

CONTAINERS  
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UNIVERSITY OF FORT  
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Eastern Cape Education  
Department

# *Distance Education Project*

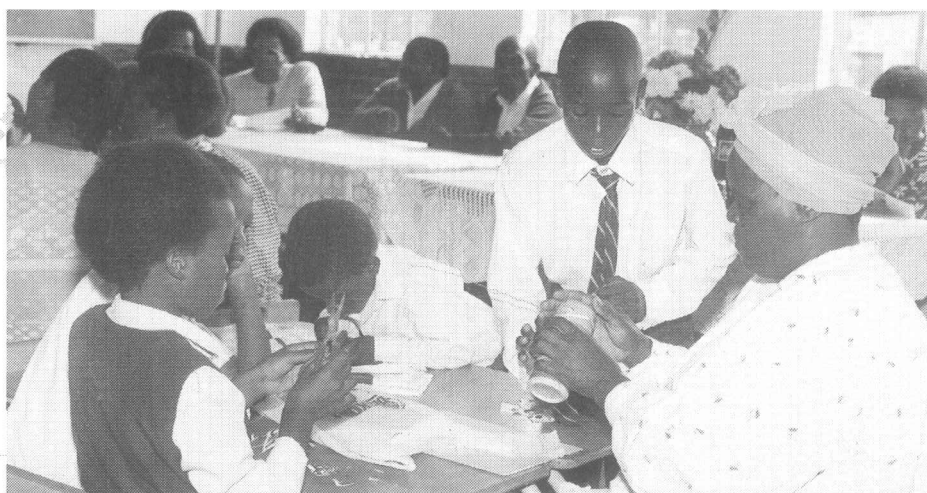
Core Education Studies Course

Helping Learners Learn – Umthamo 4



mark the straw and measure the difference in height  
*Independent  
Learning  
in a  
'Resourceful'  
Classroom*

(Pilot Edition)  
May 2000



clear Plastic Bottle

large Metal Tin

HOLDS MORE  $\longleftrightarrow$

$\longleftrightarrow$  HOLDS LESS

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# HELPING LEARNERS LEARN

## Umthamo 4

### Independent learning in a 'resourceful' classroom



#### Introduction

In the Helping Learners Learn strand of our course, we are considering important issues which affect the way you interact with your learners as you strive to help them learn more effectively.

An important theme of this strand is 'learner-centredness'. In our second umthamo we looked at various ways of creating a learner-centred environment. The first umthamo had considered one way in particular: group work. In our third umthamo, we looked at the languages you use in the classroom, and questioning styles which can encourage thinking and learning.

In the third Helping Learners Learn umthamo, we introduced the new term: 'learning-centred'. This term emphasizes the fact that the activities that take place in our classrooms need to promote learning. The learners need to be asking questions, exploring new ideas and acquiring new skills, rather than just 'keeping busy', or showing what they already know.

In this umthamo, we will consider ways of making sure that there are 'resources' in our classrooms from which learners can learn independently, without direct supervision from you, the educator. This will continue the 'learner-centredness' and 'learning-centredness' theme. In particular, it will build on the section in Umthamo 2 which asks the question, 'What might you find in a learner-centred classroom?'

We are planning a second umthamo around the theme of resources. The second resources umthamo will focus on the community as a resource.

In preparation for the work of these two umthamo, we would like you to think of the sources of learning in your own personal life:

#### Journal write: Who/ What have you learned from?

Think about your life, inside and outside of school. Go back, in your mind, to your childhood. Think of all the things you learned to do, all the knowledge you gained. Think of the values and beliefs you acquired. Let your mind wander through your school days; your early adulthood; the rest of your life up until now. Think of all that life has taught you.

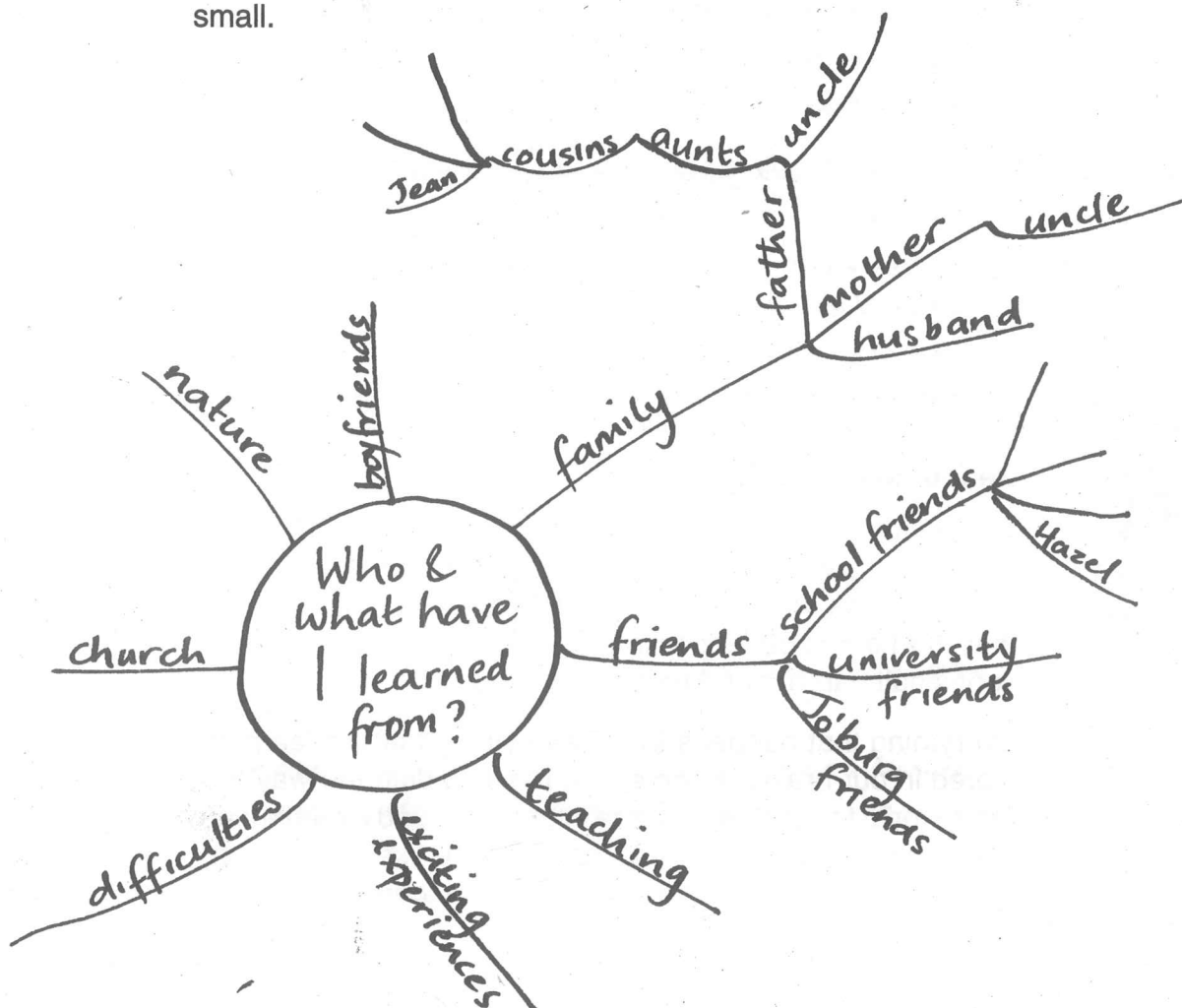


Now think of where that knowledge and those skills and beliefs, etc., came from.

Think of:

- all the people you have learned from;
- all the experiences and situations you have learned from;
- all the objects you have learned from.

Draw a mind map in your journal on which you write all these things, people and experiences. Someone has started a mind map below. You might like to have the same main branches, or you might want completely different ones. You can have as many branches as you like on your mind map, big and small.



Now select 3 to 5 of the most important sources of learning in your life (from the mind map). Draw a table in your journal like the one below. In the table write the sources of the learning, and say what you have learned from each. One of the writers of *lo mthamo* has filled in the table below.



When you have completed the task, share your mind map and your table with colleagues, at school, or at the face-to-face session.



Dodds Pule's table

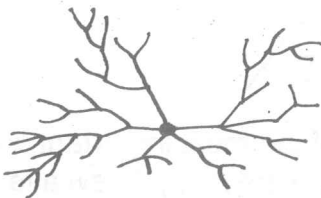
Source of Learning	What I learned
Mother	<i>My mother was an umSwati, and she related to me part of the history of the AmaSwazi, telling me how they were driven North from the KwaZulu-Natal area. This gave me a pride in my own history, and an interest in what happened in the past.</i>
Grandmother	<i>My grandmother was an expert storyteller, and I could not get enough of her stories. Later, I discovered that there were also stories in books. I therefore became an avid reader. I think it would be true to say that my grandmother introduced me to the love of books.</i>
Newspapers	<i>At school, and from other more educated people, I learned that there were other countries in the world, where conditions were different from those in South Africa. This was fascinating to me. When I discovered that newspapers gave news of developments in other countries, I started reading newspapers regularly. Newspapers are a great source of knowledge and information for me.</i>



Resources and learning

The activity you have just done shows that every person learns from a wide variety of *sources* (a word which is closely related to the word *resources*). We are all learning every day, from our experiences in the world. School learning is a very small part of our “life-long learning”.

Everything that happens to us, everything that we learn, is stored in our brains. People who have studied the way the brain works tell us that we store information and experiences in networks called “schema”. Schema are like mind maps, or spider webs. They have many little branches.



Everything new that we learn has to find a branch to connect with. That branch, which consists of something we have *already* learned, must be associated in some way with the new bit of learning, or experience. If there is nothing familiar for the new learning to connect with, we will not be able to store it.

This means that the learning which happens in school needs to link with the learner's experiential learning in the community and in the world. It is difficult to learn things which are unrelated to previous knowledge, and sometimes the things which you want your learners to learn about are outside the range of their experiences. This means that you have to *find* ways of linking them with what the learners already know.

In order to help learners to learn actively in the classroom you need to acknowledge the existence, and the importance, of the knowledge that your learners bring with them to school.



### Journal write

1. Think about the activities from other imithamo that you have done with your learners in this course so far. How have these activities acknowledged the importance of the knowledge learners bring with them to school? Make some notes about this in your journal. An example is given below relating to Natural Science 2 (Umthamo 11). Write about another umthamo, or several imithamo, e.g. Technology 3 (Umthamo 23: Processes and Processing) or LLC3 (Umthamo 17: How do we learn to 'language'?)

*The candle activity in Natural Science 2 uses a candle to study combustion because candles are small and convenient and because many learners are familiar with candles at home. In the activity, they first draw a candle. Then they are asked to bring what they already know about candles and write it down on two sides of the candle. English words that they know are written on one side. IsiXhosa words that they know are written on the other side of the candle picture.*

*The candle (something familiar) is valued as a learning resource. The learners' knowledge is valued. Their ability to draw and write are valued. The languages they know are valued. And later, their ability to think and theorise is valued.*



2. How do your everyday classroom activities acknowledge the importance of what learners bring with them to school? Make some notes about this too, giving an example from one of your recent learning activities.

Learning which takes place in the classroom needs to value, and also to challenge, what learners are learning in the family, the community, and the world. When you ask learners to relate their own experiences to new ideas, you are encouraging them to contribute to their own learning, and *construct their own meaning*.

What we have said above shows why we need to use a wide variety of *resources for learning*, which link the classroom with the world. Resources help to bridge the gap between personal or community experiences, and new ideas and concepts. They also provide opportunities for hands-on learning: learning by doing, by making, by seeing for yourself, by exploring – instead of merely by being told.



### Journal write

What do you understand by the term 'learning and teaching resources'? Write your own definition in some detail in your journal.



Now share your journal write with other teacher-learners at the face-to-face session.

A resource for learning is slightly different from the objects and people you learned from as you grew up, although they were resources for you. A particular object or person becomes a resource for learning in your classroom when you decide to use it for a particular learning activity, or purpose. In addition to traditional resources, like:

- textbooks,
- library books,
- blackboards,
- flipcharts and
- wall-charts,

resources can include:

- objects from the natural world (plants, insects, seeds, feathers, etc.);
- objects from home, shops and the community (cooking utensils, clothes, foods, packages, newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, etc.);
- stories (traditional tales, history, news events);
- the languages and cultures of the learners: a rich vocabulary of words, proverbs, idioms, stories and cultural events;
- games and role-plays.

The traditional resources mentioned above are essential parts of your classroom equipment and resources. We are not suggesting for a moment that you should reject them. In this umthamo, however, we are asking you to broaden your range of learning resources, and use them in ways which promote independent learning. We will speak more about independent learning in Unit 1.

## **Intended outcomes for this umthamo**

### **Knowledge**

By the time you have worked through this umthamo, you will have:

- gained more understanding of the importance of linking out-of-class experiences with classroom learning;
- considered different ways of organizing your classroom, and your learning programme, to create opportunities for certain individuals or groups to engage in independent learning.

### **Skills**

By the time you have worked through this umthamo, you will have:

- worked with your learners and their parents to collect objects which can be used as learning resources;
- started work, with your learners and their parents, on re-arranging your classroom and setting up systems for independent learning and the storage of resources;
- used your creativity and thinking skills to develop resources for independent learning out of available local objects;
- found ways to involve some parents in the provision of resources for learning in your classroom.

### **Attitudes and values**

By the time you have worked through this umthamo, you will have:

- learned to value your local environment and community more, as a source of people and things which can become resources for learning in your classroom.







## Unit 1: Thinking about resources in your school

In this first unit, you will think about the way resources are used in your school and classroom. You will brainstorm the resources that are available in your environment. You will think of some ways in which they could be used for independent learning in your classroom.

### Is your school engaged in 'resourceful' learning and teaching?

I am sure you have seen quizzes in popular magazines, where you have to answer 'Yes' or 'No' to certain questions. Your answers are usually interpreted as giving certain information about you as a person, e.g. *Are you an optimist or a pessimist? Or Are you a jealous lover?*

The quiz below asks you to think about your classroom and school. We think that your answers will give some indication of how well your school uses learning resources.



#### Quiz: Is your school 'resourceful'?

Make a list for question 1, and answer 'Yes' or 'No' for the other questions.

1. List the learning resources that are used regularly in your classroom and in your school. Be honest with this exercise.
2. Do these resources encourage learners to think and ask questions about what they learn?
3. Do they bridge the gap between the 'real world' and the classroom?
4. Do they allow for individual differences, giving certain learners an opportunity to work independently on tasks that suit them?
5. Do they develop in your learners the skills of observing accurately, collecting data, and writing up their own observations?
6. Do they allow community members to share their knowledge, skills and life experiences with learners?
7. Do they promote an awareness that the earth's resources are scarce and should be carefully used and re-used?
8. Do they encourage the development of hands-on, practical skills?
9. Can the resources be used for different learning areas at different times, across the curriculum?
10. Do they promote interactive, collaborative group work?
11. Do the learners enjoy working with the resources?

If you gave less than 8 learning resources in the first question and more than 5 'no' answers for the rest, classify your school as engaged in non-resourceful teaching.

If you gave more than 8 learning resources in the first question and more than 5 'yes' answers for the rest, classify your school as engaged in resourceful teaching.



### Activity 1: Discuss Zukiswa's school

Read the following story, and discuss the questions which follow it with a colleague.

#### ZUKISWA'S SCHOOL

*Zukiswa is the Principal of a big combined primary school from grade R to grade 9, with 25 teachers. The school is well built and includes a variety of storerooms, a laboratory and a library. There are a lot of old books and furniture. However, the school is in a poor community with a high rate of unemployment, crime, poor health conditions and work facilities. There are some shack dwellers and a few spaza shops near the school. Shack dwellers make use of the school facilities like water, toilets, and classrooms for church activities. They dump a lot of rubbish around the school. The school is full of litter, plastic bags in particular. The community makes use of school chairs whenever there are community meetings and funerals. At times, chairs and tables are taken out by individuals for personal use. Vandalism is rife. Fence-poles, doors and cupboards are easy targets. Several cases of theft are reported to the police, but with no fruitful results. The department fails to appoint night watchmen, caretakers and cleaners. Parents are not supportive. They hardly make a 30% turnout at parents' meetings. All teachers at this school are demotivated.*

#### Discuss the following:

- Identify the resources which are available at Zukiswa's school. Write them down.
- Brainstorm ways in which they could be used.

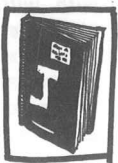
Share your ideas with other educators at a face-to-face session, or in your school.

#### Journal write

Write in your journal what you think can be done in your school, or class, to improve the availability of learning and teaching resources. Your aim is to help your learners learn more easily and effectively.

#### Activity 2: Brainstorm available resources

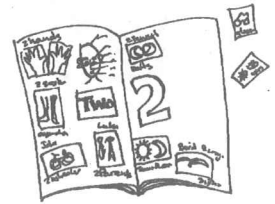
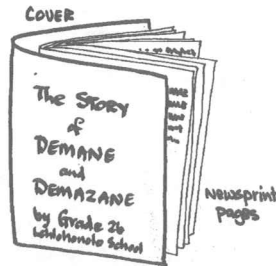
Share your journal write with others. These others may be colleagues, or fellow teacher-learners at the face-to-face session. But the 'others' might also be learners, parents, or interested friends or members of the community. Brainstorm things and people, available in your school and area, which could be used as learning resources. Make a list of them.





### Think about:

- Resources you and your learners have already used, or have made;



- Human resources;
- Waste materials;
- Resources you can find in the environment, natural or man-made;
- Resources the community could offer you;
- Resources the learners could bring you;
- Printed materials;
- Anything else you can think of.

### Resources for independent learning

In previous 'Helping Learners Learn' imithamo, we have spoken about learner-centredness. We have spoken about different ways of organising, or managing, your classroom for more effective, learner-centred and learning-centred learning. These different ways of managing your class also help you cope with individual differences among your learners. In our first umthamo, we focused on group work. In the 'Learner-centredness' umthamo, we also discussed peer learning. We discussed ways of making your classroom a 'learner-centred environment'.

This included providing resources for independent learning, so that when a learner has completed a task, s/he can work independently, reading a book, playing 'phatha-phatha bhokisi' with a friend, or working at something at a workstation. You can also provide resources so that groups of learners can work independently, while you attend to a certain group, or to an individual child.

### What is an independent learning activity?

An independent learning activity should be more than an activity to 'keep learners busy'. It should stimulate thought and challenge the learners in some way. Some independent learning activities are quite simple, like

- looking at a picture and writing a story about it, or
- reading a book or passage and asking, or answering, some questions about it.

For instance, in Umthamo 1, on page 25, you were asked to 'set your class a task which they can get on with without your close attention. Then sit with one group of children and let them choose a picture to talk about as a group.'

In Umthamo 11, on page 13, it says, 'If you plan to work with a certain group, make sure that the rest of the class are quietly settled with enough work to keep them busy for 15 to 20 minutes.'

In both these activities, you needed independent learning activities to give to the rest of the class.

Others might require more detailed instructions, or need supervision by an older learner, or a parent.

### The Balloon

Inside the envelope you will find six pictures. Look at them carefully and put them into order.

Make up a sentence for each picture and write it down.

Now read the story you have written to a friend.



*Some of the pictures in the envelope*

### **What is a workstation?**

A workstation is a 'learning corner', often devoted to a specific learning area, or to a certain kind of activity. You could have a Technology workstation in one corner of your classroom, where various materials are stored which could be useful for constructing something for Technology. Designs and artifacts made during Technology activities can be displayed on the walls, and maybe on shelves, in this corner of the classroom. You could have a reading corner at another side of the room, where all the books and reading materials are stored, and where learners can go to read, if they have completed other tasks. You could have other workstations for other learning areas.



If your classroom is small and crowded, you could start by having just one workstation: an independent learning corner, where all the different resources for independent learning are stored. Individuals and groups could work in that corner independently at times, using the resources you have prepared, while you work with the rest of the class. You might still want to have different sections of the classroom walls set aside for displaying items relating to specific learning areas.





The idea of establishing workstations for different learning areas can help you a lot if you have a multigrade (or multilevel) class. While you are teaching the older ones something new, the young ones can work at a workstation, doing something on their own.

*e.g.*

- *The Grade 3's work on a Technology task on their own.*
- *At the same time, some Grade 2's do peer learning with some Grade 5's, working with word problems on cards in Maths.*
- *In the meantime, the educator works with the Grade 1's on Reading.*

There is a wide range of possibilities.

If you have a range of independent learning resources in your classroom, well organised, you will be freed to work with specific individuals or groups who need your personal attention. And learners will be freed to discover things for themselves; to be independent learners. The Key Activity of this umthamo will ask you to re-design your classroom, so that it is 'resourceful' in this way. It will also ask you to prepare and carry out an activity for independent learning.



You have been given a copy of the handbook 'Schools as homes for learning'. This is a Resource book which was put together by the DEP for the use of Multigrade and Multilevel educators. ***Every teacher is a multilevel educator, because different learners learn at different rates, and have different skills and interests.*** This Resource book is relevant, then, for all educators. You will notice that holes have been punched in it. We suggest that you take out the staple, and put this handbook in a file.

This handbook is a 'dongo draft'. This means that it is like clay, and can be shaped to suit your needs. You will see that it has blank pages in it. These give space for you to fill in your own ideas and experiences. You can add even more pages, writing on them activities which worked well. You can also take pages out, if they are not useful for you. You will make your own draft of the handbook, which works for you in your classroom.

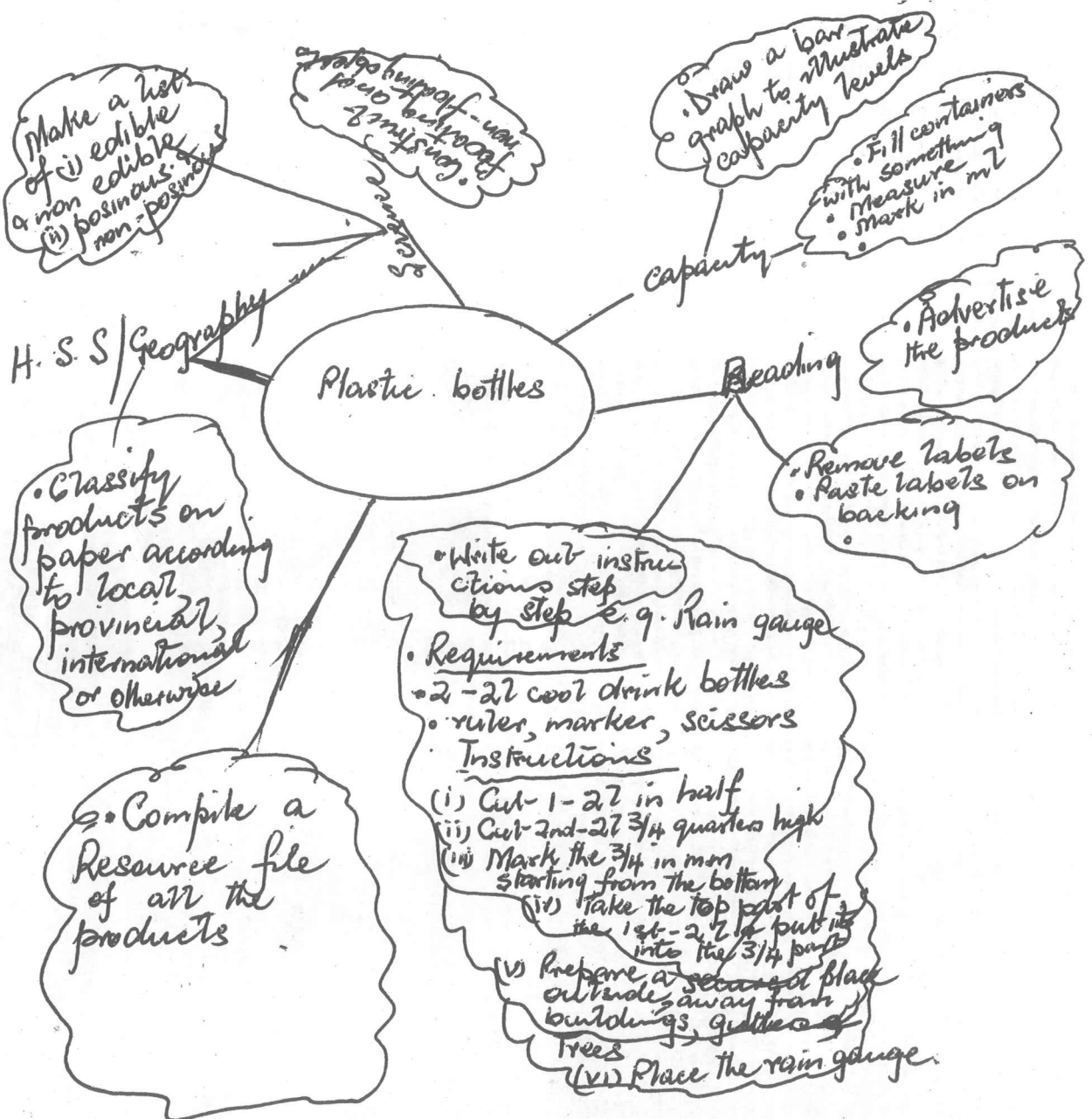
We would like you to read pages 1-4, and pages 9-11, of the yellow section of this 'dongo draft', which give ideas about how classrooms can be arranged for independent learning. ***This is an essential reading task. It will give you ideas which you need for doing the Key Activity.*** If you are teaching a multigrade group, look also at the cream section, pages 1 to 6. This will give you guidance on drawing up a timetable for your multigrade class, by means of which all learners can be busy with learning tasks all the time.



### Activity 3: Creating resources for independent learning

Look at the resources you identified in your brainstorm (Activity 2). Now think of ways in which you could use these different resources for independent learning, by individuals, or by groups. Learners, colleagues, parents or community members could help you here too, although your expertise as an educator will be very important.

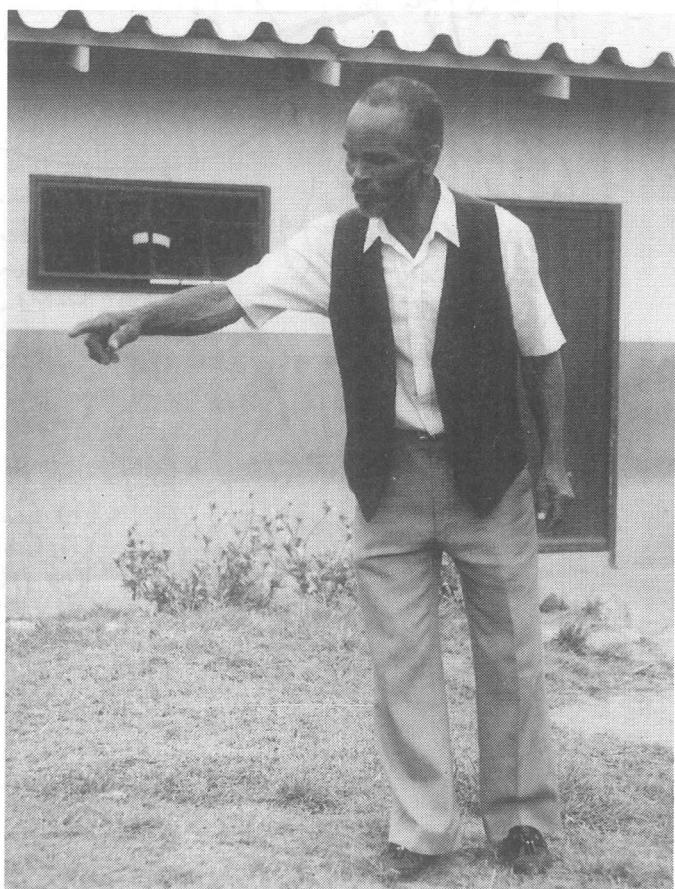
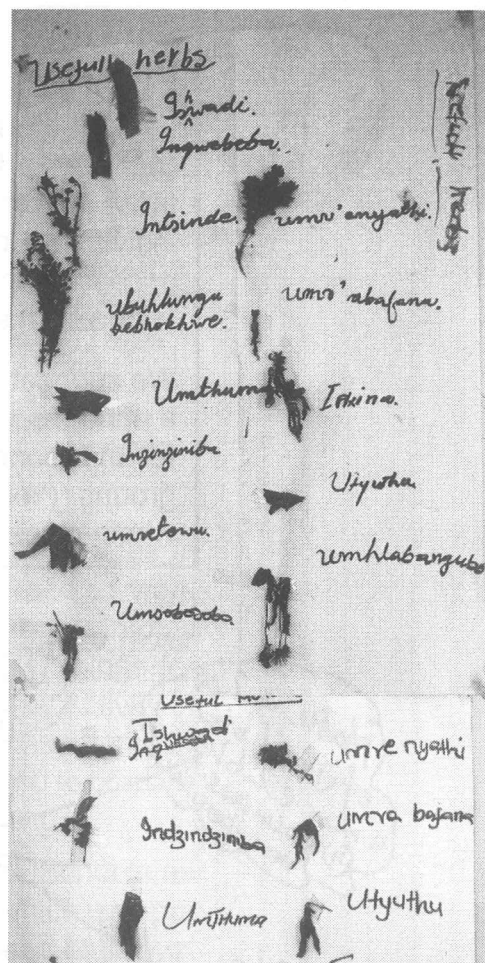
We suggest that you choose 2 or 3 resources, and make a mind map of some ways in which you could use them for independent learning, either by individuals, or by groups. (You could also include ways of using them for whole-class learning.) (P.T.O. for more ideas)



## Resources you might like to think about are:

- Plants;
- Insects;
- Containers (ice-cream; margarine; etc.)
- Sticks;
- Plastic bags;
- Food packages;
- Newspapers and magazines;
- Advertisements;
- People in the community;
- Elders and parents with stories;
- Self-made books;
- Old tooth brushes;
- Cardboard boxes;
- Old buttons and bottle tops;
- Cotton reels;
- Cooldrink cans;
- Bottles;
- Or anything else which came up in your brainstorm.

Keep your notes from this activity carefully. You will find them useful when you work through Unit 4.





## Unit 2: The ZISA Box: Bringing resources to the classroom



### Key Activity:

#### Developing resources for independent learning in a 'resourceful' classroom

All the remaining units of this umthamo are taken up with different parts of the Key Activity. The Key Activity asks you:

- to *re-design your classroom*,
- to *equip it with materials* which can be used as resources for independent learning,
- to *develop some of these materials* into a resource for independent learning, and
- to *start using this resource*.



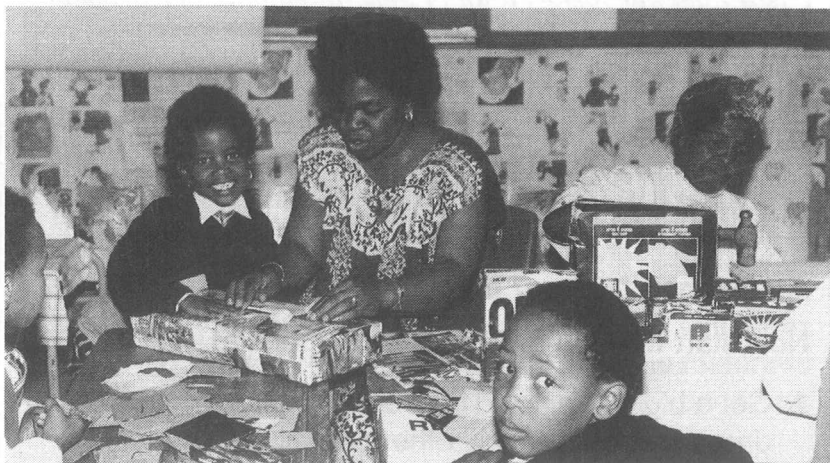
### Stage 1: \*Re-designing your classroom for independent learning

Work on a new design for your classroom, by sketching, discussing and/or mind-mapping. Think about the kinds of possibilities discussed on pages 11 and 12.

You could do the designing on your own, or the people who helped you with the investigation, or with Activity 3, can help you with it. Learners, colleagues and parents can contribute their ideas. The designing can be done in groups, if you have many participants. Each group of people could design a classroom, or a section of the classroom.

The groups will need to report back and reach consensus on their designs. You will need to have a design, preferably in the form of a sketch, with some explanations perhaps, to present as part of your report.

*\*If you wish to do this design stage after you have collected resources, that is fine. Work on the different stages in the order which appears best to you.*







## Stage 2: Equipping your classroom with materials for resources\*

Read the story of Vuyiswa's school.

\*Note: You could collect these materials even before you start to design the classroom.

### VUYISWA'S SCHOOL

*Vuyiswa is a Grade 3 and 4 teacher. She has fifty learners in her classroom that has a worn-out thatched roof. There is a hole in the top of the roof. When it is raining, learners have to move many things, such as chairs, desks, tables, books and papers, to safer places. Before weekends, these things need to be carefully placed, to prevent them from getting wet, should it happen to rain over the weekend. Some things are taken to the teacher's house for safe-keeping. A few of the windows do not have panes, and the school is unfenced. Goats, sheep, cattle and horses graze in the schoolyard.*

*Vuyiswa encourages her learners to help in collecting and bringing materials like empty boxes, newspapers, seeds, sticks, containers, bottle tops, wire, tins, old clothes and many other things that could be used for learning. There is a big box behind the door, labeled 'ZISA'. Learners put the materials that they bring into this box. At a certain stage, when the box is fairly full, it is taken to the middle of the classroom. They begin to sort the materials into various categories, and talk about how they can use the material. A number of suggestions come out of these discussions.*

*At times, learners go outside and observe things around the classroom, collect leaves and any other materials that might be useful.*

*The 'ZISA' box is always behind the door, and this process is repeated at various times of the year.*

*Vuyiswa draws on these materials to make resources for learning. She uses some for whole class teaching and learning, but spends a lot of time developing independent learning resources from them. Learners often help with this kind of activity: cutting out letters and pictures, covering some of the materials with plastic, and packing them into containers. Learners enjoy this kind of activity very much.*

*(to be continued)*



### A ZISA box for your classroom

Now start work on a ZISA box for your classroom.

1. Get a big container. This could be a cardboard box, a drum, a bucket or any other container.

This container should be:

- big enough to hold a lot of objects;
- wide enough for these objects to be put into it easily;
- Portable: learners should be able to carry or move it freely;
- Strong enough to be able to be handled frequently;
- Labelled in bold 'ZISA'.



2. Ask your learners to bring from home (or from anywhere) objects or materials that they think could be used for learning. (You might suggest that they invite their parents to come with them when they bring the items for the ZISA box.) They should put these items into the ZISA container.
3. When the ZISA box has been filled, pull out one or two items, and have a brief discussion with the learners (and their parents) on how these items could be used.
4. Ask them to think of other things and people which/whom we can't put into the ZISA box, but which are around us, and which we can learn from, e.g. air, sunlight, grass, parents, homes, church, etc. You can ask them to write the names of these things on pieces of paper, or draw pictures of them, and stick them onto the outside of the ZISA box.
5. At break time, or after school, you could ask volunteer learners, and/or parents, to help you sort the materials in the ZISA box. You will have some ideas about how you might use these materials.

*On pages 20 to 22, you can read about what happened at Thembelihle Primary School, in Queens-town, where parents came and helped learners work with items from the ZISA box. They did a lot of Technology construction work, and also gave ideas on how the items could be used for learning.*

For instance:

- You might have a plan to use empty bottles and yoghurt containers for an activity on capacity.
- Maybe you want all the boxes in one place, to cut up and paste pictures and stories or articles onto them.
- Magazines and newspapers could go in one place, to be used for reading activities.
- All those items which could be used as counters could go into one place.
- Objects which could be used for constructing, in Technology, could go into one place.
- etc.

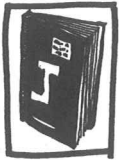
Remember that it is not necessary to sort everything that is in the box. Some items can be left in the box for later use. A lot of materials can be used for several resources in several learning areas. You might decide to leave these unsorted.

6. You and the learners can start putting some of the objects into smaller containers, and labeling the containers. Ask the whole class to think about things they could bring to class which could be used as 'GCINA BOXES'. 'Gcina boxes' are containers in which materials and learning resources can be kept safe and protected from damage.

7. You and the learners (and parents, maybe) can now start arranging the classroom, and deciding where you will store the different materials. After you have done what you can, discuss what additional help you need from parents or community members (e.g. help with constructing shelves, or hammering in nails, etc.). This job of arranging and re-arranging your classroom will be an on-going one. Once you have developed more resources out of these materials, you may need to change the arrangement. Once you have tried out your workstations, or your independent learning corner, you will see how well it works. You may want to make changes.



*There are a number of ideas about storing and protecting learning materials on page 5 of the green section of the 'dongo draft'.*



**Journal write**

**Self-assessment of your ‘new’ classroom: Reflect on your work**

How do you feel about the progress you have made, so far, in making your classroom more ‘resourceful’, and more suitable for independent learning? Write about this in your journal.

- Is the classroom neat and attractive?
- Have you re-arranged the classroom effectively?
- How long have you taken to do the work?
- Are you happy with the way you and the learners have worked? Why?/ Why not?
- What has not gone well, and why? How would you work differently, if you did it again?

**Peer assessment: Ask members of your school community to assess the ‘new’ classroom**

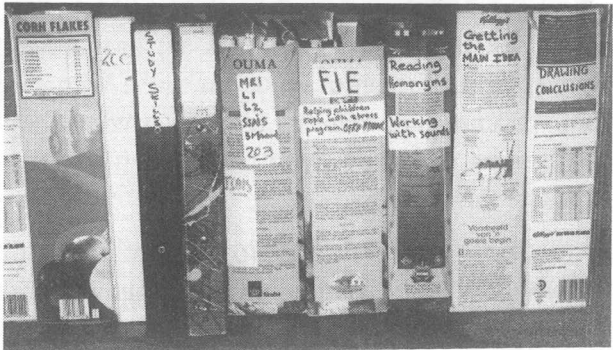
Ask your learners, and other educators or community members, to assess the changes on a 5-point scale. Repeat this assessment again, after you have been using the classroom for six months. By that time, it should have developed much further.

1	2	3	4	5
Doesn't meet requirements	Needs more attention	Good	Very good	Meets requirements with excellence

They should give a rating (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) to each of the following aspects:

- a. Neatness and attractiveness
- b. Arrangement of furniture and resources in the room
- c. Opportunities offered for independent work and individual attention OR Opportunities for multigrade or multilevel work
- d. How enjoyable is it for learners to be in the classroom?

*A teacher's Gcina boxes*





## **ESSO's and a writer visit Thembelihle Primary School**

*By Mrs Nodumo Mabece and Mrs Xoliswa Njaba*

*These two pages tell about the trialling of this Key Activity at Thembelihle Primary School. The teachers who were trialling the activity had invited parents to come to the class and help the learners sort and work with the materials in the ZISA box.*

When we arrived, the banging of hammers and a positive working atmosphere greeted us. Parents and learners were already working in groups with the materials they had brought for the ZISA box. The educator, Nomazotsho, was busy labeling GCINA containers and putting materials into their respective containers.

Materials used included planks, wire, cooldrink cans, plastic containers of varying sizes, cartons of various soap powders, beverages, cereals, shoe boxes, remnants of wood, textiles, buttons, bottle tops, seeds and many other things.

Parents and learners were very engaged in making objects and developing learning resources out of the materials. Artifacts that were made included: cars; tissue-box holders; a fire engine; candle stick holders; pot plants; a wardrobe; tables. They developed learning resources by: writing story sums; cutting out letters; cutting out action pictures.



What I liked most about these parents is that they worked in groups with their all the children, even those who could not come with their parents. The parents discussed what they were doing with the groups and they even asked their groups questions on the artifacts that they had made.

Participants were reminded to relate whatever they did to different learning contexts. While some parents were a little puzzled, one parent boldly stood up to say,

“With my group we came up with the following. As we have made a wardrobe out of shoe boxes, we can do the following Maths activities:

- Measure the length and width of the entire wardrobe, of the doors and each individual shelf in centimetres;
- Measure the capacity of each shelf and the hanging side of the wardrobe;
- Write story sums, e.g. Nosipho, my daughter, wears a shirt a day, how many will she wear over 5 days/ 10 days/ a month (5 days a week).

For Language, learners can write the names of all the clothes in the wardrobe.”

This response was an eye-opener to all the participants and others began to give a number of positive ideas.

A young father said he never knew that he could one day become a teacher, uneducated as he was. He always thought that teaching was a business of professionals only.

Another grand-parent exclaimed, “Umntu ufunda ade aye engcwabeni. Sizakukwazi ngoku ukuncedisa abantwana emakhaya nasesikolweni.”

*One learns til death parts one. We will be able to help our children in and out of school.*

A grandmother offered to organize other grannies to sew chairbags for all the children in that class, as she was an expert in sewing. She claimed that sewing was completely ignored by teachers. She offered to conduct a lesson for all learners, the day they came to present the learners with chairbags. She also offered to teach them how to make a vegetable stew.

All parents voiced the excitement they felt about their involvement in the class. Some parents had requested time off to attend the occasion, because the children had emphasized that they were going to learn together with their parents.

One mother said, “Mna ndonwabe gqitha namhlanje kuba abantwana bethu basibona siyinxalenye yesikolo. Basebenza ngokuzimisela kuba sikhona thina bazali.”

*I am very happy because our children see us as part of the school. They work with enthusiasm because we, their parents, are there.*



Out of this precious day the learners learned a lot. They learned that their parents can make a lot of things for the school out of materials they call rubbish. Also that their parents can be resources, because from them they got information on making objects and using them for learning in their classrooms.

The principal thanked everybody for coming. She reminded the parents of the importance of their children's education. She told them that when one of the teaching staff takes leave for a few days, a parent could be asked to substitute for the teacher. Though this seemed to be a joke to the parents, one parent agreed with the principal.

'Bring yours' food included cooldrinks in bottles, cans and plastic containers, home-made biscuits, scones, cakes, bread, fruit, sweets and other goodies. At the end, these refreshments were served. The learners enjoyed sharing everything with their parents, the teachers and the visitors.





### Unit 3: Using the materials that have been collected



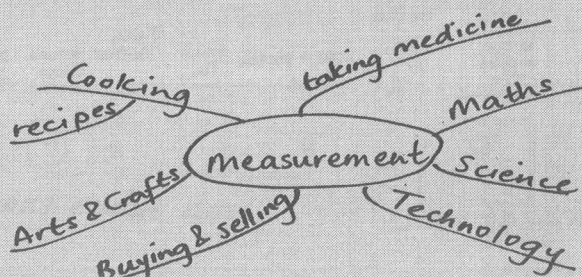
Read the next part of Vuyiswa's story:

#### VUYISWA'S SCHOOL (Continued)

Once the learners have gone home, Vuyiswa looks again at the materials in the ZISA box, and in the other storage containers. She is impressed with the way her learners have managed to sort all the materials that were collected. One container is full of plastic and glass bottles, tins of different sizes and various-shaped open plastic containers. They are all different shapes and sizes. Some are Coke bottles; some are jam bottles; some are bottles which contained body lotion, or Vaseline. Some of the containers are marked in litres and millilitres; others are not marked.

She decides that she will try to plan something using some of the containers. Her question as a teacher is, "How am I going to turn these materials into a specific learning resource?" She realizes that she is going to have to plan quite carefully and thoughtfully if she wants her Grade 3 and 4 learners to be able to work independently and gainfully on the task, while she works with other learners on something else.

She looks at the various containers and decides that she will start with a measurement activity. She realizes that this is a good idea because measurement touches on so many learning areas in the curriculum. As she thinks, she makes a simple mind map on a scrap of paper. Basically, measurement is Mathematics. But it is also important in Science and Technology. What about Cooking and recipes? You also need to measure in Arts and Crafts. It is important when you buy things or sell things. And when you give or take certain medicines, measurement is very important:



She realizes that she can be quite confident, from a curriculum point of view, that if she bases the independent learning activity on measurement, that it will be relevant and useful. The learners won't be wasting their time. They will be challenged and gainfully occupied.

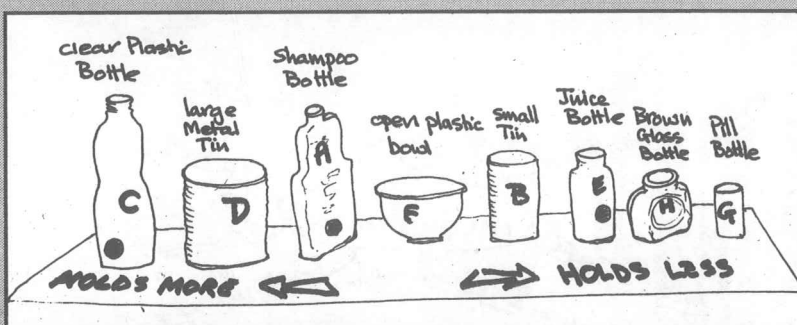


She realizes that she is going to have to plan the activity really carefully if it is to be effective. If she asks the learners to arrange some of the containers in order of how much they will hold, they will have to do some comparing and sorting. They will have to talk about what they think and they will have to argue and explain. They will also need to estimate and predict. Later they will get a chance to check their ideas in a practical way by filling and pouring something into the containers.

In her mind she summarises what it is she plans to have them do.

- She wants them to think and talk about how much each container can hold.
- She wants them to compare containers and arrange them in order of capacity (how much they can hold).
- She wants them to note down the order.
- Finally, she wants them to check practically by filling and pouring.
- She wants them to record what they have found.

She first spends a bit of time thinking about how many containers to use. Should she give them 5 or 8 or 10 or 15...? She decides that 8 would be about right and manageable for a group of 4 or 5 learners. She selects 8 suitable containers so that there is a range of shapes, sizes and types. (She puts aside an extra 4 containers so that she can add them if it looks like 8 is too few to keep the learners busy for 30 minutes or so.) She selects the containers carefully so that some are quite similar in size. She checks, using water, to see how it works, and to make sure that none hold exactly the same amount. Finally she pastes a sticker over two of the containers that have a label that says how many millilitres that container holds. Then she labels the bottles with a letter, using a waterproof koki-pen.



She thinks about whether to use clean, dry river sand or water for when they compare how much the containers actually hold. Should she bring a plastic funnel from home to help them pour without spilling? And she will need a plastic bucket for water, or plastic bags if she decides to use sand. A bucket or a plastic bag would be a good container for all the other containers.

Now Vuyiswa knows what she wants the learners to do, and she has thought about what they will need. Next, she needs to plan exactly how to write clear instructions that will enable a group to work independently on their own without interrupting her while she is busy with the rest of the class.

She decides that she will ask the group to meet her a few minutes before the end of break so that she can explain carefully, orally. But she will also make a task card for them to refer to so that some time in the future they can manage on their own without having to tell them everything first.

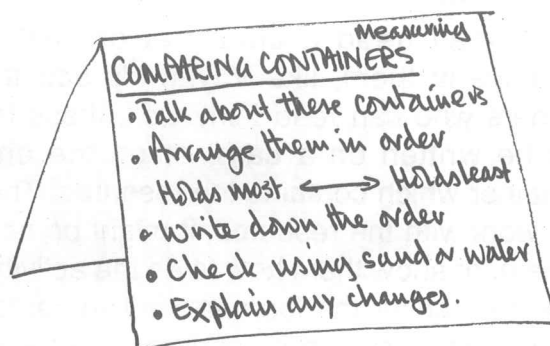
She does a rough draft of a self-standing task card. She makes a few changes, and then carefully writes it out on a folded piece of card.

# FUNNEL



A funnel made out of a  
coke bottle

- How much will they hold?  
 ARRANGING BOTTLES.  
 COMPARING CONTAINERS
- Arrange these <sup>containers</sup> bottles in order of size  
 Biggest to Smallest / Holds most to holds least
  - Record the order that you think.
  - Check by ~~pouring~~ ~~filling~~ use sand/water
  - Discuss your ~~mistakes~~ ~~or~~ any changes. ~~is~~  
 explain



She writes an English version on one side and an isiXhosa version on the other. This is to encourage those who can to try to make sense of the English. Vuyiswa realizes that she could go on using this activity by simply changing the containers each time, and that her learners will get quite good at estimating and comparing capacity.

You have just read about how Vuyiswa turned some of the ZISA box materials into learning resources. You have been allowed in on her thought processes, and the different aspects she had to consider.



### Journal write

Write down, in point form, the different things which Vuyiswa considered as she prepared her independent learning activity. What is your response to what you have read? What do you think about what Vuyiswa has done? What do you feel? What can you learn from it?



### Key Activity

#### Stage 3: Developing materials into resources for independent learning

In this part of the Key Activity:

1. you will *brainstorm* ways of using the materials that your learners have collected. Your focus in this umthamo is on developing them into resources for independent learning. Once you have brainstormed a number of ideas,
2. you will *select one of the ideas*.
3. You will *develop the selected materials into an independent learning resource*.
4. You will then *use the resource* in your classroom.

We will consider three kinds of independent learning activities:

- Some may not need much explanation, e.g. a reading card with questions, a Maths work card, a jigsaw activity (see below).
- Some may need a clear set of instructions to accompany them, like Vuyiswa's activity did. For learners who can read fairly well, these instructions can be written on a card, or on the envelope or container which contains the resource. The first time you work with the resource, it might be necessary to explain, or show them how to do the activity. You may need to monitor the learners, making sure that they have understood the procedure. The next time they work with the activity, you should be able to leave them to work on their own, and devote all your attention to another section of the class.
- Some learning activities may be independent of you, the educator, but have a parent, community member, or older learner working with a group of learners. Once again, it may be advisable to be part of the group the first time this happens. You can ask questions, helping the group to think about what they are doing. This will model to the learners the kind of thinking which they need to do.





## Brainstorm

Start by brainstorming, on your own or with colleagues, ways of using the materials that your learners have already started sorting. Make mind maps as you brainstorm. Work on mind maps which relate to the materials you have, and the current learning needs of your class. Brainstorm, also, ways in which parents could become involved in the learning activities in your classroom. Pages 6 to 8 of the green section of the 'dongo draft' give some ideas about ways of using parents and community members as 'teacher aides'.

On the next few pages you will find four ideas for independent learning, spelled out in some detail.

In the Appendix at the end of the umthamo are some more suggestions.

Do not be limited by these topics. You might feel that some of your own ideas, not mentioned in this umthamo at all, will be more relevant to the current learning needs of your class. Once you have brainstormed, and read all the suggested ideas, select one idea, work on it and then use it in your class.







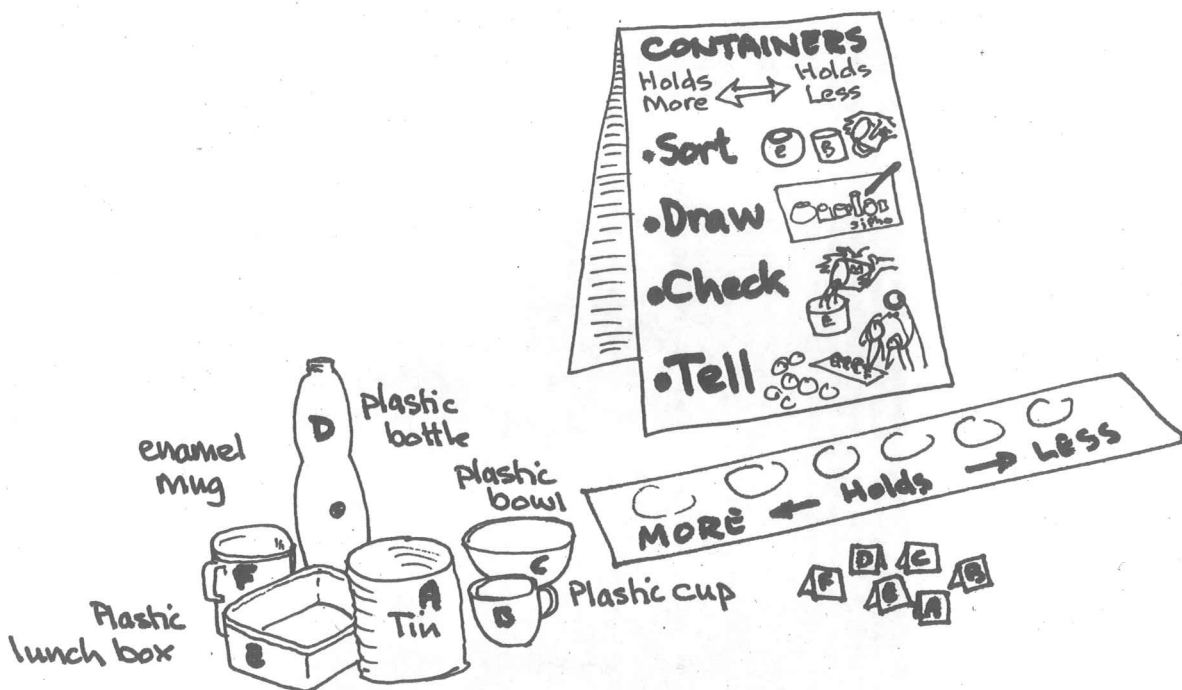
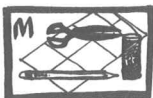
## 4 ideas for independent learning activities

### 1. Glass and plastic containers for measuring

You have already read about the way Vuyiswa carried out this activity in a multigrade group (Grades 3 and 4). We haven't included what Vuyiswa found when her learners did this activity on their own. We would like to suggest that you try this with your class. Here are a few suggestions of how you could adapt the planned independent learning activity for different groups.

#### Suggestions for Younger Learners

- Use containers from your learners' everyday experience. For example, an enamel mug; a plastic cup; the bottom of a plastic lunch box, a small plastic bowl; some tins and plastic bottles.
- Don't use glass containers (because of the danger of broken glass and the children cutting themselves).
- Make some self-standing cards, each with a letter on it, for them to match to those on the containers, so that they don't have to write.
- Make a simpler task card with bigger writing, which is supported by drawings, to remind them of the steps.



- Make sure to explain carefully, and step by step, just what you want them to do.
- While you work with the rest of the class, make sure that you regularly check on how the group are doing. This will show that you are interested in what they are doing. It will also affirm the group and their work.

- Encourage them to make a drawing of what they have done.
- When they have finished the task, sit with the group and support them as they tell the rest of the class everything that they did. Tell the other children that you will change the containers each time that you put out the activity, and that other groups will get a chance to try.

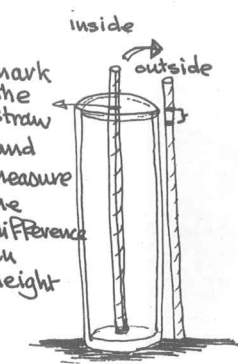


### Journal write

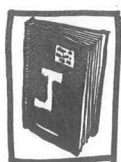
Do you find that groups become able to work independently on a task like this? Why? In what ways do your learners become more independent? Write your thoughts down in your journal.

### Suggestions for older learners (Grade 6 upwards)

- You know your learners best and will be able to think of ways to challenge them. Here are some suggestions to guide your thinking and planning.
- Select containers where the difference in capacity (how much it can hold) is not so obvious. For example, take a tall, thin container and a short, fat container. You can also have containers that look the same, but the one with thicker sides or a thicker base will hold less.
- You could ask them to estimate the actual amount (volume) that each container could hold. Then at the end of the activity, they should check both the order and their estimates.
- Get them to discuss and give explanations for any interesting observations that they have made. Why does the short, fat open bowl hold more than the tall cylinder? Can they think of a way to measure the thickness of the wall of a container? Can they work out a way to measure the thickness of the base of a container?
- If you don't have access to suitable measuring cylinders, challenge the learners to find ways to measure the actual capacities of the containers used in the activity.
- For example, if the contents of a 1/2 litre bottle - 500ml - are poured into a smaller container and you fill it twice and then half-fill it with the last of the water, you can work out how many millilitres the smaller container holds.



$$\begin{aligned}
 500\text{ml} &= x + x + \frac{1}{2}x \\
 &= 200 + 200 + 100
 \end{aligned}$$

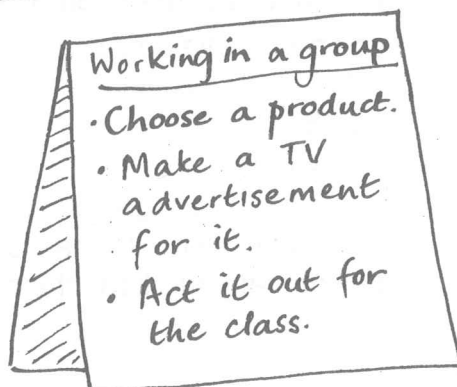
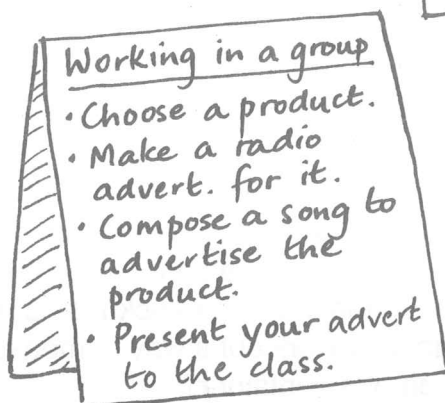
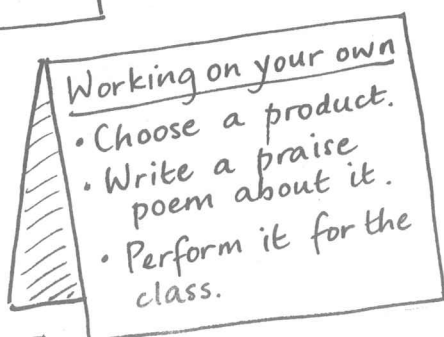
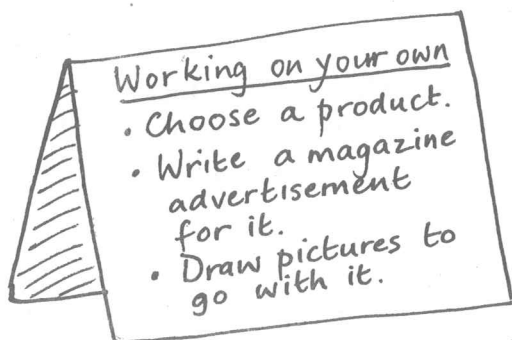


### Journal write

Note down any interesting ways your learners responded to the challenges.

## 2. Creating advertisements or praise poems for different products

Keep in one place certain packages from food products or toiletries and medicines (e.g. shampoos, soaps, toothpaste and headache pills). Ask learners to create an advertisement or a praise poem for one of the products. The task cards (for individuals and groups) could read like this:



You know your learners best, and will know how to adapt the instructions to suit their level. You will also know whether it will be best to use English, isiXhosa or both (English on one side of the task card, and isiXhosa on the other).

### 3. Jigsaw Reading

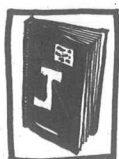
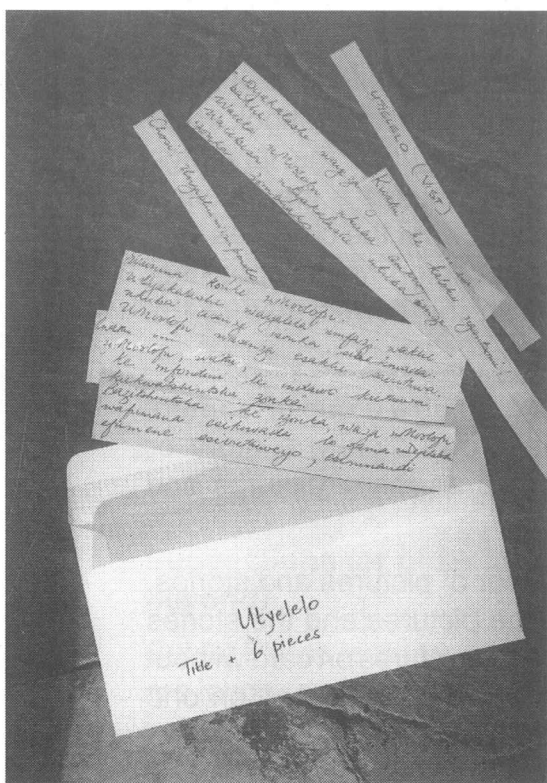
Carefully select stories that you know learners will enjoy. The stories should not be too long, and they should have a clear story line. (There needs to be an obvious time sequence to the events. One thing happens, and then another thing happens.)

- You might be able to write down interesting stories that parents have told, and use them.
- You could write down stories that learners have told, or written, and use them (see 'Suggestions for Younger Learners' below).
- You might find stories in magazines or newspapers.
- You might have old text books which have stories in them. You could copy the stories, or maybe even cut them out, if the book is not going to be used for any other purpose.



Let learners stick the stories onto card. Then cut the stories into sentences, or paragraphs, or pieces of some kind.

Individual learners or small groups of learners can read the pieces and try to put the story together again. Then they can read the story again. (You will find suggestions on how to adapt this activity for different groups below.)



### Journal write

What skills and knowledge could this jigsaw reading activity develop? Write your ideas in your journal.



## **Jigsaw Reading (Continued)**

### **Suggestions for Younger Learners**

Tell your learners that you want to make cards for them to talk about and read. You would like them to choose pictures for those cards. Ask the learners to select pictures from those which were in the ZISA box. (They may be in a GCINA box by now.)

If possible, let each child choose a picture. This will mean that each child has something to say about the picture, because s/he has chosen it. It will also mean that you have many reading resources in your class.

Next, sit with a child and ask him/her to tell you about the picture s/he has chosen. Some will describe what is in the picture. Others will tell a story to go with the picture. As the child talks, write down what s/he says about the picture, in her/his own words. You will be the best judge of how much you need to encourage them to tell you. And it will depend to some extent on both the picture and the learner. If you work with pre-school children, you may just want to elicit a sentence or two from each child. Although pre-school learners are not taught to read print, they do see print in their environment. They are already learning to interpret signs and words around them.

We have found that young children sometimes make small grammatical mistakes. Often it is important to overlook these errors because they disappear as they use the language and learn more about it. If the child makes a grammatical mistake, we suggest that you repeat what the child has said as you write. Repeat it using the accepted way of speaking. In this way, you will be feeding in the correct use of the language naturally.

If you only have a few pictures, work with a group of learners to find a picture. Then let the group dictate a story or description to you. Aim to develop as many pictures and stories/ descriptions as you can.

When you have collected a number of pictures and stories, cut them out neatly and mount the pictures and the stories on card. You may want to paste some pictures on card without stories. Write the stories out neatly, one sentence on one line. Leave a line between each line of text.

Select those which would be suitable to cut up and make into a 'jigsaw reading'. These will be the ones which have a clear story sequence. Cut the story up so that each sentence is separate. Put all the pieces, and the picture into an envelope. Label the envelope, with a picture or a word which

matches the story inside. Put all your 'jigsaw readings', in their envelopes, into a 'gcina box', for learners to work with on their own.

Put the other pictures and stories in another 'gcina box' for learners to read on their own.

### Traditional poems or songs

Another thing you could do is to write down neatly and clearly some of the traditional poems which your learners know. Here is an example:

*Nal' isele*

*Emva kwendlu kabawo*

*Liyatsibatsiba*

*Lithi tsi gxada, tsi gxada, tsi gxada.*

Learners could draw illustrations for the poems, or you could look for pictures to illustrate them, or even draw them yourself.

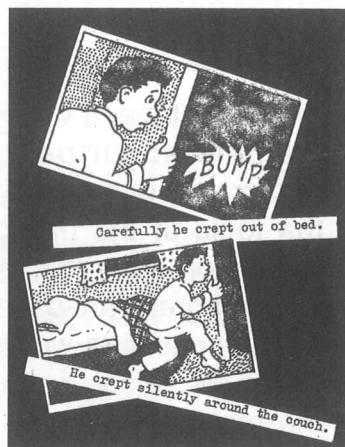
If you want to use these poems for a jigsaw exercise, write them so that there is a line between each line of the poem. Then cut between the lines of the poem. Put all the lines into an envelope, together with the picture that goes with the poem. On the outside of the envelope, write the name or title of the poem, and/or stick a picture that fits the poem.

#### Jabu and the Intruder

Inside the envelope you will find some pictures and some sentences.

You must put the pictures and the sentences in the correct order so that they tell a story.

To help you, the first 3 pictures have been left joined together.



**Some of the pieces in the envelope**

### Suggestions for older learners (Senior Phase and beyond)

Senior Phase learners can work with stories and articles that are longer and more complex. However, you still need to be very careful to choose articles that have a clear structure. You also need to make sure that your learners have the knowledge that they need to put the puzzle together.

A story has an obvious structure: the structure of time. It is usually arranged chronologically, starting with what happened first, and continuing to what happened next.

You might be able to find a set of instructions, which have a clear structure. The instructions tell you what to do first, and then what to do next, until you have completed the process. These kinds of instructions are often numbered. To make the 'jigsaw reading' into a puzzle, you could cut off the numbers. Do make sure that the order of the steps can be worked out somehow, though. After learners have put the instructions together in the right order, they can carry them out!

Pour the sand out again into another container.

A measuring cylinder

What does this investigation show?

Fill the measuring cylinder or other container to the 250ml mark with sand.

(You can use a bottle or other container instead. Measure and mark on the container 250ml and 500ml)

What to do

Now pour the sand into the container on top of the stones.

Mixing sand and stones

Does the combination reach the 500ml mark?

Fill the measuring cylinder or other container to the 250ml mark with stones.

Shake the two together.

What you need

Sand

Ugalele amaxolo elaphini uchube amaapile uwacube.

Ebakethini ubalise amanzi ashushu ngeketile ezimbini.

Uphinde ugalele igwele kunye namachephe eswekile.

amabini uyivale.

Uchuba amaxolo ePineapple.

FRUIT PUNCH

Ugalele amanzi ashushu kwe labhakethi linamaxolo ePineapple.

Ngesuku elilandelayo uyihluze uyitye.

At some stage, it will become very important to teach your learners about paragraph structure. Well-structured paragraphs often start with a sentence which tells the reader the topic of the paragraph. The other sentences of the paragraph give more detail about the topic. The sentences of a paragraph are usually connected to one another in some way. Connecting words like 'firstly', 'secondly', 'therefore', 'however', 'also', 'so', give the reader clues to the order of the sentences. Words like 'this' and 'the', and pronouns like 'it', 'he' or 'she' also help to link one sentence to another.

If you can find some well-structured paragraphs, and cut them up into 'jigsaws', learners will start becoming aware of these structural clues. After they have worked independently trying to put the paragraph together, you could work with them, discussing these points and helping to make them more aware of the connections.

The principles which are used to structure a good paragraph also apply to longer pieces of writing. Once they have become aware of these principles, their own writing will become more coherent. (It will hang together better.)

You will also get along with people around you better and get your way, without too much sweat.

The ABC of effective communication involves assertiveness, breaking down barriers and showing consideration for others.

## Communicating

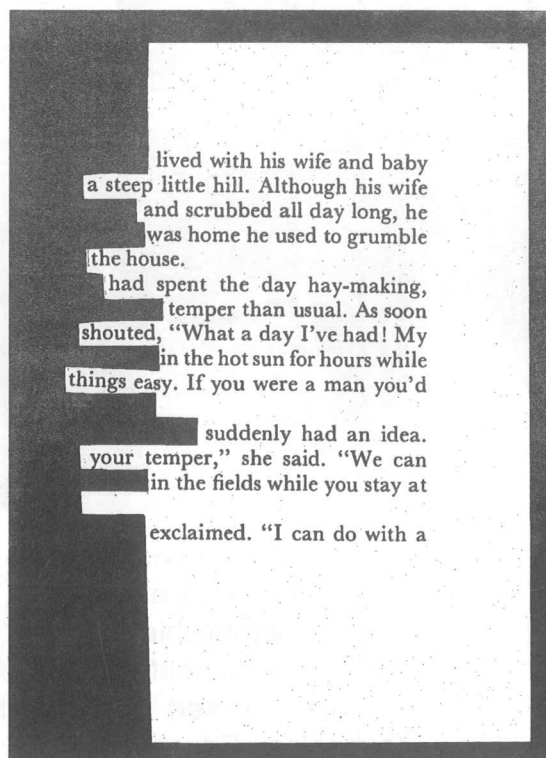
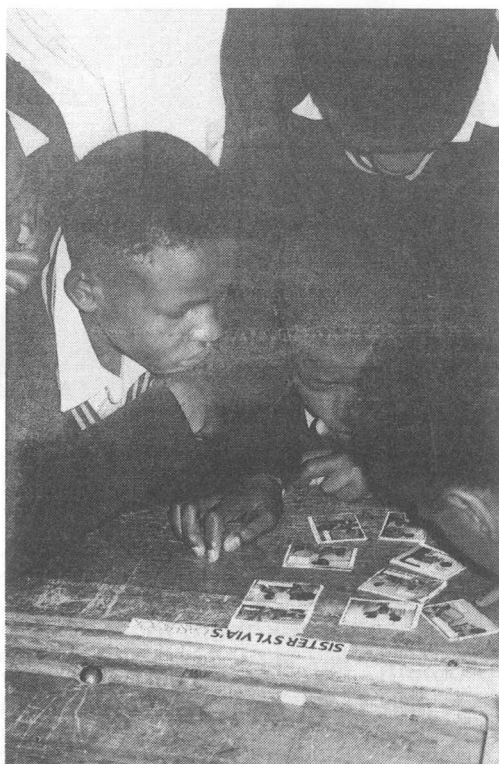
This will enable you to say what you want to say in such a way that others will understand you, listen to you and actually like what you are saying.

HAVE you ever wondered how some people seem to be popular with everybody — teachers and friends? And how they seem to get their way all the time? Well, stop wondering, because it's as easy as ABC!

It will seem a lot to learn and rather cumbersome at first, rather like learning to drive a car. But with practice it will become almost second nature.

### Other 'jigsaw' ideas

- Comic strips can be cut up, as well as articles.
- Two stories/paragraphs can be mixed in one envelope. This means that the first job is to find out which pieces belong to one article, and which pieces belong to the other one. Then the pieces can be put in order, as above.
- The page can be cut down the middle (see illustration). Learners are asked to try to complete the story before looking at the second half of the page.



### Journal write

Record in your journal anything interesting or significant about your learners' responses to any of these activities.

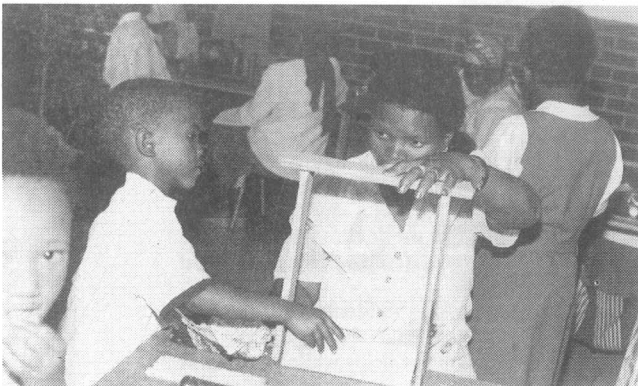


#### 4. Learning with parents

You have read a story on pages 20 to 22 which suggests some different ways in which parents can help with learning activities. You have also read certain suggestions in the 'dongo draft' about parents as 'teacher aides'. If a group of learners can work with a parent/ parents, this can free the educator to work with another section of the class.

We would like to draw your attention to two ideas which come out of the Thembelihle experience.

Firstly, on that 'open day', parents worked with learners to make things out of the materials which had been brought for the ZISA box. They made many different things – anything which the materials brought to mind. They also asked 'learning and thinking questions' about the things that they were making.



You might like to ask parents to come in and do this kind of thing with groups of learners. You could leave the task open, as the Thembelihle teachers did, or you could ask them to work on a particular 'Technology problem', like those that learners worked on in Umthamo 7 (An Introduction to Technology Education).

Secondly, at Thembelihle, there was a grannie who wanted to come and teach the learners to sew and to make a vegetable stew. At your school there must be parents who can teach learners various practical skills.

*Nontobeko at Smiling Valley school asked a mother to come and show the Grade 2 and 3 learners how to make mats out of reeds. Once she had taught them, they spent time practising on their own whenever they got a chance.*

NB: If you ask parents to come in and demonstrate skills, or work with the learners on practical projects, make sure that you stay with the group the first time the parents come. Ask questions about:

- The materials used;
- The way measuring is done;
- Reasons for what is done;
- The meaning which the artefact carries;
- etc.

Encourage learners to ask similar questions. This will show learners and parents what kinds of questions to ask and answer. It will ensure that the activity is more than an Arts and Crafts lesson. It will make sure that learners acquire a habit of thinking about what they are doing.



### Key Activity

#### Stage 4: Reporting on what you have done

Once you have used your independent learning resource with your class, you need to put together all the records of what you have done, and write a report on what you have done.

This report should include:

1. The design plan for your re-arranged classroom;
2. Photographs of the classroom (optional);
3. A description of the kinds of materials you have collected. Describe also your first steps towards sorting and storing these resources in the classroom.
4. An account of how you have used the materials you have collected for an independent learning activity. This should tell:
  - how you developed materials into a learning resource;
  - how your learners used the resource, working independently, either individually or in a group (or groups);
  - what happened;
  - what surprised or pleased you;
  - what didn't work so well;
  - how you would do it differently next time.
5. Samples of the resources you developed, and
6. Samples of learners' work.

Share this report and your resources with your colleagues and abakhwezeli at the final face-to-face session. Store them carefully in your concertina file, so that they can be displayed when you present your portfolio.





## Conclusion: Going on

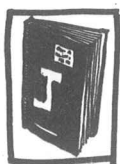
You will present your 'final report', and share how your independent learning activity went, at the final face-to-face session devoted to this umthamo. However, by that time, you will only just have started with the work of using the materials and resources that you and your learners have identified.

The process of developing resources for your classroom is a never-ending one.

You have asked learners to 'zisa' materials for the ZISA box, and they will continue to 'zisa'. You and they will also continue to sort the items into different categories.

Hopefully, your relationships with parents will develop. Some may become regular visitors to the school. Maybe some of them will offer their assistance as teacher aides, supervising various aspects of learners' work, and teaching them valuable skills. Some may continue to help with construction work and minor repairs in the classroom.

As you continue with your day-to-day teaching, you will find ways of integrating the materials that you have collected, and the learning resources you have developed from them, into your daily activities.



## Write in your journal

Keep records in your journal of how you have used the resources, and how the activities went. Keep on thinking of ways to use more and more of the boundless resources around you.

## Assessment of the resources

This assessment will have to take place in a few months' time. Make sure that you complete it before the next Helping Learners Learn umthamo is introduced. You will be asked to report on it at that session.

List the resources for independent learning, which you have in your 'resourceful classroom'. Write them in a table like the one below. Write next to each resource the influence and impact that it had on the learners. One item has been filled in, as an example.

<i>What resource?</i>	<i>Its influence on the learners</i>
<i>Jigsaw readings</i>	<i>It encourages teamwork and thinking skills. It motivates learners to read. Many learning areas are integrated in the articles.</i>

Here are some criteria to consider when you evaluate the resources:

- Do these resources encourage learners to think and ask questions about what they learn?
- Do they bridge the gap between the 'real world' and the classroom?
- Do they allow for individual differences, giving certain learners an opportunity to work independently on tasks that suit them?
- Do they develop in your learners the skills of observing accurately, collecting data, and writing up their own observations?
- Do they allow community members to share their knowledge, skills and life experiences with learners?
- Do they promote an awareness that the earth's resources are scarce and should be carefully used and re-used?
- Do they encourage the development of hands-on, practical skills?
- Can the resources be used for different learning areas at different times, across the curriculum?
- Can the resources be used by boys as well as girls, and by quick learners, slow learners, learners with special needs, learners with Hiv/Aids equally?
- Are the resources relevant to community needs, in terms of the cultures, languages
- Do they promote interactive, collaborative group work?
- Do the learners enjoy working with the resources?

**IS THERE ANYTHING THAT CANNOT BECOME A RESOURCE FOR LEARNING?**



## Appendix: Some additional ideas for independent learning resources

Here are more ideas for independent learning activities which you might like to implement with your class. We have not described them in detail, so you will need to think carefully about the details of implementation.

### Classifying objects

You have already had fun with your class classifying objects into:

- Natural and Technological objects, and
- Sinking and Floating objects.

You could also ask them to classify objects from the ZISA box according to:

- Shape
- Colour
- Size
- Texture
- Poisonous and non-poisonous objects
- Edible and not edible substances

### Working with information on packages

Food packages and other packages have a lot of different kinds of information printed on them.

- You have already worked with your learners on the graphics and different styles of writing on the packages.
- Learners could simply read the writing on some of the packages.

But there are other things which could also be looked at:

#### 1. The ingredients on food packages

All food products have to state their ingredients. You could ask learners to find, and make lists of, or put into groups, food products which contain, for instance:

- Dairy products;
- Maize (also called corn, umbona, mealies);
- Wheat;
- Sugar;
- etc.

#### 2. Nutritional information

Many food products tell how much carbohydrate, fat, vitamins, etc. the product contains. Learners could work on activities related to

- 'a balanced diet', or
- malnutrition, or
- slimming.

#### 3. Place of production

Learners could identify the places where products were made, and:

- Write them into a table:

<i>Product</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Province/Country</i>
<i>Cabana juice</i>	<i>Indwe</i>	<i>Eastern Cape</i>

- Classify them according to places of production.



## Working with advertising supplements from different supermarkets

Individuals or groups could answer questions about products advertised in different supermarket advertising supplements.

1. These could be questions about the mass of the products, e.g.

- How much does the packet of sugar weigh?
- Which is heavier, the samp advertised at Shoprite, or that advertised by Pick & Pay?

2. They could be questions relating to prices, and budgeting, e.g.

- How much does coffee whitener cost at the different supermarkets?
- Where would you shop if you had to buy rice, fruit juice and chicken? Why?

(This idea, and many others are contained in a book of activities published by the **Media in Education Trust**, which gives educators ideas about using newspapers and other media in the classroom. **Their phone number in East London is (043) 721-1482.**)

## Working with shapes

Most packages have lids and sides which have specific shapes, e.g. squares, triangles, circles, rectangles. These shapes are also used a lot in advertisements and other graphics in labels, newspapers and magazines. There are a lot of activities which can be done with these shapes.

1. You have already asked your learners to draw pictures based on shapes.

2. You have worked with tangrams – 5 pieces which can be put together to make a square. You could cut out different tangrams – different sets of pieces which can be put together to make a specific shape.

3. You could ask learners to cut out shapes from newspapers, and build pictures with them.

4. They can measure a number of aspects of the shapes:

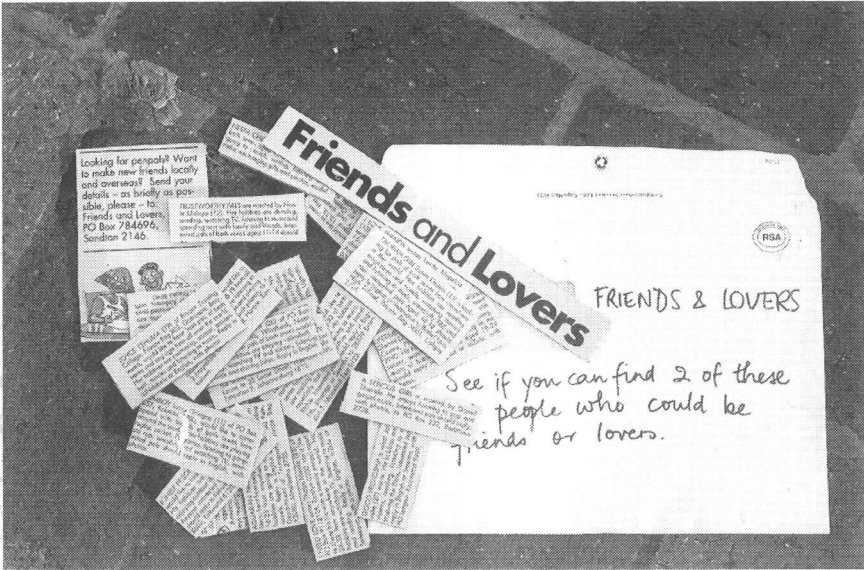
- The sides;
- The angles;
- The area of a shape;
- The total area of an opened out box;
- The volume of a box.

## Reading

You can never have too many reading materials. You have already started making books with your learners, and you should continue with that as often as possible.

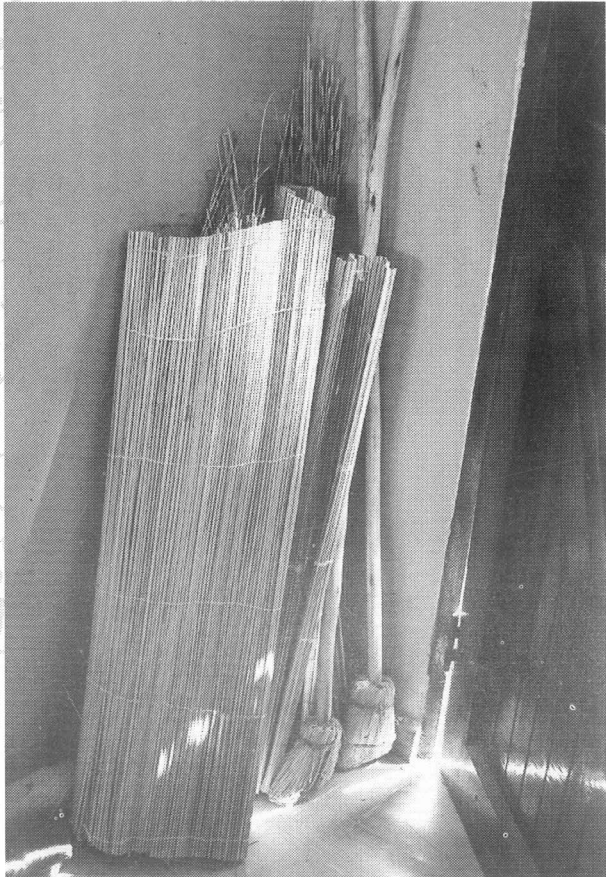
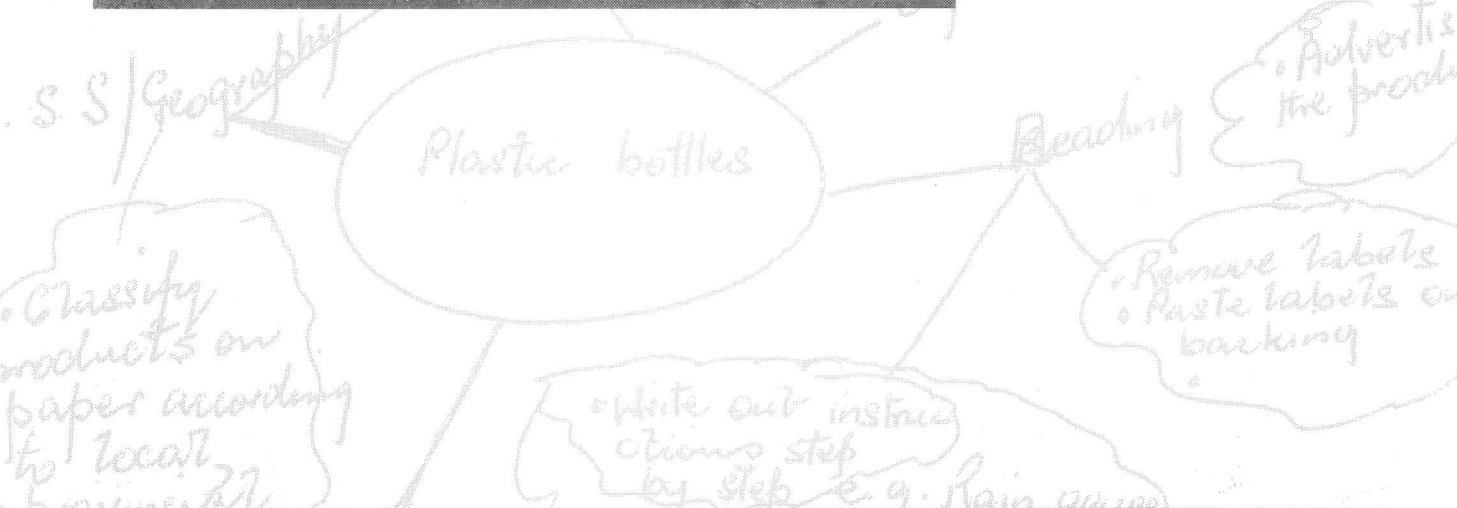
You can also stick stories and readings onto card, and make a collection of them. They could have questions on the back of them, for discussing or answering in writing.

Try to keep your eyes open for any offers of books for classrooms. It is worthwhile for your school to get book boxes from **READ**. There are often **education supplements to newspapers** which provide reading material for learners, and also give many other ideas for learning activities. On page 39, there is a picture of the Sunday Times supplement, **'Readright'**, which has a book on the back page every week. You can make it for your class by folding and cutting.



Draw a bar graph to illustrate capacity levels

- Fill container with something
- Measure
- Mark in ml



**UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE**

**DISTANCE EDUCATION PROJECT**

**CORE EDUCATION STUDIES COURSE**

**Helping Learners Learn**

## **Umthamo 4 – Independent Learning in a ‘Resourceful’ Classroom**

First Pilot Edition – 2000

Liz Botha

Nodumo Mabece

with

Dodds Pule, Paula Botya, Celiwe Ngetu, Viv & Alan Kenyon

Co-ordinated and edited by Liz Botha, illustrated by Alan Kenyon

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## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank Shumi Makalima and Nomazizi Nama, who helped with the conceptualisation of this umthamo, and Mthunzi Nxawe, Viv and Alan Kenyon and nhlanganiso dladla, who read the umthamo and gave us ideas and advice.

We are very grateful to the following people, who helped to trial the activities in this umthamo: Celiwe Ngetu, Paula Botya, Zoliswa Mafanya, Xoliswa Njaba, Nomakhaya Tyatyeka, Phumeza Mbontsi (all ESSO's), Mrs Pinkie Ndodana, Centre Co-ordinator, Mr Babini Maqolo, Principal of Mfunalwazi Primary School at Mpincho, Tsholomnqa, Miss Kholiswa Ngwadla, Principal, and Mrs Nomandla Galela, educator, of Macfarlane Primary School near Alice, Mrs Nonkosi Dokoda, Principal, and Ms Nomazotsho Skoti, educator at Thembelihle Public School, Mlungisi Location, Queenstown; Mrs Dubasi, Principal, and Miss Dubasi and Mrs Nombeko Njalisa, educators, at Nomzamo Primary School, Queenstown.

We would like to thank the Kagiso Trust, who generously sponsored the writing and development of this umthamo.

Finally, thanks to Ron Kahn of L. Harry & Sons (printers) for his patience, expertise and co-operation in helping us to turn this umthamo into a book.