From Kinyarwanda to English Instruction in Rwanda:

Upper-Grade Reading Strategies and Tips for Teachers

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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!

Memorizing Words = Decoding Skills
Findings:
Other common instructional practices

❖ Teachers introduce new words briefly with definition

❖ Teachers read aloud, or choose 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)

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
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
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

Next Steps?
Explore with Upper Grade Reading Interest Group:
We would love to hear from you—questions, thoughts and suggestions?

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Thank you!