

# Early literacy as a foundation for learning

The Zenex story



# Literacy as a foundation for learning: The Zenex Foundation Story

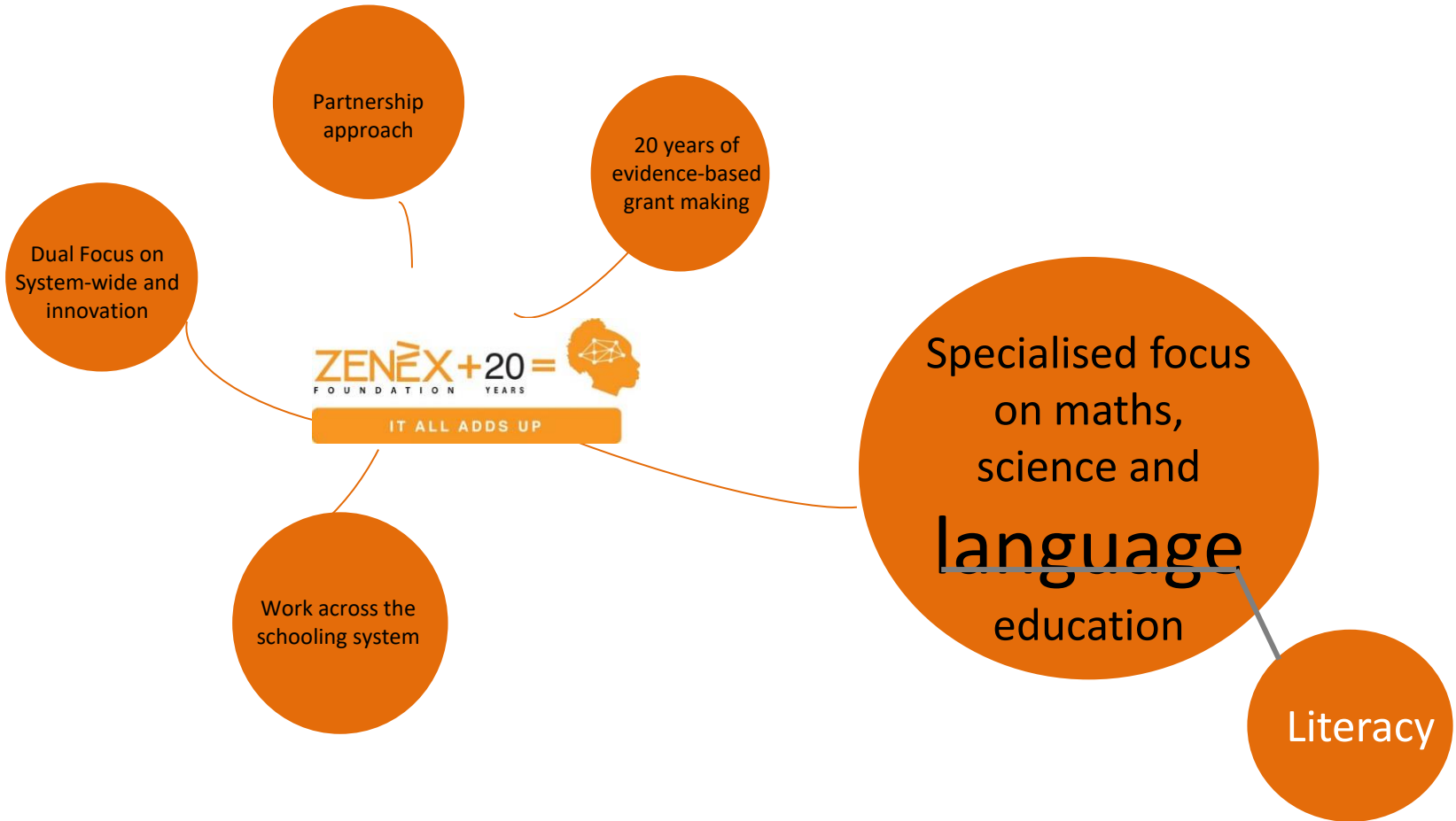


*Advancing mathematics, science and language education*

# It all adds up



# Today's focus: Foundation Phase literacy



# Why is literacy important for M & S

Literacy at Foundation  
Phase is critical – it's a  
game-changer

Maths and science are gateway subjects  
Literacy is fundamental to learning  
Good language = good maths and science



To build a skill base to enable economic  
growth and development

# Why literacy?

- Ability to read for meaning and pleasure is arguably the most important skill that children learn in primary school.
- While there are many challenges in the South African education system, the fact that most children do not learn to read fluently and with comprehension by the end of Grade 3 (in any language) is arguably *the* binding constraint to improved educational outcomes for the poor.

# Literacy Performance in SA

## Bimodality – indisputable fact (Spaull)

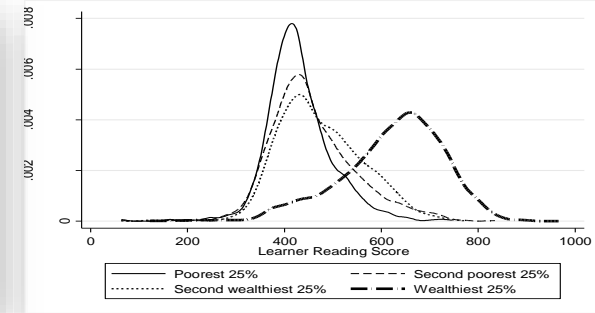
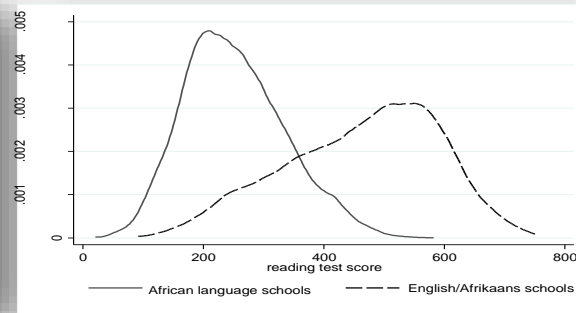
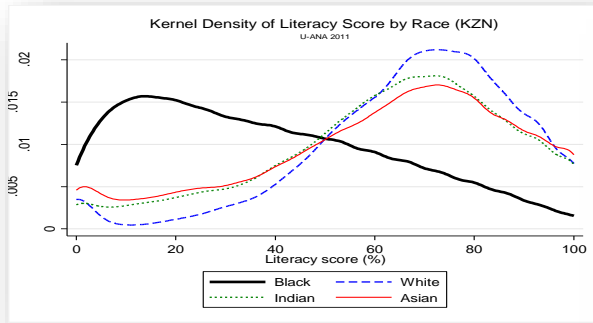
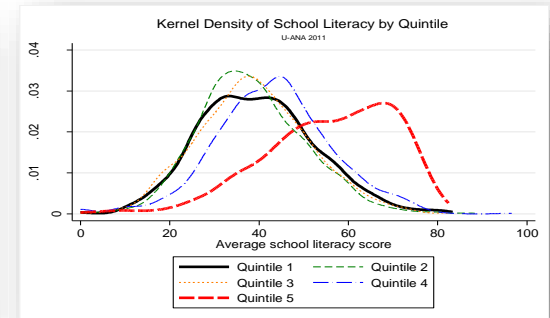
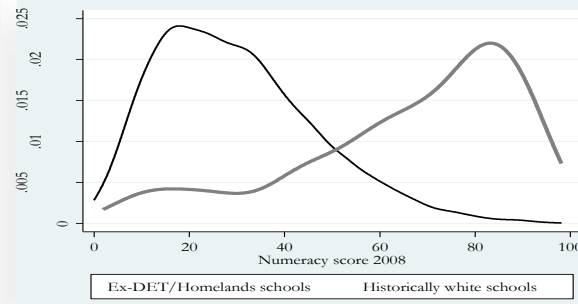
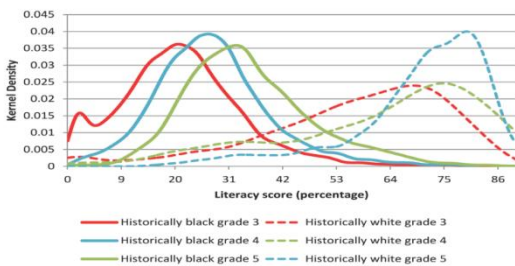


Figure 2: Kernel density curves of Literacy 2007, 2008 and 2009 by ex-department



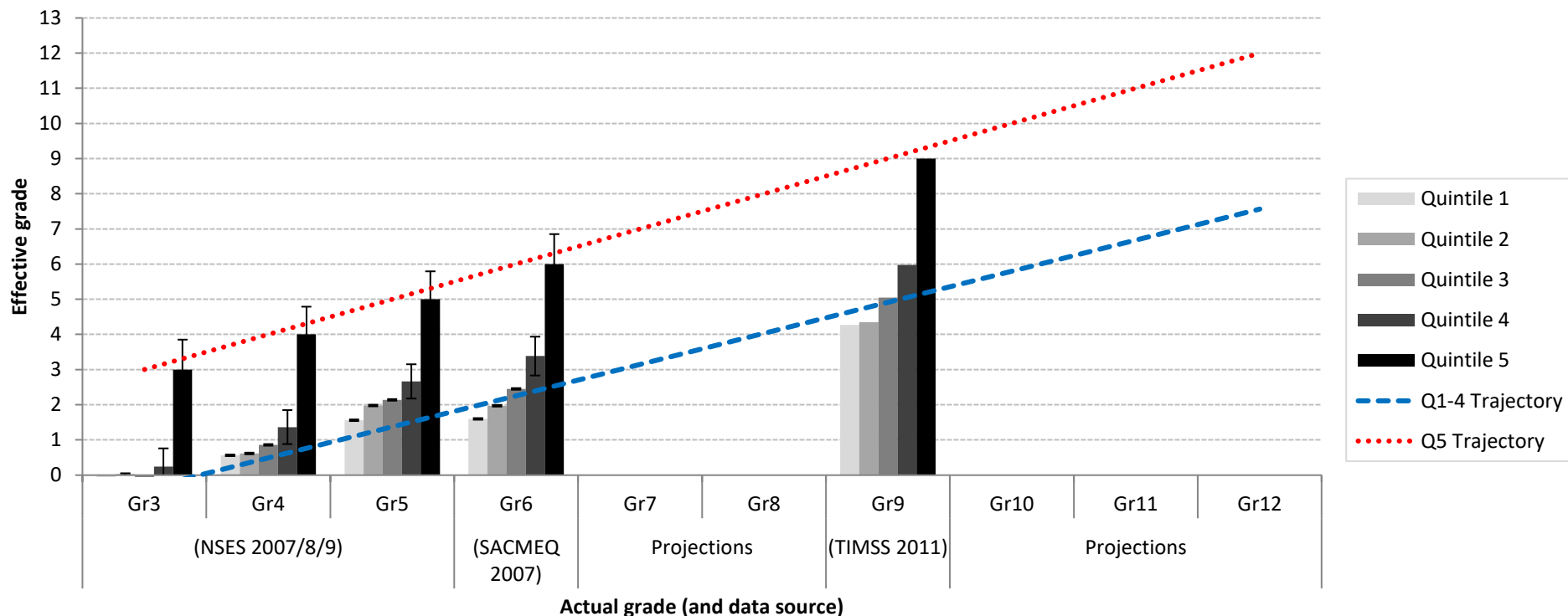
PIRLS / TIMSS / SACMEQ / NSES / ANA / Matric... by Wealth / Language / Location / Dept....

# Literacy Performance in SA

Insurmountable learning deficits: (Spaull)

## South African Learning Trajectories by National Socioeconomic Quintiles

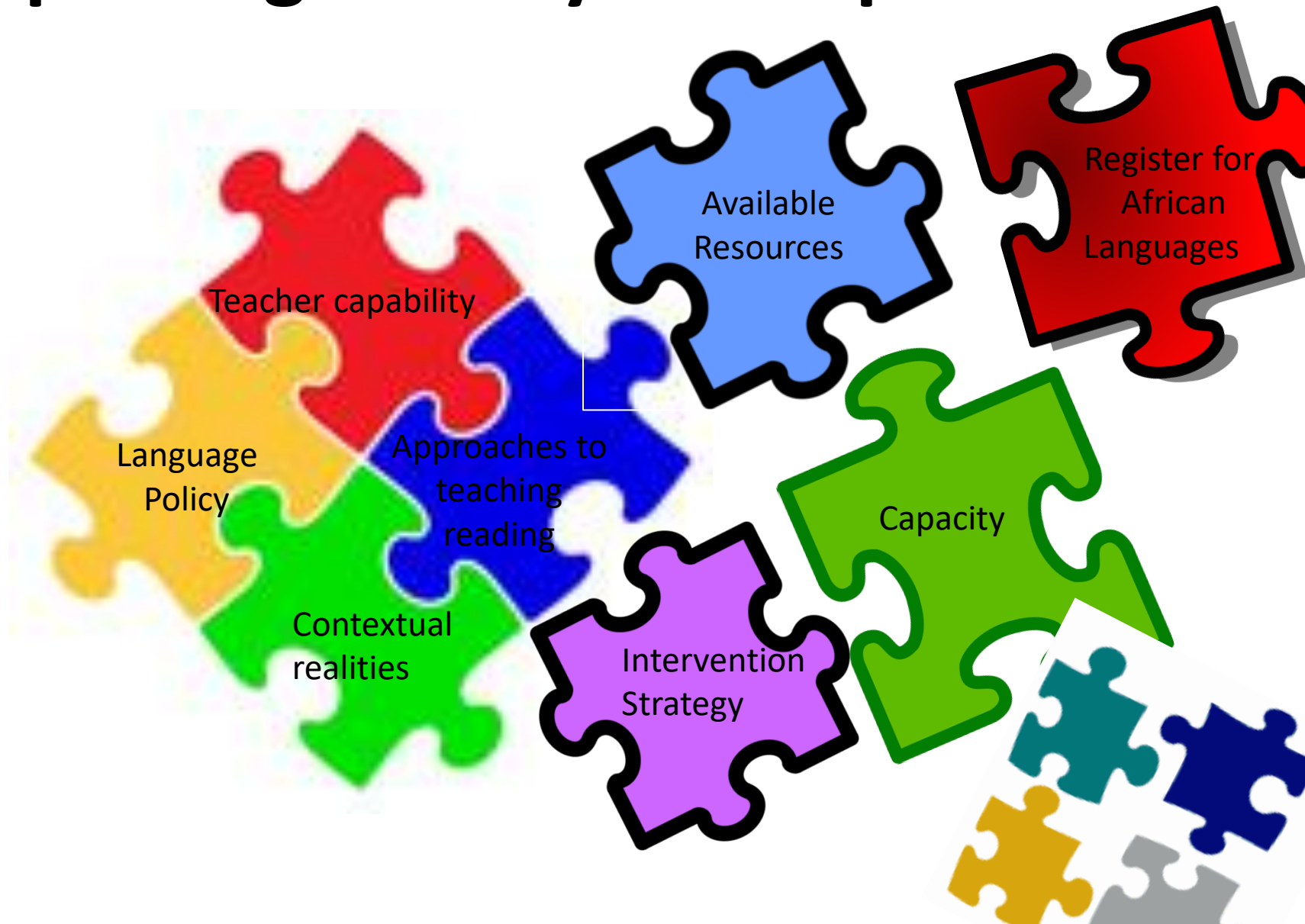
Based on NSES (2007/8/9) for grades 3, 4 and 5, SACMEQ (2007) for grade 6 and TIMSS (2011) for grade 9



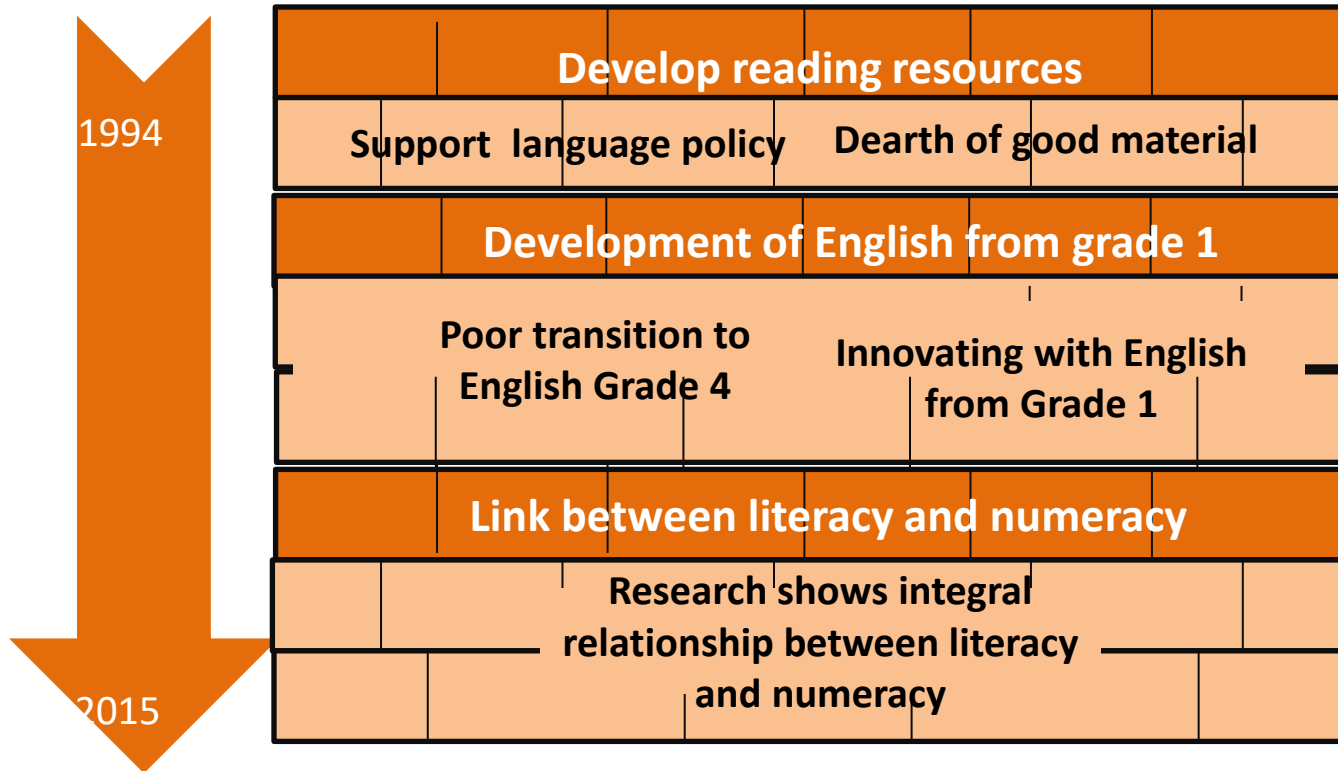
Spaull & Viljoen, 2014 (SAHRC Report)



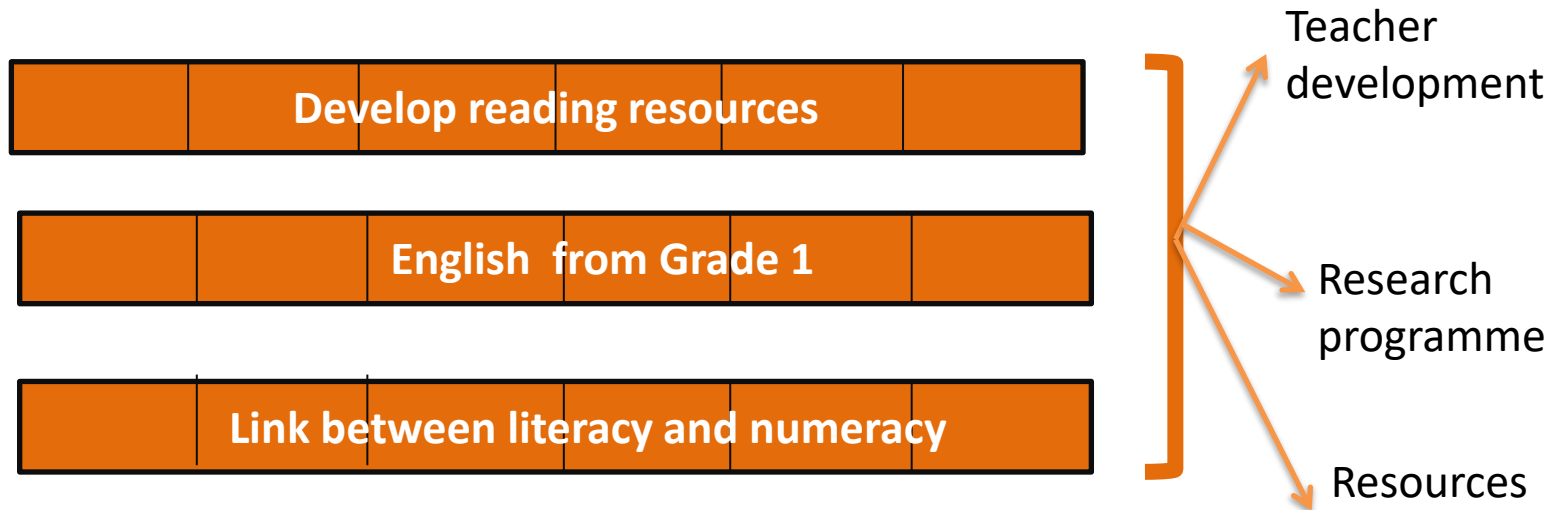
# Improving literacy is complex



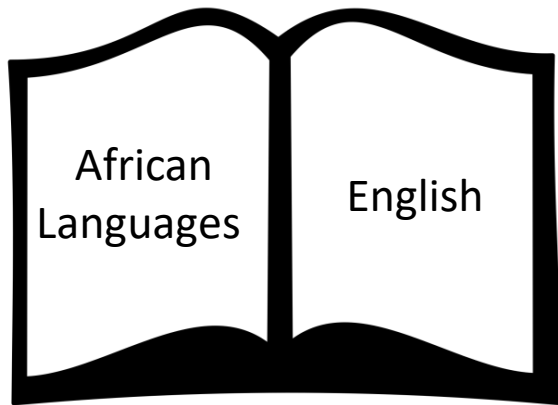
# Our 20-year journey



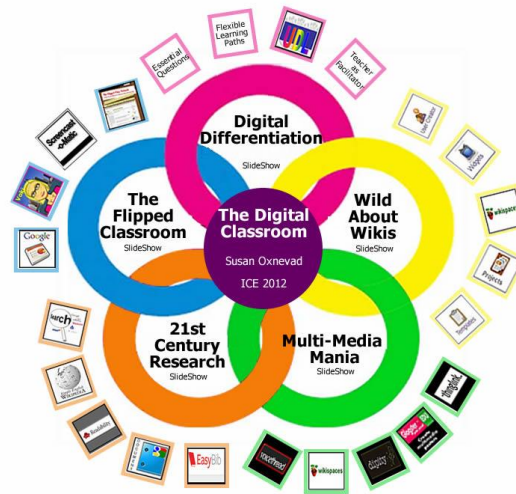
# Three action areas to influence literacy outcomes



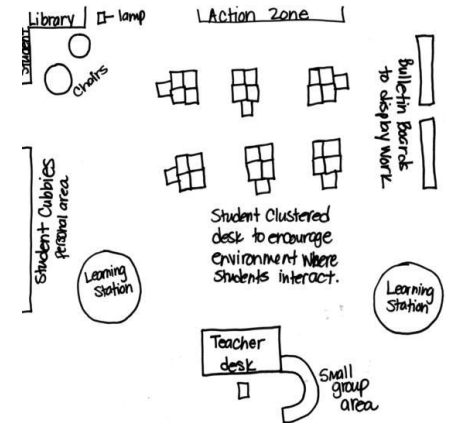
# Resources



Graded readers



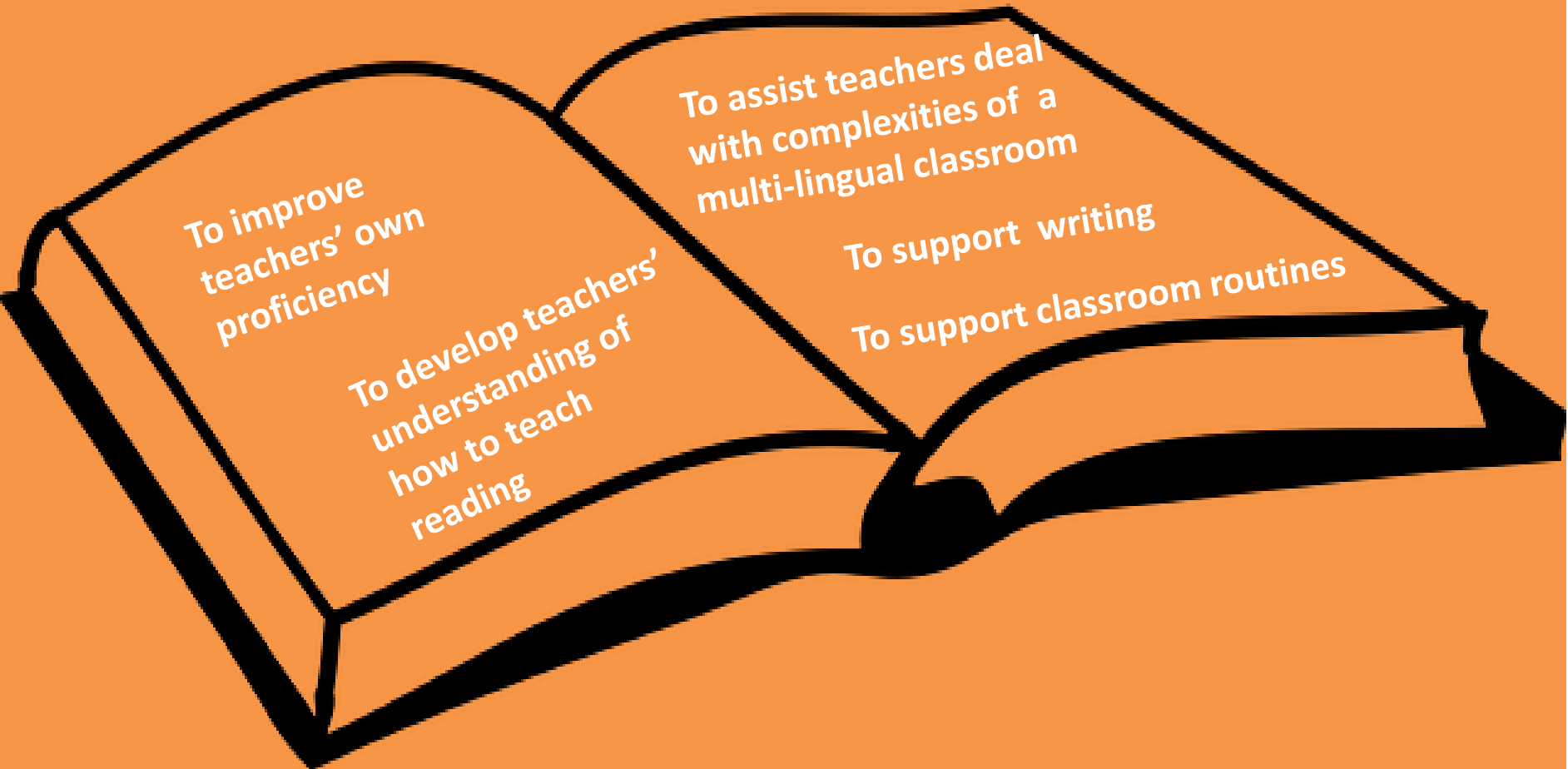
Lesson plans



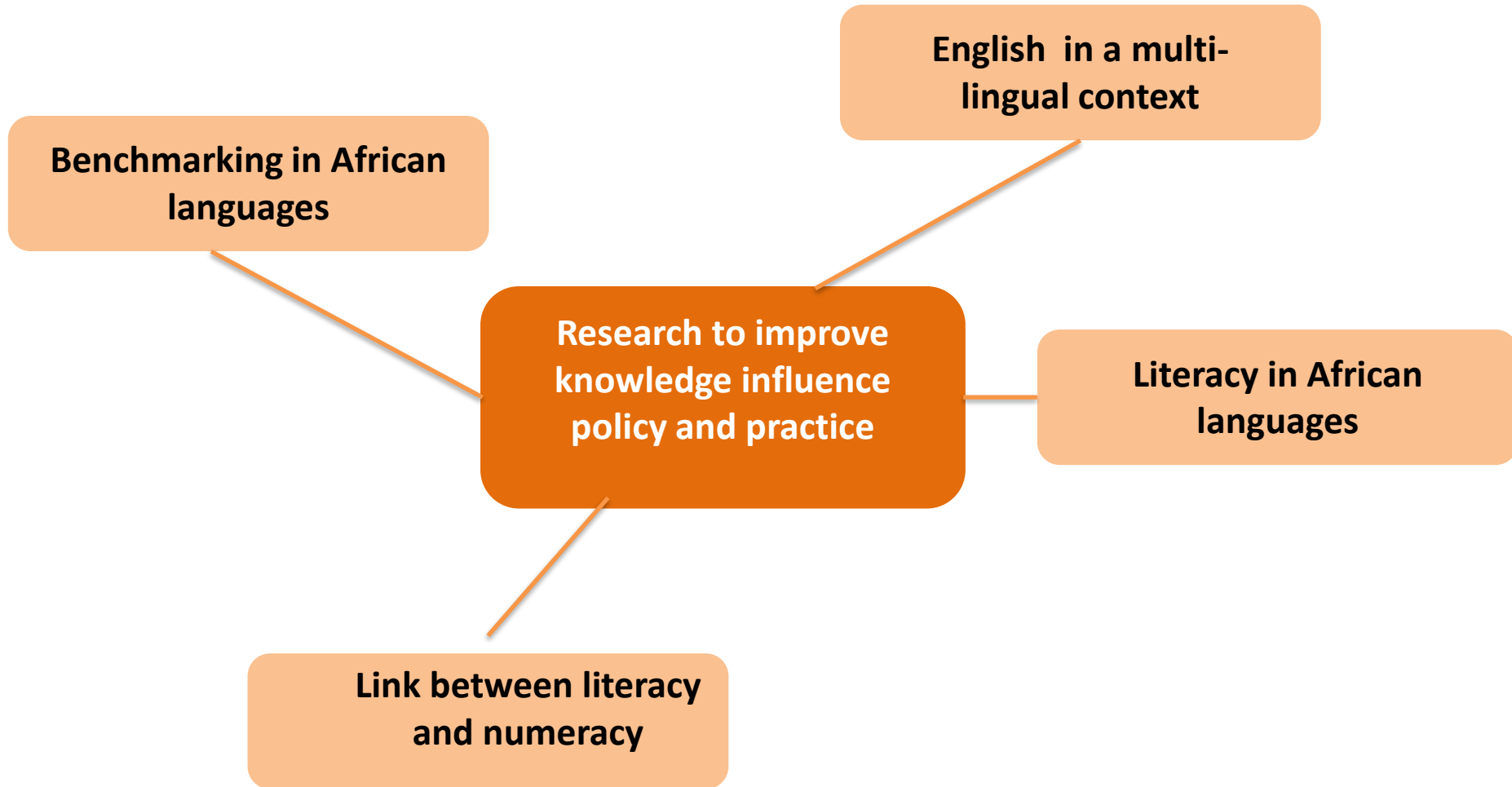
Classroom infrastructure

# Teacher development

Supported accredited and non-accredited programmes



# Research Programme



# What we have learnt

**Teacher Development: Relationship between numeracy and literacy**

**Resources, training and support  
“Learn through doing”**

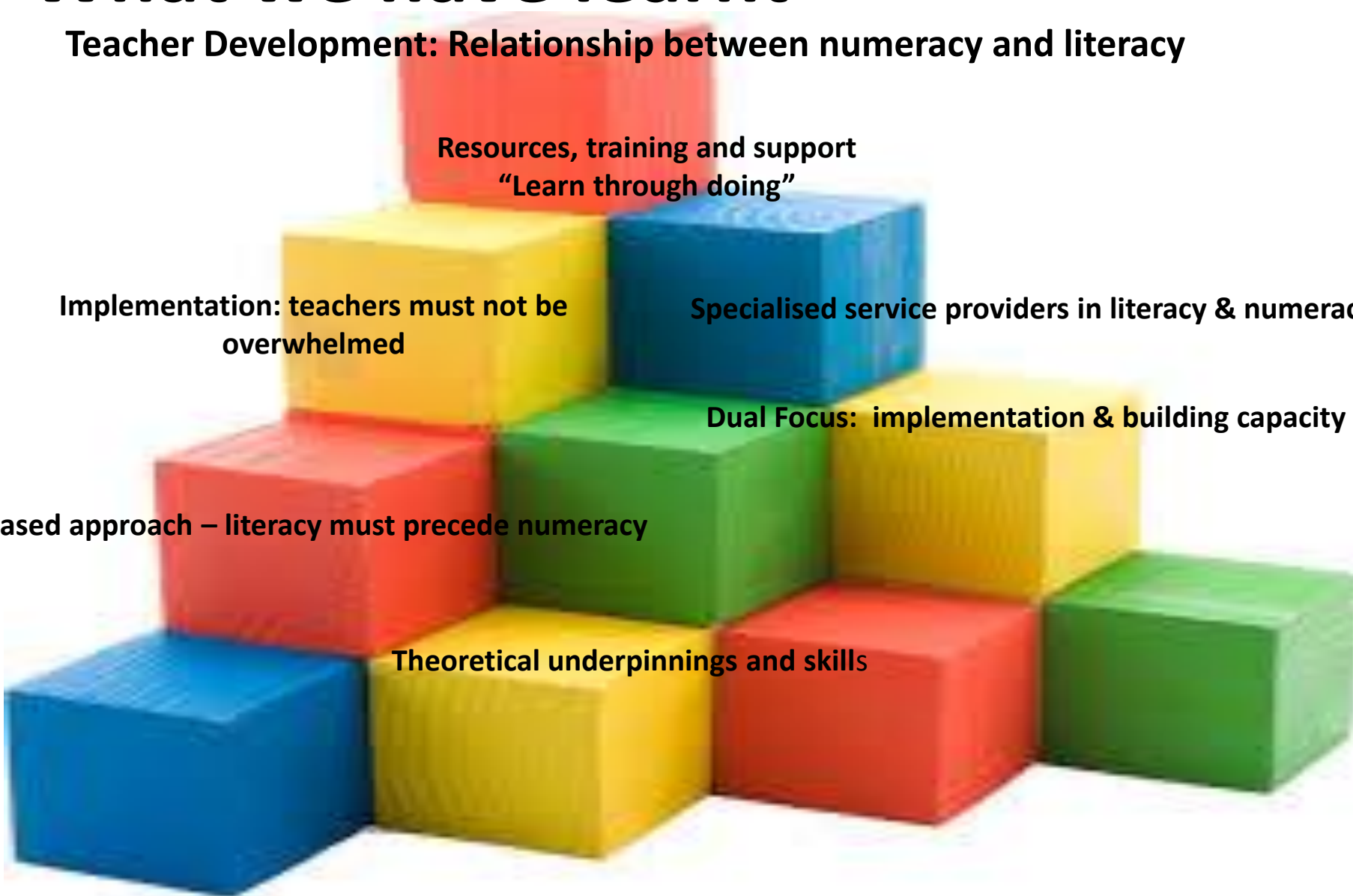
**Implementation: teachers must not be  
overwhelmed**

**Specialised service providers in literacy & numeracy**

**Dual Focus: implementation & building capacity**

**Phased approach – literacy must precede numeracy**

**Theoretical underpinnings and skills**



# What we have learnt

**Resource Development**

**Developing materials with linguistic integrity**

**Invest in capacity**

**Research**

**Developing a body of evidence**

**Innovation or testing must be underpinned by M & E**

**Track Performance**

