

Report on the findings from a qualitative study: The Western Cape rollout of an emergent literacy project incorporating the Stellar Home Language programme

Researched and prepared for Wordworks by
Angela Schaffer Smith and Isabella Hugow

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Glossary of acronyms and usage

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
Cluster / Circuit	Several schools in a district which are grouped geographically ('Kring' in Afrikaans)
DBE	Department of Basic Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ELIT	Emergent Literacy project of the Western Cape Education Department in partnership with Wordworks and incorporating the STELLAR programme
Foundation Phase (FP)	The first phase in primary schooling which includes the reception year (Grade R) and grades 1 to 3. It is followed by the Intermediate Phase (grades 4 to 6).
GET	General Education and Training
Grade R	The reception or preschool grade
HOD	Head of Department
HSP	Home-School Partnership – a Wordworks programme
Independent ECD centre	A privately-owned or non-profit Early Childhood Development Centre which operates independently of the provincial primary schools
NPO	Non-profit organisation
PSP	Primary Science Programme – a Western Cape NPO
SLES	Specialised Learner and Educator Support
STELLAR	Strengthening Teaching of Early Language and Literacy in Grade R – a Wordworks programme
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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1. Introduction

In 2015 the Curriculum Directorate of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) partnered with Wordworks to take its Emergent Literacy Project (ELIT) to Grade R classrooms across the eight education districts of the Western Cape. ELIT incorporates the Strengthening Teaching of Early Language and Literacy in Grade R (STELLAR) programme which Wordworks developed, implemented and refined over several years to address the following challenges in South African Grade R classes:

- The lack of most teachers' early language and literacy awareness and teaching knowledge
- The paucity of context-appropriate, quality materials for structured home language development and emergent literacy activities
- Compliance with the guidelines of the national Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for Grade R.

In addition, STELLAR materials were published in the three official languages of the Western Cape viz. English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa and, as will be shown, are easily adapted for classes of learners with special needs.



Between May 2015 and September 2016, ELIT was rolled out across the Western Cape. Prior to this, the STELLAR programme had been implemented with cohorts of fewer than 140 Grade R teachers at a time. Because the ELIT rollout was 21 times greater, it required effective large-scale training and dissemination strategies. Therefore, Wordworks adopted a 'cascaded training with support' model to deliver the programme to 2973 of the Western Cape Grade R teachers.¹

The independent researchers were contracted by Wordworks to investigate the efficacy of the 'cascaded training with support' rollout from the perspective of the key actors (the WCED subject advisors and lead teachers) in that process. This report presents the findings from that qualitative study.

Two summaries providing useful context to the study findings, follow hereunder. The first summary lists the main roles and responsibilities adopted by each of the ELIT partner organisations in the large-scale rollout. This is followed by a flow chart which provides a step-by-step account of the ELIT training and implementation process as and when it happened.

¹ This is the number of Grade R teachers which Wordworks (July 2016) reported as registered recipients of the STELLAR materials and training. In effect, the unofficial number of teachers was probably larger. Two interviewees reported that several teachers who had not registered for ELIT had heard positive accounts of the project and simply arrived at cluster training sessions. The relevant lead teachers included these 'drop-ins' in the training and had subsequently provided them with photocopied materials.

1.1 Each partner's responsibilities for the ELIT rollout

Besides project staff time, both the WCED Curriculum Directorate and Wordworks contributed significant financial resources to the ELIT rollout in the form of services such as catering and venue hire, the provision of travel stipends as well as materials production, packaging and delivery. In addition, senior staff in both organisations were involved in shaping and directing the ELIT project. The extent of these contributions fell outside of the ambit of the district-based participant experiences. Therefore, these commitments by each partner were not explored in this study. Instead, the partners' main contributions to the rollout are listed below as training and dissemination tasks, without any monetary or organisational weighting.

a. The Wordworks' STELLAR team undertook the following tasks:

- Training the WCED ECD and Foundation Phase subject advisors as well as the NGO-based support advisors in the STELLAR programme
- Providing all STELLAR programme materials and supplementary training resources in prepared packs according to the number and language needs of districts
- Providing ongoing support in the form of planning, training back-up, advice and coaching to the WCED advisors and lead teachers.

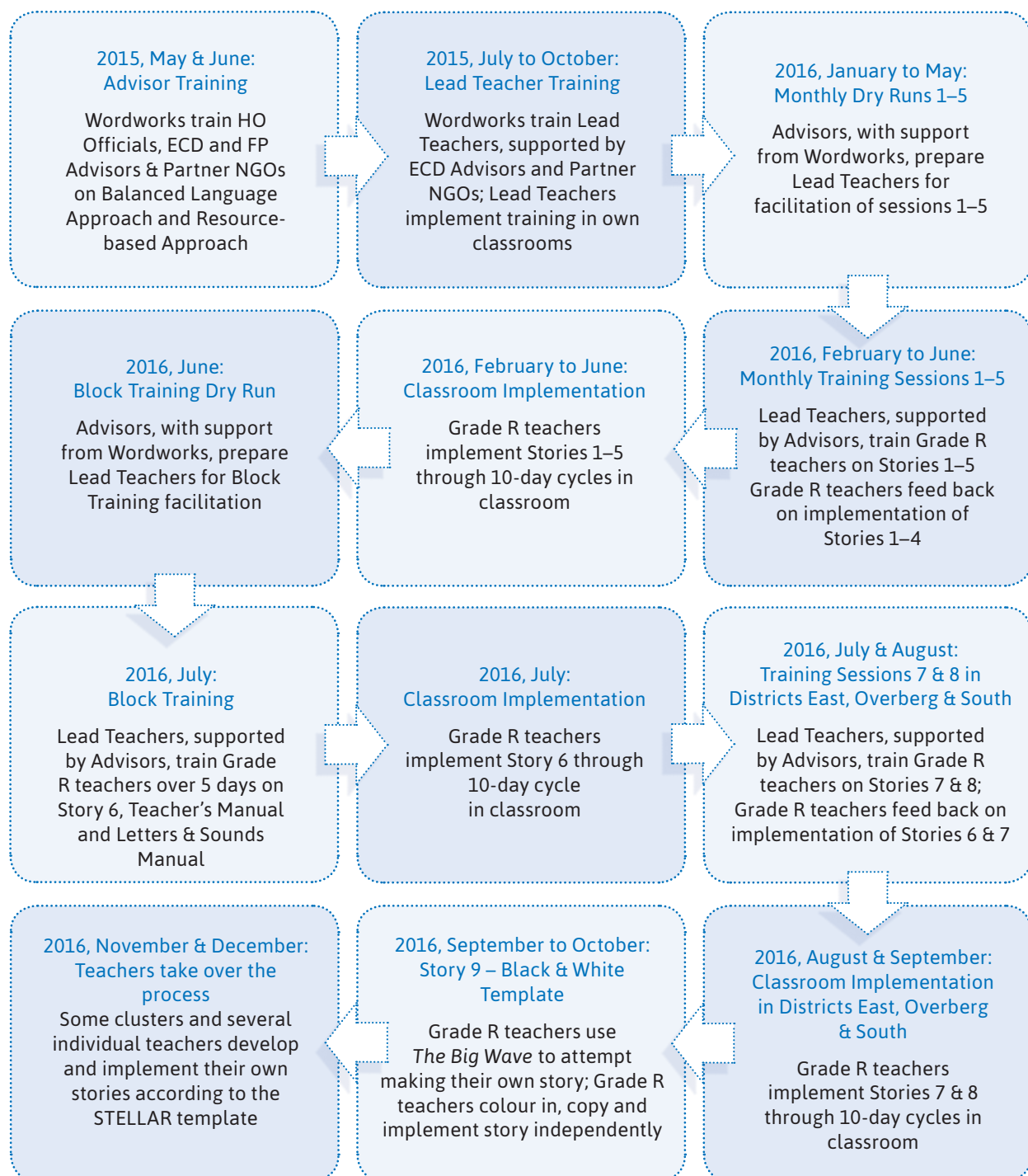
b. The WCED Curriculum Directorate's team of subject advisors undertook the following tasks:

- Selecting, training and supporting the lead teachers who, in turn, trained cohorts of their colleagues in circuits or geographic clusters
- Managing the district-level materials distribution and training logistics
- Providing support in the form of planning, co-training or training back-up for the lead teachers
- When possible, visiting Grade R classrooms to monitor teachers' progress as well as providing feedback and support.

In addition, each partner had to meet its own accountability and reporting imperatives. This, combined with a lack of coordinated planning at this level, led to the administration of different recording, monitoring and data gathering regimens across the districts.



1.2 The training and implementation process



1.3 Outline of this report

Section 2 which follows describes the research approach used for this study. Thereafter, sections 3 and 4 present the study findings according to the themes which emerged from the participants’ accounts. Section 3 deals with the different elements of the ‘cascaded training with support’ model. Section 4 draws attention to certain aspects of the STELLAR programme. Finally, section 5 presents the general research conclusions. It closes with a few questions for consideration by the ELIT partners.

2. The research

The qualitative research upon which this report is based was undertaken between late August and mid-December of 2016. Angela Schaffer, the lead researcher, was commissioned by Wordworks to provide a more comprehensive follow-up to her small 2015 investigation of the STELLAR programme.^{2,3} Because rich qualitative data was obtained from the earlier study, it was agreed that this larger, more representative study of the complete ELIT rollout should be similar in approach. The following sub-sections explain how the research for this study was conducted.

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this study was to deliver findings which illuminate the effectiveness of the ELIT ‘cascaded training with support’ dissemination model. By drawing on the key implementers’ accounts of the rollout,⁴ the research sought to provide insights for future dissemination, refinement or replication of the ELIT project or similar large-scale training interventions in state primary schooling.

Therefore, the findings presented in sections 3 and 4 of this report identify and discuss the following:

- Particularly successful or challenging aspects of the rollout process
- Factors which affected Grade R teachers’ desire and ability to implement the STELLAR programme in the classroom

- Aspects of the ELIT project which research participants regarded as most significant in respect of their impacts on Grade R teaching and learning
- Strategies which enabled or obstructed teachers’ sustained use of the STELLAR programme beyond the period of intensive training and support.

In short, this study was intended to inform Wordworks’ decision-making by analysing and providing practical and credible insights from the experiences of the key actors in the ELIT rollout.



² Schaffer, Angela (December 2015): ‘Findings from seven Participants’ Accounts of their experience on the Wordworks STELLAR Programme’.

³ Isabella Hugow, a research intern, provided valuable assistance in the form of secondary research, data analysis and report preparation.

⁴ As the project’s main trainers and disseminators, the subject advisors and lead teachers were the key implementers of the ELIT rollout.

2.2 Primary sources

A substantial set of qualitative research data (281 pages of transcription plus the researchers' notes) was obtained from 12 subject advisors' and 17 lead teachers' accounts of their experiences during the rollout of the ELIT project.

The selected advisors and lead teachers were distributed across the eight WCED education districts and the lead teachers were from rural, peri-urban and urban schools. Of the sample of 17 lead teachers:

- Eight taught in Afrikaans, four in English, two in isiXhosa and three in both Afrikaans and English.
- One of the lead teachers taught at a provincial school for learners with special needs, two taught at independent ECD centres one of which was supported by an NPO, one taught at an independent primary school and the remaining 13 taught at large WCED primary schools.
- Three of the lead teachers taught in schools or centres which catered to children from predominantly middle class families. The remainder catered to children from predominantly working class or very low income families.



2.3 Research approach

The researcher explained that she simply wanted participants to recount the stories of their involvement in the ELIT project in their own way and undertook to probe for explanations and elaboration as necessary. She also obtained participants' permission to record their accounts and promised to remove all names from the body of the research report.

Because self-report data is limited by the extent to which discussants feel comfortable talking about their own practices and professional challenges, the researcher strove to keep the process as informal and non-directive as possible. She encouraged interviewees to participate as co-thinkers and to accept that their perspectives of the ELIT rollout were being taken seriously.

Both Wordworks and the researchers were aware of the arguments against participant self-reporting because of its intrinsic bias. Nevertheless, this method was favoured because open-ended, qualitative research provides broad and rich data. In addition, the understanding that the subject advisor and lead teacher perceptions provide a reality which is vital for education change agents and the designers of programmatic interventions to understand, was persuasive.⁵

⁵ The lead researcher made a case for using research participants' accounts of their own experience in two earlier evaluation studies in education. Schaffer, Angela & Watters, Kathy (2010) 'Barriers and Bridges to Learner Understanding and Performance in Grade 11 English, Maths and Science'. This was a report on a study for the Zenex Foundation. Schaffer Smith, Angela (2015) 'Report on the Most Significant Change Study of the Dell Young Leaders Scholarship Program'. This was a report on a study for the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation.

This study showed that by having key agents in the ELIT rollout narrate their own experience, it was possible to both:

- Document a range of anticipated and unanticipated challenges which might have been ‘framed out’ by more structured research methods
- Identify and explore those aspects of the project rollout which the key agents in implementing the educational innovation regarded as essential for both take-up and sustained change.

2.4 Reliability

The reliability of the data collected during this study was checked by means of triangulation of sources.⁶ It was possible to triangulate every advisor and every lead teacher story.

Besides the sample of 29 primary accounts, the researchers had access to four members of

the Wordworks STELLAR team and a range of secondary sources. The latter included three independent evaluations, two comprehensive Wordworks reports as well as the Wordworks ELIT databases. The high levels of agreement across all the research sources, regardless of the research participants’ working contexts, suggest that the study findings are reliable.

The appendix to this report lists the secondary sources used during this study.

2.5 Ethics

As mentioned, research participants gave permission to have their words recorded and transcribed. They were guaranteed anonymity. The next section of this report presents the research findings according to the dominant themes which emerged from the data analysis.



⁶ Triangulation is used by qualitative researchers to ensure reliability by analysing the same research question from two or more perspectives.

3. Research findings on ELIT cascaded training with support

3.1. Project management and administration

As a WCED–NPO partnership, the ELIT project required effective and structured cooperation at three levels:

- a. [The WCED Curriculum Directorate and Wordworks STELLAR team](#) needed to establish effective structures to manage, monitor and account for the large-scale rollout and project expenditure.

Although this level of cooperation between the partners fell outside most research participants' experience, the partners' failure to align their reporting systems and procedures impacted negatively on the ELIT district advisors who became over-burdened by administration. This is demonstrated by the following two extracts from the advisors' stories. These are taken from one mainly rural and one mainly urban account and are representative of all advisors' opinions on this matter.



Admin was hectic. I couldn't leave the office for a month after the training and we have to report to Wordworks and WCED. And there is still some outstanding information, which I have to send to Wordworks

The drawback of the rollout was that there was a hell of a lot of admin. I had 16 clusters to do the admin for. I worked through many nights. The admin load was astronomical. It was required by WCED, not only by Wordworks: MOA, invoice, all in originals. So, I had to drive to fetch all of them. I should not be doing stuff like that. ... It has been the most difficult programme to run because of the sheer volume of work. But nothing that is ever worth it is easy.

There was consensus among advisors that there was much unnecessary project administration because of the duplication of administrative and monitoring tools resulting from the WCED and Wordworks' use of different reporting formats. One of the examples cited was that of the project partners requiring different types of training registers. This caused confusion and wasted time at the beginning of cluster sessions.

- b. [The partners' headquarters and the district offices](#) required clear administrative, logistical and communication links.

The district offices were the *de facto* project implementation centres and were responsible for materials distribution, training, data gathering and support to trainers and teachers. From the perspective of the research participants,

the second level of project administration and logistics worked reasonably well. Apart from two district managers, one who was said to be indifferent to the project and another who was reported to be opposed to the lead teacher-cluster training model, district managers were said to be supportive of the ELIT project.

The STELLAR team's effective communications with the districts, together with the care taken to package and deliver accurate numbers of cluster training materials to the district offices, were appreciated by all advisors. Only one district experienced difficulties with the careless storage of materials, which resulted in delays in their delivery to the teachers. This hitch was attributed to the actions of the above-mentioned district manager who had paid insufficient attention to the ELIT project.

Apart from two complaints about short notice from the WCED head office in announcing officials' visits to ELIT training sessions, none of the research participants complained about WCED head office to district communication.

c. [The WCED district management and curriculum teams needed to establish intra-district project administration, delivery and monitoring systems.](#)

All research accounts suggested that there had been limited intra-district teamwork and a lack of effective systems for delegating tasks such as materials distribution. Circuit managers were described as generally 'uninformed' and 'unhelpful' and apart from the helpful Wordworks STELLAR team and a few supportive Foundation Phase advisors, the Grade R advisors were left to manage and implement the district level rollout on their own.

It was unclear whether the Grade R advisors' low status within district offices explained their failure to obtain practical help from other district officials. The following similar comments by one urban and one rural advisor illustrate the difficulties they experienced in ensuring that all training clusters received materials and logistical support timeously:

If I had had an admin assistant I would have enjoyed the project much more. I was on holiday and had people phoning me asking about venues and things. I had to be at the cluster and block venues to make sure everyone was set up correctly ... I think it's important to do that ... It was just overwhelming ... I was driving up and down quite frantically.

We spend the whole time in the car. We have seven circuits. We drive six hours – you come back exhausted ...

Another rural Grade R advisor described her administrative burden as follows:

Paperwork [was a] nightmare – invoices, registers, reflection forms, registrations, [transport] payments ... All paperwork was solely my responsibility. Original registers had to be sent to head office for payments and then copies had to go back to circuits for the next cluster ...

She added that Wordworks' use of 'cluster' for grouped training within a circuit caused unnecessary confusion among teachers because the term is used in another sense by the WCED.



3.2 The WCED subject advisors

By all accounts, the STELLAR team's training of the WCED Grade R and Foundation Phase subject advisors was collegial in approach and generally appreciated. Although certain Foundation Phase advisors were less informed about the STELLAR programme than their Grade R colleagues, the four who participated in this study admired the structured training programme and materials.

These Foundation Phase advisors were particularly appreciative of the following aspects of the ELIT project:

- The way the training addressed the theory behind the STELLAR language development practices so that the Grade R teachers could understand why certain routines and learner activities were important.
- The way ELIT training stimulated the teachers' creativity and enthusiasm for teaching.
- The improvement in learner confidence and the progress in drawing, emergent reading and writing which was evident in ELIT classrooms.

Three Foundation Phase advisors reported that because of the positive impacts of ELIT, they had encouraged all Foundation Phase teachers to become familiar with the teaching approach. One of these advisors reported that she intended incorporating STELLAR into her Foundation Phase planning sessions with schools and two others suggested that Grade 1 teachers should use the STELLAR stories and materials. One of them added that she saw ELIT as an essential *'bridge for all Grade 1 learners'* to formal schooling because *'so many come to Grade 1 straight from homes where they get none of these building blocks'*.

Despite the Foundation Phase advisors' positivity about the ELIT rollout, it appeared that certain colleagues had not engaged meaningfully with the project. Two lead teachers complained that certain Foundation Phase advisors were late for meetings and had attended ELIT training sessions without bothering to understand the process. One also cited an advisor who had confused the lead teachers by introducing extraneous methods to the STELLAR programme. Another mentioned a Foundation Phase advisor who slept throughout the training sessions. In these instances, the Grade R and support advisors had kept the lead teacher training on track.

All ECD advisors were strong advocates for ELIT. Their accounts confirmed those of their Foundation Phase colleagues. In addition, several of them emphasised that the STELLAR programme was comprehensive and well thought out. One of these advisors encapsulated the general view by saying, *'They've thought of everything; whatever you need, it's there'*. Other outstanding features of ELIT rollout identified by the Grade R advisors are listed below.

- It built a strong bond between advisors and lead teachers. Five Grade R advisors alluded to the value of having this community of practice.
- It allowed Grade R advisors to show their expertise to colleagues who usually treated them as followers.
- ELIT presented the first opportunity for Grade R advisors to feel accepted as full members of the curriculum team. An advisor explained: *'I had an opportunity to "be the specialist" amongst the Foundation Phase advisors who are usually the leaders ...'*

- The STELLAR approach to teaching letters and sounds proved to be enlightening and useful. This aspect of the training had been particularly challenging for the teachers with limited foundational knowledge in teaching and learning. Nevertheless, several Grade R advisors regarded it as a ‘breakthrough’ aspect of the programme.

A few advisors allowed some of their teacher clusters longer than ten days to complete a STELLAR implementation cycle. One of these reported that she had been keen on retaining some of her own approaches to Grade R teaching. She was especially committed to the use of Persona Dolls during STELLAR implementation. The STELLAR team leader assured her and her WCED colleagues that although the programme was carefully structured and should follow the manual, trainers needed to be comfortable with what they were conveying and that they should give their ‘own flavour’ to their work with the lead teachers.

It was interesting to note that the abovementioned advisor’s district was the only one in which a lead teacher reported confusion about implementing the programme because ‘the training didn’t follow the manual’. The STELLAR team’s ongoing support in the form of training back-up and advice to lead teachers helped somewhat in this respect, but they were cognisant of the need to show restraint and consideration for the advisors’ authority.

3.3 Lead teachers

There was unanimity among the research participants that the use of lead teachers had been pivotal to the success of the rollout.

An ECD advisor explained:

... they made it happen; put in such effort; lots of packing and time; they are the lifeguards who keep the professional network going; the sharing of good practice ...



a. Lead teacher selection

The WCED districts lacked the staff to deliver the STELLAR programme’s interactive, practical and context-appropriate teacher training and support to all Grade R teachers. Therefore, the appointment of lead teachers was essential to cascade the programme to cohorts of their colleagues. The alternative would have been large impersonal lectures which, for a programme as innovative and comprehensive as STELLAR, would have resulted in unpredictable teacher take-up and classroom implementation.

The ELIT rollout required a great deal of extra-mural time and effort from the lead teachers – both as peer trainers and as teacher mentors. There was no provision for any financial compensation to lead teachers and many of them reported having spent their own money on developing additional resources. For example, several lead teachers found new stories to share with their colleagues and they assisted the weaker Grade R teachers by developing and copying teacher packs modelled on those of the STELLAR programme.

Therefore, most subject advisors took the identification of suitable lead teachers very seriously. They used a variety of selection criteria. These included attributes such as 'vibrancy', 'passion and energy', 'experience', 'qualifications' and 'younger lead teachers who are still willing to go the extra mile'. In addition, several advisors said that the lead teacher–cluster model had already become well established in their districts. These advisors reported low lead teacher drop-out numbers and all emphasised their support for the lead teacher–cluster model.

Six advisors, including four from mainly rural districts, were particularly effusive in their praise for their lead teachers. They used phrases such as 'cream of the crop' to describe their lead teachers and added that the lead teachers had 'taken ownership and run with the project'. One of these women explained:

I'm crazy about the model. When I experienced this model in the past I saw how well it worked, since you need people with passion driving the project from the group to make it sustainable ...

Inevitably certain lead teacher selections proved disappointing. Two advisors had reservations about the selections made by a few of their colleagues who had not known the Grade R teachers well enough to make informed choices. An extract from one of these accounts illustrates this frustration:

In hindsight, some of the lead teachers were disappointing. All advisors could nominate lead teachers. Some [lead teachers] really battled to grasp things so I had to make arrangements to visit them personally or to pair them with stronger lead teachers ...

This comment refers to the WCED management's decision to encourage all districts to require the lead teachers to work in pairs. This proved to be effective provided it was not undertaken in a mechanical manner. For example, an advisor said:

We had drop outs [and] were then four teachers short. Because head office just looked at x amount of teachers and divided that by 30 because they wanted two teachers per group of 30. But that didn't work out because in [a township area] there are lots of teachers and less in the suburbs. So, some lead teachers trained alone and also had to do block alone ...

A recently appointed advisor recounted that she had struggled to select and retain her lead teachers. She explained that only half of her selections had proved successful. The following extract from her story shows how her remaining lead teachers adapted to this challenge:

People have personal problems – they have accidents and bereavements ... [A]fter choosing them, the journey was a challenge. The ones that I had put all my hopes on disappointed me and others really surprised me and shone ... but when others dropped out those that remained stepped up to the plate. [Emphasis added]

The next sub-section, which deals with the lead teachers' own accounts of the ELIT rollout, shows that most lead teachers grasped the opportunity to take responsibility for both their own professional development and that of their colleagues.



b. The lead teacher experience

In districts where the lead teacher–cluster model was already established, several lead teachers were experienced trainers who adapted to their ELIT responsibilities with relative ease. These lead teachers spoke enthusiastically about improving their own knowledge and practice as well as of the rewards of working in a team and ‘bonding’ with other teachers. They also mentioned that the ELIT rollout had proved more time-consuming and more draining on their personal finances than they had expected. Two typical comments follow:

When I think about the amount of work we put in with no pay, it’s ridiculous, but worth it in the end.

I had two clusters and it was a lot of petrol, I would have liked some transport money ...

In contrast, there were five experienced and enthusiastic lead teachers who had been happy to spend their own money to add illustrative classroom models to enhance their colleagues’ enjoyment of their training sessions. The oldest of these teachers explained how she felt:

I’m doing it to give back. I’ve learnt so much. It is my privilege to help someone learn this programme ...



The first-time lead teachers reported more mixed experiences. They reported that they felt a great deal of pressure to consistently provide interesting, good quality training to ensure consistent training attendance by the teachers in their clusters.

Four of them embraced their roles with enthusiasm and reported that the project had renewed their enthusiasm for teaching. A younger woman said that it ‘sharpened’ her own knowledge and teaching, while a colleague added that ELIT had been the ideal project on which to learn to train. Another ‘new’ lead teacher summed up her experience as a trainer as follows:

The training went well. We were humble. It was hard work – even the model Cs fell in. We ran through the programme and gave out the packs – each time it became more relaxed and positive. We set up the staff room and wore green dresses [For a cycle on a story called ‘The Green Dress’].

Three lead teachers had been reluctant to train adults because they regarded themselves as child educators. All three were said to be outstanding trainers who understood the value of practical demonstrations and hands-on learning for their colleagues.

Certain first-time lead teachers had to deal with petty jealousy and undermining comments from colleagues who perceived themselves to be better qualified and/or more experienced. In addition, many of their Grade R teachers were resistant to more after-school training after the WCED training in CAPS, and being expected to make changes to their habitual classroom practices.

The following advisor account explains what some of the lead teachers went through in her district:

Clusters began with a negative atmosphere with many lead teachers bearing the brunt of the bad attitudes of the teachers in their groups. After an advisor stepped in, some, but not all, behaviour improved. When cluster three arrived and teachers were still arriving late and being disrespectful, I asked a head office colleague to attend the cluster. She addressed them and their behaviour changed ...

Over half of the lead teachers (9) recounted how it had taken some time for them to grasp 'the big picture' of the ELIT rollout. They had not anticipated the extent of the commitment required of them. Several of their accounts suggested that they had expected to help run a few workshops, whereas their work had doubled. Two lead teacher comments illustrate this:

I didn't know what a responsibility it would be. We under-estimated how much pressure we would be put under by the teachers we were training and by ourselves ...

They did explain to us but we took it with a sense of lightness. We thought it would just be workshops every so often but we didn't absorb how much preparation we would need to do in-between each [training session].

In every instance the lead teachers reported that they overcame their initial concerns because of the support of their advisors and certain members of the STELLAR team. A few of them attributed the provision of pre-training preparation (such as being shown how the STELLAR and CAPS manuals meshed, together with preparation for dealing with large groups

and practice in public speaking) to their growth in confidence.

Every lead teacher in the research sample said that with hindsight, they would volunteer to be a lead teacher again. They expressed pride in their own professional growth and reported that the experience had rekindled their enthusiasm and creativity in the classroom. Five teachers (almost a third of them) reported that based on their ELIT experience, they had begun to study for their B Ed degrees.

An additional project impact on the lead teachers was the recognition they received within their schools and districts. Several of them were approached by Foundation Phase colleagues for assistance and advice, and at one of their schools, the principal was so impressed by the lead teachers' influence on the learners, that he arranged to have the Grade R classrooms refurbished. At the time of the research visit, a different lead teacher who had been nominated by her principal was preparing to travel to Pretoria for a national teaching award. Another was promoted to the position of Grade R subject advisor, two were promoted to Grade 3 teaching posts and another was employed as a teacher-trainer by an NPO.



3.4 Dry runs

The lead teachers found that they were able to express their concerns and overcome any confusion during the practical training-the-trainers sessions, commonly referred to as 'dry runs'. During these sessions, advisors used the STELLAR content and modelled the approach to be adopted during the clustered teacher training. An advisor described these sessions as follows:

... a period of experimentation and getting experience in the programme. They were so enthusiastic to come back and get more knowledge, then to go back and see how it works in the classroom ...



Most lead teachers depended on this preparation and reassurance that they could run effective cluster sessions. For example, a skilled lead teacher said,

I'm shy. I didn't want to train. It was a lot of prep but the dry runs helped a lot and so did doing the training in pairs.

Several other lead teachers were emphatic that the training worked well and there had been few missteps 'because of the dry runs'. Only two lead teachers and one advisor reported that the 'dry runs' became too repetitive. These lead teachers would have preferred more problem-solving discussions.

The 'dry runs' were an important feature of the ELIT cascaded training model because these practice sessions addressed the problem with cascaded training known as 'broken telephones'. This term refers to the way mid-level trainers frequently misunderstand and miscommunicate important principles and methods which are, therefore, totally distorted by the time they reach the teachers in their classrooms.

3.5 Cluster training by lead teachers

As the previous sections have demonstrated, there was consensus among research participants that despite some uneven start ups, the cluster training, by lead teachers had been a success. Both the lead teachers and the advisors spoke of the advantages of professional peer training during which the trainers literally and metaphorically 'spoke the same language' as the teachers in their clusters. An advisor explained:

... lead teachers are in the classrooms and know [the challenges] and made the most amazing apparatus to demonstrate the concepts ... original materials!

An isiXhosa-speaking lead teacher reported that training offered by WCED officials was often delivered in English or Afrikaans. She explained:

[Because I am isiXhosa-speaking, my colleagues] felt more comfortable to express themselves than they would have if they had to ask questions and try to understand in their second language. This made them more relaxed.

In addition, the lead teachers knew that they needed to earn their colleagues' respect and many of them spoke of striving to maintain a collegial approach and of doing extra preparation for their sessions so that they could

turn their training venues into exciting simulated classrooms.

Most lead teachers worked in pairs. This kept the cohorts of Grade R teachers to a manageable size and provided cover if one of the trainers was absent. These lead teachers appreciated having a co-planner and said that the arrangement allowed them to draw on their respective strengths. In a few districts, factors such as lead teacher capacity, language and distance between schools, resulted in larger groups of up to 60 Grade R teachers meeting with four lead teachers. In these instances, administration took longer and the intended interactive training was replaced by lecture-demonstrations. This arrangement resulted in unwieldy groupwork and enabled certain lead teachers and trainees to disengage which, in turn, undermined the development of a cohesive professional community.

In one instance, a lead teacher reported that teachers who had not signed up for ELIT training began to join her cluster because *'they heard good things from their friends'*. This caused some logistical problems but the latecomers were not turned away.

The following were some of the challenges that lead teachers mentioned in their accounts:



a. Initial jealousy from colleagues

An experienced lead teacher referred to the challenge of petty jealousy from colleagues. She said:

In the beginning, there was jealousy and criticism, but we were of a different calibre. They respected me because of my age and experience. Lead teachers became mentors at the end of the day.

It should be noted that some of the younger lead teachers were equally successful at mentoring their peers. They spoke of overcoming many of their older peers' resistance to after-hours training and to changing their habitual classroom practices.

b. Teachers were tired in the afternoon

Four lead teachers reported that the most difficult aspect of afternoon cluster sessions had been overcoming the teachers' tiredness.

c. Training fatigue

Three accounts mentioned that the teachers had recently undergone CAPS and/or the 100 Schools Project training and were resistant to more training.

d. Many teachers were reluctant readers

In certain districts, many Grade R teachers were said to be either reluctant or poor readers. This resulted in their failure to read and follow the STELLAR manuals and necessitated more spoon-feeding than the lead teachers had intended.

e. Resistance to structure

Most Grade R teachers were unaccustomed to a structured approach to teaching. Few had thought beyond having a daily programme.

Therefore, it took some time for the lead teachers to convince their colleagues of the benefits of the very structured, ten-day STELLAR cycle. As a lead teacher said:

The children did it for us. When they saw their progress and enjoyment, even the slow and silent ones, they were convinced.

f. Setting up training venues

A few of the lead teachers had to use more than one mode of public transport to reach their training venues. This was awkward because they carried bulky teaching aids and had limited set-up time before the arrival of their trainees. Even those who held cluster sessions at their own schools spoke of the rush to set up their venues in time.

g. Lack of financial assistance

While all lead teachers accepted the lack of any financial compensation for their time and efforts, they acknowledged that they had to use some of their own funds for special demonstration resources or photocopying.

The advisors were particularly bothered by the fact that high school teachers who engaged in training, were paid for their time while the lead teachers received nothing from the WCED. Wordworks tried to compensate for this by showing the organisation's appreciation through gestures such as resources for training and for their own classroom use, 'Thank You' cards and invitations to a spa day, but these did not address the advisors' real concerns.

Finally, two of the lead teachers complained about being undermined by the way certain WCED officials, who were not known to them, had simply arrived at certain training sessions and

observed and/or interrupted their training.

There was general agreement that by the third quarter of 2016, the lead teachers were the key members of active Grade R teaching communities which shared resources and ideas, brainstormed problems and contributed to ongoing WhatsApp groups. Inevitably some clusters functioned better and more cohesively than others, but all advisors reported that the use of lead teachers to cascade ELIT training had been successful.

3.6 Block training

After five cycles of using the story-based resources, the ELIT teachers in each district were invited to attend a week of centralised training presented by their district advisors and lead teachers with support from a member of the STELLAR team. This was known as 'block training' and was held at various venues during the last week of the mid-year vacation.⁷



⁷ The lead teachers from one geographically-vast district spoke about the benefits of residential block training. However, in most districts, the teachers travelled to and from their training venues each day.

Most teachers, especially those who had already attended a week of CAPS top-up training, were understandably reluctant to spend the last five days of their vacation in block training. Nevertheless, this proved to be the highlight of the rollout for the Grade R advisors and all but one lead teacher. The following advisor comment summed up the general view:

Block training was a highlight ... first time ever ... all [District x] Grade R teachers together for the week ... They built friendships, support groups, and shared best practices.

The advisors went to great lengths to ensure that the block training was well organised and enjoyable, and the lead teachers included creative and expressive sessions, such as puppet-making and dancing, in the programme. Six lead teachers and four advisors emphasised the importance of this training for the following reasons:

- Many Grade R teachers finally grasped the general ELIT principles and purpose. For example, a lead teacher said:

They finally got it! Before, they weren't sure what the crux of the training was about, but after the block training, it all made sense to them. Their attitude at block was negative at first, 'duress', but they realised the value of it and they really enjoyed it ...

- Several accounts of block training mentioned how it was well-timed because the teachers had had time to attempt five cycles of story-based teaching with their learners. Thus, they could identify those areas of confusion which they needed to address during the training sessions or with colleagues during breaks. The week's training also enabled the teachers to

grasp the rationale for many of the learner activities which they had been reluctant to try. The *STELLAR Letters and sounds manual* was one area in which teachers were said to have needed this extra guidance.

- The lead teachers received the appreciation and recognition which they deserved. Several advisors mentioned how much the teachers had appreciated the work of the lead teachers during the training. For example, an advisor reported:

... lead teachers were given standing ovation when they were being thanked on stage at the end of the block training, [and] by the end of the block training, the feedback forms from the teachers showed a recognition of the lead teachers for their hard work and their expertise ...

- The teachers could share and appreciate the practical advice they received during the training. An experienced lead teacher explained:

At block training we were able to actually showcase examples on tables.

- The teachers developed supportive 'communities of practice'. For example, one lead teacher and one advisor stressed this advantage in similar ways. The lead teacher reported:

They were positive and offered support as a group; [they] supported each other in case of mistakes ...

- The advisor, from a different district, who suggested that the sharing of ideas and concerns during tea and meal breaks had greatly facilitated the development of group cohesiveness, added:

Block was a highlight because of all teachers together: sharing, friendships, support ...

It was interesting to note that one of the more reluctant lead teachers who reported that she had sometimes struggled to gain the acceptance of her teachers, was most effusive about her experience at this training. She described it as follows:

[It was] one of the most uplifting experiences of my life. I thought it was wonderful in the last week of holiday because they wanted to go back to class. It was a burden during winter and holidays, but there was a very positive response regardless – deep bonding for Afrikaans teachers scattered in the suburbs. They felt they weren't alone [and] cried on the Friday.



As mentioned, only one lead teacher was negative about block training and her concerns were about the following:

- The training venue: she described this as 'way out of town' which necessitated taxi hire for lead teachers who carried training resources and very early starts for those teachers who relied on public transport.
- The allocation of training rooms to different language groups: she reported that the small

group of isiXhosa-speaking teachers had been offended by having been allocated a small inferior training room at the back of the venue and far from the other groups' rooms. This divisive issue was addressed by the advisors during the week.

- Training overload during the holidays: as has been mentioned, several Grade R teachers who were from schools on other WCED projects, spent two-thirds of their holiday at official training.

Several lead teachers would have preferred a four-day block of training so that teachers had a long weekend free to rest and prepare for the third term.

As far as the advisors were concerned, the only common complaint was about principals who told their teachers that they need not attend block training. In most instances, these were the principals of formerly model-C schools whose Grade R teachers felt that they had little to learn from the training.

3.7 Support

a. Support from the STELLAR team

There was general agreement among advisors and lead teachers that they received excellent training support from the STELLAR team.

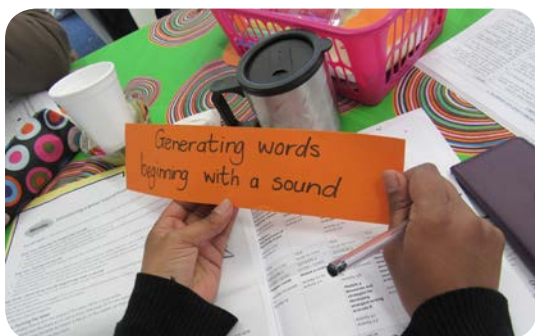
Two rural advisors described the STELLAR coordinator's approach to supporting their work on ELIT as 'just perfect' because she 'really listened', was knowledgeable and made herself available to help without undermining their authority with the teachers. A different advisor reported on a meeting of the WCED Curriculum Strengthening Forum.

She said:

Ninety-nine percent of the district(s) spoke about the wonderful support we've had from Wordworks. When we had serious issues, we could call [the STELLAR coordinator] and she would speak to the groups.

Several lead teachers referred to using WhatsApp to contact the STELLAR coordinator and one of these teachers reported that she 'could call on [another member of the STELLAR team] any time'. It appeared that the lead teachers had been most likely to contact members of the STELLAR team under the following circumstances:

- When they were uncertain about how to present some aspect of the STELLAR implementation cycle
- When they thought that they had been given instructions by a WCED official which contradicted what was presented in the STELLAR manual
- When they had trouble convincing the teachers in their clusters to try certain aspects of the programme
- When teachers in their clusters failed to grasp that the STELLAR programme was consistent with the CAPS requirements.



b. Support from WCED advisors and fellow lead teachers

An important feature of the ELIT rollout was the way in which it brought the Grade R (and

certain Foundation Phase) advisors and the lead teachers together. Fourteen of the lead teachers' stories referred to the constant encouragement and support they received from these advisors. Phrases such as 'she was wonderful', '[she] is special and walks the extra mile – gave us a lot of time' and 'they were always very helpful' recurred throughout these accounts. A lead teacher explained that this support from district officials both gave her confidence and made her feel appreciated.

In addition to the support they received from the WCED advisors, the lead teachers supported each other. They reported that they regularly used Facebook and WhatsApp to keep in contact, to share training ideas and to advise each other when they encountered obstacles.

c. Support from the WCED head office

Different head office officials visited certain of the lead teachers' training sessions. Certain advisors gave adequate notice of these visits and fitted in well during the training. In these instances, the two advisors and three lead teachers reported that they had enjoyed the recognition and gesture of support from these senior officials.

In contrast, five advisors and four lead teachers complained that the officials' visits had been insensitively handled and/or poorly timed. The slightly shortened quotations which follow illustrate how these research participants felt. An advisor said:

Head office came to monitor two of my most nervous lead teachers in their first cluster. I was furious. In hindsight, I shouldn't have allowed it – I should have been more bold ... but by the end of it those two [lead teachers] were so confident and

had won the respect of their colleagues ... There was a lot of pressure from head office. I wished we left head office out of this. I know a provincial rollout is intense, but ... they want everything done a certain way; but you can't be so rigid when the scale is so big. It's hard to move. We were given a daily programme exemplar by head office and every district re-did theirs because it wasn't working and head office were not pleased that the bureaucracy was re-arranged.

An advisor from another district explained that she had to cope with insensitive comments about the ELIT rollout from senior officials.

A lead teacher recounted her experience:

At the training, everything has been planned and set up and then she just comes in there and makes a deviation which throws out the whole thing. She does that and it undermines the trainers. On the hottest day in February [x, an advisor] phoned me in a tizzy to say that a woman from head office was coming to training that afternoon. ... I was a bit anxious but I thought that it wasn't a problem because everything was on track. And then she arrived – sour face

who really spoilt everything. She bullied x in front of the teachers and that upset me. If I said something she didn't like, she'd make it obvious and then she'd write it down. She said we shouldn't introduce the puppet characters first, or even show pictures, so that the children were forced to use their imagination. I checked and she's wrong. But I felt like I was letting x down because she kept on whispering to her ... you feel as if they're checking up on you. It changes the atmosphere when there are officials pitching up out of the blue.

d. Classroom monitoring and support

It was clear that in most districts, the ECD and Foundation Phase advisors would have liked to have more time for classroom monitoring and support. Most advisors' accounts suggested that the experience of witnessing the learners' enthusiastic engagement with the STELLAR programme had been a particularly rewarding aspect of the ELIT rollout. As mentioned, the Foundation Phase advisors' classroom observations convinced them of the need to introduce the STELLAR principles and materials to all Foundation Phase teachers.



4. The STELLAR programme and materials

This study was primarily concerned with the ELIT rollout. Nevertheless, many of the participant accounts referred to the outstanding features of the STELLAR programme and their impact on learning and teaching in Grade R classrooms.

It has already been shown that there was general participant admiration for the quality of the programme materials, for the comprehensiveness of the programme's language development activities, and for the programme's sound learning and teaching principles.

This section of the report lists the other aspects of the STELLAR programme which were cited most frequently in the advisor and lead teacher research accounts.

4.1 Research participant accounts of the STELLAR programme and materials

a. Children's positive responses to the programme materials and activities

All 12 advisors and 14 lead teachers mentioned how well the children responded to all aspects of the programme. The following slightly shortened quotations represent the consensus view:

The teachers are absolutely overwhelmed with the results that they received from the children. How quickly the children grasped the ideas of what they were busy with, the routine ... [The children] were starting to set out in the classroom, that's how eager the children were ... they were actually waiting for the language time in the classroom.

Children are now keeping the teachers on their toes because they know ... the routine, they know what needs to happen next. And the same with the activities: the children knew more or less what to expect so there was less of instructions now, because the children knew exactly what to do, it's just a different topic that they were addressing ...

The research participants gave a variety of examples of what the children liked most about the programme. In short, the children liked all the activities and most children loved the little books, the role plays and the puppets.



Three lead teachers reported that the only activity which learners resisted at first was 'Listen-and-do'. They added that this resistance was overcome with practice and most of the learners progressed happily to 'Read-and-do'. One of these lead teachers suggested that certain teachers in her cluster disliked some of the non-literal 'Listen-and-do' instructions and chose to bypass this activity.

b. Learners particularly enjoy working with the stories



After some initial skepticism about the programme's use of the same story for two weeks, two advisors and many lead teachers revised their first impressions. The following shortened quotation sums up the general view:

I think the programme itself is wonderful. The way it is presented in the story and the story is the golden thread, I think it's excellent because children love stories. That's what their lives are about. They're always telling stories or wanting to hear and to listen to a story. So children are story-driven in a sense and play-driven ... Things like the sequencing that the programme teaches them, that stories have a beginning, stories have a middle, stories have an end ... looking at the teacher as a model, how to read, seeing how they often do it. I mean, ... when you tell them, "okay, you can do it" you see yourself. They take the book and they play-read to their friends, the way you would model it.

c. The programme is clear, systematic and practical



Five advisors attributed the teachers' positive response to the programme to its systematic and practical approach. They felt that the teachers could engage with the STELLAR activities and materials in small increments, while the repetition of the ten-day cycle allowed them to become familiar with the classroom activities. One of these advisors explained:

Buy-in was phenomenal because the programme was practical and step-by-step. It gave direction and encouraged teachers' creativity at the same time. Everything was clear and it was written up. Have you seen that? It was a huge load of work that was done, but you knew precisely what to do, what to use, how to do it ...

Her colleague added:

You know, even the lazy teachers ... are pulled along by the pattern of the programme, everyone doing it together so they don't want to be left behind.

Three lead teachers agreed with this view. One of them said:

Easier than this you will never get it, because everything is laid out for you – what you must do for the children. They make for you the puppets and everything. So how can you say that it's too much work? To give you an indication, I think if you tell me you think that is a lot of work, then you never did what you were supposed to do before STELLAR.

d. The programme caters to all children

Two advisors spoke of how the programme engaged all children regardless of their home circumstances, language capabilities or physical disabilities. As one of these advisors said:

'No child is left behind.'

Five lead teachers mentioned how quiet and shy children were gradually drawn out of their shells by participating in activities such as role plays. Another lead teacher demonstrated how her special needs learners were fully engaged in STELLAR activities. She had simply adapted some of the pre-writing materials to accommodate her learners' physical limitations.

The following is extracted from an experienced lead teacher's reflections on this feature of the programme:

... it is workable and you can adapt it to your parameters because kids in different environments all learn differently. I think also the fact that this programme makes space for each child to learn in the way they learn best – there is reading, the visual, the acting out and so on. So you are actually accommodating all the learners within the classroom.

e. Learner progress

Finally, all 28 research participants made some reference to the STELLAR programme's observable impact on learner language development and early literacy skills.

A rural lead teacher recounted that she had preferred teaching maths to language until she began to implement the STELLAR programme. She explained that the obvious learner progress had convinced her of the programme's value. She said:

What I can see is they start to recognise their words and the letter sounds, and they start to write also, and the first sound and the picture.

Before there was only a few that could have done that. They love to play out the words in the games. I love the games. You see I have the letter boxes there. I extend my games with the letter

boxes, with the writing ... and I let them think out of the box also. Their reasoning and thinking skills I also use in STELLAR.

An urban lead teacher compared her STELLAR learners' expressive skills with her pre-STELLAR learners:

We don't have that much 'I did go; I did play; I did run'. When you talk to them, they are able to answer in a sentence. When you say to them, "What's the weather like?" they used to say 'hot', 'cold'; now they'll sort of think about it and say, 'The sun is out, there are clouds in the sky, there's a breeze.' ... critical thinking is happening. It's definitely made an impact on the children. Particularly their thinking skills.

Several lead teachers had received calls from parents who were thrilled by their children's language development and their willingness to converse with them at home. As one of these teachers pointed out:

It's not just about language. It also develops relationships.

Most advisors were excited by the extent to which the learners' drawings, emergent reading and early writing had developed on the programme. They also remarked on how the teachers had transformed their classrooms into attractive and creative spaces. It was evident that most advisors expect the STELLAR learners to improve the average standard of literacy in Western Cape primary schools.



5. Conclusion and questions for further consideration

5.1 General conclusion

By all accounts, the ELIT rollout was a success. It was remarkably well-planned and implemented, and the good quality STELLAR programme at its core was sufficiently adaptable to suit the full range of Western Cape Grade R teachers and learners. Thus, the project succeeded in improving most participating teachers' early language and literacy knowledge and general teaching skills. Another vital factor in the success of the rollout was the way the key actors in the cascaded training model were thoroughly prepared and carefully supported by WCED advisors and Wordworks STELLAR team members.

Many previously resistant Grade R teachers embraced the STELLAR programme and its quality materials because of the positive results they observed in their classrooms. And, significantly, ELIT stimulated and challenged large numbers of previously isolated and disengaged Grade R teachers to become creative education professionals who belonged to an enthusiastic community of practice which included their WCED advisors.

Learner impacts were not the subject of this study, which was concerned with the ELIT training and dissemination model. Nevertheless, it needs to be stated that the research participants' accounts were replete with examples of the ways in which ELIT had improved all learners' language and emergent literacy. Learners who had been silent in the classroom had begun to participate and to speak in properly structured sentences;

all learners were drawing, engaging in emergent writing, and in some instances writing sentences. Several learners were reading and, in the case of an exceptionally advanced child, a learner took over the facilitation of class activities from time to time. As a result, many parents, principals and Foundation Phase teachers have become ELIT advocates. Their enthusiasm feeds that of the ELIT teachers.

5.2 Outstanding features of the rollout which should be considered by future curriculum training interventions

a. The vital role played by the lead teachers as effective peer trainers and as teacher mentor–motivators

The WCED district officials did not have the capacity to undertake such an intensive and large-scale intervention on their own. While there were certain set-backs in the selection and retention of the initial cohort of lead teachers, those who remained proved to be enthusiastic and successful trainers who understood and could address the practical concerns of their Grade R colleagues.

- This cadre of 'teacher-animators' should be sustained and involved in further cluster activities. Remuneration should be considered in line with teachers training teachers at higher levels of the system.

b. The hard work and commitment of the ECD advisors in implementing the rollout and in building effective and supportive relationships with the lead teachers

The ECD advisors bore a heavy workload. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that most of them benefitted from having their professional capacity recognised in the district offices and at schools. In addition, their teambuilding with lead teachers enabled them to share tasks and to keep in touch with teachers' concerns 'on the ground'.

- The WCED Curriculum Directorate should encourage ECD advisors and, where possible, their Foundation Phase colleagues, to maintain their enhanced professional profiles in the district offices and to sustain the 'communities of practice' which were developed during the ELIT rollout.

c. The attention given by the STELLAR team to pre-training preparation and training support at both the advisor and the lead teacher levels

By agreeing to deliberate advisor and subsequently, lead teacher, pre-training preparation and modelling on the implementation of the STELLAR programme, as well as ongoing support at training sessions, the partners avoided many of the pitfalls associated with large-scale cascaded training. All evidence suggests that this was time and money well spent. Any shortcuts in these respects would have undermined the whole rollout.

It should be noted that although programmes such as STELLAR have well-developed and comprehensive manuals for classroom implementation, teachers and in several

instances advisors, are reluctant readers and/or are poor at translating manuals into practice. The ELIT practical demonstrations and hands-on training sessions were, therefore, essential for teacher 'take up' in the classroom.

- Donors, NPOs and education authorities should consider ELIT strategies such as 'dry runs' and ongoing trainer support for future teacher development interventions.

d. The partners' failure to implement common and streamlined administrative and reporting systems impacted negatively on the advisors, the main implementation agents, as well as on training time

It was clear that there were few effective ELIT administrative systems in district offices. In addition, most WCED advisors are not practiced administrators. This lack of well-developed district administrations is well-known by education stakeholders. Therefore, the ELIT partners should have reached an agreement in respect of streamlined project reporting and administration.

- Donors may have a useful role to play in the following respects:
 - By helping education NPOs and senior education officials to agree on common project administration systems
 - By aligning and streamlining their own data and reporting requirements with feasible district-level project administration.

5.3 Sustainability

The ELIT rollout was a success in the short- and probably the medium-term. There was consensus among the WCED advisors that the project might have assured a long-lasting success if

a reduced level of structured support to the ELIT communities of practice, combined with classroom visits, had continued for a period of 6 to 12 months. During this consolidation period, the subject advisors and circuit managers might have been able to address the following challenges with principals and Foundation Phase teams:

- The integration of key STELLAR teaching and learning principles in the whole of the Foundation Phase
- Strategies to ensure that learners who have gone through the STELLAR programme do not experience boredom and frustration in Grade 1 classes which include many children who have not benefitted from the programme
- Strategies for introducing new teachers and additional schools and ECD centres to the project
- Strategies for supporting lead teachers in sustaining their clustered ELIT teacher communities over the long-term.

Without ensuring that a critical mass of Grade R and other Foundation Phase teachers in the schools (as well as a critical mass of schools in the districts) are 'on board', ELIT is unlikely to continue to be normalised Grade R practice throughout the Western Cape. Its impacts are, therefore, likely to be sustained only in limited pockets where ELIT teacher communities are self-sustaining.

5.4 Questions for further consideration

Certain questions arose from this study which might be considered by all stakeholders in teacher training and/or curriculum development interventions in state schools. These follow:

- a. Can the WCED and/or Wordworks contribute to the institutionalisation of the ELIT project by bringing more schools and new teachers on board?
- b. Can the Foundation Phase team-building and cluster-lead teacher model be further developed to reduce the demands on over-stretched, district-based curriculum officials?
- c. Is it possible to build a cadre of experienced lead teachers from which the districts can draw for teacher training and support?
- d. Could donors contribute to b. and c. above by sponsoring modest lead teacher rewards in the form of stipends or vouchers?
- e. Can the DBE and WCED be persuaded to limit the number of curriculum and training interventions in one grade for a period of at least three years? Would this address the problem of teacher innovation fatigue and training resistance? Would this allow for both more consolidation of new practices and more classroom support from advisors?
- f. How can outside agencies assist provincial education departments with better-resourced and more effective district communication and administration systems?
- g. How can senior curriculum officials provide more visible and practical support to advisors during projects which they have agreed to?
- h. Can NPOs reduce the monitoring and reporting load on district officials while still meeting their donors' reporting and accountability requirements?

Appendix: Sources

A. Documents

The researchers' work on the STELLAR Programme was informed by the following documents:

- Schaffer, Angela (December 2015): 'Findings from seven Participants' Accounts of their experience on the Wordworks STELLAR Programme'
- Strickland Nicole (April 2016): 'WORDWORKS STELLAR PROGRAMME: Strengthening teaching of early language and literacy in Grade R – CLUSTER ONE'
- Strickland Nicole (July 2016): 'WORDWORKS STELLAR PROGRAMME: Strengthening teaching of early language and literacy in Grade R – LEAD TEACHER PORTFOLIOS'
- Wordworks (July 2016): 'The STELLAR programme: Report to USAID January 2016 – June 2016' plus appendices
- Wordworks (November 2016): 'The Western Cape Grade R Emergent Literacy project: Report to the Executive Team'
- Copies of Wordworks' internal Excel summary tables of teacher participation in ELIT training
- Williams E. (lead teacher): *The Big Wave* Activity Book

B. Programme materials

The researchers familiarised themselves with the following STELLAR programme teacher materials which are available in Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa, as well as additional classroom resources.

Eight large (A4) colour illustrated storybooks arranged in sequence:

- *The green dress* written by Brigid Comrie of Wordworks and illustrated by Helga Hoveka
- *Ali and the paint* written by Angelique Twiss of Wordworks and illustrated by Helga Hoveka
- *Spot goes to the shop* written by Cathy Lincoln of Wordworks and illustrated by Helga Hoveka
- *Baby Bird finds his mother* written by Shelley O'Carroll of Wordworks and illustrated by Helga Hoveka
- *Goldilocks and the three bears* retold by Angelique Twiss of Wordworks and illustrated by Helga Hoveka
- *Tortoise and his shell* written by Brigid Comrie of Wordworks and illustrated by Helga Hoveka
- *The three goats* adapted from *The three billy goats gruff* by Cathy Lincoln of Wordworks and illustrated by Helga Hoveka
- *Bushbuck's visitor* written by Shelley O'Carroll of Wordworks and illustrated by Helga Hoveka



- *The Big Wave*, this ninth illustrated story with materials by the STELLAR Team is an add-on. The story and materials are printed in black and white for budgetary reasons and require the teachers to colour the pictures and activity materials themselves.

The STELLAR programme, a file of teacher resources to accompany each of the eight stories published by Wordworks, Cape Town

This file of teacher resources was developed by Twiss A. with O'Carroll S., Comrie B. & Lincoln C. (undated). It includes:

- A guidebook on 'Teaching letters and sounds' with practical learner activities for teachers to photocopy and use during each ten-day story cycle
- An illustrated and comprehensive manual in accessible language which provides teachers

with step-by-step instructions and examples of what to do each day of the story cycle, as well as how each activity contributes to children's language and literacy development

- Eight story packs of guided and day-by-day learner activity resources for two weeks including the guidebook, colour sequencing picture cards, full-colour two-dimensional puppets and accessories
- Materials for the following small group activities: Post Box Game, Pirate Game, Letter Snake Game, Say-it-and-move-it, Racing Car Game and Letter Sound Bingo
- Wordworks (2016): *Emergent Literacy: Guidelines for teaching Home Language in Grade R – Teacher's Manual & Facilitator's notes to accompany the Teacher's Manual*, Wordworks, Cape Town.

