Read Right Now!
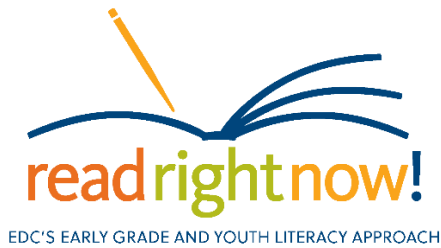
An Early Literacy Approach for Children and Youth in Resource-Lean Contexts

January 2018

read right now!
EDC'S EARLY GRADE AND YOUTH LITERACY APPROACH

EDC Learning transforms lives.

Read Right Now!

An Early Literacy Approach for Children and Youth in Resource-Lean Contexts

January 2018

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1.0 Welcome to Read Right Now

The Read Right Now (RRN) literacy framework reflects more than 15 years of implementation, reflection, deliberation, experimentation and discussions with stakeholders around the world. It supports effective systems for literacy instruction and promotion through an evidence-based approach that builds skills in reading, writing, and oral communication. Read Right Now builds teacher capacity, provides resources for learners and educators, engages families and communities to support literacy, and ensures that policies and systems for literacy are coherent and evidence-based, in order to transform the literacy landscape for young and low-literacy learners.

Figure 1. Read Right Now Literacy Framework

Read Right Now is a framework designed specifically for challenging, resource-lean contexts. It responds to the needs of educators with limited training and few sources of professional support and development; communities where reading and writing is not widespread; systems where classrooms are crowded and teaching and learning tools are sparse and unevenly distributed; and environments using multiple languages. RRN's instructional approach is rich in content and guidance and simple for teachers to use, and it is supported by training, materials, community engagement and system strengthening. It is a framework that can be tailored to address the particular needs and priorities (including those related to language policies, curricula, teacher supervision systems, etc.) of any context, resulting in sound, relevant, and meaningful literacy development.

RRN approaches literacy as a tool for thinking: participants are challenged not only to learn to read and write, but to use the power of literacy to benefit themselves and those around them. Moving beyond the acquisition of basic skills, RRN produces transformed classrooms where pupils have frequent

opportunities to engage in meaningful reading and writing, and carries that pursuit of meaningful literacy outward into systems and communities. Educators, learners, and community members are provided with routines, resources, respect, and support for risk-taking in teaching and learning that allow them to unlock the individual and collective power of literacy.

RRN is designed to be implemented concurrently with a country's existing reading and writing program, to enrich and focus an existing language arts curriculum, or to provide literacy foundations for out of school youth in nonformal programming delivered through a variety of venues. Regardless of the location and level of implementation, participating institutions are asked to reserve dedicated time on a daily basis (30 to 40 minutes a day) to implement the core instructional activities of RRN.

RRN is effective in both small and large classrooms, including those with more than 80 students. The approach includes predictable sequences of activities that teachers and students can easily learn. The predictable pattern allows teachers with little or no teacher training and limited access to in-class mentors or trained supervisors to more easily implement the program. The pattern also allows students to focus on learning rather than on new instructions for each activity. Whole-class instruction, a familiar approach to teachers in resource-lean countries, is used for some activities, while others provide opportunities for smaller-group instruction, independent and individualized learning.

In all contexts, Read Right Now is adapted, implemented, and evaluated in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education and/or the departments responsible for the education and training of children and youth, ensuring that the program is contextually appropriate and that systemic capacity is built to sustain high-quality literacy efforts. Partnerships with families and community stakeholders are also forged to support a culture of literacy and to maintain the momentum generated by RRN innovations.

> ***READ RIGHT NOW***
>
> - Is built upon research-based instructional strategies in reading and writing and proven strategies for system and community strengthening
>
> - By design, is adaptable to individual country contexts
>
> - Teaches both reading and writing from the beginning of instruction
>
> - Fosters lifelong readers and writers who use language purposefully
>
> - Enriches the local resource base for reading and writing
>
> - Taps into and enriches system, home and community resources that support literacy learning

1.1 How to Use the Read Right Now Toolkit

The RRN Toolkit is a guide to understanding the research base and principles of RRN and for adapting the framework to particular contexts. It is intended to ensure that the Read Right Now vision is clear, and that quality and consistency of programming is maintained even as programs are tailored to respond to local needs and priorities. The toolkit lays out the core principles of the framework and provides links to resources that should be consulted during RRN design and implementation.

The RRN Toolkit unpacks RRN in three sections:
- Introduction to RRN and its guiding principles
- Core instructional practices of RRN
- RRN adaptation and implementation

Appendices provide more detail and examples of tools, resources, and strategies referenced in the main text, including:
1. Read Right Now Jumpstart
2. Critical Thinking in Read Right Now
3. Sample Low-Cost and No-Cost Materials for Read Right Now
4. Family, Community and Read Right Now
5. Using Read Right Now with Older Learners and Out of School Youth
6. Mother Tongue and Multiple-Language-Based Education and Read Right Now
7. Gender and Social Inclusion in Read Right Now
8. Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning in Read Right Now
9. Technology-Based Support for Read Right Now

1.2 Why Read Right Now?

21st Century Literacy Challenges

EDC's reading programming and international research have consistently identified a series of core challenges to improvements in literacy in low-resource contexts. These challenges fall into the four areas of teacher capacity, learning and teaching resources, family and community capacity, and system and policy issues.

Teacher Capacity Challenges

Teachers often have limited literacy skills, themselves. They may not be able to read, write, and understand the languages they are being asked to teach. They have limited pre- and in-service training opportunities, and have not usually been trained in literacy instruction.

Teachers and teacher supervisors have an incomplete understanding of the breadth of skills and competencies students need to become autonomous readers, and teachers overstress some skills (word identification) at the expense of others (oral language development, phonological awareness, word recognition, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension).

Instructionally, learners are encouraged to memorize and recite text as opposed to actually reading. This occurs even when classes have a complete collection of grade-level reading texts. Fundamentally, teachers and teacher supervisors often view memorization and recitation as the preferred mode of instruction and necessary precursors to reading and understanding text.

Writing either is generally absent from elementary classrooms or is limited to copying letters, words, or sentences. As a result, students have little or no opportunity to develop and test their own hypotheses about letter-sound associations or to learn about how written text works in general.

Learning and Teaching Resource Challenges

Early learners have access to only a limited number and variety of texts (or may have no texts in mother tongue), and the quality of reading material is often low. This is particularly true in contexts where literacy in local languages is just beginning to be introduced, and in contexts where learners are youth who want to make practical connections between their life experiences and the development of literacy skills. Practice opportunities are limited by constraints on the amount and type of text available to students, and the extent to which thinking skills and extensions from literacy to life can be made is reduced.

Teacher resources are also limited and of inconsistent quality. Guides and materials to support instruction are few and far between, and access to coaching and support resources for teachers in the classroom is low.

### Family and Community Challenges

Learners often speak a different language at home than the language that they are expected to learn to read and write at school. Learners' families may not have strong literacy skills themselves, and may not know how to support their children as they learn to read and write. A culture of reading, in which literacy is a valued norm, is often lacking. Families often rely on schools to transmit learning while also feeling deeply skeptical of the quality of those schools, due to poor infrastructure, teacher and principal absenteeism, school-based violence, and other discouraging factors. Accessing schools or learning places may be a challenge in contexts of conflict and vulnerability.

System and Policy Challenges

Literacy may not be a priority for governments, or may not have sufficient funding associated to reflect its priority status. Instructional time policies may not include actual instruction in reading and writing. Language policies may be unclear or may not prioritize teaching in languages children speak and understand. Teacher training in and support for literacy instruction may be fragmented or inconsistent across pre- and in-service systems, and the procurement and distribution of literacy materials is often undeveloped.

The Read Right Now Response

RRN addresses these four categories of challenges based on extensive and rigorous global research on what works in reading and writing instruction and literacy system strengthening. RRN both draws on and generates evidence to support improved
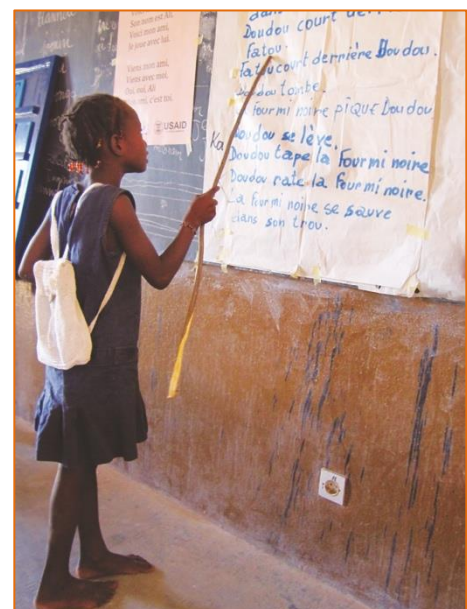
literacy systems and practices. Research on the impact of RRN is built into the design, and informs both adaptive management of individual programs and cross-country learning to enhance the overall RRN framework and global literacy efforts more broadly.

RRN provides a framework for literacy improvement that can be adapted to any resource lean environment. Adaptation is intended to be an iterative process which involves local input and local experts. Since maturational, gender-based, social, and linguistic experiences influence learning, RRN is attentive to these factors in both design and implementation.

Read Right Now's Guiding Principles

While each country's version of RRN is different, and may continue to change based on implementation experience, the common guiding principles of the framework nevertheless ensure that participants benefit from high standards and high-quality interventions. These principles address the four challenge areas of the framework.

Teacher Capacity Principles

1. Ensuring Teacher Understanding of Component Skills

   Teachers must have knowledge and understanding of the component skills of reading and writing and how to teach them. Teachers and their supervisors need comprehensive, sustained professional development to build their understanding of reading and writing development and their ability to base their own instruction on evidence-based practices. Research shows that professional development, even in small amounts over time, surpasses the impact on instructional practice of the one-time workshop. While workshops remain important delivery models in many contexts, RRN also invests in sustained professional development using coaching, mentoring, and self-directed learning models to provide higher-impact support to teachers.

2. Clarifying Teachers' Visions of Effective Practices

   Teachers need images of what good, evidence-based practice looks like in contexts similar to the ones in which they work. Most teachers and their supervisors have never seen or experienced many of the instructional practices supported by the research, and so demonstrations and simulations must be part of professional development. RRN develops a rich, locally-relevant set of video and audio resources for teachers and supervisors to use as references for improving instructional practice.

3. Helping Teachers Improve Their Foundational Skills

Teachers whose own basic literacy skills are strong have a more solid foundation from which to instruct others. Where possible, RRN programs work with national training systems to help teachers improve their own reading and writing in the languages they use to teach in the classroom, particularly where the language of instruction is not teachers' mother tongue.

4. Supporting Direct, Explicit Instruction

Instruction in reading and writing should explicitly teach core component skills. Students need structured, targeted support to build the key component skills of reading and writing. RRN incorporates five key components of reading instruction: phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. A complementary set of seven component skills of writing—handwriting, spelling and punctuation, generating ideas, organization, sentence and paragraph structure, text generation and revision—forms the core of RRN writing instruction. Teaching and learning routines within RRN help build automaticity, and build skilled readers and writers. An easy-to-use and carefully sequenced teaching approach moves from explicit teaching to strategic teaching that is focused on the needs of individual students. The program encourages students to begin writing from the first days of instruction, both to support their learning to read and to give them the experience of communicating with this new skill. Strong support for linking oral and written language is built into the program.

5. Emphasizing Meaning-Making

Building component skills is not sufficient to produce literacy. Students must also develop their oral language abilities, which form the foundation of reading and writing. This is particularly crucial when students read and write in a second language. Students must engage in authentic reading and writing, which makes these activities meaningful and enjoyable and provides sufficient practice to make them automatic activities. The overall goal of RRN is to enable students to read and write fluently, accurately, purposefully, with comprehension, and with enjoyment. The core instructional practices of RRN provide opportunities for learners to read and write, with the goal of helping them become life-long readers with critical thinking and problem-solving competencies. RRN's approach also fosters the development of individuals who use writing to communicate for authentic purposes.

Learning and Teaching Resource Principles

1. **Ensuring Sufficient and Appropriate Teacher and Learner Resources**

   Teachers need grade-specific resource packages that include a curriculum that describes the scope and sequence for introducing reading and writing skills, guidance in how to structure individual lessons, instructional resources for implementing the lessons, and simple assessment tools for measuring student progress. Teachers need easy to access and easy to manipulate resources that help them implement the new approach to teaching they learn in professional development training. In concert with host country specialists, RRN develops a full range of materials and references -- including texts, tools, and technology -- that assist countries in enhancing literacy instruction and achieving results in the classroom.

2. **Building Teacher Support Structures and Communities of Practice**

   Teachers benefit from regular access to coaches and mentors who understand and have experience with the new instructional approach and to a peer network of teachers who work together to strengthen their practice. As teachers adopt new teaching practices, they will require support from a coach or more experienced peer. In addition, teacher communities of practice can provide both the social support and problem-solving to help teachers overcome barriers. RRN's professional development model helps to build these new communities and sustain enthusiasm for and commitment to better literacy instruction. Where face to face networks are not possible, RRN develops and utilizes virtual, technology-mediated systems for building teacher and administrator communities of practice.

Family and Community Capacity Principles

1. **Engaging Communities and Families**

   Learners are more motivated to read and write when they feel part of a culture of literacy. A culture of literacy includes families and their children. As family and community members exert the greatest influence in a child's development and motivation, direct links and structured on-

   going communication between the classroom, the family, and the community ensure success in
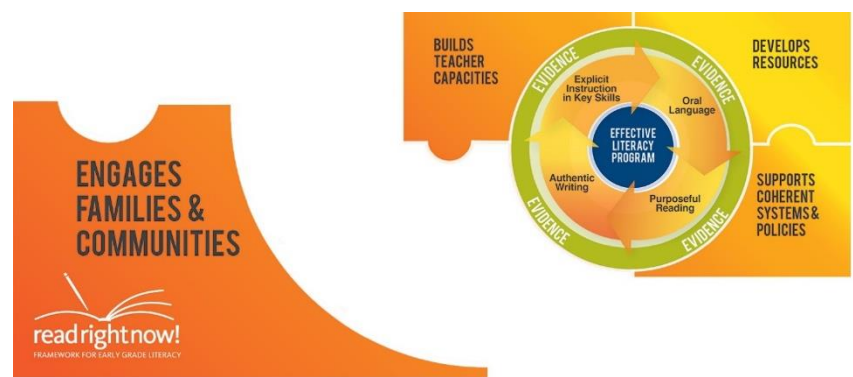
reading and lead to stronger advocacy for improved reading instruction. RRN gives families and communities tools to engage in literacy activities at home and in the community and to monitor and track literacy progress. Links between literacy activities and health, nutrition, and workforce and economic development are explored and supported to build out literacy benefits across communities.

2. ## Mobilizing Stakeholders to Support Literacy

All stakeholders must be aware of the changes being made and support those changes. The political, business, and NGO sectors must be informed and encouraged to lend their support, and families and communities must become active partners with their schools to ensure success. RRN nurtures partnerships among schools, the families of their students, and the communities in which they live to embed and respect local context and to draw on additional resources to support instruction.

System and Policy Principles

1. ## Agreeing on Performance Standards

All levels of the education system must share a common vision of effective instruction, articulated in the form of student and teacher performance standards. Student performance standards provide all stakeholders with a common understanding of the skills and competencies that students need to develop to become autonomous readers and writers. Teacher performance standards help teachers and supervisors ensure that effective instructional practices are used. RRN includes both teacher and student performance standards which are appropriate to the local context, either as new standards or in support or extension of existing standards. Where possible, links are also built with content and standards of pre-service training programs to establish a strong basis for literacy as teachers enter the system.

2. ## Using Data to Support Continued Improvement

All levels of the education system must share common tools for measuring and reporting student progress and teacher change. Families and communities should be able to understand and respond to presentations of these data. A shared vision will lead to change only if that change is measured and reported in ways that are clearly understood by all involved. Assessment and evaluation tools should reference the common teacher and student performance standards and indicators, and should provide educators with useful information to guide their instructional planning and classroom management. Likewise, tools that track activities, monitor fidelity of implementation and capture demographic data will allow teams to make linkages between what is being

implemented, how it is being implemented, individuals and groups receiving the intervention, and outcomes. These data enable a more holistic analysis of RRN's effect on educator and learner change. Assessment and evaluation using these tools is an essential element of RRN.

2.0 Read Right Now Instructional Approach

The core of Read Right Now is an instructional approach that provides an anchor for learning and links to the core challenge areas identified in the overall framework. Four instructional practices are integrated to form an effective literacy program:

- Oral language development
- Explicit instruction and guided practice in key skills of reading and writing
- Purposeful reading
- Authentic writing

2.1. Oral Language Development
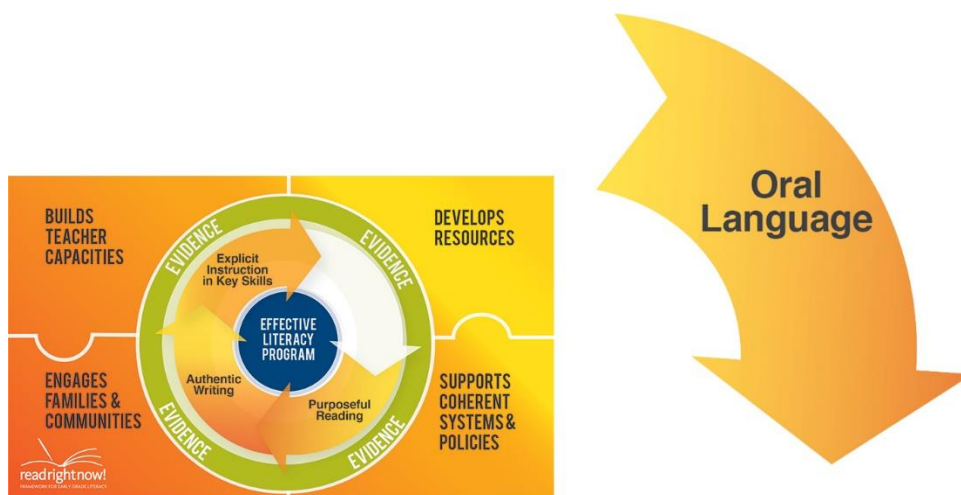
A focus on language development through teacher-student and student-student interaction is critical in RRN classrooms. Decades of research summarized by the National Reading Panel (2000) demonstrate

that young children must be able to hear and recognize the sounds of language and acquire an extensive oral vocabulary to learn to read. Beginning readers develop a foundation for reading by listening to the sounds of language and manipulating them, as well as by listening to the vocabulary and syntax through which meaning is constructed. The more children interact with spoken and written language, the better readers they become (Feitelson & Goldstein, 1986;

> **ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**
>
> - Story telling
> - Read-alouds
> - Word games, rhymes & songs

Feitelson, Kita, & Goldstein, 1986; Heath, 1983; Wells, 1986). In fact, children's ability to recognize, analyze, and synthesize the sounds of spoken language (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Scarborough, 1991; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002) and the extent of their vocabulary (Beck & McKeown, 1991; Stahl and Nagy, 2006; Wagner, Muse & Tannenbaum, 2007) are predictive of their ability to read and comprehend text (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Indeed, literature suggests that 3,500 words in a second language vocabulary are needed to become a beginning reader (Laufer, 2010).

Reading comprehension is also strongly related to oral language comprehension. Children's ability to recognize, analyze, and synthesize the sounds of spoken language are predictive of their ability to read and comprehend text (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Beginning readers develop a foundation for reading by listening to the sounds of language and manipulating them, as well as by listening to the vocabulary and syntax through which meaning is constructed. The more children interact with spoken and written language, the better readers they become (Hart & Risley, 1995). RRN's balance between oral language, reading, and writing practice facilitates these linkages between and across literacy skills.

Oral language development is particularly important when the demands of early schooling are high. That is, when the language of instruction is not the language spoken by the child or when local dialects significantly impact a student's ability to comprehend the language used in their classroom (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Students receiving literacy instruction in a second language more often experience problems attaining literacy because they lack the vocabulary and the syntactic structure, and are taught by teachers whose own proficiency and ability to model the second language is limited.

At the heart of RRN's approach is the research-based position that oral language competence in a pupil's mother tongue or second language is key to learning to read (Eisenhart, 2008). The value of using mother tongue as the initial language of instruction and of learning to read in mother tongue have been documented (Oller and Eilers, 2002), as has evidence that students use the first language to develop competency in the second language (NYSED, 2016). Therefore, RRN teacher guides include integrated language development

opportunities both in the whole-class settings and small groups in accordance with the linguistic demands of a particular country (Genishi,1988).

RRN typically follows host country language policies related to language of instruction, although policy change in that area may be one major undertaking of a RRN intervention, depending on funder and host country commitments. A major message in the teacher guides is that teachers need to instruct pupils in how to converse, question, listen, and respond. In order to promote oral language development, teachers are taught how to support pupils in becoming conversationalists: learning how to take turns, listening actively, and interacting effectively. Teacher to pupil modeling promotes language usage, and small groups are presented as an ideal setting in which to promote pupil-to-pupil conversations that provide the needed "air time" for pupils to develop language competence. These groupings also form the base for conducting guided reading lessons using leveled materials.

Teachers are assisted in planning activities that incorporate a wide selection of materials that promote talk, balancing pupil collaboration with discussion. The integration of language skills across the curriculum is also addressed in the guides for teachers. As pupils develop an understanding of written language, teachers continue to help them develop their oral abilities and skills across curricular areas.

In RRN word games, rhymes, and songs facilitate students' ability to attend to the sounds in words—an important skill that is highly correlated with reading success. This instruction in phonological awareness is explicit, active, and incorporates singing, chanting, listening to books, and playing games that manipulate sounds (Adams, 2001; Yopp & Yopp, 2009). Read-alouds use engaging, age-appropriate books that provide a link between oral language and print. RRN read-alouds provide pictorial supports and model authentic use of printed materials to communicate ideas, questions, and concepts. Audio readings of these stories model for the teacher how best to exploit the text for sounds, phonics, vocabulary, expression, and comprehension.

Types of instructional activities used by RRN to foster oral development also take into account the opportunities and challenges of MTB-MLE (mother-tongue based, multilingual education) learning environments. RRN uses locally developed materials, which more accurately reflect students' immediate environments and local cultures. For example, story-telling activities use books that include cultural adaptations of stories (in the Congolese version of the *Three Little Pigs*, the characters are lizards and their houses are destroyed by big rains). Teachers and students also use MP3s or other devices to record and listen to audio stories in mother tongue and other languages. Finally, RRN supports families to engage in oral language activities that bridge between home and school environments, as discussed below.

2.2 Explicit Instruction and Guided Practice in Key Skills of Reading and Writing

Explicit, systematic instruction in the component skills of reading (phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension) and writing (handwriting, spelling and punctuation, generating ideas, organization, sentence and paragraph structure, text generation and revision) is a critical component of any effective literacy program (Archer & Hughes, 2011), and research suggests that it is particularly beneficial for children from low-resource environments that lack a reading culture (Ryder, Tunmer & Greaney, 2008). Read Right Now's inclusion of explicit instruction and practice in these skills builds on a body of evidence that is well-established, as discussed below.

The Role of Print Knowledge in Learning How to Read

At an early age, children begin to develop an understanding of print and how it works. Knowledge about print is gained through many interactions with language—both oral and written. Through these experiences, children come to understand that written language is related to spoken language and that print carries a message (meaning). By the time children begin school, many are able to "read" environmental print; however, they may not understand how print conveys meaning (Bialystok, Shenfield, & Codd, 2000). This understanding is foundational for learning to read and predicts later reading achievement. RRN developed print skills include:

- Print function awareness—valuing print as a method of communication, such as telling a story or providing information
- Print convention awareness—knowing the features and mechanics of our alphabets
- Concept of word—understanding the match between spoken words and written text
- Handling a book (holding and turning pages)
- Common parts of a book (front, back, and title page)
- Different forms of print
- Directionality of print
- Distinctions between upper and lower case letters or those printed in different fonts
- Understanding that punctuation marks have specific meanings
- Difference between letters and words

Students who are beginning to read should be able to demonstrate the following print knowledge skills (Snow et al., 1998):

- An understanding of the parts of a book and their functions
- The ability to track print (when listening to a familiar text being read aloud or rereading a text)
- Recognition/naming of some book titles and authors
- Familiarity with different genres and types of text (narrative and informational)
- The behavior of a reader: one who reads emergently, not verbatim from print alone

The Role of Phonological Awareness in Learning How to Read

Phonological awareness is the ability to attend to and manipulate units of sound in speech (syllables, phonemes) independent of meaning (Yopp & Yopp, 2009). Phonological awareness is complex and critical when learning to read. RRN students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding that spoken words consist of sequences of phonemes (sounds in a language)
- Identify whether phoneme (sounds) are the same or different
- Produce rhyming words
- Blend phonemes (sounds) into words
- Segment words into phonemes (sounds)
- Substitute phonemes (sounds) to make new words

When students have built phonological awareness, they have the foundational skills needed for using the alphabetic principle (Troia, 2004), as discussed below.

The Role of Phonics and Word Identification and Recognition in Learning How to Read

Proficient readers demonstrate skill in both comprehension and word identification (Snow et al., 2005). This ability to accurately and rapidly decode words and then associate the printed word with its meaning allows the reader to focus attention on the meaning of the text. RRN helps students learn to be able to "read words" by addressing several elements of decoding and word identification, including:

- Alphabetic Principle: Knowledge of the shapes and names of letters of the letters and the understanding that there is a systematic relationship between the sounds of spoken languages and the letters and letter patterns of written languages. The alphabetic principle focuses on three major concepts:
  1. Letters and letter patterns represent the sounds of spoken language.
  2. There are predictable relationships between sounds and letters and learning these allows children to apply these relationships to both familiar and unfamiliar words.
  3. Applying the alphabetic principle allows students to begin reading with fluency.

- Decoding and Phonics: Decoding and phonics entails understanding how to read each letter or letter pattern in a word to determine the word's pronunciation and meaning. When children apply their knowledge of the alphabetic principle, the process of decoding occurs and they read the words. This strategy involves "sounding out and blending graphemes into phonemes to form recognizable words" (Ehri, 2002). More advanced decoders pronounce common spelling patterns as "chunks*."*

Sometimes used synonymously with the term *decoding*, *phonics* has been defined as "the ability to associate letters and letter combinations with sound and blending them into syllables and words" (What Works Clearinghouse, 2007, p. 4). Experts have described *phonics instruction* as a method of teaching children to learn and use the alphabetic principle (Armbruster et al., 2001). In order to blend the sounds together to pronounce words, students must learn progressively difficult word patterns—individual letter sounds progress to letter combinations and continue to include structural analysis such as prefixes and suffixes. Research confirms that systematic and explicit phonics instruction yields positive results for developing readers (Chall, 1967; Foorman, Fletcher, & Francis, 1998).

Recognition of Irregular/High-Frequency Words: Another method employed by skillful readers is "sight" recognition of words that appear often in printed text but may not be readily decodable. Research has revealed that this method of reading words is word-specific and requires children to draw upon their knowledge of previously learned words (Ehri, 2002).

The Role of Fluency in Learning How to Read.

Fluency has been defined as "the ability to read a text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression" (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000, pp. 3-5). As skillful readers develop, their recognition skills move from simple patterns to more complicated ones, and they transition from understanding simple letter patterns to mastering patterns of language structure (Meyer & Rose, 1999). Quick and accurate word identification is essential for skillful reading and allows cognition to shift to comprehending the text, yet it is just one facet of comprehension (Torgesen et al., 2007). For this reason, RRN uses Rasinski's (2004) visual image of fluency as the bridge connecting word decoding and comprehension. This "bridge" is composed of a range of skills a reader must build and maintain in order to become and remain fluent (Kuhn & Stahl, 2003):
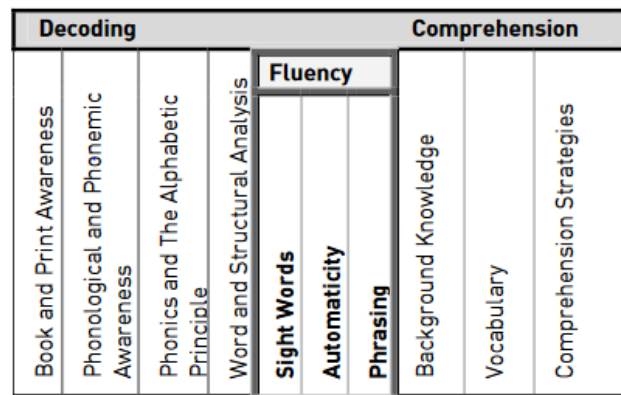
- Word recognition is accurate with few miscues.
- Word recognition occurs quickly, at a reasonable rate.
- Reading is done with expression (prosody)—it sounds like language.

Kuhn and Rasinski (2007) explain that intonation, stress, tempo, and appropriate phrasing indicate prosodic reading. As an indicator of fluent reading, prosody also contributes to a reader's engagement with the text.

The Role of Vocabulary Development in Learning How to Read

Research has established that children's vocabularies, or "knowledge of words and word meanings" are crucial to their acquisition of reading skills and their understanding of what they read. In fact, "one of the most enduring findings in reading research is the extent to which students' vocabulary knowledge relates to their reading comprehension" (Lehr, Osborn, & Hiebert, 2004).

Vocabulary development and word knowledge are tremendously complex, and this is due, in part, to the many types of vocabularies, and the social and academic language, students must develop (Hiebert, 2008). Studies indicate that students add approximately 2,000 to 3,500 distinct words to their reading vocabularies every year (Anderson & Nagy, 1992; Beck & McKeown, 1991). RRN materials and instruction facilitate this process through oral and written encounters with new words, bearing in mind several principles of vocabulary development (Nagy & Scott, 2000):

- Word knowledge is complex: knowing a word is more than being able to recite its definition.
- Word learning is incremental: it represents an accumulation of knowledge over time. Students need many exposures in different contexts.
- Word knowledge is multidimensional: many words have multiple meanings and serve different functions in different texts.
- Word knowledge is interrelated: knowledge from one word connects to knowledge about other words.
- Word knowledge relies on multiple sources: definitions, context, and word parts each provide important information about a word; however, each source has limitations.

Reading Comprehension, the Ultimate Goal

Fluency, while important, does not ensure good reading comprehension; it is just one of several proficiencies that a skilled reader must possess (Paris, Carpenter, Hamilton, & Hamilton, 2005; Torgesen et al., 2007). Proficient readers are able to comprehend both narrative and expository texts, and can (per Lehr, Osborn, & Hiebert, 2004, p. 5):

- Identify the words on a page accurately and read them fluently
- Draw upon a body of knowledge large enough to help them understand the words, sentences, and paragraphs strung together to explain and relate concepts
- Be engaged in thinking and motivated to use their knowledge in order to understand and learn from text
- Develop the flexibility and stamina required to complete the task at hand (Blachowicz & Ogle, 2008)

Comprehension is a process that involves strategic action before, during, and after reading. Before reading, the student sets a purpose for reading, makes predictions or formulates questions. During reading, predictions may be confirmed and questions answered; however, the student may also reformulate or add questions and predictions. A "good comprehender" also self-regulates by monitoring understanding, clarifying confusions, and repairing comprehension. After reading, the student reflects on the reading and summarizes or synthesizes the new information. Knowledge-building, active reading for specific purposes and applying the new knowledge gained deepen comprehension.

Researchers have identified three types of comprehension processing (Block, Rodgers, & Johnson, 2004):

- **Literal:** This form of processing serves as a prerequisite for inferential comprehension and entails tasks such as mining details from the text and recognizing the author's purpose. It usually relies on stated information (such as facts, the main idea, the sequence of events, and characters) in the text.
- **Inferential:** In this type of processing, readers must combine textual information with their own knowledge, information, and thoughts to go beyond what is stated to draw conclusions.
- **Metacognitive:** This form of processing affords the reader an opportunity to think about one's thinking and processing of the text.

Readers who employ the third form of processing, metacognitive, are strategic. They are able to control their reading and employ a variety of strategies to ensure that they understand what they read. These strategies are "actions that are consciously controlled by a reader but may be applied unconsciously when the reading materials are easy or when the reader is skilled in using a specific strategy" (Blachowicz & Ogle, 2008). RRN aims to produce strategic readers and deliberately uses instructional approaches that move students toward that goal. These approaches, which have been researched and validated (Block & Duffy, 2008, p. 22), help students to achieve strategic reading that includes the ability to:

- **Predict**: Size up a text in advance by looking at titles, text features, sections, pictures, and captions, continuously updating and re-predicting what will occur next in a text.
- **Monitor**: Activate, on an ongoing basis, many comprehension strategies to decode and derive meaning from words, phrases, sentences, and texts.
- **Question**: Stop to reread and initiate comprehension processes when the meaning is unclear.

- **Image**: Construct meanings expressed in the text by wondering, noticing, and generating mental pictures.
- **Look-back, Reread, and Fix-it**: Reflect on the text before, during, and after reading, continuously deciding how to shape the knowledge base for personal use.
- **Infer**: Connect ideas in text based on personal experiences, knowledge of other texts, and general world knowledge, making certain that inferences are made quickly so as not to divert attention from the actual text but to help the reader better understand it.
- **Find Main Ideas, Summarize, and Draw Conclusions**: Make sure to include information gained from story grammar or textual features; if students can't make a valid summary of information read to date, this is a signal to go back to reread.
- **Evaluate**: Approach a fictional text expecting to (and making certain that students do) note the setting, characters, and story grammar early on, with problems, solutions, and resolutions to occur thereafter.
- **Synthesize**: Approach an informational text watching for textual features, accessing features, unique types of information, sequence of details and conclusions, and combining all of these to make meaning.

The Role of Motivation in Learning How to Read

Students' comprehension depends on: (1) how well they read the words on the page; (2) how much knowledge they possess about the topic/content of the text; (3) how well they think; and (4) how motivated they are to do the work (Torgesen, 2005). Indeed, motivation is one predictor of reading success (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). It is of paramount importance for children to have positive experiences and to develop and maintain the motivation to read (Leipzig, 2001). RRN's lively and engaging materials and instructional methods that encourage the development of students' independence and strategic thinking foster reading motivation, curiosity, and help learners:

- Appreciate the pleasures of reading
- View reading as a social act
- Read widely for a variety of purposes (gaining information, entertainment, etc.)
- Work comfortably with a variety of written forms and genres of text

Unfortunately, many teachers in developing countries, which are typically low-resource environments, have never been trained in reading and writing instruction and, therefore, are not familiar with how to teach those skills. In addition, primary school curricula and instructional materials do not provide sufficient guidance to help teachers understand which skills should be taught or when and how to teach them. RRN fills that gap by providing teachers with an instructional program that provides the specifics

of systematic teaching of reading and writing. For each country, development begins with a description of the **scope and sequence** for each grade level, including: 1) the component skills to be taught, 2) the sequence in which they should be introduced, and 3) the types of tasks students should be able to complete at specific points in the sequence, if they have mastered the skills in question.

The scope and sequence analysis of a country's national curriculum serves as the blueprint for the development of all materials, and is designed to support teachers' ability to deliver direct, explicit instruction. Materials are developed by local educators with EDC support to ensure that they fit together in a complete and systematic package including a teachers' manual and set of lessons, accompanying grade-leveled texts, decodable books, a bank of assessment tasks and reinforcement games keyed to the specific set of skills covered in the scripted lessons, and teacher read-aloud books and audio stories. Best practices in literacy research indicate that the use of multiple tasks and instructional methods in a classroom provides girls and boys with more opportunities to be successful because they "encourage a variety of different performance standards so that different students can excel on different kinds of tasks" (Paris, Wasik & Turner, 1996).

> **EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION**
> - Controlled, sequential instruction in key reading and writing skills
> - Decodable texts
> - Leveled readers

Teachers use explicit instruction to teach foundational skills of phonics (the ability to recognize letters and letter-sound combinations and to map out or decode words). Contrary to more traditional "drill and skill" phonics methods, RRN instruction is about developing strategies for solving the word identification problem of young readers (Adams, 2001). Children tackle letters, syllables and words as a system and learn to pay attention and think about whether or not what they are reading and writing makes sense.

RRN uses well-designed leveled texts and decodable books that support students' ability to apply what they have learned to their own reading of connected text. Once students begin decoding words, teachers use explicit instruction to introduce students to strategies that increase their reading fluency and comprehension. Guided practice in reading provides pupils with an opportunity to read texts that provide the right amount of challenge and supports acquisition of an ever-increasing repertoire of word solving and comprehension strategies. At the same time, this instruction builds students' oral vocabulary. Depending on whether the texts are in mother tongue or a second language, they are presented and used in a different manner. Second language instruction must pay particular attention to vocabulary development to enable students to understand the meaning of the text.

Most importantly, RRN teaching strategies follow an evidence-based sequence of instruction that gradually releases responsibility from teacher to student (Duke & Pearson, 2002). The teacher introduces the reading or writing strategy and explains when and how it should be used; the teacher models the strategy in action; the pupil models the strategy in action; the teacher helps pupils work together to use the strategy; the teacher guides pupils to use the strategy independently, gradually releasing responsibility; and finally, pupils use the strategy independently.

Figure 2. RRN Gradual Release of Responsibility

Teacher describes strategy
▼
Teacher models strategy
▼
Pupil models strategy
▼
Teacher provides opportunities for practice: **A. Collaborative practice** **B. Guided practice**
▼
Pupil uses strategy independently

Because the lesson sequence is highly structured, it supports experienced teachers as well as those with little or no training. In addition, it provides opportunities to use whole-class instruction, a familiar approach to teachers in resource-lean countries, as well as opportunities for independent and individualized learning.

Collaborative practice gives learners opportunities to share their thinking with a classmate or to work through a problem together, and RRN encourages teachers to use partner pairs for this phase of the process. Working with a partner increases opportunities for communication, since all students get to talk and practice. It also encourages risk taking: students are more apt to take a risk with the language if they are working with a single classmate as opposed to performing for the entire class. It also provides a safe opportunity for shy or withdrawn students (especially girls who may have been socialized not to speak up) to contribute ideas, and to have them seen as valuable. The teachers' manual provides clear, explicit, and brief guidance for teachers about how to design and manage partner work, since most teachers in resource-lean countries have received little or no training in using collaborative learning. Given the physical constraints in many classrooms, partner work is more easily implemented than work in small groups of three to four students. Partner

work also affords the teacher an opportunity to work more intensively with small groups of students on guided reading practice or targeted direct instruction.

Independent practice provides students with the opportunity to make the skill their own. During independent practice, the teacher circulates and gathers observations about how students are performing the tasks. The teachers' manual offers detailed how-to instructions about structuring and implementing independent practice. Beyond the structure, the manual also provides strategies for differentiating activities based on individual student differences and methods for assessing student learning.

Teachers should also provide time for the entire class to apply the skills and new learning to a new context. Carefully crafted guidelines in the teachers' manual provide explicit support for teachers as they help students generalize the skills developed in the three previous phases of instruction. Reflections by students on what they have learned about reading and writing during a particular lesson cycle provide an opportunity for critical and metacognitive thinking.

2.3 Purposeful Reading

While teaching the specific skills of reading and writing is an important component of a literacy program, it is not sufficient to ensure that students become lifelong readers and writers. Students need opportunities to apply their skills in authentic and purposeful reading and writing situations from the very beginning. The more they read and write, the better readers and writers they become. Purposeful reading can "help students understand that content literacy is worthwhile and meaningful to their lives," in addition to providing opportunities for students to practice and improve their skills (Parsons & Ward, 2011). Helping students establish a "reading routine"—one that also includes reading for leisure—improves their oral language skills and reinforces their technical reading and spelling skills (Mol & Bus, 2011).
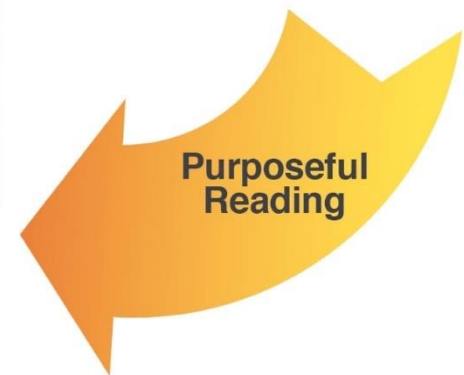
The RRN framework integrates scheduled, structured opportunities for students to read grade-leveled texts containing words and letter-sound combinations they have been learning and apply their skills more independently, following the gradual release of responsibility paradigm. Students may engage in a variety of reading for pleasure activities, including re-reading texts they have already read, reading with or to a classmate, and selecting from a variety of

> **PURPOSEFUL READING**
> - Linking reading to specific life purposes
> - Structured independent reading
> - Home–school reading partnership

texts (produced by students or provided by the program) to read during personal reading time. Empowering students to select their own reading texts and allowing them to exert some control over the environment for independent and cooperative reading activities increases students' confidence and sense of reading competence, which, in turn, can positively affect achievement (Paris, Wasik & Turner, 1996). It also enables girls and boys to choose reading materials that reflect their own lives and aspirations. The RRN program makes a conscious effort to ensure that students have scheduled and structured opportunities in a typical school week for multiple personal reading activities.

RRN also supports a home–school reading partnership program that supports literacy development (Kleeck, 2004; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Research has shown that students' socioeconomic status can have a significant impact on the frequency of language experiences (Hart & Risley, 1995) and gender-based expectations about what and when children read also play a role in the success of literacy programs. RRN's home–school reading program facilitates the development of a new "culture of reading" without undermining families' cultural traditions and values.

Students take selected texts home and are asked to read them to a parent or a sibling, or to have a parent or sibling read to them. In the case of second language texts, the parent-child experience remains a rich one even when the parent or elder does not understand the language of the text. The partnership serves to raise family members' awareness of the importance of reading and provides them with a role to play in a student's reading development. At the same time, it introduces reading as a valid and important social activity for both boys and girls, helping to instill a culture of reading in societies dominated by oral traditions.

2.4 Authentic Writing

The Reading-Writing Connection. The reading-writing connection is central to RRN, and materials and instruction are intended to leverage the mutually beneficial relationship between reading and writing. Engaging in written activities helps children understand that writing is a communication tool, as it reinforces the relationship between print and the sounds of speech. Writing also fosters an understanding of the conventions of print (punctuation, spelling, and capitalization) and allows children to express ideas fluently by constructing meaning, making connections, and exploring their own thinking. Last, it teaches children how texts are organized for different purposes.

Developing writing skills is a complex process. Research confirms the effectiveness of teaching process-oriented skills and strategies that emphasize prewriting activities, multiple drafts through revision, attention to writing conventions (editing), and sharing one's work with others (Applebee & Langer, 2009). RRN's writing instruction includes:

Dedicated time and focus: Learners need to write every day. Writing should occur within a planned block of time that provides a brief explicit lesson; time for learners to write; and opportunities to share authentic work. Direct and explicit lessons should address specific features of writing and the writing process.

Recursive process: Skillful writers follow a process. Writing instruction needs to teach children about the process in an authentic way. Modeling, thinking aloud, and scaffolding instruction allow teachers to support children's acquisition of this complex process.

- Self-regulation: Improving their writing skills and enhancing the quality of the text they create are two goals writers set for themselves. Applying specific strategies to complete an assignment and monitoring one's understanding of the writing process are achieved through reflection and self-evaluation. Effective instruction teaches these strategies through modeling, practice, and reinforcement.

- Peer response: Writing practice alone does not improve writing (Hillocks, 1986). Constructive feedback (having someone respond to the writing using specific criteria) improves writing. Training children to provide peer feedback is an important part of the process approach to writing instruction. Monitoring this feedback process is the teacher's responsibility.
- Targeted strategy instruction: Children need to learn explicit writing strategies and have opportunities to practice using the writing process. Group mini-lessons, where the teacher uses about ten minutes of the writing block to present direct and explicit instruction, provide the needed structure. Conferencing with individual children gives teacher feedback and fosters reinforcement of strategies and skills.

Purposeful text creation: Both children and older learners benefit from writing for authentic purposes which make the creation of text meaningful and purposeful. Creating lists for shopping, writing recipes, documenting homework, etc. provide learners with links between their lives and the writing process that encourage and enhance literacy gains.

> **AUTHENTIC WRITING**
> - Language experience
> - Emergent writing
> - Personal writing

Many teachers in low-resource contexts equate writing in the early grades with correctly forming letters or copying words. The opportunity for students to compose their own words or sentences or to use writing to convey original thoughts is generally non-existent. The limited role afforded writing reflects teacher beliefs that reading and writing are two distinct processes and, therefore, they must be taught separately, so as not to confuse students, and that students must learn to read before they can learn to write. Because of those beliefs, students do not engage in authentic writing until the upper elementary years, and, even then, the writing they do is highly structured and controlled by the teacher.

The absence of authentic and original writing in early primary classes robs students of a powerful means of bridging the gap between the spoken and written forms of language and helping them understand that words on paper are "just talk that has been written down." Making the link between spoken and written language is particularly important in communities where children have had limited or even no exposure to written texts, either in their homes or in their communities, prior to

beginning formal schooling. The RRN approach rectifies that situation by introducing personal writing from the very beginning as a way of reinforcing both students' reading skills (Gambrell, 1996; Zaragoza & Vaughn, 1995) and their knowledge of how written language works (Adams, 2001).

RRN introduces students to the world of writing through activities in which students dictate their ideas and teachers record them in writing, while drawing students' attention to the different components of language (letter-sound combinations, grammar, punctuation or other written conventions). This activity

makes children aware that print conveys meaning and that everyone's thoughts and ideas can be expressed in spoken and written language. It also produces texts that are meaningful for children (that is, based on their knowledge and experiences) and that are predictable and readable, because they use students' natural language. And, as students read-aloud their words about their experiences, they build their reading vocabulary and decoding skills. In resource lean-environments, where there are few, if any, developmentally and contextually appropriate texts for students to read, language experience activities can fill the resource gap by enabling students to produce their own texts to read and share with each other. All that is required is a chalkboard and chalk or a pen and paper.

These writing experiences introduce students to the notion that written text is a means of sharing one's ideas and knowledge or conveying a message that can be read by someone at a different time or in a different place (Coker, 2007). As students begin to understand that writing is a way of communicating, they can begin engaging in writing authentic sentences to convey their thoughts. This provides them with the opportunity to "*ink their thinking,*" while, at the same time, forming and testing their hypotheses about written language conventions (for example, that specific letter and letter combinations represent specific sounds). As students test hypotheses about how written language works in their emergent writing, they often use unconventional spellings that are based on how the words sound.

Teachers should encourage students' ability to use their knowledge of letter-sound relationships to write words—even if the result is not conventional spelling. When encouraged to use what they know about letter-sound relationships, students feel more free to express themselves fully and to use all the language resources available to them in an attempt to write. This "*inventive spelling*" process solidifies both the students' ability to decode (read) and to encode (write) words, while producing more developmentally appropriate texts to read. Authentic writing also demonstrates that learning to read and write serves a purpose. For example, when children use print to express their own ideas or feelings and receive a response from another, they learn that these tools are valuable in their own experiences as living and thinking individuals.

It is as important for teachers to provide students with a variety of authentic writing experiences as it is to provide them with a variety of reading materials. Incorporating writing into language programs is essential to supporting children's emergent literacy development. As students move through RRN they are gradually introduced to the conventions of written texts (conventional spelling, punctuation, and grammar) and their importance in conveying thoughts clearly and accurately. Student independent writing continually improves to reflect a growing understanding of how written language works. In the upper grade levels

students are introduced to two essential principles of the writing process: 1) how to generate and organize ideas prior to writing, and 2) how to review one's work (or that of a classmate) to improve how the ideas are expressed and organized, to enrich the vocabulary, or to ensure that language norms (grammar, spelling) are respected. Writing that explores a variety of formats—such as postcards and letters, instructions, dialogue, informative text, news articles, stories, comedy, poetry, and response journals—engages students in authentic writing activities. Writing workshops are introduced as a strategy that allows students to practice the writing process within a structured writing community that supports peer and small group supports (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2007).

The inclusion of writing as a core component of RRN also addresses one of the primary challenges facing ministries of education across developing countries: how to get socially- and culturally-relevant and developmentally appropriate texts into the hands of students in the quantities required to support their continued development as young readers. Student writing provides additional and relevant texts to read in low-resource classrooms. Therefore, it is critical that RRN provision classrooms with paper and pencils for every child.

3.0   Adapting, Integrating, and Implementing Read Right Now

While the principles and core instructional approaches of RRN remain consistent in all contexts in which the framework is applied, implementers will need to adapt RRN to meet a particular country's needs. This section provides additional detail on the steps and stages of that process, and on how to determine whether or not it has been a success.

RRN is intended to be a learning intervention for designers and implementers as well as for teachers and students. Therefore, it is critical that adaptations pay close attention to process and outcomes, incorporating robust monitoring activities and rigorous evaluation, thoughtfully developing and implementing measurement tools, and ensuring that the results of measurement are used as sources of reflection and improvement for the program and for host country government partners and stakeholders.

The adaptation and integration of RRN occurs in two phases:
- Startup and Launch
- Wider Implementation

Phase 1, Startup and Launch, provides an opportunity for the EDC team and a country's educational leaders to build enthusiasm and buy-in for changes in literacy programming by demonstrating simple and effective methods that will bring quick results, while at the same time working to tailor RRN to the local context and build it into a comprehensive and relevant local program. In Phase 2, Wider Implementation, the tailored RRN program is implemented in schools and classrooms through a partnership between the local educational ministry and EDC.

3.1 Phase 1: Startup and Launch

Preparation and Design
Most Read Right Now programs are developed in response to a call for proposals from a funder or a partner government. During the process of proposal development, program designers conduct background research on the literacy context in country in line with the four RRN areas of focus: teacher capacity, resources, family and community engagement, and system and policy coherence to support literacy. Exploration of the context for literacy programming will result in a basic "literacy profile" for the country around which programming can be proposed. The research for this stage may include such questions as:

Teacher Capacity
- What training do teachers receive in pre-service programs that relates to literacy?
- What is the continuous professional development structure for educators? Are there CPD elements related to literacy?

- What are the roles of teacher, head teacher, coach and supervisor within the system? What are the actual practices, capacity, and expectations of these personnel?

Resources
- What is the existing literacy curriculum, if any?
- What materials exist to support reading and writing instruction?
- What is the materials production and distribution structure and approval system?
- What is the ICT footprint? Is there any current use of ICT to support literacy?

Family and Community Engagement
- What does the community think about the language of instruction? Is it the same as the language that most children speak at home?
- What opportunities do families currently have to engage with schools? Around literacy?
- What is the family and community profile where RRN will be implemented?

System and Policy Coherence
- Which agencies are most implicated in improving literacy in country? What personnel might be involved in developing and implementing RRN?
- What is the current language policy related to literacy instruction?
- How much time is available for literacy instruction? Is it set aside specifically for reading and writing, folded into language arts instruction, or not provided at all?
- What is the structure of teaching? Do learners spend all day with one teacher, or are there subject-specific instructors?
- Are there benchmarks and standards in place for reading? What are they?
- What are the monitoring and evaluation systems for literacy?
- What are the ministry structures and coordination mechanisms around literacy and education?
- Are there any policies or expectations around compensation for teacher and government staff participation in training?
- What is the political feeling around the results of any recent literacy assessments? Is the government excited about the opportunity to improve literacy? Worried about results? Defensive about existing practices?

The proposal will use these data points as a basis for suggesting adaptations of the RRN framework that will best meet the country's needs. Deeper exploration of points of leverage and adaptation will be part of mobilization, as described below.

Technical Jumpstart

RRN is designed to be integrated into a country's existing curriculum and instructional framework. The only timetable change required is setting aside 30 to 40 minutes of instructional time each day to use the RRN materials. However, even this much change takes time to implement, so RRN includes a Jumpstart package to ensure that the program gets up and running quickly. This basic teacher training and activity package enables teachers to rapidly increase the amount of text available in their classrooms and make a few, high-impact changes in instructional practice to support gains in student literacy. Teachers' experience of the benefits of even these quick small changes provides an incentive for their adoption of the full RRN package as it rolls out, and engagement of government counterparts in training and families in reflecting on quick changes sets the stage for broader and more in-depth activities to follow.

Mobilization and Program Initiation

Mobilization and Program Initiation includes eight elements, presented briefly here. These activities operate concurrently with the Jumpstart technical intervention and often overlap with one another in an intensive design process that plays out over the first few months of the program. Detailed explanations of each element of the program follow.

1. **Train program staff on Read Right Now** and ensure that they have the capacity to support the evolving reading program.
2. **Collect evidence from the field to confirm the country's "literacy profile,"** as articulated in the proposal research. These baseline assessments provide data to RRN staff on the quality of teaching practices and the level of proficiency of students' reading and writing skills. They may also include a survey of the beliefs teachers bring to the reading and writing process; student, teacher, and community literacy practices; and the available resources to support reading and writing instruction.
3. **Analyze policies, standards and curriculum**. Based on findings from the initial assessment, RRN staff are able to identify gaps between the existing reading and writing practices and achievement and the desired outcomes. Document analysis of the country's curriculum also provides direction for the collective revision of reading and writing standards and curriculum.
4. **Revise standards and curriculum**. The situational analysis provides evidence from the field that informs the revision of standards and curriculum. Through an agreed-upon process, RRN and the host country Ministry of Education negotiate a shared understanding of the skills and abilities students should be able to demonstrate at each grade level, as well as the types of literacy instructional practices teachers should use in the classroom.
5. **Design and specify the program details of RRN.** Through joint planning sessions between EDC staff and the country's Ministry of Education, the specifics of a country's RRN program are agreed upon. Daily and weekly instructional schedules are designed, incorporating RRN's core instructional framework of four activities and four strategies. Design of RRN within a particular country's context also depends on the language policies and practices of that country and its timetable for educational innovation. The language of instruction and role the mother tongue

plays in instruction heavily influence how the key activities of oral language, explicit instruction in the component skills, authentic reading, and authentic writing play out in a particular implementation.

6. **Develop instructional support resources**. Through collaboration between RRN and ministry officials, initial instructional materials required to support the implementation of the program are developed—a most important activity. Teachers' manuals are a critical component of development as well as student materials, such as decodable texts, read-aloud books, letter and word games, and audio programs.

7. **Create professional development resources**. To increase teacher pedagogical content knowledge and quality of instruction, needed resources for educators are designed and developed. Through collaborative development, RRN and ministry officials put in place resources and structures that support quality instruction to implement the program.

8. **Create community literacy resources and support activities**. Resources to help families and community members engage with schools and support literacy efforts are designed and developed. These materials and activities complement and intersect with the in-school curriculum and with data collection and sharing activities, to motivate and facilitate community engagement with literacy reforms.

Train Program Staff on RRN and on Early Literacy

All Read Right Now programs receive extensive technical support from EDC's home office literacy specialists, and include a reading or literacy specialist or advisor as a full-time member of the field team. These staff should partner early in the program to introduce other team members to the principles and core practices of Read Right Now, to assess their existing capacity in early literacy, and to plan a program of continuing professional development that will ensure that all program staff understand the reasons for the work they are doing and have the necessary technical skills to implement a high-quality literacy program. Ongoing support for staff development is provided over the life of the program by the home office literacy specialists in collaboration with the field-based literacy specialist, to ensure that program implementation is consistent with evidence and with RRN principles.

Collect Baseline Evidence from the Field

Baseline data collection is intended to verify and if necessary adjust the picture of the state of reading and writing and of literacy teaching and learning that was developed during the proposal process. This diagnostic

EDC TOOLS FOR ASSESSING THE LITERACY LANDSCAPE

- Teacher Beliefs and Instructional Practices Inventory (BIPI)
- Standards-Based Classroom Observation Protocol for Literacy (SCOPE/Literacy)
- Classroom Observation Form for Literacy/Simplified (COF)
- Out of School Youth Literacy Assessment (OLA)
- Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Adaptations
- Literacy Environment Scan (LENS)
- Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)
- Organizational and Institutional Capacity Assessments (OCA/ICA)
- Rapid Education Risk Assessment (RERA)
- Gender and Inclusion Assessment Tools

assessment includes information on the following:

- The types of instructional practices and resources teachers use
- Their beliefs about what children bring to the learning process
- How children learn to read and write
- The literacy skills of the teachers
- The reading and writing skills and competencies students are able to demonstrate at key grade levels
- The types of conditions and supports present in the school, home, and community to support literacy (including professional development for educators)

EDC has a range of tools for collecting this kind of information, as outlined in the box to the right. The data collected will inform all elements of the p rogram design and provide baseline data against which to measure RRN's impact.

Data on Teacher Views of Instructional Practices. If students' reading and writing skills are to improve, teaching needs to improve. The first step in designing an effective RRN program is to determine which specific aspects of teachers' reading and writing instructional practices support literacy learning, and which need to change to enhance student performance. Without an initial assessment of teachers' attitudes, beliefs and instructional practices, it is difficult to identify how well these elements align with the evidence-based practices that lead to effective reading and writing instruction. It is also difficult to engage in a meaningful discussion of what needs to be adjusted at the classroom level to improve students' reading and writing abilities. RRN assessments provides decision makers with an overview of the types of evidence-based instructional practices teachers say they use as daily practices, and those that they say they use either rarely or consider inappropriate

> **IMPACT OF BELIEFS ON TEACHER PRACTICES**
>
> Teachers who believe that students can only learn to write after they have learned to read or who do not believe that children are capable of writing simple words or sentences on their own before grade 4 are unlikely to provide early primary students with opportunities to engage in such activities. Also, teachers who believe that students must memorize a text before they can read it are unlikely to provide students with opportunities to develop strong decoding skills, even if provided with new instructional materials for decoding.

for their students. The latter provides insights into the specific reading and writing skills or competencies that teachers are unlikely to incorporate into their practice—either because they do not view students as being capable of mastering them, or because they do not consider the activity to be an important contributor to students' reading and writing development for the age level in question. This is an important indicator of teachers' perceptions of how reading and writing develops—and of the skills that can and should be developed at particular grade levels.

Data on Teacher Beliefs and Attitudes.
Assessment should also explore the beliefs that teachers hold about how children learn to read and write, the relative difficulties boys and girls face learning to read and write, and effective reading and writing instructional strategies. Understanding the beliefs teachers bring to the reading and writing process is critical to designing an effective program. Beliefs can act as pedagogical filters, encouraging teachers to assimilate strategies and activities that align with those belief structures and to either reject or distort those that do not. If teachers are presented with instructional materials and training that conflict with their own tacitly-held beliefs about how children learn to read they are unlikely to incorporate the new ideas into their instructional repertoire. They are unlikely to use the materials or activities at all, or not to use them as intended, unless relevant and convincing evidence challenges their underlying beliefs.

Data on Actual Reading and Writing Instructional Practices. In addition to teacher reported practices, classroom observations of actual teacher behavior help to provide foundational information on the kinds of training that will be helpful and the extent to which practices align with desired instruction under RRN. EDC's *Standard Classroom Observation Protocol for Literacy (SCOPE–Literacy*) is one tool often used for these assessments. SCOPE-Literacy assesses classroom reading and writing instruction along thirteen dimensions of practice. *SCOPE-Literacy* provides clear, precise descriptions of features of practices associated with each dimension on a 1-to-5 scale, ranging from least effective to most effective practices. At the lower end of the continuum, the associated practices are not evident at all, or are used rarely or ineffectively. At the higher end of the continuum, the practices are highly evident and implemented in an expert manner. The snapshots between these two extremes describe gradually increasing use of the associated literacy instructional practices and growing expertise in their implementation. *SCOPE-Literacy* communicates a clear, precise, and shared vision of effective literacy instructional practices and outlines the phases teachers go through as they move from novice to expert teacher. *SCOPE-Literacy* provides teachers and supervisors with a common language to describe that vision and can be a useful professional development tool over time. Where a full SCOPE-Literacy is not appropriate within a RRN design, a simplified Classroom Observation Form for Literacy can also be used to capture actual teacher practices and track change over time.

Data on Teacher Reading Proficiency. Measuring reading component skills can be useful for assessing teacher skills, but teachers may object to having their skills tested in the same way as students' skills are tested. A simple fluency and comprehension assessment based on EDC's OLA tool or drawn from upper primary grade textbooks can identify teachers whose own literacy skills are so low that it may impede their ability to teach. Teachers can then continue to build their language and reading skills while teaching within RRN.

Data on Student Reading and Writing Skills. The RRN team must obtain a clear and valid picture of the skills that children have developed by the end of each grade level. Comparing this information with national and international expectations will provide a starting point for establishing instructional standards and identifying skills that need to be emphasized in both the teacher training component and the instructional materials development component of RRN. These data are often collected through the USAID- supported *Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA),* which EDC has adapted and administered in a range of contexts. The EGRA is an individually-administered assessment of reading in the early grades of primary school. EGRA evaluates students' foundational literacy skills, such as phonemic awareness, letter recognition, and fluency, which have been shown to predict later reading achievement. In addition, a curriculum-based test can measure whether or not students are learning what they are taught.
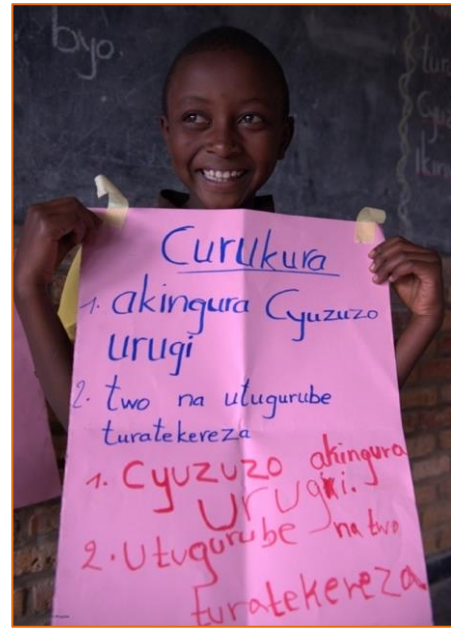
Data on School, Community, and Home Literacy Environment. The final sets of evidence from the field concern the extent to which students have access to an environment that supports and promotes literacy—at school, at home, and in the community. The RRN team should investigate the following:

- The amount of instructional time students actually receive (as opposed to the official time allotment, which may be affected by school closures and teacher and student absences) and the amount of instructional time devoted specifically to reading and writing
- The degree of students' access to reading material (both in school and out of school)
- The level of parental and family member involvement in supporting and monitoring children's reading and writing abilities
- The level of community awareness of and engagement in reading initiatives

The EDC-developed *Literacy Environment Scan (LENS)* provides a clear picture of the literacy environment at the local level and enables decision makers to identify specific interventions to enhance that environment. It also provides a baseline for determining whether RRN results in an enhanced reading and writing environment for children. Additional tools exploring community engagement and context focus on gender and social inclusion, conflict's effects on education and literacy, and household capacity and contributions to learning.

Analyze Policies, Standards and Curriculum
Review of the Policy Environment. EDC implements RRN in partnership with Ministries of Education, working in collaboration with Ministry staff and teachers. Implementation of RRN engages parents and communities, as well. Successful RRN programs result in systemic and sustainable education sector

improvements, but at every level of interaction, success requires a thorough knowledge and understanding of:

- The policy[1] and bureaucratic environment in which the program will be conducted, and how to function within that environment
- The policies that will enable RRN to have the strongest possible impact, and how to advocate for those policies.

As noted above, an initial policy analysis is part of the proposal development process for RRN programs, but a more thorough analysis that takes into account the differences between what particular policies say and how they are enacted is merited once implementation begins. Policy analysis should not ignore history. EDC staff and officials must explore questions like "What came before?" "What is now in place?" and "Why?" These investigations will lead to an understanding of:

- The evolution of policies related to literacy, including those regarding language of instruction
- Policy supporters and detractors
- Arguments for and against change
- Key decision makers
- The role of the teacher's union relative to changes in literacy approaches
- The country's experience in previous attempts at early grade literacy reform or early grade improvement in general
- Which donors might support or block a priority on early grade reading and why (for example, an early grade reading initiative might be perceived as threatening to shift the focus from vocational training).

National policy leaders must contend with sometimes conflicting forces and agendas. Therefore, it is imperative that RRN programs recognize and support Ministry of Education leadership. Understanding the nature and power of the forces that may mitigate against successful implementation of RRN will enable RRN staff to work with Ministry officials to seek ways to turn the tide of opposition.

Review of Standards. One of the guiding principles of the RRN program is that changes in teachers' literacy instructional practices are more likely to be sustained over time if they are rooted in a commonly shared vision of effective literacy instruction, articulated in the form of teacher and student performance standards. Standards communicate to all interested parties (including parents, students, teachers, principals, supervisors, curriculum developers,

> Standards provide clearer expectations for students and parents and the possibility of better communication among teachers, administrators, parents, and the larger community.

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[1] The term policy is used here to describe articulations of national government intents, goals, and principles that guide decisions on plans, programs, budgets, and regulations.

and NGOs working in the education field) a ministry's expectations for both student performance and the types of instructional practices used in the classroom.

A review of current student reading and writing standards and teacher professional standards for instruction across the early grades is essential to RRN planning. Analysis includes exploring the alignment of standards in the differing languages of instruction and the degree to which oral language standards support reading and writing development and expectations related to written language. The team also needs to analyze instructional standards and their alignment with student reading and writing standards. If some or none of these standards exist, and one of the tasks of the program is to develop them, initial data collection should focus on eliciting directions in which the Ministry wishes to move and understanding the broader performance monitoring context in which literacy standards will be put in place.

Curriculum Mapping. Teacher and student standards should then be mapped against the existing curriculum to identify gaps between the two. This process can help ministries identify changes to consider when producing a new or revised curriculum (specifically, one that better aligns with the research on effective reading and writing instruction).

Revise Standards and Curriculum

Through a collaborative process, RRN and the education ministry negotiate a shared understanding of the skills and abilities students should be able to demonstrate at each grade level, as well as the types of literacy instructional practices teachers should use in the classroom. The evidence collected in the field and the analysis of standards and curriculum provide data to guide the initial design of RRN as it is adapted for and integrated into a country's approach to reading and writing instruction.

Develop Student Reading and Writing Performance Standards. A baseline evaluation of students' reading and writing skills and examination of existing reading and writing standards provides a solid, empirical base for beginning a conversation with decision makers about: 1) whether students are performing at anticipated levels, 2) where they are with respect to regional and international norms, and 3) the degree to which existing standards need revision. The conversation should result in the definition of the broad reading and writing knowledge and skills all students should acquire, regardless of their position on the formal school learning continuum. In order to be operational, each standard needs to be accompanied by grade-specific benchmarks that describe, in *precise, measurable, and observable* terms, the tasks students at that level should be able to accomplish if they are performing at grade level. The standards and benchmarks, once validated, provide stakeholders at all levels of the system with a clear picture of the specific reading and writing tasks all learners should be able to demonstrate at specific points along their learning continuum and common reference points for measuring the extent to which learners are performing at expected levels.

Develop Teacher Professional Standards for
Literacy Instruction. The establishment of student
standards provides the basis for the critical
evaluation of existing teacher professional
standards for literacy instruction and their
revision. Once the specific skills and
competencies learners must be able to
demonstrate is clear, the next task is to identify
the instructional practices that are needed in the
classroom in order for students to develop these
skills.

The process of defining teacher instructional
professional standards for literacy engages decision makers in a rich discussion of the principles of
effective literacy instruction. The goal of this discussion is to identify those practices essential to creating
the type of learning environment that will ensure that students meet the benchmarks outlined in the
student standards.

When completed, the teacher instructional standards for literacy articulate, for all stakeholders, the
ministry's vision of effective literacy instructional practices. The teacher standards describe the
instructional practices that should be present in all reading and writing classrooms and at all grade
levels, regardless of the approach or program adopted by the teacher. The standards then become the
reference for the development of future teacher training programs, both pre-service and in-service, and
teacher instructional materials, as well as the basis for measuring changes in teacher practice over time.

### *Design and Specify the Program Details of Read Right Now*

While the RRN principles and core instructional approach are
expected to be addressed in any country's implementation, the
level of implementation in each core area (teacher capacity
development, resource development, family and community
engagement, and system and policy support) may vary. The
instructional specifications of the program may also change,
depending on the context. Because RRN can be implemented as a
supplement to existing instruction, only a minimum of 30 to 40
minutes of instructional time per day is required. A key outcome

> Read Right Now provides powerful
> ways to strengthen the "5 Ts" of
> effective literacy instruction: Time,
> Talk within a mother tongue-based
> multilingual education (MTB-MLE)
> context, Texts, Techniques for
> Teaching, and Test (Allington, 2002;
> Bender, 2012)

of collaborative planning sessions is an agreed-upon structure for the program that incorporates the
four core instructional activities (oral language development, explicit instruction in component skills,
purposeful reading, and authentic writing) in a predictable and repeatable routine. The selected routine
has implications for developing instructional resources—both print and technology-based.

Develop Instructional Support Resources

Adapting and integrating RRN into a country's context must entail a materials development process. Teacher professional development works hand in hand with materials development to ensure that all teachers have the instructional resources necessary to implement 30 to 40 minutes of a RRN program daily. These resources are developed in country by teams of local educators working with EDC's RRN staff and home office literacy experts. They may also draw on existing resources that fit the local context.

The RRN process recognizes that most Ministries of Education in developing countries have spent considerable technical and human resources producing and distributing reading and writing instructional materials, even if they are not always sufficient to guarantee that students develop all of the skills outlined in the student standards. Identifying how these materials can be repurposed to support various components of the RRN program validates this investment and ensures that the materials are used to their maximum potential. For this reason, all RRN materials development teams should conduct a comprehensive inventory of the printed resources available from the ministry or from local publishing houses for young readers in their target languages. They can then refer to this inventory and draw from it as appropriate as their materials development progresses.
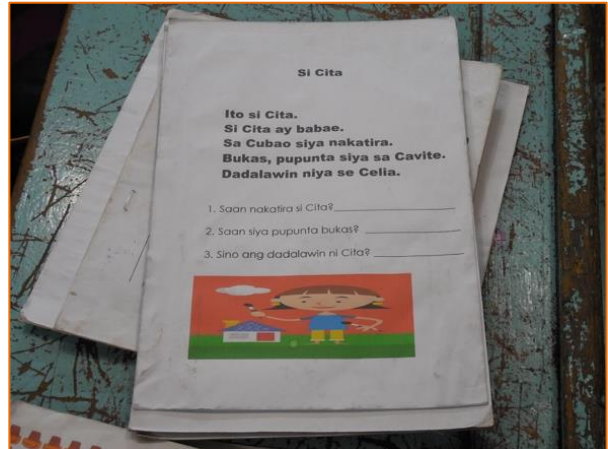
Determine the Grade-specific Scope and Sequence of the Curriculum. The first step in the development of instructional support materials is finalizing the scope and sequence of the curriculum that is aligned with student standards and that specifies, for each grade level:

- Component skills to be taught
- Appropriate developmental sequence for the introduction of the skills
- Types of reading and writing tasks children should be able to complete at specific points along the sequence

When completed, the scope and sequence of the curriculum is the roadmap for the path that students will travel to eventually achieve the end-of-grade or end-of-level standards in reading. The scope and sequence becomes the blueprint for the development of all the RRN instructional materials (audio/visual and print), ensuring that they fit together in a complete and systematic package.

Map Instructional Materials. With the standards and the scope and sequence in hand, RRN program development teams map out leveled reading material

that teachers and students will work with from the beginning to the end of the year in each grade, along with associated teacher manuals and assessment materials. Teams should try to use instructional materials developed by the ministry and/or other available resources whenever possible. To ensure that the reading material really does offer students the chance to practice what they most need to know, RRN teams may need to analyze the frequency and productivity of letters in the target language and develop sequences for introduction of words before attempting to determine which material or text should be used at a given point in the year.

Develop Read Right Now Grade-level Student Reading Materials, Teacher Manuals, and Assessment Tools.

Teachers' Manuals

RRN's daily lesson plans are presented in grade-specific teachers' manuals that detail the scope and sequence of reading and writing skills to support explicit teaching of those skills. Lesson plans provide teachers with clear and simple directions about the core instructional activities and strategies of RRN. Each lesson identifies skills from the student standards targeted in the lesson and the specific instructional materials necessary to implement the lesson. The manual guides teachers through the lesson, showing them which activities and instructional strategies to undertake and which materials to use. It also proposes follow-up activities that children can do at home with older siblings or other family or community members. In addition to the lesson-specific assessment tasks, the manual also describes simple performance tasks that teachers can administer at specified intervals to assess student mastery of skills taught. This formative assessment provides important information on the progress that students are making and can serve as an important input for teacher coaching and professional development.

The manual provides teachers with the scaffolding required to begin implementing the instructional practices and behaviors that are encouraged by RRN. Depending upon the initial analysis of teacher capacity and the extent to which literacy instruction is already being implemented in the country, teacher manuals may be more or less scripted to provide structure and guidance for instruction. At the beginning, teachers may closely follow the lessons detailed in the teachers' manual, implementing them as scripted. As teachers become more comfortable with the practices and behaviors, it is hoped that they will begin moving beyond the scripted lessons, using student responses and classroom resources to spontaneously enrich the base lessons provided in the manual.

Classroom Materials

Students in RRN classrooms need materials that include texts that align with the instructional objectives of the scope and sequence and that use identified words of the target language in a variety of ways and contexts. These texts must be carefully structured to be of increasing difficulty, and to balance between the use of words familiar to the students and words that are being newly introduced. Skills must be introduced in a developmentally appropriate sequence, and learners must be provided with texts that require them to use both the particular skills they have been studying and skills previously studied. Each RRN classroom should receive appropriate quantities of books for the children in the room. These texts are essential in the guided instruction that teachers provide on a daily basis. All materials should be pilot tested and formatively evaluated, to ensure that they are functioning at the desired levels, reflect the content appropriately, are engaging for students and easy for teachers to us, and are a good cultural fit for the teaching and learning context.

Decodables and Leveled Readers. RRN resources must include sufficient and appropriate texts to allow children to practice reading. Introductory decodable books are controlled texts that feature the phonics patterns and skills that children have already learned (along with a limited number of high-frequency function words), and allow them to practice automaticity using those skills. Leveled readers provide variety in text experience within an increasingly complex structure as students move up the grade ladder. Leveled readers become progressively more difficult and complex as students' repertoire of reading strategies grows and their reading vocabulary increases. Each text is keyed to a particular step along the scope and sequence of the curriculum. Texts are developed with appropriate font sizes, spacing, and illustrations, and where possible use rhyme for young and beginning readers. Texts also use culturally relevant themes and depict males and females in both traditional and nontraditional roles, enabling boys and girls to identify with the characters in the story. Both fiction and nonfiction texts should be developed, to support students' development of the range of processing and thinking skills that RRN promotes.

RRN teams have two options for developing leveled or decodable texts for their students: they can repurpose (with permission) texts available from the ministry or local publishers, or they can work with small teams of local personnel to create new texts that align with the scope and sequence and standards documents. The vast majority of RRN programs find that they need to adopt both strategies. Rarely will only pre-existing material allow students to practice all of the skills they need to become competent readers at an early age.

Illustrations are a key part of making reading content engaging and meaningful for the early reader, and RRN programs should be attentive to the quality and messaging provided by the illustrations in their texts. Having illustrators on site to work with writers, developing illustrations as the authors produce text allows for greater dialogue between illustrators and authors so that illustrations can be refined to convey the exact meaning intended by the author. The process of bringing professionals and nonprofessionals together helps with building capacity and enhancing local expertise in developing reading materials. It will be important to help developers ensure that both content and illustrations are gender sensitive, portraying male and female characters in both traditional and nontraditional roles.

Read-Aloud Books. RRN read-aloud books are designed to provide students with a variety of text types (fiction and nonfiction), on a variety of topics. The goal is not only to model reading for students and to develop their interest in reading, but also to build their oral vocabulary and comprehension skills. Texts for read-aloud books are grounded in the scope and sequence developed for RRN but also provide students with a richer exposure to a greater number of vocabulary words and structures than are present in their student readers. RRN read-aloud texts provide appropriate challenges, taking into account that students can understand more sophisticated text than they can read.

For read-aloud texts, RRN teams can modify or translate open source materials or create original texts, considering the standards, the scope and sequence, and the word list as materials are developed. If the team is working in a language where conventions are mutable and still in the progress of being codified, linguistic specialists should be consulted about spelling, syntax, or grammar.

Low-Cost/No-Cost Materials. In many resource-lean countries, there is no budget at the classroom or school level to purchase resources for teaching reading. RRN programs can work with groups of teachers and/or parents to develop a wide variety of supplementary teaching and learning materials at very low or no cost, including alphabet boards; letter, syllable, and word cards; tactile letters; bottle cap game sets; letter or word dice; literacy charts; matchbox literacy aids; pocket charts; word makers; small books; big books; and puppets. These materials can supplement the student readers and the read-aloud books and offer great opportunities for teachers to diversify their teaching strategies and to reinforce key component skills.
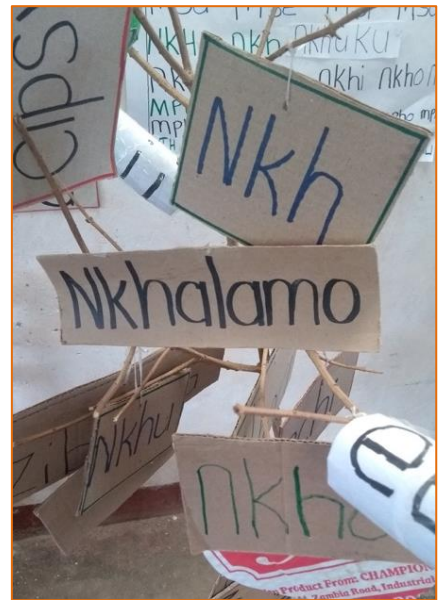
Traveling Suitcase. The RRN traveling suitcase is an inexpensive way to put a library of supplementary materials in the hands of students and community members and raise awareness of and interest in reading. Each suitcase contains supplementary reading material for all the primary grades and is shared between a small set of schools. Each school receives a suitcase and signs out the materials for a month to students, teachers, or community members. After that, the suitcase travels to the next school on the list. The process allows each school to have access to the materials for three months of the school year.

Diagnostic Student Assessments

RRN programs should provide both schools and parents with simple tools to measure the extent to which students have developed the skills targeted in the scope and sequence and the accompanying materials.

Formative Assessment. Periodic formative assessment by teachers provides a clear measure of where each student is with respect to expectations. Formative assessment tools should identify the skills being measured and present at least three results benchmarks, such as "mastery," "on track," or "struggling." Formative assessments are intended for individual use with each child assessed; there is, however, no expectation that all children be assessed on exactly the same day or week. The teacher can assess small groups of his/her students over the course of a month.

Reading tasks posed to the students can include: letter naming, letter-sound recognition, phoneme segmentation, decoding of nonsense or invented words, ability to comprehend (orally) texts read or told to them, ability to infer or deduce meanings of new words using contextual (picture, etc.) or semantic clues from the text, and/or the ability to "close" passages (choose the appropriate word to complete a sentences). In general, the RRN materials development team develops formative assessment materials in alignment with the scope and sequence of their RRN program. Teachers are encouraged to assess progress for each student at least three times per year.

Family Tracking Cards. These assessment cards, inspired by ASER, contain simple tasks (like letter recognition) that family members (mothers, fathers or older siblings, for example) with limited reading ability and little or no knowledge of the reading process can implement. The process brings family members into the learning-to-read process, allows them to monitor their child's progress, and reinforces the home–school connection. The parent assessment cards use icons to explain the tasks and to help parents interpret their child's results. They are designed to increase parent involvement and interest in their child's progress, and at the same time enable them to monitor whether their child is performing at expected levels.

Technology-based Support for RRN

RRN print materials can be augmented with ICT-based resources that include audio and video materials and literacy games, delivered via radio, CD/DVD, MP3, mobile phone, or on laptop computers or tablets. Interactive audio and video programs breathe life into the evidence-based instructional strategies presented during face-to-face teacher training sessions or outlined in scripted lessons, allowing teachers to experience firsthand what these strategies look like in a classroom and witness their impact on student learning. Games provide critical practice times for students as they use and develop their new literacy skills, and can generate important formative assessment data for teachers, as well. Mobile-

mediated support for teachers and students provides the extra boost that many need to stay engaged with new methods and practice new skills.

Interactive Audio Instruction (IAI). EDC has been using IAI for decades to provide students with carefully sequenced, graded instruction, moving them gradually from one skill—and one success—to the next, while also providing continuous professional development for their teachers. When used on a consistent basis as an element of RRN, the programs ensure that all students, urban and rural, girls as well as boys, and both struggling and accomplished learners, have equal exposure to a high-quality literacy program, one that introduces them to the full complement of the skills required to become autonomous readers and writers.

Each IAI lesson targets specific reading and writing skills and models for the teacher a complete lesson for teaching those skills, using the RRN instructional practices. IAI lessons also provide teachers with a consistent, in-class mentor or coach in the form of audio teachers who guide them through the implementation of new, evidence-based instructional practices. For several periods a week, teachers are able to experience, in a supportive and risk-free environment, new ways of teaching and learning. During the programs teachers learn through doing: The programs clearly explain and guide teachers step-by-step in carrying out good reading and writing instruction with their students. The programs act as scaffolding, providing the support and guidance teachers need to gradually integrate more effective literacy practices.

At the end of the program, the IAI teacher reviews the instructional strategies used, the specific skills addressed, and how these skills contribute to students' reading and writing development. As a result, classroom teachers with limited or no knowledge of how children learn to read and write, or no pre-service training in reading and writing instruction, develop a clear and informed understanding of the skills students need to develop to become autonomous readers and writers.

Audio Stories. Audio stories serve two purposes: They model for teachers how to conduct effective pre-reading, reading, and post-reading activities with students; and they provide students with a rich bank of audio material. The latter contributes to increasing students' oral comprehension and vocabulary skills, as well as interest in stories, and, by extension, in reading. This is particularly valuable in low-resource environments where students do not have access to written texts outside the classroom or to rich oral-language models.

The audio stories take many forms (including narratives, fictional or nonfictional texts, poems, and recitations) depending upon students' interest and developmental levels and the cultural context in which they are being deployed. They can be linked to the teacher's read-aloud texts (providing teachers with models of the texts in their print materials) or be stand-alone, supplementary stories.

Video Study. Video can be used to deliver teacher training in different ways, depending on the exact needs of the audience. Videos should feature as elements in a larger, human-driven training program and not as a stand-alone product, since teachers don't always have the skills to benefit from them without meaningful group discussion. A RRN project may use different formats at different points in a teacher's experience (pre-service vs. in-service) or at different points in the project's lifespan (introducing new concepts, consolidating or reviewing concepts).

Blended Learning. Blended Learning Modules (BLMs) are designed to integrate several types of technological and print support for pre-service or in-service teacher training. They can include video, animation of difficult to understand concepts, detailed facilitator and user guides, additional reading content, sample lesson plans, assessments, and worksheets. Blended learning can be used in groups, individually as a self-learning tool, or as a training tool by teacher trainers for pre-service or in-service or for coaches and mentors.

Tablet and Phone-based Apps. Tablet-based innovations allow a level of interactivity that paper does not, keeping learners more engaged. Tablets allow for reinforcement – for example, users can hear the exact pronunciation of letter sounds when they tap the letter. This allows tablets to supplement the instructional efforts of the teacher in concentrated, small group settings. Tablets allow for immediate feedback as students do not need to wait for the teacher to mark their work to learn their mistakes.

Tablets can also be shared among several children, and be reused over time, unlike paper based exercises. Tablets can also provide additional resources for teacher in-service training and continuous assessment and no additional costs beyond their student-use roles. RRN programs have used a variety of tablet-based and mobile-phone-based platforms and resources, including:

- eReaders. eReaders make it possible for teachers to store, manage, and move a large number of titles in a small package. It is simple and inexpensive to create eBooks out of locally developed reading resources, without printing costs.
- Stepping Stone. Stepping Stone is a simple, multimedia development package for the phone. It creates basic interactive slides with graphics, video, text, and sound to be viewed on phones. Stepping Stone "skill builder" activities can be adapted to supplement component reading skills that are targeted in the RRN category of explicit instruction activities. Stepping Stone can also

serve as a platform for teacher training and support resources on the phone, including games, materials delivery or bundling of IAI resources.

- <u>Vernacular</u>. Vernacular is a literacy activity engine that produces local lang uage reading activities. It houses pre-coded pedagogical approaches suitable to learning to read in any syllabic language. New language activity sets can be rapidly produced in the field without coding knowledge. Basic sound recording and graphic art skills are all that are required to load new local language sounds and vocabulary prompts into activity formats. Current Vernacular activity sets include 'Letters' (where children select the letter that matches the onset sound in the provided picture) 'Sounds' (where children view a letter prompt and then select a picture that begins with the matched sound) and 'Writing with Letters' (where students assemble words to match the picture of common vocabulary items).
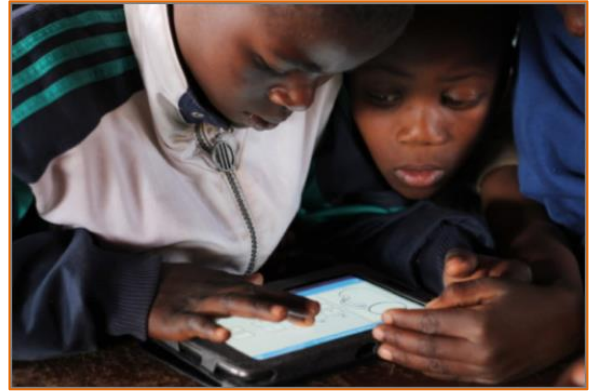
ICT support for RRN can greatly enhance the effectiveness of the program, but the costs and long-term sustainability of ICT interventions should be carefully considered. Careful planning as implementation begins helps ensure that the project resources will be maximized through the use of technology-based support that is aligned with other materials as well as the project goals.

Create Professional Development Resources

If teachers are to adopt the practices outlined in their country's teaching standards, they need a clear mental image of what those practices are, and they need to be convinced that the standards are important and will result in improved student learning. This is particularly true if data suggest that the practices outlined in the standards conflict with teachers' beliefs and assumptions about how children learn to read and write.

The RRN adaptation process often includes the development of professional development tools to help teachers and supervisors build a common understanding of best practices and why it is important to implement them in classrooms. Common RRN professional development tools include (1) a standards-based classroom observation protocol; (2) professional development training that is delivered face-to-face, through self-directed video modules, or a blended learning approach; (3) coaching and/or peer-to-peer support, and (4) a program of interactive audio instruction (IAI). The goal of these resources is to enable teachers to understand how children learn to read and write, and to practice independently the instructional techniques that help that learning occur. As with student learning, RRN teacher support is structured to provide a gradual release of responsibility, so that teachers become more confident in their ability to teach more effectively through degrees of professional development, coaching, and modeling.

Standards-Based Observation Protocol. Teachers (or schools or teacher clusters) can use the previously-discussed SCOPE-Literacy tool as a *self-evaluation and/or professional development planning tool.* Teachers can examine each dimension of practice and, based on the snapshot descriptions, situate themselves on the accompanying professional development continuum. The process can assist teachers in identifying their strengths in teaching reading and writing and in identifying areas needing attention. More important, the snapshots allow teachers to identify the changes they need to make to their daily practices in order to move to the next level. When a representative sample of teacher self-assessments are aggregated for a geographic region (a district or a province, for example), in-service trainers can identify the practices that teachers are comfortable with, as well as those that need to be addressed in future training sessions to help construct sessions that are meaningful and customized to teachers' specific needs and priorities.

Peers and teacher supervisors (principals, head teachers, curriculum supervisors, or ministry personnel) can also use the SCOPE-Literacy tool as a *classroom observation tool* and as a means for providing classroom teachers with targeted feedback on their literacy practices. Since the tool is criterion-referenced, each dimension of practice is accompanied by a clear description of observable teacher and student behaviors at five steps along the professional development continuum. Peers and teacher supervisors observe and note instructional practices and teacher and student behaviors during a lesson and then sit with the teacher to compare these observations with the descriptions provided in the snapshots. The process allows supervisors or peers to provide teachers with objective and specific feedback and to help them identify the next steps in their development. The SCOPE literacy tool can also be used as a research tool, to monitor changes in teachers' instructional behavior over time.

Professional Development Workshops and Training. Teachers, both preservice and inservice, need professional development in order to transform their classrooms into environments that align with th e best practices in reading and writing development. This professional development may be delivered face-to-face, through a mix of face-to-face training and self-directed video modules, or through a blended learning model incorporating a combination of formats. RRN programs use proposal and baseline data to determine the best

structure and opportunities for professional development, with a preference for continuous, embedded models that support teachers as they practice literacy instruction in their classrooms, rather than simply relying on periodic workshops to deliver new ideas and practices.

Coaching and Peer-to-Peer Support. EDC's field experience confirms research that indicates that sustained professional development through coaching and/or communities of practice makes a significant difference in teachers' ability to correctly implement best literacy practices and to do so consistently and confidently. Providing regular opportunities for teachers to receive feedback on their work, discuss their challenges and successes, and address with trusted peers and mentors the specific constraints and opportunities of their classrooms makes RRN real and increases the likelihood that it will be sustained. Where possible, RRN programs work to build the capacity of system personnel with teacher support responsibilities, providing coaching training and resources to help them do their jobs better. Where such personnel do not exist, RRN works with governments and schools to identify appropriate support mechanisms (peer groups, clusters, leadership meetings, etc.) and build them into strong scaffolds for teacher practices.

Video Examples of Good Literacy Practice for Teacher Professional Development. Regardless of the system of professional development delivery, video must be an essential component. This is particularly true if teachers (or their supervisors) have never seen or experienced the practices in question, or if their underlying beliefs and assumptions about how children learn to read do not support the types of evidence-based practices promoted in the standards and the RRN framework. Seeing the practices used successfully in local classrooms, with teachers like themselves, can help ensure that all teachers build a common understanding of the practices. It can also help convince teachers that they can implement these practices successfully in resource-learn environments. Seeing the practices in use through authentic local video—and witnessing firsthand what children can do as a result of those practices—can help shift teachers' beliefs about effective reading and writing instruction and provide them with the impetus they need to try the new practices in their classrooms.

The design phase of the RRN implementation process should include the development of video modules to introduce teacher supervisors and teachers to the effective reading and writing instructional practices outlined in the standards and used in the *RRN* instructional materials.

The video modules have multiple uses. Segments or portions of the videos can be used to enrich or supplement face-to-face training of teacher trainers or supervisors on effective reading and writing instructional practices. Teacher trainers or supervisors can use them in their entirety to offer comprehensive literacy training for teachers or student teachers for credentialing or upgrading

purposes. Teacher clusters or groups of teachers interested in learning more about effective literacy practices or about how to implement different components of the RRN program can learn from the modules. Coaching sessions can focus on particular elements of the videos as a springboard for discussion or check against a teacher's efforts in the classroom.

Interactive Audio Programs as Teacher Professional Development. Like the video modules, RRN IAI programs have the ability to provide teachers with a clear mental image of what the new instructional practices look and sound like in the classroom. As previously discussed, IAI programs guide teachers, step-by-step, through implementing instructional strategies and activities, providing them with an opportunity to experience firsthand successful use of the strategies and activities with students and with the resources available in the classroom. In this sense, they function as a "virtual coach" in the classroom, which is particularly valuable when system supports for teacher coaching are limited or not existent.

RRN IAI programs make a conscious effort to model the instructional strategies that foster thinking. IAI teachers ask students to solve problems, explain their thinking, propose potential solutions, and make and defend hypotheses. The goal is twofold: to engage students in rich learning situations and to model for teachers the types of questions that extend students' thinking. Because of the consistent and regular in-class support and scaffolding it provides to teachers, IAI is one of the more effective teacher mentoring programs, providing all teachers with the support and scaffolding they need to move beyond their traditional ways of teaching.

3.2 Phase 2: Wider Implementation of Read Right Now

Read Right Now is sometimes implemented as a pilot or at limited scope, but as a systemic intervention it is designed and intended to be scaled up to address broad literacy needs within a country. While a process of piloting, evaluation, and scaling up over several years is ideal, time constraints on implementation often demand a faster transition between design and scale-up, or a phased rollout of all grades at scale. Regardless of timeline, RRN rollout should include the following steps in some form:

- *Piloting,* in which teachers work with program designers to test the materials with students
- *Rigorous pilot evaluation* to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the pilot program on teachers' instructional practices, students' reading skills, and the students' literacy environment, and to identify necessary modifications

- *Full scale implementation and performance evaluation,* during which the outcomes and impact of the program are carefully assessed.

Grade-Level Pilots

Each grade level of the RRN program is piloted to ensure that it is both effective and relevant for the context in which it is to be used. Where possible, clusters of pilot schools and control schools should be randomly selected by the Ministry of Education according to a specific set of mutually agreed-upon criteria that represent the population to which the program will be scaled-up. In a phased approach, pilot schools should still be broadly representative of the contexts to which the program is extending and should allow for data collection that addresses the core instructional concerns of RRN.

Teachers and teacher supervisors in the pilot or first wave schools receive training in effective reading instructional practices and the effective use of RRN instructional materials. Teacher supervisors receive additional training on effective reading mentoring strategies, including how to use observational tools to provide teachers with targeted feedback on their reading instructional practices, how to maximize time for reading instruction, and how to involve parents and community members in supporting students' reading development.

During the piloting process, teachers are often invited to participate with project staff in developing additional materials (both student instructional and teacher training materials). In the case of the student instructional materials, the materials development process helps teachers to understand better the intended purpose and use of each resource. It also ensures that the instructional materials developed are both relevant and age-appropriate for the targeted learners. The involvement of teachers in the design process adds an action-research dimension to the pilot phase: teachers have a chance both to try out materials they helped develop and to gather data on their effectiveness in supporting students' reading abilities. They also learn more about making their teaching gender-friendly. In addition, the pilot phase serves to identify qualified and dedicated teachers and teacher supervisors to serve as peer mentors during the wider implementation phase, as well as to identify schools willing to serve as demonstration schools.

Evaluating the Pilot and Adjusting the Program

Host governments, funders, and project teams working on RRN want to be able to answer the question: "To what degree did my intervention contribute to educator change or learner progress?" Too often, this question cannot be answered because it is not clear whether changes are attributable to the intervention. During RRN project design, therefore, measures should be developed to mirror the intervention objectives and activities and determine the level of fidelity with which they are being implemented, to ensure that the quality and extent of the intervention are being measured and that evaluation data provide an accurate picture of the program. Procedures for regular collection of these data should be integrated into the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, and guidelines developed to ensure that they are being collected and reported consistently and efficiently.

RRN uses a range of empirical data to measure progress towards its target goals of improving students' reading abilities, teachers' instructional practices, and the richness of students' literacy learning environment. Evaluation of the success of the pilot in changing teacher practices and increasing student literacy rates (in addition to any other indicators of effect agreed to during the design phase) provide important feedback before rolling out at scale. Lessons learned from the fidelity of implementation data and the outcomes data as compared to baselines can be used to make adjustments to tools and approaches as needed to increase the likelihood of success when the program moves to many more schools in the full implementation phase.

Implementing Read Right Now at Scale and Evaluating Performance

RRN is intended to be a program that operates at national scale, or at least in a very large segment of the schools in a particular country. When the pilot results have been considered and any necessary adaptations made, the program can be rolled out across its full set of target schools.

In the wider implementation phase, the emphasis on learning from data remains. *RRN* programs should measure changes in students' reading skills, teachers' instructional practices, and the nature of the local literacy environment over the life of the project. The data collected at the beginning of year 1 on students' reading abilities, teachers' instructional practices, and the nature of the literacy environment serves as the baseline for comparing systemic progress over time.

In countries where implementation is phased in gradually, it may be possible to use randomly assigned treatment and control schools or treatment and comparison schools. In these cases, the performance evaluation becomes a second, larger-impact evaluation enabling ministry decision makers and other stakeholders to clearly see the relationship between *RRN* and changes in students' reading abilities and teachers' instructional practices. In countries where it is not possible to establish control and treatment schools due to an

accelerated implementation schedule, the ongoing performance evaluation is based on comparisons with the baseline results.

Ministry ownership of the evaluation process is crucial to the eventual institutionalization and sustainability of RRN. As with the design of the program, RRN evaluation involves ministry counterparts or their delegates in every step of the process, from the finalization and field testing of instruments, to the establishment of proportional and representative samples, to the collection and analysis of data. The focus on ownership and capacity building ensures that the results, and the RRN program as a whole, are viewed as Ministry of Education products and not just those of a funder or an external implementer.

3.3 Conclusion

Thank you for your interest in Read Right Now and your commitment to literacy as a key driver of development. With its focus on best practices in reading and writing instruction, as well as teacher training, materials development, supervision, and policy development, RRN provides opportunities for all children to read and write, and to become life-long readers with critical thinking and problem-solving competencies. Through Read Right Now, we can transform classrooms and contribute to helping all pupils achieve, become workforce ready, and benefit from improved life chances.

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