

Wordworks report to the Western Cape Education Department • June 2017



Dear Colleagues

Since 2006 Wordworks has been working in partnership with schools in the Western Cape to improve the literacy and language development of young children aged 5 to 8 years. Most of you will be familiar with our Stellar programme which was incorporated into the Emergent Literacy training for all Grade R teachers last year. In addition to Stellar we have developed two programmes for this age-group which we share through resource-based training and mentoring of teachers, parents and community volunteers.

As you will see in this newsletter, many schools in the Western Cape have chosen to run these programmes, more than 60% maintaining this voluntary commitment for over three years or more. We know that support and recognition from District officials will strengthen and improve the sustainability of these programmes and we hope that regular updates from Wordworks will assist you in acknowledging and showcasing the groundbreaking work happening in your schools.

We have an open application process for schools who would like to run one of our programmes. Applications open a few months before training, when application forms can be downloaded from our website.

The intention of our work is not that we run our programmes **for** schools, but that they are trained, resourced and supported to run their own programmes. After training, individuals and schools are offered the opportunity to join WordNetworks in order to maintain a sense of association, to receive ongoing guidance and input, to share experiences and learning, and to facilitate access to resources and opportunities.

In addition to taking applications from individual schools, we would welcome conversations with Districts interested in discussing a more systemic approach.

This is the first edition of a bi-annual newsletter that we have developed specifically to share information and ideas with Districts. We hope you find it useful and look forward to your feedback.

Very best wishes,
Shelley

Building community involvement in early language and literacy

In this newsletter we want to focus on the Wordworks' programmes that are being used by your schools to build parent and community involvement in early language and literacy:

- **Home-School Partnerships Programme (HSP):** empowering parents to support informal learning at home
- **Ready Steady Read Write Programme (RSRW):** a tutoring programme providing support to young children as they learn to read and write (previously known as the Early Literacy Programme)

The table on the next few pages gives information about schools that are running one or both of these programmes in 2017.

We believe that these schools are leading the way in their commitment to engaging parents and communities in supporting early language and literacy. They are ensuring that more children learn to read and write successfully, and fewer require intervention from overstretched learning support services.

In both of these programmes, teachers and community members are freely giving of their time to support parents and young children. Teacher-Facilitators are running a course of 8 weekly workshops for parents of Foundation Phase children. Co-ordinators and Tutors are at your schools weekly to support Grade R, 1 and 2 children who have been identified by teachers as being at risk.

While Wordworks provides resources, and a level of ongoing contact, and opportunities for further training, the programmes are managed by the schools and are largely self-sustaining. The HSP parent programmes have become a regular feature on the school calendar and RSRW is an integral part of learning support at many schools.

We believe these schools, principals, teachers and parents need to be acknowledged for the vitally important work they are doing and we pay tribute to them here.

Schools running HSP and RSRW in 2017

WORDWORKS PROGRAMMES IN MSED

School	Wordworks Programme being run (date begun)
Alpine Prim.	RSRW (2014) & HSP (2014)
AZ Berman Prim.	RSRW (2015)
Bay Prim.	RSRW (2010)
Buck Road Prim.	RSRW (2011) & HSP (2011)
Capricorn Prim.	RSRW (2005)
Constantia Prim.	RSRW (2014)
Cornflower Prim.	HSP (2014)
Eastville Prim.	RSRW (2013) & HSP (2014)
EC Grassy Park Prim.	RSRW (2010)
Fairview Prim.	RSRW (2013) & HSP (2012)
Ferndale Prim.	RSRW (2012)
Floreat Prim.	HSP (2017)
Harvester Prim.	RSRW (2014)
Hazeldene Prim.	RSRW (2017)
Hillwood Prim.	HSP (2012)
iThemba Labantu Prim.	RSRW* (2016) & HSP* (2017)
Kannemeyer Prim.	HSP (2010)
Lantana Prim.	RSRW (2011) & HSP (2008)
Levana Prim.	HSP (2015)
Liwa Prim.	HSP (2015)
Lotus River Prim.	RSRW (2010)
Marine Prim.	RSRW (2005) & HSP (2013)
Masakhane Pre-School	RSRW (2010)
Ikhaya Labantwana Pre-School	RSRW (2010)
Merrydale Prim.	RSRW (2014) & HSP (2014)
Mitchell Heights Prim.	RSRW (2014) & HSP (2014)
Mitchell's Plain School of Skills	HSP (2017)
Montagu's Gift Prim.	RSRW (2015)
Montague Drive Prim.	RSRW (2012) & HSP (2014)
Muizenberg Junior	RSRW (2013)
Ottery Road Methodist Prim.	RSRW (2013)
Parkwood Prim.	HSP (2013)
Pelican Park Prim.	RSRW (2013) & HSP (2011)
Plantation Prim.	RSRW (2013)
Portland Prim.	RSRW (2015) & HSP (2014)
Prince George Prim.	RSRW (2010) & HSP (2012)
Samora Machel Prim.	HSP (2017)
Sid G Rule Prim.	HSP (2017)
Simon van der Stel Prim.	RSRW (2013)
Southfield Prim.	RSRW (2013) & HSP (2013)
Spine View Prim.	RSRW (2014)
Springdale Prim.	RSRW (2016) & HSP (2014)
Square Hill Prim.	RSRW (2013) & HSP (2012)
St Augustine's RC Prim.	HSP (2013)
St James' Prim.	RSRW (2005) & HSP (2009)
St Mary's Prim.	RSRW (2011)
Star of the Sea Convent Prim.	RSRW (2013)
Stephen Road Prim.	RSRW (2011)
Thomas Wildschutt Junior Prim.	RSRW (2013) & HSP (2012)
Vukani Prim.	RSRW** (2016) & HSP (2017)
West-End Prim.	RSRW (2014) & HSP (2014)
Westville Prim.	RSRW (2013) & HSP (2014)
Woodville Prim.	RSRW (2014) & HSP (2014)
Zanemfundo Prim.	RSRW** (2016)
Zwaanswyk Academy	HSP (2015)

*In collaboration with iThemba Labantu Lutheran Community Centre • **In collaboration with Beautiful Gate

Schools running HSP and RSRW in 2017

WORDWORKS PROGRAMMES IN MCED

School	Wordworks Programme being run (date begun)
Bokmakierie Prim.	RSRW (2016)
Bonga Lower Prim.	HSP (2017)
Bramble Way Prim.	HSP (2017)
Cypress Prim.	HSP (2017)
Ellerton Prim.	HSP (2017)
Garlandale Prim.	RSRW (2016)
Hazendal Prim.	HSP (2017)
Heideveld Prim.	RSRW*** (2016)
HJ Kroneberg Junior Prim.	HSP (2017)
Hout Bay Educare	RSRW (2013)
Kenmere Prim.	HSP (2012)
Kronendal Prim.	RSRW (2010)
Sentinel Prim.	HSP (2007)
Silvertree N.W.M.H.F Pre-Prim.	HSP (2017)
Siyabulela Prim.	HSP* (2016)
St Agnes' Prim.	HSP (2011)
St Theresa R.C. Prim.	RSRW*** (2016)
Starling Prim.	HSP (2012)
Valley Pre-Prim.	RSRW (2010)
Vanguard Prim.	RSRW*** (2016)
Welcome Prim.	RSRW*** (2016)
Woodlands Prim.	RSRW*** (2016)

*In collaboration with Ackerman's Ububele Project • ***In collaboration with GCU

WORDWORKS PROGRAMMES IN MNED

School	Wordworks Programme being run (date begun)
Belhar Prim.	HSP* (2016)
Blue Mountains Prim.	RSRW** (2016)
Gardenia Prim.	HSP* (2016)
Norwood Central Prim.	HSP (2017)
St Augustine's RC Prim.	HSP* (2016)
The Valley Prim.	RSRW** (2013)
Ubunye Educare Centre	HSP (2017)
Valhalla Prim.	RSRW (2017) & HSP (2014)

*In collaboration with Ackerman's Ububele Project • **In collaboration with Capespan CSI

WORDWORKS PROGRAMMES IN WKOD

School	Wordworks Programme being run (date begun)
Elizabethfontein Mor Prim.	RSRW (2016)
Koekenaap VGK Prim.	HSP (2017)
Laurie Hugo Prim.	RSRW* (2016) & HSP* (2017)
Naastdrift Prim.	HSP (2017)
Nieuwoudt Prim.	HSP (2017)
Noordhoek Prim.	RSRW (2017)
Nuwerus HS.	HSP (2017)
Sandberg NGK Prim.	HSP (2017)
Uitkyk Prim.	HSP (2017)
Vergenoeg RK Prim.	HSP (2017)
Vooruitsig Prim.	RSRW** (2017)
Vredendal-Noord Prim.	HSP (2017)

*In collaboration with the Bethesda Community Centre • **In collaboration with the Darling Outreach Foundation

Some images from the HSP and RSRW Programmes at Western Cape schools

Please go to our Newsroom on our website for more photos and stories about schools using our programmes (www.wordworks.org.za)



Some of the new HSP Teacher-Facilitators



HSP Teacher-Facilitator Training, Vredendal Schools



HSP Ellerton Primary parent workshop



HSP Woodville Primary parent graduation

Some feedback from HSP Facilitators

Three things hit home for our parents. They began to understand that learning begins at home. One of the fathers said the following: I've learnt a lot, thinking that learning begins at school, now I know it begins at home.

When we engage with parents, we become one of them. It's my community, I am part of the group. We are giving back. My husband tells me I am lit up. It works for me, it works for the community, it works for the child. It's not work – it's something that we want to do.

This year 15 parents came and 15 graduated – mostly grandmothers, even though they had to walk through very violent areas. We work together in our FP and everyone assists. We didn't see it as another job. We want to empower our parents to empower our learners. We have a choice about whether we will go back to Lavender Hill or not, but our children don't have a choice. Thank-you for giving us something extra. Parents see that ... they have a voice.



HSP Bramble Way Primary parent graduation



HSP Kenmere Primary parent graduation



HSP St Agnes Primary parent graduation

Comments from parents and caregivers at Prince George Primary:

I have a daughter, and I was wanting to do this last year but I couldn't. Having it on a Saturday has allowed me to do the class. The later classes were exciting– the reading, conversations, the how, what and why... My daughter talks so much more now. She shows much more interest in reading. Also the class gave me more confidence, more patience. It starts at the crèche, where my son is. I am going to share with them what we do.

I have wanted to do this for a while – but since you offered it on a Saturday, I can. My child in Grade 3 was struggling with reading, and now that I know how to break up the words, and be very visual, it is getting a bit better. Now I have a clearer understanding of what to work on. Also about managing my time, and having patience.



HSP Levana Primary parents showing their new workbooks



HSP Marine Primary parent graduation



HSP Belhar Primary parent graduation



RSRW Tutor training



RSRW Tutor training



Wordworks team participating at RSRW Tutor training



RSRW Tutor training



RSRW Valhalla Primary Tutors



RSRW Tutor training Noordhoek Primary, Velddrif



RSRW West End Primary Tutors

Feedback from Co-ordinators:

Just to thank you once again for the training on Thursday. It was a privilege to have you here and for our tutors to get all their training “fresh from the Cape Town oven.” It must have been a tiring day for you to be on the road for 2 hours and then do the whole day workshop. We appreciate it! My six ladies feel confident after the training and are looking forward to start with the classes.

I was at school on Wednesday and received very positive and enthusiastic feedback on the Velddrif Course held last Thursday 16th February 2017. It was lovely being part of a greater team. Wishing you plenty of strength and energy for all the courses this year. It is really hard work but so worthwhile for us and of course the children



RSRW iThemba Labantu Tutor

I decided to become a tutor because:

I love learning and helping kids and every new experience for them is an achievement for me as well.

Vandat ek kinders begin help het, het ek geleer:

Om meer geduldig te wees met kinders en op hulle vlak te beweeg.

Becoming a tutor has given me the opportunity to:

- *Meet others with the same vision and purpose as myself.*

- *The Wordworks (programme) helped me to study further. I'm at False Bay College at the moment.*
- *Further my studies. I'm currently studying education at Unisa. This programme has given extra insight into scoring high on the literacy part of my assignments and on how to teach children how to read and write.*



RSRW Spineview Tutor certification



RSRW Alpine Tutor



Sharing our learning

We keep careful records about programme delivery and reach, and regularly conduct evaluations of our programmes. We would welcome the opportunity to share more of our findings with you, and to look with you at how the programmes might be contributing to improvements in learner outcomes as reflected in school reports, ANA's and systemic assessment data.

Building emergent literacy in Grade R classrooms

An external evaluation of the impact of the ELIT project on learner results has been commissioned by USAID and we anticipate that the results will be released in the second half of this year. We also commissioned an external evaluation which drew primarily on the reported experience of Lead Teachers and Advisors. We would like to share the findings with you as they reflect so positively on the hard work at district level.

By all accounts, the ELIT roll out 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 roll out 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.

Please let us know if you would like us to email you the report which is also available on our website <http://www.wordworks.org.za/report-findings-qualitative-study-emergent-literacy-project-roll-western-cape/>

You may also like to see a USAID photo report on the programme here: <https://usaidsouthernafrika.exposure.co/words-work>. This article from USAID, a major funder of the WCED Grade R Emergent Literacy rollout incorporating the Grade R Stellar programme, provides some background to the issues around early literacy in SA and looks at some of the features and accomplishments of the programme.

Ready Steady Read Write tutoring programme

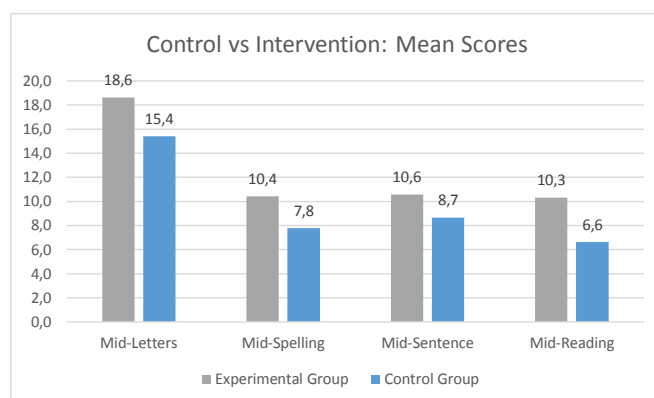
In order to track progress of children participating in the Ready Steady Read Write Programme, we have analysed the assessment data from schools that ran the programme in 2016. The Early Literacy Assessment is administered at three points in time in Grade One: at the beginning of the year, mid-year and at the end of the year. Co-ordinators at schools assess children and send the summary scores to Wordworks.

The analysis showed statistically significant improvements in results for all paired scales from the beginning of Grade One to the middle of Grade One, and from mid to end of Grade One, with the exception of one subtest. Apart from this one non-significant result, large improvements in scores from pre- to mid-, and from mid- to post-test were evident for all scales assessed. We cannot definitively

attribute the improvements to the RSRW programme (based on this analysis alone), due to the presence of extraneous variables such as formal schooling and physical maturation. However, the fact that such large and consistent improvements were found (and have been replicated in previous analyses) is encouraging, and suggests the beneficial effects of the programme.

Due to the fact that some learners exit the programme at mid-year, the mid-year assessment results are a post intervention measure for some learners. Other learners only begin participating in the programme at mid-year and therefore their results function as a control with which to compare the results of learners that have participated in the intervention from January to June. These 'control group' learners have been in the same class as the learners who have participated in the programme and the teacher has used the same criteria to assess their eligibility for the programme.

Assessment data on four tasks was compared at mid-year: a test of letter-sound knowledge, a test of basic spelling of three letter words, a dictation test and a test of word reading. The graph below provides a comparison of the average scores of the intervention and control groups on the mid-year assessments.



Statistical analysis showed that mean ranks were higher for all four scales of the mid-test in the intervention/experimental group, in comparison to the control group.

The consultant statistician who conducted the analysis noted that 'although further analysis is recommended, these results provide strong evidence of the efficacy of Wordworks Ready Steady Read Write early literacy programme'.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many of the materials used in the HSP and RSRW programmes are free to download from our website so that they can be accessed by schools and families that are not part of our network. We also sell Game Packs for parents, a Teacher Kit and an Assessment Kit for teachers and Learning Support teachers via our website.

As many Grade R teachers are working with children who speak different languages at home, we put the STELLAR story resources free for download on our website in order to support multilingual teaching and learning (<http://www.wordworks.org.za/category/story-based-resources>).

Our grateful thanks to Wordworks funders that make it possible for us to provide materials for teachers and parents.



Davies Foundation



USAID

Fynbos Foundation

