

**A Facilitator Guide for Conducting Whole
School-Based Continuous Professional Development**

**Module 4: Strengthening Literacy
Skills across the Curriculum in
Junior Secondary Schools and Senior
Secondary Schools**



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About this Facilitator Guide

This guide is designed to help facilitators lead school-based continuing professional development in strengthening literacy skills across the curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) and Senior Secondary Schools (SSS).

This facilitator guide includes activities for two Teacher Learning Circles (TLCs). The first TLC should be held at the start of term. The second TLC should be held towards the end of term.

The duration of each TLC is expected to be approximately three hours. All teachers in a school are expected to attend and participate, regardless of the subject they teach.

How to use the Facilitator Guide

This guide is to support school leaders such as Principals, Head of Departments or other senior teachers that will lead and facilitate the TLC. The date and time for the TLC should be agreed well in advance of the meeting and communicated by the Senior Leadership Team in the school.

Before each TLC, the facilitator should:

- Read and familiarise themselves with the session notes and instructions for facilitating the TLC.
- Check their understanding of the activities to be undertaken during the TLC and their purpose.
- Prepare and collect resources needed for the TLC.
- Prepare the space including arranging seating, blackboards, whiteboards etc.

During each meeting:

- Take a register of attendance. Ensure that it is signed by all participants and given to the school Principal.
- Start and end on time.
- Encourage everyone to participate.
- Ensure the meeting is a safe space for everyone to share ideas and opinions. Listen carefully to what people say and encourage others to do the same.
- If participants want to discuss something that is not related to the topic, record the item on a flip chart and agree to discuss it after the meeting.
- Use energizers whenever participants are lacking in energy. Energizers can be rhymes, songs or a quick physical activity.
- Leave sufficient time for evaluation at the end of the TLC.
- Collect the evaluations.

After each meeting:

- Review the evaluations and speak with a few colleagues to get their feedback.
- Offer support to colleagues to complete TLC follow up tasks.

Remember! A good facilitator...

- Is gender responsive and does not use any form of discrimination
- Is well prepared to conduct the session
- Starts and ends the session on time
- Follows the guide and the proposed activities and discussions
- Communicates information and instructions clearly
- Encourages everyone to participate
- Is enthusiastic about CPD and the content covered in the TLC
- Recognises and respects participants' contributions
- Encourages participants to work together.

How the Facilitator Guide is organised

The facilitator guide is organised by activity. Aim to follow the activities in the sequence given.

You will see that some types of activities have a symbol or sign to help you.

The symbols used are shown in the table below.

Symbol	Meaning
	Learning outcomes: These are brief descriptions of knowledge and skills teachers are expected to learn by the end of the learning circle. They also support both the facilitator and teachers to know the purpose of the learning circle thus allowing everyone to self-assess their learning progress.
	Reflective activities: Use reflection time to allow individuals and groups to think more deeply about an issue, or about what they've learnt.
	Facilitator notes: In these sections you will find the topic background and information needed to complete the task. If you can, print it and share with teachers or send it via WhatsApp to read before or after the TLC.
	Discussion: These are tasks where teachers get to talk and share ideas or experiences about specific topics.
	Video: These are visual and audio learning aids that introduce a topic/theme, provide a summary of the content taught or showcase different perspectives.
	Audio clip: These are audio recordings that introduce a topic/theme, provide a summary of the content taught or showcase different perspectives.
	Case study: These are real-life experiences collected from different school settings that provide opportunities to teachers to reflect and assess their ability to handle scenarios presented based on content learnt during the learning cycles.
	Tasks for after the meeting: These are tasks that teachers are required to do after the TLC. They may be individual or group tasks.



Facilitator Guide for Teacher Learning Circle 1:

Strengthening Literacy Skills in JSS and SSS across the Curriculum



Teacher Learning Circle 1

Strong skills in literacy and mathematics are necessary for learning any subject but national learning assessments in Sierra Leone show that most students in Junior (JSS) and Senior Secondary Schools (SSS) in Sierra Leone do not have grade appropriate skills in literacy or in mathematics. Many students in JSS have not mastered skills in literacy and mathematics taught at primary level, and many students in SSS have not mastered skills in literacy and mathematics taught at JSS level. This module is about how to integrate literacy skills into teaching and learning across the curriculum so that all JSS and SSS teachers are building skills literacy, regardless of the subjects they teach.

Even if you think you are familiar with this topic, carefully read the facilitator guide in advance of leading the TLCs so that you are well prepared and have made the materials you need well in advance.

TLC Activities

Activity 1: Opening



10 minutes

Preparation

You will need three flipcharts for this activity. One should include the TLC rules. If possible, bring the flipchart from the last session. If you no longer have it, prepare a new one. Rules could include:

TLC rules

- Phones on silent
- Reduce movement
- Participate actively
- Use encouraging and inclusive language
- Listen when someone else is speaking
- Accept that we are all learning, feel free to ask questions.

You will need a flipchart with the agenda:

Agenda

Activity	Time	Training Materials
Opening	10 minutes	'Rules guiding the TLC' flipchart 'Agenda' flip chart 'TLC learning outcomes' flipchart
What is Literacy?	30 minutes	
Student English literacy levels in JSS3 and SSS3	45 minutes	Flipcharts or handouts of the charts
Building literacy skills across the curriculum	45 minutes	Flip charts for each scenario Handouts of strategies or flip chart with strategies
Closing	15 minutes	Attendance register

You will need a flipchart with the TLC learning outcomes:

Learning outcomes



- Increase teachers' understanding of literacy, what being literate means and why literacy is important
- Raise teachers' awareness of student literacy skills in JSS and SSS in Sierra Leone
- Generate an understanding among teachers that all teachers need to be literacy teachers
- Identify opportunities to improve literacy skills in various subjects
- Share simple strategies to use to help students develop literacy skills.

Instructions



1. Arrange chairs in a circle. It is important that the teachers can move around the room, form pairs and groups easily and quickly during the session.
2. Welcome everyone.
3. Invite participants to propose 'rules' for the TLC and write them on a flipchart. Some examples are provided in the previous section.

Note: If you saved the flipchart with the session rules from previous TLC, reuse it and remind everyone about the rules you all agreed previously so that they still guide the session.

4. Display the rules on the wall.
5. Read out the learning outcomes of today's TLC and hang the flip chart with today's learning outcomes on a wall where everyone can see it.
6. Present today's agenda and hang the agenda on a wall near the learning outcomes, where everyone can see the flipchart easily.

Activity 2: What is literacy?



30 minutes

Form of work: Pair work, group work and whole group

Preparation

Prepare two flipcharts or handouts with the charts on in advance of the session:

Key points

- Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak, and listen effectively.
- Someone can be literate in one language but not in another language.
- The language of instruction in schools in Sierra Leone is English. This means that students need to be developing literacy skills in English. They need to be able to read, write, listen and express themselves in English.
- When we refer to English as school subject, we really mean English literacy. When we refer to Mende or Krio as a subject, we really mean Mende or Krio literacy.

Why literacy is important

- Literacy is a foundational skill, meaning that it is key for learning. Competence and confidence in literacy, including competence in grammar, spelling and the spoken word, are essential for progress in all areas of the curriculum.
- Through literacy we can achieve personal growth.
- Through literacy we can achieve full participation in society.

Activity objective: To increase understanding of the term 'literacy' and why literacy is important

Form of work: Whole group and small groups

Summary of the activity: In this activity you will invite participants to share their understanding of the term literacy and what it means to be literate. Then you will share some points about literacy and why it is so important.

Instructions



1. Write the following question on the board or on a flip chart:

When we say someone is literate, what do we mean?

2. Invite participants to respond with their ideas. Listen carefully to their responses.

3. After a few minutes, share the following points on a pre-prepared flip chart:

- Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak, and listen effectively.
- Someone can be literate in one language but not in another language.
- The language of instruction in schools in Sierra Leone is English. This means that students need to be developing literacy skills in English. They need to be able to read, write, listen and express themselves in English.
- When we refer to English as school subject, we really mean English literacy. When we refer to Mende or Krio as a subject, we really mean Mende or Krio literacy.

4. Now invite groups to discuss the following question:

Why is literacy, and being literate, so important?

5. Invite participants to respond with their ideas. Listen carefully to their responses.

6. After a few minutes, summarise the discussion with the following points on a pre-prepared flip chart:

- Literacy is a foundational skill, meaning that it is key for learning. Competence and confidence in literacy, including competence in grammar, spelling and the spoken word, are essential for progress in all areas of the curriculum.
- Through literacy we can achieve personal growth.
- Through literacy we can achieve full participation in society.

7. Invite participants to comment on the points made being moving on to the next activity.

Activity 3: Student English literacy levels in JSS3 and SSS3



45 minutes

Preparation

Prepare flipcharts or handouts with the charts on in advance of the session.

You can either draw the two graphs on a flipchart or on the board. Or you can take a photo of the graphs and send them in a WhatsApp message to TLC participants.

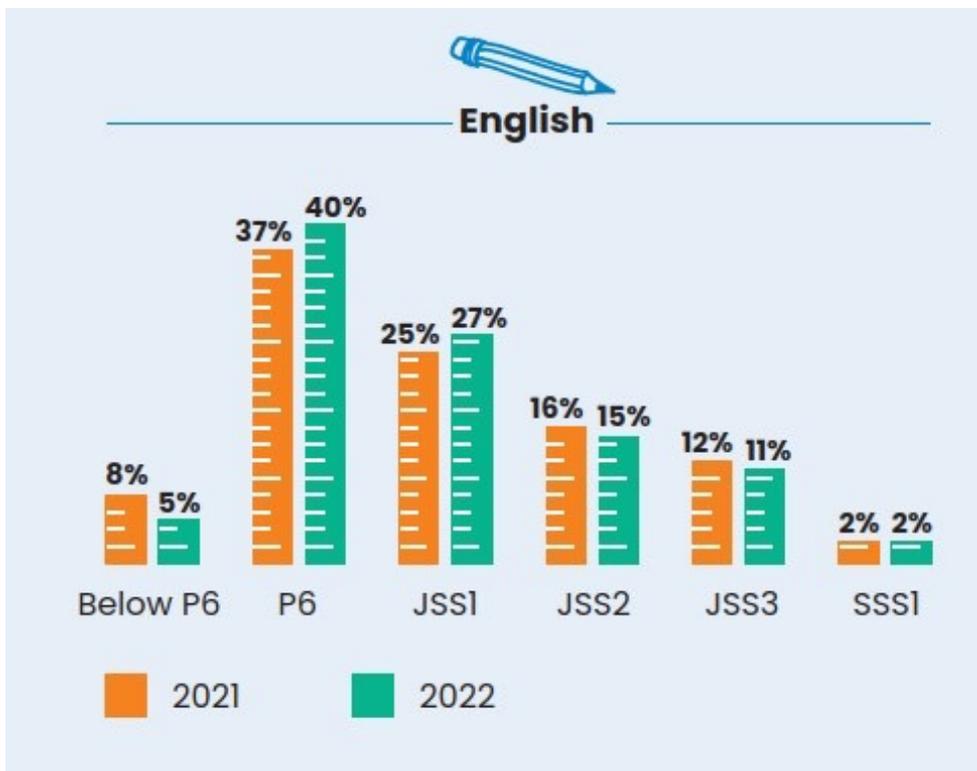


Figure 1: JSS3 students' performance in English across grade bands

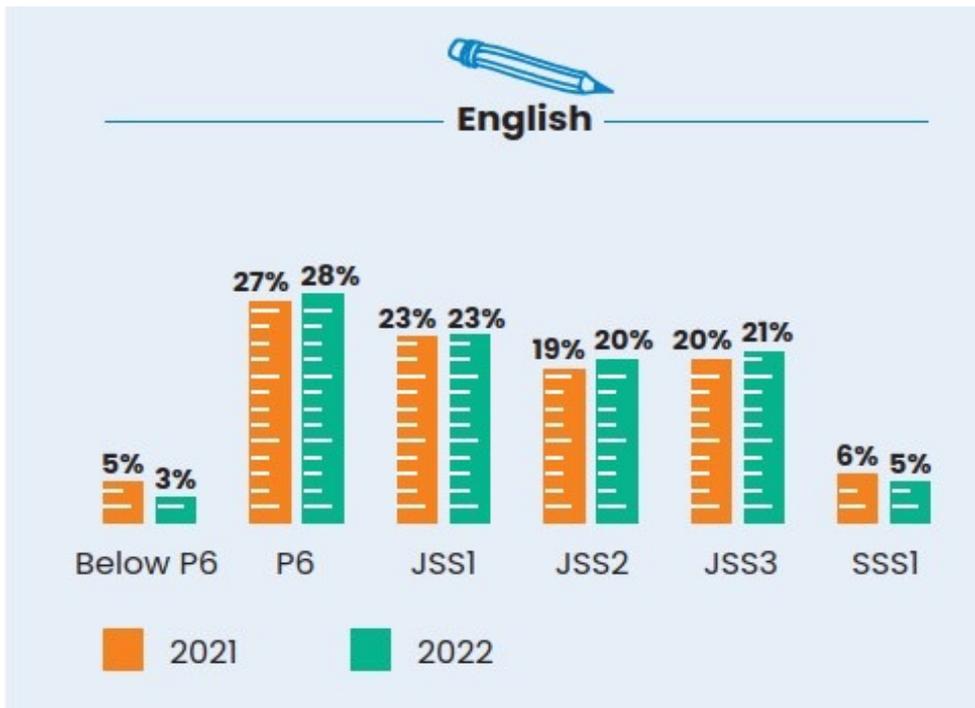


Figure 2: SSS3 students' performance in English across grade bands

Instructions



Activity objective: To analyse secondary school students' English literacy skills and identify ways in which English literacy skills impact on learning across the curriculum

Form of work: Whole group and small groups

Facilitator notes: In this activity you will present graphs from a learning assessment showing students' performance in English. You will ask teachers to try to interpret the graphs themselves in small groups. In plenary you will review their responses and then consider how the students results may impact their learning across the curriculum.

1. Explain that several studies have been conducted with students in JSS3 and SSS3 in Sierra Leone to test their performance in English and Mathematics in Sierra Leone.
2. Share the results from the most recent study with participants. You can do this by sharing printed copies of Figure 1 and 2, or you can share a photograph of the charts via a WhatsApp message.

3. Invite teachers to work in small groups and to discuss the following questions. Allow 10-15 minutes for discussion:
 - A. What do the charts tell us about students' performance in English?
 - B. What do you notice about JSS3 students' level of English?
 - C. What do you notice about SSS3 students' level of English?
 - D. Do these results surprise you or are they in line with your expectations?
4. Move from group to group to listen to the discussion and to help them understand the information on the graphs.
5. After 10-15 minutes, stop the group discussions and return to plenary.
6. Invite groups to share their responses to the four discussion questions.
7. After the discussion, summarise by sharing the following key points:
 - Student performance in English is significantly below grade level expectations for most students in JSS3 and SSS3 in Sierra Leone.
 - In 2022, only 13% of JSS 3 students demonstrated English literacy skills consistent with their grade or higher.
 - In 2022, 45% students assessed in JSS3 were performing at the level expected in the final grade of primary school or lower, 27% at JSS1 level and 15% at JSS2 level.
 - In 2022, 95% of SSS3 students were performing at JSS levels or lower.
 - Sierra Leone is not the only country where many students in secondary school are struggling with literacy. It is a common challenge, especially in countries where young people are learning in a language that is not used at home.
8. Invite participants to comment on the points you have made. Conclude by saying:

Competence and confidence in literacy, including competence in grammar, spelling and the spoken word, are essential for progress in all areas of the curriculum. Because of this, all teachers have responsibility for promoting language and literacy development. Every teacher in each area of the curriculum needs to find opportunities to encourage young people to explain their thinking, debate their ideas and read and write at a level which will help them to develop their language skills further.

Activity 4: Building literacy skills across the curriculum



45 minutes

Preparation

Prepare flipcharts with three scenarios and another with strategies for building literacy (or distribute as a handout).

You will need three flipcharts each showing one scenario:

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Students in JSS1 in the mathematics lesson are learning to solve multi-step word problems involving perimeter, circumference and area of rectangles squares, triangles and circles. The teacher writes three multi-step problems for students to solve	Students in JSS2 in an agricultural science lesson are learning about the environmental factors which influence agriculture production. They have been given a passage to read about agricultural production, rainfall and temperatures in Sierra Leone. They must use the information to extract key points.	Students in JSS3 are learning about the characteristics of good governance in Sierra Leone. The teacher introduces good and bad governance, with examples. Then she asks students to work in small groups to role play an example of good governance in their school or community.

You will also need a flip chart or handout showing strategies to build literacy skills across the curriculum.

Strategies for building literacy skills across the curriculum

Develop students' ability to read complex academic texts

- Introduce key vocabulary at the start of each lesson, especially new vocabulary. For example, if students are going to read a text, teachers should identify any new or difficult words in advance and explain them to students before they start reading.
- Encourage students to create word banks/vocabulary for subjects and topics.

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- Use questions to activate students' prior knowledge about a topic before they start reading about it.
- Break long text into smaller parts. Read each part and then stop. Ask students to identify the main idea or the key point in a single sentence summary before moving to the next part of the text.

Break down complex writing tasks

- Show students how to plan what they want to write. For example, make headings such as 'Beginning', 'Middle' and 'End'. Help them make notes about what they want to say under each heading, before they start writing an essay for example.
- Brainstorm with the whole class before they start writing to identify the vocabulary they might use and key points they might make.
- Provide the outline for a piece of writing. For example, for a history essay:
 - Paragraph 1 – explain what happened
 - Paragraph 2 – explain why it happened
 - Paragraph 3 – explain why what happened is a significant event for Sierra Leone's history.

Provide opportunities for talking

- Use the Think-Pair-Share strategy to encourage discussions about reading materials. Students first think about a question, then pair up to discuss their thoughts before sharing with the class. This gives students an opportunity to rehearse their responses.
- When students give a response to a question that is unclear or grammatically incorrect, help them to refine the response so that they are communicating clearly.
- Use the 'no hands up approach' where you ask a question and then wait for a few moments before selecting a student to respond.
- Use high quality talk yourself. Demonstrate the use of key vocabulary and clear communication.
- Help students overcome the feeling they don't know what to say by providing them with a list of options for starting their response. For example:
 - "I agree/disagree because ____."
 - "I think that ____."
 - "That reminds me of ____."

Instructions



Activity objective: To identify opportunities and strategies for building literacy skills in every

subject

Form of work: Small groups and whole group activities

Facilitator notes: In this activity teachers will identify opportunities to build literacy skills in their lessons. This will be done in groups with teachers generating ideas about when and how to build literacy skills in one of three scenarios.

1. Explain that:

Lessons and teaching materials are designed for students with English literacy skills appropriate for their grade, but as we saw in the previous activity, the level of English literacy skills among students in JSS and SSS is generally very low. Improved levels of literacy will help students achieve better examination results in all subjects and so all teachers – whatever subject they teach – need to be literacy teachers.

2. Explain that in this activity, we are going to think about opportunities to develop literacy skills in a mathematics lesson, in an agricultural science lesson and in a social studies lesson.

3. Display the scenarios on three flip charts in different parts of the room.

4. Invite participants to choose one of the scenarios and then to work with others who have chosen the same scenario. If there are many participants in the TLC break into six groups, with two groups per scenario.

5. Ask groups to discuss the following questions:

- What literacy skills does this task require?
- What could the teacher do during this activity to help students develop their literacy skills?

6. After 15 minutes, stop the discussion and invite each group to briefly share their responses. Listen carefully to what they say.

7. Conclude the session by sharing the Strategies for building literacy skills across the curriculum. These should be on a pre-prepared flipchart or handout. See preparation section on page 16.

8. Invite participants to try integrating these strategies into their lessons between now and the next TLC. Ask them to keep a note of what they did and what happened.

Activity 5: Closing

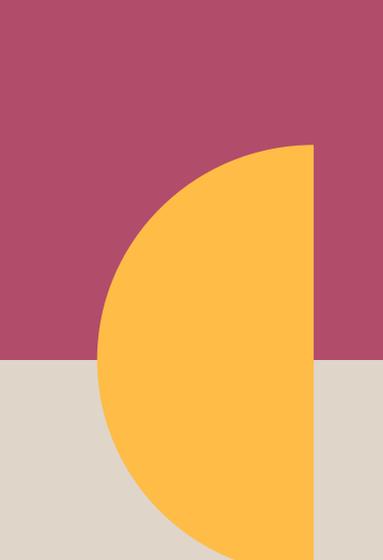


15 minutes

Form of work: Whole group



1. Use the same seating arrangement as at the start of the session (for example ask the participants to sit in a circle).
2. Thank all participants for their time and participation in today's session. Take attendance notes.
3. Ask the participants to describe today's session in up to three words.
4. Make quick notes of the descriptions the participants use. Did they find the session informative, enjoyable, fun? What did the teachers think about the session? Make a note of these reflections for your records and to discuss with colleagues when the next school-based CPD activity is designed.
5. Explain that during the next session, they will learn more about developing literacy skills across curriculum. Agree with the participants the date of the next TLC.
6. Remind participants that in the next TLC they will share their experiences from integrating literacy skills so they should keep a record of what they did and what happened.



Facilitator Guide for Teacher Learning Circle 2:

Strengthening Literacy Skills in JSS and SSS across the Curriculum



TLC Activities

Activity 1: Opening



10 minutes

Preparation

You will need to display the poster with TLC rules that you shared at the start of TLC 1.

You will need to display a flipchart with learning outcomes for TLC 2.

Learning outcomes



- Further explore and practice strategies described in TLC 1 for developing literacy skills among students in secondary school
- Practice using these strategies in their classrooms
- Develop an understanding about why these strategies can help students develop literacy skills.

You will need to display a flipchart with the agenda for TLC 2.

Agenda

Time	Activity	Materials
10 minutes	Opening	Flipcharts displaying TLC rules, objectives and agenda
20 minutes	How did we do? Sharing experience of building literacy skill development into our lessons	List of strategies from TLC (in a flipchart or handouts)
45-60 minutes	Practicing strategies to develop students' ability to read complex academic texts	Flip chart with points about reading
45-60 minutes	Practicing strategies to develop students' ability to write longer responses/short essays	
10 minutes	Closing	

Instructions



1. Arrange seating. Preferably arrange the chairs in a circle. Tables will not be necessary, but if teachers feel more comfortable with tables, you can use them. It is important that the teachers move around the room, form pairs and groups easily and quickly during the session.
2. Greet the participants
3. Agree the rules for the session and write them on a flipchart. If you saved the flipchart with the session rules from previous TLC, reuse it.
4. Display the rules on the wall.
5. Share the learning outcomes for today's TLC on a flipchart and hang the flipchart on the wall where everyone can see it. Note that the focus is still on developing literacy skills at secondary school level.
6. Present today's agenda on a flipchart and hand the flipchart on a wall where everyone can see it.

Activity 2: How did we do? Sharing experience of building literacy skill development into our lessons



20 minutes

Preparation: No new materials required.

Instructions



Activity objective: To share experience of using strategies to build literacy skills in our lessons

Form of work: Small groups and whole group activities

Facilitator notes: In this activity teachers will share their experience of using literacy building strategies as part of their lesson in a variety of subjects. If teachers have not tried using any strategies, it would be useful to ask why. You might also want to share the strategies again.

1. Invite participants to recall what they did and what they learnt in TLC 1.
2. Now share the following recap:

Remind participants that in the previous TLC we learnt about literacy and why it is important. We learnt that many students in JSS and SSS do not have the literacy skills required at their grade level which means that all teachers must be literacy teachers. Finally, we learnt about some strategies to use to build literacy skills in any lesson, regardless of the subject being taught.

3. Remind participants that they agreed at the end of the TLC to try some of the strategies in our lessons. Review the strategies that were shared at the end of TLC 1.
4. Ask participants if anyone tried them. If they did, invite them to share their experience. Provide some prompts if need be. What went well? What would they do differently next time etc.
5. Thank participants for sharing their experiences.

Activity 3: Practicing strategies to develop students' ability to read complex academic texts



45-60 minutes

Preparation: You will need two flipcharts. One with key points about reading and another with the three reading strategies to be practiced.

Flipchart with the key points:

Reading is making meaning from print. It requires that we do the following:

- Identify the words in print: a process called word recognition
- Construct an understanding from them: a process called comprehension
- Coordinate identifying words and making meaning so that reading is automatic and accurate: an achievement called fluency

Flipchart with the three reading strategies. Or you can write them on the board.

- A. Introduce key vocabulary at the start of each lesson, especially new or difficult vocabulary.
- B. Use questions to activate students' prior knowledge about a topic before they start reading about it.
- C. Break long text into smaller parts. Read each part and then stop. Ask students to identify the main idea or the key point in a single sentence summary before moving to the next part of the text.

Instructions



Activity objective: To share experience of using strategies to build literacy skills in our lessons

Form of work: Small groups and whole group activities

Facilitator notes: In this activity teachers will share their experience of using literacy building strategies as part of their lesson in a variety of subjects. If teachers have not tried using any strategies, it would be useful to ask why. You might also want to share the strategies again.

1. Share and discuss the key points about reading in the flipchart or on the board. See the key points on the previous section – page 24.
2. Explain that some students in secondary schools are still struggling with word recognition but the majority struggle with comprehension and fluency. Both are critical for learning in secondary school in any subject. If a student does not understand what they are reading they cannot extract information they need, and if students read slowly, they are unable to make meaning.
3. Explain that in this activity, we are going to practice strategies to develop students' ability to read complex academic texts.
4. Ask participants to divide into 3, 6 or 9 groups (depending on the number of participants in the TLC).
5. Ask each group to select one of the reading strategies to demonstrate. See reading strategies in the previous section – page 24.
6. Give every group a copy of the text provided with this facilitator guide. Or select a suitable text from a textbook available in your school.
7. Tell groups that they have 10 minutes to prepare the role play and that their role play should be for between two and five minutes.
8. After 10 minutes, ask one group to demonstrate strategy A, one group to demonstrate strategy B and one group to demonstrate strategy C. If time allows, you can invite more groups to demonstrate their strategy.
9. After the demonstrations, ask participants the following question:
How do these strategies help learners who struggle with reading in English?
10. Ask participants to share any other strategies that support reading comprehension and fluency. Listen carefully to their responses.
11. Conclude this activity by explaining that these and other strategies help prepare students for reading or that they break down a reading task into smaller parts. It makes reading less overwhelming.

Activity 4 - Practicing strategies to develop students' ability to write longer responses /short essays



45 – 60 minutes

Preparation: You will need a flipchart with the three strategies to practice, or you can write them in the board.

Flipchart with three writing strategies. Or you can write them on the board.

- A. Show students how to plan what they want to write. For example, make headings such as 'Beginning', 'Middle' and 'End'. Help them make notes about what they want to say under each heading, before they start writing an essay for example.
- B. Brainstorm with the whole class before they start writing to identify the vocabulary they might use and key points they might make.
- C. Provide the outline for a piece of writing. For example, for a history essay:
 - o Paragraph 1 – explain what happened
 - o Paragraph 2 – explain why it happened
 - o Paragraph 3 – explain why it is a significant event in Sierra Leone's history.

Instructions



Activity objective: To practice using strategies that develop literacy skills (writing)

Form of work: Small group and whole group

Facilitator notes: This activity is intended to deepen teachers' understanding strategies to help students write and to help them implement the strategies in class.

1. Explain that learning to write is one of the hardest challenges students face at school but it is vitally important and that students who find it difficult to express their ideas in writing are likely to struggle across the curriculum, not just in an English lesson.
2. Explain that in this activity participants are going to practice using strategies to help students write short essays.

3. Ask participants to divide into 3, 6 or 9 groups (depending on the number of participants in the TLC).
4. Ask each group to select one of the writing strategies to demonstrate. See strategies on the previous section – page 26.
5. Explain that their task is to demonstrate how they would use the strategy to help students write a short essay titled, “Why people migrate from rural to urban areas in Sierra Leone”.
6. Tell groups that they have 10 minutes to prepare the role play and that their role play should be for between two and five minutes.
7. After 10 minutes, ask one group to demonstrate strategy A, one group to demonstrate strategy B and one group to demonstrate strategy C. If time allows, you can invite more groups to demonstrate their strategy.
8. After the demonstrations, ask participants the following question:

How do these strategies help learners who struggle with writing?

9. Ask participants to share any other strategies they use to help students write. Listen carefully to their responses
10. Conclude this activity by explaining that these and other strategies help prepare students for writing by getting them started or providing a structure. They make the task less overwhelming.

Activity 5: Closing



10 minutes

Form of work: Whole group



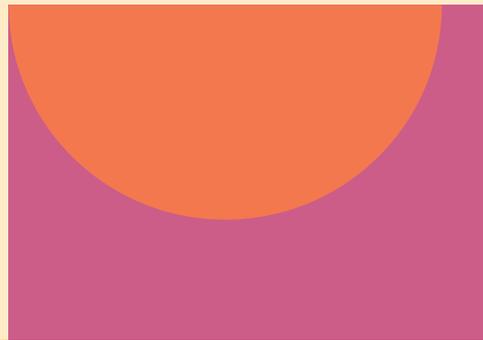
Use the same seating arrangement as at the start of the TLC (for example ask the participants to sit in a circle).

Thank all participants for their time and participation in today's TLC.

Take the attendance register.

Invite participants to tell you one thing they enjoyed about today's session, one thing they would change and one thing they learnt that they did not know before.

Make quick notes of the feedback from participants. Share it with the school leadership team when they are planning the next school-based CPD session.



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