

Influences on the Decision-Making, Beliefs, Pedagogy, and Practices of a  
Primary Grade 3 Literacy Teacher in Uganda

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By

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## DEDICATION

I would like to especially thank my husband for his encouragement, years of taking over many of my duties at home, and moving our family and his job to Virginia so I could pursue this degree. I would also like to thank Dr. Sturtevant for her patience and time in helping me to stay focused, and Dr. Mugimu for helping my family to get settled in Uganda and adjust to the culture.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables .....	viii
List of Abbreviations .....	ix
Abstract .....	x
1. Introduction.....	1
Postcolonial Education.....	3
Background .....	4
Geography.....	4
Population Growth.....	5
Poverty .....	5
Health.....	6
Violence .....	7
Characteristics of Primary Schools in Uganda .....	8
Needs in the Primary Education Context.....	11
Universal Primary Education (UPE).....	14
Statement of the Problem.....	20
Research Questions .....	21
2. Literature Review.....	23
Research Supporting the Research Design .....	23
The Effect of Context on Teachers’ Decision-Making.....	25
The African Educational Context .....	25
The Impact of Context on Teacher Beliefs .....	27
The Effect of Context on Student Learning.....	30
The Innovation .....	34
The Impact of Context on Teacher Change Through Professional Development .....	36
Summary .....	51
3. Method .....	55
Setting and Teacher Participant .....	56
The Classroom .....	57
The Curriculum .....	58
The Participants .....	58
Research Design.....	59
Innovation .....	60
Data Sources .....	61
Data Collection .....	63
Data Analyses .....	67
Triangulation.....	69

Limitations .....	70
Importance .....	74
Summary .....	75
4. Findings.....	77
The Context of a P3 Luganda Literacy Teacher .....	79
Teacher’s Cultural/Personal Context .....	79
Teacher’s School/Community Context.....	86
The Impact of Eva’s Context on Her Teaching .....	103
The Influence of Eva’s Context on Her Luganda Literacy Pedagogy and Decision-Making.....	104
The Influence of Eva’s Context on Her Practices.....	112
The Influence of Eva’s Context on Her Literacy Beliefs .....	114
Teacher Change Innovation .....	117
The Actual Innovation and How it Developed .....	120
The Teacher’s Description of Her Decision-Making.....	153
Summary .....	163
5. Analysis.....	168
Analysis of the Findings in Relation to Earlier Research .....	171
The Effect of Context on Teachers’ Pedagogical Decision-Making .....	171
Negotiating the Context to Facilitate the Innovation .....	173
Supporting Theoretical Relationships.....	180
Findings: Development of Models.....	181
Teacher Change Model .....	181
Adapted LEA Model.....	183
Student-Authored Book Flood Model .....	186
Implications for Research, Practice and Policy .....	187
Research.....	188
Practice.....	190
Policy .....	192
Limitations .....	193
Conclusions.....	195
Appendices	
A. Teacher Resources for Professional Development .....	200
B. Timelines: Innovation and Procedures.....	202
C. Questionnaires .....	207
D. Data Collected and Resources Used to Answer Research Question Two .....	216
E. Formal Interview Questions .....	217
F. Matrices .....	222
G. Luganda Lesson .....	228
H. A Description of Adults in the Community Who Were Interviewed .....	230
I. Sample of P2 and P3 Curricula.....	231
J. Teacher Work Schedule for One Week.....	235
K. Innovation Participation Model .....	236

L. Plan for Group Book Writing: A Literacy Activity for 95 Children with One Teacher.....	237
References.....	239

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Teacher Classroom Decision-Making.....	106
2. Eva's Beliefs About Best Ways to Learn Literacy .....	115
3. Teacher Decisions to Simplify the Group Work Model .....	149
4. P3 Teacher Pedagogy Changed From Blackboard Approach to Student-Centered Approach.....	152

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BTL	Breakthrough to Literacy
CCT	Coordinating Center Tutor
CPD	Continuing Professional Development for Teachers
DFIDCA	Department for International Development Central Africa (UK)
ERNESA	Educational Research Network of Eastern and Southern Africa
ERNWACA	Education Research Network for West and Central Africa
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IRA	International Reading Association
LEA	Language Experience Approach
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MDD	Music, Dance and Drama
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOES	Republic of Uganda: Ministry of Education and Sports
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NVIVO	Brand name of qualitative solutions research software
P1	Primary Grade 1
P2	Primary Grade 2
P3	Primary Grade 3
PGM	Peer Group Meetings
PLE	Primary Leaving Exam
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTC	Primary Teacher Training College
PTE	Primary Teacher Education
RMT	Researcher, Mentor or Trainer
UCWIA	Uganda Children's Writers and Illustrators Association
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## ABSTRACT

### INFLUENCES ON THE DECISION-MAKING, BELIEFS, PEDAGOGY, AND PRACTICES OF A PRIMARY GRADE 3 LITERACY TEACHER IN UGANDA

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This study investigated how the context of a Primary 3 (P3) teacher of Luganda in Uganda influenced the teacher's literacy instructional decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices before and after she was provided with supplies and literacy instructional procedures that helped produce reading materials for her students. The contextual problems that were addressed were the poverty context that included the lack of opportunities for P3 students to read in their native language due to having few or no books in Luganda (a minor language), and instructional practices that focused on rote learning which put students in a passive learning environment. The study was conducted for eight months in a rural/urban, public primary school P3 classroom with over 100 students. There were few teacher and student resources and 18 different mother tongues represented in the classroom. For six weeks the teacher taught the researcher about her beliefs, pedagogy, and practices through interviews, observations, and writing. The researcher also conducted interviews with selected students and community members.

The innovation was based on Ball's teacher change model and involved the researcher modeling Language Experience Approach book writing, sharing information on literacy pedagogy, and collaborating and supporting the teacher's reflection and decision-making to develop literacy activities. A model was developed that included small group book writing that took the local context into account. The teacher experimented with the model and changed it according to her desires. The results included an increase in teacher capacity; changes in her beliefs, pedagogy, and practices; and modifications in the context. Less advanced students received support from more advanced peers, and the teacher had more time to work with groups and individual students. In addition, at minimal cost, students authored books on the curriculum in a minor language and read them.

## 1. Introduction

“In sub-Saharan Africa, it is estimated that only one quarter of the children who complete primary school actually gain basic literacy skills” (United States Agency for International Development [USAID], 2005). Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs), whether they be international, national, or local, implement education programs that try to raise literacy levels in developing countries in order to promote sustainable economic development, access to human rights and choices, empowerment for the underprivileged, raised productivity and incomes, and improved health and participation (Burnett, 2005). The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was responsible for the *Joint Evaluation of External Support to Basic Education in Developing Countries* (2003) found that

What is most lacking . . . is a willingness and determination to improve basic education through locally developed solutions, which are most relevant to the particular contexts of partner countries and which are built from the “ground up” rather than through the application of blueprints and templates developed at a global level. (pp. xiv-xv)

The evaluation further advised that leaving teachers out of the development process results in programs that are not relevant and applicable in teacher training, materials development, and curriculum. In addition, *The Education for All Global Monitoring*

*Report for 2005* (Burnett, 2005) suggests that it is also necessary to experiment with alternative instructional practices because there are still debates on which instructional practices are appropriate in this context.

Another issue with low literacy rates is the lack of resources and reading materials in many developing countries. Research has shown measured increases in student achievement when reading materials are provided (Fuller & Heyneman, 1989; Hanushek, 1995; Mingat, 2003). Although the introduction of reading materials has been found to be related to student achievement in developing countries, there are issues that limit the efficacy of most programs. Two issues are poverty and the lack of resources in developing countries. NGOs donate books to developing countries because the countries do not have the resources to publish books, the poor people do not have the money to buy books, and often there just are not enough people who write books. In addition, sometimes teachers are not trained in how to use the books. NGOs also donate money for book publishing and distribution.

Nonetheless, donating books and providing money for publishing have their limitations. Both programs are very expensive. For example, a book project in 16 districts of Tanzania was slated to cost over \$10,000,000 from 2002-2006 (Penny, 2004). Also, corruption in the recipient countries can lower the efficiency with which NGOs can utilize governments, publishers, and distributors to publish and get the books to their destinations (Montagnes, 2001). In addition, donated books are often not culturally appropriate and this can impede the recipients' comprehension of what they read (Elley, 1996).

Another issue is the lack of books in minority languages. To emphasize the magnitude of this problem, here is a sample of the number of languages in 3 countries in Africa: 214 living languages in The Democratic Republic of Congo, 142 in Sudan, and 43 in Uganda (Gordon, 2005). It can be very costly to translate books and publish them in all the languages. The politics behind deciding which languages to use when publishing books complicates the publication of books in minority languages even further. Consequently, books in minority languages are often scarce and primary schools in low-income areas often have no books for children to read in their mother tongue (Greaney, 1996; Oliveira, 1996).

This study investigated how the context of a Primary 3 (P3) teacher of Luganda in Uganda influenced the teacher's literacy instruction decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices before and after she was provided with supplies and literacy instructional procedures that helped produce reading materials for her students. The contextual problems that were addressed were the poverty context (Heyneman, 1984) that included the lack of opportunities for P3 students to read in their native language due to there being few or no books in Luganda (a minor language), and instructional practices that focused on rote learning which put students in a passive learning environment (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2004).

### Postcolonial Education

Colonialism, macroeconomic policies, and governments established after independence have helped to shape postcolonial education in sub-Saharan Africa (Cheru, 2002). The rapid expansion of primary education since the implementation of Universal

Primary Education (UPE) has also had a great deal of influence on postcolonial education.

Characteristics of the postcolonial educational context in Uganda during the period of the study were characterized by a lack of infrastructure, teachers, resources, and supervision. In addition, caning as a disciplinary practice was still common. There was, however, a research-based curriculum. The teacher pedagogy was teacher-centered and characterized by chalk-and-talk and rote recitation which are common in high student-to-teacher ratio classrooms in sub-Saharan Africa (Dembélé & Miaro, 2003). A focus of the educational context was preparing students for district exams every term. Partly as a result of the postcolonial educational context, educational quality in sub-Saharan Africa is low as has been determined by international studies (UNESCO, 2004).

### Background

The physical and cultural background in which this study took place had a great influence on how it was conducted and how it progressed. The characteristics of the Ugandan people were influenced by the conditions in their country, and education varied across Uganda according to the people, location, and type of school.

### *Geography*

The World Bank (2002) looked at the geographical characteristics of each section of a country to determine how access, quality, efficiency, and equity can be achieved when delivering education to the people. Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa surrounded by Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Kenya. Uganda enjoys a favorable climate with rainfall most of the year except in the north

where there is only one rainy season in a semi-desert. The rest of the country is covered with tropical forests and savannah woodlands with fertile soil (Eilor et al., 2003) except for the southeast corner which is covered by Lake Victoria. The school in which I worked was in the central part of the country, which is the most favorable to education.

### *Population Growth*

There are three important factors related to population and primary education in Uganda: the distribution of population, the dependency ratio (the number of individuals aged below 15 or above 64 divided by the number of individuals aged 15 to 64), and the growth rate of the population. As of Eilor et al.'s (2003) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund's (UNICEF) (2006) research, the people were distributed fairly evenly across the different sections of the country but 88% of the population was rural. The dependency ratio was 124/7. The population growth rate in Uganda, at 3.4% per annum, was one of the highest in the world (a high birth rate of seven children per woman and decreasing infant mortality and death rates contributed to the high growth rate). It was estimated that 19% of the population was between the ages of 6 and 12 years old. The Ugandan government had not been able to provide quality education to this large population of children (11 million in 2006) (Eilor et al., 2003; United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2006).

### *Poverty*

Uganda depended on international and foreign donors for most of its human rights, gender, and education programs (Tomasevski, 1999). It was one of the poorest countries in the world with a USD \$330 per capita income. About 38% of the people

were living below poverty level (income of less than \$1 per day). The life expectancy rate was 42 years, 26% of children under the age of five are malnourished, and 50% of the population has access to improved water (USAID, 2005a; World Bank, 2001, as cited in World Bank, 2002).

One of the parts these poverty indicators play in education is related to access. When people are too poor to buy the required uniforms, pencils, and copy books for their children, their children must stay home from school. When people are so poor they cannot eat unless their children work, then their children must stay home from school and work (P. Buckland, personal communication, June 29, 2004; Tomasevski, 1999). In addition, children who are malnourished have difficulty concentrating on schoolwork; if there is no water or potable water at school the children can become ill and absences and drop-outs increase (M. Johansson, personal communication, July 6, 2004).

### *Health*

Not only does poverty exacerbate health problems, but climate, sexual activity, and war can increase health problems that in turn influence school attendance and children's ability to obtain quality education. Examples of health problems in Uganda affecting education during the time of this study included the children in Kinkiizi Diocese, Uganda, where 60% of the children suffer from malaria at one time (Church of Uganda, 1995). Also, some schools in Uganda without latrines have had epidemics such as cholera that have shut down the schools (Mulyalya, Arach, Nantume, & Zalwango, 2003).

One of the most deadly health issues in Uganda is HIV/AIDS. Although Uganda had decreased the prevalence of HIV/AIDS from 30% in some urban areas in 1992 to 8.8% in urban areas and 4.2% in rural areas in 2001, the disease took its toll in more than deaths. There were 600,000 people living with the disease in 2001 and 880,000 orphans under the age of 15. Another 820,000 children had lost one parent to HIV/AIDS. Older children were trying to care for younger siblings who often had the disease or were forced to live with a distant relative or on the streets. Teachers with HIV/AIDS often had to quit teaching for long periods, and poverty increased due to the debilitating effect of the disease (Global Health and Development Strategies/Social and Scientific Systems, Inc., 2003; Kirungi, 2001).

Child pregnancy is another issue that affected school attendance. The culture, and probably a heritage of the missionary schools of the colonization period, influenced an unwritten policy that pregnant girls were not allowed at school nor allowed to attend the same school after they had a baby. Part of the large drop-out rates of girls was due to this phenomenon. The enrollment rates of boys and girls were almost equal in first grade, but by seventh grade in primary school the proportion of boys to girls was 17 to 3 (Tomasevski, 1999).

### *Violence*

Uganda has not only been affected by war with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the north for 18 years, but it has also been affected by wars in neighboring countries that compelled hundreds of thousands of people to take refuge in Uganda. The war with the LRA destroyed homes and schools and internally displaced 600,000-

700,000 people in Uganda. There were 221,000 refugees from neighboring countries living in Uganda who were being schooled by private, foreign, or international groups if they were in refugee camps, or by the Ugandan government if they were not (Church World Service, 2004; Lange & Lexow, 2002; U.S. Committee for Refugees, 2003).

All of the disruption, destruction, and violence from conflicts in and around Uganda had an impact on education because education not only involves infrastructure and materials, it is impacted by the persons it is trying to reach. Over 20,000 children had been abducted by the LRA as soldiers, workers, and sex slaves—8,000 alone between 2002-2003 (U.S. Embassy-Kampala, personal communication, February 19, 2004 as cited in U.S. Department of Labor, 2005). These children often missed years of schooling, and when organizations tried to help them back into Ugandan society, they were not always warmly welcomed (Lange & Lexow, 2002). Many people in the north were afraid to send their children to school, and children were afraid to attend, because many abductions have taken place at schools.

#### Characteristics of Primary Schools in Uganda

Primary schooling in Uganda comprises grades P1-P7 (seven years) followed by the Primary Leaving Exam (PLE) which determines whether a child is eligible to go to secondary school. Gross enrollment is greater than 100% due to children as young as 3 and older than 13 attending primary school. The first cycle in secondary school is four years followed by the second cycle of two years. Thus, there is a minimum of 13 years of school before a student can attend a university. It takes two years of primary teachers' college in order to get the minimum level, grade three, primary teaching certificate. After

primary school there is also the option to attend a three-year course in a technical school. There are many other options at the university and government departmental training institutes to further one's education (Eilor et al., 2003). There are also attempts at non-formal education including the following programs: “the Complement Opportunities for Primary Education program, Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja, Child-Centered Alternatives for Non-Formal Community Based Education, Mubende Non-Formal Education, Basic Education for Urban Poor Areas, and the Empowering Life-Long Skills Education program” (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005, ¶ 3).

In order to prepare students for secondary education, there are a variety of types of primary school. In the primary school section of the Republic of Uganda: Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) Statistical Abstract (2003), school ownership was placed in three categories: government, private, and community. Although the government owned 10,460 primary schools, it fully funded only 10,049, but it partly funded an additional 853 primary schools. Thus, the government did not fund some of the schools that it owned, but it did fund some of the 2,826 private and community schools.

As of this writing, the largest founder of primary schools has been the Church of Uganda. Many of these schools were founded over 100 years ago by missionaries (Omogin, Okwalinga, Masembe, Busaule, & Ejoku, n.d.; Tomasevski, 1999). Other churches, entrepreneurs, NGOs, and the government also founded primary schools, and some of these schools became owned by the government (MOES, 2003).

Access to primary school had been improved through legislation and increased government and donor funding, but even with the additional non-formal education

programs there were still certain groups in Uganda that did not have access to primary education due to geography, language, culture, ethnicity, conflict, poverty, disabilities, and often the social exclusion caused by these factors. Some private schools targeted these populations and the government had some primary schools for disabled students, but there were still groups of children without access to primary school (Eilor et al., 2003). The government could not be sure how many children were not in school because birth registration was not required (Tomasevski, 1999).

Government schools are required to follow the MOES curriculum as are government-registered private schools if they want their students to pass the PLE at the completion of P7 (J. Consiglio, personal communication, August 11, 2004). Many private schools enrich the MOES curriculum with information they think will be valuable to the children in the particular situation (e.g., conflict or refugee camp) that they are in. The school year is divided into three terms with a district exam at the end of each term on the MOES curriculum at every grade level (except Nursery). Each school's scores are posted and head teachers are considered accountable for their scores, which puts these exams in a *high-stakes* category.

The cost of education among the various types of schools varies. Some private schools can offer free education because they seek donors and volunteers to help in their schools (e.g. Kibaale Community Schools and St. Mary Kevin Boarding Primary School). Other private schools are exclusive and expensive because they are run by entrepreneurs (e.g. Lincoln International School of Uganda). The central government

schools provide free education at the primary level except for uniforms, school supplies that must be purchased, registration fees, and other fees that can be added.

There is a set standard for qualifying to teach primary school in Uganda, but nonetheless, there are untrained, undertrained, and trained teachers at government schools (Eilor et al., 2003). Private schools sometimes train their own teachers or bring in internationally certified teachers (e.g., Kibaale Community Schools or Lincoln International School of Uganda).

English is the language of power (Bernsten, 1998) in the community—the language in which all business is conducted in the cities, in which all school curricula is printed, and in which all secondary and tertiary classes are conducted (R. Kyeyune, personal communication, April 3, 2004). The language of instruction in the government primary schools varies by the location of the school. The language of instruction tends to be mother tongue in grades P1-P4 in the rural areas and English in the urban areas. In P5-P7 the language of instruction is supposed to be English in all government primary schools (Eilor et al., 2003; Tomasevski, 1999). Private schools vary in their use of the language of instruction as well.

#### *Needs in the Primary Educational Context*

The 2003 Statistical Abstract by the MOES gave details about some of the educational needs at the school and classroom level. First, there was building infrastructure. According to the MOES, there were more than 11,000 classrooms needed on which construction had not even been started. Almost 42,000 more classrooms were under construction. Of the more than 10,000 school libraries needed, only 528 were under

construction. Of 28,000 latrine blocks needed, only about 7,000 were under construction. Of the almost 86,000 teachers' houses that were needed to attract teachers and house them, only 7,000 were under construction. This task was monumental and meant that 53,000 primary classes did not have classrooms in which to meet. The libraries were not quite as important because most of the schools that did have libraries did not have books to put in their libraries (Mulyalya et al., 2003); however, latrines were an issue for girls' attendance at primary school (Lange & Lexow, 2002; UNICEF, 2003).

Potable water is another important factor in quality education because it helps to keep children safe from disease and keeps them healthy. Of the 13,356 schools in the MOES report on water sources (2003), over 8,000 schools had boreholes or wells/springs, 1,261 had piped water, 1,341 collected rain water, 723 used lake water, 596 had other forms of water, and 929 had not reported any water supply. Nothing was said in the report about supplying safe water to the rest of the schools. One rural private school reported that it hauled in safe water on trucks (Church Of Uganda - Diocese Of Kinkiizi, 1995).

Next, as of this writing, physical punishment, usually in the form of caning, was a common practice that drove children away from school (Eremu, 2003). The MOES and the central government were going to great lengths to have this practice stopped. They started de-registering the teacher involved and reporting him/her to the police and firing the head teacher and the deputy authority also—making them accountable to take care of this practice at their level (Eremu, 2003). The MOES also printed a booklet on other

options for discipline in schools and distributed it to Coordinating Center Tutors (CCTs) to be discussed in school management committee meetings.

Another need was books and supplies for children. As illustration of this need, according to Tomasevski (1999), the Special Rapporteur for the Commission on Human Rights was not able to get an answer from the MOES when she asked how children can learn to read and write in a foreign language (English) when there is only one textbook for five or six students. In 2003, there were more than four people sharing an English book in P1-P3 and more than three in P4-P7 (MOES, 2003). In my own observation in the lower grades, there were only a few books and they were locked in a storage closet where nothing would happen to them (personal observation, August 17, 2003). When I asked R. Kyeyune about this practice she said that when books were delivered to a school, often the head teacher was told that if anything happens to the books he or she would have to pay for them (personal communication, August 31, 2005).

According to a report by the Special Rapporteur, she bought a set of books for the four main subjects in primary school and a uniform and supplies. She found that it would cost a teacher (who makes \$80 a month) one month's salary to enroll one child in school. R. Kyeyune (personal communication, April 3, 2004) reported that children in the rural areas who could not afford school supplies would bring sticks or stones to school in place of pencils so they could attend. Another cost associated with *free* primary education is registration at the primary schools which usually amounted to about \$1.60 per student, and then some teachers levied additional costs in their classrooms. Students who did not pay these additional costs were sent home (Child Rights Information Network, n.d.).

Repeating classes was another indicator of need. In 2003, almost 300,000 students repeated P1. This figure diminished slightly each year until by P7 there were only 50,000 repeaters (MOES, 2003). There were different needs involved here. According to Aveleno, who was a teacher in Uganda, the primary school students needed straight As if they wanted to get into a good secondary school because so few spots were available (personal communication, July 7, 2004). P7 was often repeated so that students could retake the PLE in order to better their score for admission to secondary school. All of this repeating required more teacher time and classroom space. Then there was just the opposite problem, which is dropouts. Every year a large majority of dropouts were girls. There were 46,000 more girls than boys who dropped out of P1 and there were 16,000 more girls than boys who dropped out of P7. Deininger (2003), in a study of the effects of UPE in Uganda, reported the three top reasons for students in Uganda dropping out of school or never attending: 37% said it was too costly, 26% said they just were not interested, and 16% dropped out or never attended because of a calamity in the family (e.g. pregnancy, disability, etc.).

#### *Universal Primary Education (UPE)*

UPE was implemented in 1997 after being the focus of a political race. The overall objective was to produce access, equity, and quality in primary education in order to improve individual and national development. The objectives that pertained to the classroom context were as follows: providing quality education, minimum infrastructure and resources for all children to complete the primary cycle of education, education that is relevant to the needs of the learner, affordable education to the majority of Ugandans,

and equitable education. This policy was given financial impetus through International Development Partners, the central government, and the community (Eilor et al., 2003). In 2002, 90% of the budget for UPE was expected to come from donors (Tomasevski, 1999).

The government attempted to meet the following UPE targets for providing infrastructure by building or completing classrooms, pit latrines, and teachers' houses. The goals for infrastructure were: 1:54 classroom-to-student ratio, 1:3 desk-to-student ratio, 1:40 latrine-to-student ratio, and a minimum of four teachers' houses for each school (Eilor et al., 2003). The district was supposed to provide desks, potable water, land, and help in constructing, supervising, and inspecting schools, whereas parents were to provide exercise books, pencils, uniforms, meals, and help with the construction of the schools (Ministry of Education (MOE): The Republic of Uganda, 1997).

The government paid a capitation grant to all government-funded schools for the tuition of any children enrolled which amounted to USD \$2.86 for students in P1-P3 and USD \$4.63 for students in P4-P7. Thirty-five percent of the grant was mandated to be spent on instructional/scholastic materials, 20% on non-curricular activities (sports, music, games), and 25% on consumables and management (Eilor et al., 2003). The government also paid for books, teachers' guides, learning aids and references (Mulyalya et al., 2003) and teachers' salaries. The government also paid for P7 pupils' fees to take the Primary Leaving Exam (PLE) which is required for entrance into secondary school (Mulyalya et al., 2003).

The rise in enrollment since UPE, from 3 million in 1997 to over 7 million in 2002, necessarily increased the demand for teachers and materials. The government promised to pay for additional teachers and pay all the teacher salaries that were in arrears. Teachers were also offered a monetary incentive for working in underdeveloped or dangerous areas (Mulyalya et al., 2003). A more recent update on the teacher situation showed that a raise in teacher salaries was announced in October of 2007 by F. Lubanga, the Permanent Secretary, which resulted in a ceiling on recruitment of primary school teachers. This will probably naturally result in an increase in the student-to-teacher ratio because the number of pupils has been growing each year, requiring 2,000 new teachers and classrooms (Ahimbisibwe, 2007).

The curriculum focus in UPE was based on the goals of helping learners develop functional literacy and numeracy, local language communication skills, and an appreciation for diversity. A government-appointed taskforce created two new volumes of curriculum: volume one covers English language, science, math, and social studies; volume two covers integrated production skills, religion, Kiswahili and mother tongue, physical education, dance and drama, and music. In addition, the government decentralized the procurement of texts to shorten the wait time for receiving them, and supported local publishers in producing and distributing texts (Mulyalya et al., 2003).

UPE increased access to education for children with disabilities. Some of the children with visual, hearing, and mental disabilities have their own schools as of this writing, while the physically disabled are typically mainstreamed. As of 2003, 247,953 disabled children were attending primary school (MOES, 2003). UPE also provided

teachers with special training in working with children with disabilities (Eilor et al., 2003; Mulyalya et al., 2003).

UPE provided for a disaster preparedness program in the north and the west where children were living in conflict zones. Nothing was said in the reports about what this program entails except that it is active in 11 districts that are named. Two other programs have been adopted in conjunction with UPE: multigrade, and double shift teaching. These two programs were adopted to meet the challenges of small enrollments in rural areas and expanding enrollments where there are few classrooms in other areas (Eilor et al., 2003; Mulyalya et al., 2003).

Qualified teachers are still a need, although the percentages have improved in the last few years. In 2003 there were a total of 145,703 teachers, 32,881 of whom were unlicensed/untrained, other, or unknown. The rest had some type of diploma to teach primary school. The number of teachers per students in the 2003 statistics ranged from an 80:1 average in the Pader district to a 29:1 average in the Kampala district (MOES, 2003), but the Special Rapporteur reported in 1999 that the lower grades could range from 300:1 while the upper grades might be 20:1 (Tomasevski, 1999).

There is a discrepancy in the manner in which student-to-teacher ratio is reported, however, because in the classroom I worked in there were over 100 students enrolled with two regular teachers and one teacher who came in 3 hours a week. Even though this would be reported in the statistics as less than 50 students per teacher, in actuality the ratio should be 100 students per teacher because only one teacher taught at a time with no help from the other teachers. While this was only one location, it reveals that

understanding what is happening in the classrooms in Uganda must go beyond numerical reports of student-to-teacher ratios.

Although the student-to-teacher ratio needs to be improved, the central government has made progress with the curriculum in the past few years. However, an important factor that the central government had not addressed at the time of this study was providing for the implementation of the 1992 White Paper policy on mother tongue, which states that English should only become a medium of instruction at the P4 level and should only be taught as a subject at P1-P3. According to Aggrey, Senior Assistant Secretary in the Department of Finance and Administration of the MOES, by 2004 no one in the central government had agreed on which languages should be the language of instruction in the different areas of the country (personal communication, July 24, 2004). Therefore, there were still no materials in mother tongue for teachers to work with from the government, although some NGOs have produced their own materials in mother tongue (E. Locatelli, personal communication, July 2, 2004) and many rural areas use mother tongue without materials (Eilor et al., 2003).

To further complicate the language of instruction issue, there is the PLE. This high-stakes written test, in English, covers the entire primary curriculum at the end of P7. The scores from this test, plus students' elementary school grades, determine which secondary school a student will be allowed to attend. The competition is tremendous. A teacher educator at Makerere University said that in 2004 there were not enough secondary schools for everyone who passed the test, and there were approximately six high quality (as compared to other secondary schools in the country) secondary schools

that each accepted about 150 new students each year (R. Kyeyune, April 3, 2004).

Muthwii (2001), in an investigation using 10 case studies, interviewed 613 respondents in Kenya and Uganda. Those schools that used English immersion from P1 significantly reduced the problems inherent in using mother tongue in the lower primary grades and most of the students, teachers, and parents interviewed preferred to use the language of wider communication, English, due to its future value in enabling a student to get a higher education and a good-paying job. I visited with a head teacher of a primary school in south central Uganda who was surprised that I would want to promote mother tongue literacy because the parents of the children in his school were very adamant about their children learning English. He also thought English literacy was more important than mother tongue literacy due to the PLE in P7. He was not aware of research that supported the importance of literacy learning in mother tongue (e.g., United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1953; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

I was told by educators who graded the PLE that there were many students who failed because they could not read in English (personal communication, R. Kyeyune, April 3, 2004; personal communication, E. L. Barongo, September 3, 2005). However, according to R. Kyeyune, when some students complained about the test being in English, they were given the test in their mother tongue, Luganda, and they were still unable to pass (personal communication, April 3, 2004). Educators who worked with the exam and an educator at the district level expressed their concerns to me that children were not learning to read well in Luganda or English (personal communication, E. L. Barongo, September 3, 2005; personal communication, R. Kyeyune, August 31, 2005;

personal communication, P. Lwamasaka, September 16, 2005) and even some of those students who graduated from the universities had not learned to read (personal communication, R. Kyeyune, August 31, 2005). The only assessment data located as of this writing confirming low literacy levels was an informal evaluation conducted in July of 2002 in three primary schools in the Kampala District and national random samples of third grade pupils on mathematics and oral English. Ten children were randomly selected from each school and asked to read in their mother tongue. Some of the children could read, but only syllable by syllable (Lubega, 2005). Thus, improved reading acquisition is a need in Uganda.

#### Statement of the Problem

The problems that this study addressed related to the context in which education took place in a P3 Luganda literacy class. There was a lack of resources for both the teacher and the students. The teacher's beliefs and her teacher-dominated pedagogy with student rote recitation were all considered part of this context. In this context there were generally low literacy levels.

One purpose of this study was to determine how this post-colonial context affected teacher decision-making and student learning. Qualitative research was used to examine the context surrounding teaching and learning Luganda literacy in one primary school in Uganda. The context was also modified in order to determine how an innovation developed in this context. The innovation promoted student-centered learning and was facilitated and designed on the local level by the teacher with the help of a mentor.

## Research Questions

The research questions for the study were as follows:

1. What was the context of a P3 Luganda teacher and how did this context influence the teacher's literacy decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices? The factors that were considered in order to describe this context were:
  - a. Cultural/personal background: Description of teacher's language, ethnic, socioeconomic, and religious background; history of her village/community and other experiences (past or present) that may impact her current decision-making as a teacher.
  - b. Educational background: Description of teacher's educational background (type and level of education; previous experience in teaching; beliefs about teaching, learning, and students) that may impact her current decision-making as a teacher.
  - c. School/community: Description of teacher's current school and local school community (e.g., students, families, teachers, administrators, and teaching colleagues) and description of direct influences on the school such as the government, church, or other agencies that may impact school operation or policies.
2. What informed teacher decision-making about Luganda literacy instruction when the teacher was given the following:

- a. Additional materials and information about potentially effective literacy practices.
  - b. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) required curriculum (National Curriculum Development Centre [NCDC], 2001) and guidelines for the teaching of reading and writing in the local language (NCDC, 2005).
  - c. Researcher mentoring to support the teacher's decision-making.
3. How did the teacher describe her decision-making and change processes, and influences on those processes throughout the innovation?

## 2. Literature Review

“Pedagogical processes lie at the heart of day-to-day learning” (UNESCO, 2004, p. 7). This study focused on collecting qualitative evidence of pedagogical and learning processes that were compatible in a poverty context in a primary 3 Luganda class in Uganda, Africa and the contextual influences on the teacher’s decision-making. In addition to observations and interviews, a student-centered learning innovation was implemented that was designed on the local level by the teacher with the help of a mentor to provide additional decision-making opportunities for the teacher and reading and writing opportunities for the students. This innovation filled a need for books in minor languages which were scarce in primary schools in low-income areas of developing countries (Oliveira, 1996; Greaney, 1996).

In this chapter I discuss previous research that supported my choice of research design. In addition, this literature review presents previous research on the effect of context on teacher decision-making and student learning, teacher beliefs, pedagogy, practices, professional development, and the innovation choice, followed by a summary of the chapter.

### Research Supporting the Research Design

UNESCO (2004) reported that there was a scarcity of detailed data on inputs into education that were needed to inform government policy and spending on education in

developing countries. Furthermore, Crossley and Vulliamy (1996) suggested that qualitative research increased the chances of successful educational innovations in developing countries because of its attention to local contexts. Therefore, I chose a case study of one primary 3 (P3) Luganda language arts teacher in a rural/urban public school (rural due to the many rural students who traveled each day from villages to attend, and urban due to its proximity to a major highway [head teacher, personal communication, October 12, 2006]) sponsored by the Church of Uganda in Uganda, Africa, which was quite typical of a poverty context (Heyneman, 1984). Bromley (1986) reported that case studies

get as close to the subject of interest as they possibly can, partly by means of direct observation in natural settings, partly by their access to subjective factors (thoughts, feelings, and desires) . . . and tend to spread the net for evidence widely. (p. 23)

This case study, then, added needed details collected from the personal and educational experiences and beliefs of the teacher through observations and interviews. I also used the teacher's interpretation of the innovation process and verification of my observations in order to lessen the effect of my being an outsider in this context (Maxwell, 1996).

In addition, the design included an innovation that provided researcher modeling of an adapted version of Language Experience Approach (LEA) to make student-authored books; teacher training, experimentation, and adaptation of LEA (Stauffer, 1970); and mentoring and support from the researcher. However, before the innovation

was introduced, the focal point of the study was on defining the context of the teacher to gain a better understanding of what contextual issues were affecting her pedagogical decision-making in an effort to negotiate these issues to provide the teacher with more opportunities for pedagogical decision-making and give the students more opportunities for meaningful reading and writing.

### The Effect of Context on Teachers' Decision-Making

*Context* can be defined as anything in the environment surrounding an educational experience that affects that experience. Context signifies a relationship (Jacob, 1997). It can relate to the environment surrounding the experience such as the available resources (i.e., desks, books, paper, teachers) or other environmental features (a shelter from the rain, water, latrines). Context also implies the literacy beliefs, pedagogy, and practices of the teacher (i.e., the hows and whys of her experiences and her attitude towards literacy and her students). Context could relate to anything that has to do with the students who are involved in the experience—the students' schemata or knowledge and their habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) or experiences, attitudes, and beliefs they have acquired in their social environment (MacLeod, 2004), and their physical and mental health (i.e., hungry or orphaned). The environment, the teacher, and students and their beliefs and experiences are all a part of the local educational context.

### *The African Educational Context*

Culture is accepted as an integral part of the context of education. Bruner (1996) says, "How one conceives of education we have finally come to recognize, is a function of how one conceives of the culture and its aims, professed and otherwise" (pp. ix-x).

Although there are many different cultures in Africa, there are some educational commonalities among them due to the influence of the tribal system and extensive colonization. Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2003) discussed the differences between traditional and pre-colonial African education based on traditional African values and Western education. Being useful in society, actively participating in education, preserving the African cultural heritage, achieving holistic knowledge, and practicing communalism were all part of traditional African education as was indoctrination or the “unquestioned acceptance of a ready-made set of dogmas” (p. 427). The authors believed it was appropriate to introduce reflective thinking into the African education system. Formal schooling in Africa still reflected the influence of colonization, whereas the family continued to be tied to village traditions (Adeyemi & Adeyinka).

The Ugandan culture has an educational context in the public schools with many facets that can affect teacher decision-making—large classes, few resources, high-stakes testing, class management traditions, Universal Primary Education (UPE), research-based curriculum, and other effectual and ineffectual influences. (This context was explained in Chapter One.)

Each facet of the context has an influence on what the teacher and children can or cannot do in their classroom. This context not only affects what pedagogy is used (Johnson, Monk, & Swain, 2000); it also affects the teachers’ beliefs about what is and is not possible to do in their classrooms (Flannagan, 1992; Harrison, 2005).

### *The Impact of Context on Teacher Beliefs*

There are many different definitions of beliefs. Kagan asserted that “teacher belief is broadly defined as tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions about students, classrooms, and the academic materials to be taught” (1992, p. 65). Hancock and Gallard defined belief as “an understanding held by an individual that guides the individual’s intentions for actions” (2004, p. 281) in order to emphasize the theory that beliefs influence practice.

Pajares (1992) asserted that the differences between knowledge and belief could be confusing. According to several scholars, knowledge is defined as being grounded in objective facts, while belief is grounded in assessment and judgment. For example, Gess-Newsome (1999) argued that knowledge has an empirical base that is rational, organized, and develops over time. Conversely, beliefs “are highly subjective, have a significant emotional component, include attitudes, and are derived from significant episodes that one experiences” according to Crawford (2007, p. 617).

Beliefs and knowledge interact as experiences and knowledge and are filtered through teacher belief systems (Carter & Doyle, 1989) and thereby affect how teachers perceive their context. This interaction places beliefs as part of the context because beliefs then affect teacher decision-making about curriculum and instructional tasks (Crawford, 2007; Jacob, 1997; Kagan, 1992).

A two-year study in Portugal (Flores, 2005) mapped new teacher change. The teachers ( $n = 14$ ) and students ( $n = 891$ ) reported those changes and what appeared to influence them. Included was also the reporting of school context by 18 head teachers

and 627 staff members in the schools in order to better understand the settings in which the teachers worked. The teachers—both male and female—had been trained for four years at the university level and one year in the classroom to teach different subjects such as math, science, history, etc., at the elementary and higher levels (10- to 15-year-olds).

By the end of the second year, 10 of the teachers reported problems with classroom management which resulted in a change from the constructivist style of teaching they had been taught to a more traditional style of teacher-dominated teaching with stricter rules and a more distant relationship with the students. They also reported a negative perception of school culture and their working conditions, which they reported led them to be more focused on student outcomes and student compliance. In the student essays, the students verified these reports from the 10 teachers. The other 4 teachers reported positive changes in their teaching (Flores, 2005).

The four teachers who reported positive changes to their teaching looked to the students as a large influence in their change and the support they felt from their school context. These teachers reported that more student motivation, achievement, and knowledge coupled with a supportive atmosphere at their schools were influential in their teaching changing to a more student-centered approach while they had a more caring attitude towards the students and were more aware of their students' needs. Student essays verified three of the four teacher reports. Although the fourth teacher reported positive changes, this teacher's students reported just the opposite—stricter, not caring, more lecturing and exercises, and other traditional teaching characteristics.

Flores (2005) summed up her study by noting that new teacher change was influenced by the dilemma between the teachers' expected ideals of teaching and real practice: the ideals being responsiveness, flexibility, and commitment, and the reality being "time pressure, long syllabi, scarcity of resources, accountability, and bureaucracy" (p. 408). Although personal characteristics of 2 teachers were influential in helping them make positive changes to their teaching, socialization in the workplace and student achievement influenced the teacher change of all 14 teachers (positively and negatively).

Guskey (1986, 1989, 2002) has been a strong advocate for the effect of students on teacher change. He worked for many years planning and conducting teacher development and constructing a teacher change theory from his experiences with practice mastery. Practice mastery includes teachers practicing a new innovation, receiving feedback, and noting students' increased achievement resulting in changes to teachers' attitudes and beliefs. Guskey's theory model supports one aspect of teacher change and Flores' (2005) findings: "significant change in teachers' attitudes and perceptions is likely to take place only after changes in student learning outcomes are evidenced" (1989, p. 445). Guskey argued that when teachers experimented with new practices that work, they were likely to continue those practices. He contended that the results from studies on teacher change indicated that "improvement [positive change] in the learning outcomes of students generally precedes and may be a prerequisite to significant change in the beliefs and attitudes of most teachers" (1986, p. 7).

In addition, Huberman and Miles (1984) have stated that teachers most often achieve practice mastery prior to committing to the curriculum implementation project,

thus suggesting that teachers needed to see the project in action before they believed that it would work. Consequently, if teachers saw that a new practice was having a positive effect on student learning, this could have a positive effect on their decision to use the new practice.

### The Effect of Context on Student Learning

The students were studied as part of the context of the teacher: how they reacted to the teacher and how that affected the teacher's decision-making (Guskey, 1986, 1989). Yet, what they bring to the classroom does affect how they react to the teacher's pedagogy and how well they can learn to read and write.

Children are not a blank slate to be written on when they first enter formal schooling. The knowledge they have learned at home and in the community (schemata) and the understandings they have gained at home and in the community of social/cultural behavior, beliefs, and attitudes (habitus) come to school with them. Studies in developed and developing countries have found that the children's home environment contributed to their development of vocabulary, emergent literacy skills, comprehension skills, and positive reading attitudes and habits (Adams, 1990; Guthrie & Siefert, 1984; Hess & Holloway, 1984; Ingham, 1982). Elley conducted a study for the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) (1994) in 32 school systems to study reading literacy in developed and developing countries. This study identified the home environment as the one most significant factor in building literacy. Voluntary reading was positively correlated with reading achievement, whereas illiterate parents and older relatives in the home, little reading encouragement, and community

lifestyles that looked unfavorably on reading alone had strong negative effects on reading achievement.

More specifically, there were environmental resources that may affect reading at home, in the community, and at school. At home, the lack of reading material, the inability of parents to buy reading materials, the lack of space and light at home, and the lack of the necessities of life that force children to work at home and in the community all contributed to poor reading achievement (Elley, 1994). Exposure to print in the community was also likely to be less in a developing country than in a developed country (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991) because of economic limitations for making signs, printing newspapers, making copies, access to the Internet, libraries and books, and limited access to other printed materials.

Some environmental resources that can affect learning in the classroom are the availability of books, stationery supplies, desks, teachers, teacher resources, blackboards, chalk, and other resources. Increasing the number of available appropriate books in developing countries can also increase reading achievement. For example, in 1978 (Heyneman, Farrell, & Sepulveda-Stuardo) and in 1984 (Heyneman, Jamison, & Montenegro) evaluations were conducted in the Philippines of school quality investments where a modest increase was made in the availability of high-quality textbooks. The investment was correlated with significantly improved national scores in science, mathematics, and language. A more recent study by the World Bank that provided classrooms, school furniture, textbooks, teacher training and housing, and water and latrines to schools in Ghana determined that the investments directly contributed to

learning achievement by repeating a test given 15 years earlier to people between the ages of 9 and 55 in English reading and math in the same communities that were previously tested (Ingram, 2004). Even the primary school children age group significantly increased their scores. Investments in infrastructure were correlated with increased retention rates and completion rates for primary school; this change could also give children more opportunity to increase their literacy skills.

In many educational projects in developing countries, the main strategies used to mitigate the poverty context have been to input resources such as books and supplies and/or training for teachers with the goal of offsetting the influence of the poverty context and providing quality education (Hanushek, 1995). Textbooks have been shown to raise the quality of education and learning levels of students in developing countries whereas other supplies and teacher training have only shown modest impacts. Nevertheless, malpractice, corruption, ineffective distribution networks, lack of infrastructure to store textbooks, and teachers who lack training in using textbooks can negate the impact of textbooks; they can also be very expensive (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991; UNESCO, 2004).

In addition to the knowledge and experiences of children influenced by home, the community, and the educational environment, the physical condition of the child can also affect learning. For example, the capacity of children to learn to read and write may be reduced by malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, parasitic infections, and vision and hearing problems (Levinger, 1994; Politt, 1990). Hungry children have trouble concentrating and do not have as much energy as children who are not hungry. Some schools in developing

countries do have feeding programs, and some schools in Uganda with very high-risk students have feeding programs where food is given to students during the day without any cost to the students (Kibenge, 2005). At the school in which I worked, there was no feeding program. To illustrate this, when I visited P1 and P2 classrooms in Uganda in September 2005, there were 5 children out of 65 in P1 and 8 children out of 85 in P2 who had meal cards to get cornmeal mush with a little sugar. The other children were just excused for recess at break time as they did not have money for food and did not bring food from home.

In addition to the health of the children, teachers can also influence students' classroom learning. Yet, in some studies from the World Bank such as a study by Ingram (2004), there has not been much success with teacher training skills being transferred to the classroom. If the teacher had a salary below the poverty line (this is common in developing countries) and had little training, few or no supplies, and a classroom with over 50 students, morale and teaching quality could be low (Elley, 1994) and teacher absences could be high. For example, Ugandan primary teacher absences had been at 27% on one day in 2003 as reported by World Bank (Nazmul, Hammer, Kremer, Muralidharan & Rogers, 2004). This situation promoted idle students and little learning took place.

A student's physical well-being, the knowledge and experiences a student has gained, and the students' experiences with the teacher in the classroom may all have an effect on the student's ability to learn in the classroom, which in turn affects the teacher's decision-making about which pedagogical strategies to use. According to several studies,

teachers tended to use the pedagogical strategies that fit with the context and were successful in promoting student learning (Guskey, 1989; Johnson, Monk & Hodges, 2000). Not only does research seem to indicate this, but this concept is a key to a successful innovation: If the teacher experiences success with the innovation, she will be more likely to use the innovation again.

### The Innovation

Research Questions Two and Three examined the effect an innovation had on teacher decision-making and change processes, and influences on those processes during the innovation. The innovation provided additional opportunities for teacher decision-making by changing the context while the teacher explored the feasibility of using a Language Experience Approach (LEA) adaptation (Stauffer, 1970) to help increase the students' opportunities to read and write.

The innovation I planned for this study focused on the students' need for reading materials and included teacher development followed by teacher choice and teacher research in the classroom using Ball's teacher change model (2004). There were also additional resources (paper, colored pencils, and student-authored books that were developed during the innovation) and teacher reflection supported by researcher mentoring. The teacher development included providing the teacher with information on research about how LEA is used in the classroom and how Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL) (Gains & Mfulathela, 2005) is used in Africa, and the researcher modeling LEA book writing. Furthermore, prior to the innovation and after one and one-half months of observations and interviews, I also included other learning and reading strategies that

might be appropriate in this context (viz., topic-driven pedagogy based on student-centered group work; peer support; and individual, group, and partner reading). Some of these strategies were included in the curriculum but were not being used, and I added others to the teacher development to fit the context after seeing the needs in the classroom. Two authors supported the procedure of adjusting the context or innovation through researcher observation of teacher experience in the classroom and collaboration with the teacher: Day (1985) and Jacob (1997).

Day (1985) argued that

if research is to make a significant contribution to teacher learning and change, researchers must move away from the notion of themselves as prime designers and interpreters of the motivations, thoughts and actions of others towards a more interdependent role in which collaboration, consultation, and negotiation are first principles. If they are to achieve success, they must be prepared not only to talk with teachers about practice, but to observe teachers in their behavioural settings. This is based on the assumption that, “. . . in order to understand teaching, teachers' goals, judgments and decisions must be understood, especially in relation to teachers' behavior and the classroom context,” (Shavelson & Stern, 1981, p. 459). (p. 133)

Jacob (1997) also discussed the importance of innovations fitting the context where they were used. She related successful studies in which the project was planned to fit with a context, such as the Kamehameha Early Education Project (Au, 1980; Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1993), a computer software project by Newman, Goldman, Brienne,

Jackson, and Magzamen (1989); and Cobb, Wood, and Yackel's mathematics projects in 1990, 1991 and 1993. Researcher collaboration with teachers was a main focus of these studies, and researchers used the information they gleaned from collaborating with the teachers to determine what contextual features were influencing the learning of the innovation by the teachers and students. The researchers were then willing to adapt the innovation to the context to achieve a fit between them. Conversely, teacher training and teacher development had less impact on a teacher's instruction when the context did not fit the strategies the teacher was trying to use (Johnson, Monk, & Hodges, 2000).

Teacher development was a tool used to identify solutions to the problems of no reading resources for the students except the blackboard and the contextual constraints that were preventing the teacher from addressing the resource problem. Thus, teacher development became a process that centered on solving a resource problem—no reading materials—and negotiating the contextual constraints. UNESCO (2004) concurred that teaching strategies and in-service teacher training should center on what learners need.

#### *The Impact of Context on Teacher Change Through Professional Development*

Generally, the goals of professional development are to have significant results showing a long-term increase in teachers' knowledge and skills and changes in classroom instruction (Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy, 2000; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001) which in turn improve student learning. Anders et al. conducted a literature review of inservice teacher education from 1963-2000 within the reading research community and concluded that the complexities of teacher change include "shifting definitions of reading, . . . increased awareness of the contexts in which teachers teach,

and . . . sensitivity to the possibilities of collaboration among educators” (p. 730). Monk (1999) noted in a literature review of teacher development in sub-Saharan Africa covering 1983-1987 that the physical and social components of the teachers’ environments exerted *selection pressures* that affected which instructional strategies survived. Both studies acknowledged the often constraining influence of context on teachers’ efforts to change their practice. In sum, successful teacher development programs are teacher-centered; that is, they are driven by the needs of teachers, rather than by the needs of the innovation or those who designed the innovation. This was especially true with this study’s innovation because it was focused on both the needs of the students and the teacher.

There are areas of quality teacher development in which the two literature reviews described above concur: (a) “teacher change needs support in the context of practice” (Anders et al., 2000, p. 730; Monk, 1999), (b) teachers should reflect on their own practice and collaborate with peers or others (Anders et al., Monk), (c) contexts can “constrain long-term teacher education efforts” (Anders et al., Monk, p. 9), and (d) teachers gain more from professional development when they have a choice of whether to participate (Anders et al.) or a choice of using their own variations of the new knowledge (Monk). A teacher development (change) model that closely correlates with the summary points in the literature reviews and was used in this study is the teacher change model by Ball (2004; 2006), which is also supported in earlier research by Day (1985).

Ball’s (2004, 2006) teacher change model focuses on using language (reading, writing, and listening) to build the capacity of the teacher and internalize the changes the

teacher makes so the changes are sustainable (Fosnot, 1996; Leont'ev, 1981; Wertsch & Stone, 1985). Social constructivism theory supports this model. The model provides opportunities for building teacher capacity through the teacher reflecting on her beliefs and practices, gaining new knowledge, collaborating, choosing how to use that knowledge in the classroom, experimenting with that knowledge in the classroom, and then reflecting on what happened, all the while being supported by peers and/or educators. Ball commented on the importance of her model

to promote culturally appropriate literacy activities among teachers so that internalization will actually take place. Because then and only then will the teachers continue to use these activities—long after we have left their classrooms (if she still has the supplies). (personal communication, December 12, 2005)

Ball's model is based on the theories of Leont'ev and Vygotsky which support the development of internalization. *Webster's New Millennium™ Dictionary of English* (2002-2005) defines internalization as the adoption of something as an "integral part of one's attitudes or beliefs" (§ 1, #2.). In Leont'ev's (1981) words, "the process of internalization is not the transferal of an external activity to a preexisting, internal `plane of consciousness': it is the process in which this plane is formed" (p. 57). This idea of internalization concurred with Vygotsky's idea of how perspectives move from the interpsychological plane to the intrapsychological plane (Wertsch & Stone, 1985). Both Vygotsky and Leont'ev agreed that for this process to take place there needs to be social interaction in which language plays a major role.

Although Ball's teacher change model has been shown to be quite effective in South Africa and the United States (2006) in changing teacher beliefs about teaching diverse students, it does not directly address some important issues involved with teacher development in poverty contexts where choices of pedagogy are limited and consequently there may be an even greater need for strong support and modeling. The effect of a poverty context can be especially strong in influencing teachers to depart from their training and beliefs and revert to whatever they think will work, which is usually memorization (Heyneman, 1984).

An example of this poverty context phenomenon is discussed by Johnson, Monk, and Swain (2000) in relation to Egyptian science teachers who attended a teacher development program in the United Kingdom and then returned to implement their new learning into their classrooms in Egypt. The teachers were thwarted when trying to implement their new knowledge by the lack of resources, exams, large classes, and management and student resistance. When teachers tried to engage the students in the lessons by asking them questions, the students responded with, "You are the teacher. You are supposed to tell us, not ask us questions" (p. 22). The end result was that the teachers were able to use very little of their training due to constraints in their educational contexts.

In the Johnson, Monk, and Swain study (2000), the teachers were left to incorporate their newly learned pedagogy on their own upon returning to Egypt. The authors believed that if there had been continuing support upon their return to Egypt in the form of "supplying of teachers' guides, content training, closer external support and

supervision, management training, examination reform, etc.” (p. 21), there might have been more success with teacher change. In a similar suggestion, Huberman and Crandall (1983) advised using pressure and concentrated support to encourage teachers to use a new strategy. After becoming familiar with the strategy through experience, their anxiety for using new educational improvement programs was often alleviated, due to their familiarity with the new practice.

Often support includes modeling, as it did in this study. Especially helpful is modeling in the classroom where the new strategy will take place. Not only does this provide an opportunity for the teacher to see the new strategy in her own classroom (Morrow, 2003), but it also provides the teacher and the researcher with a view of the fit between the context and the strategy (Au, 1980; Cobb et al., 1993; Newman et al., 1989; Vogt et al., 1993). The International Reading Association (IRA) has published a pamphlet clarifying *The Role and Qualifications of the Reading Coach in the United States* (2004) which included Bean’s leveled coaching activities. “Modeling and discussing lessons” and “co-teaching lessons” were two of the intense activities recommended by Bean (2004) that emphasized the importance of modeling in professional development. Furthermore, Morrow reported on a professional development plan carried out in New Jersey using reading coaches. The teachers involved in the professional development reported that the reading coaches “modeled strategies in classrooms so teachers could see how to implement ideas,” and that “working with a coach who knew the research base for changing literacy practice and who provided practical models was important in facilitating change” (p. 7). Monk (1999) also stressed

the importance of demonstration and coaching in his literature review of in-service for teacher development in sub-Saharan Africa.

Thus, the educational context affects teachers' abilities to implement new pedagogical practices. The context in developing countries often lacks resources; the teachers lack confidence in the curriculum and there are few opportunities for professional growth, especially role models, time and knowledge of how to reflect, and the lack of opportunities to experiment in a supportive atmosphere (Stuart, 1991). In a synthesis of five case studies, four background papers, literature reviews by two African educational research networks (ERNESA and ERNWACA), and some background papers written for ADEA and other groups, Dembélé and Miaro-II (2003) determined that the pedagogical practices in sub-Saharan Africa resulting from this context are characterized by "chalk-and-talk, teacher-centered/dominated, lecture-driven pedagogy," (p. 7).

The knowledge teachers gain from active participation using Ball's teacher change model is acquired through reflecting on their own beliefs and practices, their new practices, on what they see modeled by educators and their discussions with them, and on feedback from students. Wells (1999) paralleled some of these same principles in *The Spiral of Knowing* where he followed this constructivist theory by determining that information remains as only information unless a person uses that information with others through language to construct new understandings. This new knowledge then becomes part of a person's belief system or experience and determines how that person then views additional new knowledge.

*Acquiring New Knowledge*

Besides teachers gaining new knowledge through experience, reflection, discussion, and support, it is also especially necessary in poverty contexts to present new information that is appropriate in these contexts so the teachers have additional choices of pedagogy (Monk, 1999). In this study new knowledge was presented to the teacher in the form of articles on successful literacy research in Africa and other countries, reflection and teacher change, print-rich environments, and a new literacy curriculum from the MOES (NCDC, 2005) (see Appendix A, Teacher Resources for Professional Development). I decided to use the information on reflection and teacher change (Rudduck, 1988) after arriving in Uganda to ensure that the teacher was familiar with the process and purpose of reflecting on her teaching. All of the rest of the information was chosen in order to motivate and educate the teacher about pedagogy and practices that might help her achieve the goal we had agreed upon: the teacher would adapt literacy activities to help students produce reading materials in Luganda to fill a class library (a *book flood* [Elley, 1996]) and increase the amount of time the students spend in meaningful reading and writing. Therefore, in order to build the capacity of the teacher so she had some understanding of what book writing was and how it was being implemented in Africa, I chose to introduce the teacher to LEA and BTL—which uses LEA—because of their success in promoting literacy in Africa.

*A popular reading instruction program in Africa: Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL).* As of this writing, BTL (citation) was being used in about 15,000 classrooms,

affecting approximately 1 million learners, in six sub-Saharan African countries. The program was available in 40 African languages and has been found effective in poorly resourced classrooms of 80 or more students or in smaller, better-resourced classrooms. In recent evaluations in Zambia, Uganda, and South Africa, the BTL grade two learners' mother tongue literacy competencies far surpassed non-BTL learners in even grades four and five (Gains & Mfulathela, 2005).

BTL was adapted in Africa due to Rodseth's search in 1974 for a program to help children learn literacy in mother tongue so the money from the Molteno Brothers' Trust could be used to teach children in South Africa English literacy. Literacy instruction in South African lower primary school in mother tongue at this time consisted of choral recitation of meaningless syllables and copying lists of words. According to ..., many children did not acquire literacy until the end of primary school. Rodseth attributed the high failure rate of senior students from "Black schools" to the pedagogy used to teach mother tongue literacy (Gains & Mfulathela, 2005).

Adopting BTL involved training teachers and purchasing kits of materials. The kits contained: teacher and learner sentence makers, printed word cards, teacher and learner sentence holders, extra vocabulary cards, posters, readers and learner activity books for each child (The Molteno Project, 2003). As shown by the amount of materials required to use BTL, there can be considerable expense in purchasing these materials for all the grade one students in a country. There is also teacher training in how to use the materials and ongoing supervision and training.

BTL uses some aspects of LEA. In a common experience, a group of 8-16 children are gathered around the teacher to discuss a poster. The teacher develops a reading lesson around a dictated sentence from one of the children. Attention is drawn to breaks between words, prefixes and suffixes in developing words, print concepts (by also using the blackboard to write the sentence), and matching the shapes and sounds of the print cards to those written on the board. The children go back to their desks and draw a picture of the sentence in their exercise books. They try to create the same sentence with their word cards and later write a sentence in their exercise books with the picture as they learn to write (Gains & Mfulathela, 2005).

The teacher progresses to the direct instruction of phonics, punctuation, grammar, spelling, and other conventions, using literature reading and children's own writing. A class library can be made from the best exercise books the children have been writing in (Gains & Mfulathela, 2005). BTL is the program that is used for the Primary Reading Program (PRP) in Zambia. Zambia has implemented the program nationwide and pre-tested and post-tested in order to examine the effects of the program (Sampa, 2005). The same reading and writing test was given in 1999 and 2002 in both Zambian languages and English. There was a 780% increase in reading and writing scores in Zambian languages in grade one, a 575% increase in reading and writing tests in English in grade 2, and a 165-484% increase in reading and writing tests in English in grades three through five respectively.

A few interesting notes about the Zambian program: They piloted the material and adapted it to their situation asking for input at all levels; they conducted training at all

levels; they blanketed the country with a media campaign about the benefits of the program (due to concern that the children would be spending more time learning mother tongue literacy and less time learning English literacy); they involved parents in the classrooms and at home; children were arranged in groups so stronger students could help weaker students; the teacher had time to help the slower students; and the Department for International Development Central Africa (DFIDCA) (UK) invested over 18 million dollars for the seven-year project and the Ministry of Education of Zambia spent \$2,227,000 from 1999-2003 on the project (Gains & Mfulathela, 2005).

Research supports the success of the BTL program in Africa. I used the research on BTL and LEA as part of the teacher development in this study to encourage the teacher with what might be possible if we used LEA to have the students write and read their own stories as is done in both BTL and LEA.

*Why use LEA in Africa?* Some Africans who have written about traditional and colonial education in Africa (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003; Jagusah, 2001) had concerns about how education was conducted in Africa. Jagusah believed that Western education had no place in Africa while Adeyemi and Adeyinka suggested a convergence of the best of both traditional and Western educations. They suggested that reflective thinking needed to be introduced to reduce the fear commonly associated with traditional schools. Also, the emphasis should be on producing all-around citizens who are open to both Western and African culture.

These suggestions are congruent with how LEA is used in Africa because it builds on the knowledge of the children and the culture where it is used. Most of the African

educational values discussed by Adeyemi and Adeyinka could be most appropriately accounted for by the writing topics and practices of the students. In the early primary grades, collaborative, interactive writing would be compatible with African educational values. Writing about African folklore, daily tasks, African dance, local habitats and animals, local jobs, family, and other familiar topics would help to preserve and promote the local African cultural heritage. In addition, the Luganda curriculum encompassed some of these topics dealing with African culture (NCDC, 2001).

*The benefits and limitations of book floods.* A *book flood* is the introduction of a large number of “high-interest illustrated storybooks in the target language . . . that stress local themes, humor, and popular story lines—and ensure that the children read them” (Elley, 1996, p. 149). The books are used to raise literacy levels, usually in a second language, where there are few or no books. Elley gave five reasons for the use of book floods: (a) for interacting with large amounts of meaningful text (Krashen, 1982), (b) for language learning from incidental reading (Elley, 1989; Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985), (c) for using all four modes of language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), (d) for motivation due to high-interest reading (Berlyne, 1960), and (e) for ease in implementing where there are untrained teachers and few resources.

There have been book floods in many different areas of the world: Fiji, Singapore, Arizona, Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom, the island of Niue, Papua New Guinea, Canada, and Israel. According to Elley (1996), after two years, the Fiji book flood schools had double the normal pass rate on the Fiji Intermediate exam and a comparison of sentences written by the book flood students and those written by the control group vividly

displayed the impact of the book flood on the students' writing in English. The students were asked to write about a sequence of four pictures. One student from the control group who received the modal score of 2 out of 10 wrote: "Is ther was the women in the tree. Mothe sitg in the tree there was a looking at hes mother." (Elley, 1996, p. 157). One student from the experimental group with modal scores of 9 out of 10 wrote: "One morning when Luke's mother was washing, and the men were drinking yaqona, Luke was boiling the water" (p. 155).

The limiting factors in using book floods are the cost of books and the problems associated with their distribution (Elley, 1996). There is also the difficulty of finding books that express local culture and customs (Greaney, 1996), and most important to this study is the reality that there are usually not enough children's books written in minor languages to produce book floods. Therefore, student-authored book floods could be a way to produce culturally appropriate reading materials in minor languages where there are none. To further support the use of book floods and LEA in Uganda, I will next discuss some of the reading and writing practices that have been endorsed by the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in their joint position statement (1998).

*Reading and writing practices that support LEA and book floods.* LEA and book floods incorporate many of the recommended reading and writing practices for young children endorsed by the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). I have only chosen a few as examples of the types of practices that are used by LEA and book floods.

One of the main tenants of LEA is that writing should be based on children's language and experiences and that reading and writing should be meaningful. IRA and NAEYC (1998) concurred with these tenets by promoting the following practices: making content meaningful and building on prior knowledge, providing regular opportunities for children to write for real purposes without corrections, writing dictated ideas and stories for children who are not ready to do so on their own, using language experience charts that put children's speech into print, and teaching children that writing is expressing your ideas so others can understand it.

The main idea behind the impact of book floods is the opportunity for children to read a lot. IRA and NAEYC (1998) confirmed that research has shown that the more children read, the more fluent they become and the more they enjoy reading. In addition, repeated readings increase reading fluency, comprehension, and confidence (Samuels, 1997).

LEA and book floods are grounded in reading and writing theories that are based on research. In contrast, a student-authored book flood can be supported by the theories supporting LEA and book floods, but no research was found on having students produce a book flood with their own writing. As such, reviewing the benefits and limitations of book donation-based book floods can give some indication of the reading and writing benefits of book floods in general.

*The projected benefits and limitations of a student-authored book flood.* I projected that there could be benefits and limitations to a student-authored book flood. The benefits that could have been developed from this book flood might have been

similar to those of a book flood using published reading materials. Possibly, because the books were handmade, illustrated by children, and the stories were taken from the speech of the children, there could have been limitations to their value for literacy learning. Yet, it could have been that the children would have been especially attracted to the books because of those features, because they knew the authors and could ask the authors to read their books to them or help them read them.

One benefit of writing the student-authored texts could not only be an increase in the children's writing skills, but also their reading skills. Researchers who adhere to the Cognitive Information Processing Theory (McCarthy & Raphael, 1989) have found reading and writing to be interactive processes when measured in terms of their various parts. This theory includes many different theories of reading and writing that attempt to break down literacy into processes that can be defined through objective reality and thus displayed in a model. Three basic suppositions appear to guide those who adhere to this theory:

(a) reading and writing consist of a number of subprocesses used to perform specialized tasks; (b) readers and writers have limited capacity for attention so that trade-offs occur across the subprocesses; and (c) readers' and writers' competence is determined by the degree of attention needed to operate subprocesses. (pp. 3-4)

Several researchers support the theory of an interaction between the processes of reading and writing. Shanahan and Lomax (1986) found that younger students' use of phonics to decode correlated with their ability to spell words when writing. Shanahan

(1984) detailed what relationships other researchers have studied: When children get older, the correlation between spelling and decoding diminished but knowledge of vocabulary, comprehension strategies, and story structure became more important; writing structure was related to reading comprehension; those students who were the best writers also had the most developed vocabulary; and reading comprehension correlated with syntactic complexity. In addition, Ehri (1989) suggested that writing could improve a reader's understanding of alphabetic structure.

Another benefit of the student-authored materials could have been that teachers could use the writings, which were meaningful, to directly instruct the children in reading and writing conventions. Prior to this study, observations indicated that the children had just used oral learning and copying of material from the blackboard. The materials could also have been used in shared reading in the place of literature books (which were not available) to elicit discussion and support literacy activities. The student-authored materials could have been written on the theme-based curriculum. This would have given the students the opportunity to work from the known—what they had written—to the unknown to acquire new literacy skills and understandings. Using LEA to produce a student-authored book flood could have provided needed reading materials for the students and additional opportunities for teacher decision-making.

### Summary

The focus of this study was to collect qualitative evidence of pedagogical and learning processes in a poverty context in a Primary 3 Luganda class in Uganda, Africa. It also focused on teacher experimentation determining the direction of the processes so

they would be sustainable. In addition to examining the educational context of both the teacher and the students, an innovation was used to introduce new knowledge, resources, and experiences. The innovation was to provide additional decision-making opportunities for the teacher and reading and writing opportunities for the students.

A qualitative case study was used to obtain detailed data that are needed in developing countries to inform government policy and educational spending on inputs into education (Bromley, 1986; UNESCO, 2004). Interviews, observations, and teacher review of the innovation were used to validate the conclusions (Maxwell, 1996). The focal point of the study centered on understanding the educational context and supporting the teacher's efforts to work effectively within that context.

The local educational context consisted of the beliefs and experiences of the teacher and the students, and the African culture which is composed of both traditional and colonial influences. Formal schooling in Africa is tied closely to the influences of colonization (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003). The features of public schools include large classes, few resources, high-stakes testing, class management traditions, Universal Primary Education (UPE), research-based curriculum, and other effectual and ineffectual influences that can affect teacher decision-making. This context affects what the children can do in the classroom, what pedagogy the teacher can use, and her beliefs about teaching (Flannagan, 1992; Harrison, 2005; Johnson, Monk, & Swain, 2000).

Teacher beliefs are often unstated assumptions about students, classrooms, and what is to be taught (Kagan, 1992) that guide teachers' purposeful actions (Hancock & Gallard, 2004). New knowledge and experiences are filtered through teachers' beliefs,

thus affecting teacher decision-making (Carter & Doyle, 1989; Crawford, 2007; Jacob, 1997; Kagan, 1992).

The influence of the students' environments on them likewise influences teachers' decision-making (Guskey, 1986; 1989). The home environment of the students influences the development of their reading skills and attitudes (Adams, 1990; Guthrie & Siefert, 1984; Hess & Holloway, 1984; Ingham, 1982). In developing countries, the lack of exposure to print, reading materials, space, light, and the necessities of life so children have to work rather than study all contribute to poor reading abilities (Elley, 1994). In addition to the influence of resources and attitudes in the community, the availability of resources in the classroom also impacts student learning and teacher decision-making as does the health of the students. Furthermore, it seems that the effect of teachers might be compromised by salaries below the poverty line, little training, large classes, teacher absences, and few supplies (Elley, 1994; Ingram, 2004).

A common way of trying to reduce the impact of a poverty context is to input more resources—books and supplies and training for teachers (Hanushek, 1995). Supplies and teacher training have only shown modest impacts on student learning; textbooks have raised the levels of student learning, but problems with purchasing, distribution and the untrained use of textbooks have negated much of their impact (UNESCO, 2004).

For an innovation to be successful there must be a fit between the innovation and the context (Day, 1985; Jacob, 1997). The purpose of the innovation in this study was to provide student-authored reading materials for the students and the opportunity for them

to read and write using LEA. Teacher development was based on Ball's teacher change model which consists of building the capacity of the teacher and internalizing new principles through teacher reflection, discussing new information, and teacher research in her classroom (Ball, 2004, 2006). Supplies for the students, researcher support (Huberman & Crandall, 1983), and modeling (Monk, 1999; Morrow, 2003) were also added to the teacher development in order to reduce the impact of the poverty context which is characterized by chalk-and-talk and teacher-centered pedagogy (Dembélé & Miaro-II, 2003).

Furthermore, new information that is appropriate in poverty contexts was added to the teacher development program to give the teacher additional choices of pedagogy (Monk, 1999). The teacher was presented with information on BTL, LEA, reflection and teacher change, print-rich environments and the MOES's new literacy curriculum guidelines (NCDC, 2005). LEA and BTL have been very successful in Africa in raising literacy levels (Gains & Mfulathela, 2005). LEA builds on the knowledge and the culture of the students and is an appropriate way to generate a student-authored book flood.

Book floods have been very successful in raising literacy levels in developing countries (Elley, 1996). They are helpful in providing students with large amounts of meaningful text (Krashen, 1982); for using listening, speaking, reading and writing; for motivation (Berlyne, 1960); for language learning from reading (Elley, 1989; Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985); and they are easy for untrained teachers to use who have few resources. Using LEA to initiate a book flood eliminates the problems of cost and distribution (Elley, 1996) and their being culturally inappropriate (Greaney, 1996). The IRA and NAEYC recommend many of the reading and writing practices found in an LEA

student-authored book flood: writing should be centered on children's experiences and language, be meaningful, and children should read a lot (1998).

A student-authored book flood could have both benefits and limitations. Benefits could include having a lot of books in a minor language, an increase in reading and writing skills (Shanahan & Lomax, 1986), and the books could be written on the curriculum. A limitation might be that the books are of a lesser literary quality than books written by adults because they are based on the speech of the students.

Many of the literacy strategies that are successful in the more wealthy nations do not fit the context in Uganda. The challenge in this study was to collect evidence of the reality of the poverty context and support the teacher in negotiating a fit between known literacy strategies and the context in which she taught in order to provide reading resources for the students.

### 3. Method

This project was a case study of a Luganda-speaking Primary 3 (P3) teacher's instructional decision-making in a Ugandan public school. The purpose of the study was to determine how the P3 teacher's context and an instructional innovation affected her literacy-related instructional decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices while helping the students develop reading materials. The teacher's context was defined as her cultural/personal background; educational background and current literacy beliefs, pedagogy and practices; and the school/community environment where she worked and lived. The research questions were:

1. What is the context of a P3 Luganda teacher and how does this context influence the teacher's literacy decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices? The factors that will be considered in order to describe this context were:
  - a. Cultural/personal background: Description of teacher's language, ethnic, socioeconomic and religious background; history of her village/ community and other experiences (past or present) that may impact her current decision-making as a teacher.
  - b. Educational background: Description of teacher's educational background (type and level of education; previous experience in teaching; beliefs

- c. about teaching, learning, and students) that may impact her current decision-making as a teacher.
  - d. School/community: Description of teacher's current school and local school community (e.g., students, families, teachers, administrators, and teaching colleagues) and description of direct influences on the school such as the government, church, or other agencies that may impact school operation or policies.
2. What informs teacher decision-making about Luganda literacy instruction when the teacher is given the following:
    - a. Additional materials and information about potentially effective literacy practices.
    - b. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) required curriculum (NCDC, 2001) and guidelines for the teaching of reading and writing in the local language (NCDC, 2005).
    - c. Researcher mentoring to support the teacher's decision-making.
  3. How does the teacher describe her decision-making and change processes, and influences on those processes, throughout the innovation?

#### Setting and Teacher Participant

I received written permission from the MOES to conduct research in a primary school in a particular district in Uganda. The permission included a letter requesting the District Education Officer to assist me. The District Inspector of Schools assisted me

throughout my project by showing me different schools in his area, introducing me to various teachers and head teachers, and answering questions throughout my study.

I chose a P3 class in a government school located in a rural/urban section of the Bantu region of south central Uganda. Luganda and English are the main languages used in the community, but multilingualism is the norm. There are many tribal languages other than Luganda, yet parents are very adamant about the importance of teaching their children English, as they believe it will give them an opportunity to rise above their current economic situation (these sentiments were prevalent in the community and the school and were often shared with me by the head teacher, teachers, and parents).

There were six factors that influenced the selection of this school: (a) the area was convenient to a Ugandan educator who was willing to collaborate on the project, (b) the head teacher and the P3 teacher were willing to participate in the project, (c) there were usually over 85 students in the classroom, (d) there were no books for the students to read in Luganda, (e) the school was convenient to a main highway which provided safe access, and (f) the educational context was representative of a purposeful sample of teaching in a developing country context. Although this was an official government school, the property and school were owned by the Church of Uganda and the school had to follow the criteria set by both the government and the Church to conduct an education program.

### *The Classroom*

The classroom consisted of a 20' x 20' room with one door and windows with no panes. The sun was the only light as there was no electricity. There were posters of Luganda syllables on the walls, a blackboard, and a locked cupboard for teacher supplies

and textbooks. The students sat in ability-leveled groups of approximately 12 to 18 students with 3 to 5 students at a desk.

### *The Curriculum*

The MOES set the curriculum, and the head teacher and teachers were held accountable for the results of the end-of-term district exams on the curriculum from the MOES three times a year. In addition, the Church of Uganda required writing scriptures each day and attendance at a church service for 30 minutes each week (although the service always lasted one hour) during school time.

### *The Participants*

University approved written permissions were obtained from the parents/guardians of the students who participated and the teacher. These permissions were read to those parents/guardians who were unable to read and their questions were answered before they signed the permission forms. All permission forms explained the project; what the participant could be expected to do; the risks (there were no risks) and benefits; confidentiality; contact information of the researcher, committee chair, and university; and the participants' rights not to participate at any time if they so chose. University approved permissions were also read to people in the community and the students who had parental/guardian permissions when they were interviewed. Students without signed permission forms were excluded from the sample.

The students who were included represented a diverse population of ages, languages, and residency. They were between 8 and 16 years old; 23 students represented 17 different tribal languages besides Luganda. They had pens and an exercise book for

each subject, and came from both urban and rural households with most children living in poverty (head teacher, personal communication, October 12, 2006).

The teacher was a certified P3 teacher, her native language was Luganda, and she had had over 25 years experience teaching in primary schools. At the onset of the study, the teacher was using the most common form of pedagogy in sub-Saharan Africa: teacher chalk-and-talk and choral recitation (UNESCO, 2004) with the students copying exercises off the board into their exercise books. The teacher was assigned a pseudonym which has been used throughout this paper.

### Research Design

The design of this study was approved by the appropriate university research bodies. This project was a qualitative case study using purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990). More specifically, I sought an intense sample of teacher pedagogy representative of a developing country context with a high student-to-teacher ratio, low availability of teacher and student resources, and pedagogy that is common in this context—teacher chalk-and-talk (UNESCO, 2004).

In order to conduct the study in a Luganda literacy classroom, I had to use translators for what was being spoken, written, and read in Luganda; I only took notes on what I could see and what students and the teacher said in English, but my translator would take notes in English on what was being said in Luganda.

I used two translators in the classroom and in interviews: The first was a young woman, a native Luganda speaker, who had a diploma in store management, and had worked as a receptionist, accountant, and store manager (secondary and higher education

in Uganda is conducted in English); the second translator was a newly certified primary 3 school teacher who had completed secondary school and three years of teacher training. She was a native Luganda speaker who lived in the community where the school was located. The translators not only translated Luganda into English, but during the second and third terms, the translators and I also helped students during the innovation as participant observers.

I used a third translator as a member check for the interviews. She transcribed the interview tapes from English and Luganda to English and shared with me when the translations were not consistent.

This study focused on the factors that influenced the teacher's literacy pedagogy decision-making before and during an instructional innovation in a multilingual setting. The innovation was an experiment to support the teacher in developing literacy activities to increase the amount of time spent in meaningful reading and writing in her P3 classroom.

### *Innovation*

The innovation was used to facilitate additional decision-making by the P3 teacher that was examined in Research Questions Two and Three. The innovation was heuristic in nature and focused on an exploratory experiment in the feasibility of using a Language Experience Approach (LEA) adaptation (Stauffer, 1970) and teacher resourcefulness to provide meaningful and frequent reading and writing experiences where reading materials in local languages were scarce and writing in early primary grades centered on copying from the blackboard.

I had a dual role both as a researcher and as a teacher developer. At the start of the study, before the innovation began, I was only a researcher, observing and interviewing; however, during the innovation, I took on the additional role of teacher developer so that I could provide the teacher with appropriate and helpful information on literacy learning and teaching. I also provided support for the teacher in the form of collaboration and materials during the innovation. Furthermore, part of the innovation called for me to model teaching students to write their own books; the teacher was to then experiment with book writing in her classroom (see Appendix B, Timelines: Innovation).

I used Ball's teacher change model (2000, 2004, 2006) as the basis for how to provide support that would build the capacity of the teacher during the innovation. As noted in Chapter Two, this model focuses on teachers internalizing changes in their teaching through reflection, introspection, critiquing new knowledge, constructing new instructional patterns in the classroom through the teacher's own choices and research in her classroom, and the use of language (reading, writing, discussing, and listening). I used this model in the innovation because of its likelihood of facilitating the teacher's development of literacy activities that would be appropriate in the teacher's own context and of the probability of her internalizing the new literacy beliefs and pedagogy so that she would continue to implement them as long as there were resources available.

#### *Data Sources*

The data collection was designed to answer each of the research questions. Question One focused on the personal and educational background of the teacher and the context of the school/community where she worked and how these contexts may have

influenced the teacher's literacy decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices. This question was answered through observing and interviewing educators, the sponsoring church leaders, the teacher, the students, people in the community, and examining a local document the teacher used to guide her instruction prior to the innovation: the *Uganda Primary School Curriculum Syllabi for Primary Schools, Volume Two* (National Curriculum Development Centre [NCDC], 2000). I interviewed the students and people in the community with a translator (one student asked to be interviewed in English as she did not understand Luganda), while I interviewed everyone else in English without a translator. These interviews and this document gave me a basic understanding of the education system the teacher worked with at all levels, the relationship the teacher had with the students and their parents, how people in the community viewed education, and the curriculum the teacher was using and how she interpreted the curriculum. The teacher also reflected in writing on (a) her beliefs, pedagogy, and practices and what might have influenced them, (b) her first teaching video which revealed her teaching pedagogy and practices before the innovation, and (c) a Ugandan educator's response to her first teaching video (the teacher gave permission for a Ugandan educator to observe her teaching) in order to describe her educational background. In addition, she wrote about her personal background in response to a questionnaire (see Appendix C, Questionnaires: Teacher Interview Questions Prior to the Innovation).

In order to answer Question Two, I gathered a wide variety of data about and directly from the teacher during and after the innovation so as to understand what factors might be influencing her instructional decision-making during this time. I collected

materials she used or read about, data on her interaction with the students, data on the literacy activities she developed, data on the students' responses to the activities and data on the teacher's reflections and planning (see Appendix D for a complete list).

The teacher was the primary source for answering Question Three. She described her experience with the innovation in reflective writing and orally during an interview with me; these descriptions included discussions of her own decision-making and change processes, and influences on those processes.

The procedures used to collect the data were observations, video and audiotaping, interviews, and scanning written and printed materials. These data were continually analyzed so that I could make decisions in relation to changes in the innovation that would make it fit this particular context and to also find better ways to collect the data—ways that would be more productive in answering the research questions.

### *Data Collection*

A general chronological overview of data collection is discussed in the next three paragraphs. The chronological overview is then followed by a more detailed review of data collection by type: observations, videotaping, audiotaping, interviews, written materials, and printed materials.

The data collection took place from the beginning of the school year, February, 2006, through October, 2006. I explained the research to the teacher and parents and then obtained their signatures on participant consent forms to initiate the study. The first term, February 6 through April 21, was devoted to intense data collection including observing in the classroom to the point of saturation (one and one-half months) (Paley, Slack-Smith,

& O'Grady, 2004) and in the community; interviewing adults and students at school and in the community; and conducting the book writing program (see Appendix B, Timelines: Procedures).

In the one-month break between first and second term, April 24 through May 19, the teacher read and browsed research on reading and reading instruction in international contexts, books that had teaching ideas for increasing literacy activity in the classroom, the curriculum, reading and writing guidelines from the MOES, and research on facilitating teacher research in the classroom (see Appendix A). We met four times during the month and discussed what she had read and began planning literacy activities for the second term.

During part of Term Two, May 22 through June 30, the teacher and I arranged the classroom for group work, experimented with group literacy activities, and conducted daily planning and reflection sessions. After only two and one-half weeks of actual group literacy activities, I left the country on July 3. I asked the teacher to keep a daily journal of her teaching while I was gone. She then read her journal entries, and wrote down the decisions she had made about literacy instruction and why she made those decisions (what or who influenced her to make those decisions?). I returned on October 9 and worked with the teacher during the fourth and fifth weeks of Term Three, observing in the classroom, reflecting and planning with the teacher, and conducting final interviews with the students and the teacher.

### *Observations*

Observations took place in the school and the community. In order to answer Research Question One, I observed the teaching of Luganda and English in P2 and P3, the book writing program, the context of the classroom, and school and literacy practices of both the adults and the students in the community—at church, at work, and at home.

I became a participant observer (Merriam, 1998) in and out of the classroom at the beginning of second term. I began supporting the teacher with ideas and resources outside the classroom and helping during her editing time in the classroom. This allowed me to experience firsthand any problems the students were encountering with using the new literacy activities. This participant observer status provided an informed atmosphere for our reflection sessions after each lesson where the teacher and I discussed our observations and planned how the activities could be improved. I took notes during these sessions. I also recorded field notes at the end of each day detailing my activities and experiences for that day.

### *Videotaping*

I videotaped the teacher teaching Luganda literacy on several occasions in the classroom in the fourth and seventh weeks of observations; the last videotaping took place in October, during the third term. The purpose of the videotaping was as a resource for the teacher to observe—both as we analyzed her pedagogy and practices after the first month of school, and later in the year—for her to analyze the changes in her teaching and the changes that had taken place in literacy activity in the classroom since the innovation. These tapes were also used by the teacher and researcher with the Video Critique forms

(see Appendix C, Questionnaires: Video Critiques) to analyze the types of literacy activity that were taking place. One student was videotaped in May dictating a book to a translator and students were also videotaped using the innovation in the classroom in June and again in October. The teacher had given written permission for the videotaping, as had the students and a parent or guardian of each of the students who were videotaped.

### *Audiotaping*

Interviews with the students and the final formal interview with the teacher and students were audiotaped and then transcribed. Before each audiotaping, the participants were asked for their permission before audiotaping even though everyone who was audiotaped had already given written permission, or a parent or guardian had given written permission.

### *Interviews*

Formal and informal interviews were conducted throughout the year with the teacher, students, parents, people in the community, and educators inside and outside the school. An informal interview might consist of just one question that someone was asked concerning an immediate circumstance; whereas a formal interview was based on preplanned questions (see Appendix E for the formal interview questions asked of the teacher, 24 students, people in the community, and one educator).

I used a translator to interview people where needed, but most adults did not need a translator. The students were interviewed before and after the innovation to provide the teacher with an indication of the impact of her literacy activities on the students. Eight

groups of students were interviewed third term. Due to the repetitive nature of their answers, I randomly chose only three groups of student interviews that were audiotaped to share with the teacher.

### *Written Material*

The written reflections, critiques, and summaries written by the teacher were primary data from the teacher that were related to the research questions. The teacher wrote about the *whys* and *hows* of her own literacy development (see Appendix C, Questionnaires: Questionnaire: Teacher Interview Questions Prior to the Innovation and Questionnaire: Research Questions One) and the development of the literacy activities from her perspective (see Appendix C, Questionnaires: Questionnaire: Research Question Two and Questionnaire: Reflection on Editing).

### *Printed Materials*

I scanned the curriculum that the teacher originally was using and the curriculum she later used during the innovation (NCDC, 2000; 2001; 2005) and kept copies of the research articles and information that the teacher read and discussed with the researcher (see Appendix A). I also left copies of most of the research articles with the teacher at the end of the study.

### *Data Analyses*

The processes that were used to analyze the data included grounded theory analysis throughout the entire study in addition to event structure analysis during the innovation (Tesch, 1990). Using grounded theory involved collecting various data from a variety of sources, coding the data, developing concepts from the coding, and using the

categories to form theories (Tesch). Event structure analysis essentially involved analyzing how the history of certain events affected other events (Stevenson, Zinzow, & Sanjeev, 2003). The data were analyzed in an ongoing manner in order to help the researcher make informed decisions about changes that needed to be made to the innovation and in the way the data were collected.

There were other aspects of this continuing analysis. I wrote bimonthly summaries of my work and emailed them to my dissertation committee for feedback (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I personally met with the District Inspector of Schools, my translators, a Ugandan educator with his Ph.D. in education, two university-level teacher educators at different universities in Uganda, and a children's book author from the Uganda Children's Writers and Illustrators Association (UCWIA) on several occasions to get information on educational issues.

I used data reduction from the beginning and data display as part of my initial analysis for planning and incorporating the innovation and finalizing the study materials to share with the teacher at the end of first term and throughout the rest of the project. Data reduction included the continual adapting of the research design to the context. Miles and Huberman (1994) call this *anticipatory data reduction* as a researcher changes the research design as data is collected which, in the end, supports later analysis. An example of anticipatory data reduction was used when only about one-fourth of the parents showed up to sign permission documents for their children to participate in the study; thus, we had to rearrange the classroom so all those students with permission were grouped together for videotaping. Another example came with my experience modeling

book writing with the students, interviewing the teacher, and observing in the classroom. I learned about the constraints of high-stakes testing, high student-to-teacher ratio, the challenges of less advanced students, and curriculum that was inadequate for the teacher's needs. All of these constraints affected changes in the design of the innovation.

I used data display to put the transcriptions, translations, teacher writing data, field notes, and observation notes into NVIVO (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data were then categorized by type (collaborative meetings, observations, videotapes, audiotapes, etc.) and then nodes were developed with memos within the different categories that informed the research questions and reoccurring issues that might be important to the final results. I reviewed the data bi-monthly, looking for information that was not coded that might be pertinent to code. I also developed matrices of the data as needed to organize my thoughts and increase my understanding of what was occurring (see Appendix F for examples). I generated implications for this study through the analysis process as themes emerged from the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### *Triangulation*

Triangulation was used to enhance reliability and validity. Member checks were used with the teacher and the students. Long-term and repeated observations were used at the school which also could have reduced the effects of reactivity. Peer validation was sought within and outside the culture. In addition, some collaborative forms of research wherein the teacher made decisions about how the innovation should progress were also used (Merriam, 1998).

## Limitations

There were various types of limitations in this study ranging from linguistic and methodological to researcher-based. There were three linguistic limitations to the study: (a) English was the teacher's second language, (b) there were differing English accents between the Ugandans and myself, and (c) I had to work with translators during part of the study. One example of a potential limitation was that I was not able to establish if the brevity in the teacher's reflective writing was a linguistic issue or not, for it could be attributed to culture, education, or any number of other determinants. When I first saw how brief the teacher's reflections were, I shared an article with her that had examples of how other teachers had reflected on their instruction (Rudduck, 1988). In the final interview, I also added a list of specific factors which she had not mentioned previously that might have affected her decision-making. I asked her to read through the list to see if any of them might have influenced her pedagogy. Another linguistic limitation of the study was the Ugandans' and my differing English accents which caused some problems and misunderstandings for at least the first two months until we became accustomed to each other's pronunciations of English.

A final linguistic limitation was the use of translators in Luganda class and with some students. My first translator was a close friend who worked for me for 6 months and seemed to know what I expected (e.g., that she was to write what was said and what was being done without any interpretation). Yet, this translator prompted the students to get a particular answer for one question in the first student interviews. I failed to check her for strict adherence to the questions, so when I saw the transcription of the interviews,

I threw that question out. To make sure this did not happen with the second translator whom I hired for the last two weeks of the study, I had her orally translate the students' answers as we interviewed them and asked them the questions in English and Luganda. I was somewhat familiar with the language and it appeared that she embellished her oral translations of the answers, which she did. She also did not take detailed, non-interpretive notes in Luganda class until near the end of the two weeks although I had consistently reminded her to do so.

In addition to linguistic issues, reactivity (Maxwell, 1996) was also a limitation. Reactivity is the effect of the researcher on the context or the participants and was a methodological limitation due to my participant observer status. During the first term I sat in a corner of the room near the front with the translator and took notes during the lesson and then walked around and observed individual students while they copied exercises from the board and the teacher graded exercise books in the back of the room. Second and third terms, I actively walked around helping students with their reading, writing, and group work while the teacher was doing the same during 45 minutes of group work time.

I cannot say with any degree of certainty what impact my presence had on the students and teacher. I think that initially I was a distraction—partly because I was the only light-skinned person living in the community. I also had items the students had never seen: cameras, mechanical pencils, and pens with erasers. Yet, in the second and third terms, the students treated me like a teacher because of the role I played in helping

them with their literacy activities and because they were accustomed to my presence by then.

I did not observe any differences between the way the P3 teacher taught first term with me there, and how the other teachers in the school taught (I informally observed their teaching in their classrooms as I was standing around on the patios outside their rooms). In general, I saw similar instruction, disciplinary practices, and preparation activities, though my observations were not consistent or detailed. I believe that my presence did make the teacher I worked with feel obligated to try the innovation second term, especially because the head teacher was pressuring her to try it also.

I designed the study to moderate some of the *outsider* limitations—my not being Ugandan or speaking Luganda. I was considered by the Ugandan people to be a *Luzungu: English-speaking person*. Children sometimes knelt in front of me to address me (they did this with other adults also). However, I also had an elderly woman in native dress kneel in front of me to introduce herself. In addition, the head teacher had difficulty understanding why I just did not immediately tell the teacher what to do, because I was, in his view, a *Luzungu*, and he seemed to expect me to have the knowledge to solve her problems. To moderate this attitude, I told the teacher at least weekly, or more often, that I was an outsider and that she was the expert in her classroom; it was her culture, her students, and she knew them better than anyone else. I also had to reassure the head teacher at least twice that I must observe first so that I could begin to understand what information would be helpful to the teacher in her particular classroom. In addition, I

used the Ugandan educator's response to the teacher's first teaching video to help me triangulate what was taking place in the classroom.

I tried to constantly draw on the expertise of the teacher to critique and change the innovation as she chose and to have her interpret what she had been doing in writing. In addition, I would frequently seek feedback from Ugandan educators and my translator about what I was seeing.

One outsider limitation I definitely noticed was that the teacher shared some of her negative feelings about the study in the beginning with others, instead of me, even though I had asked her to share both negative and positive reactions with me. The head teacher told me in October, 2006, at the end of the study, that the P3 teacher had talked to him at the beginning of the year, expressing her belief that LEA book writing would not work in her classroom. All she had expressed to me at the beginning of the year in a written questionnaire was that I needed to model book writing in the afternoon during music and drama due to the children needing to be in class to prepare for district exams. The teacher did openly disagree with me on an educational issue in October during a casual chat and on another issue during our final interview, which gave me an indication that she did eventually develop her voice.

In order to diminish the teacher's reluctance to share personal feelings and ideas, I took a sincere interest in the teacher's pedagogy through observations and verification, I paid the teacher for her time, continually acknowledged her expertise within her classroom and my position as an outsider, encouraged and supported the teacher's

choices for changing pedagogy, and gave continuous feedback on the importance of her classroom research for other teachers in Uganda and Africa.

Using translators and studying the language were two other ways I tried to minimize the impact of my being an outsider. I also lived in Uganda for almost nine months and brought my family to participate in the community and school. But, in spite of these efforts, I was an outsider influenced by my own contexts, and many of my educational and cultural perspectives were different from many Ugandans' perspectives.

### Importance

In many schools in Africa, teachers' beliefs about instruction are likely strongly influenced by a lack of resources and infrastructure and a burgeoning student population. The importance of studying the factors affecting a P3 Luganda teacher's literacy instructional decision-making is related to the problem of widespread illiteracy and the need for sustainable, effective literacy instruction programs in sub-Saharan African primary schools.

According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), "In sub-Saharan Africa, it was recently estimated that only one quarter of the students who complete primary school actually gain basic literacy skills" (2005, p. 4). Furthermore, a general lack of reading materials in minor languages and limited reading materials in a second language (UNESCO, 2004) exacerbate illiteracy. The poverty context and lack of resources in Africa can limit the literacy instruction choices teachers make, often resulting in the use of teacher chalk-and-talk and rote recitation pedagogy as their main literacy instructional techniques (UNESCO, 2004).

Outside innovations that have focused on supplying resources and training teachers in new pedagogy have sometimes proved difficult to sustain in Africa (Dembélé & Mairo, 2003; Hopkins, 2002; Lipson & Wixson, 2004; Verspoor, 2005). After a teacher is trained and the resources are provided, the sustainability of new pedagogy is ultimately left to a teacher's willingness or decision to use it. In order to determine how to promote sustainable pedagogical change that increases literacy activity, this study focused on describing the literacy instructional decision-making process and the factors influencing the decision-making of a P3 Luganda teacher in Uganda when she was provided with new literacy pedagogy and resources.

#### Summary

This case study focused on the pedagogical decision-making of a P3 Luganda teacher in Uganda before and after she was given materials and information about potentially effective literacy practices. The site of the study was a government sponsored primary school. The context was representative of a developing country with high student-to-teacher ratio, low availability of teacher and student resources, and pedagogy that is common in this context: teacher chalk-and-talk (UNESCO, 2004). The teacher was licensed to teach in the P3 classroom and had over 25 years experience teaching in primary schools. The students were representative of both urban and rural households with the majority of the students living in poverty (head teacher, personal communication, October 12, 2006).

The innovation was based on Ball's teacher change model (2004, 2006) which consists of teachers internalizing changes in their teaching through the use of language

(reading, writing, discussing, and listening) and teacher research in their classrooms. Data collection took place from February, 2006 through October, 2006. The innovation involved my modeling LEA book writing, sharing information on literacy pedagogy, and collaborating and supporting the teacher's decision-making to develop literacy activities.

## 4. Findings

The context in which a teacher works can influence her literacy instruction decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices. Unavoidably, a teacher is also part of the context and brings with her experiences and learning that influence her teaching, or more particularly, the decisions she makes about what and how to teach. This study describes one Primary 3 (P3) Luganda literacy teacher's context in Uganda including her personal beliefs about learning and literacy; her educational training and experiences; and the educational and community context in which she works and how this context might have affected her Luganda literacy instruction decision-making before and during an innovation that provided the teacher with information about potentially effective literacy practices, supplies, and researcher support. There were three research questions:

1. What was the context of a P3 Luganda teacher and how does this context influence the teacher's literacy decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices? The factors that were considered in order to describe this context were:
  - a. Cultural/personal background: Description of teacher's language, ethnic, socioeconomic and religious background; history of her village/ community and other experiences (past or present) that may impact her current decision-making as a teacher.

- b. Educational background: Description of teacher's educational background (type and level of education; previous experience in teaching; beliefs about teaching, learning, and students) that may impact her current decision-making as a teacher.
  - c. School/community: Description of teacher's current school and local school community (e.g., students, families, teachers, administrators, and teaching colleagues) and description of direct influences on the school such as the government, church, or other agencies that may impact school operation or policies.
2. What informs teacher decision-making about Luganda literacy instruction when given the following:
- a. Additional materials and information about potentially effective literacy practices.
  - b. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) required curriculum (NCDC, 2001) and guidelines for the teaching of reading and writing in the local language (NCDC, 2005).
  - c. Researcher mentoring to support the teacher's decision-making.
3. How does the teacher describe her decision-making and change processes, and influences on those processes throughout the innovation?

I worked for one month setting up the study with the Principal Education Officer in the Department of Pre-Primary and Primary Education at the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) and the head teacher and P3 teacher at the school. I then spent an

additional six months in the classroom and the community collecting data concerning the context in which the teacher worked and also conducting the innovation. I spent three months away from the site, but communicated with the teacher through my translator, who would visit the teacher every month to convey messages I would email to her. To facilitate answering Research Question One, this next section describes the teacher's cultural/personal, educational, and school/community background and how this context might have influenced her literacy instruction decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy and practices. To answer Research Question Two, I outline the innovation, why it was chosen, and how it might have affected the teacher's literacy instruction decision-making beliefs, pedagogy, and practices. To answer Research Question Three, I use the teacher's own words to describe changes she made in her literacy instruction decision-making beliefs, pedagogy, and practices and the factors that affected the changes.

#### The Context of a P3 Luganda Literacy Teacher

The major source of information about the teacher's cultural/personal and educational context came from three questionnaires (see Appendix C) the teacher answered and an interview session, whereas most of the teacher's school/community background information came from my interviews with other people and observations. I chose the pseudonym Eva to represent the P3 Luganda teacher throughout this study.

#### *Teacher's Cultural/Personal Context*

Eva wrote about her personal background as follows:

My name is "Eva". I was born in Luwero district . . . and I am 53 years old. My father and mother were Baganda, so my native language is Luganda. My mother

and father divorced and . . . I grew up with my mother and grandmother . . . in a community with many people and it was about 2 km from the trading center . . . .

The people in the village were mostly farmers. We used to have coffee plantations in our village so people earned their living by selling coffee beans. The main food there was matooke (green bananas eaten like potatoes), but currently it has decreased because the soil is exhausted.

I am married with five children. I have three boys and two girls. My first born is a girl and is a teacher in one of the village schools.

Eva has one son who has finished Senior Six (equivalent to graduating from high school in the United States), one who has finished Senior Four, and a girl and a boy who are enrolled in Senior Four. The two older sons are not in school because they do not have funds to continue their schooling. Eva's only grandson attends the school where she works and lives with her during the week in the housing for teachers at the school. On weekends, she and her grandson travel to her home on a taxi bus (the boy's mother is a teacher in a rural school).

Her husband, a Musoga, is 60 years old, a retired teacher and Reverend of the Church of Uganda and a part-time pastor in a Pentecostal church where they live in a church-owned home. Eva explained that her husband tended their children through the years as she taught at schools far from home.

Eva's education began with her mother's teachings at home, and extended through primary, secondary, teacher's college, refresher courses, and into her own P3

classroom. This section examines her type and level of education, her experiences teaching, and her beliefs about teaching, learning, and students.

Eva's mother was a teacher and taught her letters and syllables before she started school. Eva acknowledged, "I used to admire teachers of those days, the way they dressed, talked, walked, so I wanted also to become a teacher when I grew up." She started school at eight years old and in six years passed her Primary Leaving Exam (PLE) with a grade one rating (the highest rating). After she finished secondary three, she started at a primary teacher training college (PTC) where she studied for three years. Eva wrote, "My parents also had not enough money to take me to higher studies so I had to join primary teachers College because it was free education those days."

Eva began her teaching in Grade Two at her old primary school. During the first years, she also taught P5 English, P6 mathematics, and P7 English. Later, she decided to teach in grades one through four and in 1988 she went for her Grade Three upgrading training. In 2000 she took a refresher course focused on management in the lower primary grades.

Eva has taught and has been upgrading her training for 33 years. She has taught at eight different primary schools and was transferred to her present school because it was closer to her home (only about 50 km away). She was starting her second year at this school at the time this study began. Eva wrote,

I am a grade three qualified teacher but I would like to upgrade as a grade five to get a diploma in primary education, but I don't have enough money to pay for the

fees because it is very expensive. I am still educating my children because my husband does not have enough money to pay school fees for all of them.

Eva now teaches P3 science; Luganda reading and writing; and music, dance, and drama (MDD). She has taught a class as large as 100 students by herself, and now teaches three subjects to over 100 students with the attendance being around 85 students each day. Although there are two regular teachers in the classroom, it is the norm for teachers to take turns teaching their own subjects with no help from the other teachers. Eva shared her beliefs about teaching as follows:

I have taught many students and many of them have succeeded in life. I feel proud that I have at least done something for my nation as a teacher. Teaching is good and enjoyable because most of the disciplines pass-through school (i.e., people who work in most fields have gone through school).

#### *Eva's Beliefs, Pedagogy, and Practices as a Teacher*

Some of Eva's literacy beliefs, pedagogy, and practices as a teacher are consistent with her experiences as a student and teacher trainee and some are not. Eva's beliefs, pedagogy and practices include the following: (a) the use of a sequence to acquire reading (students must first learn letters, then syllables, then words, and then sentences in that order), (b) the use of reading materials and reading incentives, (c) the use of ability groups, (d) the use of first and second language pedagogy, and (d) the pedagogy she used to teach a lesson. The information for the comparisons was taken from the teacher's written reflections and interviews and my observations of her teaching.

*Eva's use of strategies to teach sequential reading and writing acquisition.* It was evident that learning to read in a certain sequence in Ugandan education was something that Eva had experienced as both a student and teacher trainee (I was not able to find any research supporting or disputing this theory). This carried over into her practice as a teacher. Eva made it clear in our discussions at the beginning of the year that students must memorize the syllables in Luganda before they can learn to read words or sentences. Luganda pronunciation is quite predictable and therefore the main focus of reading instruction is a synthetic phonics approach (Stahl, Duffy-Hester, & Stahl, 1998). When Eva progressed to having the students read words during her lessons, she had the students contribute two- and three-syllable words using the syllables they had been studying. It did not matter whether the word was a real word or not, just that it had two or three syllables. Eva would write the words on the board with a dash between the syllables so the students would recognize the syllables in the words (e.g., se-se-ma, ya-le-ka, and ka-we-te).

Learning to write had a similar progression beginning with freely scribbling to writing patterns, then letters, words, and sentences. Eva had the students shake out their hands to soften them before writing practice, and although she believed in students writing in the air before writing in their exercise books, she only used this strategy at the beginning of term one in P3.

*Eva's use of reading materials and reading incentives.* As a child, Eva had experienced having reading materials in Luganda, reading a lot, participating in reading competitions, and receiving awards for her reading. She mentioned that she was taught while a teacher trainee to give students awards—usually marks—for reading, but now she

has no books in Luganda for the students to read, and consequently, she does not have competitions or give the students awards.

According to a Ugandan educator I visited with (personal communication, April 8, 2006), this change from having books to having no books and large classes was due to UPE, which provided the opportunity for a large increase in student enrollment by abolishing many school fees; however, the MOES has not been able to keep up with the need for more school books (Nannyonjo, 2007; Penny, Ward, Read, & Bines, 2008). One of the problems with UPE has been that the MOES chose to use the monies they received from donors to update the curriculum and then underfunded learning materials for the students (Penny et al.).

*Eva's use of ability groups.* The concept of using ability groups for all subjects has not changed from the time Eva was a student until the time of this study. Eva said that one of the most helpful things she was taught in her refresher course in 2000 was the use of ability groups. When I arrived at the beginning of the school year, the teachers grouped the students according to their scores on the first midmonth tests.

Eva was familiar with the concept of the more advanced students helping less advanced students, both as a student and a teacher trainee, but she did not use this principle in her classroom while I was there. This could have been due to her class management system where all students were punished for talking with each other. This precluded the use of student-to-student support.

*Eva's use of first and second language pedagogy.* Although Eva did not teach English as a second language in 2006, she was teaching Luganda reading and writing

using Luganda as the language of instruction to some students who did not speak Luganda as their first or second language (23 of her students, or almost one-fourth of her students). For that reason, I wanted to explore Eva's educational background in teaching a foreign language, and how she used this knowledge in her Luganda lessons. She was well acquainted with the concepts of teaching a foreign language through learning English as an L2, teaching P5 English, and her teacher training.

English is taught in Uganda beginning with Nursery (three- to five-year-olds). The teachers use pictures, drawings, and audio-lingual methods with actions and some explanations in Luganda to help the students comprehend what they are learning. When I asked Eva whether she used any of these methods to help the non-native Luganda speakers understand Luganda, she said, "They will learn it" (perhaps indicating that she thought these methods were not necessary for learning Luganda). Because some of these non-native Luganda speakers had learned enough of the language on the playground to get by in the classroom, she believed it was not necessary for her to give any special explanations in English. Many of these students also spoke English at home and were very competent in English; in addition, she could not possibly make explanations in their tribal languages as there were 17 different languages represented amongst these 23 non-native Luganda students. In other words, from her comments, it appeared that Eva believed she did not need to use any second language pedagogy for the 23 students who did not speak Luganda as their first language.

*Eva's use of pedagogical learning activities.* Eva was taught to use a variety of learning activities in her teacher training program. After she gave me the list of these

learning activities, we sat down together and discussed which of these activities she was actually able to use in her context. She gave me the following list: group work (group discussion), “*diverse*, students are taken out to look at what they are learning about,” student-to-student approach where students help each other, conversation or dialogues, storytelling, rhymes/poems, songs, drawing, and modeling (it appeared that *diverse* probably referred to learning activities that were *different* from the normal classroom activities).

In contrast to the teacher’s list, in the three months my translator and I spent in Eva’s classroom prior to the innovation, we observed that she only used group work in the sense that a group was responding in unison to a question or prompt. Yes, she used *diverse* where the students were taken outside several times for science lessons, but never in literacy lessons that we were aware. She used many group and individual choral recitations (which might be considered conversations or dialogues), picture drawing in exercises taken from the board, and no student-to-student activities, storytelling, rhymes/poems, or modeling (see Appendix G for a sample lesson).

#### *Eva’s Beliefs About the Influence of Context on Student Learning*

Eva was also asked to write about her beliefs about students and their ability to learn in the context in which she taught. She first explained her concern that children did not have enough food:

The students could do better but most of them starve, because most of them don't get lunch and break tea. Their parents don't pay for their lunch so this hinders

students from generating fully in class, mostly during afternoon hours. I wish parents or the government could do something about it for better learning.

Eva also explained that she believed vocational education would help some students: “The government should introduce a better curriculum so that the weak students may do vocational training instead of straining their brains, they should use their hands to do practical work.”

Furthermore, Eva mentioned three aspects of her context that affected her teaching: (a) very limited resources, (b) too many students and not enough time to help the weak ones, and (c) district and national exams to prepare for. To conclude, Eva believed that there were numerous aspects of the classroom, the school, and the community that impacted her teaching.

#### *Teacher’s School/Community Context*

In order to understand the decisions that Eva made about Luganda literacy instruction, it was important to understand where she worked and with whom, and influences outside her immediate community and school that also might have impacted her teaching. First, I will describe the characteristics of her classroom, the school, and the community where it is located. In addition, I will describe the head teacher and the English/Social Studies teacher who worked in Eva’s classroom and give some educational data about the people who lived in the immediate community. Next I will describe an average school day for the teachers and students and other routine events that do not take place daily. Last, I will discuss some of the influences which the church and government had on the school which might have impacted Eva’s teaching.

### *The Characteristics of Eva's School, Classroom, and Community*

The primary school where Eva worked was an official government school sponsored by the Church of Uganda that owned the property and the school buildings. There were four buildings with latrines in back. Water was collected from the roof of one building into a large tank when it rained and used for cooking and washing. One building housed a resource center for 33 schools with English books and supplies for teachers and an office for a Coordinating Centre Tutor. One room in the school was used for staff meetings and as a teacher break room, and there were two classrooms with electricity for evening classes for the boarders who used two other rooms as their dormitories (some 40 students lived at the school, including a few deaf students). No other rooms had electricity, not even the head teacher's office. There were over 700 students in the school from nursery to P7 with 21 teachers plus the assistant head teacher who also taught.

There were two to three teachers in each classroom. There was no glass in the barred windows of the classrooms so the rain entered the classrooms. When it rained, the tin roofs on the buildings emitted a very loud roar that drowned out any teaching in the classrooms. When the sun shone directly on the blackboard or when there was no sun because of clouds, it was very difficult to see what was written on the blackboard and some students would leave their seats to see the blackboard (the board was marred and it was very dark in the classroom when it was cloudy).

The P3 classroom was about 20 feet by 25 feet with a 9-foot-long blackboard at the front of the room. There also was a 12-foot-long wooden table or shelf at the back leaning against the wall for students to set their backpacks and bags on or write on. There

was a locked wooden closet for teacher supplies that was 4 feet by 4 feet by 1 foot deep with doors that opened and could be locked. The students' desks had one board to write on with one shelf underneath for pencils and exercise books, and a board that was attached for the students to sit on, but there was no back rest. There were 24 desks in the room with two to five students at each desk, and two of the same kind of desks for the teachers. Some desks were so crowded that the students would have to hold up one page in their exercise books while they were writing on the other page so there was room for five exercise books on the desk at the same time.

The P3 classroom had many cards and posters with print hanging from the ceiling and on the walls. Seven out of eight of the reading posters in the P3 room were of letters or syllables; one poster had words with the dashes between the syllables for two-syllable words. Attached to the tops of the walls in all four corners of the room were strings that were strung to the opposite corner with cards hanging on them with the alphabet, pictures with English words. There were number words around the board such as zero and one; numerals such as 0 and 1; ordinals such as first and second; and numerals by 10s such as 20, 30 through 90, 100 and 200 through 500. There was a map of Africa painted on the wall under posters that had been ripped off. Posters were glued on the walls, so when they were taken off pieces remained on the wall. There were holes in the concrete floor; one in front of the blackboard was 8 inches in diameter by 5 inches deep and Eva twisted her ankle in the hole one day when she was teaching. The hole was filled in with dirt the next day, but several days later it was 3 inches deep.

Outside, there was a cooking shelter where wood fires were built to cook the corn mush for break and posho (similar to grits) and beans for lunch. There was also a snack bar in this shelter where children could buy snacks ranging from frozen flavored water in plastic to fried cassava to samosas (deep fried dough with soybeans inside) for 50 Ugandan Shillings (USh) each (about \$0.03). Corn mush at break, and beans, posho, and tea for lunch were free for the teachers (this was not common at every school, but the head teacher at this school did this for his teachers). Many children did not get food because they had no money.

There was a barbed wire fence around the entire school grounds with gates that could be locked. The grounds had gardens and grass with dirt walkways and concrete sidewalks outside most classrooms. Next to the school grounds was the church, then the house of the pastor, and then the housing for the teachers. There was no electricity in the teacher housing and there was a common area with latrines and water taps (not potable), but this area of Uganda only has running water about one half of the time; therefore, water had to be carried from a spring which was about one-eighth of a mile away. The housing was free for the teachers and their families.

The school was located one-fourth mile from the main highway on a busy commercial dirt road. The road was busy with boda bodas (moped taxis) and van taxis from the villages to the main stages (taxi stops) and there were vendors and shops all along the road. One vendor directly across the road from the school played music so loudly that it was almost impossible to hear the teacher speaking when the music was playing.

*The People in the Community and at School*

I interviewed nine people of different backgrounds who worked and/or lived in the community directly around the school in order to obtain a better understanding of the literacy and language issues in the community. My translator and I visited with both men and women. Prior to this we interviewed two parents of children who attended the school where I was working (these parents did not live in community by the school). We then walked to a woman's clinic, a stall where a woman was selling vegetables, and then to homes around the school with a survey (see Appendix E, Formal Interview Questions: People in the Community) to learn about community members' literacy backgrounds, literate activities, and language use. The area around the school was urban and thus did not represent the home context for those children who came to school from the outlying villages.

It also is important to note that all of the people I interviewed except two sent their children to boarding schools, which were considered to have better teachers and more supplies and where their children would have to study both during the day and evenings. Five of the nine could speak, read, and write two languages; one man with 13 years of schooling could speak three languages, read one and not write any; three people could speak, read, and write only their native language; and one person could not read or write any language. A male with 13 years of schooling had four children enrolled in the school in which I worked, without lunch or break meals each day, and a woman with three years of schooling had five children, none of whom had any schooling because she

could not afford the fees, uniforms and supplies that were required. This was according to their self-report (see Appendix H).

*The head teacher.* The head teacher was at the school most of every day unless he had outside meetings. He held staff meetings every Monday and usually let the teachers go 15 to 30 minutes late to class after the meetings. He was conscientious and very careful to not upset his teachers. He was very strong in reminding teachers about turning in their schemes (lesson plans) at the beginning of each term. I asked him if he read them and if he ever disapproved of them. He said that he never got around to reading them right at the beginning of the term, but that he always read them and rarely had to have a teacher make changes. I also asked him if he ever observed his teachers teaching. He said apologetically that he had not observed his teachers teaching during that year (2006). Furthermore, the head teacher told me that he made a special effort to please his teachers by giving them free lunch and mush for break, and trying to get electricity to some of their homes.

Although the head teacher was careful to not upset his staff, he did stand up for his beliefs in staff meeting. At the first staff meeting of the year, February 8, 2006, while discussing the goals for last year and how they had not been achieved, the head teacher kindly pointed out to the staff of the upper grades that if the teachers would quit being so verbal and start having the students participate more in learning activities, maybe the students could learn to read. Those teachers responded with excuses for the students' poor test scores by citing hungry and absent children. Then the head teacher restated

more strongly that reading was a strong contributing factor to poor test scores and the teachers who lectured too much promoted poor reading among the students.

After seeing the results of the early morning reading program he had asked me to take charge of (this was a project separate from my dissertation where I supervised children before school who were allowed and encouraged to read books in the teacher resource center), he decided to give each teacher two library times a week (two library times a week was part of the curriculum plan from the MOES) in the teacher's resource center so the children could practice reading books in English. The head teacher thought this would be a good way to increase the children's reading skills in English. Due to the stress of high-stakes testing (as stated by the teachers), none of them used this time except for the nursery teacher who brought her children to the center, read stories to them, and let them browse through books. (Teacher resource centers are usually for teachers only and children are usually not allowed to use the facilities.) The attitude of the head teacher about the importance of reading led to his full support of my dissertation project.

The District Inspector of Schools (DIS) said that this head teacher was one of his best out of over 100 schools that he visited because the head teacher was always working at the school and he was conscientious about fulfilling his responsibilities. The DIS had many schools where the head teachers rarely made an appearance.

*The P3 English/Social Studies teacher in Eva's classroom.* I am acknowledging the presence of this teacher in Eva's classroom because she became influential and active in participating in the study by offering suggestions and help to Eva, and using the

innovation to teach her subjects as well. Before the innovation, she and Eva had a relationship that seemed the norm in the school: each took care of their own subjects with little interaction between the teachers except for working out the schedule of teaching, sharing supplies, and a few friendly interchanges in the teachers' break room. This teacher was also an experienced teacher whose native language was Luganda and who taught both her subjects in English. The other subjects, math and religious education, were taught by teachers from outside the classroom who taught these subjects in several different classrooms at different levels.

#### *Routine School Activities for Teachers and Students*

There were daily and periodic school activities that were part of the teacher's context. The daily activities included such things as parade (a gathering of all the children outside the school where they stood in lines while they were given announcements and lectures), clean-up, classes, break, lunch, and scouts; and the periodic activities included a weekly religious class, extra parades, scheme writing, exams, yard work, and days off due to holidays, sports days, and elections.

*Daily school activities.* Students started arriving at school at 7 a.m. and just hung around until they lined up for parade sometime between 8 to 8:15 a.m. An outside bell was rung to announce gatherings and break times as there were no clocks in the classrooms. Although there were supposed to be over 700 students enrolled, I never saw over 200 students in early morning parade. During parade, the students stood outside in line by class while announcements were made, the national anthem was sung, a prayer was recited, and periodically short lessons were taught about AIDS or road safety. Parade

could last anywhere from 15 minutes to 45 minutes or be canceled due to rain. Often the first class would begin at least 15 minutes late due to parade.

Classes were supposed to start at 8:30 a.m.. At that time, assigned students swept the dirt and walks and picked up the trash on the school grounds which took about 15 minutes. Inside the classrooms, students moved desks, swept the rooms and picked up trash if that had not been done after school the day before. Then classes began. A few teachers had watches, but most did not so they could not tell if they were on time or not for their lessons because the bell was only rung for morning parade, the starting and ending of break and lunch, and the final parade before leaving for home.

At break, 10:30 a.m., the teachers went for corn mush and tea in the teachers' break room and sat at children's desks which were placed there for them. They worked on grading assignments, preparing lessons, and/or visiting with other teachers for 30 minutes. The children who had paid for corn mush tickets (maybe 8 out of 70 students) stood in line for their mush, and a few other students bought snacks. The rest of the students played group games for the 30 minutes such as soccer with a can, chanting and jumping through elastics or cloth tied together, dodge-ball, and other group games.

Class was to begin at 11 a.m., but it took the students and teachers time to gather and prepare for class after break, so work usually began about 11:10 a.m. Lunch began at 1 p.m. and lasted until 2 p.m. The snack bar was not open so only those with prepaid lunch tickets had lunch (about 1 in 10 students had lunch tickets). The teachers again gathered in the break room for their lunch, grading and visiting, and some of the students sat on the grass, stood under trees and in empty classrooms visiting with friends during

this break. There was a security guard who made sure that students did not leave the school grounds without permission. He carried a cane for disciplining students.

The last class of the day was between 2 and 3:30 p.m. Then the students gathered for one final parade and the students who wanted to stay for boy scouts stayed for another hour or so and the girls left, all except for the boarders who lived at the school. There was a woman who was hired to cook and care for the boarders.

Some teachers were paid by parents to tutor their children after school, but Eva did not do that. All of Eva's school work—teaching, preparation, and grading—was done while she was at school, according to her journal, in which she recorded everything she did every 30 minutes from the time she got up in the morning until she went to bed at night for 1 full week. According to her journal, she spent a total of 27 hours that week doing school work: 7.5 hours were spent teaching, 9 hours grading exercise books, 9 hours in preparation, and 1.5 hours in other school duties such as staff meeting and parade.

*Periodic school activities.* The school year in Uganda is based on three terms with one-month breaks after first and second terms, and a two-month break after the third term. The MOES encourages parents to have students come to school the first week of each term, because it is common practice for students to not start attending school until the second or third week of school. Attendance in P3 the first week began with 15 students and ended with about 30. The second week started at about 35 students and ended with about 65, and at the end of the third week there were about 85 students in attendance with the enrollment around 95. This was consistent for both terms. I had heard

(hearsay) that the reason for this attendance phenomenon was due to the parents being unable to pay for school fees when school started, but when I asked my translator her opinion about this phenomenon as she had attended all of her schooling in this area, she responded that the reason for the absences was because teachers were not ready to start teaching and the parents knew it so they did not send their children. It appeared from my experiences at the school that both reasons had some credibility.

Eva was not ready to start teaching at the beginning of the term; the first several days were spent in cleaning the classroom, organizing supplies, making rolls, and checking in students' supplies (exercise books for each subject, pens, toilet paper, and a broom). Eva finished her schemes the second week of term one. There was also no food for the students the first week of school. Eva began using the curriculum during the second week of school.

There was also some credence to the hearsay about students not starting school the first week of each term because their parents did not have the money. New students must have paid in full for the term before they could attend. Continuing students could have made a down payment and installments during the term. If the students were not fully paid by the middle of the term, someone went from class to class with a list of the students who had not paid their fees, reading the list and dismissing those students to go home. They were told not to return until their fees were paid. About 50% of the students were sent home and most did not return for at least one week and sometimes more. Eva bemoaned the effect of this practice on her teaching, "Most students are poor, they can't

afford school fees in time, so students are sent back to get the money. This also hinders the learning and disturbs the teachers and the curriculum which is not fulfilled properly.”

Exams were an integral part of the curriculum that influenced teacher pedagogy. The teachers in P3 gave two monthly exams plus a midterm exam before each district exam. All exams were written on the board and had to be copied by the students before they could start to answer the questions or fill in the blanks. Due to some of the students being slow in copying the test off the board, it took at least one hour to take a test in each subject and sometimes longer, or one and one-half days to take all the tests. Then it took one and one-half days to review all the tests. Therefore, nine full days each term were spent taking and reviewing exams (and the head teacher encouraged the teachers to give more tests than this so they could find out where the students needed help) before district exams.

District exams took about three days to complete and three days to grade. During the first term of 2006, district exams were late and so about three days were wasted waiting for the exams to arrive; then the P3 science and social studies tests had to be translated from Luganda into English because these subjects were taught in English not Luganda. Hence, altogether about four weeks were spent on testing in Term One.

P3 through P7 took district exams together. There were not enough rooms and seats to have only one person at each desk so students could not cheat, thus, only part of the students were able to test at the same time. The part of the students who were not testing were kept busy outside weeding and pruning and digging the school gardens until it was their turn to test. The teachers graded the exams during the school day and the

students were expected to sit and be quiet in their classrooms while the teachers graded. This was another time with poor attendance because parents knew that after district exams there was no teaching taking place due to teachers grading the exams. The head teacher encouraged the teachers to help each other grade district exams in order to keep teachers from cheating on the grading (personal communication with head teacher, April 11, 2006).

Another regular activity that took place once a week was a religious service for all the students in the school. On Wednesday morning at the conclusion of parade, the students all walked to the church next door and took part in a prayer and sermon which took one hour. The religious service was not part of the curriculum from the MOES (there is religious curriculum but the regular teachers teach the religious curriculum, not someone from the Church of Uganda or any other church).

There were many other activities that took students and teachers away from the classroom. There were at least two times a year when the entire school was taken from classes to watch and participate in sports days. Besides the regular national holidays, there were also three elections when classes were let out because the school was used as a voting station. Furthermore, once or twice a month there would be an extra parade during the day when visitors would come to the school to address the students on some topic. The time that these activities took away from covering the curriculum appeared to add stress to the teachers. Eva and other teachers especially complained about unannounced interruptions to their teaching schedules because they were keenly aware of preparing their students for district exams.

*The Place of the Church of Uganda and the Government in the School Context*

In this section I do not try to cover all the ways the Church and the government influenced the school context. I have only chosen those ways which seemed to have special significance to Eva—those that she had mentioned or I had observed.

*The place of the Church of Uganda in Eva's school context.* The Reverend I interviewed stated that the church did not influence the teachers' instructional practices; however, the Church did require extra curriculum which took away time from studying the MOES required curriculum. An example of this took place in the middle of second term. The Church started requiring the students to write 18 verses of Psalms each day. Eva complained about the length of this assignment in staff meeting, and the head teacher said she could cut it down to 10 verses.

Although Eva was upset about the time the Psalms were taking away from the curriculum, she believed the Church was having a positive impact on the students. She wrote, "The church has done great work to teach good morals by making them attend church on Wednesdays. I think some students can change their attitudes and behavior."

The Church also had an influence on the maintenance of the school. The use of the maintenance fees collected from the parents was determined by the Church and the school management committee (elected volunteers, the Parent Teacher Association, and the Reverend) because all of the maintenance fees were deposited in a Church bank account and then a small amount was returned to the committee to use for maintaining the school while the majority of the funds went to the Church. During second term some concrete work was done outside and blackboards were freshly painted on the inside. In

addition, extra fees were charged during second term registration to pay for emptying the latrines.

In summary, the Church impacted Eva's physical teaching conditions, the time she had to prepare students in the curriculum, and possibly, the moral attitudes of her students. The government, on the other hand, provided the basis for her pedagogy and curriculum, and touched her life in more personal ways.

*The place of the government in Eva's school context.* The MOES is part of the government and is responsible for where teachers are placed, their accommodations, their training, their resources, and the curriculum they teach (the curriculum is written by the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC)). I do not know if the teacher salaries came directly from the government or the MOES, but both are government entities.

“The government does not send UPE money in time. The salary for teachers is not enough for the work done and it also delays a lot so this makes life hard for teachers,” wrote Eva in her reflections. Eva was paid 150,000 USh a month which is about \$87. While I was at the school, the head teacher told me that one month the government did not send the teachers their money and the P3 English teacher missed class to run to the bank because of this problem. Moreover, at the beginning of the school year, it took some teachers two to three months to start receiving their money (personal communications with the head teacher, P3 English teacher, and Eva). In addition to the sometimes intermittent arrival of teachers' wages, the MOES assigned most teachers to schools without input from the teachers.

It was common practice for the MOES to give teachers teaching assignments that were hundreds of kilometers away from their families. Eva felt very blessed to be only 50 km from her family and to have free housing because not all teachers had free housing. She was happy to also get her training for free. Once a teacher was assigned to a school, she had little input into what resources she could use.

The government did not provide Eva with any books in Luganda for the children to read, nor was the Luganda curriculum detailed enough for her to write her schemes and give her lessons without spending a great deal of extra time preparing lessons. Furthermore, the curriculum was all in English.

While I was there, the NCDC published the *In-Service Guidelines for Teachers on the Teaching of Reading, Writing With Special Reference to Local Languages and the Use of the Revised Time on the Lower Primary School Time-Table* (2005), which was a guide for local language teachers on how they could help improve children's reading skills. There was a dissemination problem with the guide because it did not get to the District Inspector of Schools until Term Two of 2006 and no information had gotten to the teachers by the time I left in the middle of Term Three, 2006. Also, the new guidelines included group work, but the teachers had no resources for group work, such as work books, reading materials, and lesson plans in how to specifically use group work. Because of these issues, the guide was not useful because the teachers did not know about it and there were no resources to put it into practice.

An important role the government created to help with training and supporting teachers is the Coordinating Centre Tutor (CCT). The role of the CCT (the CCT at our

school was responsible for 110 schools) was to conduct seminars on national topics for teachers, stakeholders, parents, church, politicians, and local councils; give Continuing Professional Development for Teachers (CPDs); oversee peer group meetings (PGM) during the term of those who are in professional development; teach at a Primary Teacher's College (PTC) (the PTC's central role is teacher in-service training); supervise primary teacher education (PTE) which is held on Saturdays and holidays—a three-year course for grade 3 or two years full-time; and attending meetings at the zonal and district level. A CCT can work with teachers at a school if the head teacher requests her help, but the CCT I interviewed said that she usually just worked with a head teacher at his request to solve problems with teachers, not with the teachers directly, and her main job was at the PTC (personal communication, June 21, 2006). The CCT at our school shared in our interview that she had not worked with Eva, but Eva shared that some CCTs had impacted her teaching during her refresher course and training at a PTC.

The government and Church both impacted Eva's literacy decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices as did her cultural/personal and educational backgrounds. Some influential factors in Eva's context had become so commonplace to her that she did not appear to notice their impact on her teaching, while others were so blatant that she readily acknowledged their influence.

#### The Impact of Eva's Context on Her Teaching

Research Question One not only asked that the context of the P3 Luganda teacher be described, it asked how this context influenced the teacher's literacy instruction decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices. In order to answer the second part of

Question One, I will first define what literacy instruction decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices denote.

*Literacy instruction decision-making* refers to choices that Eva made each day in regard to which instructional techniques to use in teaching P3 Luganda reading and writing. The *literacy beliefs* of the teacher refer to her confidence in certain literacy instruction techniques and her theories of how children learn to read and write. *Pedagogy* refers to Eva's actual literacy instruction techniques used in the classroom and *practices* refers to other aspects of her preparation and teaching that were affected by her context (i.e., class management, work schedule, and scheme writing).

*The Influence of Eva's Context on Her Luganda Literacy Pedagogy  
and Decision-Making*

Eva's decisions about her literacy instruction were limited by her lack of resources, lack of knowledge about possible options, the curriculum, and by the sheer number and varied abilities of her students. She could not make a decision about students reading books because she had only one small, paperback book in Luganda that was out of print, and she had no money to make copies, yet the curriculum called for the students to read stories as part of her lessons, probably because the curriculum was based on reading research and reading literature is a research-based practice for learning to read (National Reading Panel, 2000). She was not aware of other options to help the less advanced learners so she wrote that, "During the first term class participation was limited to the most able learners. The weak ones were not fully catered for." In addition, there were pedagogies she had been trained to use that she believed were impossible to use in

her context because of the lack of resources and space, including student observation, experiments to find out solutions, visual aids like television and pictures, role-play, and situational games about topics.

Despite these constraints, there were some decisions she was able to make about literacy instruction. Table 1 displays Eva's everyday choices in her classroom.

Table 1

*Teacher Classroom Decision-Making*

Categories	Practices
Introduction	Greeted students
	Reviewed the previous lesson
Curriculum	Used part of the P2 curriculum
	Did not use the P3 curriculum
Pedagogy	Wrote on the board
	Had students stand as individual/group/class and read from the board
	Had students lead students in class reading from the board
	Had students copy exercises and tests from the board
	Modeled handwriting on the board with explanations
	Had students shake out their hands before writing
	Had students write letters in the air before writing on paper
	Seated students by ability
	Solicited student contributions
	Prompted students
	Used a visual aid or song periodically
Evaluation	Questioned students to evaluate their learning
	Orally corrected student errors
	Gave and reviewed exams
	Corrected student exercise books
	Observed students at work

With Eva's permission, I asked a Ugandan educator to watch a 40-minute video of Eva teaching a P3 Luganda reading and writing lesson and a science lesson in order to identify the teacher's instructional practices and relate how culture and context were impacting them. I did this in order to triangulate my classroom observations from an educator within the culture. The educator was raised and educated in Uganda, had taught 17 years in Uganda, and had recently spent 5 years in the United States acquiring his M.Ed. and Ph.D. in education. He owned a private secondary school a few miles from Eva's elementary school and was presently teaching several graduate classes in teacher education at Makerere University. As was a very common practice in Uganda, he was sending his own children to private schools.

The educator responded that the blackboard was the main media of communication and that there were minimal classroom materials. Although the teacher used group evaluation through choral responses, class participation at the board and in individual responses was limited to the most advanced learners. Eva's teaching focused on rote memory. Classroom management was weak and emphasized negative motivation. It was obvious that the teacher was trying to involve all the students, but she was unable to do so. He believed that the culture and context were responsible for the teacher's demeanor: "[the] teacher must be respected . . . is always right . . . has a right to punish the pupils if they become naughty" (personal communication, April 8, 2006).

As we discussed the response above, in his opinion, the educator felt that the impact of implementing UPE so quickly without building an infrastructure to accommodate all of the new students was responsible for many of the problems the

teacher was encountering. Yet, he believed from his own training that the teacher was also not following the training she had been given (personal communication, April 8, 2006).

I gave a copy of the outline and discussion summary to Eva and asked her to respond to what the educator had said by writing about specific information she was taught in her teacher training (see Appendix C, Questionnaires: Response to Ugandan Educator Video Critique). The important part of our discussion about her written response was not about what she was taught in her teacher training, but what she was not taught. Eva shared that she had not been prepared to deal with the contextual issues of few resources (although she was taught how to make visual aids out of local materials), too many students and not enough time to help the weak ones, district and national exams, starving students, poor curriculum for the weak students, and interruptions in her teaching schedule. Some of these contextual issues were directly related to UPE and did not exist when Eva was originally trained; however, her most recent training took place after the implementation of UPE.

Although the context did limit what choices would be effective, Eva was still able to make some choices of pedagogy. Eva was able to make decisions about what to teach from the curriculum and she did have some options in how to teach the curriculum. For example, the P2 and P3 local language curriculum was based on topics, but Eva chose not to teach the topics. Instead, she chose three facets of the P2 curriculum to teach in P3 (Eva taught P2 Luganda literacy in 2005). These facets were (a) write letter combinations, (b) write words related to combinations and (c) sound systems (see

Appendix I for samples of the P2 and P3 curricula). Although these three facets were to be taught within topics in P2 and were not part of the topic-driven curriculum in P3, Eva chose to teach them out of context in P3. When Eva later reflected on what she taught first term, she disclosed her reasoning for this instructional decision:

I used to teach syllables, words and sentences because pupils did not know how to read well, so I had to teach syllables first and words then sentences because I wanted pupils to master them first so that they could recognize them in sentences whenever they meet them. I thought that if pupils mastered syllables and words they could easily make their own sentences.

Eva not only made substantial changes to the curriculum to support her belief and training in a synthetic phonics approach, but she also chose when and how much to teach. When daily oral evaluations showed that some students could not read syllables or words, Eva would review again and again with the entire class to try and help those who had not memorized their syllables. Moreover, Eva and other lower primary grade teachers told me that they did not teach the curriculum the first and sometimes second week of the term because they did not want to get ahead of the students who had not started school yet.

Not only did Eva's beliefs determine the decisions she made in using the curriculum, but her training helped determine the way she arranged the students. Eva was trained to use ability grouping. She had set up her room with about eight ability groups. The more advanced students were seated in the front of the classroom with the less advanced students in the back. Although Eva set up her room with ability groups and

wrote how she thought they were helpful, she rarely used the ability groups to help students. After giving a 40-minute lesson, and while the students were copying an exercise from the board, she would browse amongst the students to see how they were doing, but there was very little interaction between teacher and students.

At the beginning of each lesson, Eva would greet the students. My translator said that this was a courteous gesture that is proper in the culture. Eva always spent 5 to 10 minutes reviewing the previous lesson and then she would ask for student contributions to the lesson which she would write on the board. Eva termed her pedagogy “the blackboard approach,” because the blackboard was the backdrop for her entire lesson: from writing the date on the board and the topic of the lesson, to adding what the students contributed, having students stand and read what was written on the board, having a student lead other students in reading from the board, writing the final exercise on the board for the students to copy, and sometimes students were recruited to write on the board. Any questioning of students or oral corrections were almost always centered around what was written on the board. The only deviation from this during Luganda lessons was an occasional visual aid such as syllable or word cards the students would hold up and read or have the class read, or an activity song to prepare students to begin to work.

As a result of the blackboard approach, Eva was responsible for about 85 exercise books to correct each day for each topic she taught. Eva’s attitude about this part of her pedagogy was very evident when she wrote, “This made it difficult and tiresome for the teacher to mark a heap of books every day.” Hence, Eva’s choice of the blackboard

approach appeared not to be a choice of preference, but a choice due to the contextual constraints she believed were responsible for the lack of student learning: (a) very few resources, (b) too many students and not enough time to help the weak ones, (c) district and national exams to prepare for, (d) starving students, (e) poor curriculum for the weak students, and (f) an interruption in teaching the curriculum in the middle of the term due to students being sent home to get registration fees.

Eva did not share with me the particulars of why she used choral reading from the blackboard by group and class, and students to lead class reading; yet, as I went through the *Teacher's Guide to Uganda Primary School Curriculum Volumes 1 and 2*, I discovered the teaching and learning principles that the NCDC considered important enough to place at the front of the books where the teachers would be reminded each time they opened their curriculum guides to plan a lesson. The guidelines state that “the main concern of teaching is to help learners focus attention on a task” (NCDC, 2001, p. 2) by active participation in the lesson. Then the teachers are reminded that each child is different and research indicates that we learn and remember:

10% of what we hear

15% of what we see

20% of what we both see and hear

40% of what we discuss with others

80% of what we experience directly or through practical activities.

90% of what we attempt to teach others involving practical activities. (NCDC, 2001, p. 2)

Because this guideline was in such a prominent position in the teacher curriculum guides, I assumed that it also had a prominent position in the training given to the teachers. The head teacher also went over this percentage concept with the teachers at the first staff meeting of the year in order to persuade the teachers in the upper levels to more actively involve the students instead of lecturing.

It seemed possible that Eva's blackboard approach might have been an effort to fulfill the principle of focusing learners on a task, since Eva had no books or paper other than blank exercise books (about one small page per day) for Luganda instruction. This method did focus the students' attention on reading because they had to stand to read; also, when they all read out loud, the students both saw and heard what was being read. Having a student come to the front of the class and lead the students in choral reading might be considered having the student teach others, although it was not really following the guidelines because the student was not teaching others practical activities as the guidelines suggest, but just pointing to syllables or words on the board and asking the other students to repeat. In these respects, Eva's decision to use the blackboard approach could have been made to fulfill these teaching guidelines in her context.

#### *The Influence of Eva's Context on Her Practices*

*Eva's practices* refers to aspects of her work at school other than Luganda literacy instruction (viz., class management, her work schedule, and scheme writing). The main area I will discuss under class management is punishment by caning because Eva made some changes to this aspect of her teaching during the innovation so it is important to understand this part of her context before the innovation.

Class management was a practice involving corporal punishment in this school. Corporal punishment was against the law, but it was still practiced in this school and others I visited in Uganda. I did not ask Eva why she made the decision to use caning because it had been a culturally accepted practice. I can only propose what might be an educational reason behind her decision to use caning. Caning may have been a means to meet the main guideline in the curriculum to help students focus on a task. Eva used this practice mainly for inattention (sleeping, talking, not looking at the board while reading, and working on something other than the assignment). In fact, when I interviewed students and asked, “What does the teacher do to help you learn to read?” two students in separate interviews responded, “She beats me.” Moreover, Eva did not believe that she could make the curriculum interesting enough for the students to be attentive. She wrote, “I don't think it is possible with so many students and so few resources, to teach the curriculum to the students so that it is interesting.”

Another practice involved Eva’s work schedule, and related to this practice were her salary and her attitude about her salary. Earlier in this study, I reported on Eva’s dissatisfaction with her pay and how it was often delayed and how she believed that there should be more benefits for teachers. Ordinarily she worked about 27 hours a week according to the journal she kept of her schedule (see Appendix J). When there was no incentive to work a certain number of hours, and Eva believed that she was not compensated fairly for the hours she did work, it would seem natural for her to do her work mainly during school hours. It appeared that Eva was satisfied with her decision to put in 27 hours a week and that she believed by so doing, she had given more than

enough time for the pay she was receiving and the teaching she was required to do; moreover, I rarely saw her waste any of her time while at school.

Yet another practice that involved Eva's work schedule was scheme writing. Even though there was always a one- to two-month break before the beginning of each term, Eva always chose to write her scheme during school hours after the term had started. This appeared to be a common practice because I saw other teachers doing the same thing. As there were no or few lessons on the curriculum in the first two weeks of school, this worked quite well for the teachers even though the MOES sent out a directive requesting teachers to begin teaching lessons the first day of each term. Thus, all of Eva's school preparation and grading appeared to have been done during school hours. The only time I saw an exception to this was when district exams were being graded and recorded and the teachers had to stay at school during part of their break to finish because the district sent the exams to the school three days late.

#### *The Influence of Eva's Context on Her Literacy Beliefs*

In Term One Eva shared her beliefs about best literacy practices which are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2

*Eva's Beliefs About Best Ways to Learn Literacy*

Reading Beliefs	Writing Beliefs
1. Left to right eye movements	1 Scribbling
2. Letter shapes	2. Shake hands before writing to soften
3. Letter to letter matching	3. Write in the air before writing on paper
4. Word to word matching	4. Guided writing using pencils and paper
5. Sentence to sentence matching	5. Guided writing of patterns
6. Jigsaws with letters and words	6. Guided writing of letters
7. Cards with letters, words, and sentences	7. Guided writing of words
8, Wall charts with letters, words, and sentences	8. Guided writing of sentences
9. Storybooks	
10. Incidental reading	
11. Look (at object) and say	
12. Library	
13. Group work: read and discuss	

From Table 2's general sample of how Eva had chosen to teach her students to read and write, it is evident that Eva's beliefs and her actual practice were not always consistent. Numbers 1 through 3 under Reading Beliefs and number 1 under Writing Beliefs in the table were not pertinent in P3 as the students were focusing on reading and writing syllables and words. During the one and one-half months I observed in the classroom before the innovation began, I noted that Eva only used numbers 7 and 8: using reading cards and wall charts. She chose not to use 4 through 6, and 9 through 13.

There could be several reasons for not using numbers 4 through 6, matching letters, words, and sentences. It could have been that Eva thought these students were past the point in their reading ability where matching would be beneficial; or maybe she did not think the students were advanced enough yet to do the matching; or it could have been, as was mentioned earlier, that Eva thought that learning syllables were so important, that she did not want to waste any time on any other techniques; or maybe, and very likely, she had no supplies to make 95 or even 45 sets of matching cards (and the time to do it) even if she had wanted to, because she did list matching as one of the best practices for learning to read.

Eva's choice not to use numbers 9 through 13 was much less ambiguous. Eva did not use numbers 9 through 12 because she had no resources to do so. Eva had no storybooks, no library, and nothing incidental to read in Luganda (most if not all incidental reading in the community and school was in English) and the only things she would have for *look and say*, number 11, would be what was in the environment. But then again, at the time in the school year when she was just teaching syllables, there

would be no reason to use look and say to represent syllables. Number 13 just followed along in the same course. Students could not discuss reading materials if there were none.

Eva did use her beliefs about the best ways to learn to write when she taught handwriting. At the beginning of the year she had the students do some writing in the air, and all through the year she would have the students shake out their hands before attempting a handwriting exercise. She was consistent in explaining how letters were placed on the line and she would browse amongst the students to find areas of difficulty and then explain how to correct these problems. Eva limited sharing her writing beliefs to the topic of handwriting. Indeed, through the innovation, other beliefs Eva held about writing began to surface.

#### Teacher Change Innovation

The focus of answering Research Question Two was to determine how the teacher's decision-making would change if her context was changed. The intent of the innovation was to build the capacity of the teacher through sharing Language Experience Approach (LEA) theories (Stauffer, 1970) and other effective literacy strategies in order to help her develop literacy strategies that would be meaningful and culturally appropriate, and increase reading and writing in her P3 classroom. There were two goals that I set for the students in the innovation and that the teacher approved: the teacher will design literacy activities that help students (a) increase the amount of time they spend in meaningful reading and writing and (b) produce reading materials in Luganda to fill a class library.

Originally, I planned that the innovation would begin after three months of observations and interviews. Nevertheless, after six weeks, I found that I had come to the saturation point (Paley et al., 2004) in observing in the classroom. Every lesson from that point on seemed to be a repeat of observations I had made previously, so consistent with Grady's (1998) recommendations, I determined to begin the innovation seven weeks into the observations.

According to my original plan, the innovation was to begin with me helping the students become acquainted with different types of books and then modeling book writing and providing paper for book writing. Next, I was to give the teacher additional information about potentially effective literacy practices and use Ball's teacher change model (2000, 2004, 2006) as a guide for working with the teacher as she read, wrote about, and discussed the new information with me; experimented with new literacy strategies of her choice in the classroom; reflected with me about what was happening; and planned and implemented appropriate changes of her choice. Throughout this process, the teacher was to reflect and write about her experiences. In this originally planned innovation process, I, as the researcher, was to primarily act as a disseminator of knowledge, ideas, feedback, and paper and the teacher was to take the lead in choosing and experimenting with the new knowledge and adapting it to her context.

What I soon discovered was that if I wanted the innovation to produce meaningful and frequent opportunities for the students to read, the original innovation plan had to be altered owing to the mismatch between the plan and the context. I began to conduct continuous data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994) in order to analyze the teacher's and

students' needs, so that I could adapt the information and support I gave to meet those needs. The innovation was intended to help Eva build her capacity as a teacher so that she could find literacy pedagogy that met both her needs (literacy pedagogy that she was willing and able to use on a continuous basis in her context) and the needs of her students.

At this point in the study (seven weeks from the start of it), it was my professional opinion that the students' needs included special help for second and third language learners as well as less advanced students of various ages. However, it is important to note that Eva did not agree with my determination that second and third language learners needed special help learning Luganda. I also learned of the teacher's time constraints from the work schedule she had turned in to me, and the apparent infeasibility of her helping 85 students learn to read and write Luganda without books and little paper. Furthermore, I had determined from observations in Eva's classroom and interviews with the head teacher and the Principal Education Officer in the Department of Pre-Primary and Primary Education at the MOES that Eva was not using the curriculum for P3, which called for teaching the language daily through topics instead of the total emphasis on synthetic phonics.

As the innovation and the data analysis continued, I decided that I would have to find literacy strategy options for the teacher to experiment with that were more compatible with her context and that would move the students beyond the syllable stage of reading. Thus, the emergence of the actual innovation became an experiment in trying to find literacy strategies that would fit in this context and also meet the needs of the

teacher and students, and find a way to encourage the teacher to try new literacy strategies.

### *The Actual Innovation and How it Developed*

There were five different phases of the innovation: (a) acquainting students with books, (b) modeling book writing, (c) sharing literacy and pedagogy information with Eva and the P2 teacher, (d) Eva planning a teacher research project, and (e) Eva conducting a research project accompanied by reflection/planning sessions. I will discuss how each phase developed and what happened during each phase.

#### *Acquainting Students with Books and Introducing the Book Writing Program*

The purpose of this phase of the innovation was to acquaint students, who had had very little or no previous experience with books, with different types of books because they would have to write books in the next phase of the innovation. To prepare for this phase, I had to find appropriate books to share with the students.

I went to the public library and to many different bookstores in Kampala looking for books in Luganda, but there were only two types: an English-Luganda dictionary geared to Primary 4 English language learners, and a few paperbacks with no pictures. Therefore, I went to the public library. They had no books for children in Luganda, so I got a variety of children's books in English (usually, one cannot check out children's books, but I was able to because I had a friend from the Uganda Children's Writers' Guild who also worked at the library). I also found some other types of English books at the Teacher Resource Center at my school.

The translator and I passed out different types of books to different groups in the class and explained to them in Luganda and English and wrote on the board all the different types of books (information, picture dictionary, story, diary/journal, poetry, touch and feel, plays, how to). We moved the books between the groups so they had a chance to look at different types of books and we gave them time to browse and read through some of the books.

We then introduced the book writing program to the students. We had the students ask us questions about what we were going to be doing as we told them that they would be writing books and they could choose any type of book they wanted to write. The students asked if they were going to use pens or pencils and where they would get the paper to write the books. We told them that we were going to provide paper and colored pencils to draw pictures and they cheered and clapped. They also asked what language they were going to write the books in. We told them that they could write their books in Luganda or English or their native language. We also told them that their books would be translated into at least two languages to help them with their language learning. The English teacher in the class liked that and seemed very pleased. We left a very happy group of students. In all, we took about 25 minutes to acquaint the students with books and introduce the book writing program.

Originally, I was going to have the students write books only in Luganda, but after working with parents and educators who had strong beliefs on the importance of learning English, and then realizing that many of the trilingual students used English frequently at home and were quite familiar with English, I concluded that a lot of good

language learning could take place if the students' books were written in both languages. I also included the possibility of students writing in a native language other than English or Luganda to give the students the opportunity to have a positive experience writing books if they had few skills in English and Luganda. I presumed that they could take native language books home and their parents or relatives could translate them into English or Luganda as my translator and Eva did not have command of the 17 different languages represented in this classroom. My presumption was not accurate, however, as most of the languages were not written languages, and the students were hesitant to try to write their language phonetically, even with the help of their teachers. Thus, most of the non-native Luganda speakers wrote their books in English and a few dictated their books.

#### *The Book Writing Program*

The book writing program began eight weeks after the beginning of Term One. The original purpose of the program was to model book writing for Eva (this was a form of information sharing with Eva that she was later asked to critique in writing) so she could help her students write books after I left. I also thought it might be possible to write enough books to make a class library. We could not conduct book writing in the classroom because it would have been too disruptive to work with 10 to 16 students while the teacher was trying to teach, or the students were trying to concentrate on copying exercises off the board. Thus, we got permission to use the teacher resource center for book writing as it was usually occupied only a few days during the month for special workshops. We also made arrangements with the teachers as to the time that we could

take a group of students for book writing. The groups were designated by ability, but there was no special order in which we chose the groups to start book writing.

*The development of book writing.* I chose a large group of 12 students which had many older students and some who were trilingual for our first group. We took the students to the Resource Center and the P3 English teacher came along, but Eva was teaching during this time period. We put two benches facing each other and one bench on the end facing the others with four students at each bench. We gave each student two pieces of white paper and made sure everyone had a pencil or pen. We had all the students divide the paper with two lines so it was divided in four pieces on the front and back, and then we had them put a title in the first square and number all the rest of the squares for pages.

The translator explained that this would be a rough draft and not the book. We would not correct their spelling yet. They could just write what they would like. Only two students knew what they wanted to write about. Since we had only been given 30 minutes to work with the students, we started going through lists of ideas for book topics. We had the students who had already decided on their topics tell what they were doing and then added ideas from there. We probably spent at least 10 minutes or more going over ideas for topics. Then we discussed that the students could write their books in any language they chose. We also discussed that eventually the books would be translated into different languages. There were two teenage girls who started writing in their native tongues, but they kept their hands over their writing and had questions about what they were doing. We explained through the English teacher and the translator that they could just

phonetically spell their language. The English teacher had the girls tell her a word in their language and then she tried to spell it phonetically to show them what we were talking about. (Eventually, these students gave up and wrote their books in English.) Some of the students finished two pages of writing in the 10 minutes they had to write. The other students got a sentence or two finished. The English teacher, the translator, and I all helped the students on an individual basis as they were trying to write.

We told the students that they could take the rough drafts of their books back to their class and keep it in their desks and work on it during their free time and that we would meet again on Tuesday. They could then use the colored pencils to draw pictures for their books while we edited organization, spelling, and grammar. We told the students that they could not take their books home, that they must keep them at school in their desks. I thought we might have to make an exception for the trilingual students. The P3 teacher said that if they took the books home, we could not expect them to come back with their books. A student next to me who had only written one sentence and the trilingual students appeared to be concerned about their writing, while the other students appeared to be pleased with what was happening.

After this first experience with the students taking so long to decide on a topic, I decided it would be best if the second group wrote a journal or diary for this first writing instead of giving them a choice of anything they wanted to write about like we did the first group. I was glad I did that because when the second and third groups came, they both responded well and started writing without much time spent wondering what to

write about. Many of the students in the second group decided to write about Christmas Day, and Eva, the translator, and I gave them ideas regarding where to go with that topic.

*Teacher involvement in book writing.* Through the initial book writing process, Eva and the English teacher each came for three sessions. They got very involved in helping the students with their topics, reading what they had written, and helping them with suggestions and ideas (while all the rest of their class was voting in school elections). They did not criticize the students' work and were very helpful. This became a time of "seeing is believing" for both teachers. About halfway into the program, I asked Eva to respond in writing about her impressions of the book writing program by instructing her to "Please tell me in detail your first impression, good, bad or indifferent, of the book writing program." She wrote:

At first I wondered and was not sure whether students could write books on their own because we have never tried this method anywhere before. I thought this was a waste of time for both teachers and students.

This program is bringing out students' talents of book writing from the start. It helps them to think more of what they are going to write about and to arrange their ideas together to write a book. This will also help students to gain more interest and confidence in writing books.

I as a teacher, I am happy with the program because it develops the students talents which will lead them to get jobs in future, for example some of them might become journalists, authors of books. I'm also happy because it keeps the students busy. I've also gained more experience and hope to carry it on in the

future. I'm learning more about what I did not know in book writing. I couldn't think that these young students could write books at their age and standard, so this is very wonderful . . . . According to what I see and hear from students, they like the program very much and are eager to continue with it. Whenever we tell them to go to the resource room they become very excited.

Although the English teacher was not paid to participate in my study, she became very interested in what was taking place with her students and voluntarily participated in the program. Previous to initiating the book writing program, she had come to the early morning reading program I was holding in the resource center and saw how well her students were reading English books. She was amazed and thrilled and became very interested in what I was doing because the books her students would write would be in Luganda and English.

One day when the English teacher was there, one of her students in P3 was not writing. We gave him lots of ideas but he did not write. Then the English teacher said that he did not know the letters so he did not know how to write. I explained to her that this was not a problem with this program because the student could dictate a story to a teacher and the teacher could write it for him and teach him to read it. She was not convinced that a student could read his writing if he did not know his letters. (However, I thought that he had to have learned some letters or he could not have been in P3 because students have to pass exams to get into each level at this school).

I had the translator help the student write a story because she was experienced in doing this with P1 and P2 students in the early morning reading program. She wrote the

story he dictated, but did not help him to read it. I went over and began reading the Luganda. He recognized the words from his story and helped me to read his story in Luganda. We read it again and again and then I had his English teacher come over and the student read the story for her with a few mistakes. She was totally amazed because he read almost every word (while pointing at the words) without any help from pictures. The student was very pleased with his success and then started drawing the pictures for his story. After this incident, the English teacher appeared to get the vision of the potential value of book writing and offered to edit in class for the students when they had free time to write.

*Difficulties encountered in book writing.* Although there were good experiences writing the books, there were some issues with book writing that seemed difficult to overcome in this context and that took up a lot of extra time I had not planned on. Those activities that took more time than I had planned on were (a) editing the books, (b) having students dictate a book and then teaching them to read it, and (c) determining which students only knew how to copy (from what they had seen on the board during lessons, what was on posters in the resource center, and a story they knew word-for-word).

Writing without copying was a difficult concept for students who had, as far as I knew, only copied from the board and filled in blanks in exercises. About one-fourth of the class was in this category. I would spot these students by noting if two students who were sitting next to each other had books exactly the same, or if I recognized a lesson structure, a common story written by other students, or sentences from posters, all written in English. Also, many of these students were verbose in their writing, but they were not

on the topic. (I was really not sure how much understanding was taking place when students wrote memorized text, thus I required them to create text.). Each time I found a student who was copying, I would put an X through what they wrote in their rough draft and explained again (in Luganda and English) that I wanted them to write about themselves, not something they had memorized or copied. Recognizing these students helped me to realize that most likely, many of these students would need help to write their own books. These were the students whom I sent to the translator to dictate their books.

I thought it would be important that every student had a book in the class library, so we made a special effort with the students who copied to have them dictate information about themselves to the translator who wrote it in Luganda and English and then sent them with fresh pieces of paper to copy what she had written and draw pictures for each page. The books were small—usually six or seven pages with one sentence on each page. I could read Luganda, so I would then read any sentences they could not so they could make sure their pictures were on the right pages.

If the translator and I had regular editing to do, we could help 10 students edit their books in 45 minutes. The translator would pull three students at a time. She would help one, and while that one was writing she would work with another. I worked with each student individually in English. Our students who wrote in English were the trilingual students and there was usually very little editing I had to do with them. Some students wrote enough to fill two or three books because they had two or three topics. We encouraged them to keep their rough drafts and use them to complete more books later.

Because of the amount of time we were taking students away from regular class lessons, one hour per week for two weeks, Eva wrote:

The bad thing about this program is that it consumes a lot of class time for other lessons. I suggest that if there could be more time, maybe in the evening during games time or early before lessons. I think during this time learners should be taken to the resource to write their books in their groups. At these times, teachers can't get enough time because there will be no other lessons. This can be done from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. by a group each time.

As soon as I received this comment from Eva, I made sure that we only took students during the time period she requested. This was when I became aware of the influence of high-stakes testing on the curriculum. Eva did not want the students to miss lessons on the curriculum due to upcoming district exams.

I kept holding on to the idea that the students could write books during their free time in class (when the teacher was late or they were through with their assignments), probably because I could see that book writing was providing an opportunity for the students to do a lot of reading and writing, but I could not see how it would fit into the high-stakes testing environment where the teacher was pushed for time to get through the curriculum. I also could not see how the teacher might possibly find the time to edit all these books because the translator and I found it took a great deal of time to work with some students who could only dictate books.

### *Sharing Literacy and Pedagogy Information*

It is important to note at the beginning of this section that I was working with both the P2 and P3 Luganda teachers at this point in my study. I had planned to work with only one teacher, and I had originally started with the P2 teacher. However, when the head teacher informed me that the P2 teacher was sick (I learned that she had AIDS) and might be absent from school periodically, I wanted to change my study to the P3 teacher. The head teacher requested that I work with both teachers as he thought it inappropriate to drop the P2 teacher because of her illness. I received permission from my committee to work with both teachers, but only report on one. The only place in my dissertation where this was of consequence was when I was sharing information with both teachers due to the fact that in Ball's teacher change model (2004), teachers are supposed to discuss the new information with each other and later the results of their research with new literacy strategies in the classroom. There was some discussion between the teachers during the information sharing, but when we got to the collaboration about new literacy strategies in the classroom, the P2 teacher did not participate in the study from that point on due to her frequent absences.

When the one-month school break came in April, I arranged to meet with Eva and the P2 teacher every week to discuss research articles, books, and other materials I had given them to read the week before (see Appendix A). We would discuss the readings for about one hour and then I would introduce the new materials to read for the coming week. In every information session except the first, when I finished introducing some new information or when a teacher had finished sharing her thoughts about some

information, I would ask if either teacher had any questions about what had been discussed. We did this for four weeks until school started again in May. During this time, both teachers were paid to make final copies of the students' books they had made in the book writing program (so the students could more easily read the good handwriting of the teachers, and so the teachers could become more familiar with the students' work). These books were to provide the teachers with another resource to use with their new literacy instructional strategies.

*First information session: April 21, 2006.* The first session involved no discussion. I gave the teachers articles about literacy instruction research in Africa (Eakle & Garber, 2003; Omojuwa, 1989; Oyetunde & Umolu, 1989)—both the problems and the successes. I requested they underline text in the articles that was interesting to them and write their response to or reflections about the articles. I made arrangements to meet with them the following Friday, April 28, 2006 to talk about their reading.

*Second information session: April 28, 2006.* The rest of the information sessions were held in the P2 teacher's home close to the school. I had tried to arrange to travel to Eva's home to meet with her each week, but she preferred to travel to the P2 teacher's home to meet with me. I had set a time to meet, but the teachers did not have watches, so it was often difficult for all three of us to get together at the same time.

At the beginning of the second session, I learned that the P2 teacher had not read the materials I gave her the week before. Eva had read and marked some text in the articles but had not written any reflections. I went over the innovation participation model (see Appendix K) to show the teachers what parts of the innovation we had already

completed (which was about half the chart), remind them of the goals for the innovation, and what we were going to focus on next, which was their planning of literacy strategies for the students in their classroom so that the time the students spent reading and writing could increase. I thought that reviewing the model I gave them at the beginning of the study might give them a purpose for reading the articles. Because the teachers were not well prepared for the discussion, we discussed the articles from session one in a general sense and the specific information that Eva had underlined.

Next, I gave seven articles, books, and one handout, “A Range of Written Responses” (see Appendix A), to the teachers (Atteh & Boison, 2005; Beeler, 1993; Feldman, 2001-2007; James, 2002; Samuels, 1997; UNESCO, 2004); nine pages were to be read and the rest was for browsing. These documents focused on instructional methods and ways to use literacy for authentic purposes in the classroom. In order to pique their interest in reading and reflecting, and to encourage them to start thinking about using the materials, I pointed out literacy strategies and theories in the articles that might be helpful to them in their context (i.e., LEA, repeated readings, and different types of pedagogy).

As I typed up my field notes after the second information session, I reflected on the P2 teacher’s failure to do anything with the information she was given, and Eva’s failure to write reflections on the first week’s handouts:

It looks like if I’m going to get anywhere with educating the teachers, I am just going to have to sit down with them, read with them, and discuss what we read.

We will see what happens next week with the materials I gave them today.

*Third information session: May 5, 2006.* During this session, I met with both teachers, but not at the same time. We discussed what each teacher had read and the new materials on literacy, teacher reflection, and the MOES curriculum.

I spent one hour with the P2 teacher followed by one hour with both teachers. The P2 teacher was a week behind and had not read the materials I gave her the week before, but she had read the materials from the first information session and worked on the students' books. At the beginning of our discussion, she emphasized, "I am going to teach those children to read by going over syllables again and again." I then gave several explanations to try to make a bridge for the teacher between teaching only syllables and incorporating words and sentences as a new literacy strategy.

Therefore, it appeared that the teacher had maintained her belief about the importance of memorizing syllables despite my efforts to help her plan literacy strategies that would increase the students' time spent reading and writing Luganda. I reflected at the time that possibly, if I would have made a connection between the synthetic phonics approach she was using and the information that I had given her, she might have been able to more easily assimilate the new strategies.

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, Eva also had this same belief about teaching syllables: If a student had not mastered all of the syllables, he/she would not be able to read words and sentences. Thus, both teachers showed a strong influence from their synthetic phonics beliefs on their ability to see a place in their teaching for the new literacy strategies I was sharing.

After orienting the P2 teacher to the new material on literacy and teacher reflection, I also shared my theory about using the more advanced students in the classroom as a resource. I suggested that she regroup the students so there would be a variety of levels in each group (mixed ability groups). That way, the more advanced readers could help the less advanced readers, because it was not possible for the teacher to help everyone in the ability groups she was presently using. I made it clear that students would be reading aloud to each other and helping each other; therefore, there would be talking. She liked the idea and said she would try it.

When Eva arrived, she told me she had not written reflections, but had read what I gave her and really enjoyed the article by Samuels (1997) on repeated readings. When we discussed the idea of using words and sentences instead of syllables to teach the students to read, Eva did not respond.

We browsed through the 2005 *In-Service Guidelines for Teachers on the Teaching of Reading, Writing with Special Reference to Local Languages and the Use of the Revised Time on the Lower Primary School Time-Table*, that was published by the MOES but had not been widely distributed yet. We looked at the topic-driven curriculum and the new time-table for the Luganda literacy hour which limited the teachers to 15 to 20 minutes of board work with the rest of the hour being used for individual and group work. The curriculum was the same as the current 2001 curriculum except for the time schedule of how often local language was to be taught, and a suggested plan of action for the literacy hour. The teachers were not familiar with the curriculum, probably because they had not been using it, and they were very excited about it being based on topics.

After this session, I determined that I needed to find some way to help the teachers see the benefit of incorporating words and sentences into their reading instruction, as I believed this could improve the reading skills of the students (National Reading Panel, 2000; The Molento Project, 2003). Even though I had already given them a lot of information on LEA and modeled LEA book writing, I decided to give more information to encourage them to use words and sentences. Upon reflection, this step was similar to the P2 teacher saying she was going to do more syllable teaching because the students were not getting it; well, I was trying to give more material on LEA since the teachers were not getting it. At this point in the study, the only reason I could determine for the teachers not accepting the LEA materials I had given them thus far was the strength of their belief in the synthetic phonics approach. I learned later that there were several other contextual factors influencing their passive attitudes towards using LEA.

*Fourth information session: May 12, 2006.* In the fourth information session, the P2 teacher shared her excitement about the pictures in “Interactive Writing” (McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000) showing student writing. Eva had nothing specific to share about her reading.

We covered how to create LEA stories (Stauffer, 1970, chapter 2), the qualities of outstanding teachers discussed by Snow, Griffin, and Burns (1998), and five principles which are critical for a reading program discussed by Wirt, Bryan, and Wesley (2005). In our discussion of these three handouts, I stressed again that the reason we were going through all this and trying to have the students do a lot of reading and writing was because even though the teachers had done a good job teaching students the phonetics of

reading, the students needed the opportunity to practice reading. This was another attempt to make a bridge between synthetic phonics and reading and writing words and sentences.

Moreover, I suggested that the students' interest in reading should increase when their names were on stories they had dictated or written and when they could read their stories to their classmates and take copies home to keep and read to their families. I continued with how the students might get interested in writing and reading student-authored books about topics in the curriculum, because Eva had said that she did not believe she could give interesting lessons on the curriculum to 85 students.

*Fifth information session: May 19, 2006.* I met with the P2 teacher for over an hour, and then Eva arrived, and we met for another hour. Both teachers had read little and had written nothing, but they had spent time editing the students' books. I had decided to talk about what they were going to teach and how they were going to teach it, but first I answered questions.

The P2 teacher had the *Breakthrough to Literacy for Rutono* manual and had questions about what the other students would do while one worked with a group of students with similar abilities. We talked about how the other students could be working on writing and editing books if they were grouped so that there were high-, medium-, and low-level students in each group. This way, the high- or medium-level students could help the low-level students with writing and reading their books. The teachers appeared to be skeptical that they could work with small ability groups while mixed ability groups were writing and reading books, but they were willing to try.

The teachers appeared to be shocked that they were supposed to be teaching Luganda in context by teaching topics, even though I had given them the curriculum the prior week as part of their reading. I walked the teachers through an example of what could happen during the literacy hour if they were to use the topic *weather*, including a short lesson using LEA and group work writing and reading books, and other strategies that could provide students with the opportunity to read. We then discussed the details of setting up a reading corner and class library, how to call students from their groups to work with the teacher in an ability group, how to involve every student in the class, and how to use words and sentences for real purposes in the classroom.

After this session, I contemplated what challenges we might encounter when using group work. The students had never been allowed to work together to produce a book or talk together to accomplish a task as a group. Therefore, I decided to encourage the teachers to concentrate on only mixed ability group work until the groups were functioning independently.

In conclusion, during the one month devoted to information sessions, the P2 teacher had read little and had written no reflections, whereas Eva appeared to have read most of the information and underlined in a few articles. Due to Eva not reflecting in writing during the information sessions, at the beginning of Term Two I asked her to write a reflection on the articles or theories she enjoyed the most, and give her opinion about the idea of group work. She wrote positively about news on the board, repeated readings, and “Breakthrough to Luganda” (BTL in Luganda), and shared positive and negative aspects she had thought of concerning group work. By reading, discussing, and

writing about new theories the teachers were fulfilling the second step in Ball's teacher change model (2004, 2006).

*Focusing the Model: Planning the Teacher Research Project*

With the completion of the information sessions, the teachers were to plan some research projects with new literacy strategies that they would like to experiment with in their classrooms. (Shortly after this, the P2 teacher's absences increased due to some workshops she had to attend and her illness. Thus, from this point on in the innovation, I focused on Eva, the P3 teacher.) According to Ball's teacher change model (2004, 2006), this step in the change process involved teacher choice in planning a research project that combined new theories with practice in the classroom. Contrary to the aspect of teacher choice in the teacher change model, Eva did not choose to use any particular literacy strategies for a research project in her classroom.

Up to this point in the innovation, Eva had not shown much interest in any particular literacy strategy we had discussed except repeated readings. She also had questioned using group work as described in the *In-Service Guidelines* (2005) and other suggestions I had given her.

Eva could see the problems of using the new literacy strategies in her context. These included no resources for group work, no time for book writing because of the need to study the curriculum for district exams, and her belief that she could not make the curriculum interesting for the students. Thus, the beliefs of the teacher and the context exerted limitations on the teacher's decision-making to use or not use new literacy strategies.

As noted earlier, I had decided to give a copy of the *In-Service Guidelines* (2005) to the teachers at the beginning of the information sessions because of the research-based curriculum and pedagogy, and because it was approved curriculum from the MOES. Eva questioned how she could use group work in the *In-Service Guidelines* without any resources. That was when I brought the two problems together: having time for the curriculum and book writing, and needing some type of activity for the students to do during group work if Eva were to use the *In-Service Guidelines*. Consequently, during the information sessions was when I started encouraging the teachers to have the students write a group book about the curriculum as part of regularly scheduled lessons.

However, group work would not be effective in a classroom where the students were grouped according to abilities as it then was. We had already seen in the book writing program that the less advanced students needed a lot of help writing books and the teacher could not possibly meet all the students' individual needs. That was when the idea for mixed ability groups emerged. If there was one advanced or good student in each group, these students could become a resource to support the less-advanced students (Gains & Mfulathela, 2005). That was the idea I shared with the teachers, anticipating that the teachers might consider the idea a partial solution to their inability to help every student.

*Researcher and teacher decisions when planning the teacher research project.*

There were several important decisions the teacher and I made when we planned the teacher research project. First, there was the decision I made about mentoring. Originally, I had planned to give as little support as possible to encourage the teacher to take the lead

in planning and implementing new literacy strategies, but then we came to a point where the teacher was to plan new literacy strategies and did not. I tried to find a local, working model of group work for her to observe to help her increase her confidence in what she might do. In checking with a teacher educator lecturer at Kyambogo University, I learned that there was no model for Eva to observe within a three-hour driving distance of the school. Thus, I determined that she would need to see and experience group work through practicing it in her own classroom as there appeared to be no other options for observing group work. I chose to give additional support by providing a group work model (see Appendix L) to write books on the curriculum that was based on my observations and Eva's written and oral input (see Appendix B, Timelines: Innovation).

Consequently, I asked Eva to use the curriculum and group work model with the provision that once she had experimented with them in her classroom, she could then choose to stop using them or change them in whatever way(s) she chose. All she had to do was share with me why she decided to change them or not use them.

Eva then agreed to try the group work model that had been developed to provide increased time for the students in meaningful writing and reading in a context with the high student-to-teacher ratio, few resources, high-stakes testing, and students with mixed abilities. The model used mixed ability groups to write books on the curriculum and followed the *In-Service Guidelines* (2005) from the MOES for child-centered instruction.

Although Eva agreed to use the new group work model and curriculum, she continued to express concern that she did not have enough resources (i.e., story books, pictures, and a detailed lesson structure) to teach the curriculum. Therefore, I obtained

some books on the curricular topics from the Teacher Resource Center for her to use in writing her schemes (lesson plans). Later I discovered that what Eva really meant was that she needed detailed lesson plans—not the resources to make her own lesson plans.

Two weeks into the second term Eva still had not written her schemes for the term, nor had she rearranged the room for mixed ability groups. In order to encourage her to get started, I went ahead and rearranged the benches for the new groups with Eva, the English teacher, and some student help. I had already given Eva everything I thought she needed to begin, but she appeared to still be hesitant over the materials in the curriculum. (This appeared to be an issue of Eva not telling me directly that she needed a detailed lesson plan because I was a Luzungu and she was a teacher. Instead, she just hinted at the types of materials she needed, maybe thinking I would understand.)

Two and one-half weeks into the term, Eva came to me with the solution to her problem with the curriculum. She found that the English curriculum had detailed lesson plans with pictures and stories using the same topics as the Luganda curriculum. She was more than willing to translate the English into Luganda, so she went ahead and wrote her schemes. Then the English teacher wanted to participate in the group work concept too, and share visual aids and book editing tasks with the Luganda teacher (Eva). I thought that this was an amazing transition for both teachers considering that during all my time in Uganda, I never saw teachers help each other with their teaching. These teachers' decisions meant there would be no exercise books to mark for Luganda and English and there would be student-authored reading materials in Luganda and English based on the curriculum.

Second, Eva made a decision about scheduling. The *In-Service Guidelines* stipulated five one-hour sessions a week for local language literacy. While checking the new schedule for Term Two, I noticed that local language was only scheduled for three one-hour sessions each week. When I questioned Eva as to why she had only scheduled three sessions instead of five, she chose not to explain, but just changed it to five days a week.

The English teacher was standing with us and responded, “There needs to be more periods in English instead of Luganda so the children can do better in science and social studies.” Note that according to the curriculum, science and social studies were to be taught in Luganda, but the teachers had stated previously that the reasons they were teaching these subjects in English were that there was not enough vocabulary in Luganda for them to teach these topics in Luganda; in addition, the curriculum was written in English.

The teachers had reasons for not following the recommended scheduling for local language literacy. It is possible that because there were only three lessons a week in the English curriculum that Eva was planning on using to teach Luganda, she limited her lessons to the number of days for which she had lesson plans; and/or it could be that the English teacher wanted more time teaching English and had influenced Eva to only teach three lessons a week; nonetheless, Eva made the decision to teach Luganda five days a week as she originally agreed and which the curriculum mandated.

### *Decisions Made While Conducting the Research Project*

Eva began using the group work model with the curriculum as her research project, and I became a participant observer along with my assistant, helping the students during class. Then almost every day after class, the assistant and I met with Eva to reflect on how the lesson went and Eva and I offered suggestions on how to improve the literacy strategies and learning context. After these sessions, Eva would plan the changes she had decided to make.

I offered many suggestions and Eva accepted and tried some of them. If Eva did not make a decision to use a suggestion I thought was particularly helpful, I would offer that suggestion two more times at planning sessions or in interviews just to make sure that the language barrier was not the reason for her not trying the suggestion. After that, I would not mention it again. In our planning meetings, Eva and I reflected on the changes she was making and their feasibility and potential for increasing the students' opportunities for literacy learning.

Indeed, Eva's decision-making seemed to focus on contextual and pedagogical strategies in three different areas: her concern for increasing the students' opportunities for literacy learning, her concern that all participate in the strategies, and her concern to keep the strategies simple and efficient so as to not increase her preparation time and to keep her classroom procedures uncomplicated.

*Decisions that increased the students' opportunities for literacy learning.* Eva made four decisions that appeared to be predominately influenced by her desire to increase the students' opportunities for literacy learning during her research project:

1. Eva chose not to write any student-contributed sentences on the board during her lessons, so the students were forced to create their own sentences for group books.
2. Eva chose to limit writing and drawing to three days a week, and had the students read on the other two days because she wanted the students to read more.
3. Eva allowed students to use the reading corner at any time they chose to encourage students to read more.
4. Eva chose not to let the students take their books home when they were completed (she kept the books locked up) so she could use all of the books for reading time.

Some of these decisions might appear to be insignificant, but it is important to understand how extraordinary some of Eva's decisions were in her context. The first, Eva's decision to not have the students copy sentences off the board, went against her previous literacy instructional practices and came about even when others disagreed with her. The following explanation relates how this took place.

In the first lesson Eva gave, she wrote the sentences that the students contributed on the board and then erased them so the students would not copy them. As soon as she found out that many of the students wrote the exact same sentences from memory in their group books, she expressed her determination to not have that happen again, and asked what I thought.

I said that I thought it would be nice to have one sentence on the board for a model or pattern, but she did not take my advice and chose not to write any student-contributed sentences on the board so the students had to create their own sentences from their heads. I supported her in this decision, but the head teacher could not imagine why Eva thought copying was not good. He was thrilled that the students could memorize sentences so quickly and write them in their books. In spite of the head teacher's compliments on her students' copying from memory, Eva chose not to write any more sentences on the board. Either her literacy belief had changed, or she was finally able to express a previously held literacy belief through her pedagogy in consequence of peer support in mixed ability groups.

In decision number two, Eva was so concerned about the students taking all of their literacy time on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday to draw pictures and write sentences, that she determined the students should spend the entire class time on Thursday and Friday reading. Yes, she only had three lessons a week in the curriculum, but she expressed her concern to me time and again about the students wasting valuable reading time drawing pictures.

She did not take my advice from the reflection sessions, because I focused on solving the problem through the students being more efficient on Monday through Wednesday so they would have time to read on those days. Eva came up with her decision on her own and was very pleased with the results.

This was another significant change in literacy pedagogy for Eva; I say *pedagogy* instead of *belief*, because it was quite clear from Eva's original list of literacy beliefs that

she *did* think it was important for students to read a lot to become good readers. It apparently was her context that had been holding her back from fulfilling this belief through her pedagogy. When her context was changed so the students had books to read in Luganda, she used her belief to drive her pedagogy.

In addition, it is quite possible that the Samuels article on repeated readings (1997) fueled Eva's intense interest in the students spending a lot of time reading. Previous to her reading that article and planning her research project, she only had the students spend about 10 minutes each day reading syllables, syllable combinations, and words from the board.

Decisions three and four also stemmed from this same underlying belief—that reading a lot is important to learning to read. The reading corner consisted of a 4 foot by 5 foot woven straw mat placed on the floor in a back corner of the room where students would lay full length or sit against the wall while reading to each other. Not only did Eva allow students to read books in Luganda in the reading corner during the Luganda literacy hour, but she also allowed the students to read English books from the small class library we had set up. Whether that was due to the fact that she was just pleased to have them reading, or the fact that she was too busy helping students to deal with English reading taking place during Luganda time, I do not know. I never saw her restrict anyone from the reading corner.

Eva was concerned with my suggestion in decision four. The students were making about three books a week. The parents had expressed an interest in the students bringing their books home and I had encouraged Eva to do that in the hope that some

reading would be taking place at home. Eva, on the other hand, took each student's books for the week and stapled them together to make one book; she then used these books on Thursdays and Fridays for reading time. She kept the books locked in the cabinet because when they had been put out for students to read, the books would disappear and never be returned. These decisions provided Eva with reading materials for two literacy hours a week, and locking them up guaranteed a continuing supply of reading material that increased the students' opportunities for literacy learning.

*Decisions that increased the opportunity for students to participate in literacy strategies.* When Eva began using the group work model, there were several student participation problems that became evident right away. Eva immediately made decisions about the problems as they arose, except for a major decision she made after a reflection/planning session.

First, we noticed that when the group work started and only one person was writing, some of the students would disengage themselves from the group work by pulling out their exercise books to work on another assignment, thus, not participating at all in the group work. Eva noticed this and told the groups that everyone must contribute one sentence to the writer: If there were eight people in a group, then there would be eight sentences, five people, five sentences, and so forth. This was not part of the original group work model which just required everyone to talk together and come up with the sentences.

Second, I noticed as a participating observer that some group book writers were drawing pictures before having the books edited while all those in their group just sat. I

mentioned this to Eva and she immediately announced that the writers were not to draw any pictures in the group book.

Third, without any input from me, Eva made a conscious effort to continually remind students that everyone must take turns writing, because some of the more advanced students did not like to wait for the less advanced students to write when it was their turn. They complained that these students did not know how to write well or they were too slow at writing, so the advanced students would often take over the group work without letting others write.

Fourth, and most importantly, we noticed that there was too much time being wasted by the students who were compelled to just sit while others contributed their sentences and the writer was writing. With a maximum of 10 students in a group, it was impossible for everyone to see the sentences the writer was writing, and when the edited book came back from the teacher, it was very difficult for everyone to copy the sentences at the same time.

We discussed these problems in our first reflection/planning meeting, and Eva suggested we just divide the groups in half: Every bench would be one group of five or fewer students (we still left the benches facing each other, and two groups would share one package of colored pencils). This way participation would increase, students would be able to see better, and there would only be three to five sentences for the students to write before the group book was edited, thus speeding up the process. This doubled the groups from 11 to 22.

*Decisions that kept the strategies simple and efficient.* Decisions Eva made to keep the strategies simple and efficient, or drop them entirely, were evidence of her concern for not increasing her work load and keeping her class management simple with so many students. Most of these decisions appeared to substitute a simpler strategy for one from the model. Table 3 displays Eva’s decision-making.

Table 3

*Teacher Decisions to Simplify the Group Work Model*

Group Work Model	Teacher Decisions
Use Luganda lesson	Used English lesson plans
Staple papers together to make blank books	Used single sheets of paper that were later stapled together to make books
Use the task sheet (see Appendix L)	Verbally told students what was expected
Encourage the students to make copies of other students’ books to take home	Eliminated this activity
Pull out ability groups to work with during group time	Helped individual students and mixed ability groups during group time

In making the above changes, Eva was saving time and/or simplifying her class management (except for her decision about using the English curriculum, which I found out from our final interview was a decision she made out of necessity and which is explained fully in the next section, The Teacher’s Description of Her Decision-Making).

Although no one will ever know what would have happened if she had tried making a word wall, or let the students make copies of other students' books to take home, it is important to note the decisions she made. For some of the other decisions, it appeared that Eva's context influenced the decisions she made. An example of this was the small size of the mixed ability groups.

Limiting the size of the groups by half meant that the students only had to write three to five sentences until they were ready to edit with the teacher, which in turn meant that Eva only had about 10 minutes after completing her lesson before she was editing group books. Editing kept her busy until the end of the hour. This prevented Eva from calling out ability groups to work with.

Originally, I had thought that once the students were organized into functioning mixed ability groups the teacher could pull out students with similar abilities to work with while the mixed ability groups were functioning on their own. But with the reduction in the size of the groups, Eva did not have enough time available to work with ability groups.

Instead, Eva chose to walk around the room after her lesson and help students on a one-on-one and teacher-to-small-group basis before and during editing. Even though Eva would be working with or editing with a single student, there would be other students sitting in the group listening, or standing around the teacher waiting to edit, who benefited from her instructions.

Albeit Eva might not have consciously chosen her role during group work because she was just trying to keep up with what was happening around her, it appeared

that she was very pleased with her decision to work with individual students. Previous to the innovation, one-on-one instruction between a teacher and a student was rare and was something which Eva thought was impossible to do because of the sheer number of students she had to work with and the large amount of time she spent at the board teaching (the number of students had not changed, but the amount of time Eva had available to spend with the students had increased because she had shortened her teaching time from 40 minutes to 15 minutes).

At this point in the innovation, Eva was more than willing to spend the entire literacy hour helping the students. This willingness was evidenced in the pleasure she exhibited while working with the students, and possibly influenced by the fact that when the hour was over she did not have 85 exercise books to correct. Caning had gone from a frequent everyday practice in the classroom to something she rarely used, and she even chose to extend the use of the group work model into her science lessons.

Table 4 displays a summary of the changes Eva made in her pedagogy from her blackboard approach at the beginning of the study to a student-centered approach during the innovation.

Table 4

*P3 Teacher Pedagogy Changed From Blackboard Approach to Student-Centered*

*Approach*

Blackboard	Student-Centered
Chalk-and-talk (40 to 45 minutes)	Chalk-and-talk (10 to 15 minutes)
Synthetic phonics	Students contributed sentences about the curriculum (LEA)
Group rote recitation and individual reading from the board	Individual, group, and partner reading
“During the first term class participation was limited to the most able learners. The weak ones were not fully catered for ” (Eva)	Students helped each other read and write
Students were grouped in large, ability groups	Students were grouped in small, mixed ability groups
Students punished for talking and inattention	Students within groups talked about their writing
Students copied from the board to exercise books	Students wrote books based on the curriculum and then read them

During June, Eva appeared to enjoy these changes to her pedagogy as evidenced by a much happier demeanor as she worked with the students and by her description of her decision-making.

### The Teacher's Description of Her Decision-Making

Research Question Three, "How does the teacher describe her decision-making and change processes, and influences on those processes throughout the innovation?" was intended to present the teacher's interpretation of what took place during the innovation. The teacher responded to this question along with other questions in writing in August, 2006 (see Appendix C, Questionnaires: Reflection on Journal and Research Question Two) and in a final interview in October, 2006 (see Appendix E) where I asked her if specific factors influenced the changes she made. Eva wrote about some of her attitudes and pedagogy from first term followed by changes she made to these attitudes and pedagogy in the second term.

#### *First Term*

In July, 2006, Eva wrote the following about her teaching first term:

In the first term I used teacher and blackboard approach.

I used to teach syllables, words and sentences because pupils did not know how to read well, so I had to teach syllables first and words then sentences because I wanted pupils to master them first so that they could recognize them in sentences whenever they meet them. I thought that if pupils mastered syllables and words they could easily make their own sentences.

Pupils also were asked to read from the board in groups, as a class and a few individuals at a go.

During the first term class participation was limited to the most able learners. The weak ones were not fully catered for.

Teacher's writing was only done on board while pupils' writing was mostly done in their exercise books. This made it difficult and tiresome for the teacher to mark a heap of books every day.

During the first term there was no pair reading and group writing of books.

### *Second Term*

Eva wrote the following about her teaching second term:

In the second term my teaching changed from teacher and blackboard to group work. I write the topic on the board and pupils make their own sentences using the words.

Then they read the sentences from the board and afterwards they make group books. Then everybody in the group participates by contributing their own sentences.

Also everybody gets a turn of writing for the group. The weak ones also give their sentences and have to write for the group.

The techniques of drawing pictures and coloring them makes every student busy and interested.

In the second term there was enough paper and colored pencils, which enabled learners to work easily in groups and share ideas.

The most able ones help the weak ones in reading and spellings while reading and writing.

*Eva's Interpretation of the Factors Influencing Her Decision-Making*

Eva talked and wrote about some of the factors that helped her to change her teaching second term. She included paper and colored pencils, and the many different ways she gained new knowledge about the potentially effective literacy strategies. In our final interview I gave Eva the following list to look over and tell me if any of these factors might have influenced her to change:

- The head teacher
- The 2005 Guidelines for Teaching Local Language in P1-P3
- Finding that the curriculum for Luganda was the same as the curriculum for English
- The researcher
- The availability of the resources in the teacher resource center
- The availability of paper
- The availability of colored pencils
- The CCT
- The children's responses to your teaching
- How the change affected your available time, such as taking more time or less time to accomplish an activity, or how much time it took you to prepare for a lesson or evaluate student work
- District Exams 3 times a year (high-stakes testing)

- Personal teacher satisfaction or dissatisfaction with using certain teaching strategies and why
- The research articles you were asked to read and reflect on.

Eva's responses about the factors influencing her to change were taken from the survey and final interview.

*Paper and colored pencils.* Eva shared that the two most important things that empowered her to change her pedagogy were the paper and colored pencils. She explained the benefits in this way:

The materials, that is colored pencils, papers helped the teacher to decide to use group work because there was enough material to use. These materials also helped the teacher to mark less work for the group instead of marking many exercise books.

She had also mentioned in the survey that coloring and drawing kept the students busy and interested.

It seemed logical that Eva would state that the paper and colored pencils were the most important things empowering her to change. However, I offered paper to the other teachers in the school if they could just tell me that it would be used for something other than copying from the board, and no teacher ever approached me for paper even though I talked with them often, ate with them, and visited some of their classes. Thus, it was quite apparent that there were more factors influencing Eva to change than just paper and colored pencils. Nonetheless, in order to get Eva to consider other factors besides paper

and colored pencils, I had to ask her specific questions about possible factors influencing her change.

*New knowledge.* Although Eva acquired new knowledge about literacy strategies from a variety of sources, this new knowledge had no effect on her teaching and beliefs unless she chose to accept it as part of her belief system and let it influence her classroom practices. The new knowledge that appeared to influence Eva's decisions to use new literacy strategies included information given by the researcher in the form of research articles, advice, and modeling new literacy strategies; reflecting on and discussing her experiences using the new strategies; feedback from students; the 2005 Guidelines and the English curriculum lesson plans; and new knowledge she gained from her experiences using the curriculum with group work.

In the written survey I asked Eva to comment on part of Research Question Two: What informs the decisions the teacher makes about local language literacy instruction when given mentoring by the researcher to facilitate the teacher's incorporation of, reflection on and making changes that the teacher deems appropriate to the MOES required curriculum and instructional practices?

Eva wrote the following about the influence of new knowledge I gave her through my sharing research articles, advice, and modeling new literacy strategies:

When there is an outside educator to support the teacher, the teacher gets new ideas and new approaches from those she knew or used.

The outside educator also helps the teacher in making some good changes like pupils working in groups.

The teacher also gets some information when she reads about other teachers and methods used in different countries in reading and writing brought by that educator. The teacher compares her teaching with those other teachers and learns more from them. Here the teacher tries these techniques.

The teacher can change her behavior and adapts other good and useful practices brought by the educator.

In the interview, Eva continued, “The sack of books, books you brought about this group work and we read and then we got some idea we had not got before.” In addition, she commented on the article about repeated readings (Samuels, 1997) and noted, “It helps to know that when you teach or you give something for many times the children to read they learn better.”

Besides gaining new knowledge from reading about literacy strategies and watching me model new literacy strategies, Eva also acquired new knowledge from experimenting with these strategies in her classroom and then reflecting on and discussing them with me. Eva reported on these factors in our interview:

Researcher: When you first started first term, uh, how do you, how, do you think you could be very successful with teaching at the board like you were and everything in reaching individual students in the classroom?

Teacher: When I was, I, I taught in the first term, I couldn't reach very many. But here, in the group work you reach those. There are many groups. There are so many in one group then you, you help them.

Researcher: Okay, so you feel like you're able to reach individual students better?

Teacher: Yeah.

Researcher: With group work?

Teacher: Yeah. Yeah.

Researcher: Was there anything, how I worked with you, or materials I gave you, what was most helpful to you?

Teacher: You helped us to group these, put these groups in the classroom, 'cause at first, the first groups, then you said you now know, you found out you had grouped, now you told us to change, the what? The grouping that the two desks facing each other because they were four (desks).

Researcher: Oh yeah, we had big groups didn't we, with like four desks. Yeah.

Teacher: You told us to change and we grouped the what?

Researcher: Okay.

Teacher: Like, like the two desks.

Researcher: Okay and uh, anything else that was helpful.

Teacher: When you, the discussions with you, you give us some [inaudible] after the lesson you talked and said how we can change or what changes we can make that was also good, after the lesson.

Researcher: Okay.

Teacher: We discussed and you told, you gave us some advice as [inaudible] would be better.

Some other new information I gave to the teacher that helped to strengthen her belief in the new literacy strategies were the students' audiotaped comments about group work. After listening to some of them, I asked Eva:

Researcher: Um, so what about, were you surprised at what they said about what they liked the best about group work? [Teacher laughs.] Were you surprised at all or did you expect to hear that?

Teacher: No I didn't, I didn't. I was surprised 'cause I thought they, they were, they have gained nothing from that, that what, group, that method of group work.

Researcher: Uh huh.

Teacher: I thought they, they did not get help, but I wanted to hear that, them appreciating what, that method, group.

Eva was saying here that she was surprised that the students were really helping each other and that they appreciated the help from each other. Eva was very busy editing and talking to groups during group work and probably was not aware of how much peer help was actually taking place.

Moreover, when I asked Eva if the 2005 Guidelines had been helpful in giving her new information about how to spend the literacy hour, she replied, "Yeah, that helped, because we had an idea of how to teach, and what to include there, and what to, to give to the children to read. It was help." In spite of this, the 2005 Guidelines did not give her enough information to write her schemes even though the curriculum was included. Eva needed the English language curriculum lesson plans to give her additional information.

Eva described its influence several times in the terms: “We knew what to do,” indicating that the English curriculum gave her enough information to plan her schemes.

Although I had originally attributed Eva’s use of the English curriculum to the theory that it was saving her time in preparing lessons and actually presented that issue in the interview, it was very clear from Eva’s comments in the interview that she did not believe she could prepare her schemes at all without the more detailed curriculum. It was definitely not an issue of willingness to prepare the schemes from the Luganda curriculum, but Eva’s belief about her inability to do so with only the Luganda curriculum, which did not present detailed lesson plans information.

Once Eva started using the curriculum with group work, she gained new knowledge from her experiences (Wells, 2000). It seems that this knowledge then influenced her decisions to continue using the new literacy strategies and also to change them so they were more appropriate in her context. Encouragement from the head teacher had influenced Eva’s decisions to try the new literacy strategies in the first place. When asked about his influence on her decisions she responded, “Yes he has [influenced me]. He liked the, the idea, and he told us to, to use it and see how it works.”

I inadvertently learned about Eva’s beliefs regarding her experiences using new literacy strategies when I asked her what advice she would give to other P3 teachers in Uganda to develop their students’ Luganda reading and writing skills if she were asked.

Teacher: I think this, these teachers should do, I mean help or guide the pupils to  
make their own, write their own books, using their own what, ideas.

Researcher: Okay.

Teacher: Write in groups. Because here when they, these pupils are given a chance to write on their own, they, they think of what they're going to write and they write it from their own heads. [Inaudible.] Writing some books like [inaudible] when they started participating in writing herself she thinks of what she is going to write then she thinks of the ideas, but how is she going to write. I think it is good.

Researcher: So you like those . . .

Teacher: Umm. Pupils work on their own to write.

Researcher: So instead of . . .

Teacher: Umm. Aye.

Researcher: Telling them to copy . . .

Teacher: Make up their own . . .

Researcher: Make up their own . . .

Teacher: Yeah, their own sentences. The sentences are not all that correct but they have an idea.

Researcher: Right.

Teacher: Aye, those pupils get the idea of writing for themselves, and to think for themselves.

Researcher: And, and why do you think that's important?

Teacher: [Laughs.]

Researcher: Oh no, I'm trying to make you think here. You don't have to but if you, if you can think of, you already kind of said one reason it's

important, because the children like to do that? I mean they, do you think they like to?

Teacher: They like it.

Researcher: Okay.

Teacher: And it helps them to, to get, to read, because they, they, they like what they write from their, what, from their head and they read it. Because they are the ones who have written, what, thought of it.

Eva's experience with the children enjoying writing from their own thoughts and then reading what they had written convinced her of the value of LEA book writing. Despite this fact, she was convinced that group work using book writing could be improved upon. She made it clear that even though she liked book writing as part of group work, she would like to cut the writing to two days a week and spend three days a week reading.

Eva's belief system and context affected the decisions she made about instructional practices for her students (Flannagan, 1992). The internalization of the new knowledge Eva acquired, coupled with sufficient paper and colored pencils for the students to write books, afforded Eva the opportunity to build her capacity as a teacher and increase reading and writing in her classroom in the process.

### Summary

Eva was a native Luganda speaker who had participated in training and taught school for 33 years and had upgraded her training to a Grade Three Certificate. During

this case study, she taught three different subjects in P3 to over 100 students in a rural/urban public school sponsored by the Church of Uganda.

There were many factors in Eva's context that appeared to affect her literacy instructional decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices. Eva's decisions about her literacy instruction were limited by her lack of resources, lack of knowledge about possible options, the curriculum, and by the sheer number and varied abilities and languages of her students. Her beliefs and her actual practice were not always congruent, often due to the lack of resources and high student-teacher ratio. She could not make a decision about students reading books because she had only one paperback book in Luganda; she was not aware of other options that were appropriate in her context to help the less advanced learners; and she believed that some pedagogies she had been trained to use were impossible to implement because of the lack of resources and space.

Despite these constraints, Eva was able to make decisions about what to teach from the curriculum and she did have some options in how to teach the curriculum. Eva also chose when and how much to teach. She chose to set up her room with ability groups and chose to use the blackboard approach wherein the blackboard was most often the backdrop for her entire lesson. Eva's choice of this approach appeared not to be a choice of preference, because her training included many other options, but a choice to mediate the contextual constraints she advocated were responsible for the lack of student learning (very few resources, too many students and not enough time to help the weak ones, district and national exams, starving students, poor curriculum for the weak students, and

interruptions in her teaching), and an effort to carry out the principle of focusing learners on a task—a principal endorsed by the MOES.

The innovation focused on providing Eva with paper and colored pencils, information about potentially effective literacy strategies, and mentoring. Initially, Eva's beliefs about the innovation included the following: The students would not be able to write books, book writing would not work in her classroom, the children could not read words and sentences before fully learning letters and syllables, and the curriculum could not be made interesting for the students. In the course of modeling book writing during the innovation, my belief about its suitability was challenged as I found it to be very time-consuming and teacher-intensive, thus making it inappropriate for Eva's context of high-stakes testing and high student-teacher ratio.

Next, in the one-month school vacation when I shared research and literacy strategies with Eva, I tried to persuade her to use some of the literacy strategies we discussed and to follow the new curriculum guidelines that used group work; but by the end of our information sessions, Eva had not chosen any literacy strategies to try in her classroom. In consequence, I developed a group work model using book writing that I thought might be relevant in her context because it used the curriculum (to prepare students for district exams), and mixed ability groups (to provide peer support for less advanced students). I asked Eva to experiment with it with the understanding that she could change or discontinue using the model whenever and/or however she chose. Eva agreed to experiment with the group work model after the head teacher also encouraged her to try it.

Eva did not start working with the new literacy strategies until I became physically involved in helping her set up her classroom for group work, helping the students during her lessons, and reflecting with her after her lessons. At the completion of the study, Eva shared that the two most important things that empowered her to change her pedagogy were the paper and colored pencils. She also cited new knowledge she gained from reading research and from the collaborative reflection/planning sessions she and I had after her lessons, my support in helping her set up the classroom for group work, and encouragement from the head teacher. In addition, she believed she could not use the Luganda curriculum without the English language lesson plans that coincided with the Luganda reading and writing topics.

Eva liked using the group work model after adapting it to her context because it provided Luganda reading materials for the students, peer support for the less advanced students, and helped prepare the students for district exams each term. She gave 15- to 20-minute lessons instead of 45-minute lessons. Also, she no longer had 85 exercise books to correct each day, nor did she have exercises to write on the board for the students to copy. Moreover, she rarely caned students for inattention because talking was accepted as part of the students' school work. The model was based on small mixed ability groups (three to five students) which spent about 45 minutes, three days a week, writing and illustrating books on the curriculum, and two hours a week reading the books with partners while Eva browsed amongst the students editing group books and explaining and evaluating reading and writing skills.

This transformation took place by changing aspects of Eva's context, including providing materials and information on research-based strategies, helping her plan literacy strategies for the classroom, and supporting her reflection on and adaptation of literacy strategies. Through changing aspects of Eva's context and supporting her efforts to experience new literacy strategies and use her own efficacy to mold them to her unique context, we developed her capacity as a teacher, her belief system was changed, and she made a cognitive shift in her teaching from rigid chalk-and-talk to student-centered learning. Furthermore, the changes were sustainable, at least in the short term, as her written reflections during the months I was gone (July, August, and September) and the interview in October when I returned indicated she had continued to use the group work model in her classroom.

## 5. Analysis

In this chapter I first introduce the purpose of the study, review the research questions, and summarize the findings from Chapter Four. Second, I analyze the findings of the study in comparison to earlier research and discuss implications for research, practice and policy. Third, I discuss the limitations of the study and the final conclusions.

The purpose of this study was to determine how a Primary 3 teacher's context in a public primary school in rural/urban Uganda, Africa and an innovation affected her literacy-related instructional decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices when teaching Luganda reading and writing. The first research question focused on describing the P3 teacher's context and the effect that the context had on her literacy decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices. The second research question focused on what affected the teacher's literacy instruction during an innovation where she was given additional materials and information about potentially effective literacy practices; the MOES required curriculum (NCDC, 2001), and guidelines for the teaching of reading and writing in the local language (NCDC, 2005); and researcher mentoring to support her decision making. The third research question focused on the teacher's description of her decision making, change processes and the factors that influenced her throughout the innovation.

As explained in Chapter Four, the main findings were concerned with the influence of the P3 teacher's context on her pedagogy, beliefs, and practices before and during the innovation, how her pedagogy, beliefs, and practices changed, and what appeared to affect these changes. At the beginning of the study, the factors that appeared to affect the P3 teacher's decisions about literacy instruction were the lack of resources, lack of knowledge about possible pedagogical options, the sheer number and varied abilities and languages of her students, and the teacher's beliefs.

Her beliefs prior to the innovation included a belief in a phonetic sequence to acquire reading; in the value of using reading materials and reading incentives and ability groups; and that reading a lot was important. On the other hand, the teacher believed that her students would not be able to write books and that book writing would not work in her classroom; that she could not teach the curriculum without lesson plans; and that she could not make the curriculum interesting for the students.

Throughout the study, a variety of factors appeared to influence changes in the teacher's pedagogy, beliefs, and practices. These included physical resources such as the provision of paper and colored pencils and the English language lesson plans; human resources such as the researcher participating as a classroom helper and in collaboration/reflection/planning sessions as a mentor, and the students supporting their peers through collaboration. Professional development was also an influence by the teacher being introduced to a variety of instructional practices through reading, writing about, and discussing literacy research, and experiencing new literacy strategies in the classroom. Manipulating some of these factors in the context and interjecting other factors provided

opportunities for the teacher to experiment with new literacy strategies and determine their value in her context.

During the second and third months of the study, emerging findings were subjected to continual analysis through collaboration between the teacher and the researcher to determine the direction the innovation should take because the innovation that was originally planned by the researcher was incompatible with the teacher's present context. The new innovation included the use of paper and pencils to write books as originally planned. However, the innovation was changed to include colored pencils, writing the books on the curriculum, organizing the students into small mixed ability groups, using the English language lesson plans on the same topics, and the students were to take turns writing the group book before copying their own books. These changes were made in order to attract the interest of the students, to encourage more participation from the less advanced students, and provide peer support. These changes also saved the teacher time, helped the teacher prepare the students for district exams, and supported the teacher's efforts to teach the curriculum. Moreover, during the initial phase of the innovation, as I saw the teacher's need for assistance, and in order for me to understand what the teacher was experiencing, I chose for the translator and myself to become participant observers. This experience provided added insights to the originally planned collaboration/reflection/planning sessions. Thus, grounded theory, or continual analysis of the findings, guided this study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## Analysis of the Findings in Relation to Earlier Research

In this analysis I discuss how the P3 teacher's context was consistent with previous research on the educational context in sub-Saharan Africa, and also consistent with other African primary teachers' pedagogical decision making in this context. Next, I examine the process of planning, negotiating, and deciding on the extent of the innovation due to the influence of the context on these procedures. In addition, I review the factors that appeared to bring about changes in teacher attitudes and pedagogical decision making. I discuss the relationships between Ball's and Guskey's theories in relation to this study. Finally, I review the findings that led to the development of three models: the teacher change model, the adapted LEA model, and the student-authored book flood model.

### *The Effect of Context on Teachers' Pedagogical Decision-Making*

According to the *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2005 – The Quality Imperative* (UNESCO, 2004), recent findings on pedagogical practices in sub-Saharan Africa included the following:

Undesirable teaching practices persist. Such practices can be described in a nutshell as being rigid, chalk-and-talk, teacher-centered/dominated, lecture-driven pedagogy. Such pedagogy places students in a passive role and limits their activity in class to memorizing facts and reciting them back to the teacher. (Dembélé & Mairo, 2003, p. 7)

These findings are consistent with the results of the present study in which it was determined that the teacher chose to use “the blackboard approach” where the blackboard was most often the backdrop for her entire lesson. The teacher's choice of this approach appeared not to be a choice of preference because her training and beliefs included many other options, but a choice to

moderate the contextual constraints she believed were responsible for the lack of student learning. Heyneman (1984) concurs with this in his research on education in developing countries: “The point is this: in situations of school poverty, where, typically, the teacher has access to only one book, it is hard to imagine that *any* pedagogy is feasible other than memorization” (pp. 295-296).

Not only can the context affect teachers’ choices of pedagogy (Johnson, Monk, & Swain, 2000), but it can also affect teachers’ beliefs about what is possible in their classrooms (Flannagan, 1992; Harrison, 2005) which then influences their choice of pedagogy.

The P3 teacher in this study had beliefs that had been formed due to her experiences within her context. From her experiences in the classroom, she believed that it was not possible to make the curriculum interesting for the students, so she chose not to teach the curriculum. She also believed that it was not possible for the students to write books because they did not have all their syllables memorized, and she knew it was not possible for the students to read a lot because she was limited to the blackboard for reading material. Besides the factors in the context that constrained teacher decision making, there were certain factors that were missing. This limited decisional opportunities for teachers in this context.

Lack of resources, confidence, and opportunities for professional growth can affect teachers’ pedagogical decision making. In addition to the limited “availability of learning materials [which] strongly affect what teachers can do” (UNESCO, 2004, p. 3), Stuart, who conducted a case study of action research in Lesotho, Africa (1991), proposed that teachers were limited in their pedagogical choices by

the lack of role models and lack of opportunity to see or experiment with alternatives in a supportive atmosphere . . . [the teachers’] lack of confidence in

the subject matter, and lack of time or opportunity to think through what they were doing, reflect on their practice and articulate values and theories. (pp. 132-133)

Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) and Flores (2005) concur with Stuart about the importance of the school context supporting access, participation, experimentation, and application and how this contributes to teachers' professional growth.

Early on in the study it became apparent that the context was having and would have a strong influence on the process of planning, manipulating, and deciding on the extent of the innovation. Thus, the emergence of the actual innovation became an experiment in trying to find literacy strategies that would fit in this context, meet the needs of the teacher and students, and support the teacher in trying new literacy strategies.

#### *Negotiating the Context to Facilitate the Innovation*

Jacob (1997) acknowledged the importance of adjusting the context when implementing innovations in the classroom. She noted,

Contextual influences on teachers' learning may be manifested in their [teachers'] adaptations of innovations, which subsequently may change the contexts of students' learning. This suggests that, rather than ignoring context, scholars need to attend to how context influences both students' and teachers' learning.

Teachers also need to reflect on how context may be influencing them and on how they can adjust contextual features to assist their students. Only then will educational innovations begin to reach their full potential. (p. 13)

Everything in the context had to be in concert to achieve success because there were so many factors hindering the teacher from making decisions to use new literacy pedagogy. The only way the teacher and I achieved this was through heuristic methods involving constant experimentation supported by researcher mentoring, followed by reflection, collaboration, and change. These decisions are supported by the concept of social constructivism, which indicates that learning takes place through social activity and interaction (Lee & Smagorinsky, 2002).

The innovation utilized a teacher development model by Ball (2004) that is based on social constructivism (Fosnot, 1996; Windschitl, 2002). This model not only serves as a basis for educating teachers to new theories, but more importantly, theoretically, it can ensure that the changes the teachers make are internalized (Bakhtin, 1981; Leont'ev, 1981; Vygotsky, 1981; Wertsch & Stone, 1985). It can also support more culturally appropriate classroom practices through promoting teacher choice.

Although the theory behind the innovation was based on Ball's teacher change model, this theory failed to prepare me for the impact of the context on the innovation. Even after observing for seven weeks and having the teacher reflect on her background and experiences, there were some contextual constraints I could not foresee until the teacher and I started planning the innovation and I became a participant observer.

The first contextual constraint I did not foresee was the less advanced students' need for a lot of help with book writing and editing which took a disproportionate amount of the teacher's time because of an average of 85 students attending class each day. Due to my participation in the context through modeling book writing, I experienced some of

the challenges the teacher could face in this respect. Furthermore, the teacher expressed her concern about the amount of time that book writing was taking from the curriculum in a high-stakes environment. I realized the context would have to be adjusted for the time factor, the inability of many students to write in Luganda, and for district exams if the teacher was to experience success. Thus the book modeling part of the innovation, by necessity, became an experiment with the innovation before the teacher began her research project in the classroom. Interestingly, this experience also shows that observations alone do not always give a researcher all the information that is necessary to adequately determine the strength of the influence of a context, especially in consequence of trying to initiate an innovation. Experiencing the context for myself confirmed that changes to the context must be made to provide opportunities for the teacher to experiment with new literacy pedagogy.

Not until we began the next stage of the innovation when I shared new knowledge about literacy pedagogy with the teacher and collaborated with her about the possibility of using new pedagogy in her classroom did I begin to understand additional constraints the teacher and I were dealing with that were not apparent during the observations. The teacher's background and beliefs were the next constraints that I had not foreseen. Because of her experiences in her classroom, she had developed low expectations for the students, herself, and the curriculum. These findings concur with earlier research by Pryor in working with action research (1998) in Ghana, Africa. He found that the teachers he worked with lacked knowledge about pedagogy and the curriculum and confidence in

their ability to make decisions in the classroom and not depend on other people's judgments.

The P3 teacher in this study also had a very difficult time deciding which new pedagogies to try. Crossley and Guthrie conclude that "Teachers are not generally irrational opponents of change but they rationally weigh alternatives according to the realities they perceive" (1987, pp. 65-66). This was when I realized that I must do something more to support the teacher besides just giving her information.

Therefore, due to her hesitancy to make a choice of new pedagogy after reading about and collaborating on new pedagogical options in her classroom because she could not see how these new options could work, I provided the opportunity for her to experiment "with alternatives in a supportive atmosphere" (1991, p. 132) as suggested by Stuart. Furthermore, I had already found that some of the teacher's beliefs had been changed by observing and participating in the book writing model. Hence, because she had no model to observe for the new strategies, with her input, I provided a group work model for her to experiment. Even so, it was only when I was there each day in the classroom helping, collaborating after the lessons, and encouraging the teacher to make changes she believed were necessary, that I saw the teacher take control of her change and develop a voice and confidence in her own ability to make new pedagogical decisions. Huberman and Crandall (1983) concur with this resolution for the anxiety of using new strategies by suggesting a "combination of pressure from educational leaders along with high levels of assistance [which] appears to be extremely powerful in educational improvement programs" (Guskey, 1988, p. 68).

In addition to the high levels of support that were needed, the planning of the model had to include compensation for the constraints that were preventing the teacher from experimenting with new pedagogy (Jacob, 1997). Johnson, Monk, and Hodges (2000), in their work with teacher development and change in South Africa, determined that the context puts selective pressure on teachers' choices of pedagogical strategies:

Teachers can choose to use any strategy they can think of but the success of the chosen strategy does not lie in the act of choosing. Rather, success lies in the fit between the strategy and the environment in which the teacher uses the strategy. "Fitting" strategies survive. "Unfit" ones are not repeated unless the environment changes. (p. 186)

Consequently, the teacher and I began a process for manipulating or negotiating the constraints in the context to convert them into opportunities such as using book writing on the curriculum to mitigate the high-stakes testing constraint; using the students as a resource in mixed ability groups to provide peer support for the less advanced students and thus lessen the constraint of the 85 to 1 student-to-teacher ratio; using group book writing to solve the time constraints of the teacher by producing fewer books the teacher had to edit; using the English language lesson plans to teach the Luganda lessons to alleviate the problem of the teacher having to teach without lesson plans; and using the required curriculum from the MOES (NCDC, 2001; NCDC, 2005) with its latest guidelines instead of some arbitrary topic (Johnson, Monk, & Hodges, 2000).

Previous research is sparse on using students as a resource to write books on the curriculum where there are none in a minor language to provide the teacher and students

with resources. In addition, using mixed ability groups in developing countries to help less advanced students in high student-to-teacher ratio classrooms is also not a popular practice—ability groups are more popular and endorsed by UNESCO (2004) for quality education. Nevertheless, one researcher, Farrell (2002), has been collecting information on programs that use some of what he calls “radical alternatives” (p. 247) such as student peer tutoring, student-constructed learning materials, child-centered pedagogy, active learning, peer mentoring for teachers, and ongoing feedback systems in developing countries, which all became part of this innovation.

Even though it appeared that the teacher and I had reduced the problems that were restricting the teacher from experimenting with new pedagogy by manipulating the constraints, the teacher was still anxious about using the innovation (Crossley & Guthrie, 1987). The innovation was planned with the goals in mind (viz., the teacher would adapt literacy activities to help students produce reading materials in Luganda to fill a class library and increase the amount of time the students spent in meaningful reading and writing), and by converting many of the constraints into opportunities so the teacher could experiment with new literacy pedagogy as mentioned above. Even after all this, the teacher told the head teacher privately she did not think the innovation would work, but she did agree to experiment with it because he asked her to.

The teacher’s decision to experiment with the innovation became a key to teacher change—change not only in instructional pedagogy from rigid chalk-and-talk to student-centered learning, but a change in the teacher’s beliefs in herself, her students, and what was possible in her classroom. In earlier research, experimenting with or practicing new

pedagogy has been shown to be a vital component for change in other international contexts such as Botswana (Duffy, 1993), Nigeria (Adara, 1996), and Kenya (Gitau, 1987). In a review of literature on in-service in sub-Saharan Africa, Monk (1999) determined that “In-service aimed at changing teachers’ actions, rather than their knowledge, values, or affect, does require the teachers to practise those actions” (p. 9). Furthermore, Martin, Russ, and Bishop (2000) reiterated this concept as a result of their work in Lesotho, Africa. In this case study, practice not only gave the teacher the opportunity to experience the innovation and change her beliefs and instructional pedagogy by seeing the students’ active participation and growth in reading and writing (Guskey, 1986), but it also gave me, as the researcher, the opportunity to experience the context and change my beliefs so I could give better-informed support to the teacher.

Experimentation was the main aspect of the innovation that brought teacher change, but without the inclusion of other aspects—new knowledge, mentor support, collaboration/reflection, and above all negotiating the context so the teacher had the opportunity to experiment with new pedagogy—teacher change would not have been possible in this context. This analysis shows that the teacher change that took place supports the theory of social constructivism. While the results of this study are basically consistent with the social constructivist theory, it is important to understand the relationships between three supporting theories that led to the teacher’s change.

#### Supporting Theoretical Relationships

The overwhelming influence of the postcolonial context in this study would have precluded the successful use of Ball’s (2004, 2006) and Guskey’s (1986, 1989, 2002)

teacher change models if it had not been for theories on developing a fit between context and innovations (Jacob, 1997). The effectiveness of Ball's theory stopped when the teacher did not make choices of new literacy strategies to experiment with due to the constraints in the context. Guskey's model could also have been of little value if the preset strategies that were modeled and supported did not fit in this context because they would not have produced student learning and, thus, no teacher change. However, a fit between the context and new strategies was made and parts of both models were then used.

As I implemented the different phases of Ball's model—the teacher reflecting and writing; reading and critiquing research; planning a teacher research project; and collaborating, reflecting, and planning with the researcher—I modeled LEA book writing during the reading and critiquing phase and became a participant observer during teacher research to enhance my ability to support the teacher. Modeling and mentoring are consistent with Guskey's teacher change model and the teacher acknowledged that they were vital to her changes in literacy beliefs and pedagogy.

All three theories supported the use of collaboration/reflection/planning sessions which, the teacher admitted, moved her to a successful adaptation of the new strategies in her context. Her experiences with the new strategies culminated in changes to her beliefs.

#### Findings: Development of Models

Experimentation led to the development of several models during the study: a teacher change model, an adapted LEA model, and a student-authored book flood model. These models were developed in the classroom with teacher choice and researcher

support. They were developed concurrently, thus,, there could be some correlation between the models. Therefore, it is a possible that success in using the models depends upon their being implemented simultaneously.

### *Teacher Change Model*

Surprisingly, the teacher change model does not focus on teacher change, but on teacher and student needs (Guskey, 1986). The steps in the model include goal setting; making resources available; researcher familiarity with the context; and acquiring new knowledge through modeling, reading, critiquing and experiencing new strategies.

#### *Goal Setting*

The goals for the model are based on teacher and student needs (Guskey, 1986). In this case study, the needs included books to read and new strategies to enhance the students' study of the curriculum.

#### *Making Resources Available*

After setting goals, the researcher and the teacher need to plan how they will acquire and use needed resources to accomplish the goals (Monk, 1999). Paper and colored pencils to make books and peer support were the resources made available in this study.

#### *Researcher Familiarity With the Context*

Researcher familiarity with the context could take place in several different ways. The researcher could be an insider who is already familiar with the teacher, students and school; or she could become familiar through observations, interviews and/or participating in the classroom. This study used the latter strategies. This step is vital in

order for the researcher to become a valuable support to the teacher within her context (Day, 1985; Jacob, 1997).

Another way a researcher can become familiar with the teacher and her context is through teacher reflection, which this study also used. The value of reflection to the teacher was not determined in this study, but the information the researcher discovered through the teacher's reflection was helpful in supporting teacher change.

#### *Teacher Acquisition of New Knowledge*

There are several different ways for the teacher to acquire new knowledge in order to help her reach her goals: modeling, reading and critiquing research or new information, and teacher research. Simply reading and critiquing new information is not enough to promote teacher change in a poverty context. The teacher needs to see and/or experience new strategies (Ball, 2004, 2006).

*Modeling and reading and critiquing research.* Modeling new strategies for and with the teacher in her classroom helps both the researcher and the teacher to understand how a new strategy might fit or not fit in her context (Bean, 2004). It is also helpful for the teacher to read and critique research that has been conducted in similar contexts. This study used both strategies.

*Teacher research.* Teacher research is planned using the curriculum (Ball, 2004, 2006). The researcher and the teacher plan the implementation of new strategies so as to accomplish the goals that were previously set (including new goals that might have been added during the process of acquiring new knowledge). If no new strategies fit into the context, then the teacher and the researcher need to examine the context to see how they

can change or negotiate it to allow for experimentation with new strategies. In this study, the adapted LEA model was developed to provide more opportunities for new strategies to be used in the classroom.

Collaboration/reflection/planning sessions are also an essential part of teacher research (Ball, 2004, 2006). For at least the first week of this study's teacher research in the classroom, the researcher acted as a participant observer helping the teacher and students in the classroom as needed. Where possible, the researcher and teacher met after each lesson to collaborate, reflect, and plan changes to the activities based on evidence from their observations during the lesson. The decisions for changes were the responsibility of the teacher. This process should be repeated until the teacher is confident with the new strategies, or has discontinued them. In this study, it continued until the study ended.

#### *Adapted LEA Model for This Study*

The adapted LEA model for this study was developed from the work of Stauffer (1970) to meet the needs of the students and teacher. It met the needs of the students to write and read more and the needs of the weaker students to get help from their peers because the teacher could not possibly help everyone; it met the needs of the teacher to teach the curriculum, have books for the students to read on the curriculum so the students were prepared for district exams, and to have more time for individual and small group student support and evaluation.

#### *Preparing the Teacher*

Preparation was needed prior to experimenting with the LEA model in the classroom. The teacher in this study found it helpful to learn through reading and critiquing research where various forms of LEA book writing were being successfully used in different parts of Africa (Ball, 2004, 2006). Then the researcher modeled (Bean, 2004) a form of LEA book writing with groups of students and the teacher participating. This preparation was essential because these experiences convinced the teacher that the students could indeed write books.

### *Preparing the Context*

Every context is different and so the model must be adapted to fit the context where it is implemented. A researcher and teacher cannot put three to five students in a desk facing another group of three to five students when there are not enough desks. Therefore, at this point, the researcher and the teacher took stock of the resources and constraints in their context and determined how they could adapt the model to their context or change the context to conform to the model. Nevertheless, negotiating the context was a continual process throughout the adaption process until the teacher felt confident with the success of the model in her classroom, or chose to discontinue using the model due to its incompatibility with the context (Jacob, 1997). The teacher used the model throughout the course of this study.

### *Collecting Resources*

The resources needed for this model included mentor support until the teacher was confident in using the model (Huberman & Crandall, 1983), paper and colored pencils (colored pencils were not necessary, but they promoted student enthusiasm for

book writing), and student-centered lesson plans in the curriculum that allowed for more than 35 minutes of group work. There were also local resources such as the students themselves.

### *Implementing the Adapted LEA Model*

Implementing the adapted LEA model began with acknowledging that there was a need for reading books on the curriculum, followed by the researcher/mentor helping the teacher to gain new knowledge, preparing the context to fit the model and/or conversely, collecting resources to implement the model, and then conducting teacher research by experimenting with the model in the classroom.

Mixed ability groups of three to five students had to be organized with at least one middle- or high-level student in each group. The classroom was arranged with two groups of three to five students each seated at two desks facing each other. Both groups shared one box of 12 colored pencils, but each group worked independently of the other group to create a group book based on 10 to 20 minutes of teacher instruction on the curriculum. Each student had to contribute one sentence to the book and students shared the task of writing the sentences—more advanced students helped less advanced students when they had difficulty writing during their turn.

The teacher browsed among the students while they were writing and edited the group books. As soon as a book was edited, the students each got a clean sheet of paper and made a copy of the sentences in their group book. Then they used the colored pencils to draw a picture for each sentence in their individual books. Throughout this activity the

students were encouraged to talk to each other to discuss the sentences and how they should be written.

The teacher collected the books at the end of the hour and kept them in her locked cupboard. The books were used several days a week for reading time. During this time the teacher distributed the books to the students and they read them to each other (they read their own and other students' books). As the students made more books, the teacher connected each student's books together with staples or string so the students were repeatedly reading progressively longer and longer books on the curriculum. The number of books created by this model could be considered a book flood (Elley, 1996).

#### *Student-Authored Book Flood Model*

As illustrated in the previous section, the adapted LEA model can produce a flood of books to read on the curriculum. When a large number of student-authored books are used on a regular basis to encourage individual, partner, and group reading, then the students are participating in a student-authored book flood. When there are so many books they will no longer fit in the teacher cupboard, the older books can be sent home for the students to read to their parents, relatives, and friends, thus increasing their circulation.

In this study, the book flood was not as successful as it could have been because I encouraged the teacher to place the books in the room where the students had access to them, and many of them disappeared. Consequently, I suggested that the books be locked up in a context where the students might take the books if they were left out—unless the students were able to make extra copies to take home. I also did not examine the effect on

students and families when the books were taken home, so I could not determine if the books would be used if they were taken home. That would be something to examine in future research.

### Implications for Research, Practice, and Policy

The challenge for policy makers and educators in developing countries is to provide quality education for all children in a restrictive environment which includes, among other things, resources, teacher development on pedagogy that encourages student participation, support from other educators, and curriculum that teachers will use. Because the educational conditions in Uganda are similar to those in many other developing countries, research, practice, and policies that prove helpful in the context in Uganda might also be helpful if adapted to other developing country contexts. In the following section, some implications for research, practice, and policy based on the results of this study are highlighted and discussed.

### *Research*

Because of the successful outcome of the study in a developing country context, further research should expand the study to more teachers, schools, and subjects in order to determine its extended value in these contexts. However, further research based on the findings of this study should be limited to pilot studies on a small scale due to this being a case study of one teacher while only teaching Luganda literacy.

First, in order to remain true to the social constructivist theory on which this study is based, and because these tenets have already proven successful in other similar studies in Egypt (DeStefano, 2006) and Colombia (Kline, 2002), any teacher development that is conducted should be based on the dissemination of new knowledge supported by practice in the classroom—in a classroom with a high student-to-teacher ratio—beginning with the type of pedagogy and resources found to be successful in this study. Then, through experimentation, collaboration, reflection, and change, the teachers should be encouraged to develop pedagogy that they are willing to use and feel confident in using with their specific curriculum. This research would help to show if the teacher in this case study was unique, and/or if this process would be successful in other cases in helping teachers change from chalk-and-talk pedagogy to child-centered pedagogy where the students develop their own resources.

Second, this model could be expanded to include other subjects and grades to see if it could be adapted to different contexts. The Kampala School Improvement Project (SIP) found only some success in trying to support child-centered teaching in Uganda (Siraj-Blatchford, Odada, & Omagor, 2002). It appeared that part of the difficulty was due to outside-of-school training, pedagogy not being grounded in the curriculum, lack of constant supervision and support that appears to be very important in poverty contexts where resources are few and, therefore, possibilities for pedagogy are limited. It could very well be that more support, collaboration, and reflection while using mixed ability groups for student support could produce more teacher success in Uganda because many

of the teachers in the SIP study did not change their beliefs to include child-centered pedagogy as did the teacher in this study.

Third, in order to provide additional evidence to support the significance of this innovation, a longitudinal study could be conducted wherein all the principles of this study are used across teachers in a school to follow a class of students from nursery through P7 and then compare their Primary Leaving Exam (PLE) scores with previous students' PLE scores to determine the significance of the innovation. Although teachers are able to evaluate students' performance as they work, this type of quantitative research would give NGOs and educational administrators the evidence they would need to confidently expand the program.

Fourth, a cost-versus-benefits study could be conducted to determine the cost of producing student-authored books in a minor language on the curriculum where there are none—this would include cost for paper and colored pencils and teacher training and support—verses the opportunities the children have to read and write and a comparison of their district exam scores with a control group before and after the innovation.

### *Practice*

The results of this study provide several implications for practice by adding to existing literature in the following areas: student-centered learning and peer support in a high student-to-teacher ratio classroom; students developing their own resources on the curriculum where there are none; and the importance of a supporting context (modified

contextual constraints, new pedagogical knowledge, and the support of a mentor), experience, and experimentation for teacher development. Although I have listed separate implications for practice, they are mutually dependent on each other and putting just one part of this study into practice without the other parts would most likely not work. Resources alone do not provide reading materials and/or child-centered instruction, as I offered the resources to other teachers at the school several times (under the condition that they were not to use the paper to copy off the board), and no one wanted them. Giving new pedagogical knowledge to the teacher was not enough for her to start using the information in her classroom. The support of the mentor was vital, but without changing aspects of the context and giving the teacher new knowledge, a mentor also would not have provided the changes that took place in this classroom; so it is with all the different aspects of the study.

Thus, to effectively put the principles from this study into practice, all aspects of the study would have to be included and one new aspect would have to be added which was not part of the study: training mentors. In order to train mentors, my recommendation would be to use the same principles for training the mentors that were used to train the teacher—Ball’s teacher change model (2004). It is also important to note here that the goal of the innovation was not to change the teacher, but to provide reading materials for the students and opportunities for them to spend more time in meaningful reading. All of the changes in the context and the teacher’s instructional practices were focused on the goals for students, and changing the context and teacher instruction were the necessary precursors to reaching the goals for the students.

There are several important implications for practice in using student-centered learning and peer support in a high student-to-teacher ratio classroom. First, it is vital to use small mixed-ability groups (three to five students in a group with at least one student who has average or advanced ability in each group) where every student is required to contribute to a group book, and where talking and helping each other is encouraged. This grouping provides an opportunity for the teacher to browse amongst the students editing books, evaluating, and helping groups and individuals. Students can thus develop their own resources on the curriculum where there are none; in addition, this grouping also has potential for adaptation in other subjects besides writing and reading books in large classes.

Another segment of the study that has potential for practice is the teacher development portion. Instead of *cutting and pasting* pedagogy from developed countries into a developing country context as some educators and NGOs attempt to do, in this study the teacher and I attempted to negotiate the pedagogy and the context until there was a fit. Even with these adaptations it is vital to give the teacher experience with experimentation in the classroom with mentor support, in order for her to develop the instructional practices that work for her and that she is willing to use. Thus the focus of the innovation is at the classroom level.

### *Policy*

Policies that are expected to filter down to the classroom level, and often do not in developing countries, have difficulty impacting teachers and students. Processes and the context of change need more attention at the local levels where they will affect learning

(Penny, Ward, Bines, & Read, 2007; UNESCO, 2004; Verspoor, 1989). Yet, according to Verspoor (1989) in a World Bank discussion paper on improving the quality of education in developing countries, it takes much more than a successfully implemented program for it to become institutionalized. Student achievement needs to be systematically monitored, and institutionalization needs to be built into the innovation right from the start or even successfully implemented programs with high outcomes can become permanent pilot programs.

Having worked briefly with the MOES and spent many hours with the district inspector of schools in the district I was working in, I would suggest that working at the school administrative and classroom levels would bring the most support and success in implementing the concepts in this study, whereas the district administrative level could be the next place to begin for success, and the national level would be the least effective to support a new classroom innovation policy. Therefore, in working with policy in relation to this study, it would be important to get permissions on the national and district levels, but if immediate outcomes are desired then actual implementation should begin at the school level while keeping the district and national levels apprised of the progress and outcomes. Study after study confirmed that the most effective teacher development was conducted through teacher experience in the classroom (Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy, 2000; Duffy, Catchpole, Santer, & Bevan, 1993; Guskey, 1989).

If using this model for teacher development on student-centered learning, it is imperative that the policy also includes a provision for funds for paper and colored pencils; training for head teachers, mentors, and teachers; and that these funds go directly

to those involved to discourage corruption. It would also be important to include a provision in the policy for the development of model classrooms or schools where, as part of their training, outside teachers could observe and ask questions of teachers who are using the model in their classrooms before the trainees attempt to implement the innovation in their own classrooms.

Finally, school-level support, intensive at first and then intermittent to build teacher confidence, needs to be provided. Through this whole process there needs to be provision for regular collaborative meetings between all those involved to discuss areas of difficulty and needed adaptations and changes to the program, which has been a hallmark for success in similar programs in Egypt (DeStefano, 2006) and Colombia (Kline, 2002).

#### Limitations

There are several factors that limit the validity and generalizability of this study. First, this was a case study of only one teacher in only one subject; second, I, as the researcher, was an outsider to the context; and third, the study was conducted in a classroom that used Luganda as the medium of instruction with Luganda reading and writing as the subject and thus translators had to be used to help with observations. There was no problem communicating with the teacher in English as she was fluent in English.

In actuality, case study is a recommended model for studying education in developing countries to provide rich details in order to understand the context more fully (Heneveld & Craig, 1996; Merriam, 1998; Saunders, 2000). However, it also narrows the scope of the results until the study can be replicated with more teachers. Because this

teacher had 33 years experience teaching, I thought she might have more difficulty changing her beliefs than a new teacher. She actually made the change wholeheartedly once she had enough evidence as to the benefits of the innovation, whereas a newly graduated, primary school teacher whom I hired as a translator for a few weeks was very critical of the innovation as it did not fit with what she had been taught. Whether a new teacher, or any other teacher, can change her beliefs through the same process that the experienced teacher went through cannot be known for certain until this study is expanded.

This study is also limited by there only being one mentor who was an outsider. I say this because when I began the study at the school, I was asked several times by the head teacher why I did not hurry up (quit observing) and just tell the teacher what to do. It was difficult for the head teacher to understand that it was important to learn about what the teacher thought, and that I needed her to teach me about her background and beliefs before I could effectively help her. If this study was expanded, and local educators were used as mentors, I do not know if they would be accepted in the same way that I was and therefore the results could be very different; they might do better, or they might encounter difficulties. Training mentors was something I did not do, and this would have to be done using the same model I used for the teacher so the mentors could experience and adapt the innovation with confidence in a classroom before they have to train others, as contended by Martin et al. (2000) in Lesotho, Africa.

My outsider status as a researcher is an obvious limitation of this study as I had to conduct and analyze the results in a different culture from my own. I tried to mediate this

limitation in various ways: triangulation, member checks, long-term observations at the school, and repeated observations, peer support, and some collaborative forms of research wherein the teacher made decisions in how the innovation should progress (Merriam, 1998).

### Conclusions

The results of this study are significant in that the models developed and theories implemented have the potential to solve or minimize, at minimum cost and human resource expenditure, the constraints in developing country contexts that have been heightened by UPE. These models and theories fulfill most of UNESCO's (2004) criteria for quality education: stressing "curriculum . . . pedagogical strategies and materials," and investing in "teachers and their professional development," and providing "opportunities for mutual learning and experience sharing" (p. 37). Furthermore, UNESCO's criteria have been challenging to establish and maintain in developing country contexts, but the simple models found in this study have the potential to achieve quality education in developing countries at the classroom level through providing inexpensive resources and teacher development where the teacher is an active participant and decision maker in the training, thus building the capacity of the teacher and developing sustainable and culturally appropriate pedagogy.

These models were necessary to minimize the constraints caused by the high student-to-teacher ratio and multiple languages in the classroom. Even the current programs in Egypt and Colombia that are considered radical alternatives by Farrell (2002) reduce the student-to-teacher ratio to about 50 to 1, whereas in this study the ratio

was twice that. The reality in Uganda is that a high student-to-teacher ratio is common and will not be changing anytime soon (Nannyonjo, 2007). Nannyonjo, in a World Bank working paper, suggests that “Accordingly, the current limited resources in Uganda may be better used by helping teachers to effectively teach large classes” (p. 68).

Consequently, the models the teacher and I developed to deal with these constraints—mixed-ability groups developing and using their own resources on the curriculum—gave the teacher more time to work with groups and individual students in this difficult context. Too often, teachers have been held responsible for not implementing new innovations in sub-Saharan Africa, when in reality it is the lack of support and their lack of confidence in their ability to implement new pedagogy in unsupportive contexts that prevents them from experiencing success (Johnson, Monk, & Hodges, 2000; Johnson, Monk, & Swain, 2000; Monk, 1999; Pryor, 1998).

As this study has shown, the researcher, mentor, or trainer (RMT) can be a key figure in supporting teacher development if he/she takes the time to observe and participate in the teacher’s context in order to understand the compelling constraints that might keep the teacher from using new pedagogy. Then the RMT must be willing to adapt the context and/or the new pedagogy to develop a “fit” between the two (Johnson, Monk, & Hodges, 2000). Not only that, the RMT also needs to work closely to support the teacher’s reflective ideas for changes to the context and pedagogy so that the changes are truly owned by the teacher and will thus be sustainable after the RMT leaves. It was through this process that successful models for practice were developed in this study.

It would appear that this support could be very labor intensive for the RMT, but once the teacher was confident in her ability to use the new pedagogy and saw how happy the children were making and using their books—about two weeks—the teacher felt confident enough to use the mixed-ability group model in her science class to study for tests, and she no longer needed mentor support. Getting to the point of actual practice was the most difficult part because it seemed that at every stage of planning the model there was a new constraint that would stop our progress and we would have to make it fit before we could even begin the innovation.

The social constructivist theory supported the development of this study using Ball's teacher change model (2004). It was the catalyst that provided the parameters and the model to work with, including the teacher internalizing changes in her teaching through reflection on her beliefs and practices, critiquing new knowledge, and experimenting with new pedagogy in the classroom through the teacher's own choices and research in her classroom.

The decisive event in the teacher changing her beliefs appeared to be the teacher's experimentation with new pedagogy in her classroom, after which she was encouraged to discuss and change the pedagogy to fit her preferences. Although she began the study believing that book writing would not work in her classroom and that many of the children could not write books, when I asked the teacher in her last interview what advice she would give other P3 Luganda teachers to help them develop their students' Luganda reading and writing skills she said,

I think . . . these teachers should . . . help or guide the pupils to . . . write their own books, using their own . . . ideas. Write in groups. Because here when . . . these pupils are given a chance to write on their own, . . . they think of what they're going to write and they write it from their own heads. And it helps them . . . to read, because . . . they like what they write from their . . . head and they read it because they are the ones who have . . . thought of it. (personal communication, October 17, 2006)

The theories and models from this study should be enticing to governments and educators. NGOs should be interested because the cost of buying materials is very minimal, the resources that are produced are not available at any cost anywhere, and after the initial training and support—once the teacher is confident with the innovation—very little additional support is needed because the beliefs of the teacher have been changed and her capacity increased so she can teach and adapt her teaching with confidence. The MOES should be interested because the students are providing materials on the curriculum and therefore increasing the amount of time they spend reading and writing. Teachers should be interested because they use less time to lecture and grade exercise books outside of class, and more time to work with small groups and individual students and evaluate their progress. At the same time, the students are providing resources the teachers can use, and teachers can make a cognitive shift from chalk-and-talk to child-centered learning in a poverty context, thus providing quality education for the students.

## Appendix A

### Teacher Resources for Professional Development

*First information session: April 21, 2006.*

1. "International Reports on Literacy Research," by Eakle and Garber (2003), pages 142-144
2. "Developing reading in mother-tongue and English in Nigerian primary schools: Crisis in practice," by Omojuwa (1989), pages 409-415
3. "The current view of the reading process and its implications for English reading instruction in Nigeria: An afterword," by Oyetunde and Umolu (1989), pages 439-444

*Second information session: April 28, 2006*

1. A one page handout titled "A Range of Written Responses" with about 145 ideas for written responses (e.g., advertisements, cartoons, comics, diaries, fables, menus, riddles, speeches, etc.)
2. "Effective Teaching Styles" on pages 152-154 of the "EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005" by UNESCO
3. A page from the Internet entitled "Language Experience Approach Charts" by Feldman (2001-2007)
4. "The method of repeated readings" by Samuels (1997), pages 376-381
5. "The Impact of the Language Experience Approach in teaching reading in Basic Schools: A quasi-experimental study conducted in some selected schools in the Asesewa Circuit, Manya Krobo Education District, Ghana," by Atteh and Boison (2005)
6. "I Can Read! I Can Write! Creating a Print-Rich Environment," by Beeler (1993)
7. Mrs. N. James program for writing a second grade class newspaper (2002) with samples of the papers

*Third information session: May 5, 2006.*

I gave the following materials to the P2 teacher:

1. "Interactive writing: How language and literacy come together, K-2," by McCarrier, Pinnell, and Fountas (2000)
2. "The ownership of change as a basis for teachers' professional learning," by Rudduck (1988), pages 215-221 (Appendix)
3. "Tandika kusoma Orunyoro-Rutooro: Breakthrough to Runyoro-Rutooro: A course in initial reading and writing," by The Molteno Project (2003)

During this session, I gave the following materials to Eva:

1. "I Can Read! I Can Write! Creating a Print-Rich Environment," by Beeler (1993)

*Fourth information session: May 12, 006.*

I gave the following materials to both teachers in this information session:

1. "The language-experience approach to the teaching of reading," by Stauffer (1970), pages 21-58.
2. "Discovering what works for struggling readers: Journeys of exploration with primary-grade students," by Wirt, Bryan, and Wesley, (2005)
3. "Preventing reading difficulties in young children," by Snow, Burns, and Griffin(1998)
4. "In-service guidelines for teachers on the teaching of reading, writing with special reference to local languages and the use of the revised time on the lower primary school time-table," by the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) (2005), P2 and P3, term 2 curriculum.

In addition, I gave the following materials to Eva:

1. "Interactive writing: How language and literacy come together, K-2," by McCarrier, Pinnell, and Fountas (2000)
2. "The ownership of change as a basis for teachers' professional learning," by Rudduck (1988), pages 215-221

## Appendix B

### Timelines: Innovation and Procedures

Table B1

*Timeline: Innovation*

Month	Innovation
March	<p>The translator translated four English children’s books into Luganda and read them to P3 students.</p> <p>The translator and I introduced the LEA book writing program in P3 by passing out different types of English books (dictionaries, story books, journals, etc.) to the children to peruse while we taught them about books in general, and then we told them about the LEA book writing program where they would write their own books.</p>
April	<p>I provided paper and colored pencils for the students to write books</p> <p>The translator and I conducted LEA book writing with Groups of P3 students in English and Luganda (some students chose to write in English and all students’ books were translated into both languages, English and Luganda).</p> <p>The P3 teacher helped with LEA book writing and wrote reflections.</p> <p>I arranged meetings with parents of trilingual students to encourage book writing at home.</p> <p>For four weeks in April and May (school break), the P3 teacher and I met weekly to discuss her reflections on assigned readings about reading and writing research, the MOES required curriculum and instruction guidelines for local languages and LEA book writing.</p> <p>The P3 teacher copied the edited, student-authored books to make a class library</p>
May	<p>The translator wrote dictated books for students who were unable to write without copying, and then the translator wrote about her experience.</p>
June	<p>I consulted with the head teacher and the P3 teacher about what the teacher wanted to implement in her classroom and how she would do that.</p> <p>The teacher did not express any preferences for literacy strategies.</p> <p>I developed a group work model based on my observations and the teacher’s input and then reviewed group work and the required curriculum with the P3 teacher.</p> <p>I gave the teacher resources from the Teacher Resource Center to plan her lessons.</p>

Table B1 (continued)

	<p>I helped the P3 teacher rearrange the classroom for group work. The P3 teacher did not write her schemes until she found parallel lessons plans to the Uganda curriculum in the English language curriculum.</p> <p>The translator and I observed P3 language lessons, and helped the teacher with group work (book writing on the curriculum) during the class period.</p> <p>The teacher and I reflected after class and discussed possible solutions to problems with group work.</p> <p>The P3 teacher responded in writing about her experience editing with groups and individual students.</p>
July, August, and September	<p>I left the country and the P3 teacher reflected in writing in a daily journal about her instructional practices and any changes she made to those practices.</p> <p>The teacher read her journal entries, and wrote answers to a questionnaire about the literacy instruction decisions she had made and why she made those decisions.</p>
October	<p>I returned to Uganda for two weeks and the translator and I continued our observations and help during the P3 Luganda lessons.</p> <p>The translator and I interviewed students.</p> <p>I helped the teacher reflect on her literacy instruction.</p> <p>I conducted the final interview with the teacher.</p>

Table B2

*Innovation and Data Collection Procedures Timeline*

Steps	Dates	Procedures
Step 1	February 1 - March 1	Obtained teacher signatures on consent forms for teacher participation in research and parent signatures on consent forms for student participation> collected samples of blank exams for student placement> observed P3 language teaching and children at church during school hours > attended staff meeting and invited other teachers to use paper resources> interviewed the Principal Education Officer for Pre-primary and Primary Education (MOES), Vicar and Assistant Vicar, Coordinating Centre Tutor (CCT), head teacher, P3 teacher and 9 people in the community> collected teacher reflections (oral and in writing) on literacy beliefs, practices, and pedagogy > collected native language data on children in P3
Step 2	1 <sup>st</sup> week of March	Observed P2/P3 language teaching> gave TORP reading instruction survey to and collected it from P2/P3 teachers > videotaped language teaching (only P2/P3 teachers)
Step 3	2 <sup>nd</sup> week of March	Observed P2/P3 language teaching> held parent meeting and obtained 70 parent signatures on consent forms for student participation in research > attended CCT meeting and staff meeting with the District Inspector of Schools> checked out and purchased children's books from Kampala library in English to read in P2/P3> collected monthly language test scores for children in P2/P3
Step 4	3 <sup>rd</sup> week of March	Attended regional CCT meeting> videotaped P2/P3 language teaching> had P2/P3 teachers level students' reading abilities as either low, medium or high> I randomly selected 12 students to interview from P2 and P3 (4 students at each level who had parental permission to participate in research) from the teacher-leveled lists of students > reviewed videotapes with P2/P3 teachers and gave them forms to elicit written reviews of their own videotapes> gave videotapes to outside educator to review
Step 5	4 <sup>th</sup> week of March	Translator began reading books in Luganda in P2/P3> collected the teachers' video reviews> visited home and family of P3 teacher> interviewed students with help of translator

Table B2 (continued)

Step 6	5 <sup>th</sup> Week of March-2 <sup>nd</sup> Week of April	Finished interviewing 24 students and had tapes transcribed into English and checked for accuracy by the translator> introduced book writing program in P2/P3> conducted the book reading program in P2/P3> had the teachers write about their opinions of the book writing program> met with educator to go over his evaluation of the teachers' videotapes
Step 7	3 <sup>rd</sup> Week of April (district exams)	Visited with parents of trilingual students in P2/P3 to encourage book writing in L1 at home and offered resources and support>had teachers respond in writing to research question 1
Step 8	4 <sup>th</sup> Week of April-3 <sup>rd</sup> Week of May (1 month school break)	Had teachers write their responses to the educator's review of their videotapes> met with P2/P3 teachers weekly to discuss teacher reflections of assigned readings on reading and writing research, MOES required curriculum and instruction guidelines for local languages and book writing> teachers copied the edited, student-authored books to make class libraries
Step 9	4 <sup>th</sup> Week of May-2 <sup>nd</sup> Week of June	Videotaped a student dictating a book to translator> consulted with head teacher and teachers about what the teachers wanted to implement and how to do that> supported teachers' scheme writing with resources and ideas> reviewed group work and required curriculum with teachers> gave a workshop at staff meeting on reaching trilingual students> interviewed Mr. Bale who is in charge of local language curriculum at the National Curriculum Development Centre and Margaret Lubega from Kyambogo University who has worked with developing BTL at the national level>
Step 10	3 <sup>rd</sup> Week of June-5 <sup>th</sup> Week of June	Introduced book writing program to boarders> helped P2/P3 teachers set up classrooms for group work> the translator and I observed P3 language lessons, helped the teacher with group work and reflecting after classes and offered possible solutions to problems when the teachers needed ideas> videotaped group work in Luganda> I had the P3 teacher respond in writing about her experience editing with individual students> interviewed the CCT> visited with Head Librarian at Kyambogo University about the availability of easy readers in Luganda> scanned student-authored books> worked with the English teacher in P3 as she helped the Luganda teacher and then as she used group work to teach English>

Table B2 (continued)

		I asked the teachers to write in a daily journal about their instructional practices and any changes they made to those practices for the rest of the term
Step 11	July 29 <sup>th</sup> (1 month school break)	I asked the teachers to read their journal entries, and write down the decisions they had made about literacy instruction and why they made those decisions (what or who influenced them to make those decisions?) and to respond to research question 2
Step 12	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Weeks of October	Make copies of teacher schemes for all 3 terms and help teachers reflect on the schemes and the changes they have made in their teaching and curriculum> review teacher reflections of journal entries on language instruction for 3 <sup>rd</sup> term with the teachers> videotape language instruction> transcribe video tapes> review first term and third term video tapes with teachers to reflect on changes in instructional practices and curriculum> interview the same P2/P3 students for the second time but only using the questions on reading and writing in the classroom and at home> have translator help me translate classroom literacy groups' video taken before I left in July> have final interview with teachers to go over what I have from them and see if there is anything they would like to change or add to their reflections
Step 13	December	Collect 3 <sup>rd</sup> term, Luganda and English, district exam scores for P2 and P3

*Note.* I used a translator for all my observations in the classroom, working with the children to model book writing (except students who were writing in English), and most of the time when I worked with the teachers because the teachers speak fluent British English with a Lugandan accent.

## Appendix C

### Questionnaires

#### Questionnaire: Teacher Interview Questions Prior to the Innovation (February)

What is your native language?

How did you learn to read and write in Luganda? In English?

What are some of your good memories about learning to read and write?

What were some of your frustrations while learning to read and write?

What do you think are the best ways for children to learn to read?

What do you think are the best ways for children to learn to write?

Have you had teacher education classes or preservice or inservice training in how to teach children to read and write?

What did you learn in that training?

Do you use what you were taught or do you know some better ways to teach reading and writing in your classroom? How do you know these ways? (Through experience, through observation of other teachers, etc.)

If you had all the children's books you wanted in Luganda and paper for the children to write as much as they wanted, how would your teaching change?

Questionnaire: Video Critiques (March)

VIDEO CRITIQUES

(R, W, S, L)

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE CLASSROOM THAT PROMOTES READING,  
WRITING, SPEAKING, OR LISTENING?

Instruction: (R, W, S, L) 1.	Why Is This Effective? 1.
Student Participation: (R, W, S, L) 1.	Why Is This Effective? 1.
Literacy Activity: (R, W, S, L) 1.	Why Is This Effective? 1.

VIDEO CRITIQUES

(R, W, S, L)

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED IN THE CLASSROOM IN ORDER TO DEVELOP  
READING, WRITING, SPEAKING, OR LISTENING?

<p>Instruction:</p> <p>1.</p>	<p>Why would it be important to improve it?</p> <p>1.</p> <p>How could you improve it?</p> <p>1.</p>
<p>Student Participation:</p> <p>1.</p>	<p>Why would it be important to improve it?</p> <p>1.</p> <p>How could you improve it?</p> <p>1.</p>
<p>Literacy Activity:</p> <p>1.</p>	<p>Why would it be important to improve it?</p> <p>1.</p> <p>How could you improve it?</p> <p>1.</p>

## Questionnaire: Response to Ugandan Educator Video Critique (April)

I asked the educator to look for the following in your video:

Identify the instructional practices of the teacher.

Relate how culture and context are impacting the teacher's instruction.

His outline and a discussion of the outline are followed by questions I would like you to comment on and I also invite you to give any comments you would like to add on anything that he has said or questions you might have about anything he has said. Thank you so much.

1. Delivery strategy—
  - a. Media of communication is teacher and blackboard
  - b. Use of visual aids minimal
  - c. Class activities mainly singing (t1)
  - d. Class participation limited to the most able learners
  - e. Group evaluation is evident
  - f. Classroom material barely minimal
2. Classroom control—
  - a. Inadequate
  - b. Chorus answers encouraged
  - c. Teachers do not seem to realize all the flaws going on in their classrooms
  - d. Teachers do not respond to students' verbal calls
  - e. Students' movements seem to be radical
  - f. Teachers do not seem to know pupils' names
3. Teacher professionalism—
  - a. Teachers boldly demand order
  - b. Teachers promise learners negative motivation for inappropriate behavior
  - c. Teachers have a difficult time rewarding positive behavior
  - d. Effort to engage all learners is evident, but teachers are unable to engage all of them, particularly the weak and slow learners
4. Teachers' innovation
  - a. Use of local, available resources
    - 1) Not every pupil has access to the scarce resources
5. Actual implementation/execution of pedagogy
  - a. Effort seems to focus on rote memory
  - b. There is lack of effort to stimulate individual thinking skills
  - c. Teachers' agenda is emphasized at the expense of the students' interest
6. Culture and context
  - a. Teachers must be respected
  - b. Teacher is always right
  - c. Teachers have a right to punish the pupils if they become naughty

Discussion:

As we discussed the critique of the videos, the educator felt that UPE was responsible for many of the problems you are encountering. Yet, he believed, from his own training, that you are not following the training you were given.

Jill: Please answer these seven questions.

1. Were you trained to acknowledge individual students needs? If so, how?
2. Were you trained to use other modes of communication besides the teacher and the blackboard? If so, what ways?
3. Were you trained in positive motivation techniques for students to learn? If so, what ways?
4. Were you trained to develop friendships with the students? If so, how?
5. What did not show in the video was individual assessment through checking exercise books and exams. Were you taught any other ways to individually assess student learning? (the educator did not believe that students coming to the board showed individual assessment of slow or weak learners because there were threats given in the video that students were not to raise their hands to come to the board unless they knew what was on the board).
6. Do you think it is possible, with so many students and so few resources, to teach the curriculum to the students so that it interesting to them? If so, how? Do you have any ideas on this?
7. In your training, were you taught how to get the students to think about the curriculum or just deliver the curriculum? If so, what suggestions did you receive for getting the students to think about what they are learning?

## Questionnaire: Research Question One

The teacher responded in writing to Research Question One (April).

- 1) What is the context of a P2 teacher of Luganda and how does this context influence the teacher's literacy decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices?
  - a) Cultural/personal background: Description of teacher's language, ethnic, socioeconomic and religious background; history of her village/community and other experiences (past or present) that may impact her current decision-making as a teacher.
  - b) Educational background: Description of teacher's own educational background (type and level of education; previous experience in teaching; beliefs about teaching, learning, and students) that may impact her current decision-making as a teacher.
  - c) School/community: Description of teacher's current school and local school community (e.g., students, families, teachers, administrators, and teaching colleagues) and description of direct influences on the school such as the government, church, or other agencies that may impact school operation or policies.
- 2) Please tell me in detail your first impression, good, bad or indifferent, of the book writing program.

Questionnaire: Reflection on Editing (June)

What problems did you see when you edited individual students?

What did you learn about the students while editing?

Give some examples of things you explained.

## Questionnaire: Reflection on Journal and Research Question Two (August)

(When I left in July, I asked the teachers to write in a journal each day about what they did in their Luganda and English reading and writing lessons (a short summary), their ideas about the effectiveness of the lessons [problems and good points] and to also write about changes they wanted to make or they did make in their instructional practices. I sent this questionnaire by email in August to my translator who took it to the teachers and discussed it with them.)

Teachers:

Please read the journal entries you have written so far and write down the decisions that you have been making about how you teach the children to read and write Luganda or English. (examples of some of the decisions you made before I left are 1) to try group work, 2) divide the groups into smaller groups, 3) arrange the desks facing each other, 4) use the children's own sentences to learn to read, 5) develop a reading corner, 6) determine how you would present the curriculum to the students, etc.). Right now I would just like you to write down what decisions you have been making about literacy instruction since I left, and why you made those decisions. What or who influenced you to make the decisions?

These are the questions I have to answer with my study and you, the teachers, are the only people who know the answers to these questions.

- 1) What informs (influences) the decisions the teachers make about literacy instruction when provided with
  - a) Additional materials and information about potentially effective literacy practices
  - b) Mentoring by an outside educator to support the teacher's reflecting on and making changes to those instructional practices that the teacher deems appropriate?
- 2) How does the teacher describe her decision-making and change processes, and influences on those processes throughout the innovation?

During the break in August and September you could write about how your teaching has changed and what has influenced you to make those changes. In order to do this, you would have to explain how you taught reading and writing first term, how you have taught reading and writing second term, and how you made the decisions to make those changes.

When I come back for the second and third weeks in October, I will spend the first week videotaping your lessons and the second week interviewing you about your writing, your teaching, and questions 1 and 2 above.

Whatever you have decided to do with the paper and the help and instruction I gave you is totally your decision. My study is about you and what you decide to do, not about what

I want you to do. Please be honest with how you describe your decisions and why you made them.

If you have any questions about this or anything else, please contact Lydia before she leaves on August 9th (077 403 5747). I can be emailed at [jjenkins@gmu.edu](mailto:jjenkins@gmu.edu) .

Please remember to record the time you spend writing so I can pay you when I return. I look forward to working with you all again in October.

Jill Jenkins

## Appendix D

### Data Collected and Resources Used to Answer Research Question Two

I collected local documents the teacher used to guide her instruction during the innovation—the *In-Service Guidelines For Teachers On The Teaching Of Reading, Writing With Special Reference To Local Languages And The Use Of The Revised Time On The Lower Primary School Time-Table* (NCDC, 2005) and the *Uganda Primary School Curriculum Teacher’s Guide, Volume Two* (NCDC, 2001); research articles and information read by the teacher and discussed with the researcher (see Appendix A); notes and transcripts from audio-taped teacher and researcher reflection and planning sessions; notes from the researcher-modeled reading and writing programs that the teacher used as a model for her own literacy activities; field notes; a second set of student interviews after the innovation that was shared with the teacher; a daily reflection journal during the innovation kept by the teacher; copies of student-authored books as representative of the types of literacy activities used by the teacher; and video tapes of teacher instruction and student involvement during the innovation. I also collected written materials from the teacher including her initial reflections on her literacy beliefs, practices, and pedagogy; her review of the outside educator’s response to her first video tape and the LEA model for writing student-authored books; her plan for literacy activities that followed the MOES required curriculum and teaching guidelines and that used the donated resources (paper and colored pencils); the continuing reflections on her implementation of these literacy activities in the classroom; and the final summary of the process.

## Appendix E

### Formal Interview Questions

#### Formal Interview Questions: Final Teacher Interview

1. Please tell me about the changes to your teaching.
2. Please tell me how you conduct group work and what you think about it.
3. Please read the list below and tell me if there is anything on the list that might have affected your decision to use the curriculum and try group work.

The head teacher

The 2005 Guidelines for Teaching Local Language in P1-P3

Finding that the curriculum for Luganda was the same as the curriculum for English

The researcher

The availability of the resources in the teacher resource center

The availability of paper

The availability of colored pencils

The Coordinating Centre Tutor

The children's responses to your teaching

How the change affected your available time, such as taking more time or less time to accomplish an activity, or how much time it took you to prepare for a lesson or evaluate student work

District Exams 3 times a year (high stakes testing)

Personal teacher satisfaction or dissatisfaction with using certain teaching strategies and why

4. Please share some article/s that you remember that was helpful.
5. Was there anything I did that was particularly helpful or not helpful?
6. Do you think you were able to help more low level students 3rd term than 1st term?
7. If you had the job of helping teachers in Uganda improve children's reading and writing skills in Luganda in P1-P3, what are some things you might do to accomplish that?

Formal Interview Questions: Senior Education Officer for  
Reading and Writing at MOES

May I purchase the curriculum books for grades 2-5?

Show her the innovation model and ask what her department would expect of this teacher if she were to participate in this study?

What is policy and what is just preference in regards to the curriculum that is to be taught each day?

How is an activity measured to be meaningful or not (criteria)?

How much time in class is to be spent on curriculum that is tested on and how much time can be spent on outside curriculum?

What problems could arise due to the following factors that could be influenced by the study or that are part of the study:

- Teachers' extra responsibilities of teaching me, planning and conducting literacy activities and editing reading materials: initially, maybe 5 hours a week of extra work
- My providing compensation to the teacher for her extra time
- Video and audio taping teachers and students
- Curriculum
- Pedagogy
- Facilitator observations
- Children's listening, speaking, reading and writing in the classroom
- Procedures for parental permissions
- Language and language of instruction

## Formal Interview Questions: People in the Community

Can you read and write English and/or your native language?

What are the different ways you use reading and writing during the day:

At home

At church

In the market

At work

While traveling

For communication (Internet, letters, notes, etc.)

Other

Formal Interview Questions: Children's Interviews About  
Literacy Experiences Before the Innovation

What language do you speak in your home?

What does the teacher do to help you learn to read and write?

What do you do to learn to read and write?

In what ways are the reading and writing activities at school helpful or not helpful?

What do you like and not like about reading and writing? Why?

How do you use reading and/or writing:

At home

At church

In the market

At play

During your jobs (housework or helping parents with their jobs or earning money)

Does anyone outside of school help you with reading or writing? Who? What do they do to help? How often?

## Formal Interview Questions: Student Interviews in Term Three

### After the Innovation

1. What language do you speak at home?
2. What does the teacher do to help you learn to read and write Luganda?
3. Tell me what you do at school to learn to read and write Luganda.
4. Does group work help you learn to read and write Luganda? How? How not?
5. Is there anything you like about group work? What? Why do you like that?
6. Is there anything you don't like about group work? What? Why don't you like that?

## Appendix F

### Matrices

#### Matrices Used for Analysis: Research Questions for Chapter 5

1. What is the context of a P3 Luganda teacher and how does this context influence the teacher's literacy decision-making, beliefs, pedagogy, and practices?

Context	Context	Influence of Context
Teacher	33 years teaching experience Teacher Training + Grade Three Certificate Beliefs- synthetic phonics, all children must progress together children acquire 2 <sup>nd</sup> language (Luganda) without teaching, reading a lot is important Writing = handwriting, students would not be able to write books, book writing would not work in her classroom “I cannot make the curriculum interesting for the students” unwilling to give concessions to Non-native Luganda speakers Lack of knowledge about options Freedom of choice in pedagogy Chalk-and-talk (40 to 45 minutes) Synthetic phonics Group rote recitation and individual reading from the board “During the first term class participation was limited to the most able learners. The weak ones were not fully catered for.” Students punished for talking and inattention Students copied from the board to exercise books	Little effect because no books and synthetic phonics stopped ss from progressing to words and sentences Low expectations for ss resigned to blackboard approach and low s scores Treated all ss the same with little individual help T chose pedagogy that fit her resources-chalkboard, exercise books and limited visual aids I never asked why t only called on good students. t never said why.

	Native Luganda speaker	Common, prevalent practice even though there was a law against it and published materials to help schools with discontinuing the practice.
		No copy machine at the school. All exercises were put on the board. Those who did not have exercise books or pens just sat.
School	Over 100 students enrolled Lack of resources Head teacher UPE High-stakes testing	
Students	18 different languages Hunger High student/teacher ratio Various ages and abilities	
Curriculum	Written in English No lesson plans New guidelines not given to teacher	

2. What informs teacher decision-making about Luganda literacy instruction when given:
- Additional materials and information about potentially effective literacy practices
  - The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) required curriculum (NCDC, 2001) and guidelines for the teaching of reading and writing in the local language (NCDC, 2005)
  - Researcher mentoring to support the teacher's decision-making

Materials	Information	Informs
Paper and colored pencils	Research	English language curriculum
Books	Mentoring	Group work model
Story books	Experience using	Curriculum
Staplers	Guidelines for curriculum	
Pens and paper for teacher to write		

3) How does the teacher describe her decision-making and change processes, and influences on those processes throughout the innovation?

How she changed	Change process	Influences on change
<p>In the second term my teaching changed from teacher and blackboard to group work. I write the topic on the board and pupils make their own sentences using the words.</p> <p>Then they read the sentences from the board and afterwards they make group books. Then everybody in the group participates by contributing their own sentences.</p> <p>Also everybody gets a turn of writing for the group. The weak ones also give their sentences and have to write for the group.</p> <p>The techniques of drawing pictures and coloring them makes every student busy and interested.</p> <p>In the second term there was enough paper and colored pencils, which enabled learners to work easily in groups and share ideas.</p> <p>The most able ones help the weak ones in reading and spellings while reading and writing.</p>	<p>Materials helped teacher choose group work</p> <p>Materials helped teacher mark less work</p> <p>With materials the teacher could use the curriculum and keep the students interested and busy</p> <p>When there is an outside educator to support the teacher, the teacher gets new ideas and new approaches from those she knew or used.</p> <p>The outside educator also helps the teacher in making some good changes like pupils working in groups.</p> <p>The teacher also gets some information when she reads about other teachers and methods used in different countries in reading and writing brought by that educator. The teacher compares her teaching with those other teachers and learns more from them. Here the teacher tries these techniques.</p> <p>The teacher can change her behavior and adapts other good and useful practices brought by the educator.</p> <p>In the interview, Eva continued, “The sack of books, books you brought about this group work and we read and then we got some idea we had not got before.” In addition, she commented on the article about repeated readings (Samuels, 1997) and noted, “It helps to know that when you teach or you give something for many times the children to read they learn better.”</p> <p>new knowledge from experimenting with these strategies in her classroom and then reflecting on and discussing them with me.</p>	<p>Paper and colored pencils</p> <p>New knowledge</p>

### Matrices Used for Analysis: Findings

Decision context	Influences for change	Category	Result
Lack of resources (books, limited paper)	paper and colored pencils, k and exp	Resources Knowledge	books to read
T Lack of knowledge of options Not using Curriculum	K and exp, reflection and mentoring English L. curriculum Guidelines-timetable for literacy hour	K-exp, mentoring, reflection,	New understandings  T uses curriculum  T uses group work and only teaches for 15 minutes
Number and diversity of students	Mixed ability groups, exp, group work writing books		Books to read, most students participating, reading and writing, helping each other, New options
Teacher qualified	New k from reading research and exp		
High stakes testing	Used curriculum for b writing and reading		T confident that ss are prepared for exams and learning to read and write
<b>Beliefs</b>			
Reading a lot good	Research verified		Always trying to increase writing and decrease drawing
Book writing not work Students unable to write books	Experience 2/book writing Saw ss writing books		Used group book writing  Positive attitude towards students writing abilities but not toward using book writing in the classroom
Children must fully learn letters and syllables before they can read words and sentences	Saw ss writing books		Belief changed to the students love to read what they have written

I cannot make the curriculum interesting for the students

Experience using group work and short lessons that involved s contributions

Belief changed to the students love to read what they have written and they like to write from their heads  
Changed pedagogy to include ss in lesson and more one on one

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## Appendix G

### Luganda Lesson

March 3, 2006

girls 32

boys 36

total 68

Subject Luganda

Time 10 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Notes from the translator:

The teacher told students to stand up and teacher began to sing while students followed her

Teacher told students to put all their books away from the desk. Teacher told students to give her words with two syllables with two vowels a and e. Students gave the following words. They put up their hands and teacher picked them. Kawe, leka, era, weta, bate.

Teacher tells students she wanted students to give her words with three syllables with still two vowels. Students gave the following words: sesema, yaleka, kawete. Students who disturbed teacher were given a punishment of kneeling in front of the class. After teacher reviewed what she taught she introduced a new topic.

Gaa embooji ez'ebigambo ebisatu n'ebibiri ebirimu enjogeza "a" ne "e".

Teacher read the above sentence and students repeated after her. Teacher gave the following example. Teacher said that the following are sentences with two or three words but with two vowels a and e.

Era gate.

Tereka wala.

Kaye aleze male.

Kagere yatema male.

Kebera male.

Kale kaleke.

Ate sena.

Kale seka.

Teacher told students that the above are two and three words which make a sentence. Teacher told only girls to read the above sentences and she corrected them where they went wrong.

Teacher told boys to stand up and read above sentences. Teacher told students she wants them to form sentences with two or three words but with two vowels a and e. Students formed the following sentences:

Kale kate.  
Kale kalabe.  
Kale gema.  
Ate sesema.  
Ate legesa.  
Ate leka.

Teacher told students that whenever they are starting a sentence, they should always start with a capital letter and they should put a period at the end of a sentence. Teacher told different groups in class to read sentences which are written on the board. Teacher picked different students in class to point at each sentence on the board while students are reading.

Teacher told students to keep quiet while a certain group of students in class were reading. Some students do not know how to read sentences. They had a problem in reading. Some students read sentences which are written on the board clearly and loudly. Teacher picked different individuals to read sentences which were on the board while other students repeat after him/her.

Students didn't write. It was a reading lesson. Teacher told students to go for breakfast. Students who talked in class, teacher caned them before going for break time.

## Appendix H

### A Description of Adults in the Community Who Were Interviewed

Table H1

*A Description of Adults in the Community Who Were Interviewed*

Gender	Years in School	Languages		
		Speak	Read	Write
M	13	Luganda, Swahili, French	Swahili	None
F	10	Luganda, English	Luganda, English	Luganda, English
M	12	Samya, English	Samya, English	Samya, English
F	17	Luganda, English	Luganda, English	Luganda, English
M	13	Luganda, English	Luganda, English	Luganda, English
F	3	Luganda	Luganda	Luganda
F	9	Luganda, English, Lutolo	Luganda, English, Lutolo	Luganda, English, Lutolo
F	6	Luganda	Luganda	Luganda
F	2	Luganda	None	None

*Note.* Lutolo and Samya are not languages listed in an Ethnologue of Uganda. Five of the Nine could speak, read, and write English; one man with 13 years of schooling could speak three languages, read one and not write any; Three people could speak, read, and write only their native language; and one person could not read or write any language. This was according to their report.

## Appendix I

### Sample of P2 and P3 Curricula

#### Sample of P2 Curriculum

Note: This curriculum unit was taken from the Primary 2, Term 1 curriculum for local languages. The underlining and italics were added to show the part of the Primary 2 curriculum the P3 teacher used to support her use of teaching syllables. She did not use any other parts of the curriculum or teach the topic.

#### UNIT 3: NAMES OF PEOPLE, OBJECTS AND PLACES

GENERAL OBJECTIVE : To enable the learner develop appropriate language skills to express names of people, places and objects in sentences.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	CONTENT
<p>By the end of this unit, the learner should be able to :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (a) give names of people in sentences.</li> <li>(b) give names of places in sentences</li> <li>(c) give names of countable objects in sentences .</li> <li>(d) give names of uncountable objects in sentences.</li> <li>(e) give names of abstract ideas in sentences .</li> <li>(f) give collective names in sentences .</li> <li>2. (a) read names of people in sentences.</li> <li>(b) read the generated collective names in sentences.</li> <li>(c) read names of places in sentences.</li> <li>(d) read names of abstract ideas in sentences.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Listening and speaking               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Names of people, places sentences.</li> <li>(b) Names of countable and uncountable objects e .g. cups, air, water in sentences .</li> <li>(c) Names of abstract ideas (constructs) e .g. anger, envy, anxiety, hope in sentences .</li> <li>(d) Collective names e .g . bundle, herd, team in sentences.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Reading               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) <u><i>Sound systems.</i></u></li> <li>(b) Names of people, places in sentences.</li> <li>(c) Names of objects, countable and uncountable in sentences.</li> <li>(d) Names of abstract ideas in sentences.</li> <li>(e) Collective names in sentences.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Writing               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Names of people, places in sentences.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

<p>3. (a) write names of people in sentences.</p> <p>(b) write collective names .</p> <p>(c) write names of countable objects in sentences .</p> <p>(d) write names of abstract ideas in sentences .</p> <p>(e) write names of places in sentences.</p> <p>(f) write names of uncountable objects in sentences.</p>	<p>(b) Names of objects, countable and uncountable in sentences.</p> <p>(c) Names of abstract ideas in sentences.</p> <p>(d) Collective names in sentences</p>
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#### Teaching Hints

- In a story talk about countable and uncountable objects.
- Do an excursion in the environment to collect countable and uncountable objects.

pp. 324-325

National Curriculum Development Centre, (NCDC): The Republic of Uganda (2000). *Uganda primary school curriculum syllabi for primary schools*, Vol. 2. Kyambogo, Uganda: Author.

Sample of P3 Curriculum

**TEACHER'S GUIDE TO UGANDA PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM VOL. TWO**

**TERM 2**

**UNIT: 1**

**TOPIC: WORDS USED IN LOCATING PEOPLE, OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES**

**DURATION:**

**GENERAL OBJECTIVE:** To enable the learner develop knowledge and concepts of locating people and objects for various purposes.

Primary 3

National Curriculum Development Centre, (NCDC): The Republic of Uganda (2001).  
*Uganda primary school curriculum teacher's guide*, Vol. 2. Kyambogo, Uganda: Author.

MAIN IDEAS	PREVIEW OF TOPIC/HINTS	METHODOLOGY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revision of names of people, objects and activities.</li> <li>• Locating words</li> <li>• Instructions related to locations</li> <li>• Language used in requesting for directions</li> <li>• Locating an object</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p>Reading directions from a simple map.</p>	<p><b>Listening and Speaking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create situations which will help learners to use locating words, first give example</li> <li>• Role play situations related to requests for directions and to locations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare reading materials with statements on:</li> <li>• objects, people and locations</li> <li>• language related to requests for direction</li> <li>• Prepare simple village or school map.</li> </ul> <p><b>Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay attention to grammar in locating sentences</li> <li>• Prepare a sample map for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration</li> <li>• Role play</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>•</li> <li>• Demonstration.</li> <li>• Explanation</li> </ul>

Simple maps.	a village or school for demonstration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstration.</li> </ul>
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TEACHER'S ACTIVITY	LEARNER'S ACTIVITY	RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussing names of people, objects and places</li> <li>Giving examples to locating words and using them in sentences e.g. near, after, behind, before etc.</li> <li>Demonstrating situations related to requests for directions and locations.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guiding learners to read</li> <li>Demonstrating to learners how to read a map</li> </ul> <p>Guiding learners on how to write using correct orthography.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guiding learners to draw simple maps e.g. school map, village map, compound map, locating their classrooms.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Listening and Speaking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use locating words in sentences</li> <li>Role play situations related to requests for directions and locations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read sentences and simple stories</li> <li>Read simple maps.</li> <li>Identify locating words in passages read.</li> </ul> <p><b>Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write simple stories about people, objects and their locations.</li> <li>Copy simple maps showing directions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objects placed in different positions</li> </ul>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple maps</li> <li>Reading books and booklets</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maps</li> </ul>

pp. 524-525

## Appendix J

### Teacher Work Schedule for One Week

Table J1

*Teacher Work Schedule for March 25-31, 2006*

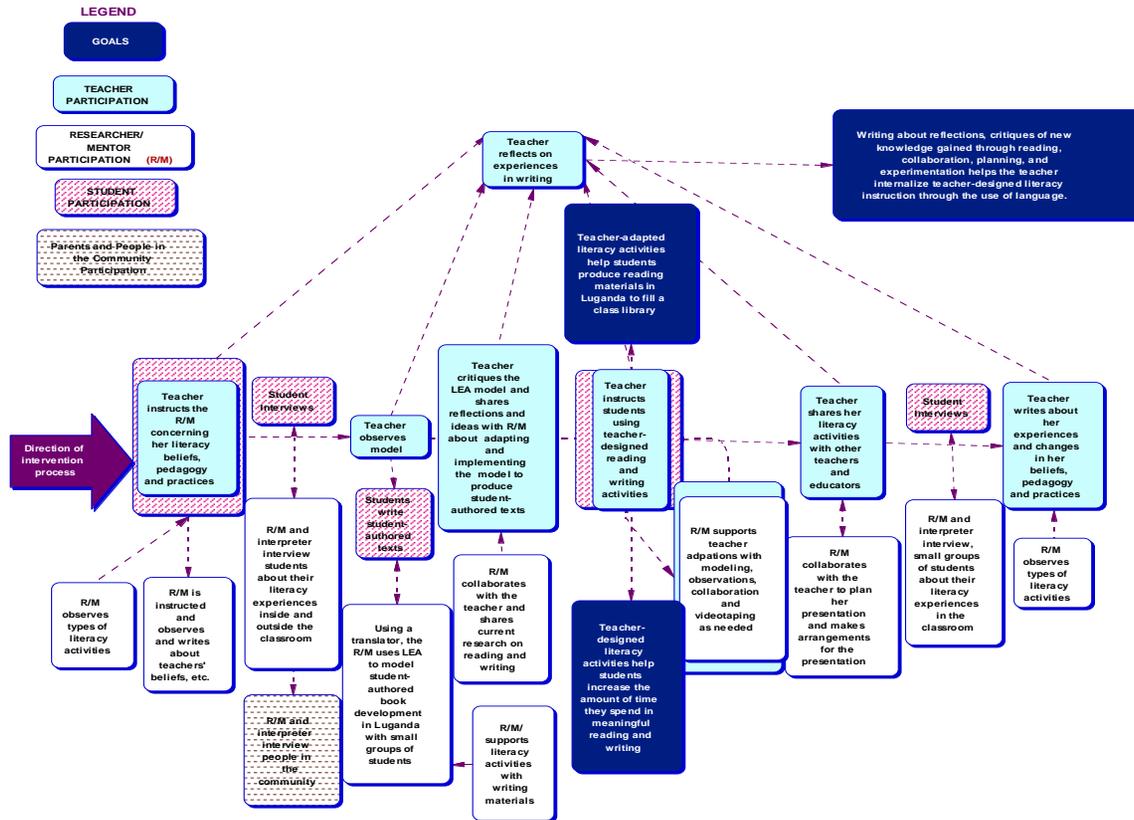
Work week	Luganda			Science and MDD			Duties
	Teaching	Preparation	Grading	Teaching	Preparation	Grading	
Monday		1.5 hour	1 hour	.5 hours	1 hour	.5 hours	1.5 hours
Tuesday	1.5 hour	.5 hours	1 hour		1.5 hour	.5 hours	
Wednesday	1.5 hours	1 hour	1 hour	.5 hours	1 hour	1 hour	
Thursday	1.5 hours	.5 hours	1 hour	1 hour	.75 hours	1 hour	
Friday	.5 hours	.5 hours	1 hour	.5 hours	.75 hours	1 hour	
Total hours:							
27	Working						
7.5	Teaching						
9	Grading exercise books						
9	Preparation						
1.5	Duties: parade and staff meeting						

*Note.* MDD is music, dance, and drama.

(The teacher did no school work on Saturday and Sunday.)

# Appendix K

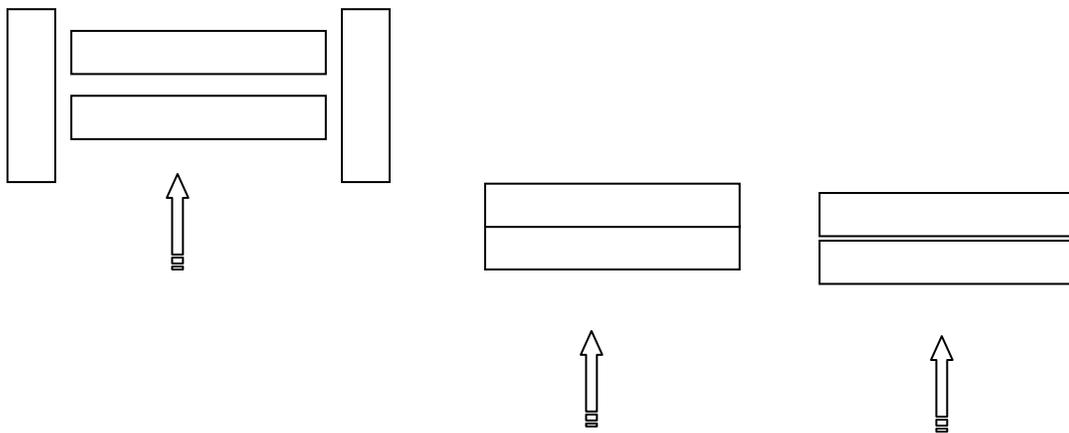
## Innovation Participation Model



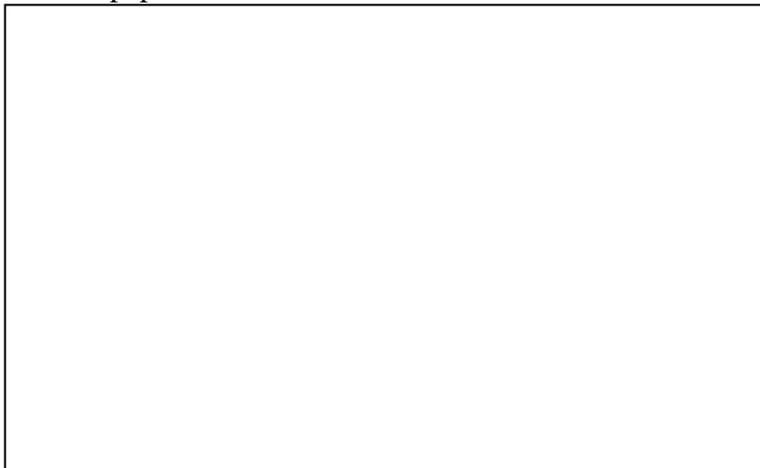
## Appendix L

### Plan for Group Book Writing: A Literacy Activity for 95 Children with One Teacher

I will attempt to explain the plan we are beginning with that will maximize the time the teachers have by using mixed ability groups and teaching children in these groups how to help each other write a book on the topic of the day. The children are now in groups of about 16 with four desks put together like so (there are different heights and lengths of desks):



I am suggesting that they only put 2 matching desks facing each other which would make groups of 8 to 10 students, depending on the length of the desks. That means there would be a maximum of 11 groups in the room. There would be a task sheet taped on one desk with the names of all the students in that group and space under each name to write. The paper would look somewhat like this:



The reason for the paper is to give the children structure on the tasks that need to be completed, and to make sure there everyone has a turn at each task before a person can have two turns. This turn taking will require that students help another student accomplish a task if he/she is unable to.

After the teacher's 10 minute whole class, lesson presentation, the teacher will give the students a pattern or model (especially for P2) for writing their book. If the lesson were on what they do when it rains, after they talk about all the different things they do when it rains and they read sentences about what they have said, the teacher could write on the board in Luganda:

When it rains we wash our clothes.

When it rains we. . . . .

Etc.

Each group gets one book to write initially. The students give out the tasks and they start sharing ideas to help the writer write their book. When they have completed as many pages as they choose to do, they raise their hands and the teacher comes to edit their book. The teacher then hands each student a blank book. Everyone gathers around to copy the edited book. As soon as two of the students have finished copying the edited book, they do partner reading and read their books to each other. When they read the book, their partner puts a check mark under their name and visa versa, and then they can start drawing the pictures that match the pages. The person who is the publisher, takes his/her copy and puts it in the class library after checking the final draft with the teacher. Everyone who has read their book and drawn the pictures is allowed to take their books home to keep except the publisher who must put his/her book in the class library. If the publisher wants a copy to take home he/she must make a second copy of the book. If a student is not able to help another student read a book, then the student finds a new partner.

If the books are not finished within the literacy hour, they can be collected and returned to the students the next day. The reader reads the completed group book to the class or another group.

In her 10 minute presentation, the teacher is supposed to add new words for the topic to a word wall. Each new word will have a simple drawing beside it to help the students remember the word. The wall will become their picture dictionary since they haven't any.

The general idea of this literacy activity is that once 95 children are functioning well in their groups without much supervision, the teacher can pull out small groups of students for 10 to 15 minutes to work on their literacy skills while the other students are working on books.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

Jill Jenkins graduated from Brigham Young University (BYU) with her BS degree in Travel and Tourism in 1998. She earned a TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Teaching Certificate in 1999 and her MA in TESOL in 2001 from BYU. She has been employed as a substitute teacher in the Raytown Public School District, Kansas City, Missouri; as a teacher at the Missionary Training Center, Provo, Utah, and the English Language Center, BYU, Provo, Utah. Jill has also been employed as a graduate research assistant at BYU and George Mason University (GMU).

Jill has presented several papers and published a book. She presented a paper, *Empowering a Ugandan Primary 3 literacy teacher to become an agent of change*, at the Fifth Pan-African Reading for All Conference, Accra, Ghana, and the College Reading Association, Salt Lake City, Utah in 2007. In 2005 she authored a book published in Arabic: 'athar burnaamij al-taġtiis "al-tawaasul al-daa'im" bi-al-luġa al-'arabiyya al-fusha al-mutabbaq fi rawda lil'atfaal al-'arab 'ala 'alaamaatihim fi al-qiraa'a wa-al-ta'biir fi al-madrasa al-'ibtidaa'iyya (The effect of a "constant contact" immersion program in Standard Arabic which was put into practice in an Arab kindergarten on their reading and comprehension scores in elementary school). Damascus, Syria: Daar Al-bashaa'ir. She also presented a workshop, *Local resources for developing student-authored reading materials* at the Fourth Pan-African Reading for All Conference, Swaziland, Africa. In 2000 she contributed information from her 1998 published ORCA scholarship research to a presentation, *Adjustment issues for students from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE* given at NAFSA's 52nd Annual Conference (Association of International Educators), in San Diego, California.