Multiliteracies

Trainer's handbook

Contents

How to use this handbook

Objectives

This module sets out to:

- explore the ways in which people read and write different languages for different purposes
- examine the uses of various languages in the print environment
- consider problems concerning technology
- explore the notion of transferable skills
- consider ways of supporting children's reading and writing in other languages.

Structure

The topics covered are:

- the benefits of talk
- potential problems of learning through talk
- organising groups
- including everyone: ball of string activity

Organization

Each activity:

- starts with teacher's notes which set out the purpose of the activity, the materials required and instructions for how to proceed
- is followed by the relevant handouts and OHTs.

Key	
Teacher's notes	**TN**
Handout	**H**
OHTs	**OHT**

Multiliteracies: objectives

- To explore the ways in which people read and write different languages for different purposes.
- To examine the uses of various languages in the print environment.
- To consider problems concerning terminology.
- To explore the notion of transferable skills.
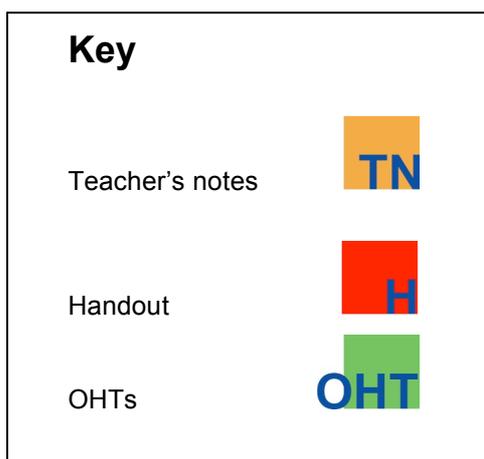- To consider ways of supporting children's reading and writing in other languages.

Emergent literacy quiz TN

Purpose

To raise participants' awareness of early literacy and challenge any myths

Materials

Emergent literacy quiz OHT
Emergent literacy quiz key handout

Instructions

Display the **Emergent literacy quiz** OHT
Ask participants to discuss the answers to the questions in pairs or small groups.
Distribute the **Emergent literacy quiz key** handout and give participants enough time to make their way through the answers.
When taking feedback, focus on the answers which participants found most surprising.

Emergent Literacy Quiz

True or false?

- Literacy development can start with babies and toddlers.
- Pretend play is significant for literacy learning.
- It is best that children do reading and writing readiness exercises before they start learning to read and write.
- Children need to be taught their sounds and letters before they can start reading because these are the basic building blocks of literacy.
- Children will get confused if they learn to read and write in two languages simultaneously.
- Stories (in mother tongue or additional language) provide children with a rich supply of language.
- Children who read a lot for themselves tend to become good spellers.
- Teachers need to give children phonics exercises to develop phonemic awareness.
- Reading, writing, speaking and listening are independent language skills that need to be taught separately from each other.

Emergent literacy quiz: key

Literacy development can start with babies and toddlers.

True: Literacy learning begins at any point when an individual experiences written language as personally meaningful, in similar ways that oral language learning begins with meaningful engagements with listening and speaking.
Pretend play is significant for literacy learning.
True: Pretend play involves symbolic behaviour, where one thing stands for another. Children are able to apply this understanding of symbolism to reading and writing, where a letter stands for a sound, and a word stands for a read object.

It is best that children do reading and writing readiness exercises before they start learning to read and write.

False: Children begin to learn to read by reading and to write by writing. The skills and understandings they need will develop if they are given many different opportunities to be part of events, which include reading and writing.

Children need to be taught their sounds and letters before they can start reading because these are the basic building blocks of literacy.

False: Letter sound relationships are best learned when they are taught as part of activities which begin with reading meaningful texts.

Children will get confused if they learn to read and write in two languages simultaneously.

False: It depends on the context, the teaching methods used, and the resources available. Children are quite able to learn to read and write in their mother tongue and in an another language at the same time, because knowledge transfers from one language to another.

Stories (in mother tongue or additional language) provide children with a rich supply of language.

True: Engaging with many appropriate stories increases children's vocabulary and use of grammatical structures.

Children who read a lot for themselves tend to become good spellers.

True: Keen readers tend to be good spellers because spelling develops over time. Children who read a lot have more opportunities to engage with the 'look of a word' in different texts than children who seldom read.

Teachers need to give children many phonics exercises to develop phonemic awareness.

False: Phonemic awareness develops in young children when they do many rhymes, songs and wordplays. If teachers and children play with language, phonemic awareness can develop in an enjoyable way.

Reading, writing, speaking and listening are independent language skills that need to be taught separately from each other.
False: All areas of language are interrelated and children learn best when they are given chances to use the skills they have in one area to support learning in another.

Early memories of reading & writing   TN

Purpose

To encourage participants to reflect on their own early literacy experiences so that they can identify approaches which are likely to motivate young children

Materials

Early memories of reading and writing handout

Instructions

Distribute the **Early memories of reading and writing** handout.
When participants have finished read the various accounts, ask them to write about their own early experiences, including:

- What, if any reading materials and examples of print there were in their home or community

- What language/s these were in

- Which people around them were reading and writing?

- What were their reasons for reading and writing?

Ask participants to share their stories in small groups or with the whole group, depending on how many people are involved.
Take feedback from participants as to which approaches they feel are likely to motivate and which approaches are likely to demotivate young children.

Early memories of reading & writing H

Each of us has our own unique memories of learning. After reading the examples below, write down your thoughts of your own early experiences or the memory of a specific event. Try to include:

- What, if any reading materials and examples of print there were in your home or community.

- What language/s these were in.

- Which people around you were reading and writing?

- What were their reasons for reading and writing?

Mpumzi

At home I grew up with my mother and sisters. I had no grandmother to tell me stories. The only person who told us stories was my uncle. He used to tell us about where he worked in Johannesburg and I remember we used to laugh a lot.
When we had nothing to do, we'd go to him and ask him to finish his stories. They were always in Xhosa.
My older sister used to read Xhosa novels for my mother. I was lucky enough to hear them because I slept with my mother. I was only 5 or 6, but my sister read with expression and I followed the stories very well.

Thosama

Before I started my schooling in the early fifties, my mother had already exposed me to reading and writing. In my mind, I still have a picture of my mother's fore-finger, pointing at some key-words in the reading book, pronouncing them slowly so that I could imitate. These words had meaning to me because they were accompanied by pictures. My mother used more pictures to introduce me into the literacy world. She'd ask me to describe what the pictures were about, and she'd write these words down so I could copy them onto paper. She would commend me even if I was writing 'amarhoqololo'! (scribbles). At that time, there were no preschools. Teachers had to start from scratch with reading and writing in grade 1. My teacher didn't struggle with me when she had to teach me to read and write, because I was not a 'clean slate' at all! Gosh! How I miss that soft and tender voice which used to say 'Masifunde sana lwam!'(Let's read, my baby). Oh! That patient finger which used to point at key-words and pictures; that dim light of the candle in which I used to read. I am not afraid to say ' Ndinjenjenje ngumama!'(I'm the way I am because of my mom).

Nonesi

I was in Sub B (grade 2) when I developed a negative attitude towards reading and writing. My teacher was an elderly lady who was supposed to be supportive, but she wasn't.
My handwriting was horrible and my teacher was nasty towards me. I always knew after each writing exercise, that I'd get a hiding because of my horrible handwriting. She said she could not read it. She'd draw a line from the top to the bottom with a red pen. I hated writing; she always picked on me, she made me miserable, she insulted me.
A punishment followed every writing lesson. I developed an attitude. I knew I wasn't stupid, but the way she acted made me seem stupid. It was my handwriting. Now, I realize she should have supported me, but she didn't. I don't think she ever looked at what I wrote. She only saw my handwriting.
After I left her, I often felt that I should tell her what she should have done, but I never had the courage to confront her. She died before I could confront her.
This has taught me never to deprive a child, and fortunately my grandmother taught me to like reading, and thanks to her, I was helped a great deal.

Languages are thieves TN

Purpose

To demonstrate that all languages borrow words to help express new needs and concepts.

Materials

Languages are thieves activity
Languages are thieves OHT
Problems in using mother tongues for official purposes OHT

Instructions

Distribute the **Languages are thieves** activity, which contains a list of words, which English has borrowed and a list of languages.
Ask participants to see if they can guess which words come from which languages.
Bring the session to a close by asking participants how they feel problems encountered when using mother tongues in new settings can be overcome.

Languages are thieves H

All of the words below came to English from different languages. Match the words with the languages in the box at the bottom of the page.

1. alcohol

2. automatic

3. cafe

4. cargo

5. judo

6. microphone

7. pyjamas

8. robot

9. studio

10. tea

11. typhoon

12. waltz

13. songololo

14. whiskey

15. yoghurt

16. sosatie

17. kierie

Arabic	Czech	Chinese	French	Gaelic
German	Greek	Italian	Japanese	Persian
Khiosan	Turkish			
Xhosa	Malaysian	Spanish		

Languages are thieves

1. alcohol: Arabic	2. automatic: Greek
3. cafe: French	4. cargo: Spanish
5. judo: Japanese	6. microphone: Greek
7. pyjamas (Persian; Urdu)	8. robot: Czech
9. studio: Italian	10. tea: Chinese, via Dutch
11. typhoon: Chinese	12. waltz: German
13. songololo: Xhosa	14. whiskey: Scottish Gaelic
15. yoghurt: Turkish	16. sosatie: Malaysian
17. kierie: Khoisan	

Finding the right words **TN**

Purpose

To explore what happens when people begin to expand the uses of languages that have not been widely used in writing.

Materials

Finding the right words activity

Instructions

Distribute the **Finding the right words** activity.
Divide the group into pairs or small groups containing participants who speak a mother tongue, which has no history of use for official purposes.
Ask speakers of these languages to translate the text into their mother tongue, while explaining to any other members of the group the problems they encounter.

When taking feedback, pay particular attention to:

- **Problems with spelling**. Ask why this should be the case and, if necessary, point out that people have much less exposure to minority languages than to English and that it is therefore not surprising that they should be less confident about spelling.

- **Vocabulary**. Often there will be no word in the mother tongue which corresponds to the English word. People sometimes believe that this is proof that English is in some way superior to these other languages. However, it is important to point out that English is a rich language in certain domains precisely because it has borrowed extensively from other languages over the centuries.

Finding the right words

This activity is designed for people who speak a language which, historically, was not written down and used for official purposes.
Translate the form below into your language.
What problems do you encounter?

Job application

Name
Address
Date of birth

Do you suffer from any of the following medical conditions that may affect your ability to perform the duties of this post:
Arthritis
Diabetes
Epilepsy
Heart disease
HIV/AIDS
Other (please specify)

If so, please give details and indicate is there are any reasonable adjustments might be considered to enable you to perform the job?

Different kinds of reading and writing **TN**

Purpose

To help participants to think about our own uses for reading and writing.

Materials

Culture of literacy OHT
Different kinds of reading and writing activity

Instructions

Display **Culture of literacy** OHT.
Distribute **Different kinds of reading and writing** activity for participants to complete individually.
Explain that that the checklists on the handout include *possible* uses of reading and writing and that there are no correct or incorrect answers.
Encourage participants to think of other reasons they may have to read or write as well as those on the list.

When you take responses:

- Point out that different people want and need to read and write for different reasons, but nobody reads or writes without some particular intention in mind.

- Suggest that when children are learning to read and write, they also need to be exposed to some of the uses for literacy other people have. This will help them realise that literacy is powerful and they will become motivated to find out more.

- Ask what role the language or languages of the print around us may have to play in our motivation to read and write.

Activity

Different kinds of reading and writing

Fill in the form below to build up a picture of your reading practices.

Material	Language	Where?	Who with?	Why?
Bible				
newspapers				
magazines				
stories/lbooks				
forms				
signs				
notices				
timetables				
letters				
other				

Enabling a culture of literacy

- 'A culture of literacy' refers to the regular uses of reading and writing for various reasons that people have as they go about their daily lives.

- People read and write when they have good reasons to do so.

- A good reason is always one where the person who is doing the reading or writing achieves something personally meaningful.

Languages of print TN

Purpose

To draw attention to the languages of print and the implications for literacy learning.

Materials

Environments for print OHT
Languages of print activity

Instructions

Display **Environments for print** OHT**.**
Distribute the **Languages of print** activity
Ask participants to work together in groups of 5 or 6.
From their own experiences, ask them to note:

- Which of these appear more frequently in their home language/s.

- Which tend to be another language. What is the other language?

- Which are bilingual? In which languages?

When taking feedback, focus on

- Whether the environments where participants live and work are print-rich or a print-scarce.

- Why the scarcity of print in African languages might be significant for literacy learning.

Environments for print

- Some places are full of print, and others have little or none. Urban areas tend to have more print than rural areas.

- A **print-rich** environment is one where a lot of print is on display and in regular use in one or more languages.

- A **print-scarce** environment is one where there is little or no evidence of written language on display or in use in one or more languages.

Languages of print H

	Home language	Other language	Bilingual
greeting cards			
newspapers			
product labels			
shop signs			
street signs			
clothing labels			
care instructions			
machine instructions			
books			
posters			
magazines			
leaflets			
travel tickets			
petrol station signs			
TV information guides			
radio information guides			
academic publications			
advertisements			
notes			
lists			
prescriptions			
notices			

Family and literacy **TN**

Purpose

To help participants understand and value the role that family and community members can play in children's literacy development.

Materials

Family and literacy **activity**
Family and literacy **handout**

Instructions

Explain that you are going to be talking about some of the challenges in involving parents and others in the community in children's literacy learning and possible ways of responding to these challenges.

Distribute **Families and literacy activity.** Ask participants to look at the challenges already identified in the table and invite them to add any others that they can think of.

Then ask if they can think of constructive ways of overcoming any problems.

Distribute **Families and literacy handout** and allow participants time to read through and discuss suggested ways forward.

When taking feedback emphasise that:

- Family and community members can be extremely helpful for literacy learning, especially in classrooms.

- Schools need to be encouraged to see family and community members as partners and find ways of welcoming them into the school.

Family and literacy

In the table below are some of the challenges in involving parents and others in the community in supporting children's literacy. You may be able to think of others, too. Discuss in pairs or small groups ways of responding to these challenges.

Challenge	Response
Parents are not literate.	
There is no culture of parental participation in school.	
Parents do not speak the language of instruction.	

Family and literacy: key

Challenge	Response
Parents are not literate.	School provides one set of experiences for literacy learning. Homes can often provide others. While it is true that many family members in African communities do not read and write as part of daily activities, they can none the less be role models for literacy by: • asking questions about what the children doing and listening to the answers they give • having regular conversations with the child • telling stories regularly and listening to the child's own talk and stories • having fun singing and playing language games • sitting together with the child and looking at and talking about pictures in books, magazines or newspapers.
There is no culture of parental participation in school.	It is important to understand that parents are children's first and most important teachers. Often this is not recognised or valued by schools which fail to see the potential of working in partnership with parents and the wider community. Knowledge and skills acquired at home and in the community can enrich and form an important bridge to children's literacy learning. Teachers need to create opportunities for parents and others members of the community to support children's reading and writing by telling stories and reading with individuals and groups.
Parents do not speak the language of instruction.	Parents can nonetheless support their children's development in the mother tongue. Skills and knowledge transfer across languages.