



From Kinyarwanda to English Instruction in Rwanda:

Upper-Grade Reading Strategies and Tips for Teachers

Alisa Phillips, Sr. Education Advisor

Kristy Smith, Education Technical Advisor



World Food
Programme



Home Grown School Feeding Project

- 5-year project; Amount: \$7,594,396
- Coverage: 40 rural schools in 4 districts (Pilot)
- Beneficiaries: 83,106 girls and boys
- World Vision responsible for literacy component



Why Focus on Upper Grades?

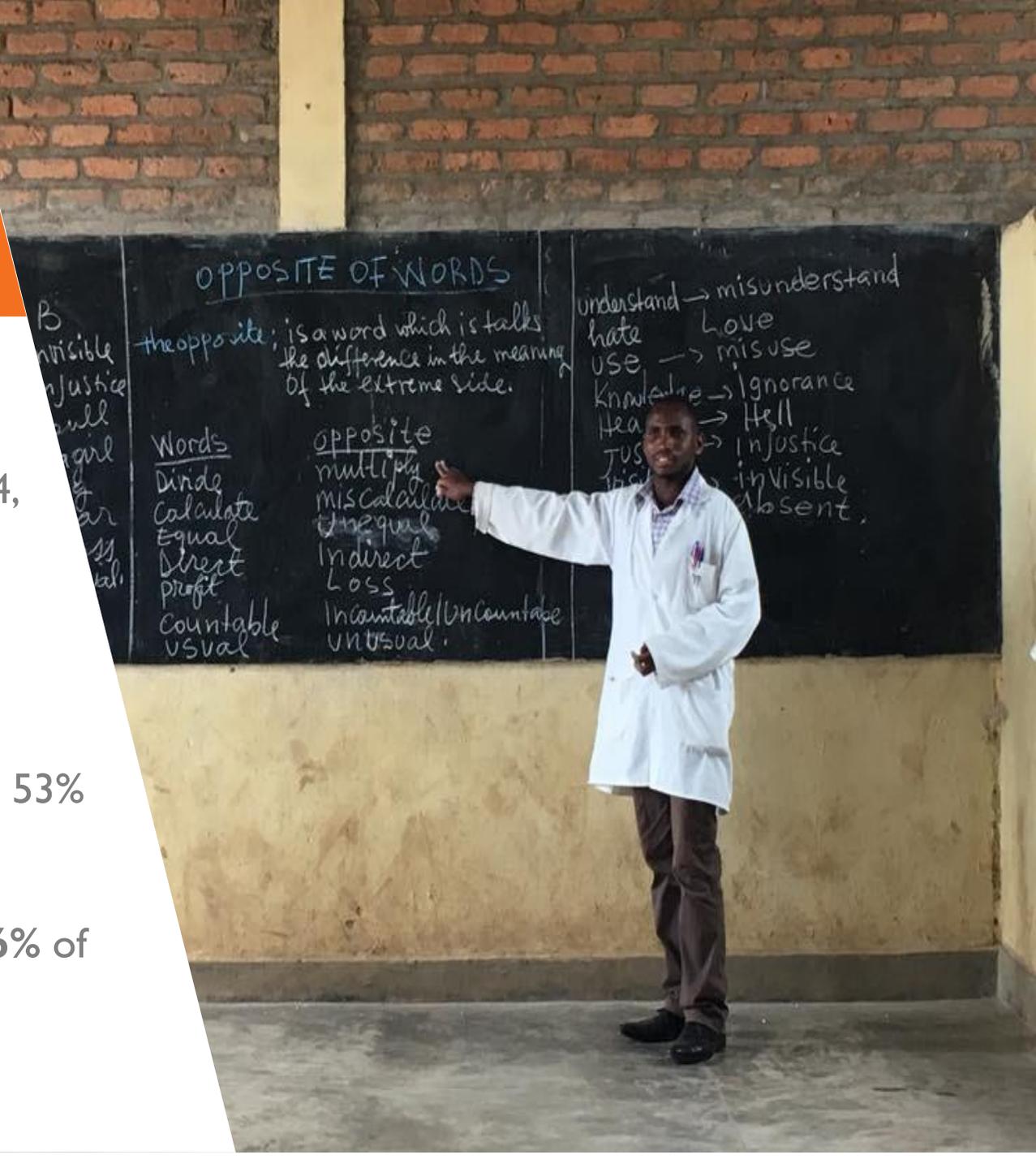
New Language:

- Transition from Kinyarwanda to English in Grade 4, but English taught as subject in grades 1-3

Assessment:

- Primary 4 (P4/grade 4) students able to read aloud 53% of the English passage
- Primary 4 students responded correctly to only **26%** of English comprehension questions

(January 2017, FARS Endline)



Small-Scale Rapid Needs Assessment (September 2017)



Conducted in 6 schools across 2 districts

Classroom Observations in P3-P6

Teacher Interviews and Focus
Groups



Findings:

Letter sounds are not just for primary grades!



community

dog

mother

**Memorizing
Words**



**Decoding
Skills**

bag



afraid

laugh

Findings:

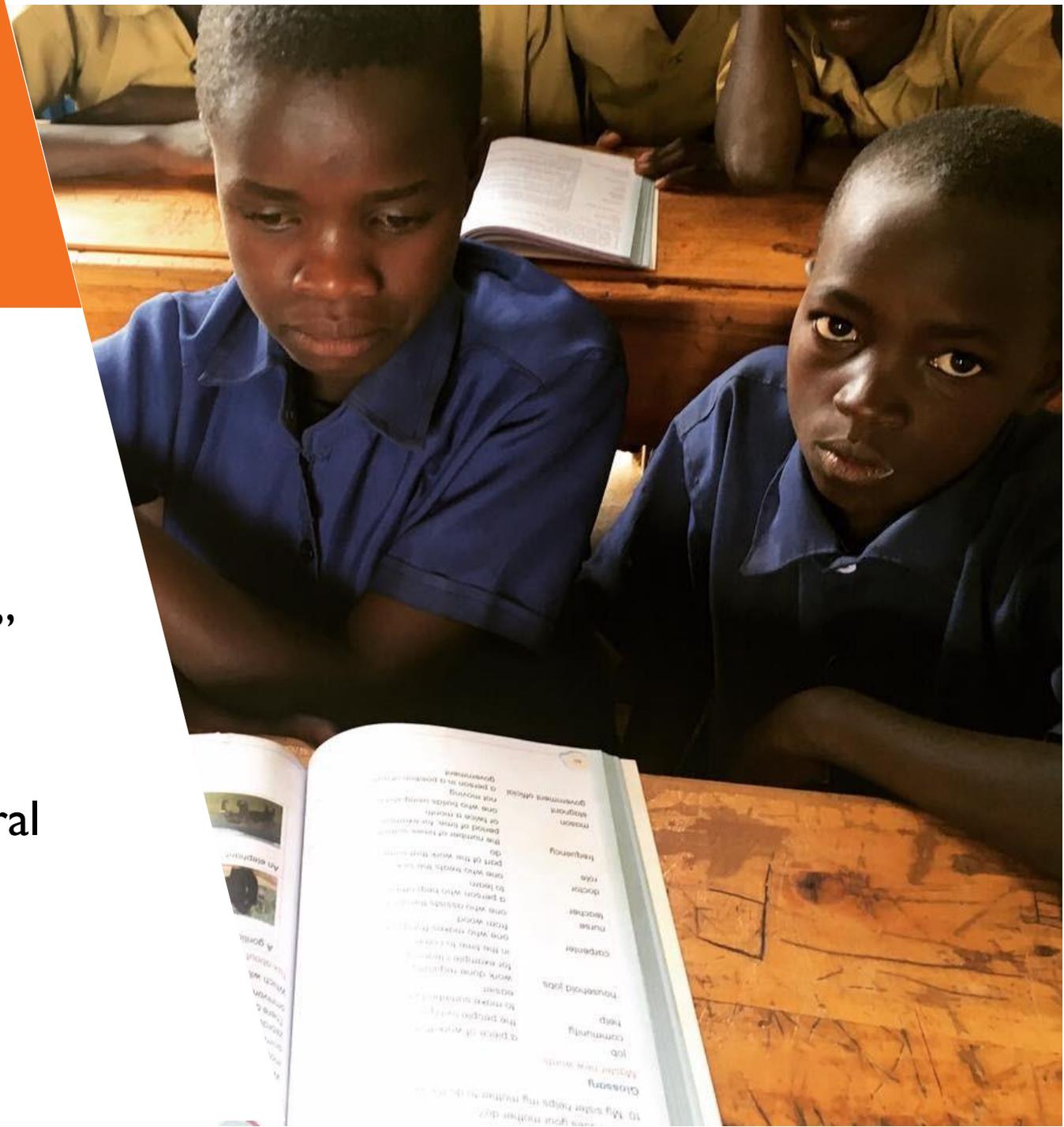
Other common instructional practices

- ❖ Teachers introduce new words briefly with definition
- ❖ Teachers read aloud, or chooses one student at a time to read aloud
- ❖ Simple questions at end of story
- ❖ Few classrooms with locally resourced learning materials or student work on walls



Findings: Insufficient Time to Practice

- Few opportunities to practice reading in supported environment
- Lacking support through “guided practice”
- Little time to practice emerging English oral language skills



Warm-up: Word Work

(2 minutes)

Name _____

WORD STAIRS

had

top

sit

Change only ONE letter in the word to make a new word. Write the new word on the next stair going up. Keep changing one letter and writing a new word until you reach the top step.



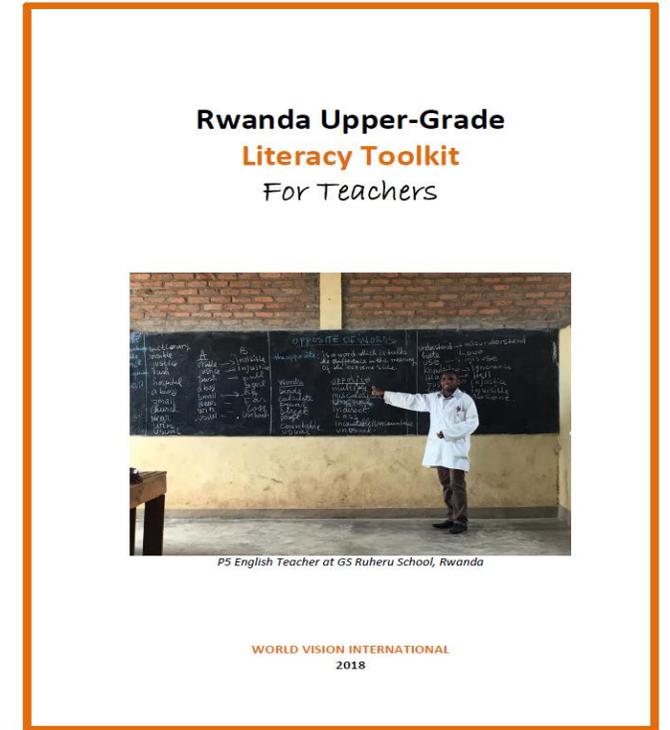
Fun-in-first.blogspot.com

The image shows a worksheet titled 'WORD STAIRS' with a staircase graphic. The words 'had', 'top', and 'sit' are written on the first three steps from the bottom left. A cartoon boy with a clipboard and pencil stands on the right side of the stairs. The worksheet includes a name line at the top left and a copyright notice at the bottom.

What skills does an L2 learner need in order to do this activity successfully?

Upper-Grade Toolkit Structure & Content

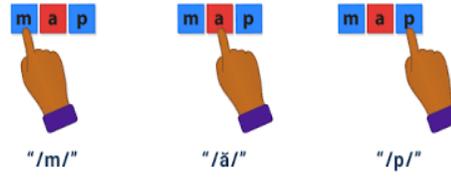
- ❖ Organizing a Classroom for Active Learning
- ❖ Creating a Print-Rich Classroom
- ❖ Reading Strategies for Upper-Grades
 - Phonics, Fluency, Comprehension, Vocabulary



Toolkit Reading Strategies

Building Phonemic Awareness Skills

-English letter sounds, blends, phonemes, word families, polysyllabic words



Developing Fluency- multiple readings of same text

Teacher Read Aloud



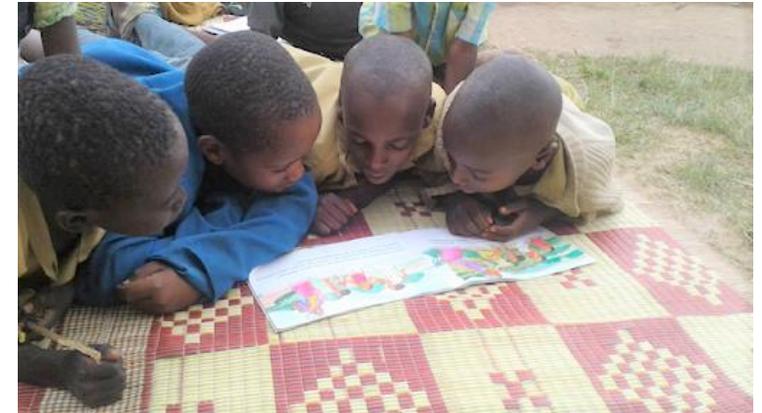
Echo and/or Choral Reading



Partner Reading



Independent Reading



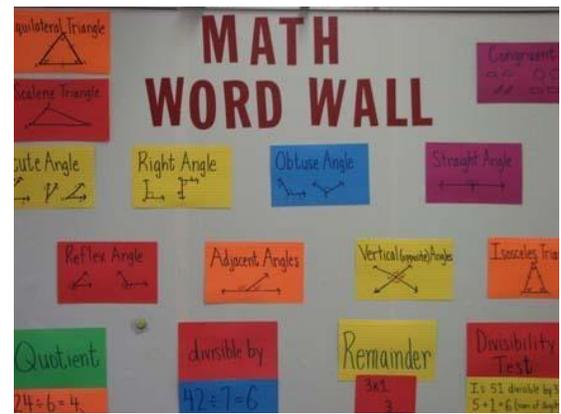
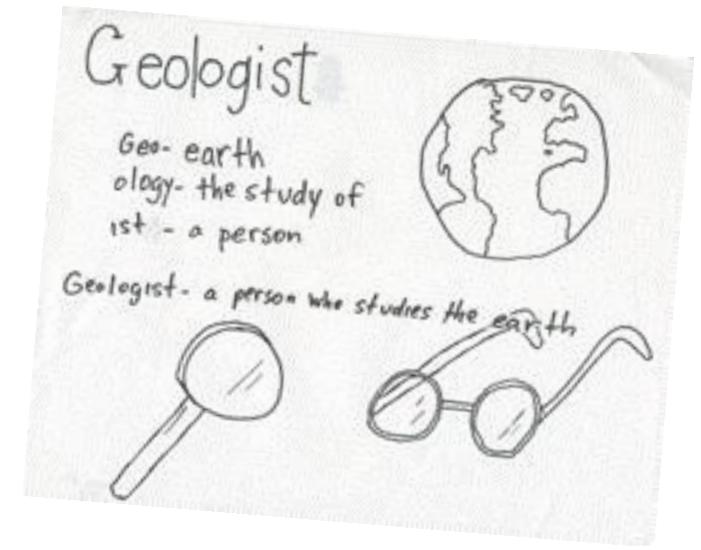
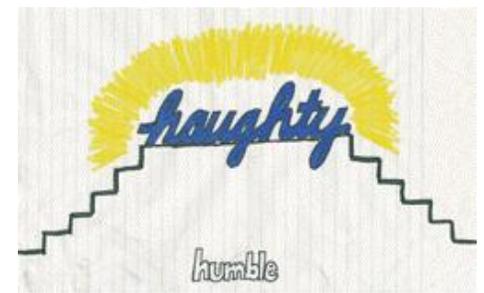
Toolkit Reading Strategies



Strategies for Building Vocabulary in L2



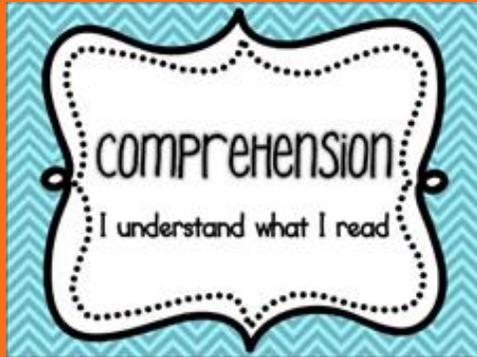
Act it out!



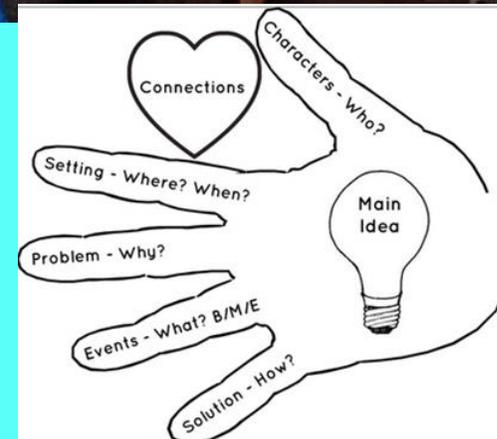
Student -Created Definitions

Repeated exposure

Toolkit Reading Strategies



- Making Connections
- Predict
- Questioning
- Monitor and Clarify
- Summarize
- Evaluate



Rollout

- ToT sessions were developed
- 355 upper-grade teachers trained in 40 schools
- Classroom Observation Monitoring tool



“We have been trained...on several aspects of teaching,...but this training of Literacy for Upper Grades had something extraordinary. My teachers assured me the training was very helpful, especially letter sounds which they have been lacking. Missing foundation of letter sounds makes it difficult for students to love English language since they find it hard to understand. As a result, they give up very early-- but now...we hope to see positive change...”

-Alvera Mukarubayiza, Head teacher EP. Mugombwa
Nyamagabe District, Rwanda



Next Steps?

Explore with Upper Grade Reading Interest Group:



Recognize curriculum at this level doesn't cover letter sounds- what ways can this gap be addressed?

LOI change in upper grades- in what ways can we better support these learners? How can we better support teachers who may not be fluent in a language they are expected to teach in?

Appropriate assessment/measurement of upper grade reading skills



Thank you!

■ We would love to hear from you-
questions, thoughts and suggestions?

■ Alisa Phillips:
aphillip@worldvision.org

■ Kristy Smith:
kristy_smith@wvi.org