



Vuma Reading Instruction Programme

Pilot study

Description

The *Vuma* pilot study aimed to test the *Vuma* English First Additional Language reading programme as a whole over two terms and to monitor how the print components can be used within the context of the South African classroom.

The field work was conducted by an independent researcher with support from Brigotte Naicker, a Pearson Content Specialist. This report contains summary findings from the original research report.

Time-frame

The pilot study was conducted during the third and fourth terms of 2015.

Sample

- Two Grade 1 classes and teachers at a public school in KwaZulu-Natal
- Two Grade 1 classes and teachers at a public school in the Western Cape.
- The total sample thus included 116 learners and 4 teachers.

Research questions for the study

1. Is it easy to use the print components of the *Vuma* Reading Instruction Programme?
2. How do teachers use *Vuma* in the instruction of reading?
3. Do teachers think the *Vuma* Reading Instruction Programme will help children to learn to read?
4. What do teachers like about the various components of *Vuma* and how can they be improved?

Data collection methods

- Classroom observations
- Pre and post surveys
- Teacher questionnaires
- Two structured interviews with teachers.

Key findings

1. The resources are easy to use

All teachers strongly agreed that the print materials are easy to use.

Teachers cited the following:

- The Teacher's Guide and lessons plans were clear and comprehensive with logical sequencing.
- The programme as a whole is very flexible, providing many options and a variety of ways to use the various components that suited them and their learners.

Teachers from both schools reported that they preferred using *Vuma* to previously used print materials. Reasons included the fact that learners really related to the stories and characters.

“

There is nothing difficult or anything like that. It is very easy and straightforward. Everything you need is there and it is not like you have to guess what goes with what! Everything makes sense.'

”

Grade 1 teacher from primary school in *KwaZulu-Natal*

2. Teachers use *Vuma* as intended and learners enjoy and engage with the stories

- Generally, teachers appeared to use the *Vuma* reading programme as intended.
- Teachers from both sample schools were clear that the different reading methodologies (shared reading, group guided reading, paired and individual reading) are all important and need to work together.
- They all agreed that *Vuma* provides the necessary resources in order to implement the different reading methodologies effectively.

Teachers noted that the story contexts and relatable characters promoted reading for enjoyment and learner engagement.

“

They can't wait for the next book. They keep asking when they will get it.
They get so excited.

”

Grade 1 teacher from primary school in *KwaZulu-Natal*

3. *Vuma* has the potential to help children learn to read and read with comprehension

- Overall, teachers from the sample schools believe that the *Vuma* print resources help children to learn to read English First Additional Language.
- All the teachers felt that *Vuma* achieved the aim of supporting reading with comprehension.
- This was linked to the story contexts and characters, the visual cues in the artwork and evidenced in learners' answers to the post reading and comprehension questions as well as learner responses to the activities in the workbooks.

Rating of *Vuma* resources

Teachers were asked to list the strengths and areas of improvement for each component in the programme. Teachers reported they could not identify any weaknesses.

Strengths

The table below records the strengths noted by teachers:

<i>Vuma</i> resource	Strengths
Readers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Printed readers are colourful and beautifully illustrated.• On the right levels for learners.• Children can relate to the stories and characters.• Added features such as hidden icons promote interest and learner engagement.
Big Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Matching Big Books for each reader helps with shared reading.• Including questions on the inside covers is useful.• Perfect size.• Very well illustrated with colourful pictures.
Context Cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help learners with word recognition.
Workbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Useful when busy with group guided reading as other learners are occupied with related learning activities.• Learning activities are enjoyable.• Covers all the readers efficiently
Teacher's Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps produce better lessons.• User friendly and easy to understand.• Includes a lot of excellent ideas.
Alphabet Frieze	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very colourful and useful.
Audio CD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps develop listening skills.• Aids learners with correct pronunciation.

Areas for improvement

The following useful suggestions for improvement were put forward by teachers:

- Include additional phonic work, sentence building and writing activities in the English First Additional Language Teacher Guide and Workbook activities.
- Include context cards for all new words in each level and enlarge sentences on context cards.
- Include space so that learners' names and class can be written on the front of the Workbook.

Pearson South Africa is engaging with these suggestions and will continue to strengthen *Vuma* based on the on-going feedback from teachers.

Summary

Vuma meets the needs of a variety of learners and teachers and the research findings suggest that *Vuma* has potential to deliver on expected learner outcomes especially when the programme is used as intended by teachers.

“

Vuma is a great reading scheme that learners enjoy and can relate to.
It is manageable and easy to teach

”

Grade 1 teacher from primary school in *Western Cape*

About *Vuma*

Vuma is a reading instruction programme for Foundation Phase learners. The programme has been designed to teach reading for meaning and to inspire South African children to want to read. It also aims to nurture reading enjoyment, with exposure to real South African, age-appropriate stories.

Each story has been developed uniquely in its language group and according to particular phonics and vocabulary progression specific to each language group. The programme covers Sepedi, isiZulu, isiXhosa, and Afrikaans Home Languages as well as English First Additional Language.

The range includes an entry level digital component based on teachers' needs and DoE policy papers.

For more information contact *Vuma* contact Pearson Customer Services

Tel 021 532 6008

Email: pearsonza.enquiries@pearson.com