



ONE OF THE BIGGEST DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES FACING SOUTH AFRICA IS THE HIGH NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO DO NOT LEARN TO READ FOR MEANING IN THE EARLY YEARS OF SCHOOL.

THIS IS THE FOUNDATIONAL SKILL UPON WHICH ALL OTHERS BUILD.

This is a comparison of the cost-effectiveness of **3 promising intervention models** to improve reading outcomes in learners' home language (Setswana)

THREE INTERVENTION MODELS:



1. A STRUCTURED LEARNING PROGRAMME & CENTRALISED TRAINING

Implemented in a different group of 50 schools.
Provides teachers with lesson plans aligned to the NCS including CAPS as well as additional quality reading materials and training workshops twice a year.



2. A STRUCTURED LEARNING PROGRAMME & SPECIALIST ON-SITE COACHING

Implemented in a different group of 50 schools.
Provides teachers with the same set of lesson plans & reading materials. Provides ongoing support to teachers through on-site coaching & small cluster training sessions.



3. PARENTAL INTERVENTION

Implemented in a different group of 50 schools.
Holds weekly meetings with parents to discuss the importance of learning to read in the early grades & to empower them with the knowledge and tools to become more involved in their child's literacy development.



WEAK READING FOUNDATIONS =

WEAK ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT LATER IN SCHOOL

+

SUBSEQUENTLY THE DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL

Learners who received two years of this Coaching intervention were approximately **40% OF A YEAR OF LEARNING AHEAD** of the students in the schools that received no intervention.

MAIN RESULTS: IMPACT FOR THOSE WITH 2 YEARS OF INTERVENTION

- Control:** 2 years of school
- Training:** About 19% of a year of learning
- Coaching:** About 40% of a year of learning
- Parents:** About 13% of a year of learning

ORALLY ADMINISTERED LEARNER ASSESSMENTS

- Letter sound recognition
EGRA item: 60 seconds
- Word Recognition
EGRA item: 60 seconds
- Non-word recognition
EGRA item: 60 seconds
- Paragraph reading
EGRA adapted: 60 seconds
- Reading comprehension
4 items based on paragraph
- Phonological awareness
4 items
- Writing
Letter dictation, word dictation, re-writing short sentences
- Maths
2 items
- English
8 items: receptive & expressive vocabulary
- Composite score
Based on factor analysis

INTERVENTION 1:

Positive impact on all subtests & English

INTERVENTION 2:

Positive impact on some subtests

INTERVENTION 3:

Positive impact on phonological awareness

WHO BENEFITS MOST FROM THE INTERVENTIONS?



BOYS CATCH UP TO SOME EXTENT

The effective Coaching intervention is helping boys catch up some of the way to girls



IMPACT CONCENTRATED IN URBAN SCHOOLS

For all three interventions, the observed impacts are larger in urban township settings



MIDDLE-TO-TOP PERFORMING LEARNERS BENEFITTED MOST

The impact of the Coaching intervention is largest for children in the middle and upper part of the achievement distribution



LARGE-CLASSES BENEFITTED MOST

Both the teacher support interventions ("Training" and "Coaching") had the largest impacts in relatively large classes (38 to 45 learners)

HOW THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, TEACHING PRACTICE, & CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES CHANGED AS A RESULT OF THE PROGRAMMES

COACHING & TRAINING

- Far more learners are actually reading graded readers
- Teachers in both Training and Coaching groups are more likely to do group-guided reading, resulting in more opportunities for learners to receive individual attention.
- The writing activities in the EGRS lessons encouraged teachers to give more writing tasks, and learners were completing written work on most school days
- Teachers in the Coaching schools were considerably more likely to report feeling a *high level of professional support*
- Graded readers are only useful if teachers have developed the skills to use them effectively in the classroom.
- Teachers in the Coaching group conducted individualized reading assessments more frequently
- Learners in the Coaching group completed more written exercises of all types including drawing pictures, written exercises and full sentence writing exercises



Structured pedagogic programmes can make a difference when aligned to the NCS(CAPS) with high quality reading support materials

On-site coaching to Foundation Phase teachers can be a cost-effective strategy; modelling lessons, in a safe space, through lesson plans for teaching learners to read is critical.

Direct in-service training better than 'train-the-trainer' models: Direct in-service training of teachers (4 two-day workshops over the course of 2 years), is likely to have more impact than "cascade" models

Other large scale intervention initiatives (e.g. NECT) could draw on the lessons of the EGRS and extend successful programmes to selected schools and districts.

Existing subject advisers cannot fulfil the role of a coach: Low ratio of subject advisers to schools (especially in the Foundation Phase); Different recruitment process, oversight structures and modus operandi

The EGRS data could be used to develop reading norms in the African languages:

On-site coaching interventions could be implemented in priority schools (e.g. 100 or 500 schools in a province) The cost for 100 schools would be approx.R6 million at current prices.

Parental involvement needs further research & may be promising: remains a potentially cost-effective intervention

RECOMMENDATIONS & DBE PLANS FOR MOVING FORWARD

Further research is needed to establish what might work in deep rural settings.

THE PARTNERS

