



Tuesdays in the Trenches Literacy Presentation Series

Week 6: 30 July 2024

It is incredible to consider the many innovative ways in which organisations work towards the common objective of strengthening literacy development. In this week's session, the four presenters spoke on the very different ways as to how programmes run by their respective organisations are structured to increase engagement with reading and strengthen children's literacy practices and skills.

Dr CL Smith Foundation

Founder of Dr CL Smith Foundation, Malcolm Mooi, presented mainly on the foundation's flagship project which is zibuza.net, a digital platform that was originally established as a platform to support educators' continuous professional development. The attention to educators was a result of the organisation's belief that children learn more successfully when their educators perform well. The platform has since expanded to a broader group of stakeholders including NGOs, caregivers and learners. zibuza.net does not produce content but offers a space for teacher development, community engagement among educators, and the sharing of learning resources. **The platform's power lies in its potential to facilitate interactions** among users and create ongoing possibilities for sharing knowledge and resources. The development of zibuza.net shows the impact that specialists from other industries can have on the field of education. Malcolm has used his IT backgrounds and skills to develop a platform that offers thousands of users access to valuable resources and learning opportunities.

D^R. C. L. SMITH
● **Foundation** ●

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lectorsa

lectorsa is an established edtech company working towards change in education. Minda Marshall provided an overview of its various programmes, with a focus on its online reading programme, [eyebraingym](http://eyebraingym.com), which was launched during lockdown. In outlining lectorsa's projects, Minda emphasised the **importance of reading being a fun activity that children associate with excitement**. This attention to generating excitement around reading is clear in [eyebraingym](http://eyebraingym.com) and WordPlay's focus on learning through play, and lectorsa's recent launch of [Reading Riot](http://ReadingRiot.com), an online reading competition for Grade 6s.



<https://www.eyebraingym.com/>

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Letcee

Letcee is an NGO operating around Greytown, Umzinyathi District, KwaZulu-Natal focused on ensuring children have access to quality early learning opportunities. In 2022, Letcee implemented, Closing the Gap, a twice weekly programme that provides Grade R-3 learners with literacy and numeracy support. The establishment of the programme was a result of four primary schools who, realising the positive impact that Letcee has had at ECD level, requested assistance in supporting learners struggling with literacy and mathematics. **If gaps in learning are not addressed swiftly, they continue to widen and learners risk falling further behind every year.** Closing the Gap's aim is to ensure that any content and skills gaps are addressed early and that learners can exit foundation phase ready for the demands of Grade 4. In 2023, the programme expanded and is now present in eight schools, with further schools indicating interest in joining the programme.



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Lesedi Larona

Lesedi Larona was established in 2012 as a homework centre in Thabazimbi, Limpopo. The programme is run by Norma who is driven by a passion for ensuring children in the community have access to a safe space for homework and afterschool activities. CloseGaps in Language, Literacy and Numeracy Enrichment Programme responds to Norma's recognition that many of Lesedi Larona's learners needed further support with literacy and numeracy. Close Gaps works to provide 92 Grade 1-7 learners with additional learning support. In recognition of **the important role that parents/caregivers play in their children's education**, CloseGaps also engages with 34 parents/caregivers to assist them in supporting their children.



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Final reflections

Play and games help encourage children to read and to associate reading with enjoyment. Song, drama and other literacy practices all contribute to strengthening reading. Incorporating these various activities into literacy programmes is important to increase children's motivation to participate in programmes, especially if they associate reading with fear or boredom. Reading events such as ReadingRiot can contribute to generating excitement around reading.

Many of the discussions in this webinar series – in chat and during presentations – have centred on the **accessibility of reading materials**, especially in African languages. Throughout this series, we have been reminded of the impressive work that has been done in this regard. It is apparent though that for the benefit of these resources to be maximised, there needs to be greater awareness of their availability and how they can be accessed.



Smaller organisations play a crucial role in supporting our children’s education. A struggle that many smaller organisations experience is that of not being aware of how to access assistance in working towards their project objectives. This is not only in terms of securing funding but in being able to connect with other NGOs who could contribute resources, training and advice. NASCEE is considering various ways in which we can work to provide organisations with such assistance. We want to **ensure organisations have access to as many tools and resources as possible** to strengthen their potential impact.

Final Summation

Join us for the culmination of this Literacy Presentation Series

Date & Time: 13 August 2024, at **10:00 am**

Online: [Teams Meeting](#)

Haven't registered to join the session? [Register here](#)

