



Learning to read in multi-lingual contexts: best practices from the field

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Meet Amina



- **Age:** 6
- **Grade:** 1
- **School location:** rural
Katanga, DR Congo
- **Mother tongue:** Lunda
- **Familiar with:** Kiswahili (LOI)
- **No pre-primary**
- **Teacher speaks:** Sanga and
some Kiswahili
- **Teacher learned to read in:**
French

Question

How do we create a curriculum that is responsive to Amina given the following factors:

- the **diversity** of language backgrounds
- the **global push for mother tongue/national language** reading instruction
- The power of language choice in **post-conflict context**
- Perceptions that **international languages** like English (or French) are the language of business.

SO THAT...

Students learn to read and write proficiently?
(and *love* reading!)

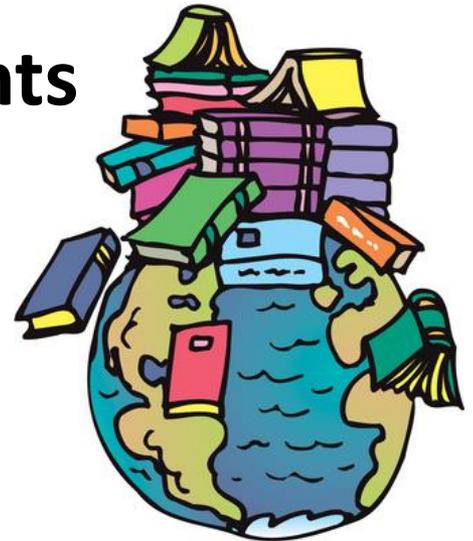
Best practices drawn from developing reading programs implemented worldwide

GET TO KNOW YOUR CONTEXT:

#1: Engage in a **socio-linguistic mapping**.

#2: Ensure language of instruction is **standardized**.

#3: Understand the language **elements** and **structure**.



Best practices drawn from developing reading programs implemented worldwide

DO SOMETHING WITH IT:

- # 4: Develop **context-sensitive** approach to instruction.
- # 5: Use information to develop a **realistic and systematic scope and sequence**.
- # 6: Develop language and context-appropriate **student texts**.
- # 7: Develop appealing, quality, and rich **reading materials**.
- # 8: **Address sensitivities** around language of instruction.

GET TO KNOW THE CONTEXT!

Best practice # 1: Engage in a socio-linguistic mapping

To capture...

- the **languages that students and teachers predominately speak.**
- whether **teachers can speak, read, and write** the language of instruction.
- **needs for distribution of resources and materials.**



Best practice # 2:

Ensure language of instruction is standardized

- **Choosing and standardizing orthographies:**
 1. Gather information.
 2. Identify/recommend orthography.
 3. Develop a scope and sequence per language.
 4. Adapt SynPhony or Primer Pro to languages.



Best practice # 3:

Understand the language elements and structure

- Understanding the language helps **determine how to most effectively to teach reading skills in this language.**

Transparent **or** opaque?

Swahili

skuli →

kusoma →

jufunza →

English

school

reading

learn

Agglutinative

Nilikwenda soko.

OR

non-agglutinative?

I went to the market.

DO SOMETHING WITH IT!

Best practice # 4:

Develop context-sensitive approach to instruction

- Determine the **approach to reading instruction** in a way that accounts for information gathered.
- Determine how to best prepare students **for reading in 2 (or more) languages.**



Best practice # 5:

Use information to develop a realistic and systematic scope and sequence

5	Writing for comprehension	Illustrate response to an "extension" question on the big book/read-aloud and label by completing a sentence stem.	Illustrate response to an "extension" question on the big book/read-aloud and label by completing a sentence stem.	Illustrate response to an "extension" question on the big book/read-aloud and label by completing a sentence stem.	Illustrate response to an "extension" question on the big book/read-aloud and label by completing a sentence stem.	Illustrate response to an "extension" question on the big book/read-aloud and label by writing own short sentence.	Illustrate response to an "extension" question on the big book/read-aloud and label by writing own short sentence.	Illustrate response to an "extension" question on the big book/read-aloud and label by writing own short sentence.	Illustrate response to an "extension" question on the big book/read-aloud and label by writing own short sentence.
	Reading comprehension	answer literal and inferential questions by using the illustrations and text clues	answer literal and inferential questions by using the illustrations and text clues	answer literal and inferential questions by using the illustrations and text clues	answer literal and inferential questions by using the illustrations and text clues	answer literal and inferential questions by using the illustrations and text clues	answer literal and inferential questions by using the illustrations and text clues	answer literal and inferential questions by using the illustrations and text clues	answer literal and inferential questions by using the illustrations and text clues
Decoding									
6	Decoding (phonics)	b, k, c + vowels + review of syllables already studied and short words (no more than 2 syllables)	d, t, p + vowels + review of syllables already studied and short words (no more than 2 syllables)	g, v, z + vowels + review of syllables already studied and short words (no more than 2 syllables)	r + vowels + review of syllables already studied and short words (no more than 2 syllables)	review of all syllables learned and word reading of 2 syllable words	review of all syllables learned and word reading of 2-3 syllable words	review of all syllables learned and word reading of 2-3 syllable words	review of all syllables learned and word reading of 2-3 syllable words
7	Writing and phonics	write dictated syllables from repertoire of syllables studied	write dictated words composed of syllables studied	write dictated words composed of syllables studied + substitute syllables that indicate number (ie. make words plural)	write dictated words composed of syllables studied + substitute syllables that indicate number (ie. make words plural)	write dictated sentences composed of word with syllables previously studied + substitute syllables that indicate number (ie. make words plural)	write dictated sentences composed of word with syllables previously studied + substitute syllables that indicate "pronoun"	write dictated sentences composed of word with syllables previously studied + substitute syllables that indicate "pronoun"	write dictated sentences composed of word with syllables previously studied + substitute syllables that indicate "pronoun"
8	Fluency	Reading of a decodable focused on letter-sound studied (level 1), focus on decoding	Reading of a decodable focused on letter-sound studied (level 1), focus on decoding	Reading of a decodable focused on letter-sound studied (level 1), focus on decoding	Reading of a decodable focused on letter-sound studied (level 1), focus on decoding	Reading of a level text focused on pattern-predictable text (level 2), focus on accuracy	Reading of a level text focused on pattern-predictable text (level 2), focus on accuracy	Reading of a level text focused on pattern-predictable text (level 2), focus on accuracy	Reading of a level text focused on pattern-predictable text (level 2), focus on accuracy

Best practice # 6: Develop language and context-appropriate student texts

- 1) Don't simply translate.
- 2) Use language elements to inform development.
- 3) Ensure themes are accessible and familiar.



Best practice # 7:

Develop appealing, quality, and vocabulary rich reading materials

- **Big books or read-alouds** relevant to student's culture and focus on building vocabulary.
- **Supplementary materials** (i.e. Leveled texts) following text leveling criteria.



Best practice # 8:

Address sensitivities around language of instruction

- **Address the negative perception** of local language of instruction in your activities at all levels:
 - Community
 - Teachers and school directors
 - School system (inspectors, coaches)

BIG TAKE-AWAY

These are **complex** issues

THEREFORE...

1. Get to know the **context**.
2. Use this **knowledge** to design your reading materials and program.

SO THAT...

BIG TAKE-AWAY



... Amina can learn to read and write proficiently and with *enthusiasm!*

Questions?



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References

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