

RWANDA INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES MANUAL

Primary Grades 4-6



**Improving Teaching Practices and Literacy
Outcomes for Emergent English Teachers**

MANUAL OVERVIEW

This manual is intended for use by instructional coaches as they guide and support teachers of grades P4-6 in Rwandan primary schools.

As of 2012, Rwanda's Ministry of Education outlined its national commitment to increasing students' literacy skills, increasing training to teachers and developing internationally comparative standards (Republic of Rwanda, 2013). The need for support is particularly acute in primary grades 4-6, as the classes transition out of the earlier grade's use of mother tongue and into English instruction - a language new to both teachers and students. This manual is designed as a guide for overarching strategies and specific best practices for instructional coaches as they support teachers towards gaining confidence, skills, and mastery of English-based instruction.

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BACKGROUND: Language Planning in Rwanda

Rwanda was a French colony, gaining independence in 1960. In 1990, the Rwandan Civil War began, leading to the devastating ethnic Genocide in 1994 . After the Genocide, which was due in part to a legacy of French influence, Rwanda cut most formal ties with France, including firing the French ambassador and closing French institutions. Simultaneously, Rwandan refugees began returning from neighboring English-speaking countries and policy makers began to recognize the economic benefits of aligning itself linguistically with the trading block of Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. For these political reasons, English was declared an official language, alongside French and Kinyarwanda (Samuelson & Friedman, 2010). In addition, the UK has become the single largest donor to Rwanda, providing nearly half of its foreign aid. Kigali has applied to join the Commonwealth despite never having been a British colony” (McGreal, 2009).

As a result of the move towards English as an official language after the 1994 genocide, in 2008, Rwanda also shifted its educational system to English with the **goal of raising a generation of Rwandans fluent in English.** (McGreal, 2009).

GLOSSARY

National Language: The language identified as the common language of a nation.

In Rwanda, the national language is Kinyarwanda.

Official Language: The legal language of the country documented in the constitution.

In Rwanda, official languages are Kinyarwanda, French, English, Swahili, Rwandan Sign Language.

Language of instruction (LOI): The language taught in schools.

Kinyarwanda is the LOI for pre-primary (age 4-6) and primary grades (P1-3).

English is the LOI for P4 through University.

Language Planning or Management: Deliberate attempt by a powerful institution (such as the state) to influence the behavior of others with respect of the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes” (Cooper, 1989).

Status Planning: Deliberate efforts to give status and prestige to a language by extending the functions for which it is going to be used. (Kloss, 1969) .

Corpus Planning: A series of planned actions taken to purposefully develop a language with the goal of ensuring that it can achieve a community’s social, cultural, political, economic, or spiritual goals. (Cooper, 1989; Ferguson, 1968; Kloss, 1969)

BACKGROUND: Education in Rwanda

Education in Rwanda is dominated by a free, national public education system run by the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC). Through significant centralized efforts of the government and its partners, Rwanda has become “one of the top-performing countries in sub-Saharan Africa in education.” Enrollment rates are near universal for primary school for both boys and girls. National goals now seek to make improvements in the quality and efficiency throughout the system, including in curriculum reform, teaching methodology reform (focused on moving away from rote-learning), and to equip children with the skills and competencies they need to fully participate in Rwanda’s future labor market (UNICEF, 2018). As of 2008, primary education policy now states that **Primary grades 1-3 use mother tongue as language of instruction. Primary grade 4 marks the transition to English as language of instruction.**



NATIONAL LITERACY GOALS

"Provide foundational skills of literacy... the habits of reading and life-long learning, the skills of analytical reasoning and creativity, and mastery of both the general and job-specific knowledge demanded by the labour market"

(Republic of Rwanda, 2016, p. 11).

NATIONAL STRUCTURE

Rwanda’s national education system is divided into four stages:

1. Pre-primary

Early childhood education from ages 4-6

2. Lower Primary: Grades 1-3

The start of formal, public schooling from age 6

Language: Instruction in Kinyarwanda

Focus: literacy and numeracy in mother tongue.

3. Upper Primary: Grades 4-6

Language: Transition to instruction in English

- Focus: Prepare for national examinations which determine eligibility for secondary school

4. Secondary: Grades 7-10

(Christina & Vinogradova, 2017)

CONTEXT: Challenges for Teachers

The policy shift to English as the language of instruction from primary grade 4 onwards brought with it significant challenges for both teachers and students across the country (Williams, 2017). Today, teachers face a dual-sided challenge, as they must teach in a language that they may not speak fluently while simultaneously ensuring academic outcomes for students who are also learning in a language that is new to them.

Broad Challenges

The Rwandan education system is characterized by several significant challenges in improving literacy outcomes:

- Low parental literacy
- Lack of teaching and learning materials
- Overcrowding: national average teacher to pupil ratio of 61:2.
- Low completion rates: primary school completion rate of (72.7%)
- Low rates of secondary enrollment (32.9%)
- Low levels of teacher education

(Republic of Rwanda, 2016).

Moreover, the shift itself was implemented as a rapid and complete turnover, without strategic mechanisms to support schools, classrooms or teachers alongside. Williams (2017) reviews the rollout, saying “the shift was done so quickly that it has left the quality of the education system in a perpetual state of catchup. Stakeholders ranging from teachers to senior members of MINEDUC reported the struggle it was to maintain quality alongside the language shift” (p. 557).

Community, School and Classroom Environment

With limited English proficiency among teachers, parents, staff and students, significant challenges remain across school environments as a whole. Entire schools must work together, including via instructional coaches, to institute new norms and best practices for improving comfort and skill in English language classrooms.

Abbott, Sapsford, and Rwirahira (2015) worry that it may “take a generation before the schools are staffed by people who were themselves taught in English at school and university, albeit often badly, and probably two generations before the English that is used and therefore learned at school becomes a language fully worth learning” (as cited in Williams, 2017, p. 123).

Teachers as English Language Learners

Today, the majority of teachers have low levels of English proficiency and have received limited teacher training in English. While primary school teachers are required to have a secondary school diploma, this “does not guarantee that they will be comfortable and capable in using the English language even for conversation, let alone teaching” (Williams, 2017). A study of over 600 primary and secondary school teachers in 2015 found that most teachers had a competency of English considered to be at “elementary” (41.8%) or “intermediate” (43.4%) stages (British

Council, 2015). This appears to be an improvement over an earlier study by MINEDUC (2009) that reported that just 15% of primary teachers and 10% of lower secondary teachers demonstrated adequate proficiency in English (Williams, 2017).

Without English skills, teachers are unable to effectively teach the curriculum nor create an academically rigorous environment in which students can learn both English language and subject content (Williams, 2017). Teachers were predominately educated in their L2, which at the time was French. This means that they do not have English-language learning models to refer to for learning English themselves, nor for helping students gain communicative competence as they transition from Kinyarwanda to English (Cummins, 1999 as cited in Benson, 2004)



Linguistic Insecurity:

As a result of limited skills and confidence, teachers have begun relying on instructional practices and pedagogical choices that attempt to mask the difficulties they face. These practices tend to double-down on the teacher-centered pedagogy common across the country (Republic of Rwanda, 2016). In effect, a teachers' lack of confidence in their own L2 (English) ability can reduce the range of teaching strategies they can use in L1 (Afitska, Ankomah, Clegg, Kiliku, Osei-Amankwah, & Rubagumya, 2013). Insufficient competence on the part of both teachers and learners may lead teachers to teach 'defensively,' using what Chick (1996) refers to as 'Safetalk'. Safetalk is when teachers avoid topics they cannot teach due to lack of language skills. This reduces expectations for students and makes genuine learning more difficult. (Clegg & Simpson, 2016). In this way, teachers and students maintain their dignity and hide the fact that very little or no learning is taking place. In the classroom, this manifests within the teacher-centered pedagogy as call, response, and copying notes on the board. To date, most teachers continue to rely on prepared notes in English which they can only copy and repeat, not discuss extemporaneously, given their limited knowledge of the language (Abbott et. al., 2015; Bucci, & Milton, 1984).

GLOSSARY

- ▶ **L1:** A learner's first language
- ▶ **L2:** A learner's additional language
- ▶ **Linguistic Insecurity:** When teachers are not confident in teaching the language of instruction due to lack of proficiency and contact with the language (Stroud, 2002)

Prior Initiatives

In response to these challenges, the government, in conjunction with external partners, piloted a sequence of programs. As a result, two major lessons have been gleaned on needed practices for improving teacher competencies.

NEED FOR ONGOING TRAINING IN PEDAGOGY

From 2008-2011, the teachers Service Commission of Rwanda and the British Council implemented the Rwanda English in Action Program (REAP). This initiative provided English training to 88,000 teachers over the school holidays. However, these one-off trainings were not enough. A mentorship program was instituted through the hiring of 1,000 English speaking mentors from surrounding English speaking countries. While this mentorship program was intended to cover pedagogical strategies, it ended up solely focusing on English learning (British Council, 2015).

NEED FOR LITERACY SUPPORT AND MATERIALS

From 2012 - 2016, MINEDUC and the U.S Agency for International Development (USAID) implemented a bilingual early grade literacy initiative called Literacy, Language and Learning (L3). The initiative included crafting literacy standards, training for teachers and coaches (in both literacy pedagogy and English language) for early grade teachers, development of literacy materials and community-based literacy activities. In addition, the ministry was trained in relevant assessments.

The initiative showed very positive results. The pre-and post intervention reading test data of randomly sampled primary 2 students in the pilot district showed significant gains over a year and higher scores than the control group, with gains of around 0.55 standard deviations. (Education Development Center, 2014 as cited in Christina & Vinogradova, 2017)

The positive results led to the program scaling to all Rwandan Primary schools. In the first year, the scaled up program also showed positive results - the percentage of students labeled proficient in reading increased - showing gains of .2 standard deviations. This decrease in effect size can possibly be explained by the fact that with scale, the government redefined the role of school based mentors (formerly ministry of education contract employees). Without the support and coaching from these mentors, teachers became less committed to the program and effective sizes can be only explained by the additional literacy materials the program provided. (Christina & Vinogradova, 2017)

NEXT STEPS & RECOMMENDATIONS

With these challenges and context in mind, we propose that the government of Rwanda reinstitute the mentorship model, run through English-speaking school based instructional coaches for P4-6 teachers. The remainder of this handbook provides 8 recommendations for these instructional mentors to use as they support the teachers.

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING: RECOMMENDATIONS

The following lists summarizes 8 best-in-breed, research driven recommendations for Instructional Coaches as they provide ongoing monitoring, training, and support to Rwandan P4-6 teachers. This coaching typically takes place in schools directly through in-class monitoring, private coaching sessions and in group work helping teachers learn collaboratively. These recommendations are meant as both overarching methodologies and specific strategies that can improve teaching practices and learning outcomes for emergent English speakers and learners.

1. Use both L1 and L2 when coaching teachers

Christian Stroud (2002), in his review "Towards a Policy for Bilingual Education in Developing Countries" emphasizes that "teacher training should be conducted in the language and culture of the community" This stands in contrast to common practice of holding trainings in developing countries in the "metropolitan" language of power, such as English (p. 64).

Coaches serve as a support system, rather than a source of judgement or assessment. Coaches must operate from an understanding that teachers and learners both are operating in a learning environment that may be outside their comfort bounds. They must encourage teachers to understand that all are learning the language, and it is okay that they are not experts. As a result, coaches should work together with teachers to agree upon common pedagogical language in all languages, so that school-related themes and all subject disciplines can be discussed comfortably and be understood. This most often will take place in the teachers' L1 (Benson, 2004; Stroud, 2002).

In Practice:

- ▶ Emphasize that coaches and teachers work together as a team to increase skill, confidence and comfort, without judgement or fear.
- ▶ Coaching may be needed most in Kinyarwanda or French, depending on teacher comfort. (Benson, 2004; Stroud, 2002).
- ▶ Agree upon a mutual language for discussing school-related content. Do not assume this will be English, and allow for flexibility in changes over time.
- ▶ Whenever possible, make space for providing direct English language instruction for teachers, helping them develop L2 skills through direct instruction and providing modeling of language learning (Stroud, 2002).

2. Encourage teamwork

In a school environment where several teachers teach P4-P6, teachers may be empowered by operating beyond a "one classroom, one teacher" model (Benson, 2004; Clegg & Simpson, 2016). By removing this traditional frame, teachers can promote cross-team collaboration, encourage professional growth, and harness specialization, making the most of skillsets across the team (Benjamin, 2000). This is particularly useful in environments where some teachers have higher levels of English fluency or comfort and may be able to bridge gaps across classrooms.

In Practice:

- ▶ **Collaboration:** Work with school leaders and teachers to instill a school culture that encourages collaboration and teamwork. When working with teachers, promote this culture whenever possible. Listen and respond to concerns teachers have along the way. Similarly, allow teachers to openly discuss linguistic insecurities, and their challenges in and out of the classroom and to improve confidence together through collaborative strategies (Marks, 1995).
- ▶ **Team Teaching:** If resources permit, try having two teachers teach a classroom together. This can help students via stronger English facilitation, while teachers simultaneously learn from one another and mutually increase English-language skill (Klein, 1990).
- ▶ **Scheduling:** Try putting the timetable together so that the strongest teacher in English teaches most of the English-instruction classes. Similarly, if one teacher is stronger in a particular subject, assign them to teach those lessons. For example, if a teacher is more confident in science, they teach the science lessons. This cross-pollination helps teachers teach lessons they are more comfortable in, thereby reducing some of the language-related stressors and limitations.
- ▶ **Lesson Planning:** Encourage teachers to work together to plan lessons, including giving each other feedback on their lessons' content and needed English vocabulary (Johnson & Fiarman, 2012).

3. Coach teachers on student-centered pedagogy

Moving away from teacher-centered classrooms

Encourage teachers to transition out of common Rwandan teaching methods that utilize rote learning and heavy emphasis on call and response. In these methods, teachers can be seen doing the majority of the talking in



front of the classroom. Instead, a move towards student-centered pedagogy increases opportunities for learners to think critically and apply their learning in English, while simultaneously removing the total and complete burden on the teacher's mastery of English to facilitate learning. In the student-centered model, the teacher becomes more immersed in the English-language environment of the students, with the teacher guiding students in activities where they can also talk to and learn from each other.

Transparency International found that most teachers in Rwanda have had no professional development or supplemental training in the past 5 years, with the exception of English language (Williams, 2017). Instructional coaches therefore have a tremendous opportunity to help support teachers in techniques that benefit both teachers and students.

Peer Learning:

A teacher's linguistic insecurity may result in methodologies that manifest as monotony and rigidity in the classroom. Teachers may also believe that pupils cannot understand and respond to questions in English, and thus choose ritualized lectures. However, teachers should have high expectations for their students. This includes trusting in their ability to apply their background knowledge to underpin their understanding and their abilities to learn creatively from each other (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2014). The later of these, called peer learning, is when students learn from each other.



Students learn more when they have to explain content to their peers. Brown and Palincsar (1989) stated that learning gains are "more likely when the student is required to explain, elaborate, or defend one's position to others". This method promotes direct language practice for students and places the teacher in the role of a guide.

A study by Van Den Branden (2000) found that in language learning environments, peer learning increased comprehension of both peers, especially when one student had a higher level of language proficiency than the other. This gain in comprehension occurred as the stronger student instinctively takes on the role of teacher, and is incentivized to more deeply understand the content to transmit to the weaker partner. The weaker partner also learned more as a result of having an individualized teacher. In this system, the class's teacher must remain on hand to guide and ensure correct conclusions are made (Van den Branden, 2000).

In Practice:

- ▶ Find or create activities where students can pair up to learn together.
- ▶ When one student is stronger than another either in language or content, pair them together, while the teacher remains on hand as a guide.

Discussion:

Discussion is a subset of peer learning. When students talk to each other, they reflect on the content they have learned and answer questions, they are engaging in discussion. Discussion can occur in small or large groups, and with or without the teacher directly leading the discussion. Gambrell (1996) found that small group discussions invite children into active learning and provide more opportunities to speak, interact, and exchange points of view. Gamoran & Nystrand (1991) found that the amount of student talk and concomitant reductions in teacher talk created substantial improvements in text comprehension (as cited in Murphy, Wilkinson, Soter, Hennessy, & Alexander, 2009).

Differentiation: Each student is different and has different abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. Learners can differ in things such as language ability, reading ability, learning styles and general background knowledge based upon the environment they live. Encourage teachers to give students time to work independently and in groups with their peers, rather than just teach them content at the front of the classroom. This allows teachers to help students with their specific, individualized needs while creating multiple sources of learning less dependent on the teacher (Stavrou & Koutselini, 2016).

Formative Assessments: To figure out the level of individual students and effectively measure their own facilitation, teachers can use formative assessments. This requires using small, ongoing assessments to "gather and synthesize information concerning student's learning", versus evaluations which make "final judgements about student's learning" (Echevarria et al., 2014, p. 212). Formative assessments are when teachers gather information on their students in order to build on their strengths and weaknesses. This can be formal, through a written text, and/or informal, through observation and discussion. These assessments should also be created with the fact that students are learning in a new language in mind. (Echevarria et al., 2014). Teachers can use this ongoing feedback to target where they may need to improve their own English facilitation and vocabulary, or where to spend more or less time to ensure understanding.

In Practice:

- ▶ Encourage teachers to use classroom discussion: have students form small groups to discuss key learnings and to further their understanding of subject matter. This should be guided by well-crafted questions or activities provided by the teacher.
 - ▶ Encourage teachers to help tailor lessons to include multiple levels of ability among students. This will encourage deeper language thinking by teachers, and help students who have varying levels of English skills.
 - ▶ Encourage teachers to continually check for knowledge through observation, discussion, and written work. Coach on using this information to inform teaching practice and language use.
-

4. Use scaffolding to support students

'Scaffolding' is the construction material that holds up a building before it has been fully built. In the same way, learners who are emerging English speakers need active support from teachers as they build up their 'house' of knowledge in the content and in the second language. As they become more proficient, this support can gradually decrease. Scaffolding can simultaneously support teachers in English growth throughout the course of a lesson, as they grow in comfort with language complexities.



In Practice:

- ▶ Encourage teachers to use scaffolding methods to support their students as they both learn English.

Examples of Scaffolding

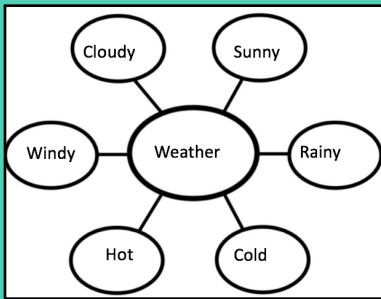
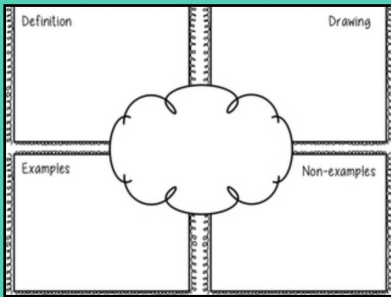
- Teachers slow their speech, increase pauses, speak in phrases
- Teachers using sentence starters to guide and model student responses
- Teachers reword content when a student does not understand
- Teachers repeat and show definitions of words through out lesson
- Teachers have students work in small groups where they can break down content gradually
- Teachers provide individualized attention to a student needing help while the rest of the class does independent or group work
- Teachers give students the option of multiple assignments to complete
- Teachers presenting content in a new way such as through a graphic organizer or word banks (provided below).
- Teachers provide examples of completed assignments so students have a model to work from

(Echevarria et al., 2014).

Scaffolding: Bruner (1983) coined the term scaffolding. This is when teachers provide active support to children as they learn and slowly decrease this support as children gain skills and proficiency.

Tools for Scaffolding

Graphic Organizer: A picture that represents a word or concept



Word Bank: A box that shows all the words that will be used to answer the questions given

Questions

A ___ is an animal.
A ___ is a plant.
I take the ___ to school.

Word Bank:

Bus Flower Pig

Sentence Starter: Providing students with the beginning of a sentence to help them start answering a question and participate in the discussion

I already know...

This reminds me of...

I like / don't like because....

The main idea is...

(Olson, Land, Anselmi & AuBuchon, 2011; Echevarria et al., 2014)

5. Train teachers on research-based literacy practices

Rwandan P4-P6 teachers are working to help students gain English-language reading and writing skills while simultaneously learning these skills themselves. Coaches can train teachers on research-based literacy practices as a method of a way of transitioning themselves and their students from Kinyarwanda to English reading and writing. According to the NICHD's National Reading Panel (2000), there are 5 components to consider while teaching literacy, keeping each in mind to target where students and teachers need support:

Phonemic Awareness

Phonics Instruction

Vocabulary

Text Comprehension

Fluency



Phonemic Awareness: Sounds of language

For example, when students can understand that 'Sh' represents the sound at the beginning of the word "Ship" and the 'A' sound represents the sound at the beginning of the word "Apple".



Phonics Instruction: Understanding letter/sound correspondence. For example, being able to piece together the word cat, by sounding out the "C"- "A"- "T".



Vocabulary: The meanings of words. **Vocabulary is extremely important** in being able to understand language and text. Vocabulary is one of the most significant predictors of reading comprehension (Freebody & Anderson, 1983). English learners need enhanced, explicit vocabulary development. Low vocabulary is a major determinant of poor reading comprehension for English language learners (García, 1991; Garcia, 2003; Nagy, McClure, & Mir, 1997; Verhoeven, 1990; August & Shanahan, 2006)



Text Comprehension: The idea that reading is a product of two key components - decoding and meaning based skills (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990). Text comprehension is understood as the ability to understand text around you and use strategies like asking questions and predicting what will happen next (Uccelli, 2018).



Fluency: Automatic, accurate, and expressive reading. For example, when a student can read a passage from a book clearly and accurately without pausing.

Academic Language: Words and phrases needed across disciplines school.

IN PRACTICE:

- ▶ Coaches and teachers alike should remember that poor comprehension outcomes later are not necessarily a product of poor word reading but may be a lack of vocabulary and academic language (e.g. August & Shanahan, 2006 cited in White, 2018).
- ▶ Expose teachers and students to vocabulary in a variety of ways. Do not simply provide lists of unconnected words.

- Find ways for teachers and students to see and use English-language academic words in varied contexts, for example, across multiple subjects or topics.
- ▶ Coach teachers to practice using target vocabulary words both in speech and in writing. Provide students opportunities to do the same.
- ▶ Provide explicit instruction in word meanings.
- ▶ Provide instruction in word learning strategies such as using multiple meanings of a word or using cognates, which are words that sound the same in two languages. (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002)

Other strategies to help teachers and students learn English-language literacy:

The following strategies can be modeled by coaches while providing English-specific instruction directly for teachers, and again used by teachers in their classrooms:

- ▶ Encourage use of basic reading strategies: previewing, skimming, scanning, reviewing
- ▶ Encourage discussion making logical guesses based on the information given
- ▶ Break words into multiple parts
- ▶ Put words into groups
- ▶ Give time for students to correct themselves if they realize they have made a mistake
- ▶ Paraphrase

(Echevarria et al., 2014)

6. Train teachers in strategic code-switching and translanguaging

One way to scaffold instruction for English language learners is to strategically use the learners' L1 to clarify concepts and assist in learning. Studies have shown that academic skills such as reading taught in the first language transfer to the second language (August and Shanahan, 2006). By scaffolding instruction and incorporating the L1 already known by both teachers and P4-6 students, teachers can "ensure that new learning in English is built onto existing learning in the mother tongue" and "facilitate transfer of knowledge and skills from one language to the other" (Simpson & Clegg, 2016, p. 363). Echevarria, Vogt & Short (2014) similarly find that clarifying concepts in a student's L1 can provide support to students who are still learning English. Robert Goldenberg also found that incorporating instruction in the L1 appears to promote their literacy achievement in English (as cited in August & Shanahan, 2006).

Use of L1 clarifying supports is especially important in primary 4, which marks the start of the transition phase from mother-tongue to English instruction in Rwanda. There are several strategies to ensure that the use of mother-tongue in English-language classrooms is guided by best practices:

Code-Switching

Switching from one language to the other is called code-switching. Often, when teachers and students have difficulty with the language of instruction, they move between the L1 and L2 without clear goals, which can lead to confusion. This is called 'unsystematic code-switching' (Benson, 2004). Instead, teachers should use 'systematic code-switching' which "scaffolds knowledge building, bridging the gap between the teacher and students' knowledge in L1 and the language of instruction" (Martin-Jones & Heller, 1996, p. 9).

Translanguaging

Translanguaging is when more than one language is used to communicate. In the classroom, translanguaging is the way in which teachers and students use all the languages they are able to speak to teach and learn as they make sense of an immediate learning task and develop new concepts (Clegg & Simpson, 2016).

Outside of the classroom, an example of translanguaging is when speakers combine English with another L1, like Spanish, into a combination of both languages, which some refer to as "Spanglish." Another example is when families speak multiple languages while eating dinner, where sentences or words themselves can be a combination of both languages.

Teachers can use mother tongue in the classroom, through code switching or translanguaging. However, coaches can demonstrate and guide teachers to use these methods strategically towards learning in English and not as "an easy out. Strategic code switching ensures that teachers do not rely on using mixtures of English and Kinyarwanda that do not promote learning.

In Practice: Some examples of systematic code-switching/translanguaging include:

- ▶ Explaining an assignment in the L1 (for classwork or homework) to ensure understanding, even though the assignment will be completed in English.
 - ▶ Using the L1 to explore ideas and generate concepts within a discussion for a writing assignment done in L2.
 - ▶ Allowing student drafts to be gradually moved from L1 to L2.
 - ▶ Stopping to use L1 to explain an English word that few learners are understanding. (Garcia & Wei, 2014)
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7. Provide appropriate supports and materials. Make sure teachers know how to use them

Rwandan teachers are working through linguistic insecurity to teach in a language not widely spoken in the community. This is a position that, without ongoing support, can create challenges in connecting learning to their real world, cause ongoing frustration, low performance improvement year to year, and poor academic outcomes for students. The use of finely adapted materials in the classroom can help support teachers, both in their own language learning, in providing resources to students, in supporting the content's connection to the community's culture.



Instructional coaches can be a support system in helping create or find materials for use in the classroom. The following principles should be applied when creating or sourcing materials.

In Practice:

- ▶ **Reflective of the setting** Ensure that English language texts and materials are directly reflective of the teacher's setting and home cultural context. The meaning of a text is constructed based upon background knowledge and prior experiences (Cummins, 1999 as cited in Benson, 2004). If texts are poorly adapted to the community's context, emergent readers may struggle to have the proper background knowledge for text comprehension or to facilitate discussion. For example, a rural Rwandan school would not be well served by English-language texts designed for a United Kingdom context, or texts filled with vocabulary about life in urban cities. If local-oriented texts are not possible to provide, provide background knowledge in the English-language culture so teachers and students can understand.
- ▶ **Supports Student-Centered Pedagogy** Ensure that teacher manuals or materials for students are encouraging of a student-centered pedagogy. For example, when possible materials should promote activities outside of teacher-centered lectures, and include learning via discussion, peer-learning activities, or independent creative or strategic thinking activities.

▶ **Motivating for Students** Learners need to confront a text that interests and intrigues them. Activities should also be connected to this motivation while simultaneously obliging them to comprehend the input (Boyd, Brock & Rozendal, 2004). McKool, Worthy and Hoffman (1998) found that allowing students to make choices about texts they wish to read material increased the likelihood that they would engage more in reading. In locating texts, coaches can work to find a rich variety of genres for readers, including fiction storybooks, nonfiction material, magazines, and poetry (Gambrell, 1996).



- ▶ **Support L1 and L2** Dual language materials can help bridge the divide between L1 and L2, and bolster learning in L2. This is especially true for the transitional year of P4 (Ndayipfukamye, 1993). Bilingual materials can include books, newspapers or dictionaries, for example.
- ▶ **Is Appropriately Challenging:** Texts should be academically challenging. These texts are selected to help spur student growth over time and require critical thinking (Uccelli, 2018).
- ▶ **Supports Fluent Input** While not a material, English language learners need access to English speakers who are fluent in the language (McCabe et al., 2013). If coaches are find that teachers and learners lack access to fluent speakers, a consistent series of guest speakers can be brought in, if possible. In communities where this is not feasible, coaches can help ensure that all English-language materials use accurate grammar, spelling, and writing structures.
- ▶ **Train Teachers on Materials Use** Ensure that teachers know how to use any materials in the classroom. A study in Rwandan schools found that even when books were available to teachers, they were rarely used, in part, because teachers didn't know how to use them as an effective pedagogical tool (Milligan, Tikly, Williams, Vianney, & Uworwabayeho, 2017). This training can include working together to explain their content, how to incorporate them into class sessions, and how to monitor and adjust for successful progress when needed.

8. Promote heritage language culture

As Rwanda increases its use of English as a national language, coaches must remember that English is not currently the language of the community and is representative of a foreign culture (Nieto, 2010). Coaches can encourage teachers to use the student's home cultures to assist in learning and to ensure local cultures are valued in the classroom (Anderson, 2016).

As language levels shift overtime and English becomes more prevalent, the use of home culture in the classroom will help maintain learning outcomes. Catherine Snow (1990) states that, "many studies have shown that academic achievement improves when children are provided with teachers (or even teacher aides) from their own language and cultural groups, adults whose expectations about how the classroom should be organized match the children's experiences, adults who understand and correctly interpret the children's ways of expressing themselves, and adults whose structuring of relationships and of learning contexts re-creates what the children are familiar with." (p. 64).

Coaches can encourage teachers to take advantage of their role as a pillar of the community and their role each child's life by including parents, caregivers and families in the discussion of cultural values of the classroom. Teachers can speak to parents about shared expectations and goals for their child's education, cultural values that families wish to prioritize for students in school, expectations for student behavior and discipline, and any extracurricular supports needed. Coaches can help support teachers in connecting with students on a personal level to discuss commonalities and differences in values between cultures.

In Practice

The following are examples of ways that coaches can involve the home culture and community in the classroom:

- ▶ Encourage reading and writing assignments that involve family histories and students' life experiences (Campano, 2007).
- ▶ Encourage teachers to invite families into the classroom for storytelling and writing activities (Ada & Campoy, 2004).
- ▶ Encourage culturally relevant books, texts and materials. Encourage open, nonjudgemental discussions about culture when differences in texts arise.
- ▶ Encourage teachers to discuss expectations for student's learning with parents and families. Involve parent and families while making choices for learning styles, assessments, discipline and extracurricular needs.



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