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What's Up TEACH! MAGAZINE



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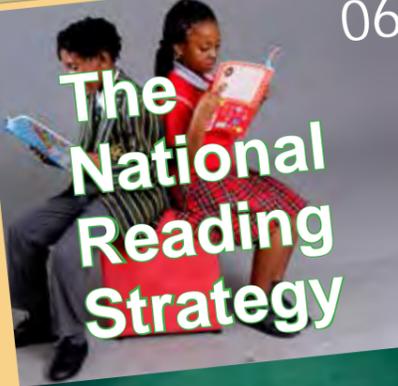
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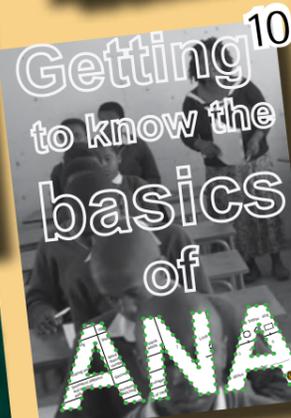
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Foreword

by Achmat Dangor, Chief Executive of the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory (at the Nelson Mandela Foundation)

"Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world." Nelson Mandela, 16 July 2003

Children have the power to change the world, but before this transformation can happen, we should use our power as adult role models to change their world now. Literacy and Numeracy are the foundations on which further studies, job satisfaction, productivity and meaningful citizenship are based. For this reason parents, educators, principals and every individual or organisation which is serious about the future of our country, should take the time to spend quality educational time with our learners.

President Jacob Zuma's call to make education a societal issue, was strengthened by the signing of the NEDLAC Accord on Basic Education in 2011. It marked the beginning of a new era in which all role players and social partners in education committed themselves to support the drive for quality teaching and learning, especially in poor-performing schools.

We at the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory support the Department of Basic Education's efforts to improve the quality of teaching. We want to see confident and well-trained teachers who are continually improving their capabilities. The end goal should always be how teachers can give to learners the best possible education to ensure the development of the nation. We also support the department's goal that school principals ensure teaching takes place as it should, and that they work as responsible leaders.

Teachers need our encouragement, support and assistance to be the best they can be. For this reason the department has created *What's Up Teach?*, a teacher magazine to assist and further motivate our teachers. We are hopeful that the practical and interactive information articulated in this magazine will enable the realisation of the goals that have been set for our schooling system.





Message from the Minister of Basic Education

Dear Teacher

The aim of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) is to support and develop teachers with a view to enhancing teaching and learning. During a recent meeting at the Department's Head Office in Pretoria, I said to my senior management team that we were taking it for granted that many teachers, albeit qualified, are aware of the minimum actions that need to be performed in every classroom.

I therefore tasked my team to develop a fresh, innovative and inspiring publication to communicate with South African teachers.

The National Development Plan (NDP) notes that "attention should be given to the continuing development of teachers and promotion of professional standards. Moreover, it emphasises that teachers must have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and cognitive competence in the language in which they are required to teach." This new magazine is an attempt to address the recommendations of the NDP and the goals encapsulated in *The Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025*, which tabled the idea of developing a "script" for teachers as a way of communicating the basic tasks teachers need to perform in the classroom.

We got a team together to research the content and possible formats for the new publication. It was during these sessions that the magazine for teachers became a reality. We envisage publishing four editions of the magazine annually - you will therefore receive an edition every quarter.

The magazine will be used as a tool to enhance the performance of our teachers. It is also aimed at generating an enthusiastic dialogue between teachers, the DBE and the broader education community.

Another purpose of the magazine is to communicate critical pedagogical and support information to teachers in a creative and interactive manner.

I have repeatedly stated that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. The DBE has consistently shown its commitment to ensuring that the teachers tasked with shaping the minds of South Africa's future leaders are of the highest calibre. Teachers have the potential, and the responsibility, to inspire, motivate and equip future generations with the foundational skills required to be productive contributors to society, both in terms of the economy and the civic duty that every South African should fulfil.

Enjoy your new publication.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP
Minister of Basic Education



Editorial by the Director-General, Mr Bobby Soobrayan

So, What's Up Teach?

The main focus of this exciting first edition of the *What's Up Teach?* magazine for teachers is on the National Reading Strategy (NRS), the Annual National Assessment (ANA), and the Workbooks. The NRS is built on six pillars and the article explains how the teacher is key to a child's ability to read. In 2012, the ANA was written by more than 7 million learners in Grades 1 to 6 and Grade 9 in public schools. *What's Up Teach?* introduces the teacher to the basics of ANA and notes our performance in these annual assessments. Also read about our performance in Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). All school principals, districts and provincial officials are reminded that the Workbooks are part of our learning and teaching support programme for schools and reflect our ongoing commitment to unlocking every learner's learning potential.

In *Organisational Tips for Teachers* we share 24 steps for teachers to follow to effectively manage their time and responsibilities in the classroom.

Every school teacher knows the negative impact of learners being absent from class. *What's Up Teach?* looks at practical ways of managing absenteeism in the classroom.

The safety of learners in schools is of paramount importance. *The South Africa Schools Act (1996)* demands that schools must take measures to ensure the safety of learners at school. Are you playing it safe to prevent the transmission of diseases at school? Check whether the green or the red light is flashing.

Teachers can have fun too. What do you as a teacher do to ensure good grades? Check yourself against our fun quiz to see how many smiles or tears you score.

We all know that children learn best in an environment where they feel safe and secure. Many children don't

learn because they come to school fearful of being bullied. Unfortunately, there's no single solution that will stop or prevent bullying. *What's Up Teach?* interviews two school principals to find out what they have done to reduce bullying in their schools. You can also put an end to bullying!

The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. *What's Up Teach?* speaks to three teachers who are passionate about teaching. For them, teaching is indeed a noble calling. Read what they have to say, and shift any negative perceptions you might have about teaching.

What is a School Improvement Plan (SIP)? One of the tasks of a principal is to present a proposed SIP to teachers, heads of departments and SGB members for their approval. Read about the role of the principal and teachers in the implementation of the SIP.

Teachers are the cornerstone of Government's commitment to providing quality learning and teaching to all learners at South African public schools. What does it take to be a good teacher? What classroom practices are associated with committed teachers? What aspects of the curriculum or classroom strategies would you like to receive more information about? Contact the *What's Up Teach?* team with suggestions, letters and feedback at: whatsupteach@dbe.gov.za.

In the next issue of *What's Up Teach?* look out for tips on the teaching of reading, there will be greater focus on PIRLS, CAPS is explained, there is more on ANA, the results of Matric 2012 are analysed and some of your letters to the editor will be featured.

Enjoy the read!

Mr Bobby Soobrayan
Director-General, Department of Basic Education

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The National Reading Strategy

– the teacher is key to a child's ability to read

A major consensus of research is that the ability of teachers to deliver good reading instruction is the most powerful factor in determining how well children learn to read. It is essential to recognise the critical role teachers play in preventing reading difficulties.

The National Reading Strategy is based on the premise that a child's success in school and throughout life depends largely on the ability to read. Therefore every teacher has the profound challenge of making reading a reality for all children. The National Reading Strategy gives impetus to *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025*. Output goals 1 to 4 in the Action Plan are aimed primarily at laying solid foundations to enhance reading, writing and calculating skills in the early grades as well as increasing the number of learners who have mastered the minimum language and numeracy competencies from Grades 1 to 9.

The underpinning principles of the National Reading Strategy

- Reading instruction should be based on the evidence of sound research that has been verified by classroom practice. The research is clear in showing that effective reading instruction compensates for risk factors that might otherwise prevent children from becoming successful readers.
- Early success in reading is critical for children. Reading success is the foundation for achievement throughout the school years. There is a critical window of opportunity from the ages of four to seven for children to learn to read. Research findings on early reading difficulties show that children who continue to experience reading difficulties in Grade 3 seldom catch up later. It therefore makes sense to detect problems early in order to avoid the escalation of problems later.
- The teacher is the key to a child's success to read. A major consensus of research is that the ability of teachers to deliver good reading instruction is the most powerful factor in determining how well children learn to read.
- In order to succeed in the classroom, teachers need the co-operation and support of instructional leaders who value and provide ongoing professional development. Effective early reading

instruction involves the importance of a system-wide, supportive approach to reading instruction, the development of the expertise of teachers, and the role of the home and the community. All partners play a significant role in ensuring that the conditions are right for teachers to provide effective instruction and for children to learn to the best of their ability.

THE SIX KEY PILLARS

The National Reading Strategy builds on six key pillars for successful implementation of the National Reading Strategy.

1. Resources

There is no doubt that a good learning and text-rich environment in schools encourages children to perform better. Teachers need adequate resources for the teaching of reading. The DBE has therefore embarked on several interventions to provide teachers across the system with the resources they need to carry out this pivotal task. These are the 100 Storybook Project, the Drop All and Read Campaign, the Reading Toolkit Project, the Systematic Method for Reading Success (SMRS) Project, Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), the Foundations for Learning Campaign, the Foundation Phase National Catalogue and the Workbooks.

2. Teaching practice and methodology

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is based on the premise that is advanced by the International Reading Association (IRA) that: "There is no single method or single combination of methods that can successfully teach all children to read. Therefore teachers must have a strong knowledge of multiple methods for teaching reading and a strong knowledge of the children in their care so they can create the appropriate balance of methods needed for the children they teach."

The knowledge and skills that children need in order to read with fluency and comprehension include: oral language; prior knowledge and experience; concepts about print; phonemic awareness; letter-sound relationships; vocabulary; semantics and syntax; meta-cognition; and higher-order thinking skills. These are not isolated concepts taught in a lock-step sequence rather they are interrelated components that support and build on each other.

3. Teacher training, development and support

Ongoing teacher training, development and support is a key pillar of the National Reading Strategy. The Department of Basic Education in its efforts to enhance the pedagogic and didactic capacity of all teachers in reading, language and mathematics has developed a Reading Handbook, *Teaching Reading in the Early Grades* (2008) as well as a DVD, *Getting Literacy and Numeracy Teaching Right in the Foundation Phase*.

However, although the Department has the responsibility of initiating teacher development programmes, it is critical that teachers understand that the biggest part of their development is their own responsibility. Immediate short-term interventions are currently targeted at providing teachers with

the tools and the opportunities to improve their classroom practice.

4. Monitoring learner assessment

The essential focus of the National Reading Strategy is to enable learners to read fluently and with comprehension. Monitoring learners' progress through School Based Assessments (SBA) and Annual National Assessment (ANA) is a critical part of the Reading Strategy. Learner improvement depends on teachers being able to assess the reading level of each and every learner. Teachers need to be able to measure whether their teaching methodologies in the classroom have resulted in improved reading by the learners.

5. Management of the teaching of reading

Good management and leadership are essential for successful teaching and learning. The principal needs to show a relentless determination in pursuing the National Reading Strategy. The principal is responsible for the reading programme in the school, for ensuring that staff members are trained, analysing learners' results and involving parents in the reading programme. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that every learner learns to read, and that steps are taken to promote reading. The allocation of time to read and the effective use of that time needs to be managed.

6. Research, partnerships and advocacy

An analytical and critical analysis of the Annual National Assessment (ANA) will show why schools perform the way they do – the "ground truth" of school and learner performance will enable the profiling of both best and worst practice as a means

of informing intervention strategies. It will also enable the elevation of schools with best practice to best performer school status, especially when such schools perform despite their disadvantages. In all these reading projects and plans, the Department will ensure that its strategies, pedagogy and support materials are modern and at the cutting edge. While the Department will conduct some of its own research, it will also partner with universities and other specialist reading organisations to strengthen its reading campaigns with teachers, principals, district officials and parent communities.

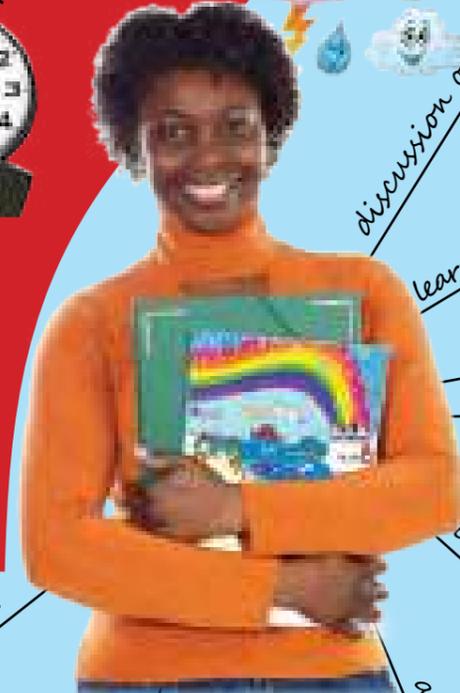
Coordination, sustainability and monitoring

The different tiers of the system will be strengthened, from the Chief Directors at National level to Curriculum Coordinators at Provincial and District levels and finally to School Management Teams (SMTs), teachers and the various contributions from external sources to promote overall coherence and alignment. This process is illustrated in the diagram below.

Evaluation, monitoring and support interventions will be implemented at all levels of the system to track, record and sustain the gains that the strategy is making to improve the quality of education over its life span (2008 – 2015) and beyond to assist in strengthening the capacity of teachers to raise standards of achievement and rates of progression for learners across all phases and schooling contexts in pursuit of the demands of the twenty-first century.



Organisational tips for teachers



1 Arrive at least 20 minutes before school starts.



2 Make sure you have your lesson plans and the material you need for today's lesson.



3 Call the register. Remember to follow up on learners who have been absent for more than 3 days.

4 In foundation phase classes start the day with news, birthdays or a discussion about the weather.



5 Write down your learners' details on the register and keep them up to date.

6 Analyse and follow up on the absenteeism of learners each month.

7 Sign the period register and class attendance register.

8 Display the class timetable and put up charts, posters and maps on the walls.

9 Ensure you have your assessment plan and a mark book.

10 Set, mark and record assessment tasks.

11 Where necessary, group learners according to ability.

12 Give feedback to your learners so that they learn from their mistakes. Also tell them where they did well.

13 Remain at school for at least seven hours per day. Don't dismiss a class before the scheduled time. Don't keep your classes waiting.



14 Get to know all your learners.

15 Understand and interpret the ANA results. Use them to focus on areas that need special attention.



16 Develop a textbook retrieval system so that all textbooks are returned.

17 Check to make sure that your learners receive the correct workbooks in the correct language.

18 Do administrative tasks such as taking minutes at staff meetings and collecting school fees.



19 Get involved in extramural activities.



policies...

24 Adhere to all school policies (Bullying, HIV and Wellness).

23 Curb inappropriate behaviour in your class.

22 Familiarise yourself with the CAPS and use them to plan your lessons.

21 Stay updated. Keep abreast of new teaching methods.



20 Keep your teacher file/portfolio up to date.



Getting to know the basics of



In 2012, more than 7 million learners in Grades 1 to 6 and Grade 9 in public schools, including special schools and state-funded independent primary schools participated in the Annual National Assessment (ANA).

The ANA is a regular standardised assessment that is administered to all learners in public schools from Grades 1 to 6 and 9. Learners are assessed in the foundational skills of Literacy and Numeracy, which are the building blocks of future success in education.

The *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025*, states the outputs the Department of Basic Education (DBE) wants to achieve as the minimum quality standards in Grades 3, 6 and 9. These outputs are to: "Increase the number of learners in Grades 3, 6 and 9 who by the end of the year have mastered the minimum Language and Mathematics competencies for Grades 3, 6 and 9 respectively".

Why was ANA initiated?

South Africa's participation in local, regional and international studies points towards consistently low achievement among learners in the public schooling system. This prompted a proactive introduction of more regular and standardised testing of learners in all grades, particularly at the key transitional stages. ANA is a strategic tool for monitoring and improving the level and quality of basic education, with a special focus on the foundational skills of Literacy and Numeracy, to establish an objective national benchmark. The implementation of ANA will mean that improvements can be accurately assessed and appropriate interventions designed and implemented where needed.

What are the objectives of ANA?

Some of the key objectives of ANA are that it should serve as a diagnostic tool to identify areas of strength and weakness in teaching and learning; expose teachers to better assessment practices; provide districts with information to target schools in need of assistance; and empower parents by giving them with information about the education of their children. Teachers and parents should build up learners' confidence in their own abilities and make sure that learners understand that these are not examinations in which they can pass or fail, but are tests to find out if they have any problems with Literacy and Numeracy while they are still in primary school.

What were the results of ANA 2012 in comparison to 2011?

The ANA 2011 results gave us a measured picture of current levels of performance at the primary school level in Literacy and Numeracy. The results provided an important baseline in relation to the targets set by the South African Government, viz. that by 2014 at least 60% of learners in Grades 3, 6 and 9 must achieve acceptable levels of Literacy and Numeracy.

In 2012 the overall results for the ANA in grades 1 to 6 point towards a general improvement in the performance of learners in the ANA tests. In Tables 1 – 3 the average percentage that learners achieved in Language and Mathematics is indicated for 2011 and 2012.

Table 1: National average percentage marks for Language in 2011 and 2012 (Grades 1 – 3)

GRADE	HL 2012	LANG 2011
1	58	59
2	55	52
3	52	35

Table 2: National average percentage marks for Language in 2011 and 2012 (Grades 4–6 & 9)

GRADE	HL 2012	FAL 2012	LANG 2011
4	43	34	34
5	40	30	28
6	43	36	28
9	43	35	N/A*

* Grade 9 was not part of ANA 2011

Table 3: National average percentage marks for Mathematics in 2011 and 2012

GRADE	MATHEMATICS 2012	MATHEMATICS 2011
1	68	63
2	58	55
3	41	28
4	38	28
5	31	28
6	27	30
9	13	N/A*

* Grade 9 was not part of ANA 2011

An encouraging observation from the 2012 results is the noticeable increase in the performance of learners in grade 3 in both Languages and Mathematics. It should however be noted that the Grade 9 performance of learners in Mathematics is below expectation and requires immediate attention from all stakeholders.

Marshaling the above and a number of other strategies and mechanisms, and working with the community and other stakeholders, the DBE has set itself specific targets (Table 4) at the key transitional grades and these will be monitored and tracked through ANA results.

Table 4: Targets in percentage of learners for 2011 to 2014

GRADE	LANGUAGE				MATHEMATICS			
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2011	2012	2013	2014
3	53	55	58	60	53	55	58	60
6	46	51	55	60	35	44	52	60

Targets for Grade 9 will be set once the baseline has been established from the ANA 2012 results.

What are some of the expectations from ANA 2012?

A diagnostic report will be produced for use by teachers from the item-level analysis focusing on what learners could or could not do in the tests. Among other things the results of ANA should:

- Inform Government and the South African public as to how well the schools are serving the country's children where it matters most, namely, the attainment of functional Literacy and Numeracy skills that will enable them to study successfully in all subjects
- Provide important information that will help the Department to identify areas where urgent attention is required in order to help improve learning success levels of learners
- Assist provincial departments, including district offices, to make informed decisions about which schools require urgent attention in terms of providing necessary resources to improve learner performance in these subjects/learning areas
- Provide teachers with essential data about the baseline Language and Mathematics capabilities of learners at the beginning of each grade and thereby help them make informed decisions when planning the year's programme
- Inform individual teachers about how close or how far they are to or from realising the target goals they seek to attain through their teaching, and inspire them to realign their teaching strategies towards accomplishing such goals
- Provide parents with a better picture of the levels of learner

performance in the school so that parents are better informed when they become involved in efforts to improve performance, for instance through decision-making in the school governing body and support to learners in the home

- Provide an appropriate benchmark for teachers in the development of assessment tasks that form part of their school-based assessment programme
- Assist school management teams (SMTs) to select and implement school-based interventions for improving learner performance in Languages and Mathematics.

How can teachers/senior managers use the findings of ANA to plan for the next year?

- SMTs and teachers in schools must analyse learners' performance in ANA after marking their scripts. The analysis must point teachers to problem areas or gaps in teaching and learning so as to improve.
- The School Governing Body (SGB) must receive, at the beginning of each year, a report from the district office. This report will enable schools to compare its ANA results to those of other schools in the district as well as to plan targeted support for teachers and learners in schools.
- The results of ANA should be seen as complementing and further supporting the assessment programmes used by schools to continuously assess the progress of learners. The ANA results will form an important part of the school's academic performance improvement plans (APIP).
- The results of ANA should enable the education sector to increase feedback evidence on how the various strategies and interventions that the Department puts in place impact on learner performance.

In conclusion it is important to note that the results will not be used for promotion to the next grade, but as a guide for teachers to identify challenges in curriculum coverage and to inform their lessons in the classroom.



THE WORKBOOK PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOLS

2013

An initiative of the Department of Basic Education

The Department of Basic Education wishes to remind all school principals, teachers, School Governing Bodies, district and provincial officials and parents that the Department will be delivering workbooks for learners for the 2013 school year before the end of 2012.

This is part of the Department's ongoing commitment to unlocking every child's learning potential. It is important that every education stakeholder understands what workbooks will be delivered, in what languages and how these workbooks should be used.

The Department has also developed textbooks for FET Maths and Physical Science with the Shuttleworth Foundation.

Grade	Workbooks to be supplied by the Department	Supplementary materials supplied by the Department	What textbooks will be required	Textbooks to be supplied by Department
Grade R	One integrated (language, maths and life skills) book per term in all 11 official languages	Grade R resource packs for each grade R classroom in all 11 languages	No textbooks required	
Foundation Phase Grades 1-3	Home languages Book 1 and Book 2		Textbooks not essential for Grade 1	
	Maths In all official languages Book 1 and Book 2		Textbooks not essential for Grade 1	
	Life skills In all official languages Book 1 and Book 2		Textbooks not essential for Grade 1 – 3	
Intermediate Phase Grades 4-6	First Additional Language English and Afrikaans		Textbooks not essential for Grade 1	
	Home languages Book 1 and Book 2		All Textbooks required except for Natural Science and Technology	
	Maths In English and Afrikaans only Book 1 and Book 2			
Senior Phase Grades 6-9	First Additional Language English and Afrikaans			
	Siyavula Natural Science and Technology In English and Technology Book 1 and Book 2	A Teacher's Guide will also be available.		
FET Grades 10-12	Maths In English and Afrikaans only Book 1 and Book 2			
FET Grades 10-12	No workbooks	Supplementary guides <i>Mind the Gap</i> for Grade 12 only available in English and Afrikaans on website and delivered: • Geography • Life Sciences • Economics • Accounting In the near future <i>Mind the Gap</i> study guides will be developed for • Maths • Physical Science • Agricultural Science • English First Additional Language	Textbooks for all subjects required except for Maths and Physical Science	<i>Siyavula</i> Maths and Physical Science Grades 10-12 supplied in 2012 <i>Siyavula</i> Maths and Physical Science Caps aligned for Grade 11 will be supplied in 2013
Grade 10				Textbooks available on DBE website: Life Science and Maths Literacy

Alert! Principals, teachers, learners and parents should make sure that learners in Grades 10 (CAPS aligned) and Grades 11 and 12 return the Siyavula Maths and Physical Science textbooks that were distributed by the Department in 2012.

The Department will only be distributing Siyavula Maths and Physical Science CAPS aligned textbooks for Grade 11 in 2013.

Alert! Workbooks (Book 1) are being delivered directly to schools during November 2012. Principals are urged to check that the workbooks are:

- In sufficient numbers;
- In the correct languages; and
- Not damaged.

After checking against the master list above, principals should report errors in deliveries to:

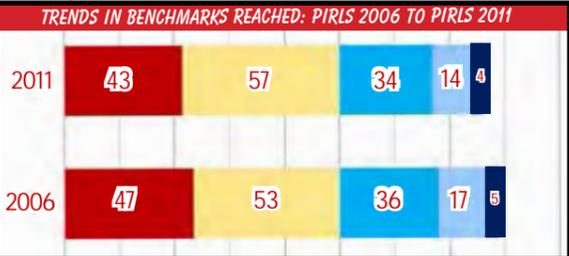
Call Centre: 086 100 4357 – or Free SMS 39864

The service provider will rectify errors directly with schools.

Workbook 2 will be delivered in January 2013.

PIRLS has been a hot topic recently!

HOW DID SOUTH AFRICA PERFORM?



Did not achieve	LOW	INTERMEDIATE	HIGH	ADVANCED
Focus on and retrieve explicitly stated information	Make straight forward inferences	Interpret and integrate ideas and information	Examine & evaluate content, language and textual elements	

What is PIRLS?

PIRLS stands for the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, which is an international study used to assess and compare children's reading literacy.

Other countries have assessed learners at Grade 4 in three points in time: 2001, 2006 and 2011. South Africa's approach was a little different. We assessed Grade 5 learners, and used the prePIRLS test, which is a less difficult assessment, to assess learners in Grade 4.

What does PIRLS assess?

PIRLS assesses learners' comprehension when reading:

- for literary experience; and
- to acquire and use information.

The achievement results are reported on the PIRLS scale, which has a range of 0–1,000 (although student performance typically ranges between 300 and 700, with 500 as a point of reference).

How does PIRLS help to benchmark learning achievements?

It was found that 57% of Grade 5 learners from English and Afrikaans LOLT schools reached the low international benchmark. This means that 43% of the learners in these schools did not achieve that level and they could therefore not find and retrieve information from the texts they were required to read.

Why was the pre-PIRLS introduced in 2011?

It was introduced to assess Grade 4 learners who are still in the process of establishing literacy and are moving from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" – i.e. acquiring literacy skills for learning across the curriculum.

What were the characteristics of top performing learners?

- They came from homes where they were introduced to reading literacy at a young age, and their parents liked reading. The home provided direct guidance in effective literacy practices.
- They had attended pre-primary education and could read some sentences and write some words by the time they started school. With the introduction of Grade R we can anticipate that learners will perform better in future PIRLS assessments.
- They attended schools that emphasise academic success and encourage students to do well. The School Improvement Strategy on page 26 could be useful in helping schools to develop this culture.

What counts against achievement?

- Hunger and malnutrition
- Sleep deprivation
- Lack of reading resources
- Bullying

PIRLS shows that **teachers** can make the **most significant difference** towards improving reading!

Which were the top-performing countries in PIRLS 2011?
Hong Kong SAR, Russian Federation, Finland and Singapore.

Playing it safe: preventing the transmission of diseases in school



The **UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS** provide guidelines for preventing the transmission of HIV and other diseases through contact with blood if someone is injured at school.

Check that your school complies with the universal precautions.

In my school all learners, staff and sports coaches

- are trained in first aid
- are trained in the use of first aid kits
- are trained on the importance of the universal precautions

My school has at least two first aid kits that contain the following:

- 2 large and 2 medium pairs of disposable latex gloves
- 2 large and 2 medium pairs of household rubber gloves for handling
- waterproof plasters
- disinfectant
- scissors
- cotton wool
- gauze tape
- tissues
- containers for water
- a resuscitation mouthpiece for mouth-to-mouth resuscitation
- protective eye wear
- protective face mask to cover nose and mouth

Latex or household rubber gloves

- are available in every classroom
- at every sports event
- are carried by the playground supervisor

First aid kits and appropriate cleaning equipment are accessible at all times

- for the playground supervisor
- at sports events
- in vehicles during school outings
- a staff member who is responsible for health at school checks the first aid kits each week and ensures that no items are missing
- all learners and staff are trained to manage their own bleeding/injuries to protect others

Learners in pre-primary and primary schools are instructed

- never to touch the blood or wounds of others
- never to handle emergencies such as nosebleeds, cuts and scrapes of friends on their own
- to call for the assistance of a teacher or other staff member immediately an injury occurs

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a communicable disease that is caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV and AIDS is one of the critical challenges facing all South Africans. With increasing infection rates, learners and teachers with HIV and AIDS will become part of the population of schools. The National Policy on HIV/AIDS for Learners and Teachers in Public Schools (August 1999) clearly stipulates that even though the risk of HIV transmission as a result of contact play and contact sport is generally insignificant, strict adherence to universal precautions in case of open wounds, sores, breaks in skin, grazes, open skin lesions or mucous membranes is essential. No learner or teacher may participate in contact play or sport with an open wound. If bleeding occurs during contact play or contact sport the injured player must be removed from the playground immediately and treated appropriately. The player may only resume play if the wound is completely and securely covered.

Creating a safe, inviting and inspiring classroom environment is critical for effective teaching and learning. The appearance and physical layout of your classroom says volumes about your teaching style, your level of organisation and the values you hold. A classroom that incorporates a variety of stimuli ignites the curiosity of learners and encourages them to take risks with their learning. Use colour, sound, light, novel activities, bulletin boards and a variety of materials to stimulate your learners. Remember always that Routine, Ritual and Rules are equally important and allow for all learners to share the learning space and materials in a fair and equitable manner and ensure that the classroom is kept neat and tidy.

The safety of learners in schools is of paramount importance. The South Africa Schools Act (1996) demands that schools must take measures to ensure the safety of learners at school and during any school activity; ensuring, where reasonably practicable, that learners are under the supervision of a teacher at all times. This would include their safety during break-time. Teachers must take turns to be on duty during breaks to ensure that learners are not bullied, hurt or abscond from school.



2013 SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR THE 2013 ACADEMIC YEAR: [INLAND]

SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR THE 2013 ACADEMIC YEAR: [COASTAL]

Public and School Holidays 2013	
1 January	New Year's Day
21 March	Human Rights Day
22 March	School Holiday (Coastal)
29 March	Good Friday
1 April	Family Day
27 April	Freedom Day
1 May	Workers' Day
16 June	Youth Day
17 June	Public Holiday
9 August	Women's Day
24 September	Heritage Day
16 December	Day of Reconciliation
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Day of Goodwill

January 2013							February 2013							March 2013						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5					1	2					1	2		
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28			24	25	26	27	28	29	30
														31						

January 2013							February 2013							March 2013						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5					1	2					1	2		
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28			24	25	26	27	28	29	30
														31						

April 2013							May 2013							June 2013						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6			1	2	3	4						1		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
														30						

April 2013							May 2013							June 2013						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6			1	2	3	4						1		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
														30						

July 2013							August 2013							September 2013						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6			1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30					

July 2013							August 2013							September 2013						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6			1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30					

October 2013							November 2013							December 2013						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5					1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31				

October 2013							November 2013							December 2013						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5					1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31				

GROUP 1: INLAND PROVINCES: FREE STATE, GAUTENG, LIMPOPO, MPUMALANGA AND NORTH WEST

Term	Duration	No. of weeks	No. of days	No. of public holidays	Actual no. of school days
1	(7) 9 Jan – 20 March	11	(53) 51	0	(53) 51
2	9 April – 21 June	11	54	2	52
3	15 July – 20 Sept	10	50	1	49
4	1 Oct – 04 (06) Dec	10	(49) 47	0	(49) 47
TOTAL		42	(206) 202	3	(203) 199

GROUP 2: COASTAL PROVINCES: EASTERN CAPE, KWAZULU-NATAL, NORTHERN CAPE AND WESTERN CAPE

Term	Duration	No. of weeks	No. of days	No. of public holidays	Actual no. of school days
1	(14) 16 Jan – 28 March	11	(54) 52	1 + 1	(52) 50
2	8 April – 21 June	11	55	2	53
3	15 July – 20 Sept	10	50	1	49
4	1 Oct – 04 (06) Dec	10	(49) 47	0	(49) 47
TOTAL		42	(208) 204	4 + 1	(203) 199

PUT AN END TO



We all know that children learn best in an environment where they feel safe and secure. Many children don't learn because they come to school fearful of being bullied. Unfortunately, there's no single solution that will stop or prevent bullying. *What's Up-Teach?* interviewed two school principals to find out what they have done to reduce bullying in their schools.



WHAT IS BULLYING?

It is the **repeated behaviour** by an individual or group that **intentionally hurts** another individual or group either **physically or emotionally**. Often bullying is motivated by some or other **prejudice** against particular groups or by actual or perceived differences between children. Emotional bullying can be hard to identify and can be very **damaging** to children.

Mrs Moima told us that she had received a number of complaints from parents that their children were being bullied.

"We decided to be proactive," says Mrs Moima.

"We held a workshop and we spoke about what issues could result in bullying, and we developed strategies to prevent bullying. We needed to change the culture to one where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect."

Not an easy task! We asked Mrs Moima what they did.

WE HELD A POSTER COMPETITION

Groups of learners designed posters on good values in the school, to show the importance of respect for staff and other pupils. The children set up a jury to judge the posters. This actually became an advocacy campaign that helped to permeate the values of respect and care throughout the whole school environment.

Mrs Moima tells us they introduced the following school rules specifically to deal with bullying:

- 1 Don't bully other children.
- 2 Try to help pupils who are being bullied.
- 3 Include children who might be left out.
- 4 Encourage the practice of ubuntu and caring in the school.

They also introduced ways of dealing with aggressive behaviour:

- 1 Bullies had to apologise.
- 2 They had to forfeit their breaks and do some 'community service'.
- 3 Bullying incidents were discussed with the teacher, principal and parents.

Mr Smith explained what he did to prevent bullying at his school:

INVOLVE PARENTS According to Mr Smith, parents need to feel confident that their children will be protected from bullying at school. And the parents of children who bully need to know that the school does not tolerate bullying.

INVOLVE LEARNERS "All children," says Mr Smith, "need to understand that we do not tolerate bullying. In our school, we made sure that both the victims and the bullies knew that we would not tolerate bullying. We also needed to empower children who see their peers being bullied so that they can report the incidents."

USE THE CURRICULUM Mr Smith explains: "The workbooks have given us a number of opportunities to speak about tolerating differences in matters like religion, race and disability, as well as tolerating children who come from different family situations. Many of the worksheets directly promote kindness, care, cooperation and friendship. We included values wherever we could to show that prejudice is unacceptable. We also introduced conflict resolution and anger management skills training."

INCREASE ADULT VISIBILITY Mr Smith's school increased supervision at places around the school where most bullying behaviour occurred, such as the toilets and the playground.

STAFF TRAINING "Our staff were trained in how to resolve problems, and where to get support if they could not deal with a particular instance of bullying. They learned how to recognise bullying behaviours and to come up with strategies to deal with the problem."

WORK WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY Bullying that takes place at the school is often carried outside school to sports clubs and even to the local

internet cafe. Mr Smith engaged with the wider community to get them to also contribute to preventing bullying that might be happening outside the school.

MAKE IT EASY FOR PUPILS TO REPORT BULLYING

"Learners need to feel confident that they will be listened to and that we as adults will act on bullying," says Mr Smith. "So we sent our learners a clear message that they could report bullying that was happening outside school, including bullying on the internet, Facebook or other such sites – and that we would take action wherever necessary."



WHAT ABOUT THE BULLY?

Our two school principals suggested the following:

- Intervene immediately to stop the bullying.
- Phone the parents of both the bully and the victim as soon as possible. If possible, involve the parents in designing a plan of action.
- Have discussions with bullies and victims.
- Have discussions with the parents of bullies and victims.
- Use role-play activities to teach non-aggressive behaviour to prevent bullying.
- Use role-play to teach victims to be more assertive.
- Remind the bully about school and classroom rules.
- Reassure the victim that everything possible will be done to prevent any further bullying.
- Make learners aware of the school's non-zero tolerance of bullying.
- Continue to monitor the behaviour of the bully and the safety of the victim.
- If the situation doesn't change make a referral to the child line: 0800 055 555.



STRUGGLING WITH CHALLENGES IN THE CLASSROOM? IS THERE NOBODY YOU CAN TALK TO? WRITE IN AND LET AGONY AUNT HELP YOU!

Dear Agony Aunt

I am a Grade 6 teacher, teaching at Sivumelene Primary school in Matatiele. My problem is with the learner portfolios. My Grade 6 learners do not take proper care of their portfolios. When it is time for moderation, some learners have lost their files, some of the assessment tasks done are missing from their portfolios or are in a very poor condition. Kindly assist me with advice on how I can manage and control learner portfolios.

Concerned

Dear Concerned
It will be best to keep the learner portfolios yourself and lock them in a cupboard. Try and do the following to make sure that your learners' portfolios are always up to date, neat and easily accessible.

- Start by seeing to it that all your learners have a file in which they will keep all their work.
- Make an index page and photocopy it for all the learners in your class.
- Help your learners to make interleaves for the file. Let them use different colours for the various sections of the portfolio.
- Keep all the files with you, and hand them out to learners when they have to file some assessment tasks.
- Give guidance on where to file each assessment task that has been marked and returned to learners.
- Acknowledge the efforts of those who are up to date with their work and file tasks correctly.
- Those learners who cannot afford a file can use a small box, e.g. a shoe box, to store their work.
- Instil the values of neatness and pride in one's work, so that learners are able to present and keep their work neat at all times even without supervision.
- Be mindful that you need to be patient so that your learners can take the time to do the tasks correctly.



Dear Agony Aunt

I was not on strike in 2012 when large numbers of teachers went on strike nationally. I have submitted a copy of the attendance register and an affidavit proving that I was on duty. Unfortunately my salary was docked and I have still not been reimbursed. Is there any further action I can take?

Frustrated

Dear Frustrated
Start with your school principal. The principal will forward your query to the District Office. If the District Office can't solve your problem, it will go to the next level, namely the Provincial Office. Your responsibility is to follow up with your administration office to find out what is happening with your query. It is very important to keep all the correspondence about your query. If the District and Provincial Offices can't help you, you may contact the Department of Basic Education so that we can follow up with the relevant PED.

You will find the contact details of the Provincial and National Departments of Education at the back of the magazine.



Dear Agony Aunt

I'm marking a monthly test for my English FAL learners in Grade 9 and all of them have struggled, not on content but on time. Clearly they ran out of time. One learner managed to still get over 50% and answered only 5 of the 8 questions! I'm worried that my learners' raw scores don't give a true picture of their ability to understand a given English text.

What should I do?

Perplexed English Teacher

Reply

Hi 'Perplexed'

I teach English FAL learners in a rural school so I sympathise with you and with them, while still absolutely believing that they have to demonstrate their competence according to the expected level of Grade 9 learners.

Medium term solution: reconsider this assessment mechanism and build in more time if that's the only problem with it. You're quite right in treating this as a comprehension test. It is not an Olympic race.

Short term solution: if it's worth a lot % wise and these English FAL learners have been disadvantaged I'd talk to my HoD about the options. If it's a small piece of assessment, I'd give them their marked scripts and tell them that you're aware they ran out of time, and that you're trying to ensure there is sufficient time for all other assessments in future.

Best wishes

Agony Aunt



SHIFTING PERCEPTIONS



Teachers are the cornerstone of Government's commitment to providing quality learning and teaching to all learners at South African public schools.

The Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, has repeatedly stated that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has consistently shown its commitment to ensuring that the teachers tasked with shaping the minds of South Africa's future leaders are of the highest calibre.

It is our teachers who carry the responsibility of shaping the children and future children of this country so that they can become the kind of citizens South Africa needs and wants: citizens who have the skills to contribute to the country's economic well being, and to the fabric of life in their communities.

The profession has, however, in recent years not been as attractive as in the past. With all the career avenues available to young people in this modern world, teaching is often overlooked for careers that sound more glamorous.

What's Up Teach? spoke to three teachers – a long-serving teacher, a teaching student and a former teacher – to discuss their passion for the profession and dispel some of the negative perceptions around this noble calling.

THE TEACHING STUDENT

Mzwandile Ngwenya is following in his father's footsteps and pursuing a career in teaching. The 21-year-old is the recipient of the Funza Lushaka bursary scheme, which was established by the DBE to attract young people to the profession and ensure the education system has capable teachers in the core subject areas.

"My father was a teacher. I felt inspired to follow in his footsteps and to honour his legacy by becoming a teacher when he passed on," explained Ngwenya. "Where I am from, Mpumalanga, there is a need for good teachers as they have the potential to change the lives of young people."

Ngwenya, now in his third year of studies, hopes to return to his hometown and teach Mathematics, Geography and English to high school learners. While he is concerned about the earning potential of teachers, he is confident that the secondary benefits will outweigh the negatives associated with the profession.

"I feel I am now on the correct path; this is my calling. My fellow students and I will one day have the opportunity to change a young person's life and I wouldn't have it any other way."

THE VETERAN

Rosaline Makan was an teacher for 47 years, before her retirement at the end of 2011. Makan embodies the characteristics often associated with teachers, but she was more than just a teacher. So much so that she became a living legend in the communities where she taught.

"After my marriage in 1970 I joined my husband at Ganskraal Primary School where he was a school principal, with the intention of staying for not longer than 3 years," recalled Makan. "With responsibilities increasing, like in any other rural area, I became so rooted into the farming community that the 3 years extended to 23 years!"

Makan was deeply involved in community work, ranging from staging plays, organising church bazaars and cultural events, campaigning for the Cancer Association of South Africa, and participating in municipal and community activities.

Like many of her peers, Makan was limited in the career options available to her, but she has no regrets about committing her life to educating and assisting others.

"We had to make a choice between two professions that were available at the time, namely teaching and nursing. I chose teaching as a career. I never stopped studying and through correspondence courses I obtained a Matric Certificate, a Diploma in Education (SP)(DE111) in 2004 and an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in Mathematics, Languages and Curriculum Leadership through the University of Cape Town in 2010, explained Makan."

Makan's dedication to the profession was recognised at the 2011 National Teaching Awards – a DBE initiative – where she was a finalist in the Lifetime Achievement category.

Makan is adamant that the idea of quitting teaching never crossed her mind, even when teachers were being offered generous severance packages. "I enjoyed transferring knowledge that will open doors for children. It was fulfilling to see the eyes of learners light up when they suddenly understood something new and were able to apply their newly found skills," she explained.

THE FORMER TEACHER

For Teacher A, who wishes to remain anonymous, the decision to leave the teaching profession was not an easy choice to make. After spending 14 years at a small school in the Northern Cape eventually working his way up to become principal of the school, his exit from the profession was for family reasons.

“Teachers are the cornerstone of Government’s commitment to providing quality learning and teaching to all learners at South African public schools.”

"My wife relocated to Johannesburg and reluctantly I had to seek alternative employment. Fortunately for me I was able to secure a position with the DBE so I could continue to contribute to education in South Africa," said Teacher A. "It was never my intention to leave the classroom, but it just worked out that way. For me, my years as a teacher were the best years for me professionally."

Teacher A explained that he grew up in a period where teachers had a special status within the community as respectable, upstanding professionals.

"It was regarded as a very respectable career path; a teacher was someone that the rest of the community could look up to. Teaching is not, and never should be, just about money. If I can be honest, I think a bit of passion and love for the profession has been lost, but in my work I constantly come into contact with professionals who have the right energy for the job." Teacher A believes that improved teacher development is one way to attract the right calibre of young people to the profession. He feels, that with strong leadership and continuous professional development, the profession will be restored to its deserved status in no time.



Rainbows to brighten our classrooms

Many of our readers will be familiar with the Department's Rainbow Workbook Series.

Why were they introduced?

The workbook package was introduced in 2011 to assist teachers and learners directly in the classroom. The workbooks are provided for free and are intended to:

- ensure that schools that lacked learning resources and photocopying facilities would be supported through the provision of worksheets;
- provide a variety of activities to reinforce literacy/language and mathematical skills;
- introduce learners to the language and concepts required for learning and understanding their other subjects;
- assist teachers to focus on the skills that learners should be acquiring in each grade as outlined in the curriculum;
- help teachers to monitor learners' performance in key activities and prepare learners for the formats used in various standardised assessments; and
- all the workbooks have cut-out activities which are included to enrich your teaching. They are usually fun activities that support the learning outcomes.



The workbook package

The Department's Rainbow workbook package includes the following books which are produced in two volumes:

- learners' workbooks in mother tongue language (that is, in all the eleven official languages) for Grades 1 to 6;
- Numeracy/Mathematics workbooks in all the official languages for Grades 1 to 3 and in English and Afrikaans for Grades 4 to 9;
- Lifeskills workbooks for Grades 1 to 3 in all official languages; and
- English First Additional Language (FAL) workbooks for Grades 1 to 6. (Afrikaans, Sepedi and IsiZulu versions are available for free download on the DBE website www.education.gov.za)

The language and mathematics workbooks comprise 128 worksheets published in two volumes of 64 worksheets each for terms 1 and 2 and terms 3 and 4.

This means there are:

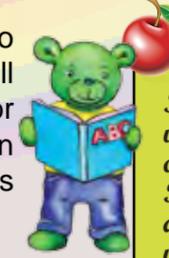
- ★ 4 worksheets per week;
- ★ 8 weeks per term;
- ★ 2 terms per volume; and
- ★ 2 volumes per grade.



How will you know what to do?

We have used icons in the language books to guide you on what to do at various times. You will see that the workbooks for each language, for FAL and for Life Skills use icons depending on the grade. The icons tell us whether an activity is a speaking, reading or writing activity.

Each and every child should have her or his own workbooks. They should be allowed to take them home and they must write in their workbooks.



Grade R Workbooks
In 2013 the Grade R learners' workbooks were released. Each learner should receive one Grade R workbook per term. The Grade R workbooks integrate Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills using fun and engaging ways to capture young learners' interest and attention. The Grade R workbooks are available in all languages along with relevant resources, posters and big books.

The maths worksheets are colour coded to show:

Revision
Number
Patterns
Space and shape
Measurement
Data handling



What is the TIMSS?

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) assesses learners' mathematical and science abilities. TIMSS was previously conducted in 1995, 1999 and 2002. In 2011 it was administered to 11969 Grade 9 learners at 285 schools across South Africa.

The 2011 TIMSS and PIRLS cycles coincided and this has allowed countries, for the first time, to assess the same students in three subjects (language, mathematics and science). Researchers can now analyse and explore the relationship between reading performance and achievement in Mathematics and Science.

Provincial performance

The three top performing provinces in both mathematics and science in TIMSS 2011 were the Western Cape, Gauteng and Northern Cape. The three lowest performers were KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and the Eastern Cape. Between the 2002 and 2011 TIMSS assessments, Gauteng, Limpopo, North West, Free State and Eastern Cape showed the greatest improvement.

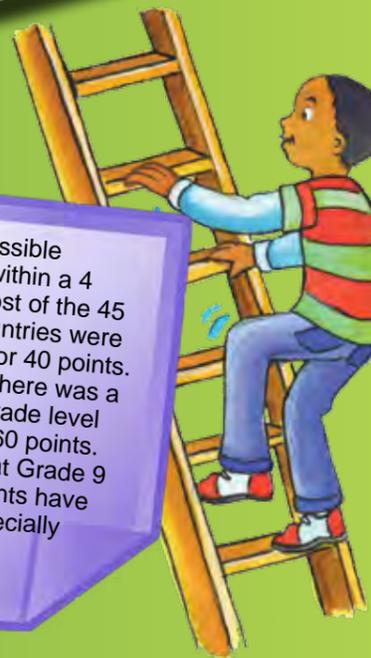
Poorest schools show most improvement

The greatest improvement was among learners who can be described as "the most disadvantaged" and who scored lowest initially.

In 2002, 10.5% of South African learners scored above 400 points. This more than doubled in 2011, when 24% of our learners scored above 400 points. This suggests that the school improvement interventions are making a very real difference in these schools.



Estimates of possible improvements within a 4 year cycle in most of the 45 participating countries were one grade level or 40 points. In South Africa, there was a one and a half grade level improvement or 60 points. This shows that at Grade 9 level, improvements have been made - especially in poorer schools.





WHAT IS A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SIP)?

A School Improvement Plan is a map that sets out the changes that a school needs to make to improve its overall performance and level of learner achievement. A SIP is also a mechanism through which the school sets itself targets and steps for improvement, and the public and other stakeholders can hold the school accountable for the achievement of such targets.

The development of a SIP is part of the self reflection process by the school. SIP must be developed by the school after the School's Self Evaluation (SSE) process, which is part of internal whole school evaluation. All nine areas for evaluation as contained in the WSE policy need to

be considered during the self evaluation process, but only those where serious challenges are being experienced, need to be included in the SIP. Over and above that, the following areas for evaluation are compulsory:

- Quality of teaching and learning
- Curriculum provision and resources
- Learner achievement

The requirement to develop a SIP emanates from ELRC Collective Agreement No.8 of 2003, as well as the policy on Whole School Evaluation.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A SIP?

- There is a clear plan for improvement on all aspects of the school;
- All relevant departmental priorities are taken into account as part of a plan for school improvement;

- All relevant stakeholders participate in the development of a plan;
- All efforts to assist the school to develop and improve must use the SIP as a starting point; and
- All developmental activities for the school are coordinated.

WHO MUST BE INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING A SIP?

- The development of a SIP must be an all inclusive process that must involve the SMT, staff members and the members of the SGB.

WHAT MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN DEVELOPING A SIP?

- The overall performance of the school as well as learner performance, particularly in relation to Annual National Assessment (ANA), National Senior Certificate (NSC), outcomes of School based assessment, IQMS outcomes and WSE reports.

WHEN MUST A SIP BE DEVELOPED?

- The development of a SIP must be done during the fourth quarter, when the school does its planning for the following year. This will be after the summative scores for IQMS are finalised. Further adjustments may be necessary after the release of Grade 12 results. A final plan must be available by the end of January of each year.



Mr Themba Kojana, Acting Deputy Director-General, Department of Basic Education

“One of the roles of the principal of the school will be to present the proposed SIP to all of the teachers, heads of departments and SGB members for their approval. The principal should submit the school improvement plan to the district office.”

ASSESS

Identify school improvement needs through a process of School Self-Evaluation (SSE). Define the desired outcomes for school improvement and learner achievement and decide on a team to represent the school stakeholders and to guide the process towards the achievement of the goals.

PLAN

The School Improvement Team must develop a course of action for implementation and gather stakeholder support. It is essential to ensure buy-in from teachers and school staff who will be directly involved in implementing the reform strategies and initiatives. Also ensure the commitment of learners, their families and other stakeholders who may play supporting roles.

IMPLEMENT

When implementing remember that a “one size fits all strategy” seldom works. Strategies should be personalised to meet diverse learner needs. Remember also that all teachers and school staff must implement the plan faithfully to ensure positive outcomes. Once school staff buy-in has been established, schools must provide the professional development and supports to ensure that teachers and staff have the resources necessary to implement the plans.

MONITOR

The School Management Team is responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of the plan as well as to assist where assistance is needed. Evidence must be collected for each learner, teacher and classroom. Data should be analysed to ensure that each learner and staff member is receiving the support that he or she needs as a result of the new improvement strategies and initiatives.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SIP

All staff members have a responsibility to ensure that what they do contributes to the achievement of the targets as reflected in the SIP. Building staff support is best accomplished through active participation of the staff representatives in researching and developing the plan. The staff representatives can support this process by building support among the rest of the staff through information sharing and by soliciting ideas and feedback from colleagues.

Since the ultimate objective of school improvement planning is to improve the level of learner achievement, the person who has the greatest impact on learners during the school day, the teacher, plays several critical roles in the school improvement planning process. Teachers should:

- actively participate and assume leadership roles in establishing priorities, setting goals, and formulating implementation strategies for the plan;
- work closely with school governing bodies and parents to implement the plan;
- ensure that classroom strategies for improvement address the needs of learners at all levels of learning;
- assess learners in a variety of ways and develop strategies for improving the level of learner achievement;
- support the evaluation of the plan by providing up-to-date information on: learning, the school environment, and parental feedback; and
- set and pursue professional development goals that focus on the goals and strategies identified in the plan.



Ensuring

GOOD Grades

Check yourself against this quiz and see how many smiles or tears you score.
 Increase your smiles by adding some criteria in each category.
 The more smiles you tick, the better you are doing in the category.
 Think about any aspects that bring you to tears and devise a strategy to change the situation.

A Before class		😊	😐	😞	😭
1	I always prepare my lessons.				
2	I develop clear and achievable lesson outcomes.				
3	I prepare, choose or make appropriate teaching aids for my lessons.				
4	I ensure I have the resources I need for each lesson.				

B During class		😊	😐	😞	😭
1	I use all my teaching time in a focused, purposeful way.				
2	I organise the subject matter into meaningful lessons or activities.				
3	I provide learners with appropriate opportunities to practise new skills.				
4	I use effective communication when presenting lessons.				
5	I use effective questioning techniques that encourage higher-level thinking skills.				
6	I check that my learners understand and I give them feedback about their attainment of new concepts or skills.				
7	I ensure that learners actively participate in the learning process.				
8	I use a good balance of learner and teacher-directed discussion/learning.				
9	I assist learners to access and critically assess information.				
10	I encourage learners to be aware of their personal strengths and capabilities.				
11	I motivate learners to do their best.				
12	I use a variety of teaching strategies to cater for the learning needs of all learners.				
13	I recognise and respond to learning exceptionalities so that the needs of special learners are met.				
14	I present my lessons in a way that is helpful to learners who learn in a different way.				
15	I address inappropriate behaviour in a positive way.				

C About me		😊	😐	😞	😭
1	I model and behave in a way that promotes the joy of learning.				
2	I show care and respect for my learners.				
3	I am always on time.				
4	I attend school regularly.				
5	I am a lifelong learner.				

D My classroom environment		😊	😐	😞	😭
1	I try to establish an environment that is conducive to learning.				
2	I create a non-threatening learning environment to encourage learners to participate.				
3	I display relevant timetables.				
4	I display relevant posters, charts etc., on classroom walls.				
5	I keep my classroom neat and tidy.				
6	I ensure anti-discriminatory practices with regard to gender, race, disability, religion, and culture.				
7	I ensure that learners actively participate in the learning process.				

E Curricular expertise		😊	😐	😞	😭
1	I am familiar with the curriculum.				
2	I have sufficient subject knowledge.				
3	I have the ability to explain the subject.				
4	I include accurate and up-to-date information in my lessons.				
5	I try to stay updated in phase or subject matters.				
6	I work with other teachers in my phase or subject.				
7	I use textbooks and the DBE workbooks appropriately.				

F Assessment		😊	😐	😞	😭
1	I use appropriate assessment techniques.				
2	I provide feedback to learners during the lesson.				
3	I keep both learners and parents informed about learners' progress.				
4	I keep comprehensive records of learners' achievements.				
5	I am able to use test and assessment results to improve my teaching.				
6	I am able to use the ANA results to diagnose where each learner needs help.				

G School-wide activities		😊	😐	😞	😭
1	I participate in extramural activities.				
2	I provide support for or refer learners who require additional care.				
3	I have a book retrieval system to make sure I get back all the textbooks.				
4	I participate in parent days and other school activities.				
5	I manage school resources properly.				
6	I take care when writing learners' and other reports.				
7	I keep accurate records and class registers.				
8	I follow up on learners' absenteeism when necessary.				

MANAGING

ABSENTEEISM



learners, backed up by your knowing who your learners are and your noticing if any one of them is absent and if there is any pattern to the absenteeism. Your register will indicate whether the learner has arrived late or left early for whatever reason.

It is not sufficient to simply record that a learner is absent – absenteeism needs to be reported. Three things need to be recorded:

- The name of the absentee and period of absence;
- The status of the absence; and
- The reason for the absence.

This information must be passed on to the school administrator who will be able to report on absenteeism for the whole school.

Authorised and unauthorised absences

Legitimate absence will be authorised by the parents and the school, though with absences caused by illness many schools have a policy requiring a note or phone call from the parent and a doctor's certificate for absences of more than a day or two. Sometimes you may only be able to record that the absence has been due to illness after the child returns to school.

Other authorised absences may result from school approved educational, cultural or sporting activities.

Absenteeism concerns

Some children in our schools are heads of households as a result of their parents being ill or dying. These children tend to be absent to carry out caring or household duties. It is important that you identify these children so that they can be assisted in obtaining child grants and so that they can be helped through accessing support in the communities where they live.

Children who live in rural areas may also be absent because of duties at home, such as tending cattle. You need to encourage parents to send these children to school regularly. School transport should be arranged so that rural children do not have to walk long distances to school. Schools need to be aware of the impact of floods or heavy rain that may also affect learners' attendance.

Guardians/caregivers must inform the school by phone, SMS or letter of a child's absence from school. This must be followed by a note stating the date/duration and reasons for the learner's absence. These letters must be filed.

Reducing absenteeism

The teacher plays a very important role in reducing absenteeism. A good teacher knows the learners in her or his class and notices when anybody is absent. Keeping a record of absenteeism will help you to identify any pattern in the absences – whether it is because of illness or truancy.

It is good to contact the parents by letter, phone call or SMS, to check on absence, particularly when they are frequent. It is also important to remember that in some communities child labour, excessive household responsibilities, or perceptions that school attendance is less important than the tasks given to the child may mean that absenteeism is condoned. In these cases it is clear that the problem has to be addressed with the parents, not the child. School engagement with parents can have very positive effects in reducing absenteeism. Where truancy is a problem it is important to find out why the child is staying away from

school. Is it happening because of peer pressure, or is the child not coping with learning? Once the cause is identified an effective solution can be found.

It takes a community to raise a child

The good news is that chronic absence can be significantly reduced when schools, communities and families join together to monitor and promote attendance, as well as to identify and address the factors that prevent young learners from attending school every day.



"As a teacher, I know how the poor attendance of pupils can disrupt their own learning and that of other pupils. Quickly these children begin to fall behind their friends and often fail to fill in gaps in their skills or knowledge – sometimes in basics like reading or writing. Over time these pupils can become bored and disillusioned with education. These pupils are lost to the system, and can fall into anti-social behaviour and crime. That is why it is vital schools tackle absenteeism." Charles Taylor, the United Kingdom government's expert adviser on absenteeism in schools.

Managing absenteeism

Every school teacher knows the negative impact of learners being absent from class. Learners who are absent, whether for a whole day or part of a day if they arrive late, do not progress as well as their classmates who are in class daily. In fact, they may not catch up and their self-esteem and sense of being part of the class may suffer. Their absence harms attempts to do group work and group projects.

In South Africa we know that on any one day as many as 5 to 15 percent of learners are absent from school and the number is even higher if we include those learners who arrive late because of transport or other problems.

Learners who are frequently absent are likely to be more socially isolated and may be at risk of harm during periods of absence. Moreover, they are more likely to become involved in unacceptable or even illegal activities such as delinquency, vandalism, alcohol and drug abuse and risky sexual behaviour.

The role of the teacher

The teacher essentially has a twofold role in relation to absenteeism. Firstly, the teacher is responsible for recording, monitoring and reporting absenteeism. Secondly, s/he can help reduce absenteeism.

Marking the register and monitoring absenteeism

The teacher has the responsibility of keeping a daily register of learners' attendance. A register, of course, must be based upon an accurate class list of all the enrolled

Grade 6B																
No.	Admin No.	Date of Birth			Names	Sex	Attendance									
		D	M	Y			January 2013									
							11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
1	9093	16	5	2001	Dlamini Kwanele Polany	M	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	
2	9688	2	8	2000	Njabulo Usuf	F	a	a			a			a	a	
3	9387	17	5	2000	Khuzwayo Mphakamisi	M					a	a				
4	103307	14	2	2000	Khwela Thabiso Menzi	F	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	
5	1998	2	5	2000	Bengu Kholeka	M	a	a								
6	9507	23	9	2000	Buthelezi Kholeka	M	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	
7	9095	30	12	2001	Charmaine Nompilo	F					a	a				
8	9142	7	7	1999	Gudazi Pretty	F	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	
9	10999	5	1	2001	Jeza Mbali	M	a	a			a	a				
10	10861	9	5	2000	Josephine Lake	M	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	
Number of Girls								4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	
Number of Boys								6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	
Roll								10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
Attendance								7	10	10	10	7	10	10	9	10



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