Zimbabwe
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

WHOLE SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

IGATE

Implementation Guide for School
Heads and Literacy and
Numeracy Teacher Professional
Development Leads

Implementation Guide for School Heads and Literacy and Numeracy Teacher Professional Development Leads

Contents

INTRODUCTION

This Guide is part of a Teacher Professional Development (TPD) programme designed to strengthen learners' foundation skills in literacy and numeracy.

The TPD programme has been collaboratively developed for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MOPSE) by the Open University, World Vision and CARE International. The programme has been researched and developed in partnership with thousands of teachers from hundreds of primary and secondary schools across Zimbabwe. Participating schools all serve marginalised communities. Through the TPD programme, schools have strengthened teaching quality and improved learning outcomes, particularly for those learners who had been left behind. Our thanks and appreciation are given to the teachers, school heads, schools' inspectors and other participants.
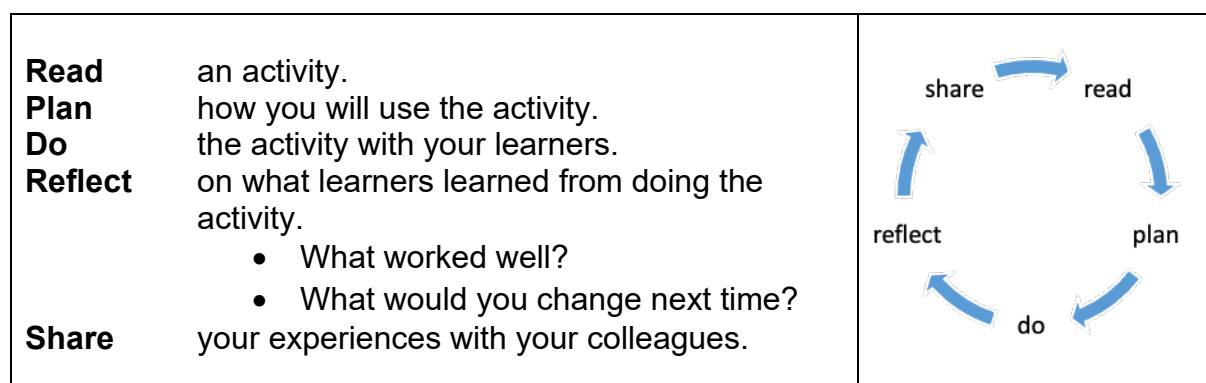
This Guide is written for those leading TPD in schools—the school heads and teachers, who may be chosen to be TPD leads for literacy and numeracy—and presents recommendations drawn from the experience of the school heads and TPD leads who helped research and develop the programme.

The programme resources include:

- This Guide
- Six modules on foundation numeracy
- Six modules on foundation literacy

The programme is for all teachers working with learners whose literacy or numeracy skills are below their Grade or Form level. (The programme may also be adapted for Initial Teacher Education—particularly for use in school placements or practicum).

The modules provide classroom activities for teachers to use with learners. Teachers gain the most when they work through the modules and activities together with other teachers in their schools. The classroom activities drive cycles of reflective practice—helping teachers build new insights and understandings together.

Read	an activity.
Plan	how you will use the activity.
Do	the activity with your learners.
Reflect	on what learners learned from doing the activity.
	• What worked well?
	• What would you change next time?
Share	your experiences with your colleagues.

MOPSE's highest priority is to empower ALL learners through strong foundations in literacy and numeracy. Whatever their Grade or Form, all learners need these strong foundations in literacy and numeracy to succeed in other learning areas. Learners must **learn to read and use number** so they can **read and use number to learn**.

SECTION A: BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATION SKILLS – 6 LESSONS

Here are six lessons, learned from the experiences of schools in Zimbabwe, on building strong foundations in literacy and numeracy through the TPD programme.

1) School leaders lead learning

School norms

School heads need to be champions and leaders of learning in their schools. By publicly promoting and upholding whole-school norms, heads can change the school culture.

> **Whole-school 'norms' for strong foundation skills. In our school:**
>
> ***Every learner*** is improving their literacy and numeracy skills
>
> ***Every teacher*** is improving their teaching skills
>
> ***Everyone*** is safe and respected, regardless of gender

School action plans

Clear goals and guiding structures, like making time for literacy and numeracy and using the TPD modules regularly, can empower schools to act. Think about how to put learning—and the school norms—into your school development plan!

Classroom learning walks and coaching conversations

➢ Do a daily '**Classroom Learning Walk**' around the school: dropping into different lessons for short, quiet observation (five minutes can be enough), to inform your learning and understanding and not for inspection.

➢ Thank and show respect to teachers after observing their classes. Save your feedback until later when you can talk with the teacher privately.

➢ When you can talk to the teacher, make it a '**Coaching Conversation**' by focussing upon the positive behaviours you'd like to see more of—for example:

  o Noting examples of respectful behaviour between learners and teachers

  o Praising the teacher for trying activities from the TPD modules in lessons

  o Highlighting times when all learners were actively learning

> **School Heads Talking**
>
> 'And there is this thing, the learning walk. At times, I pay impromptu visits. You know, I don't have to notify them that I am coming. I just get into a class, sit at the back of the class, and make some observations… I'll jot down some notes on what I observe. Then, maybe at the end of the day, I will call the teacher and say "Ok, you are doing a great job there…" (*Primary school head, Mangwe*)
>
> Through the school head's leadership of learning, the grade 7 pass rate doubled over two years, from 27% in 2017 to 56% by 2019!

2) Time for teacher development

Using the TPD modules in regular staff development meetings

In this programme, teachers learn by carrying out new activities in their classrooms, guided by the TPD modules. The modules and activities are all aligned with the national curriculum and approved by MOPSE.

The programme is most successful in schools where teachers work through the activities from the modules together in regular staff development meetings. Most schools find it best to run TPD sessions either every week or every other week. You will find guidance on running TPD sessions in your school in Section B (see page 8).

The role of school heads in making time and space for TPD at school

Here are some of the successful ways school heads made time and space for TPD:

➢ Inviting one teacher to lead TPD sessions for literacy and another teacher to lead TPD sessions for numeracy (see *the role of TPD leads…* below).

➢ Organising regular TPD sessions for teachers to work through the TPD modules and activities together – these can be part of the staff development meetings you may already have timetabled.

➢ Encouraging and motivating teachers—all teachers in primary schools, or all teachers of English and Mathematics in secondary schools—to take part in the TPD sessions

➢ Being a good role model and actively participating in the TPD sessions yourself.

School Heads Talking

'My advice to colleagues: Your involvement and participation in the programme is the key to success'. Secondary school head, Mberengwa

'Take a class – do the practical thing with the kids… see how to tackle this thing… At the beginning, we thought maybe after doing Module 1… we are done with Module 1. But then we discovered that… the child may have missed something there. Therefore, we had to constantly refer to those Modules… we are seeing a great improvement in pupils' performance'. (*Primary school head, Mangwe*)

The role of TPD leads in regular staff development meetings at school

TPD leads work through the modules one step ahead of the other teachers, trying out the activities with learners in their own teaching, and then facilitating teachers trying out activities in TPD sessions. (See the guidance on running TPD sessions in your school in Section B, on page 9).

TPD Leads Talking

'I started to try some ideas and activities and then I saw that it works in my class, so I liked to do it. That's when I started to change my attitude because it helped me a lot.' (*Primary school TPD lead, Mangwe*)

3) Time for foundation skills

It's important to remember that literacy and numeracy are not an 'extra' on top of the curriculum—they are the foundations on which the rest of the curriculum builds. Helping all learners develop strong foundation skills is MOPSE's highest priority.

Learners need enough time to build strong foundations in literacy and numeracy. For most learners, it's not enough to offer 'catch-up' or 'remediation' just once a week—whether in a lesson or a club outside lesson time.

Where learners are not at 'grade level' for literacy or numeracy, MOPSE recommends allocating up to two English lessons per week for literacy, and up to two Mathematics lessons per week for numeracy. Children who are further behind may need additional time and support, perhaps through lunchtime or afterschool clubs or individual guidance.

> **School Heads Talking**
>
> 'We allocate at least two sessions per week for those classes where the literacy and numeracy gaps are so glaring, then one session to those classes with little challenges. However, realising that most of our pupils have challenges… We decided to use these materials during normal lessons...' Secondary school head, Insiza.
>
> 'In our worst classes, we have three periods for literacy or numeracy and three for English or Maths. In our good classes we spare one lesson for each [one for literacy and one for numeracy], since we realized that there are certainly numeracy and literacy gaps among *all* learners'. *(Secondary school head, Mberengwa)*

Experience shows that in schools serving disadvantaged communities, i.e. P3 and S3 schools, most learners need at least two sessions a week for literacy and two sessions a week for numeracy—some more, some less. Diagnostic assessments (see next page) can help you identify which year-groups or classes need help with foundation skills.

> **TPD Leads Talking**
>
> 'What I have discovered is that almost every day, almost every time… when we plan, we do our scheming, when we are breaking our syllabus into simpler smaller parts… we find out we have activities [from the modules] … Since now we have six modules, it is almost to me impossible not to have a lesson, a foundation literacy and numeracy lesson, on a daily basis… *(Primary TPD lead, Mangwe)*
>
> Having sufficient time for learning foundation literacy and numeracy skills contributed to the Grade 7 pass rate rising from 29% in 2017 to 48% in 2019.

Independent-study resources, such as reading cards and numeracy cards, can also be a helpful way for learners to have additional time for literacy and numeracy skills—working on their own, in pairs, or in small groups. Many teachers also report learners playing literacy or numeracy games independently outside lesson time, after the teacher first introduced learners to the game during a lesson.

5

4) Using diagnostic assessments

It's often hard for teachers to know who needs help with foundation skills in literacy or numeracy. Many teachers rely on written tests and give a mark out of ten. This kind of assessment doesn't usually help teachers know which specific skills a learner is struggling with in literacy or numeracy—or what kind of activity would help. Diagnostic assessment enables teachers and school heads to understand which learners need help, what skills they need help with, and which activities to turn to.

Diagnostic assessments tools for literacy and numeracy skills

Diagnostic assessment tools for literacy and numeracy are provided alongside the Modules as supporting booklets.

➤ Introduce teachers to the diagnostic assessment tools in one of your earliest TPD sessions.
  o Take time to look at the tool and read the instructions together.
  o Put the teachers into pairs and ask them to take turn to use the tools to assess each other – with one teacher taking the role of a learner.
➤ Encourage all teachers to assess a sample of five learners from a class before the next TPD session. (They should choose one 'high attaining', two 'middle attaining', and two 'low attaining' learners).
➤ Encourage teachers to identify which activities would be appropriate for these learners and why, using the guidance from the diagnostic tool
➤ Invite teachers to discuss the findings at the next TPD session. Teachers are often surprised to find learners can do more, or less, than teachers expected.

> **School Heads Talking**
>
> 'The major challenge we had was that teachers in all subjects indicated the need for literacy and numeracy across the board… from Forms 1-4.' Secondary school head, Mberengwa.
>
> 'The [Grade 7] learners did the test, and we sat down as staff members and had an evaluation together… We discovered our learners had problems… If Grade 7 has a problem, we assume all learners may have this problem, and so we will all do this [test] with our learners.' (*Primary school head, Mangwe*)

Guidance on assessment within each literacy and numeracy activity

In addition to the diagnostic assessment tools, every activity in the modules also has guidance about how teachers can assess learners, for example, by noticing and noting what learners are doing and how they are doing it during the activity.

> **TPD Leads Talking**
>
> 'I discovered that ... teachers ... myself included, used to ask questions which don't help learners – like those chorus questions. So, we said no, why not try to ask individual questions [that make learners think]. I have tried to do that, and it is really working...' (*Primary school TPD lead, Mangwe*)

5) Toolkit of classroom activities

The diagnostic assessments (previous page) are mapped onto the classroom activities, so that teachers can see which skills a class or year-group need help with and prioritise activities that will help most learners progress.

> **TPD Leads Talking**
>
> 'The reason I choose to teach division for Form 2 was because of this sheet – the diagnostic tool – a lot of learners were having problems with division questions. They were also having trouble with comparing different fractions - which was bigger'. (*Secondary school TPD lead, Chivi*)

These activities have been shown to strengthen learners' foundation skills and confidence in literacy and numeracy.

When teachers use the activities purposefully through reflective practice cycles (see page 9), these can:

- ➤ Extend the range of pedagogic knowledge, practices, and resources which make up the teacher's professional toolkit
- ➤ Help teachers change the way they think about teaching and learning.

> **TPD Leads Talking**
>
> 'Sometimes as teachers we… give pupils individual work and we term that 'pair work' – but we mustn't! If we are giving pupils pair work [we] must be sure this really is pair work…
>
> I discovered… it is very important to let your learners do the work. Let them do it! Stop talking! The [less] you talk the better. Let your pupils do the learning…'
>
> (*Primary school TPD lead, Mangwe*)

6) Home, school and community together

The pandemic has shown how home, school and community partnerships are crucial for of resilience. Learners, who were supported to learn in their homes and communities, were more likely to return to school after the lockdown, showed better attentiveness and confidence in school, and experienced the largest learning gains.

> **School Heads Talking**
>
> 'The school can encourage caregivers to provide children with learning time. It is good for the caregiver to show interest in the child's work too. A child gets motivated by the interest parents or guardians show in his or her work. Hence it is imperative for the school to help the caregivers… assist the children in their learning at home.'
>
> (*Primary school head, Chivi*)

MOPSE's implementation framework for blended and catch-up learning (2021) promotes the shared use of learning materials for study at home, in school and in the community, and encourages collaboration with Community Learning Champions.

## SECTION B: RUNNING TPD SESSIONS IN YOUR SCHOOL

Getting to know the TPD modules

It's crucial that school heads and TPD leads make themselves familiar with the modules before using them in TPD sessions with the teachers.

Each TPD module contains three units, and each unit has three classroom activities for teachers to use with their learners.

Each module, and each unit, also has an introduction to help teachers understand the key terms and ideas used in the activities. Each module ends with a reflection about what teachers have learned from doing the activities with their learners.
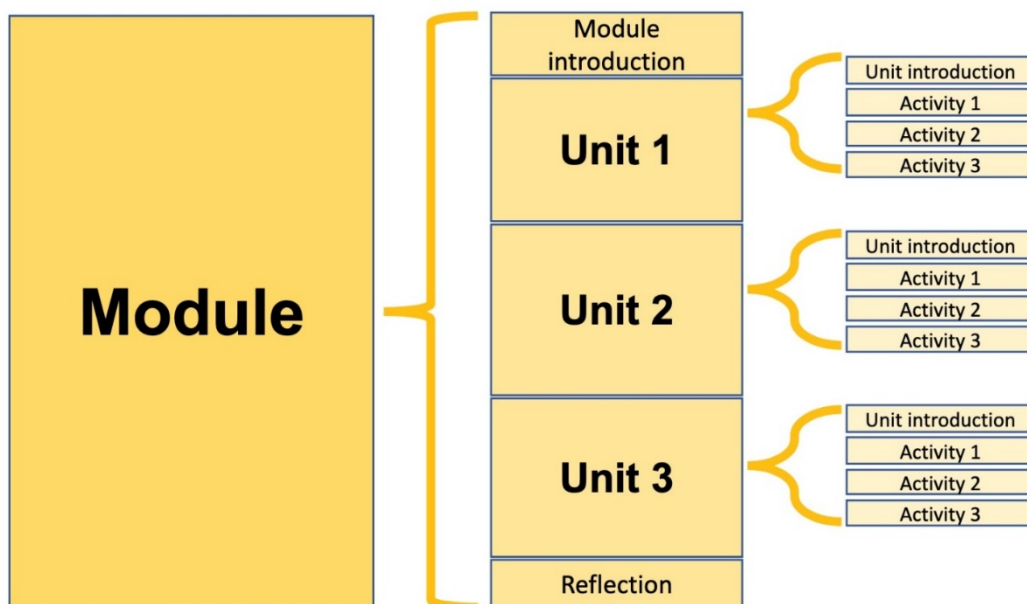
Each activity includes:

➢ **Aim** – what learners are expected to learn from the activity
➢ **What the learners will do** – a brief outline of what learners are expected to do during the activity
➢ **Resources** – a summary of any learning materials required
➢ **Activity** - brief step-by-step instructions for teachers to follow, so that learners can do the activity
➢ **Assessment** – thoughts about how to assess learning during the activity
➢ **In practice** – illustrative reflections on using the activity, from other teachers

The most important part of the activity is often not what the teacher does but **what the learners will do**. If you observe teachers practising an activity in a TPD session, or using an activity with learners during a lesson, ask yourself '*are the learners doing what they are meant to do, in this activity?*' And if not, what is different and why?

Using the modules in TPD sessions

School Heads Talking

'From my experience firstly, as a school head, be the champion by giving the TPD leads opportunity to workshop all staff members. Make it sink into them that literacy and numeracy are cross-cutting skills. When these are improved, in all learners, this will ultimately improve the results of the whole school…' (*Secondary head, Chivi*)

Teachers can use the modules on their own, anytime, anywhere. But teachers usually get the most from the modules when they use them together with other teachers. Regular staff TPD sessions enable teachers to help each other learn.

The reflective practice cycle

In TPD sessions, teachers **read** the classroom activities from the TPD modules, practise them together and **plan** how to use the activities in their lessons.

After the TPD session, teachers **do** the activities with learners and afterwards **reflect** on what they learned.

At the next TPD session, teachers **share** their experiences and insights with other teachers.

share → read → plan → do → reflect → share

> ➤ Make the staff development sessions a regular event. Many school heads recommend they should be at least every two weeks or ideally every week.

> ➤ School heads or TPD leads can facilitate the sessions using the modules.

> ➤ Try to involve as many staff as possible in leading the activities, by taking turns.

> ➤ Practise or do 'dry runs' of the activities. Ask teachers to 'teach' each other, in pairs or small groups, and check they follow the instructions correctly.

> ➤ Encourage teachers to share what they are experiencing and thinking

> ➤ Share any good things you have seen on your **learning walks** or discussed in your **coaching conversations** this week—and encourage staff that you'd like to see even more of these positive changes on your learning walks next week!

TPD Leads Talking

'At first, teachers… thought maybe this thing is a lot on top of what they already have… but, as time went on, they began to understand it and they found that the activities in the modules… are interesting and the learners… they like them, and they are bringing a lot of changes in their levels of literacy and numeracy…'

(*Primary TPD lead, Mangwe*)

Outline plan for a TPD session

Most schools find that between 45 minutes to an hour works well for running a school-based TPD session – though some schools run shorter sessions and others run longer sessions. You might find it helpful to start by aiming for 45 minutes:

➢ **Share** experiences (10 to 15 minutes)
➢ **Read** and rehearse the activity, or activities, together (25 to 30 minutes)
➢ **Plan** to use the activity, or activities, with learners (5 to 10 minutes)

Don't worry if the session goes a little more quickly or takes a little longer. Find out what works for you and the teachers in your school. What matters most is that teachers cover the three steps (share, read, plan) and feel confident and committed to 'do' the activity with their learners.

Sharing experiences (10 to 15 minutes)

It's best to start the session by inviting teachers to **share** their experiences relating to learners' foundation skills and teaching literacy or numeracy.

If it is the first session, teachers won't have had the chance to try the activities yet, but you can encourage teachers to think of about the foundation skills of a particular class or learner and share—what can those learners do confidently, what do they struggle with, and what has the teacher tried to do to help them improve?

After the first session, most teachers should have tried using the activities in lessons with learners. Ask teachers to share whether they have used the activities they practised in the last TPD session—and if they did, how did it go, how did the learners respond, and what did the teacher take away from the experience?

Reading and rehearsing the activity together (25 to 30 minutes)

Reading and rehearsing the activity from the modules together should be the focus of the TPD session. If the activity requires learning resources, you may want to prepare these in advance, or you may prefer to ask teachers to make the learning resources together during the session—it often depends upon time.

Sometimes teachers like to read through and 'rehearse' the activity together—all reading and doing each step together, checking understanding, one step at a time. Sometimes teachers like to read the activity together and then nominate one teacher to role play 'the teacher' while the others role play 'the learners' and act the activity out. Teachers often enjoy having several goes at an activity like this, taking turns to be 'the teacher' and gaining deeper understandings of how or why the activity works.

What matters is that everyone understands practically how the activity works and feels confident to try it with their learners before the next TPD session.

Planning to use the activity with learners (5 to 10 minutes)

Teachers should spend the last part of the session planning to use the activity with their learners—specifically which class and when—including gathering or making any learning resources they will need. Teachers often prefer to prepare together.