READ

Promoting Literacy and Literature

Do Not Give Up!

Applying Cultural Observations to Teaching Methods in the Aitape West Translation Project

Collaborative Efforts for the Futures of Detainees. The Giligili Correctional Institution Detainees' Literacy Program Teacher Training Workshop Alotau, Milne Bay Province

STEP (Strengthening Tokples [vernacular] Education in Papua New Guinea): Assisting Papua New Guineans with Community-based, Vernacular Literacy Programs

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We welcome your input and would appreciate hearing about the different things you have tried in your literacy programs. Please submit all articles for this publication to the address below.

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Table of Contents

Notes from the Editor

The process of trial and error is one familiar to literacy workers everywhere. In this issue, writers both new and experienced demonstrate how either their own attitudes needed to change in order to communicate more effectively at the grassroots level, or how they endeavoured to change attitudes towards literacy among the people they worked with. This can be a slow, painful process, but as Hanna Marie Hoel encourages us, do not give up!

Attitude change plays a huge role in the area of AIDS awareness. In the near future, I would like to dedicate an issue of READ to this subject. Many countries have been faced with AIDS for years, while for others, like PNG, it is a relatively new problem that is beginning to explode out of control. I believe it is vital that as literacy workers we share our experiences of AIDS awareness work, whether they come from a tried and tested program or still are in the experimental stage. SIL often works with remote, isolated groups who will miss out on mainstream AIDS awareness. If we do not endeavour to promote AIDS awareness, there may be precious few people left to benefit from the other fruits of literacy work in years to come.

If you have any experiences at all in the field of AIDS awareness, READ would like to hear from you. Send any articles – long, short, practical, erudite – to lr-read@sil.org.pg.

Yours, in anticipation
Lizzie Meyer

Do Not Give Up!

by Hanna Marie Hoel

I was asked to write an article based on my experience as a literacy worker in the Mende team, so I will try to share a few things. To write about everything I have done would be too much!

Longing to Read?

Before I came to PNG, I thought that every illiterate person in developing countries must be longing to learn to read. That was the impression I had gotten from brochures, posters and advertisements from various organisations in the past, especially those who tried to collect money. I discovered that this was not the case among the Mende people. How could they be longing for something they did not even know about? And if they could not see how reading would benefit them in their daily life, why would they be interested? We are often talking about felt needs. If reading was not a felt need for the Mende people, and if I believed that reading would help them, my job was to try to create that need. Working on awareness and motivation is important.

The Mende people had seen books before we came. They had seen bibles in English and Tok Pisin, and those who had been to school had used books there. Not everybody was illiterate. They had not seen how reading could help them improve life in the village, and I still do not know if the majority see how reading could benefit the community. However, the interest in learning to read has slowly increased. I am not going to tell you any great success stories, this is just some facts about some of the things I have been doing in the program. We have not yet seen people jumping up and down with excitement for what reading has done for them.

[The Mende team consists of two translators, Tarja Ikäheimonen (Finland) and Michiyo Nozawa (Japan), and one literacy worker, Hanna Marie Hoel (Norway). They started working together in 1991 in the Mende language in Sandaun Province, which has around 5,700 speakers. Five PNGian men have worked alongside Tarja and Michiyo on the translation, and the Mende New Testament was dedicated on 13th September 2005.]

I wanted to see the Mende people getting used to buying books, reading in their vernacular and enjoying it, so that when they got the New Testament in their hands, they would be able to read it and also be anxious to know what they could find in that book. But other than reading the New Testament, will the Mende people need the skill of reading for anything else? Yes, I think so. The area where the Mende people live is getting more and more populated. This means their gardens are getting smaller and so is the bush ground where they go hunting, which means less food is available. Therefore they will need people with education who can earn money somewhere else or start local businesses. This is one area where awareness is needed. The people need to think about the future for their community. I do not expect that this understanding and interest will come about by itself. It *might* come through the hard work of the literacy worker. That is why the heading of my article is: "Do not give up!"

Making the Best Out of the Situation

I had been thinking of starting with the adults – training teachers and helping them to start reading classes for illiterate adults. Before I came that far I was made aware of the province's literacy plan which said that "Tok Ples Prep Skuls" (vernacular pre-schools) were going to be started in our area in 1993. By whom? The SIL team! That is why when I started working on materials I had to change my plans and start with schools for children instead.

I wish I had known more about how literacy was done in PNG before I started myself. I had not seen any other literacy programs because we allocated shortly after POC (Pacific Orientation Course). Fortunately I had the chance to be an observer in a "Vernacular Component Workshop" at Ukarumpa, and there I saw Big Books for the first time and learned how to use them. I understood from the provincial NGO literacy coordinator that he wanted me to use the Big Book method in the "prep-skuls" because that was the "future method" in PNG, so it was very much decided for me what to do and which method to use. My job was to find out how to make the best out of the situation. I certainly recommend that you find out what the current policy in education is before starting a big program.

Tok Ples Prep Skuls (TPPS) and Elementary Schools

According to the provincial literacy plan, I was to help start TPPS in several villages in the Mende language area. I trained teachers to use the workbooks and teacher's guides I had made to go with the Big Books, and

they learned to make Big Books themselves. I did not believe that the Big Books in themselves were enough, so I made additional materials. During the training period the trainees had a lot of reading fluency training. *The teachers need to be fluent readers in order to use the Big Books*. I also tried to explain the thinking behind the interactive whole language method, and why I taught them to do the things in a certain order, but I never succeeded in getting them to understand it, so I ended up saying that 'this is the way we do it!'

When elementary schools were introduced in 2000 and the first intake of elementary teachers came back from their first training course and started to teach, they had hardly any teaching materials. They had not been given much time in their training course to produce materials, so they asked me to help them. Therefore every time I have been in the village I have had one-to-two weeks workshops for them. We do not have all the TPPSes anymore, so I can spend time on the elementary schools instead. My motivation has always been the same: I want the children to be able to read in their own language, so they will be able to read God's Word.

I chose to try to understand how the syllabuses in the elementary schools were supposed to be taught, and make materials accordingly. I also contacted the district elementary trainer and asked her to approve what I was doing, because the elementary schools were her responsibility, not mine. Every time I have had a workshop for the elementary teachers, I have written a report and sent it to the trainer. I have helped the elementary teachers both to organise their yearly themes and make materials to fit those themes.

Adult Literacy

I will briefly mention that I have done some adult literacy. Now and then I have received requests from local people, but they did not always follow up on their own requests when I tried to help. One church wanted literacy classes for illiterate church members. I made books and advertised a teachers' course, but nobody from that church turned up! A few from other churches came, but the three classes they started afterwards never became a success. Another church had some "*Kisim Save*" classes (learn to read in Tok Pisin) and wanted a transfer book, so that the students would also learn to read in their vernacular. The teachers and I made the transfer book together, but I think most of the teachers got tired of teaching before they started on the transfer book. One problem I could see with both these cases, is that several of the teachers were not good enough readers themselves. If

the teachers do not read well, the students get bored or they do not learn anything, so they quit.

During the year before the New Testament dedication I had several requests about reading classes. I ran two different reading fluency classes that were well attended, around 40 in each. For the first week of the course we used a book with Old Testament stories and for the second week New Testament stories. The students were positive and very interested.

After the dedication, on local people's request, I advertised a reading class for illiterates. I had a suspicion that many might come, so I asked some fluent readers to come along as assistants. Around a hundred people came who wanted to learn to read. My present challenge is how to follow up on this. I think the best way might be to train the assistants more and let them take responsibility for a group in their village, and then I can go around and help and encourage them.

Where are the Good Teachers?

It has been an on-going problem finding good candidates to train as teachers. How can a new literacy worker find and choose local people that will become good teachers and also be accepted by the community? You do not know anybody when you arrive, so the advice I got was to let the community select teachers. That is what I have done, but you may not get the best teachers that way. However, if the choice of teachers later turns out not to be the best one, you can point to who selected them! The dilemma has been that I have never had more candidates than I needed, so I felt I could not get rid of any of them. The way I see it now is that it would be better if I could get many candidates, and then make it clear in the beginning that only the best ones would actually become teachers. Then one would need a test or some way of selecting the best ones in the end. I do not have a perfect solution, but it is something for new people to think about before starting teacher training.

Another factor is payment of the teachers. We did not want to pay the teachers because we felt the teachers should do it as a service to help their own community. Ideally the community should support the teachers rather than the teachers become dependent on us outsiders. However, we have not seen the community being very supportive, so that may be one reason why it has not been very popular to become a teacher.

When we still had the TPPS, I walked around and visited the schools as often as I could, and sometimes I found the teachers teaching and sometimes not. Sometimes I got discouraged when I found classrooms empty. Other

times I got encouraged when I came and found that the children were actually learning something. For a long time I thought that the teachers might have felt more responsible and taught all the time if they were paid.

When elementary schools were introduced in our area, the teachers were paid. Since I was interested in knowing what they were doing in those schools, I walked around and visited them. What did I find? Sometimes I found the teachers in the classrooms and sometimes not! Some of the elementary teachers were former prep-school teachers. Had the payment made them more responsible? It does not look like that to me. I have actually found the same tendency in the primary schools. When I visit the primary schools, I often see one or two classrooms where the students are without a teacher. The teacher has taken off to town and might stay away for several days. The thing is that the teachers receive their pay anyway! That is the same both for elementary teachers and primary school teachers.

So, some might say, "why work when we don't get paid?" but others might say," why work when we get paid anyway?" It is not easy for an outsider to know what to think. Where are the good models the teachers can follow?

What Will They Read?

In order to get people interested in reading, there must be something to read. Therefore I have tried to make books on various topics: Bible stories, birds, memory verse books, information about marihuana, information about AIDS, health books, how to play the tambourine, how to play the guitar and so forth. In addition to that many Shell-books have been translated and sold to the elementary and the primary schools. Calendars with Scripture verses have been very popular, as have the hymn books that Tarja and Michiyo have produced.

When we first started to produce books many years ago, book sales were very low. Then we started glueing old Christmas cards on the Christmas story books, putting used Sunday School material pictures on many of the Bible story books, and so forth, and these coloured pictures made a difference.

The way we have sold most books is to go to different villages on Sundays and sell them after church. We read out loud from our books, and that always attracts people. Those who cannot read can listen to the content of the books, and others get interested in buying and read for themselves. I also visit schools and do the same, and I encourage the teachers to buy books for the school.

We have sold around 7,000 books over the last 7-8 years. It did not look very promising in the beginning, so we had to work hard to get people interested. Now it is not unthinkable for the Mende people to spend money on buying books, and we hope and pray that the interest in reading the New Testament will continue to increase.

My journey as a village literacy worker has not always been an easy one. Sometimes the discouragements have seemed greater than the encouragements. However, attitudes to reading can change, as we have slowly seen among the Mende people. I would therefore like to encourage you: if the people in your language group are not yet expressing an interest in reading, *do not give up!*✍

Applying Cultural Observations to Teaching Methods in the Aitape West Translation Project

by Mandy Pehrson

In working with the literacy students of the Aitape West Translation Project, I gained valuable teaching tools by observing my students and our surrounding communities while they worked. Because I view literacy as a creative and relational process, I hoped to create an environment where my students felt comfortable. The following observations come from the first two literacy workshops (Writer's and Writer's/Typing) in Arop, Sandaun Province.

Are people more comfortable working individually or in groups?

Observation:

In Arop, while performing the daily chores of village life, virtually all people have observers looking on. The person doing the task does not verbalize the steps involved, and the person observing may occasionally say something, to give advice when needed.

A young man paints a canoe paddle while his older friend gives advice.

In our project, people tend to prefer to do things in groups of at least two or more. When doing our literacy surveys with the translators, we noticed that one person was the spokesman. However, he frequently received input from his counterpart through nonverbal communication. Sometimes we noticed someone lifting their eyebrows, indicating "I agree," or pursing his lips, eyebrows going down, saying that he didn't agree.

Mandy and Ben Pehrson have been working with the Aitape-West Multi-Language literacy and translation team in Sandaun Province, since 2002.

Teaching Method:

From day one in our Writer's Workshops, individual students were reticent to give verbal feedback in front of their classmates in a group. On the other hand, they eagerly took turns writing on a chalkboard with their friends gathered close by in order to create a class list of a story sequence. They similarly enjoyed working together to fix a "Morning Message" (letter) written by the teacher, which contained many spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.

When doing assessment, we often do it as a group, asking each regional group to meet together and gather the information needed. Observation is another important assessment tool.

How are decisions made in the community?

Observation:

During group tasks, often a leader emerges, while the other students give feed back and suggestions.

Where we live, decisions are made by consensus. If someone has a problem, he brings it to the "big man" (or leader). This person holds a meeting with community. Men and women have the opportunity to give speeches, sometimes threatening others with emotional words to show how serious they are about the issue. The "big man" makes the decision based upon what he hears everyone saying. When a person feels that he has been wronged, he often appoints an advocate who speaks on his behalf. Many times, compensation has to be made to the offended party. When the process works like it is supposed to, everyone leaves satisfied, with a resolution in place.

Planning/Teaching Methods:

- When planning a workshop, we rely on our Papua New Guinean advisors to give insight into cultural things that we did not pick up on. We make our decisions by consensus, usually deferring to our colleagues for the final say.
- Group activities, like creating a "kinds of stories" web together, yielded very interesting and creative responses. In each group, one man

naturally stepped up as the "leader," writing down ideas the other group members gave him.

- Spokesmen for regional groups (the maus man, or the "mouth man" literally) came to us with their concerns at appointed meetings, which provided information that we would not have had otherwise. For instance, if someone is being unkind to the other students by keeping his light on past a reasonable hour, his regional group members will tell their representative, who will report to us at the meeting. Our Papua New Guinean colleagues then gently remind him to be considerate to the other men.
- When proofreading a story, students easily find "wantoks" (people who speak their language) to check over their work. We have never seen anyone get angry or upset when someone checks their work. Rather, they are happy to put themselves under someone else's scrutiny. Going home without corrections made would be a shameful experience for that individual and for his team members (who are expected to help him).

How do parents teach their children to do jobs?

Observation:

Often the child will stand by and observe the parent. After a lot of observing, the child attempts the job. They learn by doing. Occasionally the parent gives some input but usually the child keeps trying until she gets it right.

Teaching Method:

- We demonstrate the activity that we want our students to participate in. When teaching typing, I drew myself a keyboard and asked my students to do exactly what I was doing. (i.e. a a a a, a ; a ; a;) They continually looked at me for direction as we typed together.

Demonstrations allow students the opportunity to first observe and ask questions about the task they are learning.

- We give as many opportunities as possible for students to try out what they have learned. There is very little "lecture" time; rather, after something has

been demonstrated the first time, the students are responsible for teaching it to others. In order to make this possible, we try to use very simple methods and steps in our presentations. This was particularly important when we had seven new literacy students. The students who had previously attended our workshop became their teachers. They had an amazing ability to remember and teach the material we had covered so many months before.

How do they emphasise important things in their culture?

Observation:

In Arop culture, if you say something once, it's not important. Saying something several times, on the other hand, means that it is very important.

In our initial Writer's Workshop, I gave my students very simple directions without elaborating much. I wanted to give them creative freedom as well. I quickly learned that they were frustrated and desired more instruction from me. I began to see that there were other avenues for creativity, but not when I was giving them an activity to do.

The light came on when I had invited a local church group to come and do morning devotions for the workshop. My friend came to me and said, "You want us to come do your devotions, right?" I agreed, "Yes, please come tomorrow at the second bell." She replied, "I'll come tomorrow at the second bell." I answered, "Yes, please come at the second bell." She asked again, "Now, you want me to come at the second bell?" Then she went to Ben and went through the whole process again. I wondered if this was a typical aspect of an oral culture, where you work hard to put something in your long term memory, in order to be where you need to be. Or, perhaps it is a way to prolong the interaction with your friend, thus strengthening the relationship.

Teaching method:

When emphasising something important, we say it over and over again. At this point in our multilanguage project, the translators and literacy workers are people who know how to read and write in the mother tongue languages. Before we ended our last literacy workshop, we printed drafts of the students' stories, and emphasised over and over that we hoped our literacy students would meet with the Bible translators and ask for editing help. If we had only mentioned this once, they may have not seen the importance of this task.

How are stories told? (i.e. what is the discourse style?) Is it an oral culture? Does story telling have a major role in society?

Observation:

When we talked about story sequencing, I asked a man to tell us a story about the tsunami in 1997. The first time he told the story, we simply listened to him. The second time through, we talked about what happened first, second, third, etc. When he told the story, it went like this: "One day I was working at my house. When I was working at my house, I heard a loud noise. When I heard the loud noise, I began to run on the beach."

Teaching method:

- When it was time to start writing stories for the first time in their mother tongues, students told their stories to each other before writing them down.
- In choosing example books to read, we used ones that followed their discourse style. If students needed further help discovering their discourse styles, they could tape their story and listen to it before writing it down.
- We often use stories and analogies when teaching.

What makes a good story in their cultural context?

Observation:

Coming up with a class list of "what makes a good story" took about two and a half hours, because students were afraid of making verbal mistakes. However, the end result provided us with a wealth of cultural information. We agreed that stories addressing the felt needs of a community would be appreciated and read.

Teaching principles:

After learning what makes a good story in their context, we encouraged our students to use those principles while they wrote. The following list is what literacy students from the Aitape West Translation Team feel is important to include in a story.

A Good Story…

- Has good pictures.
- Helps us learn new words.

- Steers/teaches us how we should act, what is right or wrong.
- Teaches us to follow the customs of our mothers and fathers.
- Gives us ideas of how to do our work well [functional literacy].
- Helps us to combine our thinking and work well together.
- Reminds us of the traditions of our ancestors and strengthens our family relationships.
- Has characters that have good thinking.
- Gives a big name* to the author. [*credibility, respect]

What other things do your students value, that you take for granted?

1. They valued materials.

When teaching in a U.S. context, I rarely gave thought to what kinds of materials my students were blessed with. Papua New Guineans generally value material goods and make use of things that I would normally throw away.

During a translation workshop, students wrote their rough drafts on previously used paper, turning it upside down, and writing in between the printed lines.

Students used notebooks for taking notes only, when I had thought they would use their notebooks for writing rough drafts. In their opinions, these notebooks I had given them were much too valuable to be used in this way.

Teaching Principle

- We use as many locally available materials as possible.
- We try not to waste paper, ink and solar powered electricity.

2. They valued relationships, above the pending task ahead:

If someone dies right before a workshop, we delay the starting session out of respect for that family. Many times students have arrived late to a workshop for this reason.

In a U.S. context, I had every activity and task planned down to the last minute. However, when facilitating literacy in a Papua New Guinean context, I am compelled to be open minded, relaxed and not as task oriented. This can be a painful experience at times, but very good for personal growth.

3. **They don't seem to value variety as much as I did:**

One of the cultural values that I did not realise I had before arriving in Papua New Guinea was variety. Papua New Guineans are so much more content than I to do the same activities every day, eat the same food, and do the same routine for weeks on end. They do have variety when they visit relatives or go to town, but these visits tend to be rare for most people.

When participating in a workshop, there were times when I felt nervous watching my students writing, drawing and typing in a very quiet manner (and in my view, monotonous). Thus, I planned for us all to have a break by playing a mixer game. One of my students mentioned in his evaluation that he felt this was an inappropriate activity because we all needed to work hard to finish our tasks. I realized from this comment that I had assumed they were bored because I was, which was not the case!

In Summary

Thoughts from a grassroots literacy worker who has much to learn…

When teaching overseas, I have had to consider the many different contexts that my fellow learners come from. Things that worked "back home" in the United States did not work in the same way in another cultural setting.

Before and between each workshop, I began my planning with somewhat grandiose ideas of what my students and I could accomplish together in certain amounts of time. However, I found that the only way we could work together was for me to have an open mind, face my own cultural biases, and to facilitate literacy activities for my students within their own comfort zones. Many times I did not "get it right," as my comfort zones were very different from theirs! However, each time a "cultural light" went on for me, I was rewarded with seeing another intriguing aspect of my colleagues' rich heritage, allowing us to move on together as a group and providing many opportunities for the cross fertilisation of ideas. When we were able to succeed in creating a comfortable learning environment, I watched them create, learn and lead each other in amazing ways.✍

Collaborative Efforts for the Futures of Detainees. The Giligili Correctional Institution Detainees' Literacy Program Teacher Training Workshop Alotau, Milne Bay Province

by Yasuko Nagai

Introduction

Author with the staff

The idea of a Detainees' Literacy Program originated with Lance Corporal Sulo, the Officer-in-Charge of the Detainees Reception and Discharge Section. He is from Divinai, a Tawala speaking community, 28km east of Alotau. After graduating from Cameron High School, he joined the Correctional Institutions Service (CIS) in 1989 and was posted to Wewak, Sepik Province, for seven years. In 1999, he was transferred to Alotau. In September and October 2002, he had an opportunity to attend a six-week CIS Adult Literacy Training Trainers Workshop in Port Moresby. During the workshop he learned about a participatory method that was new to him. He was impressed with the idea of producing reading materials on the basis of people's interests or current problems in the community, but the workshop did not provide time to put these ideas into practice. After the workshop, he compiled a report and made recommendations to the Giligili Correctional Institution to begin a Detainees' Literacy Program. He also mentioned it to former schoolteacher detainees. However, beginning such a new program was not considered to be the highest priority of the institution at that time.

[Yasuko Nagai joined SIL in 1978. She helped develop the Maiwala Elementary School in the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea. She is currently working as a researcher and cosultant in the Academic and National Training Section of LCORE, the language department of SILPNG]

Towards the end of March 2003, S, one of the detainees, wanted to read the Bible. He could speak English but could not read it. So he approached B, one of the former schoolteacher detainees, to teach him to read English. B recommended that S learn to read in Tok Pisin first, so that it would be easier to learn to read English. As S was very keen to learn, he asked for the necessary stationery to be brought to him. On seeing him make steady progress and compile his own Tok Pisin-English dictionary, a few other detainees were also inspired to learn to become literate. So B asked G and A, two other former schoolteacher detainees, to assist him with teaching. As they kept Sulo informed about their inmates' progress in their learning, Sulo waited for an opportune time to propose a Detainees' Literacy Program.

After a six-month period of re-shuffling administrative officers in Giligili, a new Function Officer was appointed to the Detainees' Welfare, Rehabilitation and Project in February 2005. Almost at the same time, B requested that Sulo organise a literacy program for any other detainees who were motivated to become literate. With the approval of the Function Officer, Sulo began to approach various community leaders to form a committee to plan, give advice and monitor the proposed Detainees' Literacy Program. As a result, the first Committee meeting was held in the Giligili Correctional Institution Library on 15 March 2005.

When Sulo went to the local Education Department to seek their assistance, the Officer-in-Charge of adult education could not provide personnel to train teachers or teach detainees. Instead, he sent Sulo to SIL to seek their assistance. Thus, his request was made known through the LCORE Literacy Section. I immediately responded to his request to help facilitate the program, since I was already familiar with the Alotau area from my previous work and a research project (Nagai, 1999, Nagai and Lister, 2004). Not only the local Education Department but also Sulo was very pleased about my possible involvement. Thus, our correspondence began. I explained cheap ways of producing reading materials while teaching. However, he thought, according to the procedure which he learned from the workshop in 2002 (ACCU, 2001), that he had to prepare teaching materials prior to my arrival for a teacher training workshop.

The Materials Production Workshop

The first Materials Production Workshop was held in the library from 10 May to 16 June 2005. It was facilitated by two newly trained elementary school teachers who had been identified by the Education Department as "Trainers of Trainers (TOTs)." As they were teaching in the morning at

their respective elementary schools, the workshop was held only three afternoons per week for six weeks. Besides the three CIS officers and four former teacher detainees, Sulo invited five women to participate in the workshop, so that they would be able to begin a women's literacy program if needed in the future. These women were: a Teacher-in-Charge of the CIS Elementary School, two officers' wives and two other officers' daughters.

It was rather difficult for them to try to produce reading materials for adults on the basis of their elementary school teacher training. As the two TOTs were newly graduated elementary school teachers themselves, they did not have any experience of teaching adults, so the content of the workshop was heavily focused on theories and did not meet the expectation of the participants who wished to learn to teach detainee students. As a result, some of the participants lost interest and motivation to attend the workshop while others persevered and sat through the lectures, wondering how they could put their learning into practice. After the workshop, the four former teacher detainees continued materials production with the artistic inmates, as was instructed by the TOTs. In reality, they felt as if they were on their own, heading nowhere, not knowing what they should do next. They had been led into the mountains far away from the sea when they had wanted to learn how to steer a canoe.

The Initial Teacher Training

I arrived in Alotau on Thursday 11 August and visited Sulo and the Commander at the Giligili Correctional Institution the following day. The commander was extremely appreciative of my coming and was very pleased to be involved in a research project which I initiated. Then, Sulo took me to the library where we made plans for the workshop to commence the following week. Sulo also sent for the four detainee teachers who were soon escorted out of the locked compound and into the library. Each teacher had made one Big Book, one poster, one set of alphabet cards and a syllable chart. They had done an excellent job. However, the materials they produced lacked cohesiveness in themes and levels. I suggested they put them aside as supplementary readers and make simple stories *with* the students using Language Experience Approach (LEA). LEA is a very effective method for teaching not only children but also adults (Nagai, 2004). Although it had been included in the original Elementary School Curriculum, it had not been taught in the recent Certificate of Elementary Training (CET). So the teachers were delighted to have the privilege of learning LEA as a result of being in a correctional institution.

On Monday 15 August, Sulo informed the local Education Department of the commencement of a Teacher Training Workshop, which was a real surprise, or rather, a shock to them. On Tuesday 16, I met with Sulo in the library and made further plans for the workshop. In the morning of Wednesday 17 August the Commander officially opened the workshop in the library. It was dark inside because there was no electricity during the day. There were eight wooden desk-bench units and a large table in the library. In order to create a participatory atmosphere, Sulo and the teachers rearranged them into a semi-circle and removed the large table to make a little space for some activities during the workshop. Since the institutional activities are organised under a strong Christian influence, Sulo suggested we take turns leading devotions.

The participants of the workshop included Sulo and two other officers as well as four former teacher detainees. One elementary trainer from the Education Department attended the initial two days only. The four teachers' backgrounds were as follows:

Name	Age	Teaching Qualification	Teaching & Work Experience
B	45	Primary School Teacher Elementary School Teacher	Grades 2, 4, 5, 6 EP, E1, E2
A	33	Elementary School Teacher	EP, E1
G	28	Elementary School Teacher	EP, E1
T	29	Primary School Teacher	Grade 7 (Science and Maths), agency clerk in a bank, professional singer

(NB. EP = Elementary Preparatory, E1 = Elementary Grade 1, E2 = Elementary Grade 2)

I briefly explained the LEA procedure and how to teach parts of language from a story. Then, we composed a story together based on the event we had just experienced in the library and made it into a chart story[1] (see Appendix 1). On Thursday, we practised reading fluently and dramatised the story. I also explained how to draw out a key phrase to teach a key letter/sound. On Friday, we continued practice teaching parts of language. However because the participants were all literate, it was too easy for them. So I explained that learning to teach was like learning to steer a canoe: it would be useless to learn to steer a canoe in still water but necessary to do

so in a river with a current. As the participants were all skilled at paddling canoes, they understood the necessity of practice teaching in an actual classroom. Hence, Sulo made an arrangement to begin practice teaching from Monday 22 August.

The Language of Instruction

Although English is the lingua franca of Milne Bay Province, Tok Pisin is the official language of the Correctional Institutions. Since all the officers from Milne Bay have served in the New Guinea region, they have all learned to speak Tok Pisin while at the same time mixing in many English words. Officers from the New Guinea region seem to be more comfortable talking with me in Tok Pisin rather than English, while the officers from Milne Bay were more comfortable speaking with me in English. Officers from Milne Bay often switched from English to Tok Pisin and vice versa while speaking among themselves. Most detainees could speak English, but a few from remote areas with poor educational backgrounds could not. Thus, officers hoped that they would learn to communicate better through the literacy program in Tok Pisin. In other words, all the detainee students had to learn to read and write in Tok Pisin while they were still learning to speak it.

Since the students came from many different *tok ples* (mother tongue) groups, I agreed to facilitate a literacy program in Tok Pisin, whose orthography is similar to that of other PNG *tok ples* orthographies. I also initiated the idea of incorporating *tok ples* within the program to help participants appreciate their traditional languages and cultures. For example, they first composed a story together in Tok Pisin. Then, they were encouraged to work together in their own *tok ples* groups when learning a sound/letter in Tok Pisin. They were also encouraged to think of words with the same sound/letter in their *tok ples* . As they wrote words in their own *tok ples* on the blackboard and read them to the rest of the class, *tok ples* was valued and respected as much as Tok Pisin. At the same time, each student wrote a word and drew a picture for it to make a word-picture dictionary in his exercise book. *Tok ples* word-picture charts were also prepared by the teachers and some of the students. More words with pictures were added to the charts as the participants learned a new letter/sound every two weeks.

During the first two weeks of practice teaching, the teachers continued to find it difficult to teach in Tok Pisin. Since they felt more comfortable teaching in English, Sulo agreed that it would be all right for them to mix

English and Tok Pisin while giving instructions, but that they should compose a story in Tok Pisin. It was rather amusing to see both the teachers and students trying to speak and read Tok Pisin, while everyone else in PNG was trying to speak English which is the language of wider communication. Oftentimes, teachers spelled words in English and some of the students added the suffix "-s" to make a Tok Pisin noun plural as in English. One of the teachers taught the students to say 'tisa' in Tok Pisin, while they could say 'teacher' in English. Every morning after the morning roll call, they were ordered to line up in groups for the various activities of the day. They did not realise that 'lain' in Tok Pisin meant a 'group'. On another occasion, both the teachers and the students were confused with the words, *poret* (forehead) and *pret* (afraid).

There are 16 consonants, 5 vowels and 2 semi-vowels in Tok Pisin. The plan was to teach one letter/sound per fortnight. As they composed a story together based on their experience, the teachers learned to determine which letter/sound should be taught from the story. Then, I helped them make a list of letters/sounds in Tok Pisin according to their positions in the mouth. I also helped them determine which sound/letters could be more useful and easily felt in the mouth, thus would be better to be taught early on. Then, the teachers learned to identify a catch phrase in a story with a letter/sound that occurred frequently in the phrase, especially in the word-initial position. For example, "p" was taught from a phrase: "*Wanpela dok i painim papa bilong em*."

The Students

Initially 41 detainees were identified as potential students based on their educational backgrounds in the official records that were passed on to CIS from the Police Department. However, we soon discovered that some of the information was unreliable in light of that provided by the teachers. Thus, the number of the students was reduced to half. Then, the teachers also identified some other inmates as potential students, although they were not on the original list. As a result, the number of potential students became 26.

Although I suggested that the teaching staff give a simple screening test, they preferred to stick to a new list of students. In order to pay closer attention to each student, we formed two groups by dividing the list of names in two. In a few days, however, we began to notice that some of the students who had some literacy skills were dominating and intimidating others who did not. The teachers also reported to us that some of the

students complained that they were not receiving more advanced teaching, but could not tell us their names because of their relationship with them. Thus, we decided to give them a dictation test with simple three-letter words in order to separate out those who had no literacy skills.

From the test results, we were able to identify those who had already gained some literacy skills, as well as those who had complained. Three of the ones with literacy skills had been taught by B during the previous few months and nine others had somehow picked up basic literacy skills despite their poor educational backgrounds. In fact, many of them were very bright and quick to learn. Hence, another time of reflection and re-planning became necessary. From the roll book, we also identified four students who were not regular in their attendance: two returned to the class after Sulo had encouraged them to continue, but the other two dropped out. One of them could not see well as a result of severe cataracts on both eyes, and the other had been locked up in the high security unit due to misbehaviour. As a result, the number of the students became 24: fifteen in their 20s and 30s, five in their 40s or 50s and four juveniles. Some of them could not remember their dates of birth and others had forgotten how old they were after being in the institution for some time.

From the third week of practice teaching, we regrouped the students into two levels: 14 emergent literacy learners in Level 1 and 10 others in Level 2. However, after a couple more lessons, we further discovered that some of the Level 2 students were still needing to learn basic phonics skills, while others were almost ready to go on to a Tok Pisin-English bridging class. Since they were highly motivated to learn, the teachers were afraid that they would lose interest in learning, if they were dismissed from the class. The teachers also wondered if those who needed to learn phonics skills should return to the Level 1 group. I suggested that they should be kept together with the others in the Level 2 group.

During the next lesson or two, as they received extra teaching in phonics, those with weak phonics skills in the Level 2 group began to regain confidence not only in the class but also in everyday life in the institution. Furthermore, through rewriting a story from the Level 1 students' perspective (see Appendix 2), the Level 2 students began to develop a more considerate and caring attitude towards the Level 1 students. On 22 September which was my last day with them, I encouraged the Level 2 group to observe the lesson of the Level 1 group. By doing so, they became more than willing and honoured to assist the teachers and their inmates in the Level 1 group.

As we came to know each other better during the three weeks we were together, the students became more open about giving honest information regarding their educational backgrounds, as shown in the following chart:

Number of Students	Grade completed	Reasons for poor educational background
5	NIL, 2, 6	Lack of school fees (One of them attended school without learning much. Additionally, he felt shy about not having a school uniform.)
3	1, 2	Family problems (Parents were divorced; Mother was living away in Moresby, being left with grandparents.)
2	1	Lived too far away from school
5	NIL, 1, 2	Ran away from school and lost interest as a result of an argument with the teacher, beaten by the headmaster, bullied by older boys
4	NIL	Parents and relatives were more concerned about village life than schooling.
2	NIL, 1	Tribal fighting disrupted the operation of the school
1	1	When transferred to another school, he was rejected by the Board of Management due to his age (19)
2	1, 2	More interested in activities outside of school

As I felt it impersonal to call the students 'Level 1' and 'Level 2', towards the end of the fourth week, I suggested they decide on a name for each group. The Level 1 group decided to call themselves *Kumul* (Bird of Paradise) and Level 2 called themselves *Torangau* (Eagle). Calling themselves by these names helped them feel much needed pride and camaraderie, which was evident from their participation in the launching of the program during the fifth week.

Curriculum

The curriculum for the detainee students was developed during the practice teaching period. In this curriculum, we did not aim to teach literacy in order for the detainees to function in a classroom only. Rather, we aimed to teach them to think critically in order for them to become more effective and more cooperative citizens in their communities when discharged.

In contrast to young children, adult learners have a longer attention span and have already acquired knowledge and skills that are necessary in everyday life. Yet, these particular students felt inferior because of their poor educational backgrounds. They also felt guilty for what they had done and the effect it was having on their families. So the curriculum aimed to create a non-threatening atmosphere in which students could enjoy learning together through friendly competitions and games similar to those in elementary schools.

The curriculum also aimed to encourage students to appreciate that learning is fun and meaningful. Both the students and the teachers were encouraged to learn to listen to each other and accept each other's views through the process of composing a story together and making it into a chart story. Later, the story was rewritten in various forms by changing main characters, events, times, perspectives, etc. In order to alter their receptive and self-centred ways of thinking to more reflective and critical ways, the teachers and the students were encouraged to rewrite a story from the other's perspective.

In this curriculum *tok ples* is valued as much as Tok Pisin. The students firstly learn to read fluently and think through a whole meaningful story in Tok Pisin. Then, when they move on to learning parts of language through phonics, they also learn to apply phonics skills in *tok ples* . Later, they learn to read and write in English through a Tok Pisin-English Bridging Program. Through the acquisition of literacy skills, the students are

encouraged to develop better communication skills in various forms in the languages of communication in PNG society.

Practice Teaching

I made a tentative four-week cycle of lesson plans as follows:

- Week 1: composing a story together and reading fluently
- Week 2: understanding parts of language through phonics
- Week 3: rewriting the story and reading fluently
- Week 4: understanding parts of language through phonics

One of the messes was used as the classroom for the literacy class. The grey brick walls and small high windows, together with no lighting during the day, made the room dark. We rearranged the two heavy-duty table-bench units into a V-shape, so that the students could sit closer to the blackboard and the front walls where the chart stories were hung. The teachers also hung alphabet cards on the other walls to make the room look more like a classroom.

During the first two weeks of practice teaching, Sulo negotiated with the institution for the allocation of class time, so that all the students could be involved in other activities. Initially, it was agreed to have one session in the morning and another in the afternoon. Then, it was changed to have two one-hour sessions per morning except every other Wednesday, which was sports day. After dividing the students into two levels, the length of each class was adjusted further during the third week: approximately 70-80 minutes for Level 1 and 45-50 minutes for Level 2.

During the third week of practice teaching, Sulo called a second committee meeting. At the meeting, I was asked to give a report on the current Teacher Training Workshop. I briefly explained the curriculum and lesson plans. I also read one of the LEA stories and rewritten stories. Then, the committee members were invited to visit the classroom in the locked compound. They were amazed to see the semi-dark mess, which they had previously visited, transformed into a bright classroom with chart stories and alphabet cards in Tok Pisin, and word-picture charts in the students' *tok ples* , as well as Big Books and posters that were prepared through the Materials Production Workshop. So they officially recommended that the Giligili Correctional Institution Detainees' Literacy Program be launched on 21 September 2005.

The fourth week was cut short due to the Independence Day long weekend. So the lessons for the fourth week spilled into the fifth week. Further delays were caused by preparations for the launching of the

program. Nevertheless, the teachers and the students were able to complete the last two lessons of the first four-week cycle by the end of the fifth week.

The Official Launching of the Detainees' Literacy Program

The event took place in the sports yard facing the male detainees' compound. After the guests had been escorted to their shelter by the Kilivina dancers, the program began with the National Anthem in Tok Pisin. It was sung in two-part harmony by the teachers and students, together with the CIS Elementary School children. It was followed by the National Pledge and a 'Literacy Song' composed by one of the teachers, both of which were in Tok Pisin. After the entertainment and several speeches, the guests were escorted into the classroom where one of the teachers and the students demonstrated reading one of their chart stories. One student then gave a testimony: he had been rejected all his life, but as a result of attending the literacy class he has now learned to do something worthwhile. As he broke down in tears, we also shed tears of thankfulness. Then, we returned to the shelters for a feast.

The whole event was well organised and coordinated by the officers, their families and the detainees. It began and finished according to schedule. The event was fully documented by a reporter from Conservation International and was featured on EM-TV in PNG.

Reflections and Conclusions

Since I was not familiar with life in the Giligili Correctional Institution, I employed LEA to suit the interests of the detainee students. I also considered that it would be more appropriate for me as a researcher, to work together with the teachers as co-researchers in order to develop a curriculum and teaching strategies through a PAR process. The spiral process of planning, acting, observing, documenting, reflecting and re-planning contributed to the formation of not only a curriculum but also tailored teaching strategies for this particular audience behind bars.

Although none of the officers in the teaching team had been trained as teachers, they caught on to the idea of enjoyable, meaningful ways of teaching emergent literacy learners, especially because they could relate the concepts to their own children. As a result of practice teaching, the three former elementary school teachers discovered that teaching their inmates was similar to teaching children, yet they were adults who had already acquired life skills. One teacher who formerly taught grade 7 was

willing to learn to adjust his linear ways of teaching to more holistic ways in order to help his inmates in their learning. As they were all committed Christians, they prayed earnestly and worked together with humility.

Initially, I suggested to the teaching staff that the same teacher should teach a whole two-week lesson so that he could experience the flow of it while others observed and learned. However, B, who was much older than the other three and with more teaching experience, insisted that everyone take a turn to practice teach. As a result, most teaching staff were not sure of where to pick up in each lesson, especially because each group of students had composed two separate stories. This chaotic practice teaching situation became worse when the students were regrouped into two levels, as B suggested that every teacher should experience teaching both levels. Since the three teachers had not been trained to teach E2, and they were still adjusting to teaching adult learners, they found it difficult to teach two levels alternately. It was like swapping the captain many times between two canoes. So the canoes were unstable and were not going forward smoothly. By this time, everyone was convinced of the need to have the same person learning to steer the canoe throughout a two-week course of lessons, beginning with a whole meaningful story and moving on to parts of language through phonics.

In order to solve the problem, I suggested the three teachers concentrate on teaching Level 1 students, while B taught Level 2 students with my assistance. Since there were 14 students in Level 1 and most of them still needed to learn basic alphabet and phonics skills, I also suggested that each teacher take responsibility for looking after certain students outside of the classroom. As the teachers and the students shared the same dormitories, teachers often reported to us that some students had already copied a chart story or some others were practising a 'say-it-fast' game and wanting to have a set of letter-cards to practise spelling. It is obvious that the strength of this program lay heavily on the highly motivated students and committed teachers.

The officers in the institution were the first persons to witness the positive outcome of the program right from the early stage of practice teaching. Because of the less relevant workshop conducted by the two TOTs in May, the teaching staff members were feeling somewhat lost and apprehensive by the time I arrived in August. Nevertheless, they began to see the benefit of learning by doing. As I helped them to understand the purpose of various teaching strategies, they were able to put them into practice. They also recognised that the detainees' literacy class in Giligili was not like a formal classroom where only the right answers were expected. Rather, it was a

place where every student was accepted and encouraged to participate in all the activities. Furthermore, the students were able to appreciate each other and celebrate each other's achievements.

On my last day at the institution, the teachers reported how the whole atmosphere within their dormitories had been changing, and the behaviour of inmates, not only of the students but also of others, was changing. One student expressed a desire to become a counsellor when discharged. Another gained the confidence to share for the first time at the Bible study in a dormitory. They used to think that 'literacy' was about reading and writing only, but now they have become fully aware of the fact that it is about regaining confidence and building character. The time of teaching and learning was also a time of developing friendships. For the first three weeks or so, I was not sure how safe I might be among 230 male detainees in the locked compound, especially when all three officers had to leave me alone for a few minutes among the students and the teachers. However, as we got to know each other, we began to develop respect and trust between us. By the end of the fourth week, I knew that no detainee would ever harm me, but would rather protect me.

During the next few months, the teachers and the students will continue their literacy classes. They are working together to achieve well in order to progress to the next level of learning, especially through a Tok Pisin-English Bridging Program. An inservice course for a bridging programme is planned for mid-2006 around the time the current students will be graduating from their classes.

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Appendix 1: LEA Story

Wanpela Dok Painim Papa

Page 1: Dispela moning, mipela sindaun insait long hauskuk.

Page 2: Wanpela dok i painim papa bilong em, na em i laik kam insait.

Page 3: Tisa em i luksave na em i tok, "Ssss!" Papa bilong dok i tok, "Go!"

Page 4: Tasol dok i les long go. Olsem na em i ronim em wantaim ston.

Appendix 2: LEA Story and Rewritten Story

Nambawan De Bilong Skul

Page 1: Long Mande, mipela hamamas long go long skul.

Page 2: Insait long klasrum, tisa tokim mipela long wokim stori. Tisa i raitim het long Tok Ingris.

Page 3: Kopol Sulo i tok, "Hei, raitim long Tok Pisin!" Tisa i tok, "Sori, sori."

Page 4: Na mipela olgeta i lap olsem, "Hahahahaha!"

Mi Pret Long Skul

Page 1: Long Mande, mi tingting planti long go long skul.

Page 2: Insait long klasrum, tisa i toktok long Tok Pisin, tasol mi no klia.

Page 3: Mi sindaun isi wantaim pret.

Page 4: No gut mi kranki na olgeta man bai lap olsem, "Hahahaha!"

STEP (*S*trengthening *T*okples [vernacular] *E*ducation in *P*apua New Guinea): Assisting Papua New Guineans with Community-based, Vernacular Literacy Programs

by Joanne Locnikar

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Introduction

Papua New Guinea: Land of the Unexpected. An appropriate motto, considering Papua New Guinea is the most culturally and linguistically diverse country in the world with 818 indigenous, living languages (Rueck 2005, pers. comm. 21 April)[1]. This great diversity presents quite a challenge to those involved with vernacular education in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

The STEP Course (***S***trengthening ***T***okples ***E***ducation in ***P***apua New Guinea) has been one response to this challenge. This paper introduces the STEP Course and explains how it grew out of the needs of local communities intent on sustaining and expanding vernacular literacy programs. Discussion focuses on aspects of the STEP Course that encourage, practise and promote community-based vernacular literacy, community ownership and pride in one's cultural identity.

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[1] Mike Rueck was the SIL Language Survey Coordinator in PNG until December 2005. Though the exact figure changes, 818 is currently the most accurate for 2005. Number of speakers in each language range from 165,000 to fewer than 100.

Background

In 1975, when PNG became an independent nation, the government chose to continue with the "English only" policy in formal education – a carryover from Australian rule. Community schools, Grades 1-6, were to be taught in English. However, the non-formal system continued to use local vernaculars to teach literacy in village preparatory schools.

As the new government gained confidence, and members reflected on their own experiences as students under the "English-only" policy of education, it was time to address the issue of culturally relevant education for all. The need was crucial for a statement or philosophy of education that would be relevant to all the culturally diverse peoples of PNG. Recognising the importance of cultural identity, the Constitutional Planning Committee of the new government issued the statement, "The diversity of our country is one of its greatest strengths" (Matane 1986:5). Building on this, a ministerial committee, appointed in 1986, published the report, *A Philosophy of Education in Papua New Guinea*. This was the first official document recommending a bilingual system of schooling: using the vernacular languages in the early years of school and bridging to English after. It also recommended that the local schools and communities promote the value of every individual's cultural identity through a locally created curriculum (Matane 1986).

It wasn't until 1991 that the government adopted this statement and began to implement it through training teachers and beginning a pilot program. Today both the formal system of education (Elementary Reform) and the non-formal system (TPPS – Tok Ples[2] Prep Schools) are working to implement bilingual schooling for all by setting up vernacular classrooms in the preparatory years. In a country with over 800 languages there are many challenges to be overcome to make this a reality for all.

Sociolinguistic factors also play a part in this challenge. The fact that many people in PNG have had outside contact only in the last 40-70 years helps us begin to glimpse the incredible speed at which these people have been thrust into the 20th and 21st centuries from what was virtually a stone-age society. Culturally, the people of PNG are in a stage of transition. They are proud of their traditional heritage, based on relatively small vernacular social groups, yet they are eager to adapt to the changes necessary for benefits associated with a national identity (Scoble 2001, p 43)

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[2] *Tok Ples* (or *tokples)* is Melanesian Pidgin for 'vernacular'. Literally it means "talk of the place".

Linguistically, PNG, unlike most developing countries, has no indigenous linguistic or ethnic group that dominates politics, business or education (Wroge 2000b). Tok Pisin (Melanesian Pidgin) is the most widespread lingua franca in PNG with Hiri Motu used in parts of the south. English is the official language of government, major businesses and education. With very few speaking English as a first language, the literacy rates in PNG remain low.

Due to the symbiotic nature of language, culture and identity, the challenges that occur during this transitional stage are shaping the literacy and education programs in PNG. What kind of a program will increase literacy rates and uphold cultural values while incorporating a national identity? One way to achieve this, in a country of over 800 languages, is to set up vernacular, community-based literacy/education programs.

Vernacular, community-based literacy/education programs are not new to PNG, rather, they have been rediscovered - in the formal system- and are being implemented on a much larger scale with the support of current national policy – for children and adults.

Defining Community-based Literacy in PNG

There are numerous examples of successful indigenous, community-based literacy/education programs worldwide: North Solomons Province, PNG (Litteral 1995); Maiwala, Alotau Province, PNG (Nagai 1997, 2002); Hualapai, North America (McCarty and Watahomigie 1998); Fiji (White 2002); Maori, New Zealand (Durie 1998); Australia (Corson 1998). Each situation is unique and to address the extreme cultural diversity in PNG a local definition of literacy was drawn up by the Directorate for the National Literacy Awareness Secretariat.

Literacy in PNG means being culturally able to pass on both orally and by the printed page, the oral traditions which enrich the diverse social practices of individuals in every local community. These orally transmitted social practices radiate life and give meaning to a community and an individual. They also tell the community and the individual what to do in order to survive and see PNG prosper with its abundant natural resources as active agents in all institutions. The active individual will then be able to participate socially, politically, economically and spiritually and achieve integral human development through the integration of cultural traditions and reading and writing skills. (Jonduo 1997, p.37)

The education and literacy policy of PNG supports vernacular, community-based literacy for two reasons:

1. Tokples literacy makes it easier for people to learn. Starting with what they know and moving to what is not yet known is the basic principle behind vernacular literacy.
2. Tokples literacy helps preserve PNG's languages and cultures. It can revitalise local language and culture. (Malone 2001)

The only viable way to accomplish this in PNG is with community-based education. It draws on the community's knowledge, expertise and cultural practices to shape the work that schools do and make it relevant to the life experiences of the students (Corson 1998, p.239). More than just using local vernacular for teaching, it incorporates all that is culturally relevant for that community and it preserves and revitalises local language and culture. Not only are the people involved with the school facility but also the content of the curriculum.

A Challenge from Within

The current education policy in PNG is clear in its support of vernacular literacy and community-based programs (See National Curriculum Statement of PNG 2002). People in government and education are convinced of the value of these programs. The chairman of the first pilot project of a vernacular school on Buka Island in North Solomons Province, who had received his education in English, firmly supports vernacular literacy:

> We must train our children in the history, values and culture of our people. And we must use our language to teach them, for language is culture. If we truly understand our language, we can say that we truly understand our culture. Our language tells us our relationship to everything: to elders, to our parents, even to the sand, the rocks, the sea and the stars. If my children are divorced from my own language, then I cannot teach them and then my children will reject both my culture and me. (Waiko 1993, p.131)

But what about the local, village people who, because of past experiences or isolation, either do not value literacy or believe it is the responsibility of the government or an NGO to provide the literacy/education for their children? One major challenge to sustainability of literacy programs is the attitude of the village people. Unfortunately, many do not see themselves as stakeholders in the system and are reluctant to take ownership.

Schools were originally introduced by outsiders. They did not develop from needs within the culture. For the most part they have not been valued by communities as a necessary part of the culture. The "English-only" policy further alienated the school from the community. It had a destructive effect on the culture of those educated. Sir Paulias Matane, educated under the "English-only" policy, lamented:

> Education has made me a foreigner to my own tradition, culture and beliefs . . . I wish that my proud fathers could come back to me now, take me and transform me into one of them so that I would be like them – a colourful, articulate, skilful, proud, confident and brilliant man. But I have lost all these values because I went to school. (Waiko 1993, p.130)

Many people who went to school in the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's experienced the same alienation – school was separated from village life. These experiences were the impetus behind the new philosophy for relevant cultural education for all.

Changes need to be made on many levels and there are many challenges when attempting to incorporate a shift in attitudes and values concerning literacy/education. Ultimately, for literacy programs and education to be integrated into local culture as something valued, the local people must take ownership.

> This occurred successfully in North Solomons Province from 1979-1987[3] (Litteral 1995). Dissatisfied with the "English-only" school system, parents, along with local and provincial government, devised a two year preparatory school system to be taught in local vernacular. The schools were known as VTPS (village vernacular schools). This was a grassroots movement, locally controlled and community-based (Wroge 2000a).

A few other provinces followed suit but the majority of PNG communities still have not taken ownership of vernacular literacy programs. Today many PNG literacy workers seek training to help the people in their communities take ownership and start their own literacy programs.

[3] Civil war broke out on Bougainville Island (North Solomons Province) in 1988 shutting down literacy and education programs for over 12 years.

The STEP Course

One of the successful training programs for non-formal education, is the STEP Course (**S**trengthening **T**okples **E**ducation in **P**apua New Guinea). Through content and presentation of its curriculum, STEP addresses the issues of ownership and community attitude toward vernacular literacy. STEP also attempts to facilitate the shift in attitude necessary to motivate people to include vernacular, community-based literacy as something desired and valued in their culture.

The STEP Literacy Training Course, jointly run by SIL (Papua New Guinea Branch) and the National Bible Translation Association of Papua New Guinea (BTAPNG), trains experienced TPPS (Tok Ples Preparatory School) teachers to improve and expand their vernacular literacy programs through awareness campaigns, training other teachers and producing original vernacular materials for their classes and schools.

What is STEP?

Meeting a need

STEP evolved out of DTET (Diploma for Trainers of Elementary Teachers) a course originally established in 1994 to train trainers for teachers of preparatory classes in the new formal Elementary Reform System.

Soon after the course began the government changed its plan for training. The 2 ½ year course continued as STEP (Supervisors Tokples Education Program) under the non-formal system because TPPS teachers were still keen to expand the vernacular literacy programs in their language areas. Today the course is completed in 18-20 months.

In 2003, the name of STEP was changed to **S**trengthening **T**okples **E**ducation in **P**apua New Guinea to more accurately reflect the vision statement of the course:

The STEP course is committed to the empowerment of Papua New Guineans as competent resource people with a vision to serve their own communities by developing, managing and expanding sustainable vernacular literacy and education programs throughout the country. (STEP document 1993 – See End Note)

Course organisation

The STEP literacy training course consists of five one-month instructional modules completed in 18-20 months. Each module is followed by village assignments, which provide practical opportunities to apply concepts and skills learned in the formal classroom setting.

Assessment is ongoing and village assignments are only one aspect of overall assessment throughout the course.

The first four modules of the course provide a solid foundation in literacy and leadership. The seven components of this basic course are as follows:

A. Curriculum Development
B. Literacy and Numeracy
C. Materials Development
D. Teaching/Learning: Principles and Practice
E. Leadership/Management
F. Other Course Components (Health, ESL, Computers, etc)
G Village Component

Module 5 offers participants the opportunity to choose subject areas in which they may have a special interest. All subject areas will be used as instruments for advancing literacy. At present these are the electives being offered:

1. Children's Vernacular Education (Prep School and Elementary Reform)
2. Adult Vernacular Literacy

Community-based Literacy Focus

There are many facets of STEP but for the purposes of this paper I focus on the elements of the course that emphasise community ownership and the development of community-based literacy programs.

In the course set-up

Community ownership is encouraged before the course begins in the application process. The applicants are to be chosen by the community. The community is expected to pay a nominal fee each module to demonstrate their interest and support for vernacular literacy. The mentor[4] is usually someone involved in other community work, such as, translation, literacy, church leader, etc. Letters of recommendation are required from community leaders, village leaders, church pastors/elders, and spouse of the applicant.

[4] STEP has a mentoring program which requires a mentor for participants in each language group. Mentors must attend all modules with participants and must have knowledge of how the language works. The mentor should be an encourager and have a grasp of the sociolinguistic dynamics in the local community. Besides checking orthography, spelling and grammar of materials produced by the participants they also guide participants in assignments during STEP modules and in the village.

Concerns have been voiced as to the fact that participants of STEP are trained away from their local communities. Isn't the separation of school and community being perpetuated? On the contrary, despite increasing travel difficulties within the country, there are definite advantages to holding the course at Ukarumpa in the Eastern Highlands of PNG. One advantage has been commented on frequently by participants. Coming away from the village allows them to concentrate on their work without the daily distractions and responsibilities in the village.

Currently the teaching staff is comprised of both national and expatriate men and women who do not normally visit participants' villages. By maintaining a separation the villagers will not have outsiders coming in to do the training. The advantage being that the villagers must depend on the STEP participants, chosen by the community, to help them improve and expand their literacy program. All decisions and materials are made by the local community. STEP participants return to the village and train others to assist in all aspects of sustaining a vernacular literacy program. (In some language areas, SIL translators are present and assist only when needed.) In the long run this is to their advantage and it facilitates community ownership at all levels. For years many people of PNG have depended on outsiders or the government to set up, run and maintain their literacy programs for them. In STEP we believe it is time for them to take ownership and maintain their own programs.

In the curriculum

Community-based literacy serves the basis for much of the STEP curriculum. Despite the constraints of working within a Western system of education, the strong belief in the value of community-based literacy is a priority in the course within each major component.

Curriculum Development

The curriculum developed by STEP participants is unique to each language group. We begin with a cultural calendar that each language group fills in with the events and customs common to their culture and environment, e.g. weather patterns, food cycles, customs, celebrations, tools, etc. This calendar is taken back to the village and shown to others who assist with any necessary changes or additions (See Appendix 1).

Instructional themes are then developed from the completed cultural calendar. For example, if March is the yam harvesting season, the teacher would develop materials and activities for a one or two week theme about

yams or gardening. Teachers are trained to incorporate community resources into their lessons, e.g. people who can teach the children traditional customs in a traditional way. One STEP graduate comments that they "ask the people in the community to come and teach traditional singsings to the children. Then they perform them at special community functions, like fundraising days" (T. 2005, pers. comm. 15 March).

For adults, the curriculum is based on identified community needs – social, physical, spiritual and economic. Focusing on functional literacy, themes and materials are then developed addressing these needs (Waters 1998, p 396-397).

Literacy/Numeracy

The introduction to literacy in Module 1 focuses on multiple literacies – not just paper and pencil (Herbert and Robinson 2001).

The participants discuss and explore the idea that in their culture they already "read" many things. They are literate and have traditional literacies. Some examples participants have listed are:

- patterns in bilums (string bags) – certain patterns are from specific regions
- knots in a rope – traditional way of counting
- patterns/marks on post of house – identify a specific clan
- tracking animals in the bush – reading marks/prints left by animals
- storyboards – carved figures on wood tell a story

The reaction to this novel idea has been very positive and, for many, increases the value of traditional culture in their own minds. The importance of oral traditions and alternative literacies are integrated with reading and writing as they learn about total language development of children.

The participants are also encouraged to develop curriculum which includes traditional systems of counting.

STEP is reinforcing the idea that literacy is a part of the local culture and that local culture and customs are to be integrated into the curriculum by the community (Corson 1998; Jonduo 1997).

Materials Production

All instructional materials produced at STEP by the participants and in the village by the community are in the local vernacular. The mentor plays a key role in this aspect of the course as s/he is usually the one qualified to check the orthography, spelling, and grammar of the materials.

During Module 1 the participants work through a Writers' Workshop. This workshop begins with storytelling sessions to stress the importance of their oral tradition but also as a springboard to bridge into writing and reading stories. One graduate has told us "We have many books that teach children about the culture now" (M. 2005, pers. comm. 18 March). The Writers' Workshops are key assignments that can include many people in the village. It is a great tool for increasing awareness and encouraging involvement in the literacy work at the village level because people with various skills and talents are needed. Some tell stories, others write stories, others illustrate the stories, and still others are needed to produce the books and other materials or teaching aids needed for the literacy classes[5]. Participants also experiment with ways to use natural and recycled materials from their local environment when making literacy materials.

Teaching/Learning Principles and Practice

In this component we deal with a change in habits and attitudes. When they first come to STEP the participants and mentors have a definite idea of how they should teach in the school setting based on their personal experiences - learning by rote. During the course, as we discuss how children learn life skills in daily village living – by observation and trial and error, we bridge over to the school setting and demonstrate how they can incorporate this style of learning and teaching in the classroom. They are encouraged to dialogue with their students by letting them comment and question during lessons. They also practise learning by discovery which is a new idea for many in the school context. The practice teaching sessions give them opportunities to practise and refine the principles they have learned before they try them in the village and train teachers.

Leadership/Management

Literacy awareness campaigns are an ongoing assignment for the STEP participants. Their plans for awareness include visiting neighbouring

[5] Due to lack of infrastructure in the country and limited access to technology, most materials are still made by hand and duplicated with ink and silkscreens.

villages and regional government centres. They talk about their literacy program plans with the key stakeholders - the adults in the villages, village leaders, and local government education officers. Community ownership and opportunities for involvement are discussed as necessary factors for the sustainability of the program. The many facets of a literacy program require teamwork and delegation of work: creating a Board of Management or Literacy Committee; selecting teachers; training teachers; managing finances; community support of teachers and schools in practical ways, e.g. building of classrooms, pay school fees, supply food for teachers, etc.

Accountability is also a major topic as they must persuade the community that everyone is accountable to someone and if one person doesn't do his job it affects the entire literacy program.

Preparation for these campaigns occurs during the modules and participants work in groups to explore ways that people in the communities can become involved (See Appendix 2).

Village Component

After each module participants have the opportunity to consolidate, apply, practise and expand the knowledge, skills and attitudes they have acquired at STEP through their village assignments. This is a very important part of the course as participants are able to test new ideas and skills. Returning to the next module of STEP gives them the opportunity to evaluate and improve their techniques and materials. Many assignments require them to train others so that the literacy program can expand throughout the language area (See Appendix 3).

Assignments are designed to involve other members of the community thereby increasing their interest, motivation and commitment to vernacular literacy. Completion of the assignments is crucial as this is when the participants have the opportunity to lay the groundwork for a strong, sustainable, community-based literacy program.

Current Impact

From 1994 through 2004 there have been ten intakes[6] of the STEP course. All except two intakes – conducted in Western Province and Sepik Province – were conducted in the Eastern Highlands at the main SIL centre, Ukarumpa. STEP has accepted 226 participants with 165 (73%) completing all five modules and graduating. Of these graduates 12 (7%) are women.

A total of 35 PNG men and women have been mentors to participants - many of them former STEP graduates. Seven PNG men, most with BTA, have been on the teaching staff or in administrative roles. Participants from 103 languages (114 including dialects) and 18 of the 19 provinces have been trained at STEP. The following figures give an idea of the impact STEP training has had at the village level. These are the number of people trained by STEP participants as part of their village assignments from 1994-2002.

- Prep School Teachers Trained 1,483
- Teachers In-serviced 881
- Children taught in these classes 21,262
- Adult literacy teachers trained 680
- Adult teachers in-serviced 269
- Adult participants attending classes 7,505

(STEP Video 2005)

The numbers continue to increase as STEP continues and as the graduates expand out into neighbouring areas. The following reports from STEP graduates indicate that STEP is affecting many more languages than originally thought.

B (Kunimaipa language, Central and Morobe Provinces) began as a TPPS teacher in 1986. In 1994 he attended the first intake of STEP. Since his graduation in 1996 he has mentored two other Kunimaipa men through STEP and has helped various villages set up TPPS classes. When the formal Elementary Reform System came into Central Province two of the Kunimaipa men were hired on as teachers. ***B*** continued to supervise and train both TPPS teachers and Elementary teachers in the language area. ***B*** has reached out to the neighbouring languages of Weri and Guhu-Samane. Under his guidance and with outside funding, a literacy training centre has been constructed. In order to serve the most people, it is situated on the border of the three language groups. ***B*** has a full calendar for the next two years running workshops and training or supervising teachers.

T (Mbore language, Madang Province) attended Intake A and graduated in 1996. Before STEP, he had been involved with Mbore translation work. During STEP he and another Mbore man established nine TPPS schools.

[6] Each complete five module course is referred to as an intake. This paper includes Intakes A-K. Intake L is currently in session with 30 participants and 14 languages represented. These participants are not included in the figures given in this paper.

Over the years ***T*** has continued to be very active in vernacular literacy. In his language area community politics and lack of interest closed the schools so ***T*** sought out others who were keen to start literacy programs. He has helped communities from Aruamu, Kire, Ogea, Akighim and Onabasulu languages run Writers' Workshops, Teacher Training Workshops, Materials Production Workshops and Alphabet Design Workshops. He has assisted the Madang Province Elementary Trainers with materials production and he was STEP principal for Intake J in the Sepik Province in 2002-2003. Currently his community has renewed interest in vernacular literacy classes again and he is mentoring one Mbore man through the current L Intake of STEP.

Challenges Encountered by Graduates

There are two common challenges most STEP graduates face. The most difficult is lack of sustained community support. Initially the community is very motivated and supportive but over time their interest wanes and they stop offering practical support to the TPPS teachers. This is the most obvious indication of people not valuing literacy as a way of preserving their culture. As the graduates are discovering, it takes time to reshape attitudes.

The second challenge is the Elementary Reform System paying their prep teachers while TPPS teachers are primarily volunteers. This one difference between the formal and non-formal systems has caused problems for vernacular, community-based programs. Although both systems are recognised by the government, only those in the formal system are paid for teaching. Numerous TPPS teachers have quit when they see Elementary Reform teachers in neighbouring communities receiving pay from the government. As a result, many children end up with no vernacular literacy education.[7] ***B*** told me, "Elementary pay is killing TPPS." (***B*** 2004, pers. comm. 30 November). As mentioned earlier, tensions exist between the formal and non-formal systems. The pay issue and refusal of some provincial education officials to accept experienced TPPS teachers into the system are the two major tensions that we would like to see resolved.

As I interviewed ***T***, ***B*** and five other graduates, I saw an encouraging pattern emerge. These men and women with a vision for vernacular literacy did not give up if their own communities stopped supporting the literacy

[7] The formal Elementary Reform System has not been established in many parts of the country yet due to logistical challenges and financial constraints. The need for non-formal TPPS programs is still great and valid in PNG.

programs. Instead they reached out to other language groups who were interested. The STEP staff continues to receive similar reports from other graduates who have done the same.

Strengths and Weaknesses of STEP

Between the government, NGOs, churches and communities much is being accomplished for vernacular literacy programs. Much of the training conducted, however, is short-term, usually two to six weeks. This is great for awareness and initial motivation but this type of training is not conducive to sustainability of literacy programs. A long-term training course, like STEP, has definite advantages. Meeting for short times repeatedly over 18-20 months allows for more than just presentation of ideas, theories, activities and methods. The participants have the time to discuss, adapt and practise the things they are taught in each module – both during the module and in the village. The village time in between modules is a vital part of training as the participants can experience what works and what doesn't work in real life. Returning for another module gives the opportunity for follow-up. They share their successes and challenges and discuss ways to improve in their literacy work.

The community-based curriculum using cultural calendars and themes is another strength of STEP. We are making progress in breaking down the attitude that literacy/education has nothing to do with the community and the culture. Evaluations from the STEP participants indicate the importance of this aspect of STEP in their training. One STEP graduate comments, "This has strengthened the teaching of our culture and customs" (***B*** 2004, pers. comm. 30 November).

Another strength of STEP is the mentor system. A culturally and linguistically knowledgeable liaison is necessary for each participant since the training is given in Tok Pisin (trade language) or English, out of the language area and primarily by an expatriate teaching staff. The mentor's role is crucial as s/he assists the participants on many levels during the modules and in the village.

The camaraderie and synergy among participants is a strength that has become an added bonus. Participants come from all over the country meeting as strangers with preconceived attitudes toward different cultural groups. Some have been traditional tribal enemies. Add in a variety of religious denominations and one would expect some confrontations. Instead we repeatedly witness a breaking down of stereotypes and fears as participants get to know one another over time. They gather often enough

to truly appreciate each other as individuals. Many deep and lasting friendships have come out of the STEP course. Learning to work together for the common good is a lesson learned by many.

As all human endeavours are flawed, so too, the STEP course has its weaknesses. The most common request we receive from graduates is further training through in-services. STEP was able to conduct a three week in-service in 2000 due to special funding from AusAid. However, no other in-service has been conducted by STEP in Ukarumpa due to lack of funding, lack of staff and difficulty of travel and communication in the country. Currently, regional in-services are being discussed and planned with funding available.

Being a long-term course makes STEP an extremely expensive course to run. The cost per person is approximately $3,000 (US). This, in turn, keeps the course dependent on outside funding. Regional courses have proven to be more expensive and, logistically, extremely challenging.

Though national men have been and continue to be on staff, the course is primarily staffed and administered by SIL expatriates. One of the original goals of the course in 1994 was to turn it over to national administration and staffing within a few years. That has not happened due to a number of factors (e.g. new assignments, personal/family issues, illness). We still believe that the training in STEP would be more effective and more culturally relevant if there were more national involvement in teaching and administration.

Potential Impact

The potential impact of STEP could be phenomenal, not just in PNG, but in other countries.

STEP graduates from Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are preparing to launch literacy training in their countries based on STEP.

Neighbouring language groups are asking STEP graduates for assistance in setting up their own vernacular literacy programs. STEP graduates are even going into traditionally enemy tribal areas to respond to these requests. Some of our STEP graduates have returned to mentor participants from these neighbouring language groups as their vision of expansion begins to bear fruit.

The modular approach to training has expanded to other disciplines, such as, translation and teacher training, as others see the benefits.

Increasingly the formal Elementary Reform district education trainers ask STEP graduates for assistance in training teachers within their provinces due to the excellent training received in STEP.

STEP could have an impact on vernacular, community-based literacy in other countries as well. The basic principles behind the major components of the course are proven and can be adapted to most situations.

Conclusion

By recommending the use of vernacular language in the early years of schooling and community-based curriculum, the government adopted an education policy that would bring PNG into the modern world while preserving the diverse cultures within the country. Both formal and non-formal systems of education have diligently been working toward this goal. Under the non-formal sector, the STEP Literacy Training Course has made progress in assisting communities to establish and maintain vernacular, community-based literacy programs for children and adults in villages throughout the country. Vernacular, community-based literacy is a main focus of the course and is evident in the course presentation and curriculum. Reports and interviews from STEP graduates confirm their training in STEP has prepared them well for the work of starting and expanding community-based literacy programs in their communities.

One of the challenges literacy workers continue to face is that many people have yet to realise the value of vernacular literacy in their communities and cultures. Changing attitudes takes time and adopting new values takes even longer. However, the change is happening, perhaps slowly, but it is taking hold.

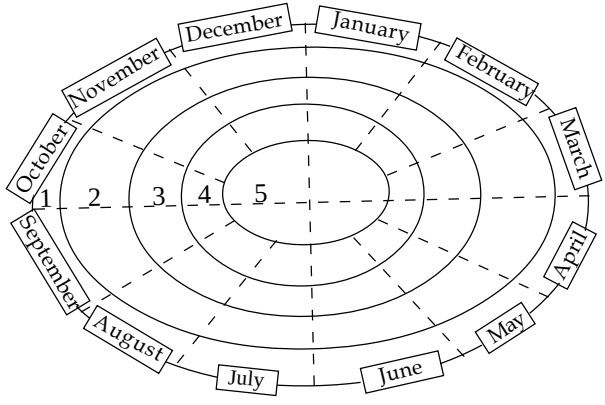
This was recognized recently by ***B*** as he told me the Kunimaipa in his area are now into the second generation of children going to prep school. There has been an attitude shift among the parents who attended TPPS in the 1980's and who are now sending their children to TPPS. Literacy is becoming an important value in their culture. They have seen the results with more children finishing primary school, entering high school and some getting tertiary training. The solid base of vernacular literacy has been proven as the TPPS children continually out-performed the other students in primary and secondary classes. (***B*** 2004, pers. comm. 30 November)

The people of PNG are resilient, a necessary attribute for rough living in a rough land. Their resiliency comes through in other aspects of life as evidenced in our STEP graduates who won't give up their literacy work

despite incredible challenges. It is gratifying to know that, despite its weaknesses, STEP is contributing to an increasing literacy rate and is helping to keep the diverse cultures of PNG alive. Vernacular, community-based literacy programs are making a difference. It is the men and women of vision, properly equipped for the task, who will lead their communities into the future with their language, culture and identity still strong.✍

End Note: Complete information regarding the STEP Literacy Training Course – including vision statement, core values, strategies, outcomes, complete curriculum and lesson plans – is available upon request by contacting the STEP principal by email at step-course@sil.org.pg or the SIL literacy office at lr-literacy@sil.org.pg

Appendix 1: Cultural Calendar



In each circle something different is recorded in the environment or culture.

1. Cultural, Religious and Sporting Events.
2. Agricultural, Fishing and Hunting Activites.
3. Natural Changes in the Environment.
4. Seasons.
5. Wind Direction.

Appendix 2

Ways the Community can Show Support (Sample list compiled by STEP participants)

1. give money (donations)
2. build classrooms
3. give food from garden
4. work in teacher's garden (start the garden)
5. go with literacy worker on awareness patrols, visit LLG, etc.
6. help by giving a free ride on a canoe, pmv, etc.
7. pray!!
8. provide prizes for Amamas De *(Celebration Day)*, fairs, etc.
9. make announcements (help publicise) about the literacy program in lotu, market, etc.
10. sell items at the market and give percentage back to school
11. cut trees to sell lumber
12. cash crops
13. set a school work day (community help day)
14. help carry supplies from town or airstrip
15. help cook food at courses
16. parents can give supplies to the school (pencils, chalk, etc.)
17. get stories from community
18. parents come to school-visitors day
19. mark a day for bringing firewood to school that can later be used/ sold by students/literacy workers
20. parents must come to all meetings
21. water system
22. ask community for literacy ideas
23. people to help you make materials (artists, make and bind books, etc.)
24. ask people to help with lessons or activities
25. ask people to help with students (read a story, math game) to improve the students learning
26. parents can perform a drama
27. help edit stories

Ownership happens when you keep the people informed and involved!!

Appendix 3

Village Assignments
Summary Page for Modules 1-4

Primary Goal:

In order to consolidate, apply, practice and extend what participants have learned in each module, they will work through and complete the village assignments designed for them.

Note: Assignments may be adapted to fit individual situations.

Module 1 Village Assignments

1. Conduct a two-week Writers' Workshop.
2. Read the stories written in Module 1 and at the workshop to people in the village. (fluency practice)
3. Complete the cultural calendar. Get community involvement, especially from village elders.
4. Conduct a literacy awareness presentation in your community and visit local government offices.
5. Find out the literacy needs of the area. (Literacy Needs Assessment)
6. Write a personal or family mission statement.
7. Draw a village area map for future village reports at STEP.
8. Translate health texts into vernacular: *Nutrition; Hygiene; Dangerous Things.*
9. Complete 5 inductive Scripture studies in the vernacular and write them in your exercise book.
10. Keep an accurate financial record of expenses for assignments on your financial record sheet.

Module 2 Village Assignments

1. Run a Writers' Workshop. Write predictable stories that go with themes and make into Big Books. (At least 5)
2. Read the predictable stories to others in the village. Practice letter formation at workshop. (Fluency practice)
3. Choose 5 new themes and develop theme webs with learning activities listed for each of the four elements of literacy.
4. Write lesson plans for the Four Elements of Literacy for one of the themes you have developed. Teach these lessons in the village.

5. Teach the literacy lessons used in practice teaching this module to children in the village.
6. Continue with literacy awareness sessions in the village and visit your local level government officer.
7. Translate 3 health texts into vernacular and make into Big Books. *(Diarrhoea; Immunisations; Child Health and Safety)*
8. Complete 5 inductive Scripture studies in the vernacular and write them in your exercise book.
9. Keep an accurate financial record of expenses for assignments on your financial record sheet.

Module 3 Village Assignments

1. Complete theme webs (5), term plans (1), weekly lesson guides (10), for all of Term 1. Write a complete set of lesson plans for one week.
2. Teach the lessons you used in practice teaching during Module 3 incorporating principles learned in classroom management and teaching/ learning principles.
3. Run a Materials Production Workshop to produce more stories and teaching aids.
4. Read stories you have written to people in the village. (Fluency Practice)
5. Continue to do informal awareness sessions in your area and visit local government officer or provincial education officer.
6. Translate 3 health texts into vernacular and make into Big Books. *(Malaria; TB; Coughs and Colds)*
7. Complete 5 inductive Scripture studies in the vernacular and write them in your exercise book.
9. Keep an accurate financial record of expenses for assignments on your financial record sheet.

Module 4 Village Assignments

1. Conduct a two-week Teacher Training Workshop.
2. Continue working on completion of materials for one year prep-school curriculum (Four terms) *(term plans, theme webs, lesson plans, weekly lesson guides, books, stories, teaching aids, etc.)*
3. Assist community in setting up a literacy committee (if needed).
4. Write a personal profile in English for graduation booklet.
5. Read stories you have written to people in the village. (Fluency Practice)

6. Continue literacy awareness in local community and public relations with local level government officials.
7. Complete 5 inductive Scripture studies in vernacular and write them in exercise book.
8. Keep an accurate financial record of your expenses for assignments on the financial record sheet.

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Report on The 8th UKFIET International Conference on Education and Development 13-15 September 2005 - Oxford, England

Learning and Livelihood

The 8th UKFIET International Conference on Education and Development was held 13-15 September 2005. The venue was the University of Oxford Examination Schools in Oxford, England. The conference was convened and managed by UKFIET (UK Forum for International Education and Training) and Cf BT (Centre for British Teachers). The theme 'Learning and Livelihood' included 25 sub-themes. The main theme of this conference ties in with the start of the UNESCO decade *Education and Sustainable Development* in 2005.

The conference provided the opportunity for educators and consultants across the globe to discuss how education and training enhances livelihood:

'Taking livelihood holistically, the theme allows us to universally explore how learning enhances individual potential across the life span and the well-being of families, communities and societies.' *(Conference Introduction)*

Program

The conference offered over 200 sessions/presentations ranging in format from larger, multiple thematic sessions to smaller symposia to roundtable discussions. Most 1 ½ hour sessions included three presentations. Each presenter had 15 minutes to present their topic followed by 15 minutes of questions from the audience.

Two keynote speakers addressed the introductory session. Vimala Ramachandran from India spoke of her involvement in adult literacy. Her focus has been literacy to empower women. She defines meaningful education as that which enables people to negotiate the world and their environment. She gave examples of literacy programs in South Asia for young men and women that are attempting to fulfill this definition of meaningful education. However, funding systems currently in place undermine long-term, sustainable literacy programs that will support sustainable livelihoods. The focus of most funding is to meet immediate crisis needs and immediate development.

In order to achieve sustainable livelihoods men and women need time to learn the skills required for critical analysis of situations and choices to be made for their future well-being. The training must also be rooted in the local environment/community with more integration of education and skills programs.

She concluded with answering the question: How can learning and livelihood be woven together? It can be achieved by giving people access to knowledge followed by the opportunity to implement this so that they will gain confidence and continue on with a sustainable livelihood.

Elvira Sabina is a professor of the Higher Education Department of the University of Havana. She primarily discussed the positive growth of education and literacy in Cuba under the current government system. She stated that sustainable human development requires education along with human values in all areas of life including knowledge, values, experiences and social responsibilities.

Both speakers stressed that the importance of local community training and integration of all areas of life, rather than a focus on compartmentalisation of education, will strengthen the ties between learning and livelihood.

Sessions

Over the three days of the conference I attended 11 sessions. Besides the plenary sessions, I attended sessions with presentations in various sub-themes, such as, Literacy & Livelihood; School, Family and Community Relations in a Changing World; Educating and Training out of Poverty; Language, Learning and Identity; Learning and Sustainable Livelihoods in the times of AIDS – Challenges and Prospects.

Distance Education for adults seems to be popular in many countries around the world. One presentation shared about the BLSP – Building Literacy in Sudan Project. This project aims to increase daily reading among adult refugees in Sudan. The literacy classes are started as small community based reading/writing circles within refugee camps. The result has been an increase in daily reading activity and original materials produced. There is anecdotal evidence of increased self-confidence and interest in literacy among the participants.

The World Bank gave a presentation on 17 projects they have been

funding in various countries involving rural distance learning (RDL) and technology. They combine teacher training, networks and partnership, and technology.

One of the aims of these projects is to reach nomadic groups of people spread out over vast areas. As the nomadic groups move around they have materials available to them for schooling. They also have technology available at specific centres in different parts of the country. When the nomads come to a provincial centre they can connect with teachers and use the current technology available to them to continue with their training and education. They stressed that in each project they use the existing technologies available in the homes which can range from computers and satellite phones to radio, TV and audio cassette players. The presenters also admitted that this project is geared to large language groups spread out over large areas of land. It is not for countries with numerous tribal groups like PNG. The specific example shared in the session was the project in Mongolia. A Mongolian man spoke about this project. He shared that it was helpful to the nomadic groups that come into the provincial centres regularly. The technology was focused in provincial centres and the outlying areas had nothing.

Many key findings and potential advantages were listed as a result of this pilot project. These will help them to develop more appropriately tailored projects for others. He stated that when the funding from World Bank stopped – after 2 years – the Mongolian project closed down.

I was not surprised that the project was not sustainable because of the dependence on outside aid (for finances, training, materials and equipment) and the lack of community ownership in the project. The World Bank gave out CDs with detailed information about these RDL (rural distance learning) projects. A CD has been sent to the Literacy Office in LCORE available to anyone interested in reading up on this idea. They really have researched this quite thoroughly and the project is an impressive one.

A number of presenters focused on the need for local, community- based literacy/education. I heard such presentations from people working in India, Uganda, Sudan, Macedonia and Nepal. They each presented projects they are currently working in to promote community-based education for both children and adults.

My presentation, under the sub-theme of *Language, Learning and Identity,* was about STEP. I focused on the elements of the STEP course that foster and encourage vernacular, community-based literacy programs. I started with a bit of PNG history to help the audience understand the context in

which we work. The main part of the presentation was to discuss the focus of vernacular, community-based literacy in each component of the STEP course. I concluded with some of the challenges our STEP graduates face and the positive impact they have had on many language groups in PNG over the last 10 years. An electronic copy of the complete paper is available in the Literacy Office in LCORE.

The sessions I attended were quite diverse yet I found them helpful and interesting. I learned many new things and discovered that many of us share the same challenges and successes as we work in literacy around the world.

Contacts

My main contacts were with the presenters of some of the sessions I attended and others that I met over the lunch break. I was pleased to get some time with Barbara Trudell (Africa Area) and become better acquainted with her. She and I were the only SIL representatives at this conference. It was interesting to hear what others are doing in the area of literacy and education around the world and they expressed interest in the work of SIL in PNG as we visited and spoke informally.

Personal Reflections

It was a privilege to attend this conference. I found the sessions informative and sometimes challenging as I tried to learn all the current acronyms being used in this field.

This conference was truly international as I heard presenters from various countries such as Africa, Nepal, India, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Denmark, Croatia, Norway, England and the U.S. It was heavily attended by people working in Africa, so many of the presentations were focused on work in Africa. I was disappointed to see so few people from the South Pacific or Southeast Asia. The topics were quite diverse and there could easily have been another SIL representative from PNG attending other sessions besides the ones I attended.

This was only the second conference I have attended for SIL but I can see the necessity of SIL members attending conferences just to keep abreast of current trends in the world of literacy and education. Since we are encouraged by SIL International to produce academic papers, it is necessary to attend these international conferences to keep our papers current and pertinent for our colleagues around the world.

As I listened to the various presentations I realised that many literacy/education workers face the same challenges and issues that we do in PNG. It was encouraging to hear that many of us, worldwide, are on the same track with our focus on training at the community level and encouraging community ownership of literacy/educational programs.

Writing a paper and making a presentation was quite a challenge but I have found it to be a worthwhile endeavour and I would like to see more SIL literacy workers taking part in this aspect of our work. We become too insular and stagnant the longer we remain isolated in our jobs with minimal outside contact with other professionals in our field of work.

Future Plans

I have written a paper and submitted it for publication at the UKFIET Conference. Two journals, ***IJED*** (International Journal of Educational Development) and ***Compare*** were looking for possible articles. The paper will be in the Literacy Office of LCORE. I will also be writing an article for READ Magazine based on the topic of my paper.

Recommendations and Conclusions

As mentioned above, it is crucial that our literacy workers stay abreast of current literacy/education theory and practices worldwide. This enhances a person's ability to continue in his/her work to the best of his/her abilities.

I would like to recommend that the PNG-SIL Branch make a regular practice of sending different literacy personnel to conferences such as this one. It benefits our branch, our literacy workers and the men and women we train. It also benefits others as we make contacts and develop relationships with colleagues worldwide. Training is professed to be one of SIL's top priorities. With this in mind, it is my sincere hope that we will be able to continue sending our literacy trainers and consultants to conferences in order to continue doing our job in the best ways possible.

I would like to thank the LCORE Deparment of the PNG-SIL Branch for providing the expenses that enabled me to attend the UKFIET Oxford Conference.✍

Submitted by Joanne Locnikar
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