

Rapid Response System Guidelines Grade 1 Reading

Total Reading Approach for Children (TRAC)

This document has been developed by World Education and Kampuchean Action for Primary Education in order to further support the success of the new reading textbooks recently developed by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport. Under a pilot project called Total Reading Approach for Children (TRAC), World Education and KAPE have developed a systematic way to help Grade 1 teachers to better track and help young children who are encountering difficulties in reading.

**ALL
CHILDREN
READING:**
A GRAND CHALLENGE
FOR DEVELOPMENT



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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Preface

The *Total Reading Approach for Children* Project (TRAC) is an innovative educational initiative to promote more effective approaches that help Cambodian children learn how to read Khmer Language. World Education, Inc. is implementing TRAC in collaboration with Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE), a local partner, and the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS). The TRAC Project is one of 25 projects that were awarded globally under the *All Children Reading Grand Challenge (ACR)*, which is funded by USAID, World Vision, and Australian Aid. The project was deemed to be one of the most innovative pilots proposed in a competition with over 400 applicants worldwide.

TRAC is working closely with the Department of Primary Education (PED) and the Department of Curriculum Development (DCD) to develop innovative teaching-learning techniques that build on the new Khmer Language readers recently developed by MoEYS. These innovations include (i) the development of explicit reading benchmarks based on the new curriculum; (ii) a Rapid Response System (RRS) to address the needs of children with special needs; (iii) continuous assessment tools based on reading benchmarks; (iv) reading toolkits, (v) M-learning games; and (vi) the establishment of school-based Literacy Coaches to orchestrate the interventions mentioned. The present document is intended to present experimental guidelines to implement a Rapid Response System for children with special that links closely with recently developed benchmarks, continuous assessment tools, and reading games.

TRAC hopes that the provision of this booklet will facilitate effective piloting of the proposed RRS. This will in turn lead to refinements and improvements to make the system more effective.

Rapid Response Guidelines

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PURPOSE & GOALS

1.1 Purpose of this Document

This document has been developed by World Education and Kampuchean Action for Primary Education in order to further support the success of the new reading textbooks recently developed by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport. Under a pilot project called *Total Reading Approach for Children (TRAC)*, World Education and KAPE have developed a systematic way to help Grade 1 teachers to better track and help young children who are encountering difficulties in reading.

The main focus of the document is to provide teachers with an explicit set of guidelines that explains how teachers can identify the children encountering difficulties in reading as well as the specific reading competencies that they do not understand well. Following this identification, teachers can work with school-based **Literacy Coaches** to systematically map out the needed responses to help these children master the ability to read Khmer Language. The system used to enable this tracking and response is called **a Rapid Response System** or **RRS**.

The identification of children with special learning needs and the nature of those needs depends heavily on continuous assessment tools

1.2 Goals & Objectives

The **overarching goal** of this document is to provide explicit guidelines that will enable teachers to manage a Rapid Response System that addresses the special learning needs of specific children in a classroom.

Specific objectives in this regard include the following:

- To help teachers better understand the importance of effective **continuous student assessment**.
- To help teachers administer continuous student assessment tools effectively.
- To help teachers better track children with special learning needs by providing concrete forms and tools
- To provide teachers with the tools they need to match learning needs with interventions that can address these needs.
- To provide explicit **Tracking Tools** that enable teachers to do adequate follow-up of those children with special learning needs.
- To provide guidance with respect to **Learning Games & Learning Aids** that will help struggling children to quickly acquire specific reading competencies.

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WHY ASSESSMENT IS IMPORTANT?

Too often, teachers assess their students without understanding why they are assessing students or what to do with the assessment information after they get it. It frequently happens that teachers simply record assessment scores in their mark books and move onto the next lesson whether children understand the previous lesson or not. Many teachers never use the information to review competency areas where students are failing or to identify individual children who are struggling with specific benchmarks.

It is hoped that the Rapid Response System described in these guidelines will help teachers to move beyond simply us-

ing assessments as something to record in the mark book. This is not to say that such assessment is unimportant – it is important, but by itself is not enough to say that we have assessed our students well. TRAC hopes that this document will help teachers to be like doctors – that is, to do assessment in a way that pinpoints what students do not understand and take actions to cure the problem, much as a doctor prescribes medicine.



Children completing a continuous assessment with their teacher.

Better assessment of children will help teachers to identify the students who are falling behind and in what particular competency areas they are experiencing difficulty. Once they have this information, they can develop or identify particular teaching and learning aids that will help address learning deficits. Because the

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benchmarks are organized over short intervals of time, teachers can know quickly

which students are having difficulty and with what topical areas, rather than waiting until the end of the term, when it might be too late to take remedial action. Thus, the guidelines described in this document are intended to help teachers to do better assessment, which will in turn provide better information about how to address learning problems in a timely manner.

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RELATED DOCUMENTS THAT COMPLEMENT RRS

Continuous assessment is a key element in implementing the RRS for children with special needs. The TRAC Project has developed a large number of continuous assessment tools that are matched with **Reading Benchmarks** that children must acquire at specific intervals during the school year. These benchmarks refer to reading competencies that are based on the MoEYS reader. TRAC has worked with the Ministry to develop clear statements of these reading benchmarks along with continuous assessment tools for assessing them (see document shown below).



Cover of the Reading Benchmark Booklet

Another important set of tools that teachers should be familiar with refers to a **Reading Toolkit** that contains learning games based on the official readers de-

veloped by Ministry. When reading through *the Reading Benchmark Booklet*, teachers will find specific games cross-referenced with each benchmark. These references should help teachers to know which games to assign children to play and for what particular benchmarks. A complete list of appropriate learning games from the toolkit can be found in Annex 1 of the *Reading Benchmarks Booklet*.

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GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE RAPID RESPONSE SYSTEM

There are 5 simple steps through which to systematically improve the literacy level of students when using this document. These steps are summarized in **Figure 3** and below:

1. Teach lessons until end of each interval

The teacher should teach the new MoEYS Grade 1 Reader using the Ability Statements indicated in the *Reading Benchmark Booklet* as a guide. Each Ability Statement is based on the official reader and indicates appropriate page numbers where the content can be found. Use the Sample Activities and suggested Learning Tools to help you develop effective lesson plans, based on the MoEYS Grade 1 Reader.

2. Assess students with the Writing Test indicated in each reading interval of the Benchmark Booklet

At the end of an interval (after a few weeks), administer the recommended test indicated in Annex 2 of the *Reading Benchmark Booklet* to the class. These tests may be available at your school as laminated sheets so that you can re-use them in future years.

It is important to keep in mind the following advice when administering the test:

- Each student should work individually

- The writing test answers should be completed with a white board marker if you are using laminated test sheets. This allows the teacher to clean the answer sheet and use it multiple times.
- Appropriate time should be scheduled to administer the test. In general, *20 minutes should be sufficient*.
- After completion of the test, each student should hand in the answer sheet and continue with other work.
- All students should understand that this test is there to help them, so it is fine if they do not know all the answers. **REMEMBER:** These tests are to be used to help students and should NOT be recorded in the Mark Book.
- Afterwards, parents and students should have lots of time to practice the things they find difficult together and at home.

3. Review tests and select the appropriate Learning Tools to address problems

After each test, the teacher should review the answer sheets. For each test section (for example 1A, 1B, 1C, etc.), an indicative scale is used to determine whether students have mastered the stated Ability (i.e., benchmark) or not (see Table 1). If

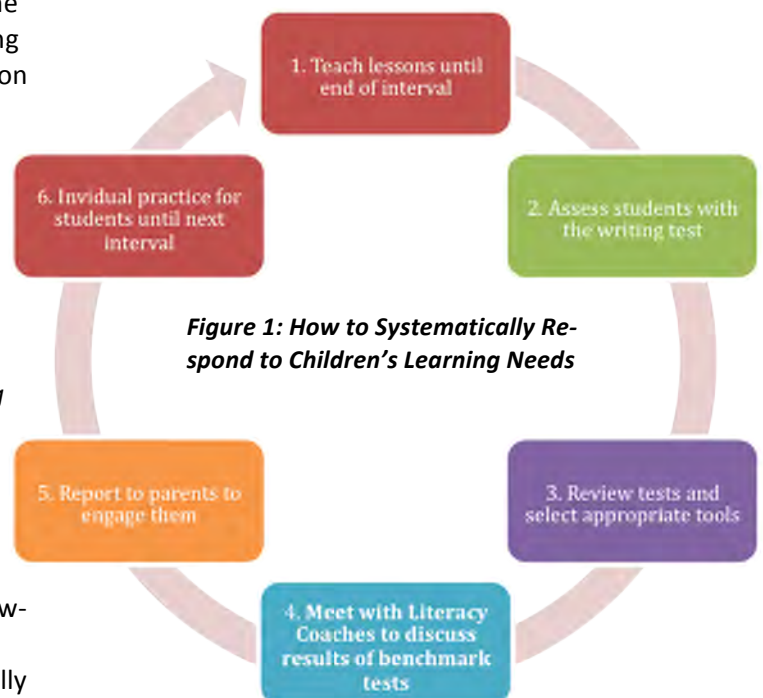


Figure 1: How to Systematically Respond to Children’s Learning Needs

students are scoring under 50% for a specific benchmark, they should be provided with the suggested Learning Tools to help strengthen their understanding. Your school may have these Reading Tools available in the library. If they are not available, you may consider asking your school director to try to procure them commercially with school funds.

Table 1: Rating Tool to Assess Student Performance on Writing Tests

% Answered correctly	Rating
66% to 100%	Good
51% to 65%	Satisfactory
below 50%	Poor

4. Meet with Literacy Coaches to discuss the results of the benchmark tests and appropriate follow-up actions

After marking the benchmark tests, teachers should meet with the school’s Literacy Coach to identify the students with special learning needs and the benchmarks or ability areas where they are having difficulty. The names of these students and appropriate follow-up actions should be recorded in a **Student Tracking Spreadsheet**. Possible follow-up activities may include the following:

- **Library-based Learning Games**
- **Classroom-based Learning Games**
- **Library-based M-learning Activities**
- **Extra books in library**
- **Issue Student Score Cards**
- **Peer Tutoring**
- **Parental Tutoring**
- **Parent-Literacy Coach Conferencing**

An example of this tracking tool is provided in **Annex 1** of this document.

5. Report progress results to parents in order to better engage them in helping their children

For those students who are scoring less than 50% for one or more reading benchmarks, teachers should complete a **Student Score Card**. When completing these Score Cards for students at the end of each month, teachers should note the

Ability Areas or benchmarks where students are encountering difficulties (i.e., where they are scoring below 50%) along with some Learning Tools that parents may use to help their children better master the benchmark. An example of this Score Card is provided in **Annex 2** of this document. Parents should be told that they can borrow the materials from the library to use at home, as necessary. All such materials including games, reading books, or even M-learning tools (for installation on a smart phone if a parent owns one) can be borrowed for at least a week.

6. Organize individual practice for students experiencing reading difficulties

Each student should regularly practice learning exercises through the Learning Tools provided, as recommended under each benchmark. These Learning Tools, mainly games, are essential for reinforcement of the different reading skills such as fluency, comprehension, etc. noted under each benchmark. These games and other materials should be available in the Library or at a learning corner if a teacher has organized one in his or her classroom. The School Vice Director for Technical Matters should follow up with the Librarian to see that this is happening regularly. The Literacy Coach may also follow up on the regularity of such activities. While these reinforcement activities are occurring outside of regular classroom hours, the teacher should continue teaching the benchmarks indicated in the next interval.



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USEFUL INTERVENTIONS TO HELP CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Teachers may consider the following interventions when they have identified children with special learning needs. Teachers should work with the Literacy Coach at their school to decide which and how many of these activities may be appropriate for any given child with special needs.

5.1 Library-based Learning Games

Each benchmark identified in the *Reading Benchmark Booklet* is cross-referenced with one or more learning games from the Reading Toolkit to reinforce it. Using these cross-references and the testing results for struggling students, Literacy Coaches and teachers should be able to determine which games are most useful to help these students read better. The librarian who should also participate in these meetings with the Literacy Coach and teachers should know which students should be playing with which games. Such games should be readily available in the library in multiple copies so that students can engage in individualized self-learning and reinforcement on their own or in groups.



5.2 Classroom-based Learning Games

Teachers are encouraged to set up learning corners in their classrooms where children can access literacy games from the Reading Toolkit. As in the case of the games available in the library, teachers should try to guide struggling students to

play with specific literacy games according to the benchmarks where they are having difficulty. These games should be readily available in the learning corner so that students may play with them during the break times. Alternatively, teachers can also distribute the to students to play with while they are correcting test papers or checking homework so that students are constructively engaged in learning as much as possible during the school day.



5.3 Library-based M-Learning Activities

If the school library is equipped with mobile learning devices like tablets and smart phones, students should also have the opportunity to play literacy games that are based on the Grade 1 textbook. These literacy games have different units that are automatically scored by the program so that teachers and the Literacy Coach can know whether there has been any improvement in the learning of specific students.



Once again, the Literacy Coach should discuss with the librarian those students who are struggling with which bench-

marks. The librarian should assist students in logging in to the electronic game so that individualized tracking of these students is possible.



A librarian assists a student to log onto a tablet to play a reading game

5.4 Extra books in Library or in Reading Corners

One of the best ways of teaching reading is to allow ample opportunity for students to practice their reading skills. Enjoyable reading books that are designed for young readers should be readily available in the library for students to access freely. Alternatively, teachers may also organize reading corners in their classrooms so that children can read enjoyable books during the break times as well.

5.5 Student Score Cards Provided to Parents to Request their Assistance

The role of parents in helping children to learn to read is critically important. Parents can provide crucial support to children if they know the areas where they should be helping their children. After the administration of interval tests, teachers should complete **Student Score Cards** that tell parents in what ability areas their children are struggling. These scorecards need only be completed for those students who scored below 50% on the interval test. The scorecard will tell parents the kinds of games and activities they

should be playing with their children to help strengthen certain reading skills. Parents may borrow these games from the school library by showing the Student Score Card with a teacher's signature. The score cards may also suggest special meetings between the Literacy Coach and the parent to help make a plan to better help their children at home.

5.6 Peer Tutoring

Children enjoy playing together. It is possible for the school to use the natural habit of children playing together to organize peer tutoring at the school. In this activity, older children in Grades 4, 5, or 6 may be assigned to work with younger children to help them to read. The older peers receive specific games from the school to play with the children, based on where they are having the most difficulty. The Literacy Coach should help organize this activity both in terms of making reading games available to peer tutors and making places available for children to learn together such as a study kiosk or outside bench.



Older children providing tutoring support to younger children

5.7 Parental Tutoring

Teachers and the Literacy Coach should encourage parents to work with their children in practicing reading at home. The student scorecards mentioned earlier are an important way for this outreach to parents to happen. To facilitate a parental

role in teaching children to read, schools should consider the following:

- Provide scorecards to parents on a regular basis for those children with special learning needs
- Allow parents to borrow literacy games and booklets from the library to play/read with their children
- For those parents who own a smart phone, invite parents to install literacy game software on their phones. This will enable children to access electronic literacy games while at home.
- Explain to parents how to track children's learning on electronic literacy games (using smart phones). This will enable parents to know in what areas they should be helping their children.



reading books in the library (which they can borrow), reading textbooks (if the child does not already have one), and electronic literacy games for installation on a smart phone if a parent should own one. Installation is free and comes with an explanation about how to play electronic games and track children's learning.



A Literacy Coach meets with local parents

5.8 Parent-Literacy Coach Conferencing

The Literacy Coach is a new position in many schools to better strengthen the link between schools and parents, especially in the area of reading. The Literacy Coach may be a community member, a member of the commune council, or a teacher. The Coach is there to meet with parents to provide guidance to them about how they can better help their children to improve their reading skills. The Literacy Coach can facilitate better communication between parents and teachers and also help parents to access reading resources at the school. These resources include literacy games and children's

ANNEX 1: Student Tracking Spreadsheet

School Name: _____ Class: _____

Teacher's Name: _____ Term: _____

No.	Student Name (A)	Tests Administered (√) Tests 1-9 (Written); 01=Oral Test 1; 02=Oral Test 2												Benchmarks Not Understood (C) (List Benchmarks: 1A, 1B, etc.)	Response Measures (√) (D)						Final EGRA Assessment (E) Poor (P) Satisfactory (S) Good (G)
		(B)													Parent Mtg	Library Games	Peer Tutoring	Parental Tutoring	M-Learning	Other (Pls specify)	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	01	02									
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Instructions for Completing the Student Tracking Spreadsheet

1. This spreadsheet is to be used only for those students encountering difficulty with reading on the continuous assessment tests. It should NOT be used for all students in the class.
2. Any student scoring less than 50% on a benchmark section (e.g., Section 1A, Section 1B, etc) of a continuous assessment test should be targeted for some form of response to help them master
3. For students who meet the criteria for identification above, please enter their name in the sheet above **(Column A)**
4. For each student whose name is entered in the spreadsheet, indicate what continuous assessment test has been administered to them by checking the appropriate test (e.g., Test for Interval 1, Test for Interval 2, etc.). For each new test that you administer, be sure to update the spreadsheet by checking the appropriate test. **(Column B)**
5. Indicate the benchmark that the student has difficulty understanding in the

ANNEX 2: Individual Student Score Card for Children with Special Reading Needs

Nation Religion King
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Student Score Card for Young Readers

Name of Child: _____

Class: _____

Primary School: _____

District: _____ Province: _____

Name of Teacher: _____

Month: _____ Year: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

*Help your child to read at home by practicing the
reading games and exercises suggested in this
scorecard*

Name of Reading Topic: _____

Lessons in Textbook: _____

Student Score on Interval Test: _____

Where Your Child Is Experiencing Difficulty:

What you can do:

- Visit the Literacy Coach for a conference
- Visit the Library to borrow specific games for your child.
Games or books you might borrow include the following:

- Install Learning Games on your Smartphone if you own one. If you are interested in this, please contact the Literacy Coach at the following Phone Number: _____