as well as pupil participation in the leaning process. Generally, the realities of large classes, insufficient materials, and lack of secure storage facilities compound the challenges of the learning environment by creating unpleasant environment for learning in general and inefficient and ineffective methods for teaching reading in particular. Instructional time is wasted on managing overcrowded, noisy classes, and having to make do with insufficient materials. In the present evaluation, the focus on learning environment and materials was the availability of BLM/P materials, how well teachers used them, teacher made materials (TALULAR), and print from children' environment.

PSSP:SFP staff supplied materials in the schools relatively well. Overall, learning materials of a variety of quantity and quality were displayed in all 15 classrooms. Below are two patterns of how teachers displayed materials.

Table 1: Pattern of Displaying Materials

- Big books, song posters, alphabet charts, and teacher made visual aids were very visible in some schools (Dowa I, Lufe, and Kongwe I), and looked used.
- At Bowe, there were only three Song Posters that appeared not to have been used. The situation was well amplified at Mponela I where pupils congregated to check out Song Posters other charts and new Big Books hang on a cloths line at the back of the class

Teachers used BLP/M Big Books and Song Posters for reading stories, teaching phonemic awareness, and integrating them with content. As described in section 3.4, the BLP/M literacy strategies were integrated with content such as good health practice, road safety, citizenship, and history. Skills for print concepts, and story structure were also used with the Song Posters, as exemplified by the class observed at Mponela I. The singing from the posters also engaged learners in the lessons, and topics, and helped them make connections to their prior knowledge of the song to the new lessons. Finally, teachers mentioned that the BLP/M Song Posters, and Big Books serve as springboards for instruction in reading, writing, letter combinations, and supporting themes under study. Thus, the songs help pupils see the words they sing in print form, to see the symbols of the sounds they sing and so facilitate learning to read. The materials help in building vocabulary through creative word play. The Character Map, Theme Web, and Story Star supported children's comprehension of stories read.

2.5.4 Conclusion

The results have shown that teachers received a variety of materials ranging from a Teachers Guide with detailed unit and lesson plans, to Big Books, Song Posters, Alphabet Charts, Poem Posters, Character Maps, Theme Webs, and Story Star charts. Although the materials were available, the complications of large classes made them inadequate in some schools since many pupils were laboring to look at them.

BLP/M increased resources at school and expanded opportunities for exposing pupils to print. Teachers generally had positive judgments about the Big Books and found them to be appropriate for learners' needs, gender-sensitive, and with attractive illustrations. The books were useful in teaching acquisition of literacy because they served as a springboard for developing print concepts, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, reading, and drawing. The fact that unit and lesson plans were already prepared, lessened teacher workload and provided much needed time for creating teaching and learning aids although some ZOCs regarded it to compromise teacher creativity.

3. BRIEF DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 BRIEF DISCUSSIONS

The preceding section has shown that BLP/M has a number of components such as a Teacher's Guide with detailed unit and lesson plans, Teaching Materials (Song Posters and Big Books); TOT Guides and a Fidelity Observation Tool. Teachers and other beneficiaries received training in skills and competences that allowed them to implement the BLP/M program. In addition, the PSSP;SFP training added training in using teaching aids, planning school based insets, and learner participatory methods.

In addition, the INSET training for Headteachers and district staff was complementary to BLP/M as it assisted them in keeping and managing school records, supervision, assessment, and school and community relationships. These useful skills will benefit schools and communities to continue with the program long after its project life expires.

What PSSP:SFP with BLP/M as a primary feature, has done is to create a community of educators that has begun to generate a common understanding of and common language for literacy, learning, and promoting schooling processes. MoE, GoM, and the donor community can use this community to guide in capacity building, development of materials, and designing monitoring and support mechanisms. The short training period can always be resolved by extending the time so that teachers are well grounded in the concepts.

Pupils, in the infant section need a firm foundation in literacy to help them learn throughout their schooling process. If pupils' literacy skills in general and learning outcomes in particular are to be achieved, then teachers must possess a firm grasp of literacy and how it should be taught. Reading skills such as letter naming and phonemic awareness are characterized as the most influential of predictors of later reading and schooling success (Cunningham, 1990; Phillips, Norris, & Mason, 1996). If our pupils do not master these, then a quality education for all is unattainable. In case of the cascade mode of training, more teachers who have a deep knowledge of literacy, i.e. who translate policies into actual practice on the ground need to be included. In addition, school based insets will need to be intensified so that all teachers gain the skills from those who were trained.

The lesson observations revealed that teachers were applying some of the BLP/M strategies effectively. As a result, learners were developing reading, writing, and drawing skills. Although not necessarily expected to apply all 15 strategies in one lesson, teachers applied the strategies as emphasized during the three BLP/M trainings. Although vocabulary activities were not emphasized, they were a recurrent strategy in all three terms. Only word search strategy was observed in 5 of the classes.

As regards to thinking aloud, teachers appeared to model more of the writing/tracing of letters rather than meaningful modeling of actual think aloud as it was conceived. In a think loud, teachers verbalize their thoughts as they read aloud to children to model to them how the mind works during reading (Davey, 1983). Teachers did not display application of thinking aloud for comprehension. Teachers will need explicit instruction and guided practice themselves so that they transcend modeling writing letters to: i) one that models to children how to figure out the sounds, words, ii) make a prediction of what happens in the story and a rationale, iii) describe the images forming in their minds according to information they are reading, iv) make connections between prior knowledge and the information they are reading, v) saying out loud a confusing point, and vi) demonstrate comprehension strategies (Vacca & Vacca, 2002).

The low levels of application of other strategies may also speak volumes about the academic background of teachers. Lately, it is trendy for primary school teachers to retake subjects at MSCE level to upgrade themselves. In principle, upgrading academic qualifications expands the teachers' knowledge in the content. However, given that many of them sit for the same subject multiple times before they attain credible scores, it is likely that the knowledge takes a long time to be internalized and applied into classroom practice. In and of itself, it amplifies the problem of weak academic background. NESP stipulates that teacher candidates "may lack some basic skills"²⁰. This is important as effective teachers matter significantly more than particular curricular materials, pedagogical approaches, or proven programs (Taylor, 2002). Extended training period will allow teachers comprehend the new and complex concepts and routines. This suggests that although teachers are being trained and oriented to new thinking in the field of literacy, they may not have sufficient academic background to fully uphold and apply what they learn to improve learning outcomes. By extension, the cascade model of training may also not be the only answer to train the vast numbers of teachers.

Obviously, a greater proportion of participants was highly engaged and followed the transactions during the BLP/M TOT sessions. Training for teachers must help them link theory to practice as well as creating theories to practice. The mode of training followed in BLP/M should be integrated with other modes of training to improve teachers' understanding of the material. Selection of trainers must consider not only staff positions but also caliber and ability to effectively train and coach others. If a wrong person is chosen because they hold the desired position, many teachers will not learn the concept. This will impact on NESP plans to improve quality of primary school teachers.

The results also showed that teachers held views about how children ought to be taught reading. These beliefs frequently come from the ways that teachers themselves have been taught to read and write, and how they have been taught to teach reading and writing. Many of the teachers believed that children should first be taught the letters of the alphabet, then the letter combinations or syllables that make up the words before reading the whole word. The BLP/M program, on the other hand advocates for a balanced approach that focuses on the whole word. It is encouraging that teachers were able to find ways in the BLP/M's approaches to integrate with their own perspectives on reading.

In implementing reforms, goals and philosophies of implementers and those advocating them should correspond. Johnston (1997) argues that when teachers teach, their beliefs about knowledge, language, and literature influences interactions with their learners (95). These beliefs influence "literate exchanges with children... within which they develop their conceptions of themselves as literate individuals (95). If teachers' beliefs subscribe to the narrow conceptions of literacy and how it should be learned, pupils will likewise develop limited literate constructs that will affect their learning of literacy and consequently schooling success.

Fountas and Pinnell (2001) argue that reading and discussions about literature develop "sophisticated levels of thinking" among children as they use language and visual images to construct their thinking (259). The 21st Century demands children who are able to demonstrate high levels of thinking as they negotiate multiple words and possible lives around themselves. Strategies taught in BLP/M lessons demonstrate these possibilities for Malawian children. The indicators for achieving the intended outcomes also provide guarantees that children can develop read words they sing, write their names, copy sentences, and draw characters read in a story.

Smith and Read (2005) point out that "[C]hildren internalize the language patterns they hear, even without explicit instruction" (78). However, in learning to read, children will require explicit instruction. Teachers will have to incorporate more reading activities for deliberate and focused instruction to engage children in reading. BLP/M has great reading extension activities but will need

²⁰ National Education Sector Plan, (2007)

to target more on word recognition skills to build pupils' vocabulary. Word play activities also need to be intensified to help pupils expand their vocabulary. Pupils could be given a separate exercise book where they write vocabulary they are learning, stories, and drawings. If every day pupils performed these activities, it will provide consistent practice and development. It will also demonstrate their growth in developing literacy.

The results also showed that teachers received materials to support the teaching of BLP/M. The results further revealed that although teachers have a relatively ample supply of materials, not all of teachers use them during instruction, let alone display the materials. Many lessons in Malawian classrooms are delivered without teaching and learning materials to support their delivery. This is likely to promote rote learning, but more dangerously, cosmetic teaching of the content under study. Pupils will be held back in developing print concepts and other components of literacy by a, reduced time for looking at print and reading opportunities. The love of reading and other good reading habits might be unduly influenced if pupils do not have access to and experience with print materials. Environmental print, TALLULAR, and especially, learners' work were not available in many schools. Undeniably, the BLP/M materials increased pupil access to print as well as enriching their learning environment and process. Simply having resources without using them will not guarantee that children will read.

In the same vein, to have materials and not to use them is beyond reason. These materials help create a climate for developing both language and cognitive capabilities that form the foundation for reading. Norton (2007) reiterates that it is children's "cognitive development that influences their ability to learn and make decisions about what they read... hear and see" (49). However, in case of storage of materials, teachers found ways around the problem and simply took the materials with them or kept them in the headteacher's office if it considered secure.

Pupil engagement only showed that pupils were following the teacher or a more capable peer. However, pupil engagement should go beyond the initial parroting of words and sentences on the Song Poster and Big Books to engage learners in question and answer and discussion sessions outside pointing to letter or words. Rather the questions should elicit high level thinking through making predictions, relating to own experiences, suggesting a rationale, and making judgments

Teachers were obviously teaching amid challenges of understaffing, large classes, underaged pupils, absenteeism, and poor storage facilities. Overcrowded classrooms complicated availability of materials because the BLP/M Song Posters and Big Books for example, were not visible to scores of children. The quality of education is affected in classes with too many children. The ministry needs to provide classrooms and more importantly sufficient teachers to handle the pupils.

Underaged pupils pose another challenge as these pupils may not be developmentally ready to learn the necessary skills that standard I children are learning in order to read and write. Underage pupils contribute to numbers of pupils failing to read and write. Absenteeism affected the teaching and learning process because it hindered learners from continuing to build and expand their knowledge because of intermittent attendance. Teachers who are faced with a different group of learners every day cannot offer quality education as learners will have conceptual gaps in their knowledge.

The teachers in this evaluation have shown that action research provided a process for them to tackle problems such as understaffing or overcrowding. At Bowe and Lufe schools where understaffing was acute, teachers organized themselves and managed all classes. The teachers at Lufe even found time to create the most resourceful school with a full-fledged TALULAR bank. GoM, MoE, and their development partners still share the bulk of responsibility to provide adequate resources for schools to run. NESP stipulates to "increasing teaching inputs improve learning outcomes and also to "reduce class size to facilitate more effective learning through progressively recruitment of teachers" (11). Nonetheless, in the absence of such efforts, action research is a viable tool for continued efforts toward providing education to Malawian children.

3.2 CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation has shown that teachers and beneficiaries have gained a repertoire of strategies for effective sustainability of the BLP/M program. An entry point for MoE, GoM, and donors, is that these beneficiaries are capable of taking a lead on rolling out efforts. To some extent, teachers' beliefs corresponded to principles followed in BLP/M. A greater majority of the teachers held an expanded view of teaching reading. This connection assisted teachers in applying strategies based on the notions and philosophies advocated by the BLP/M program planners.

Pupils developed a wide range of skills such as reading from Song Posters and Big Books; writing their names, sentences and short stories, creating big books; and drawing various illustrations. BLP/M has demonstrated that when children encounter literacy instruction based on their lived experiences in a language they understand using strategies grounded in a well-balanced literacy approach, they can acquire skills necessary for their life long learning journey. BLP/M is the best program to introduce children to literacy instruction because it brings in resources that expose children to a print rich environment of familiar songs and stories. Most of all, BLP/M has created a community of educators with a common understanding and discourse for literacy, learning, and schooling.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section offers recommendations for to promote adaptation of the program:

I. Improving Teachers' Ability to Teach and Promote Literacy

- i) Teachers need to collaborate across grades. Teachers who have been trained in BLP/M can work with those who have not. There is need to intensify the concept of cluster leaders to develop literacy coaches to train others to apply the strategies in their content areas and oversee the teaching and learning of literacy in schools.
- ii) Rearrange the timetable so that BLP/M comes in the morning. Both the teacher and pupils are tired by the time BLP/M came around.
- iii) Teachers need to make deliberate plans for differentiated instruction to cater for the varied instructional levels of the pupils. Although at the back of their minds teachers may recognize the various instructional needs of their learners, without a well thought out plan to differentiate the content, materials as well as methods of teaching, it is unlikely that the goal will be achieved.
- iv) Teachers should explicitly model reading behaviors beyond reading T/L materials (songposters, big books, class reader). Bringing books, newspapers and showing children that they are reading, sharing a book/article/story they read, and discussing books will model to children and promote a love for reading. The same classroom materials could be used where this is not possible but deliberate efforts must be made to model behaviors of good readers
- v) Teacher education must be reformed to equip teachers with comprehensive understanding of how the reading process works by introducing more comprehensive literacy courses. Reading courses should be core curricular subjects so that it is a requirement for every teacher to take several literacy courses to make every teacher a teacher of literacy.

- vi) Integrate cascade training with other modes of training and more teachers to participate because they are implementers of reform.
- vii) Develop national reading/literacy assessments for each section (infant-standard 2, junior-standard 4, and senior-standard 6) before pupils reach standard 8 to check their proficiency levels and address instructional needs at appropriate times.

2. Enhancing Literacy Teaching and Learning Materials

- viii) Materials need to move beyond the current themes of family and home to engage learners in more challenging tasks. It is essential that initially learners experience familiar themes in the readings but then gradual adjusting to more challenging issues will promote both reading to learn.
- ix) More community engagement is needed to raise awareness and sensitize communities to keep school grounds and property safe. If vandalism of school property by community is reduced teachers will be able to hang and store teaching materials. A permanent feature of talking walls in the classroom will also contribute toward encouraging pupils to read and develop a love of reading.
- x) Teachers need to be encouraged to use the materials they have. Materials development should evolve as a whole school initiative (as done at LUFÉ) and deposited in a TALUALR bank so that all teachers have access to them when they need use them. If headteachers are nurtured as instructional leaders, they could lead this activity in the schools.
- xi) Create Song Posters for emergent readers that focus on phonological awareness (syllables and rhymes). For a beginning reader and even an emergent reader, it is helpful to have smaller units of text than dense text that will strain the pupils' cognitive processing as they strive to decode and make sense of the language symbols.
- xii) Allocate the best resources and classrooms to standard 1 and 2 pupils. The first years of schooling should be interesting and conducive to learning so that it encourages and motivates pupils to keep coming to school.

3. Mainstreaming BLP/M best Practices into Preservice and Inservice Systems

- xiii) Teacher education must be reformed to equip teachers with comprehensive understanding of how the reading process works by introducing more comprehensive literacy courses. Reading courses should be core curricular subjects so that it is a requirement for every teacher to take several literacy courses to make every teacher a teacher of literacy. The content (essential components of reading and writing and the learning outcomes) used during training and implementation of BLP/M should be used in the reading courses.
- xiv) Teachers could be encouraged to use action research in the teaching and learning of literacy. Assignments could require students to go into schools and identify problem areas and address them using knowledge and skills gained in their courses. They can then be asked to produce teaching and learning aids for the literacy problem they are addressing.
- xv) Preservice teachers could create their own Big Books, picture/scrap books and

Song Posters. Their pupils would use the picture/scrap books to write vocabulary, create stories, and illustrate them. In the end, they would share these so that each teacher has a variety of stories and songs to cater for the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of learners when they go out to teach.

- xvi) BLP/M teachers who have demonstrated exemplary teaching can be used as resource persons and help create BLP/M classrooms in the demonstration schools used by TTCs. The tutors can travel to the schools in Dowa to see for themselves and then take back the experience to incorporate into their own teaching.
- xvii) Develop a comprehensive national literacy framework and strategy housed in literacy standards and benchmarks across grade levels and communicated to teachers. The framework would then integrate teaching and learning principles or assumptions, teaching strategies aligned with the building blocks of literacy and assessments. This will work effectively with instituting mechanisms for adherence and strict promotion of learners who demonstrate satisfactory achievement of the set standards. The standards framework should be set as a separate document and explicitly communicated to teachers and teacher educators
- xviii) MIE literacy experts, teachers, DEM's office, and other BLP/M stakeholders need to collaborate with scholars well versed in literacy standards and their application to lead the reform in literacy and its teaching to inform reform in other content areas.
- xix) Literacy should be a school wide initiative so that teachers focus on developing pupils' literacy skills. The first school hours could be allocated to teaching literacy and teachers not teaching the first periods could come to assist standard 1 and 2 teachers with teaching literacy.

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APPENDIX BI: BLP/M FIDELITY WALK-THROUGH TOOL: INDIVIDUAL TEACHER FORM (FORM A)

Classroom Information

Date: _____ School: _____ Cluster _____ Zone _____
 Teacher: _____ Gender: _____ No. of learners _____ Girls _____ Boys _____
 Entry time: _____ Departure time: _____ Monitor: _____

**Check the indicator and record the evidence. Mark only by the indicators that you observe.
 (Note: the absence of a check mark does not mean that the indicator is not occurring. It means that you did not observe it.)**

BLP/M Units and Lesson Plans

Indicator	Evidence
_____ The teacher is in the appropriate unit ²¹	
_____ The teacher is following the BLP/M lesson plan ²²	
_____ The lesson relates to the appropriate learning outcome	
_____ The lesson relates to the appropriate lesson objective	

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Indicator	Evidence
_____ The class is using the song poster	
_____ The class/teacher is using the Teacher Read Aloud	
_____ The class/teacher is using the Teacher Think Aloud	
_____ The class is Drawing/Scribbling	
_____ The class is playing Scavenger Hunt	
_____ The class is playing BINGO	
_____ The class is using Bottle Cap Letters	
_____ The class is using the Story Star	
_____ The class is using the Character Map	
_____ The class is creating a Big Book.	
_____ The class is using a Theme Web	
_____ The class is doing Interactive Writing	
_____ The class is Planning a Class Trip	
_____ The class is using Environmental Print	
_____ Other (please describe)	

²¹ Teachers should be in the appropriate term and unit according to the date of the visit. Lessons may vary within the unit

²² Teachers may be adapting the lesson somewhat due to time and class readiness. However, the learning outcome and objective MUST BE followed.

²³ You should not necessarily see all BLP/M early literacy strategies as some are introduced in Term 2.

²⁴ This tool gets at use of the strategy; not at the effectiveness or quality. See BLP/M Teachers Guide for Strategy Description

Class Structures and Learner Participation

Indicator (Structure)	Evidence
____ Teacher-led whole class ²⁵	
____ Learner-led whole class ²⁶	
____ Independent work ²⁷	
____ Learner Groups ²⁸	
____ Other (describe)	

Indicator (Participation)	Evidence
____ Learners have multiple ways to display knowledge (speaking, pointing, writing, drawing, scribbling).	
____ Learners participate by asking and/or responding to questions and contributing.	
____ High engagement: $\geq 80\%$ of learners are engaged in the lesson	
____ Mixed engagement: $\leq 80\%$ but $\geq 50\%$ of learners engaged in the lesson	
____ Low engagement: $\leq 50\%$ but $\geq 20\%$ of learners engaged in the lesson	
____ No engagement: $\leq 20\%$ or learners engaged in the lesson	

BLP/M Learning Environment/Materials

Indicator	Evidence
____ Classroom exhibits BLP/M displays for learner reference: alphabet chart, song posters, Big Books	
____ Learners work is displayed (drawings, writing, scribbling)	
____ TALLULAR materials are used/evident	
____ Environmental print is displayed	

Additional Notes or Comment

²⁵ Teacher-led activity: in which all learners are doing the same thing

²⁶ Learner-led whole class: learner presentation in which all learners are doing the same activity

²⁷ Independent work: learners working alone on a common or individualized task

²⁸ Learner groups: learner groups working to accomplish a common task.

APPENDIX B2: TERM I BLP/M COURSE SYLLABUS

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/ Sounds (Letters/ Consonant Blends)	Materials (Alphabet)
<p>Unit 1</p> <p>All About Me</p> <p>(Wk 1-2)</p>	<p>Greetings (1, 2)</p> <p>Introductions (3, 4)</p> <p>Physical description (5)</p> <p>Body parts (6, 7)</p> <p>Daily routine (8)</p> <p>Counting/numbers (9, 10)</p>	<p>1.1 Recognize letters and differentiate from other types of print such as numbers and shapes (print awareness and letter knowledge) (9, 10)</p> <p>1.2 Identify words that have similar starting sounds (1, 2, 3, 4, 10)</p> <p>1.3 Write some letters of the alphabet and copies familiar words (3, 4, 5, 8)</p> <p>1.4 Predict story events or outcomes using illustrations and prior knowledge (5, 8)</p> <p>1.5 Know many letters of the alphabet and their one-to-one letter-sound correspondence and the order of letters in the alphabet (6, 7, 8)</p>	<p>Moni Alesi (1, 2, 3)</p> <p>Ine ndine mwana (4)</p> <p>Kamdothi thawa mvula (5, 8)</p> <p>Mwana John Walira (6, 7)</p> <p>Mwezi uwlale (9, 10)</p>	<p>Vocab: moni, Monica, Molesi, moto, moyo, mono, mondokwa (1); Alesi, kuti (2); bwanji, bwino, kodi (3); ine, mwana, atate, amayi (4); mlendo, dothi, dongo, mvula, mlambe (5); mutu, phewa, mchiuno, chifuwa, mawondo, zala (6); mwana, walira, kupweteka, Joni (7); thawa, msembe, nkhawa, agogo, msinkhi (8); numbers 1-10, modzi, wiri, tatu, nayi, sano (9, 10);</p> <p>Focus letters: m, n (1); k, t (2); b, u (3); l, n, e (4); k, d (5); p, z (6); j, w (7); t,m (8); s (9, 10)</p> <p>Sounds/ blends: mo, ni (1); ku, ti (2); bw, nd (3); ne, na (4); mv, ml (5); ph, za (6); mw, pw (7); th, ms (8); s (9, 10)</p>	<p><i>Pupils will have exercise books</i></p> <p>Song poster: Moni Alesi (1, 2, 3,)</p> <p>Song poster: Ine Ndine Mwana (4, 5)</p> <p>Song Poster: Mwana John Walira (6, 7)</p> <p>Song poster: Mwezi Uwale (9, 10)</p> <p>Big Book: Kamdothi thawa mvula (5, 8)</p>

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/ Sounds (Letters/ Consonant Blends)	Materials (Alphabet)
Unit 2 My Family (Wk 3-4)	Family composition (1) Family names (2) Family roles (3) Cooperation; love for one another (4, 5) Respect for elders (6) Daily routine (7) Duties (8) Customs (9) Traditions (10)	2.1 Display that print is read from left to right, top to bottom, and that books are read front to back (3, 4, 8, 9) 2.2 Identify some familiar words in print such as own name (and names of family) (2, 5, 6, 10) 2.3 Write many letters, name, and some high frequency vocabulary (2, 3, 6, 7) 2.4 Use writing tools appropriately (pencils, crayons, chalk) (1, 5, 7, 8, 10) 2.5 Know many letters of the alphabet and their one-to-one letter sound correspondence and the order of letters in the alphabet (alphabetic principle) (1, 4, 5, 6, 9) 2.6 Identify syllables in some words (6, 7) (1.4) Predict story events or outcomes using illustrations and prior knowledge (3, 4)	Ine ndine mwana - I am the child (1, 2, 9) Mtsinkana wa dengu lowuluku (3, 4) story Kachule ka mdambo (6) Joni mwana wa chipongwe (7) Kalulu akana kukumba nawo chitsime (8) Kwiyo Kwiyo (10)	Vocab: mwana, atate, agogo, mchimwene, mchemwali (1,2); bamboo; malume (3); azakhali, agogo (4.); ntchito, lawo, lute (5); chule, madambo, kuzitama (6); mwana, mwambo, mwano (7); ndibwera, ndatopa, ndakana, lero (8); zamakolo, gule, (9); seletera, tenga (10) Focus letters: m, a ,l ,z (1, 2); n, b (3); z, g (4); a, t, l (5); m (6); m, w (7); n, d (8); z, g (9); t, s (10) Sounds/blends: mw-, nd, mch (1, 2); za zu; ga, gu (4); t.l and vowels (5); mb, ch (6); mw (7); nd (8); ta-tu, sa, su (10)	<i>Pupils will have exercise books</i> Song Poster: Ine Ndine Mwana (see Unit 1) and (1, 2, 9) Song Poster: kachule Ka Mdambo (6) Song Poster: Joni mwana wa chipongwe (7) Song Poster: Kwiyo, Kwiyo (10) Big Book: Mtsinkana dengu lowuluku (3, 4) story Big Book: Kalulu akana kukumba nawo chitsime (8) <u>TALULAR</u> Bottle cap letters (1, 2) Dice (6, 9) Matchbox words (9)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/ Sounds (Letters/ Consonant Blends)	Materials (Alphabet)
Unit 3 Review and Assess- ment (Wk 5)	Greetings and introductions (1) Body parts (2) Counting/numbers (3) Family Roles and family names (4, 5)	1.1 Recognize letters and differentiates from other types of print such as numbers and shapes (3) 1.3 Write some letters of the alphabet and copies familiar words (1, 3) 1.4 Predict story events or outcomes using illustrations and prior knowledge (1) 1.5 Know many letters of the alphabet and their one-to-one correspondence and the order of the letters of the alphabet (1, 5) 2.1 Display that print is read from left to right, top to bottom, and that books are read from back to front (2) 2.2 Identify some familiar words in print such as name and names of family (2) 2.3 Write many letters, name and some high frequency vocabulary (4, 5) 2.4 Use writing tools appropriately (pencils, crayons, chalk) (4, 5) 2.6 Identify syllables in some words (4)	Moni Alesi (1) Kamdothi thawa mvula (1, 2) Mwezi Uwale (3) Ine Ndine Mwana (4, 5)	Vocab: names of family members (1, 2); numbers 1-10 (3); names of pupils (4). Mdzukulu; agogo, malume, zakhali (5) Focus letters: a, e, i, o, u (1, 3); k (2); from names of pupils (4) Sounds/blends: from names of pupils (4)	<i>Pupils will have exercise books</i> Song Poster: Moni Alesi (1) Song Poster: Mwezi Uwale (3) Song Poster: Ine Ndine Mwana (4, 5) Big Book: Kamdothi thawa mvula (1, 2) Character Map Poster (2) <u>TALULAR</u> Bottle Caps with letters (2, 4) Pupils' names on cards (2) Family member names on cards (5) Dice (4)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/ Sounds (Letters/ Consonant Blends)	Materials (Alphabet)
Unit 4 My School (Wk 6-7)	School activities (1, 2) Class routines (3, 4) Favourite activities (5, 6) Class instructions (7) School Supplies (8) Keeping school clean (9, 10)	4.1 Know the proper way to handle books/readers (1, 2, 6) 4.2 Predict story events or outcomes using illustrations and prior knowledge (4, 6, 7, 8, 10) 4.3. Draw or write unconventionally to convey meaning (1,3, 5, 8) 4.4 Identify syllables in some words (2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9) 4.5 Identify words that rhyme (8,10)	Kode nonse mwasamba (1, 2) Tsopano tahta kuphunzira (3, 4) Pamchenga (5,6) Mada woyiwalaiwala (6) Tiri Tiana Takusukulu (7) Kusukuku Nkwabwino (8) Zowola Zoipa (9, 10)	Vocab: sesa, lemba, sewera, meta (1); belu; yimba, moni, Malawi (2); phunzira, phunzitsa; phunziro (3); tsopano, teska, chitseka (4); konda, kodwa, kondwa (5); pensulo, sukulu, aphunzitsi, belu (6); tikupita, tikadye, tsalani (7); pansi, psnsulo, nkweri, nkwawo (8); kusukulu, kusamala, kusesa (9); zowola, zinyalala, zonunkha, zoipa (10) Focus letters: s, m (1); m, b (2); p, h, n, z (3); t, s (4); k, d (5); k, p (6); t (7); n, k, p (8); k (9); z (10) sounds/blends: sa, su (1); ph, nz (3); t,s, (4); k, o (5); be, ka (6); ta, te, ti, to, tu (7); ns, nkw (8); ku (9); zo (10)	<i>Pupils will have exercise books</i> Song Poster: Kode nonse mwasamba (1, 2, 3) Song Poster: Tsopano tahta kuphunzira (3, 4) Song Poster: Pamchenga (5, 6) Song Poster: Tiri Tiana Takusukulu (7) Song Poster: Kusukulu Nkwabwino (8) Song Poster: Zowola Zoipa (9, 10) Big Book: Mada woyiwalaiwala (6) Poster: Character Map (see School District of Philadelphia, page 34) (6) <u>TALULAR</u> Word tree (2) Dice with letter blends (ta, te, ti, to, tu) (7) BINGO cards (9)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/ Sounds (Letters/ Consonant Blends)	Materials (Alphabet)
Unit 5 My Home (Wk 8-9)	Animals in the home (1, 2, 3) Objects in the home (4, 5) Keeping home clean (6, 7) Love of home (8, 9) Daily chores (10)	5.1 Know that print appears in different forms (labels, story books) and serves different purposes (e.g., to inform) (1, 3, 4, 8, 9) 5.2 Know many letters of the alphabet and their one-to-one letter-sound correspondence and the order of letters in the alphabet (alphabetical principle) (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9) 5.3 Write many letters of the alphabet (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) 5.4 Read familiar print in the environment (5, 6, 7, 10) 5.5 Write familiar print in the environment (2, 5, 10)	Tambala walira kokoliliko (1, 2) Kwiokwiyo (3) Galasi n'landani (4) Pakhomo pamunthu pafunika ziti (5, 7) Zowola Zoyipa (6 and Unit 4) Moto Kumudzi (8, 9) Kodi mnyumba mwasesa (10)	Vocab: tambala, walira, kokoliliko (1); nkukhu, anapiye, thazi, nthenga, lira, kokoliliko, dzira (2); kwiyokwiyo, kankhuku, kambuzi, kang'omb (3); galasi, mng'ono, wanga (4); nkhwangwa, nkhwere, nkhwali (5); zoyipa; idya; wadya, tadya (6); bafa, chimbudzi, dzengi, khitichini, nyumba, thandala (7); kunyumba, chabwino, chimoto (8) mudzi, dzina, dzulo, dzana (9); chapa, phika, sesa, sita, zila (10) Focus letters: t. m (1, 2); k (3); g (4); w (5); y, d (6); b (7); u (8); d (9); z (10) Sounds/blends: mb, ko (1); ra, re, ri, ro, ru (2); kw (3); ng' (4); nkhw; wa, we, wi, wo, wu (5); dya, dye, dyi, dyo, dyu (6); tch, ntch (7); dz (9); ph (10)	<i>Pupils will have exercise books</i> Song Poster: Tambala walira kokoliliko (1, 2) Song Poster: Kwiokwiyo (3) Song Poster: Galasi n'langani (4) Song Poster: Pakhomo pamunthu pafunika ziti (5, 7) Song Poster: Zowola Zoyipa (6 and unit 4) Song Poster: Kodi mnyumba mwasesa/mwazira (10) Big Book: Moto Kumudzi (8, 9) Story Star Poster (9) (School District of Philadelphia, page 39) <u>TALULAR</u> Environ print: wrappers, bags, etc. (1) Bottle cap letters/blend: dya, dyi, dyo, dyu (6); tch, ntch (7) Objects from home: broom, kitchen utensils (10)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/ Sounds (Letters/ Consonant Blends)	Materials (Alphabet)
Unit 6 Assessment and Review; Preparation for Literacy showcase (Week 10)	School activities (1) Class instructions (2) Keeping home clean (3) Objects in the home (4) Daily chores (5)	4.1 Know the proper way to handle books/readers (1, 2) 4.2 Predict story events or outcomes using illustrations and prior knowledge (1, 2) 4.3 Draw or writes unconventionally to convey meaning (1, 2) 4.5 Identify words that rhyme (2) 5.1 Know that print appears in different forms (labels, story books) and serves different purposes (3) 5.3 Write many letters of the alphabet (4, 5) 5.4. Read familiar print in the environment (3, 4, 5) 5.5 Write familiar print in the environment (3, 4, 5)	Mada woyiwaliwala (1, 2) Zowola zoipa (3) Kodi mnyumba mwasesa (5)	Vocab: chipako, phada, fulaye, bawo (1); aja/paja; dzanja/panja (2); mankhwalal, makoswe ntchentche, udzudzu, mphemvu, zinyalala (3); nkhwangwa, nkuku (4); kudya, kutchetcha, kuthyola, kuwaza nkhuuni, kuphika (5) Focus letters: ch, ph (1); j + vowels (2); w, t, y (3) w, k, y (4); p, h (5) Focus sounds: ja-ju; nja, nju (2); nkhu; ngw, nk (4); ph (5)	<i>Pupils will have exercise books</i> Song Poster: Zowola Zoipa (3) Song Poster: Kodi mnyumba mwasesa (5) Big Book: Mada woyiwaliwala (1, 2) Big Books and pupil made books from previous lessons (2) <u>TALULAR</u> Items found in a household, such as empty bottles, wrappers, plastic bags, etc; Environmental print on empty bottles, wrappers, plastic bags, (3, 5) Fertilizer bags (4) Bingo cards (4)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/ Sounds (Letters/ Consonant Blends)	Materials (Alphabet)
Unit 7 Literacy Fair Week 11	Invitation letter (1) Songs (2) Big Books (3) Plan the literacy programme (4) Literacy fair (5)	7.1 Display songs, stories and other literacy activities to parents and community members (1-5)	Selected Songs and Stories from Units 1-6	Vocab: dear, love, names of family members (1); from selected songs (2); from selected Big Books (3); n/a (4,5) Focus letters/sounds: from invitation letters, selected songs, big books, literacy programme (1-5)	<i>Pupils will have exercise books</i> Selected Song Posters (Units 1-6) Selected Big Books (Units 1-6)

APPENDIX B3: TERM 2 BLP/M COURSE SYLLABUS

Standard 1 Term 2 (May-July)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/ Sounds (Letters/ Consonant Blends)	Materials
Unit 8 My Friends (Wk 1-2)	Physical description (1, 2) Likes (3, 5) Dislikes (4, 5) Days of week (6, 7) Favourite games and sports (8) Children's names (9, 10)	8.1 Identify syllables in unfamiliar words (1, 2, 9) 8.2 Identity rhyme in unfamiliar words (3, 4) 8.3 Uses letter sound knowledge to sound out unknown words when reading text (6, 7, 8, 10) 8.4 Uses letter sound knowledge to spell unfamiliar words (5, 10) 8.5 Reads and writes simple descriptive sentence(s) (1, 2, 3, 4, 9)	Moni Alice (1, 2) Kachiwala Kamdambo (3, 4) Mzanga Shawa (5) Tabwera kutola mtedza (6, 7) Mponda wa ku Mponela (8) My friends and I Anznaga (9, 10)	Vocab: friends name e.g Monica (1); physical descriptions of my friends, e.g., wamfupi (short), wamtali (tall), wakuda (dark in complexion), woyera (light in complexion), wonenepa (stout) (2); chiwala wala (3); foods (4); Shawa, Shema, Shira, Shona, Shuga (5); lamulungu (Sunday), lolemba (Monday), lachiwiri (Tuesday), lachitatu (Wednesday), lachinayi (Thursday), lachisanu (Friday), loweruka (Saturday) (6, 7); names of games, sports (8); children's names (9, 10) Focus letters: m (1); w (2, 3); p, y (4); s, h (5); l (6); c, h (7); m, p (8); n, z (9); dd, w (10) Sounds/blends: m + vowel (1); n +vowel (2); wa (3); pa, yu (4); sh (5); l+ vowel (6); ch + vowel (7); mp (8); nz (9); dw (10)	Song poster: Moni Alice (From Term 1, unit 1) (1, 2, 9) Song Poster: Kachiwala Kamdambo (3, 4) Poem Poster: Mzanga Shawa (5) Song Poster: Tabwera kutola mtedza (6, 7) Big Book: Mponda wa ku Mponela (8) Big Book: My friends and I (9, 10) Poster: pupils greeting each other (from unit 1) (1, 2) <u>TALULAR</u> Environmental print collection

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/ Sounds (Letters/ Consonant Blends)	Materials
Unit 9 My Village/ Township (Wk 3-4)	Animals in the village (1, 2) Directions (3, 10) Physical features (4, 5) Location (6, 7, 8, 9)	9.1 Reads simple lists, charts and/or maps (3, 4, 5, 7, 8) 9.2 Creates, writes, simple lists, charts and/or maps (3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10) 9.3 Reads and understands simple direction (4, 5, 6, 7, 10) 9.4 Writes simple directions (3, 4, 5, 6, 7) 9.5 Retell familiar story in own words (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10)	Bilmankhwe (1, 2) Kachiwala kam'dambo (3, 4) Kukaona kumudzi (visiting people at the village) (6, 7, 8, 9, 10)	Vocab: kwathu, kwayera, pakhomo, buluzi, mbalame, chiwala (1); khomo, khutu, maso, khungu,mutu (2); kachiwala, yimba, yenda, m'dambo, directional vocab (3); kumanja, kumanzere, kumpoto, kum'mwera, kuvuma, kuzambwe (4): kumpoto, kum'mwera, kumadzulo, kum'mawa, kumanja, kumanzere (5); luntha, lonjera, kuseli, kun'mawa, kumanja, kummwera (6); mfumu, ndiwo, mpunga, nyama, kabichi (7); ng'ombe, ng'amba, pang'ono (8); wokazinga, mkhuto, okandwa, njira (9); kwawo, phikira, anaganiza, mtengo, mudzi (10) Focus letters: w, e (1); s, o (2); y, l (3); v (4); z, w (5); j, l (6); d, u (7); b (8); r (9); w, u (10) Sounds/blends: th (1); kh (2); nd (3); v + vowels (4); m'mw, nz (5); nth (6); mp (7); n'g (8); ndw (9); ts (10)	Song Poster: Bilmankhwe (1, 2) Song Poster: Kachiwala kam'dambo (3, 4) (Unit 8) Big Book: Kukaona kumudzi (6, 7, 8, 9, 10) Class Made Big Books Animals (Unit 5 Lesson 3) (2) Poster: Character Map (7) (Term 1 Unit 3) Poster: Story Map (8) <i>(See pp A49 school district of Philadelphia)</i> TALULAR Bottle cap letters/blends (6) Character Maps (7) Story Bags (9)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/ Sounds (Letters/ Consonant Blends)	Materials
Unit 10 Review and Assess- ment (Wk 5)	Physical description (1) Days of the week (2) Animals in the village (3) Directions (4) Location (5)	8.1 Identify syllables in unfamiliar words (1, 2) 8.3 Uses sound letter knowledge to sound out unknown words when reading text (2) 8.5 Reads and write simple descriptive sentences (1) 9.1 Reads simple lists, charts and or maps (4, 5) 9.2 Creates, writes, simple lists, charts or maps (4) 9.4 Writes simple directions (4,5) 9.5 Retell familiar story/song in own words (3)	Kachiwala kamdambo (1, 4) Tabwera kutola mtedza (2) Bilimankhwe, Bilimankhwe (3) Kukaona anthu kumudzi (5)	Vocab: wamfupi (short), wamtali (tall), wakuda (dark in complexion), woyera (light in complexion), wonenepa (stout) (1); days of the week (2); Bilimankhwe, nanzikambe, kalilombe (3); khota, kumanzere, kum'mawa, kumanja, kumpoto (4); luntha, anthu (5) Focus letters: N+ vowels (1); l (2); k, w, l (3); h, t, j (4); n, t, h (5) Sounds/blends: Na+ vowels (1); L+vowel (2); nkhwe, nzi, mbe (3); kh, ta, nja (4); nth (5)	Song Poster: Kachiwala Kamdambo (1) Song Poster: Tabwera kutola mtedza (2) Song poster: Bilimankhwe, Bilimankhwe (chameleon chameleon) (3) Class Made Big Books about Animals (Term 1 Unit 5 Lesson 3 (3) Song poster: Kachiwala kam'dambo (4) Big Book: Kukaona anthu kumudzi (5) TALULAR: Clay models, puppets, paper cut-outs, etc, of various characters in the Big Books (3) Bottle cap letters (3) Story Bags containing props in the story Kukaona: bowl, plate, woman's hat, man's hat, bag for a little girl, chief's dress, a chitenje for Luntha; grocery items she is bringing to her people, a headcloth for the chief, etc. (5)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/ Sounds (Letters/ Consonant Blends)	Materials
Unit 11 Health and Hygiene (Wk 6-7)	Physical description (1) Days of the week (2) Animals in the village (3) Directions (4) Location (5)	11.1 Predicts and justifies what will happen next in stories (situations) (4, 10) 11.2 Uses letter-sound correspondence to spell unfamiliar words (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10) 11.3 Reads familiar sentences and simple stories with high frequency vocabulary (3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10)	Kodi m'mano mwatsuka. Adapted from Kodi nonse mwasamba (Term 1 Unit 4) (1) Kodi nonse mwasamba (Term 1 Unit 4) (2,5) Kodi mmaso mwasamba. Adapted from Kodi nonse mwasamba (Term 1 Unit 4) (3) Kodi tsitsi mwatsuka. Adapted from Kodi nonse mwasamba (Term 1 Unit 4) (4) Madzi ndiwo makwala (6) Ena sadya (7) Lafika dzinja (8) Mwana Jon Walira (from Term 1 Unit 1) (9) Zoila Zoipa (from Term 1 Unit 4) (10)	Vocab: samvera, tchena, vala, hama, hema, tiyenera, ngati (1); wina, wosatsuka, yenera, wosamvera, bwerani (2); kamanthongo, muphwa, chipwenene, adathandiza, zidali (3) meyenera, patsidya, yesnse, yemwem chidye, dyera, udyere (4); parts of the body (5); mankhwala, nkhalu, wosamba, konkha, wochapa, wodwala (6); meyenera, patsidya, yense, yemwe, chidya, dyera, udyerere,(7); funa, ndiwo, kufolera, ndalama, ndege, ndewu (8); pweteka, tipwa, Joni, jekeseni, jowa, jeda, (9); m'nyumba, mnyamata, mnyontho, mnyozo, sanenepa, sanasamale, nenedwa (10) Focus letters: v, t, h (1); w, r (2); d (3); y (4); t, s (5); w (6); r (7); f (8); j (9); n (10) Sounds/blends: tch (1); mv (2); phw (3); dy (4); ts, kh (5); nk (6) ; th (7); nd (8); pw (9); mny(10)	Song Poster: Kodi nonse mwasamba (from Term 1 Unit 4) (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) Song Poster: Madzi ndiwo makwala (6) Song Poster: Ena sadya (7) Song Poster: Lafika dzinja (8) Song Poster: Mwana Jon Walira (from Term 1 Unit 1) (9) Song Poster: Zoila Zoipa (from Term 1 Unit 4) (10) Class made Big Books (from prior units) (5) Class made Big Books on hygiene (lesson 5) (10) <u>TALULAR</u> Food: corn, beans, rice, (7) Bottle cap letters (8, 9) Teacher collected environmental posters depicting illness prevention (10)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/ Sounds (Letters/ Consonant Blends)	Materials
Unit 12 Safety (Wk 8-9)	Accidents in the home (1) Preventing accidents (2, 3) Accidents at school (4, 5) Road safety (6) Road signs and signals (7, 8, 9, 10)	12.1 Summarizes own stories/songs (orally) (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) 12.2 Writes with attention to (some) mechanical conventions (upper and lower case letters, left to right, top to bottom, full stop at the end of a sentence) (3, 4, 5, 10)	Kanguade wapanga ngozi (1, 2, 3, 4) Pokwera njinga yenda kumanzere (5) Mseu siwako (7, 8) Wadzilodza wekha (9, 10)	<p>Vocab: ngozi, moto, mpeni, magesti (1); mbawla, moto, zithaphwi, maenje (2); kwera, nyemba, chimanga (3); kugwa, gwera (4); gwera, bwera, kwera, dila, pera (5); msewu, ng'ombe, anthu, njinga, ziweto; galimoto, ngolo, ndege, sitima, ngalawa (6); akakugunda, tsoka, wadziyamba, road signs (7); mwesu, njinga, ngozi, pewa, sewera, ziweto (8); chikwangwani, mlatho, amalume, azakhaili (9, 10)</p> <p>Focus letters: n, g, (1); u (2); k, w, r, i (3); g, w (4); w, r (5); j (6); m (7); j, s (8); t, l (9); w, z (10)</p> <p>Sounds/blends: ng (1); mb (2); kw (3); gwa, gwe (4); bw, gw, ra (5); nj (6); ms (7); nj, ms (8); th, li (9); kwa, ngwa, za (10)</p>	Song Poster: Kanguade wapanga ngozi (1, 2, 3, 4) Song Poster: Pokwera njinga yenda kumanzere (5) Class-made Big Books from prior units (5) Song Poster: Mseu siwako (7, 8) Big Book: Wadzilodza wekha (9, 10) <u>TALULAR</u> Teacher collected environmental posters depicting common accidents from PCAR road safety program (1) Teacher collected safety prevention posters from PCAR, govt, Ngos (2) Bottle cap letters (5) Teacher collected words/symbols from road signs (7, 8)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/ Sounds (Letters/ Consonant Blends)	Materials
Unit 13 Review and Assess- ment (Wk 10)	Caring for my body: cleaning teeth, ears, face (1) Preventing Spread of Disease (2) Accidents in the home (3) Accidents at school (4) Road Signs (5)	11.1 Predicts and justifies what will happen next in stories (situations) (2) 11.2 Uses letter-sound correspondence to spell unfamiliar words (1, 2) 11.3 Reads familiar sentences and simple stories with high frequency vocabulary (1, 2) 12.1 Summarizes own stories/songs (orally) (3, 4) 12.2 Writes with attention to (some) mechanical conventions (upper and lower case letters, left to right, top to bottom, full stop at the end of a sentence (4, 5)	Kodi nonse mwatsuka mano (Term 1 Unit 4) (1) Zowola Zoipa (Term 1 Unit 4) (2) Kanguade wapanga ngozi (3) Wadzilodza wekha (5)	Vocab: parts of the body (1); m'nyumba, mnyamata, mnyonho, mnyozo (2); ngozi, moto, mpeni, magetsi (3); gwera, bwera, kwera, dila, pera (4); chikwangwani, mlatho, amalume, azakhali (5) Focus letters: t, s (1); n (2); n, g (3); w, r (4); w, z (5) Sounds/blends: ts, kh (1); mny (2); ng (3); bw, gw, ra (4); kwa, ngwa, za (5)	Song Poster: Kode nonse mwasamba? (Term 1 Unit 4) (1) Song Poster: Zowola Zoipa (2) Big Book: Wadzilodza wekha (5) Class Created Big Books from Other Units (1, 4) Class Created Big Books on hygiene (Unit 11) (2) Pupils' drawings from Unit 11 (1) <u>TALULAR</u> Environmental posters that depict illness prevention (2) Teacher collected picture of common accidents (3) Bottle cap letters (3)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/ Sounds (Letters/ Consonant Blends)	Materials
<p>Unit 14</p> <p>Literacy Fair</p> <p>(Wk 11)</p>	<p>Invitation letter (1)</p> <p>Songs (2)</p> <p>Big Books (3)</p> <p>Literacy Programme (4)</p> <p>Literacy Fair (5)</p>	<p>14.1 Display songs, stories and other literacy activities to family and community members (1,2,3,4,5)</p>	<p>Selected Songs and Big Books from Units 8-13</p>	<p>Vocab: dear, love, names of family members (1); from selected songs (2); from selected Big Books (3); n/a (4, 5)</p> <p>Focus letters/sounds: from invitation letters, selected songs, big books, literacy programme (1-5)</p>	<p>Selected Song Posters Units 8-13</p> <p>Selected Big Books Units 8-13</p> <p>Literacy Programme Agenda</p>

APPENDIX B4: TERM 3 BLP/M COURSE SYLLABUS

Standard 1 Term 3 (September-November)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/Sounds (Letters and Consonant Blends)	Materials (Pupils have blank exercise books)
Unit 15 The World of Work (Wk 1-2)	Daily chores (1, 2, 3) Farmer (4, 5, 10) Shoemaker (6, 10) Carpenter (7, 10) Shop Keeper (8, 10) Doctor (9, 10)	15.1 Dictate stories and personal narratives (1, 2, 3) 15.2 Read familiar sentences and simple stories with high frequency vocabulary (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) 15.3 Write familiar sentences and simple stories with high frequency vocabulary (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)	Kodi mnyumba mwasesa (1, 2, 3) Mlesi (4, 5) Timapanga nsapato (6, 7) Sitolo la a Mataya (8) Ntchito ya udokotala (9)	Vocabulary: ntchito, m'dambo (1); kuphika, kutunga (2, 3); mlimi, mlesi (4); kusankha, thonje, mtsinje (5); nsapato, zazikulu, zazing'ono (6); zazing'ono, panga, umisiri, zitseko, mipando, mabedi, matebulo, ngolo (7); ulimi, wothirira, fodya (8); dokotala, mankwala, zingwangwa, osiyanasiyana, nyamakazi (9); farmer, shoemaker, carpenter, shop keeper, doctor (10) Focus Letters: m, n (1); p, h, t (2, 3); m, l, s (4); h, j (5); n, s, o (6); r, l, t (7); d, w, y (8); k, m, y, w (9); s, l, d, t (10) Sounds/Blends: ntch-, m'd (1); phi, tu, nga (2, 3); ml, mku (4); nkha, tho, nje (5); ns, ng'o (6); ri, o, te, tse (7); wo, dya (8); ngw, nkhw (9); m'm (10)	Song poster: Kodi mnyumba mwasesa (from Unit 5, Lesson 10) (1, 2, 3) Poem poster: Mlesi (4, 5) Song Poster: Timpanga nsapato (6, 7) Big Book: Sitolo la a Mataya Poem poster: Ntchito udokotala (9) <u>TALULAR</u> basket; cards with names of occupations

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/Sounds (Letters and Consonant Blends)	Materials (Pupils have blank exercise books)
Unit 16 The Environment (Wk 3-4)	Plants/animals (1, 2) Physical features/insects (3, 4, 5) Physical features, plants, importance of plants (6, 7) Physical features, trees, importance of trees (8, 9, 10)	16.1 Summarize unfamiliar stories orally (1-10) 16.2 Write summaries of unfamiliar stories (1-10) 16.3 Write with attention to basic rules of grammar (capital letter to begin a sentence, full stop to end the sentence) (9, 10)	Fulu Chigoba Pamsana (2) Kachiwala Kamdambo (from Unit 8) (3, 4) Dziko Lalira (6, 7) Tsiku ladzala mitengo pa sukulu ya Kalilombe (8, 9, 10)	Vocabulary: lower, tree, bush, tortoise, grasshopper, lizard, nsenjere (type of reed), malayina, (gmelina), bulugama (bluegum trees), chule (frog) (1); fulu, pamsana, flower, tree, bush, tortoise, grasshopper, lizard, chigoba (turtle's shell), udzu (grass) (2); kachiwala (grasshopper), kamdambo, gulugufe (butterfly), udzudzu (mosquito) (3, 4); udzudzu, n'gwii, ng'ona (5); ndinkavala, makhwawa, maluwa, nyanja, psiti, gwa (6,7); mphunzitsi, nkhalango, boma (8); nkhuni, nth, mv (9, 10) Focus Letters: g, j, h (1); m, s, g (2); w, l, d, z (3); c, d, g (4); n, g, w (5); v, y, w (6, 7); m, p, k, h, g (8); n, k, v (9, 10) Sounds/Blends: ga, nje, chu (1); msa, go (2); wa, le, dzu, gu (3); chi, dz, gu (4); ng (5); va, ny, gwa (6, 7); mph, nko, ngo (8); nkh, nth, mv (9, 10)	Song Poster: Fulu Chigoba Pamsana (2) Song Poster: Kachiwala Kamdambo (from Unit 8) (3, 4) Poem Poster: Dziko Lalira (6) Big Book: Tsiku ladzala mitengo pa sukulu ya Kalilombe (8, 9, 10) Story Star Poster (9) TALULAR: poster (cardboard) with theme web "Buzz the Mosquito" (5) cardboard to draw "Love Mother Earth" posters (7) Environmental print: examples of environmental posters from the ministry, local government, or NGO (7)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/Sounds (Letters and Consonant Blends)	Materials (Pupils have blank exercise books)
Unit 17 Assessment and Review (Wk 5)	Daily chores; days of the week (1, 2) Occupations (3) Physical features, insects, animals (4) Physical features, importance of trees (5)	15.1 Dictate stories and personal narratives (1, 2, 3) 15.2 Read familiar sentences and simple stories with high frequency vocabulary (1, 2, 3) 16.1 Summarize unfamiliar stories (4, 5) 16.2 Write summaries of familiar and unfamiliar stories (4, 5) 16.3 Write with attention to basic rules of grammar (capital letter to begin a sentence, full stop to end a sentence) (3)	Kodi Mnyumba mwasesa (1, 2) Kachiwala Kamdambo (4) Tsiku lodzala mitengo pa sukulu ya kalilombe (5)	Vocabulary: ntchito, m'dambo, kuphika, kusita, kutunga, madzi, Lamulungu, Lolemba, Lachiwiri, Lachitatu, Lachinayi, Lachisanu, Loweruka (1, 2); farmer, carpenter, shoemaker, shop keeper, doctor (3); udzudzu, n'gwii, ng'ona (4); mphunzitsi, nkhalango, boma, nkhusi, nthaka, mvula (5) Focus Letters: m, k, l (1, 2); s, l, d, t (3); n, g, w (4); m, p, k, h, g (5) Sounds/Blends: l + vowel (1, 2); m'm (3); n, g (4); mph, mv, nk, ngo (5)	Song Poster: Kodi Mnyumba Mwasesa (1) Song Poster: Kachiwala kamdambo (4) Story Star Poster (4) Big Book: Tsiku lodzala mitengo pa sukulu Kalilombe (5) Character Map Poster (5) <u>TALULAR:</u> Poster (cardboard) chart with days of the week (1) Poster (cardboard) chart with days of week and chores (2) Poster (cardboard) with theme web "Buzz the Mosquito" (4)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/Sounds (Letters and Consonant Blends)	Materials (Pupils have blank exercise books)
Unit 18 My Country (Wk 6-7)	The story of Malawi (1, 2, 3) Famous People: Rose Chibambo (4, 5, 6) Famous People: Vera Chirwa (7, 8, 9) Famous People (10)	18.1 Use familiar vocabulary when writing sentences and stories (1-10) 18.2 Present (retell) stories verbally (1-10)	Mbiri ya Dziko la Malawi (1, 2, 3) Mbiri ya Rose Chibambo (4, 5, 6) Mbiri ya a Vera Chirwa (7, 8, 9)	Vocabulary: Nyasaland, struggle, freedom, independent, president, elect (1, 2, 3); colonial, government, prison, women's rights (4, 5); parliament, assassination (5, 6); struggle, freedom, lawyer, professor, prison, arrested (7, 8, 9); Nyasaland, struggle, freedom, independent, president, elect, colonial, government, parliament, exile, orphanage, women's rights, lawyer, prison, arrested (10) Focus Letters: t, s, k (1, 2, 3); t, d, h (4); t, h, p (5, 6); t, s, w (7, 8, 9); t, s, w, d (10) Sounds/Blends: mt, hkh (1, 2, 3); ts, nd, nth (4); nth, ph (5, 6); tsw, mph (7, 8, 9); tsw, dw (10)	Big Book: Mbiri a Dziko Malawi (1, 2, 3) Big Book: Mbiri ya Rose Chibambo (4, 5, 6) Character Map Poster (6) Big Book: Mbiri ya a Vera Chirwa (7, 8, 9) <u>TALULAR</u> : Poster (cardboard) chart to copy timeline of Malawi (3, 10) Poster (cardboard) chart to copy timeline of Rose Chibambo (5, 6, 10) Poster (cardboard) chart to copy timeline of Vera Chirwa (9, 10)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/Sounds (Letters and Consonant Blends)	Materials (Pupils have blank exercise books)
Unit 19 My Country (Wk 8-9)	National Anthem (1) Famous People: Masauko Chipembere (2, 3, 4) People of Malawi (5) Famous People: William Kamkwamba (6, 7, 8) Malawi Pride (9, 10)	19.2 Edit own writing (capital letter and full stop) (7, 8, 9, 10) 19.2 Produce a variety of writing (stories, lists, descriptions, maps) (1-10)	Nyimbo ya fuko lathu (Malawi National Anthem) (1, 2) Mbiri ya a Masauko Chipembere (2, 3, 4) Anthu aku Malawi (People of Malawi) (5, 6, 9) Mbiri ya a William Kamkwamba (6, 7, 8) Zivute Zitani (No matter what) (9, 10)	Vocabulary: bless, land, peace, enemy, hunger, disease, envy, free, fear (1); independent, exile, disagree, freedom, struggle (2); independent, highway, honor (3); independent, government, freedom, struggle, disagree (4); proud, country, natural beauty, rivers, lakes, mountains (5); windmill, electricity, famine, bicycle tire, tractor (6, 7, 8); proud, humanness, die (9, 10) Focus Letters: j, t, r (1); c, h, y (2, 4); k, s, z (3); n, y, r (5); p, g, t (6, 7, 8); d, t, f (9, 10) Sounds/Blends: nj, nth, re (1); ch, ny (2, 4); ku, ms, za (3); ny, ra, ri (5); mpe, ge, th (6, 7, 8); di, nthu, fa (9, 10)	Song Poster: Nyimbo ya fuko lathu (1, 2) Big Book: Mbiri ya a Masauko Chipembere (2, 3, 4) Character Map Poster (4, 8) Song Poster: Anthu aku Malawi (5, 6, 9) Big Book: Mbiri ua a William Kamkwamba (6, 7, 8) Song Poster: Zivute Zitani (9) TALULAR: cardboard and string to fasten pupil- made books

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/Sounds (Letters and Consonant Blends)	Materials (Pupils have blank exercise books)
Unit 20 Assessment and Review (Wk 10)	Famous People (1-5)	18.1 Use unfamiliar vocabulary when writing sentences and stories (1, 2) 18.2 Present stories orally (2, 3, 5) 19.1 Edit own writing (capital letter, full stop) (3, 4) 19.2 Produce a variety of writing (stories, lists, descriptions, maps) (4, 5)	Nyimbo ya fuko latu (1) Mbiri ya a Rose Chibambo, Vera Chirwa, Masauko Chipembere, William Kamkwamba (1, 4, 5)	Vocabulary: dalitsa, dziko, mtendere, loya, mtapamphepo, msewu waukulu (1); loya, mayi, zoyenerera za umuntha wa omangidwa, anamandgidwa (2); zoyenerera za umunthu wa azimayi, ndende, nyumba ya malamulo, kupha munthu wolemekezeka (3); nyumba ya malamulo, loya, ufulu wodzilamulira, msewu waukulu, magetsi, mtapamphepo (4, 5) Focus Letters: t, s, p (1); y, g, w (2); n, h, z (3); f, r, s (4, 5) Sounds/Blends: ts, mph (1); yi, ng, dw (2); nth, ph, ze (3); fu, ra, ts (4, 5)	Song Poster: Nyimbo ya fuko lathu (1) Big Book(s): Mbiri ya a Rose Chibambo; Vera Chirwa, Masauko Chipembere, William Kamkwamba (1, 4, 5) <u>TALULAR</u> : cards with names of famous people (1) Timeline posters of famous Malawians (2, 3, 4, 5) Cardboard and string to fasten pupil-made books (4)

Unit	Topics/ Functions	Learner Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes)	Story/Songs	Key Vocabulary/Sounds (Letters and Consonant Blends)	Materials (Pupils have blank exercise books)
Unit 21 Literacy Fair (Wk 11)	Invitation Letter (1) Songs (2) Big Books (3) Literacy Programme (4) Literacy Fair (5)	21.1 Display songs stories, and other literacy activities to family and community members (1-5)	Selected songs and Big Books from Units 15-20	Vocabulary: dear, love, names of family members (1); from selected songs (2); from selected big books (3); n/a (4, 5) Focus Letters/Sounds: from invitation letters; selected songs, big books, literacy programme (1-5)	Selected Song Posters (Units 15-20) Selected Big Books (Units 15-20) Literacy Programme Agenda

APPENDIX B5: INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS TO SUPPORT APPLICATION OF BLP/M LITERACY STRATEGIES

	TERM ONE	TERM TWO	TERM THREE
BIG BOOKS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kam'dothi Thawa Mvula 2. M'tsikana wa Dengu Lowuluka 7. Kalulu Akana Kukumbanawo Chitsime 4. Mada Woyiwalayiwala 5. Moto Kumudzi 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mponda wa ku Mponela 2. Ine ndi Anzanga 3. Kukaona Anthu Kumudzi 4. Wadzilodza Wekha 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tsiku Lobzala Mitengo 2. Sitolo La Mayi Mataya 3. Mbiri ya Dziko Lathu 4. Mbiri ya Vera Chirwa 5. Mbiri ya Rose Chibambo 6. Mbiri ya Masauko Chipembere 7. Mbiri ya William Kamkwamba
SONG POSTERS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Galasi N'landani 2. Ine Ndine Mwana 3. Joni Mwana wa Chipongwe 4. Kachule Kam'dambo 5. Kodi Mnyumba Mwasesa? 6. Kodi Nonse Mwasamba 7. Kusukulu Nkwabwino 8. Kwiwokwiyo 9. Moni Alesi 10. Mwana Joni Walira 11. Mwezi Uwale 12. Zowola Zoipa 13. Pa Mchenga 14. Tambala Walira Kokoliliko 15. Tosapano Tatha Kuphuzira 16. Pakhomo Pamunthu Pafunika Ziti 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Msewu Siwako 2. Birimankhwe 3. Kachiwala Kam'dambo 4. Ena Saadya Therere 5. Lafika Dzinja 6. Kangaude Wapanga Ngozi 7. Kutola Mtedza 8. Madzi Ndiwo Mankhwala 9. Pokwera Njinga 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Timapanga Nsapato 2. Fulu Chigoba pa Msana 3. Ntchito ya Udotolo 4. Zivute Zitani 5. Anthu Aku Malawi
POEM POSTERS		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mzanga Shawa 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dziko Lalira 2. Mlesi 3. Nyimbo ya Fuko Lathu
Graphic Organizers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Story star (Nyenyezi ya Mtambasula Nkhani) 2. Character map (Kalondolondo wa Atengambali) 3. Theme Web (Kangaude wa Mfundo) 4. Alphabet Chart 		



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