



RESEARCH INTO THE SPEED SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY IN ETHIOPIA

Research Monograph 1

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Executive Summary

An impact evaluation of the Speed School programme has demonstrated that Out of School Children (OOSC) who benefit from it are able to demonstrate superior learning outcomes than a comparable group who have not gone through the programme (Akyeamong et al., 2011). In this report, researchers from the Centre for International Education (CIE) University of Sussex, UK and their partners from Hawassa University, Ethiopia have focused attention on understanding what it is about the pedagogy of the Speed School programme that is responsible for the positive effects. In reviewing the Speed School pedagogy, the researchers were also interested in aspects of the curriculum and the organisation of the training for the facilitators (teachers) that might need improving to enhance its impact. Analysing how the pedagogy is practiced is a key part of understanding why the pedagogy works in the way it does, but also identify gaps between the philosophy and aims, and the observed practice.

Research into the Speed School pedagogy covers a wide range of schools and teachers, and was completed in spring 2016. The following research questions underpinned the review of the Speed School curriculum, pedagogy and practice:

- What is the philosophy behind the Speed School curriculum and pedagogy?
- How does the organisation of Speed Schools support this?
- To what extent does the training of the facilitator support convergence with the curriculum and pedagogy?
- How does the pedagogy work in practice?
- What are the gaps that arise between the philosophy, documentation and practice?

The qualitative research took place in four different Speed Schools using videos of lessons, still photographs, researcher notes, and interviews with teachers and students, all undertaken by researchers from the University of Hawassa, using interpreters where necessary. Data analysis involving all six researchers focused on close analysis of pedagogic practice, drawing up individual case studies and then accounting for differences between methods and approaches.

The review found that in the hands of motivated and creative teachers, the Speed School pedagogy succeeds in getting OOSC to learn with enjoyment and demonstrate an aptitude for deep learning that traditional teaching approaches find more difficult to achieve. The pedagogy can be characterized through three key aspects:

Activity-based learning through group work – all case study teachers placed emphasis on learning through group activity and process skills and wherein pupils re-enact pedagogic content knowledge through multimodal means

Flexible lesson planning and delivery – there was also an emphasis on using a wide range of learning resources and activities within and outside the classroom which kept lessons lively and engaging.

Reflexive student thinking and verbalisation of knowledge – all teachers encouraged individual or group student thinking, sharing and verbalisation of understanding.

Training plays a big part in how this are achieved. The facilitator training goes beyond showing teachers what to do, but provides them with the kind of learning experiences that they are expected to promote in their classrooms. Thus, even in the hands of less experienced and responsive teachers, the longer time spent in school learning the full curriculum of Primary 1, 2 and 3, albeit with a narrower number of subjects, and flexible structure promoted in the teaching process means that pupils are able to engage with the content through a variety of activities that always includes social interaction, so that learning is far more likely to take place.

However, gaps identified that, once acted on would ameliorate some of the differences found between the four case study teachers were the heavy demands made upon poorly paid teachers; differing teacher qualifications; poorer knowledge of Amharic and English in some facilitators; varying training by the different IPs; geographical location and size of classrooms; lack of resources, particularly supplementary readers; use of textbooks; varying use of questioning; need for differentiation of students.

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Introduction and background

The Speed School programme is a temporary catch-up programme based on Ethiopia's national primary school curriculum focusing on Literacy and Numeracy skills of grades 1 to 3, and involving innovative ways of delivering this curriculum. It targets Out of School Children (OOSC) between the ages of 9-14 who dropped out of school for economic reasons, loss of one or both parents, who never attended schools, girls and older children. The graduates of the program are expected to pursue formal education in Link government primary schools from grade 3 or 4, after passing a placement examination prepared in collaboration with the woreda (district) education office. Speed Schools are set up by different Implementing Partners operating in a particular woreda over a period of two to three years, closing down operations once all the OOSC have been identified and passed through the programme. Operating since 2011/12 in the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR) some 3.7 million children have been through the Speed School programme with 96% of them integrating into a local government primary school. As such, the curriculum and pedagogy have to be regarded as successful. The research presented in this report explains this success.

However, real success has to be measured in the extent to which the Speed School graduates are able to learn effectively in the Link Schools, stay on and complete their primary education. In this regard, the report is the first of three research reports with a second forthcoming report looking at the pedagogy taking place in the classrooms of the Link School teachers where the Speed School graduates are. A third report looks at the possibility of pedagogy transfer between Speed Schools and Link Schools through action research involving Link School teachers, strengthening learning for both the graduates and the existing students in mainstream school.

This research is also an integral part of the three-pronged design that includes qualitative research on the nature and impact of mothers' Self-Help Groups and interviewed Speed School graduates on their experiences of mainstream Link Schools and which, together with this research on Speed School training and pedagogy, underpins and informs the quantitative data. The longitudinal quantitative data begun in 2011/12 tracked the socioeconomic characteristics of children, school history, attitudes towards school, and academic performance in literacy and numeracy during baseline and endline. A new round of data collection will focus on three specific long-term outcomes: (i) academic performance in literacy and numeracy; (ii) schooling trajectories from which we measure dropout rates, repetition rates, and completion rates; (iii) attitudes towards education and learning in general. The quantitative survey will take place 5 years after the Speed School intervention.

The objective of the Speed School programme is to provide a short period of high-quality intensive remedial education to bridge basic skills gaps for out of school children (OOSC) for reintegration into the mainstream education system and ultimately positive educational and welfare outcomes. Through the provision of learning materials, supervision and facilitator training, the goal is to ensure that a second-chance education for OOSC leads to successful completion of primary education. The programme recognises the effect of poverty on the achievement of this goal, especially on educational aspiration, school attendance and completion, and attempts to address this by including a 'conditional' micro-credit facility for mothers of Speed School children. The goal is to encourage attendance, reduce poverty and the opportunity cost associated with going to school. Many factors contribute to educational outcomes, including teaching and teacher quality, classroom facilities, commitment of parents to children's education and their income levels.

A basic assumption is that Speed School children would have accrued sufficient educational capital from 10 months of accelerated learning to successfully complete primary education at the standard required. This also means that the government schools which OOSC after their Speed School education enroll will be able to sustain or add value to the learning accumulated. If Speed Schools provide enough 'boost' in terms of high learning outcomes, improve attitudes to learning, then as an accelerated learning model, it ensures that OOSC can catch up and go on to successfully complete primary or lower secondary education.

Whilst an evaluation of the Speed School programme focused on how many children improve their learning, or even make the transition into government schools, is important, what it does not reveal is *how* and *why* it is able to achieve its effect; what do we know about who gains the most or the least from the programme and why? To answer this question, the research team decided to study a small number of purposely selected cases of the programme in action and in great depth. Carefully designed, case studies offer the deepest insights into a phenomenon allowing researchers to understand how and why things happen the way they do, and in the case of Speed Schools, can help us to understand how it accelerates learning and improves learning outcomes.

Organisation of the report

This report considers the barriers that exist for OOSC in accessing education and discusses the principles and assumptions of the Speed School pedagogy, curriculum and teacher training. The research aims, questions, methods of data collection and analysis used for this first case study are then explained. Research findings are presented beginning with a description of the contexts of the four case study schools and the four teachers' identity and influence on their practice that highlight differences between them. A detailed discussion of the characteristic features of the Speed School pedagogy and practice is then given, focusing on classroom management, structure, and the social interaction between students that makes this pedagogy so innovative. As we are seeking to understand how the pedagogy works optimally, the report analyses more fully the differences between teachers. The report concludes by identifying gaps identified in the pedagogy and training.

Barriers to Educational Access for Out of School Children

Several research¹ studies have shown that children leave school or never attend for different reasons, the key ones being poverty; child labour especially if this is an essential contribution to household income; distance to schools; over-age attendance in the context of a mono-grade school curriculum; nomadic or pastoralist life styles; gender – where girls poor attendance or access is linked to cultural/religious factors or gender-insensitive school environment; ill health and disability leading to inconsistent attendance; and loss of one or both parents leaving children without the household support for their education. Schools can intentionally or unintentionally also 'push' children out of school, through for example, an inflexible school calendar which coincides with seasonal local economic activities; absent teachers; irrelevant or culturally unresponsive curriculum; inadequately trained school managers and teachers; poor teaching methods; lack of teaching/learning materials; use of corporal punishment; lack of accountability and the use of an unfamiliar language as medium of instruction. To be successful, accelerated learning programmes (ALPs), such as the Speed School, have to overcome many of these barriers or challenges.

Characteristically, ALPs try to address these barriers through small class sizes of between 25-30 children to enhance quality of instructional interaction; adopt multi-age and mixed-ability grouping; provide greater contextualization of the school curriculum; increase time on task; recruit local usually unqualified volunteer teachers fluent in the local language and can use it as a medium of instruction (MOI); introduce flexible school hours (where necessary) and adopt more interactive or activity-based pedagogies. Some ALPs may have strong local community and civil society involvement and commitment, and introduce careful monitoring and governance structures outside the formal education system.

The Speed School programme in addition to sharing similar characteristics of ALPs, introduces a distinctive pedagogy that does not only enable the OOSC it targets to catch up on basic skills, but takes them through processes of learning that boost their capacity to learn both in the Speed School and subsequently in the Link Schools. In studying the Speed School pedagogy, therefore, the research team was looking for insights into how it qualitatively improves OOSC's learning experience, especially how it changes how they learn and the enabling conditions necessary to achieve this.

Speed School Pedagogy (SSP) – Assumptions, Principles and Structure

Document analysis of the Speed School Facilitators' Guide Training Handbook, the Speed School Manual, and the Minimum Learning Competencies Grades 1-4 (Ministry of Education) supported understanding of the underlying principles of the Speed School pedagogy. The Facilitator's Training Guide (p.16) views the older child who has been out of school as having a learning advantage, assuming that:

- Older students can learn within a shorter time span and at a faster pace than younger children – thus, being overage is not necessarily seen as a disadvantage because of how the approach encourages and values their contribution to learning.
- Children who have been out of school can be more motivated and enthusiastic to learn, because they see a second-chance as an opportunity to re-engage with education to fulfil their life goals.

¹ See Hunt 2008; Akyeampong et al., 2007

A key assumption is that, provided with a collaborative learning environment, children can harness their natural desire for learning. Unlike traditional pedagogical practices in many African classrooms often characterised by strong teacher-centred pedagogy (Akyeampong et al., 2010), the Speed School pedagogy seeks to shift the balance of instructional responsibility towards children requiring them to be more in control of the teaching and learning process. It amounts to a significant departure from the scripted lessons that some ALPs in the region have encouraged. Instead the pedagogy encourages flexibility giving children ample opportunities to (re)represent concepts through group work discussion before presenting their original ideas. This requires Speed School Facilitators (SSF) to be ingenious and avoid prescriptions that can be a straightjacket for facilitators' practice. The very nature of the pedagogy, as we describe later, requires creative thinking and planning by the facilitator and allowance for pupils to work in parallel space and time to rethink the learning. For example, facilitators are expected to adapt textbook content to the pedagogy rather than simply lecture and reproduce the content through rote learning.

To enact the principles, active methods of role play, drama, games, peer teaching, scavenger hunts, discussions and dictation used with charts, flashcards and objects are used, in whole classes, groups and pairs, and field trips. Advantages and disadvantages of each method are given in detail in the Training Handbook. The monitoring and probing role of the facilitator in group work is given a strong emphasis. The Training Guide also has a lengthy insert on encouraging students to ask their own questions known as the six-step Question Formulation Technique, using divergent, convergent, and metacognitive techniques. This involves the facilitator setting a question focus, student writing and improving their own, prioritising, asking and reflecting.

Curriculum, Lesson Planning, and Goals

The structure of the annual and daily calendar and curriculum departs radically from that of the formal school and gives more opportunity to learn the content of the first three years of the primary curriculum over just 10 months. The annual Speed School calendar starts in September and ends in June with 40 weeks of teaching and only two one week holidays, the year divided into three terms of two or three months, each term or phase corresponding to a year of the formal primary curriculum. The teaching day is longer than the four or five hours of the government primary schools, and begins from 8am to 5pm, with 7 lessons a day with a one hour and forty-minute lunch break, and four hours of lessons on Saturday mornings. Facilitators are expected to work longer hours than this in preparation and assessment, 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week minimum, although their salary is less than the government teacher one. Pupils are assessed continuously but the year culminates in a month-long revision period to support pupils in taking the placement examination designed by Link² Primary schools, that identifies which level the students have reached and hence which grade they are to transition to, usually Primary 3 or 4.

The curriculum itself is rooted in the Ethiopian national curriculum and its Minimum Learning Competencies (MLCs), with the government textbook for each year and subject as the teacher's key reference; the rationale is that the pupils have to transition back into mainstream primary schools, and this is a cost-effective way of using existing resources. In effect, the curriculum is meant to create a seamless transition into mainstream government schools at the appropriate level of competence.

The curriculum framework for Ethiopian Education (2010) indicates that:

- The existing curriculum in Ethiopia is based on the objectives of the Education and Training Policy of 1994.
- The curriculum revision focused on rearranging the content and including current issues of concern such as Civics and ethical education, gender, HIV/AIDS education and other government policies and strategies.
- Again, based on the research by Curriculum Implementation and Core Processing Department- MOE, the national curriculum is developed to address lack of relevance of some of the contents, problems in assumed methodology as well as implementation of continuous assessment.
- Having reflected on the challenges of Traditional Methods, the curriculum frame work adapts principles of active learning and adheres to a competency based approach to education to achieve the desired changes

The Speed School curriculum places emphasis on pupils learning Native Languages, English, Mathematics, Amharic and Environmental Sciences, within a tightly planned curriculum that moves them from grade 1 level in Native Languages and basic numeracy in the first two months, to four months at grade 2 level adding in Amharic and Environment Studies, continuing with four months at grade 3 level adding in English. Each subject has a specific allocation of hours to it. The Speed School Training Guide

² Link primary schools are government schools where Speed School graduates are expected to transition and continue their basic education

takes pains to show the relationship between the Speed School and government curriculum so that facilitators are aware of how one fits into the other with the imperative to progress pupils through the curriculum at each phase. Thus, content for each subject and year is not condensed or curtailed, but fully taught through the extended day and a faster pace, with other subjects taught in a cross-curricular manner through the pedagogy.

The expectations for what pupils are to attain come from the government Minimum Level Competences (MLCs), and demand much of both pupils and facilitators to learn and cover in ten months. For example, by the end of the last four months for reading in English pupils should have moved from reading initial letters, matching them to pictures, and reading 25 key words related to people, animals, objects and colours (MLC for English Pre-reading and reading, Grade 1) to using and reading around 300 words, using phonic cues to read new words and reading short paragraphs (MLC for English Reading Grade 3). The Minimum Competencies for Mathematics stipulate that by Grade 3 pupils will be able to add whole numbers to 10,000, multiply whole numbers up to 100 by 1-digit number and divide multiples of 10 and 100 up to 10,000. For Environmental Studies, Health, and Society, by Grade 3 students will have quite sophisticated concepts around disease prevention, sanitation activities, local geography, local industrial items and small scale value chains.

When the research team analysed the requirements of the government and Speed School curriculum, it found similarities and differences, but significantly the Speed School curriculum required slightly more hours. For example, the number of units as well as the content areas were found to be basically the same.

Table1: Comparison of official teaching time – government and Speed School

Mathematics: allocated teaching time-government and Speed School

	Speed School	Government School	Time Allotted Government School	Time Allotted Speed School
Grade -1	12 Units	12 Units	100 Hrs.	104Hrs
Grade-2	9 Units	9 Units	101 Hs	128Hrs
Grade- 3	9 Units	9 Units	100Hrs	128Hrs
			301hrs	360Hrs

English: allocated teaching time-government and Speed School

	Speed School	Government School	Time Allotted Government School	Time Allotted Speed School
Grade -1	15 Units	15 Units	113 Hrs.	104Hrs
Grade-2	14 Units	14 Units	113 Hs	128Hrs
Grade- 3	12 Units	12 Units	113Hrs	128Hrs
			339hrs	360hrs

Generally, both curricula for each subject cover the same amount of content and allocate nearly the same amount of time to cover the content. The main differences are: the Speed School curriculum is activity based and focused on pupils' time on task; concepts are presented through a variety of pupil-led group activities; the curriculum assumes a high resource-based learning environment in terms of basic materials; and curriculum delivery shifts a greater responsibility to learn to the pupils which means they to do a lot more talking between themselves and with facilitators.

Recruitment and training of facilitators

The research team was able to observe one training session although it had planned for several. This was because of the difficulty in synchronizing observation visits with training sessions. Thus, it is not possible to generalize from just this one training session. However, the team was able to gain a good understanding of the training provided, and from this discern how the Speed School pedagogy was presented to facilitators.

Teachers are recruited on the basis of their fluency in the local language, having achieved at least to Grade 10 at secondary school, preferably having obtained a formal teaching qualification and experience of creating an encouraging learning environment. These

facilitators in training seemed young, in their early to mid-20s, with 4-5 men older, in their 30s or 40's. They are Grade 10-12 leavers, with some of them possessing the Certificate in Education from teacher training college but as yet no experience. This cohort were all upgrading to the Diploma over the next year, as part of the government's plan to raise teachers' qualification. However, they had to study for this at the same time as teaching on the Speed School programme, studying at weekends, and making up the four hours they are supposed to teach on Saturdays during breaks and lunchtime, giving them a very full year ahead.

Much hangs on the initial three-week intensive training and facilitators must learn fast, be committed and self-directed, and have faith in the pedagogy itself. Training focuses on the study of practice and tight planning and teachers trained through the same interactive group methodology used to teach students in a socially situated and metacognitive approach. This was articulated as 'revealing the learning' to the students, so that what and how is being learnt is overtly signaled by the teachers gives the learning an intellectual slant in the best examples seen. The facilitator training takes time and care to give the social and economic backgrounds of the targeted group of Out of School Children and their responsibilities are framed within a child's right to education. In this context, the nature and content of the training makes sense, the pedagogy having a distinct structure for a specific purpose. This approach is maintained through the refresher training and weekly visits from Community Mobilisers (CMs) and Training Officers (TOs).

Whilst observing a facilitator training session, the research team saw how close planning was reflected in the given lesson structure. This generally consisted of a recap, teacher explanation of new content, group work in fixed, stable mixed groups labelled according to their medium such as Handicraft or Game group, representation of the newly explained content to peers, individual classwork and homework giving further examples to be worked on of the content. In this session, the training officer "TO" painstakingly wrote out on the board, dividing up an hour into ten minute chunks of activity, beginning with questions or teacher explanation, then music and song, 'teaching by card', group work, 30 seconds of silence for students to think about what they have learnt and what they can remember, ten minutes of slogans and ten minutes of peer teaching at the end. If a topic cannot be completed within the hour, then facilitators can continue without planning again but only if a new topic is not to be introduced. Thus, planning seemed to focus on what the teachers were to do in line with the Speed School philosophy, rather than what the pupils were to do and learn. However, while there was a given lesson structure, there was flexibility as to the way in which a concept could be taught and what kind of tasks were given to each group so that teachers' ingenuity could shape the learning. However, this also means that there will inevitably be some variation in the way that facilitators interpret and enact the curriculum. The research team found in the case studies that facilitators often departed from the tight structure recommended in the training, and found facilitators willing to use the instructional time flexibly and not necessarily follow the timings suggested in the lesson plans.

Facilitators were trained through the same methodology used to teach the children: they were seated in six groups according to Handicraft, Games, Story Telling, Music, so experiencing – 'doing' - what was a very different pedagogic approach, one they would not have come across as school pupils or trainee teachers (Abebe and Woldehanna 2013). Quite explicitly, the training sought to re-conceptualise how these trainees viewed learning, and the OOSC, in a way that was far more than simply 'child-centred', encouraging trainees to accept what the pupils brought with them, the straitened circumstances they found themselves in and how they learnt. Using a metacognitive approach, the young and jovial Training Officer (who had been a head teacher of a primary school), gave the rationale for each part of the lesson, pointing out also that 'we need to reveal the learning for the students', that is, the Speed School Children. The term 'Activity Based Learning' was used by the Training Officer, albeit not a term from the Training Handbook. The rationale given for the group work, that is, the 'activity' or 'doing' part, was for pupils to 're-teach and re-test' lesson content and concept in their groups to the rest of the class, as the Training Officer termed it, through various multimodal media of song, card, story or game. This re-learning or rehearsal of content by different groups in tandem with simple teaching and learning resources is at the heart of the Speed School pedagogic approach. It is the 'saying again' in the pupils' own words, so that they appropriate and own the learning.

Importantly, the facilitator training encouraged precisely this approach, asking volunteers to come to the middle of the classroom to tell a comic tale, or illustrate how they would use cards to teach numbers or stones for counting in a game or a song, drawing on their own cultural backgrounds and presumably what they have also learnt in their formal teacher training. The atmosphere was highly convivial and enjoyable for all. Some trainees came out twice to show in front of the others, those who were more confident and perhaps had more experience, while those who did not volunteer were not pushed to perform. That facilitators were communicating in their mother tongue greatly supported the interaction.

To conclude, the facilitator training adopted an approach directly in tandem with the Speed School philosophy and aims, and illustrated to the facilitator how teaching and learning in the Speed School classroom was to be organised. How this approach was enacted in actual classrooms was the main focus of the research.

Research Methods

Research Objective and Questions

This research focused on analysing the Speed School pedagogy as documented and in practice. More specifically, the goal was to explore detailed contextualized and evidence based experiences and knowledge about Speed School pedagogical practice, and to reach an understanding of how it promoted effective learning, and which essential aspects could be adapted to improve learning in existing government school classrooms in Ethiopia. Thus, it was important to characterise the Speed School Pedagogy, not simply from what programme documents intend it to look like, but from how it can be characterised through an analysis of the pedagogy in action. Thus, in addressing the question: how can the pedagogy used by facilitators in Speed Schools be characterized, the following specific questions guided the inquiry:

- How are teaching and learning materials used?
- To what extent do the students interact with teachers – what is the nature of these interactions?
- To what extent do the students interact with each other – what is the nature of these interactions?
- How does participation of students vary?
- What kind of tasks are students set?
- To what extent are students involved in individual or group exercises or practice?
- To what extent do teachers engage with students in formal and informal, collective, or individual feedback?
- How do teachers respond to students' difficulties?

Methodology

Researchers from Hawassa University working with interpreters where necessary researched in four classrooms in four different Speed Schools in autumn 2015, with researchers from Sussex joining in with the Hawassa team in the initial collection of preliminary data from the pilot. In all researchers observed 35 different lessons (English, Amharic, Mathematics, Science, Sidama Language, and Environmental Science). A total of 32 hours of lessons were observed for the analysis. Together with the intensive classroom observations, interviews and documentary analysis helped to provide a rich narrative intended to: (i) provide a deeper understanding of the Speed School programme in all its facets; (ii) develop further hypotheses that can be tested with the quantitative survey; (iii) explain further any positive relationships or contradictions found in the quantitative analyses. Ultimately, our aim is to pinpoint more accurately what it is about the programme that delivers the outcomes that the longitudinal household survey reveals, but also what is hidden.

The methods used to investigate the classroom pedagogical practice included structured and unstructured observation, follow up interviews with facilitators and students, complemented by still pictures and video photography of all lessons observed. Using this range of instruments enabled the team to produced detailed accounts of classroom instruction process including critical description of interactions, reflections, decisions, and behaviours focusing on the pedagogy, features which enhance the quality of the learning experiences. This produced 'thick descriptions' of classroom interaction and discourse to enable a deep understanding of the pedagogy in action.

An observation template and interview guide were drafted, pilot tested and then improved before final versions were developed (see appendix 1). To complement the observation template recording devices such as video tape, photo camera, and audio recorder were employed with the consent of the facilitators and with knowledge of Implementing Partners (IP) and Community Mobiliser (CM) or supervisors. Evidence from the videotaped lessons were instrumental in authenticating the pedagogy in practice.

Data analysis

The 35 lesson observations of about 32 hours of video tape were organized based on creating individual teacher case studies through a common analytic template developed by the research team. Researchers went through all the hours of video lessons with the help

of interpreters (where necessary), identifying critical incidences, detailing the nature and content of group work, student talk, teacher talk, teacher to student talk, questioning techniques, classroom management practices, assessment activity etc. for each teacher. Further critical analysis was employed to answer and explain the basic questions set out earlier by pulling together varied data collected via the observation template, interview responses, video, and photo evidence. A detailed case study report with references to evidence of facilitators pedagogical practices and students' learning activities was produced for each of the teachers.

The research team then reviewed the evidence from each of the case study reports for commonalities and differences before synthesising to address each of the sub-research questions. Through this process of analysis involving all six researchers – three from Hawassa and three from Sussex - interrogating the data from each of the case studies, it was possible to develop a deep understanding of features of the Speed School pedagogy, how different teachers enact this pedagogy, and how Speed School students were engaged, experienced learning and the extent to which meaningful learning occurred. The analysis focused also on the challenges facilitators faced and how they responded. From the analysis, we were interested in accounting for the differences (if any) between teachers in how they applied the pedagogy and the issues to be considered for Speed School trainers, facilitators, CMs, TOs and Geneva Global Ethiopia to enhance the Speed School pedagogy as an accelerated learning pedagogy to improve short and longer term learning outcomes for out of school children.

School Contexts

Speed School A (SSA) is situated on the outskirts of a small town in the premises of a Protestant church premises. There are two SS classes. One uses Oromifa as medium of instruction, serving families with longer roots in the area. The other, the class studied, mainly takes children whose families have moved into the area more recently and uses Amharic medium. **Abel**, a male teacher, teaches this Amharic medium class. When the school is not in session, the classrooms are used by the church, and parts of the room, specifically the back of the classroom studied, are used for storage of a variety of artefacts such as building materials and offcuts. The area around the classrooms contains grassy areas, some tress and areas where crops are growing.

Speed School B (SSB) is in a more rural area and uses Sidamigna as medium of instruction. Two of the classes share rooms with the kebele Farmers Training Centre. It is in an upland semi-arid but very green area with good climatic conditions. The third class, the one studied, is located within the local government primary school compound. This class began in a very small room but subsequently moved to a larger one though this has the disadvantage of not having lockable windows and door. **Birru**, a male teacher, teaches this class.

There are four speed school classes at **Speed School C (SSC)** all situated in a large government school in the same town as SSA. Three classes use Oromifa medium with the one studied using Amharic medium. **Chuni**, a female teacher, teaches in this Amharic medium class.

Speed School D (SSD) is in the same Woreda as SSB. It has one classroom in a government school and two more, including the one studied, in the local centre of the Productive Safety Net Program. This is a small area with no adequate playground and no water. The medium of instruction is for all classes is Sidamigna. **Danchille**, the fourth teacher of this case study, teaches here.

All four classrooms have a concrete floor though these tended to be quite cracked and dusty and often bore the signs of chalk which had been used for educational game activities. The classes had adequate numbers of desks for the 25 children and were arranged in four groups. There was also a teacher's desk. The walls were hung with educational materials, mainly work produced by the children. Each class also contained artifacts produced by the children mainly in card or in unfired clay, for example letters, numbers and geometric shapes which were either stored on a table or shelf or on the floor. Classrooms had one or two chalkboards and one had mini-chalk boards for each group. Apart from cards or clay and occasional use of improvised materials such as maize stalks, these classrooms had no other materials. Each teacher had the national textbook for each subject at Grades 1-3.

Speed School teacher identity and the influence on practice

Any pedagogical approach is as good as how teachers understand and operationalise it. Thus, the research team focused on how the four case study teachers enacted the Speed School pedagogy. The extent to which the four case study teachers were able to

deliver the Speed School curriculum as intended reflected knowledge from formal teacher training and Speed School training, both of which seem to determine their creativity, and how they handled classroom challenges. Differences in the case study teachers' backgrounds, qualifications, experiences, Speed School training translated into differences in their practice.

Table 2 below shows some of the important defining characteristic features of the four facilitators studied. It shows that the facilitators were not the same in the way they went about their teaching, but essentially all their teaching included key elements of the Speed School pedagogy as prescribed in the training. The video evidence of teaching showed a consistent pattern in the way the different facilitators went about their teaching.

Table 2: Speed School Case Study Facilitator Professional and Instructional Characteristics

Teacher	Chuni	Danchille	Abel	Birre
Qualification	Completed grade 10 and diploma in theology	Completed grade 10; attended summer teacher training at government teacher training college	Diploma in Teaching at Primary level	Completed grade 10 and pursuing diploma in government teacher training programme
Experience	Two years teaching experience in private school and first year teaching in Speed School	Three years of Speed School teaching experience	First year in teaching as well as in Speed School	Three years of teaching experience in Speed School
Training	Attended Facilitator Training	Attended Speed School Facilitator training for three consecutive years	Received Speed School orientation	Attended Speed School Training
Personal Characteristics	Not interested in teaching as a career; doing teaching due to lack of other job opportunities	Highly interested in teaching; pursuing formal teaching training	Highly motivated and interested in teaching; committed to working with pupils to shape learning behaviour	Generally interested in teaching as a career
Instructional Characteristics	Consistently adopted a more structured approach	Consistently creative in use of group discussion e.g. group discussion of questions; frequent use of individual thinking	Used predominantly own materials and ideas in lesson delivery. Highly creative teaching	Highly dominant teacher directed approach
Teaching Strategies	Relied heavily on textbook e.g. read passages, gave exercises etc.; more teacher talk than pupils	Consistently used textbook to guide instruction e.g. to provide exercises, examples; lots of group discussion and presentation	Consistently used a wider range of teaching strategies - individual thinking; group discussion and presentations; greater involvement of pupils in lesson and high pupil autonomy in the instructional process	Used a moderate range of teaching strategies e.g. teacher explanations; whole class common short answer questions; group discussions; pupils have moderate autonomy in the instructional process

Abel produced the most engaging lessons of all four teachers studied, and his class had the highest level of student participation and critical engagement. Abel had a formal teaching qualification (Diploma) which seemed to contribute to his ability to appropriate the pedagogy in more creative ways than the other teachers. But, unlike the other teachers, he had only received an orientation to the Speed School programme. So, unusually for a Speed School, Abel³ is a trained teacher although this is his first teaching post. He joined the school late replacing a previous teacher who dropped out. As a result, he did not take part in the initial SS training sessions and learned about the particular approach from colleagues and supervisors until he was able to receive some brief training. He is in his early 20s, and is enthusiastic about his role and particularly the emphasis within the SS on having a good relationship with the students. He mixes with them during the breaks. Abel approves of the approach of the SS so that *'those students who are economically disadvantaged and dropped out from regular education are supported to continue their education'* and like Birru, Abel sees his role as one helping his community and country. He goes as far as using his own money to buy students school supplies and talks to parents of those with behaviour issues. Explaining why he was interested to teach in his interview, he said:

³The names of the teachers are pseudonyms whose initials have been chosen to coincide with the schools where they teach.

"My major reason behind is humanity, that forced me scarifying myself more than the monthly salary I am paid. That means my daily coming to and living from the work place is not based on keeping official working hours. Because I have citizenship and humanity obligations to help them as they are citizens of the nation. As these children are from diverse family backgrounds such as some have no family and others, though they may have family, but economically from very poor. When I consider myself what can I help them, I found that my knowledge is the only thing I have; it is neither wealth nor my clothing. Hence, I have citizenship obligation to share what I learned in order to help them. The other thing is that when they demonstrated objective changes in their life, that change is also mine too, I am happy when I see such change in them."

Abel's teaching can be characterized as linking learning to many concrete real life examples in the local environment, taking students outside to use the space and maize stems, and differentiating for students with special educational needs. He summarized learning from previous lessons and always at the end of each lesson. As it was observed in actual classroom practice, Abel was enthusiastic to teach his students and mentioned the importance of having good relationship with students to make their experience of learning positive especially since they are *economically disadvantaged and dropped out of regular schools*. Abel felt that the posture of the SS teacher was important as this determines the level at which students engage in the teaching and learning process (see Figure 1 below).



Figure 1: Abel closely assisting students' learning

This is the third year that Birru has taught in a SS, so he had more years teaching in Speed Schools than Abel and Chuni, although not Danchille and seemed more familiar with the methods and he has attended SS training sessions. His previous two years were spent in SS in another Woreda where the scheme has finished. His formal education was up to grade 10 but he has been able to join an in-service teacher training program in a government Teacher Training College to gain his Diploma which meets mainly in the school holidays. Birru has a mild and consistent approach to his students. He was strongly committed to the approach of the SS based on open and informal relations with the students, avoidance of corporal punishment and practical activity: *'the rationale behind using such teaching strategy is based on my work experiences... for last three years in speed schools.'* He sees himself as working to support his society and fellow citizens and was very aware of the economic problems faced by his students. Birru's teaching can be characterized by his use of music as an icebreaker and to motivate, using the outside space to study 'the Forest' and touch soil samples. He predominantly used explanations and whole class short answer questions and peppered lessons with mini-summaries but also used recaps, group work, presentations and classwork deployed somewhat inconsistently.

Chuni is aged around 21 and in the first year of working within the SS. However, she has a Diploma in Theology and two years of experience in teaching at private kindergarten in two different schools. Her English was not, however, that strong. She has a generally quiet manner and shows respect and politeness in interacting with the children, often smiling. On one occasion when she made a mistake which a student told her that she missed the sequence, then she thanked him and corrected it. She is keen to develop a sense of belonging and collective identity in the class, for example by requiring them to apologize to their classmates rather than her if they come late. The children spoke highly of her and reacted warmly to her. Her teaching can be characterized by her use of silent individual thinking, use of teacher questions and brainstorming in groups, and public correction of students' individual responses. Sometimes she demonstrated poor time and classroom management skills, as teacher talk predominated in lengthy explanations of new subject content with use of question and answer, choral work and copying with students wandering around the classroom, leaving inadequate time for students to complete work individually.

Danchille is also around 21 years old and studied to grade 10. Although this is a new school for her, she has been working for three years in a SS in another Woreda which is now closed. This means that she has attended speed school pedagogy training for each

of those years. She was very consistent in her interaction with the students and although seen as strict was never seen to raise her voice. She also was happy for students to point out when she made a mistake. She was popular with the students who found her *'inviting and encouraging'* and thought she explained things very clearly. Her levels of English and Amharic, however, were not that strong. She was especially keen to see all students succeed: *I see all of my pupils in the same way. But I support them according to their level of understanding. I see myself as a good teacher because I treat pupils in a good way.* Her teaching can be characterized by her clarity of explanation, her emphasis on getting students to think individually for some seconds, then to solve problems in pairs or groups before responding individually to her often open questions, use of brainstorming in groups to recall previous learning and writing up the fruits of that discussion on mini chalkboards. She gave adequate time for students to do work individually towards the end of the lesson and worked through the activities again with the whole class using individuals to do addition or write words on the chalkboard and giving further explanation. Student talk predominated.

Generally, we found that Abel with teacher training experience showed more creativity which seem to enhance the quality of his application of the Speed School pedagogy. This would suggest that attracting professionally qualified facilitators means they can bring that experience to facilitate effective teaching. The two teachers who had repeated SS training also demonstrated a wider range of strategies associated with the pedagogy.

Despite their generally positive approach to working in the SS the teachers all expressed dissatisfaction with the level of their salary which was seen as not adequate for their daily subsistence. Especially where they had contact with government teachers they noted that their workload was greater but their salary lower. Several suggested that they would leave if there were other alternatives.

Characteristic features of the Speed School Pedagogy and Practice

From the analysis of the four case study teachers' practices it is possible to discern a consistent pattern of practice that broadly exemplifies the core elements of the Speed School pedagogy. We see these also as the particular strengths of the pedagogy and fall under three categories:

1. **Activity-based learning through group work** – all case study teachers placed emphasis on learning through group activity and process skills and wherein pupils re-enact pedagogic content knowledge through multimodal means
2. **Flexible lesson planning and delivery** – there was also an emphasis on using a wide range of learning resources and activities within and outside the classroom which kept lessons lively and engaging.
3. **Reflexive student thinking and verbalisation of knowledge** – all teachers encouraged individual or group student thinking, sharing and verbalisation of understanding.

The use of the local language created an atmosphere where both teachers and students engaged in constant dialogue, at a level not seen in typical African classrooms where English is used as the medium of communication. Friendly classroom environments, free of intimidation or threats encouraged a high level of participation in the lessons. The classroom culture and management was collaborative with teachers generally ready to respond to individual learning needs and disruptive behaviour when it occurred within a group. Also, the teachers often tried to ensure that all members of the group were on task and engaged the groups through questioning, participation in the group task, encouragements and correction of deviant behaviour. The Training Handbook determines that any pupil 'mis' behaviour should be understood as emanating from the facilitator's failure to engage the child, or being caused by the school infrastructure (lack of water or pleasant latrines) or on the child's circumstances such as transition, learning disabilities, hunger, ill health or family issues. This approach would appear to explain why the teachers used encouraging gestures and light reprimands to encourage all students to stay on task.

However, the extent to which the discernible characteristics of the Speed School pedagogy achieved their intended purpose in the classroom depended on how well the teachers were able to harmonise and operationalise each of the three important elements of the pedagogy. What the analysis clearly showed is that the extent to which the Speed School pedagogy achieved its intended purpose depended on the teacher, and this raises the importance of regular training and monitoring of practice. Our observation of classroom practice revealed that some groups seem to get more from the activities than others, and with no rotation of the group members to different activity groups, some students may not be getting as much from some activity based tasks. Fixed grouping seemed to be a limitation of the SS pedagogy in the way in which it could provide inequitable development of conceptual understanding.

The following questions directed data analysis as the research team aimed to get a deep and detailed understanding of the teaching and learning methods used. These questions structure the rest of this report:

- What kind of classroom management is used?
- How do teachers deliver learning through the lesson structure?
- How do teachers use explanation, summary, materials and questioning?
- What is the nature of student talk and responses?
- How is new content practiced?
- What is the nature and participation of social interaction?
- How does this participation vary?
- How do students contribute to and reflect on learning?
- What is the nature of the class work?
- How do teachers respond to students' difficulties?
- To what extent do teachers engage with students in formal and informal, collective or individual feedback and assessment?

Classroom management

Generally, all four teachers created a positive classroom environment with respect for their students made explicit in the way they addressed and encouraged them, allowed them some freedom and responsibility and withheld corporal punishment. Some teachers were less aware of off-task behaviour such as Chuni, so students could be noisier and moved out of their seats more often, being disengaged at times. In Birru's class students felt anxious when they did not get the opportunity to answer questions, and several changed seats during lessons. Danchille paid great attention to all students keenly observing them, using eye contact, talking and touching them gently on the shoulder. She allowed freedom but not enough to disturb others. Abel similarly used his own body language (eye contact) or tapping them gently as light reprimands and occasionally raised his voice. Mostly he focused on reminding, encouraging, reinforcing and reprimanding the whole class on behavioral and instructional issues and as such created a stress-free environment. On the whole, teachers allowed more freedom of expression and tolerated levels of noise and movement that encouraged active participation of students in the teaching and learning process.

Structure of lesson delivery

A basic structure of all the lessons of the teachers was discernible. They began with a recapitulation of previous work in the topic area, new material was then introduced, students were given an opportunity to develop or practice the ideas through small group work, while the teacher monitored and worked with each group. The lesson concluded with students or student groups presenting the material back to the whole class. Some teachers summarised the new learning or presented further examples and exercises for students to complete on their own while they marked individuals' books. Some also gave homework to consolidate and challenge what had been learnt. Within this structure particular elements were given greater or less emphasis by different teachers and on different occasions and occasionally one or more elements might be omitted.

Summarizing at start of lesson

Summarising a lesson at the start of a new lesson provides opportunity for learners to recollect key points that help to link with new ideas. Almost all lessons began with a recapitulation or revision of what had been done in previous lessons using Think-Pair-Share. Within this the teacher would ask the students to recall what they had learnt and reflect on individually, often by closing their eyes for a few seconds and holding their heads in their hands. They would then generally be asked to discuss in the groups what they had learned. After their discussions the teacher might work with the whole class to reflect on their prior learning and summarize the points by posing questions mainly and eliciting answers. These would be fairly open questions with students giving longer answers though short more closed questions and answers were also used and favoured particularly by Birru.

Abel, on the other hand would often start his lesson by asking students to sit quietly and recollect individually what they had learnt in a previous lesson, then ask them to share this in their group, before inviting a representative from the group to share with the whole class, and then finally he would summarise the students' summaries. Thus, he went from individual to group to whole class summaries before he summarised. Abel's students got better engagement through individual thinking, group discussion, and reflection to the class about last time lesson. In most lessons Danchile would begin her lesson with revision of the previous one and would sometimes use group discussion to consolidate what had been learnt in the previous lesson. She provided more chances for students to think

about the previous lesson especially if they couldn't recollect this readily – there was no rush to move onto the new lesson until students had produced accurate summaries of the key points from the previous lesson. Danchille's strategy of revising lessons showed consistency and allowed students to grasp information with adequate repetitions. On the other hand, Chuni would sometimes rush through the summary and her students often provided summaries that suggested that they had simply memorized key information from previous lessons.

Frequently, as was quite typical of Abel and Danchille's practice, rather than question and answer, groups were asked to present the material back to the class either collectively or through an individual. This would sometimes be an oral report and sometimes involve using the resources or activities that the group had created during the lesson. The teacher might then summarize the points before moving on to the lesson in hand. Student engagement was reported to be strong in these recaps, although the teacher's summary then directed the learners towards the new material and so recaps were time-limited. The amount of time devoted to this varied: sometimes it might amount to no more than a couple of minutes whereas on one occasion Birru took almost half an hour to revise a science lesson on forests. Mostly though the recapitulation lasted for 10 to 15 minutes. Very occasionally the lesson would begin without revision of previous material. Generally, the teachers paused at different stages of their lessons to allow students to recap before progressing further.

In conclusion, summaries achieved three major purposes:

- *They encouraged students to develop confidence in their ability to think and make sense of what had gone on before, but also encouraged them to reflect on the day's lesson as it progressed*
- *By revising most parts of the lesson, this allowed students to repeat and remember most of what they learned the last time*
- *By revising new concepts as lessons advanced students were given to easily catch up with what was being taught and ensure that most students progressed together as a group.*

Explaining

Accelerated learning depends on pupils grasping lesson content rapidly and securely, so that teachers' explanations of new content and concepts need to be clear, imaginative, and based on secure content knowledge. This is particularly important since students do not have their own textbooks to refer back to in case of misconceptions.

New content was introduced often with the teacher referring directly to the government text book for the relevant grade whose work they were covering. In each case the teacher had the only copy available. Chuni for example read aloud a passage from the textbook in a lesson about local crops and then asked some questions about it. In the actual instruction Chuni used the textbook as teaching material. To read passages, to write exercises and notes she used the students' text book. The chalkboard was the main teaching resource used and so text from the book would often be written up there and students were asked to copy it into their exercise books. However, although few specific teaching resources are provided all of the teachers also used flash cards and objects available locally, so for example in one science lesson taken by Birru different types of soil were shown and passed around by the children so the children could note their differences and Chuni folded a piece of paper to show the concept of half. Question and answer were used to construct a text and sometimes there was drilling with choral response, often with Chuni and Birru. Although covering the same material there was considerable variation in the way that the teachers approached exposition. Birru during this phase of lesson did most of the talking and favoured choral response and short answers from individual children and then copying down text from the board. For example, in a science lesson he explained that in day time the sun rises whereas, during night time nothing can be seen it is dark and that a day has 24 hours. He then got the students to repeat these facts together. He asked that if a day is 12 hours how many hours will be night. The class responded together. Birru also used his body and gestures to explain scientific concepts and was energetic in getting content across. There were times where teachers' explanations were used in a whole class setting after the teacher had taught a concept and asked the whole class a question and waited for responses. This approach was likely to camouflage weaker students' understanding as they learn without real understanding of what was being taught.

These more teacher-centred explanations were less a part of Abel's and Danchille's repertoire and they tended to involve the class more actively in the explanation, selecting students for lengthier interaction. Danchille for example questioned children about their family relations in order to explain in a lesson about families and got four children to stand at the front to symbolise a family unit and used pictures and music to illustrate concepts. She had words in Amharic and English hanging down from the ceiling. Rather than drilling she asked further questions of different children, only moving on when she seemed happy they had understood, as they said: *'We learned the real thing that we found at home in addition to this we learned the lesson in a pictorial representation'*. Abel explained

the day's English lesson, Time to Eat, by first reading a conversation from the text and then conducting a dialogue with one student, explaining it then in Amharic before getting two students to rehearse the conversation in front of the class. He then showed a picture in the English textbook to the class and wrote on the blackboard about food and drink. Abel also used a variety of materials to aid comprehension such as using diagrams, body gesture and movement, learners themselves, door, blackboard, chalk, students' text books, coins, flashcards, mud, dry corn stalks and bushes. He took students outside to line up to explain dots, lines and angles and explain geometric shapes using the analogy of bread, moon, and plate. Abel's classroom displayed students' work on benches and on the floor. From the actual classroom observation it is possible to add one point. Considering the flow of instruction Abel frequently, employs diverse repetitions strategies of the same concept in the instructional process, including individual thinking, activity group discussion, reflection to the whole class, group presentation (at least three groups presentations the same content), explanation (lecture), class work and/ or homework about the same content such Water, Air. This strategic flow of instruction enables repetition of the same content in many different forms or activities and positively contributes to the achievement of learning outcomes. Abel's explanations were also targeted to group or individual learners and aimed to alleviate learning difficulties. In this way, Abel and Danchille enacted good pedagogical content knowledge, with convergence between the concept being taught, the pedagogy used, the materials that illustrated the concept, and indeed, in pupils' representation of the content, as the activity used.

In conclusion, the way in which 'explaining' concepts and new ideas to varying degrees and quality achieved four important goals:

- *Students get an opportunity for elaboration that has potential to build common understanding among them and hold them to stay engaged in the instructional process*
- *By sometimes receiving individual attention from the teacher ensured that teachers were able to follow up on who was progressing and was still struggling. Abel, in particular used this to great effect. He would elaborate on concepts by visiting the different groups offering further explanations as group members were engaged on a task.*
- *The approach used by the teachers had the potential to create positive student-teacher relationship as teachers visit groups to explain concept or activities*
- *Also by using a variety of real objects, body movement and analogies in their explanations, this enables students to create one or several associations and remember the concepts.*

Teaching and learning materials

Teachers used the blackboard, students' text book, and natural resources around the school for facilitating students learning by elaborating the concepts, and approaching the concept from different angles. Resources remained limited in quantity and variety and no classroom had a library of 40 supplementary readers nor did an observation capture the reading aloud of a story. However, this lack of resources can be construed as a strength as the pedagogy relies on social interaction rather than a costly package of materials that once used, needs to be replenished, and may not be contextually appropriate. Modelled by teachers, it is the students who make much of the resources to show or represent the content through throwing a ball or using cards, or a game chalked on the floor, or making clay letters and numbers. Students' confidence in preparing flashcards gained support from the teacher and their peers, and contributed to positive interaction among students and the teacher. Their confidence grew as they presented learning materials to the whole class and listened to other presentations on making flashcards. Teaching and learning materials were also not restricted to things that students had constructed and displayed in the classroom, but extended to handling concrete materials outside the classroom, which seem to provide real life practical learning experiences. The use of different teaching and learning materials seem to help students learn each lesson in different multimodal forms and potentially addressed various learning preferences of students.

In summary, the use of teaching and learning materials served several purposes and contributed to the effectiveness of the Speed School pedagogy. The following three points in particular stood out:

- *Students learnt how to associate concepts with materials around them and through the use of their own body, thus personalising the use of concrete materials in concept development.*
- *By constructing their own materials for most lessons, students had to transfer new knowledge into a different medium, enabling visualisation and relating meaningfully and creatively to abstract concepts, as well as keeping students actively busy.*

- *The visible accumulation of the materials created by the students over the ten months in classroom displays reflect back their successful learning and become a further resource in themselves reminding them, like summaries, of what has been learnt. This is echoed in the importance attached to individuals' exercise books where their learning over time is recorded and assessed and turned to as reference material by teachers and students themselves.*

Questioning

The ability of teachers and students to use questions to stimulate discussion and review understanding is an important element of effective teaching. The Speed School pedagogy encouraged questions to achieve this purpose. Students engaged with the teacher in asking and answering questions individually, in working with the teacher during group discussions, working out activities on the chalkboard, and individual interactions during class work when the teacher assessed them orally and in writing. Questions can also be forwarded as a means of introducing the lesson, advancing the lesson, clarifying the concept, summarizing or concluding the lesson.

Teachers often used closed, low level factual questions such as Abel's 'what happens if there is no air?' and further characterized by Burri who asked 'how many vowels are there, and how many consonants?' Such questions did not stretch students cognitively and in the short common yes/no response encouraged choral rote learning. Moreover, sometimes Burri did not ask questions but wrote the answers to, for example, what two syllables make directly on the board without giving time for students to work this out for themselves or support those who did not understand and so responses came from the quicker abler students, often group leaders. Abel used questions flexibly with one set of factual questions on the board used by one girl to ask a peer next her. Abel and Burru also set group questions such as 'discuss the sources and uses of water' and 'what animals crawl on their belly?' In limited instances Birru asked students to justify why they decide their response to be, for instance, in Maths lesson about time measurement, Birru asked students to discuss about the smallest and largest time measurement and let one student present the answer with justification. The whole class also engaged in talking especially when teachers asked a common question and students gave a choral response. This was used by some teachers more than others.

Chuni often used questions that encouraged students to give several answers to a specific question. For example, in the science lesson on forests, she asked her students what the purpose of water was, and encouraged a wide range of responses. Danchile used brainstorming in order to introduce a new lesson for example, in science subject family members and natural resource lessons and in a Sidama language subject punctuation lesson. Danchile encouraged students to comment on the answer of other students and invited others to add further responses. For example, in a mathematics addition lesson after some students had worked out a solution on the board, she asked for confirmation and justification from other students. In addition, she also verified the answer with the whole class. She was very patient with students whether they got the answer to a question right or wrong.

More open questions that stimulated recall were also asked, often as part of the recap to establish a baseline understanding prior to presenting new content. Chuni for example asked students to explain what uses can be made of water and wood and 'how can we look after the forest?' She asked for further examples and elaboration of the responses gained. It also was evident that students were far more motivated and engaged through questioning than when the teacher simply told the content. Indeed, asking questions is the most common form of instruction throughout a lesson and when explicitly linked to real life applications these become higher order and cognitively challenging. Higher order questions were also used to reflect and evaluate on the lesson's learning. What have you learnt about? – e.g. angles outside the classroom (Abel). Though it was sparingly, Abel also used higher level questions when he encouraged students to forward reflections about the day's lesson, for instance, after Amharic Subject lesson topic "constructing words". Such questions encouraged students to think about what they did and to forward organized thought about concepts and activities, as depicted in Figure 2:



Figure 2 Students use questions to think about what they are doing in groups and to forward organized thought

The place where learners have to answer the question may have some learning advantage for learners such as answering in their seating position, answering in standing up where they are seated, answering from the front of the class, and answering a question by writing on the blackboard. Specially, individual learner answering by writing on the board has significant learning benefit even for factual questions.

Generally, using questions:

- *Helped students to engage in the lesson actively, motivated all students to have a go at answering questions and contributed to the collective identity of students as knowledgeable and capable*
- *Questions answered by groups of students became a way in which knowledge was shared, debated and constructed.*
- *Shorter factual questions established a baseline of knowledge as part of recap or evaluation*
- *More open questions with a range of responses created cognitive challenge and involved more students*
- *Questioning at different levels was a form of differentiation.*

Student talk and development of skills

One of the important characteristics of the Speed School classroom is the different opportunities the pedagogy offers for students to ask questions and engage in critical dialogue among their peers and with their teachers. On the whole, the research team noticed the diversified nature of students' talk, for instance, sharing reflections with a partner, talking whilst doing a group activity, presenting a specific assignment or activity to the whole class. For example, students confirmed in their interviews that Danchille encouraged them to ask questions when they need clarification: *"the teacher encourages us to ask questions that are not clear to us in every instructional time"*. However, students posing questions were rare, either knowing the topic sufficiently or being too afraid to ask, although students made requests to Abel during group work. Students in Chuni's class however said *'When we ask questions she discusses it properly'*. Apart from questioning, we observed how some teachers used activities in which students have to demonstrate something or share their views. Chuni encouraged students to draw pictures on the board which helped them to develop their artistic skills. In some lessons her strategy of group discussion and presentation helped her students to share ideas and contribute to the success of group work. Danchille's use of group discussion, think-pair-share and students' presentations enhanced their interaction in the instructional process and their communication skills, as well as social interaction. Through group discussion they made meaning from the content discussed in a group, developed negotiation skills and instructional language use. Danchille's use of different instructional methods for example, music, game, handicraft and card helped students to learn the same content in different ways. Danchille used students' talk as a main tool for students' collaborative learning and sharing of experience helped them to interact among themselves and with the teacher. It also helpful to them to construct knowledge rather than memorizing facts.

Generally, there were several opportunities for students' talk throughout the instructional process, either formally organized or informally managed by the learners' specific situations. Such talk enabled students to:

- *Engage in thinking, explanation and reflection.*
- *Talk to each other, make conversation, share ideas and develop communication and interpersonal skills as they engaged in group discussions, negotiate and agree on how to conduct presentations.*
- *Write what they thought in front of the class and in the process developed confidence in talking in front of their peers.*

This wide range of opportunities for student talk and skills development flowed from the underlying principle of the Speed School pedagogy, which was more than acquiring cognitive skills but crucially about developing non-cognitive skills. Thus, the Speed School pedagogy was not simply about a one-dimensional focus on educational achievement or ability, that is, focused on development of cognitive skills. Non-cognitive skills such as those promoted through student talk and other activities in the Speed School classroom enhances self-esteem and confidence, both of which are important as traits that are valued in high achievers and particularly important for these OOSC (Heckman & Rubinstein 2001).

Group Work: Practice of new content learned

It is important to note that the explanations the teachers gave used different forms of representation including much use of the body, demonstrating, singing, using drawings and objects. This prefigured the next part of the lesson where the children put into practice the ideas the teacher had taught. Sometimes this involved normal seatwork such as doing sums or writing words in an exercise book. Even when this did happen it was normally accompanied by group discussion. However, the groups in the Speed school classroom have specific names which reflect the form of activity that children are asked to carry out: Game, Music, Card and Handicraft (though not a group name in Abel where the fourth group was Slogan Group). Thus the Game group would be asked to work collaboratively to make a game out of the lesson material. For example, in a lesson about the purpose and sources of water they made a miming game where the players had to guess what was going on and shout out the answer: drinking, washing, flowing, a river. Often they would use a ball and throw it to each other where the receiver had to give an answer or else they chalked a diagram on the classroom that could be used in a hopscotch game. The Music group would be asked to make up and perform a song or a rhythm that conveyed the concept or information in question for example a song about the units of time from seconds to years. The Card group would be making flash cards usually involving making pictures or words that might be matched or numbers. Handicraft might also make things from card or materials such as maize stalks but particularly used clay to make solid models including those of letters and numbers. The task of the Slogan Group in SSA was to distill the most important point about the lesson, so that they could be shouted out as a slogan, the members of the group raising their fists as they enumerated for example the different uses and sources of water.

In almost all cases the different groups were working in parallel, covering the same points exactly but representing them differently. However in one lesson on sources of power Birru allocated the tasks slightly differently asking the Music Group to focus on natural sources of power, the Card group on electricity, the Game Group on liquid fuels and the Handicraft group on solar power. Birru also gave out group discussion questions.

During this phase of the lesson all the teachers would circulate amongst the groups. Frequently this stage of the lesson was concerned with collaborative rather than individual work. Each of the teachers set sometimes specific and sometimes more open ended tasks for the groups but Abel and Danchille seemed particularly to have thought through and planned what each group might do. While the groupwork was progressing the teachers moved between the groups. Mostly they would observe the group work before sometimes intervening and sometimes moving on to another group. Danchille in particular was keenly observed to watch and monitor individuals and groups. Generally speaking, most of the students were very engaged with the group activity most of the time. This may have been aided by the attention of the teacher, though it was noted that when she was not looking at their group, children in Chuni's class were sometimes very boisterous with each other and not always on task. The level of noise of the students in the groups was varied with the task in hand but the teachers were relaxed about it and rarely remonstrated quietened the children down.

The teachers' interventions in the group work took different forms. They often joined in with and led the group discussion. Abel, for example, in a mathematics lesson was seen to move to each group in turn, observe what the children were doing and then add extra explanation – showing them the text book and making angles and shapes with his fingers, as well as asking questions of the group. It was noted that his intervention drew in all members of the groups. Chuni's role as well as keeping the children on task was often to react to questions that the groups asked when she arrived. She observed students while they discussed in a group by walking around the class and responded to their question. She also directed them to the right track when they were off-task. Burri sometimes did not monitor group work closely enough so students were off-task and shouting without being collaborative, nor did he specify norms such as how groups were to discuss and report their discussion result as well as how much time to be devoted for each exercise.

At the end of the group work the class was brought back together and asked to report back. On some occasions this performance seemed to be the main objective of the group work. Since most of the time the group activities concerned the same learning point it mean that the students then experienced in four different ways: as a game, a song, an interaction with cards and in concrete form

through the crafted materials or else with the main points presented as slogans. Mostly the other groups joined in. The music group for example would teach the song to the rest of the class, the handicraft would show their models or pass them round and the game group would choose someone to come and play the game.

The practice of new content meant that:

- *Students relearn and represent new content through their medium, and this active practice of the new content consolidated learning, further enhanced by listening and joining in with other group's presentations in multimodal ways.*
- *The social construction of the representation through language, gesture and materials was dialogic in nature, supporting both cognitive and non-cognitive skills. Students were learning how to learn in ways that were enjoyable and sociable – a form of play.*
- *Some teachers overtly taught students how to behave within groups, so socialising them into a form of wider society.*
- *In demonstrating the new content to peers, students became positioned as teachers themselves, reversing normal teacher-student relations, making students creative and independent.*

The nature and participation of social interaction

Students talk while taking part in teachers' short whole class responses, in group activities, in presentations where singing is involved, answering questions, writing on the board and reflecting on the lesson. The pedagogic structure means that every student will do some talk and experience interaction in every lesson. The extent to which students interact with each other though is controlled by the teacher: more teacher talk in presenting content or recaps meant less social interaction. Also, in some classes students could be silent even in group work, as with Birru, unless the teacher intervened or groups were noisy and did not listen to one another. Danchille, on the other hand, encouraged interaction and in her lessons students used most of the instructional times for group discussion, reflection, presentation and answering questions, freely sharing their ideas for a longer time. Doing activities and practicing the content through individual work even while in a group also meant students were engaged. During group work students were often seen, heads touching over the table, to be talking to one another, supporting and teaching one another, such as helping one another to make maize stem triangles or squares. In Abel's class they also were seen asking one another the same questions the teacher had asked them about the meaning, use and protection of a forest, with the group clapping for one another. Students also interact with one another when going up to the board to do a sum or answer the teacher's questions with handclaps if correct or shout out the right answer if wrong: this form of interaction takes place very often in SS. Group leaders in Abel's class also reflected back using extended speech on what has been learnt that lesson. One S said that *"... we were about to sleep while learning inside the classroom but we become active and happy as you took us outside the classroom"*. The longer that learners are involved in the talk the better opportunity for learning take place and simultaneously social skills.

Social interaction means that:

- *Every student will talk and have some social interaction in every lesson.*
- *Where teachers structure as many opportunities for different kinds of social interaction and reduce their own talk, student talk through social interaction becomes the main medium of learning.*
- *Students are continually engaged and active in the lessons.*

Variations in how students participate and teachers' responses to students' difficulties

Generally all teachers encouraged boys and girls equally to respond and participate. All the teachers responded to contributions deemed good by praise and stimulating clapping. Some teachers – Chuni – would not respond directly to a student's question but would ask the whole class first, giving herself time to digest her own response, too, and then as she offered her response, students were given the space to see if this tallied with their own understanding. Similarly, Danchille would ask a student to e.g. calculate 1×100 , but when two students got this wrong, she then asked a third girl who got it right, but then fully explained to the first two how to do the sum correctly. Abel worked with individuals, listened carefully to them and responded, further explaining when they did not understand. Abel and Danchille seemed also to be using the students' response to gauge when to adjust the flow or pace of instruction repeating some ideas or extending explanation. Danchille clearly identified those students who had difficulties with particular topics and retaught them on the spot, gave feedback during marking their classwork activity, doing activities on the chalkboard and their presentation. Chuni was explicit in her support for less able students:

I call weak students individually during the break time and help them in things that are not clear and, also I use the able students in each group to support them

ALFA school is different from other school we could get chance to teach others, we learn through play. The teacher discusses points very well and she could translate us some English words in Amharic.

But I support them according to their level of understanding. I see myself as a good facilitator because I treat pupils in a good way

Birru tried to encourage one girl to present but did not pick up on her great reluctance, so that when she eventually did, she did this quickly, returning to her seat looking very uncomfortable. Birru and Abel appeared on occasions to direct their questions, particularly lesson reflections to the abler group leaders and neglect or prevent other students from contributing. All group members' equal engagement other than group presentation was not ensured. Also all groups in Abel's class were not equally engaged in all group responses or activities; especially Card Group was not equally involving in group presentation activities in front of the class. He did not alter the pace of instruction to differentiate between learners.

Teachers' responses:

- *Generally position students as being able to problem-solve for themselves and for their peers, so avoiding simple 'right and wrong's emanating from the teacher.*
- *Students are free to make mistakes without admonishment from teachers or peers.*
- *Are used to sense whether students have grasped the learning throughout the lessons and alter the pace accordingly.*
- *Are used to identify where students need further support for their learning.*
- *Can also be unevenly divided between individuals and groups.*

Class work and teacher assessment

This part followed on from the group presentations. Teachers wrote up further problems or exercises, sums, words or letter combinations depending on the topic for students to do individually, providing an opportunity for the teacher to work with individuals if they faced problems. Students also discussed their work quietly to one another during this time. Teachers used this part of the lesson to assess written work in exercise books, putting quick ticks and sometimes a short phrase in each book, either as students came up to the teacher's desk or as they went around to each group or responded to students' hands up. Birru did this without a great deal of comment or written feedback, apparently aiming mainly to get round the class, and he appeared unconcerned that children were copying the answers from each other. This contrasted with other teachers who questioned and provided feedback to students while marking their class work and were clear that this was an opportunity to gauge different students' understanding. Students said of Chuni that *'our teacher advises us to study hard, she can make clear points that are not clear to us, while she is marking class work she advise us to study our note instead of disturbing others'*. This part of the lesson then teaches children how to study hard on their own, using their exercise books as default text books and is markedly different from the earlier sections. Abel and particularly Danchille, were clearly differentiating between students and providing extra support for those who needed it whilst correcting their class work. Abel gave verbal comments to those who had finished and in a mathematics lesson Danchille responded to children by doing further activities and explanation with them and taking students up to the chalkboard to demonstrate. Teachers kept good records of student attendance and regular records of students' informal test results.

Teachers would also sometimes summarise the lesson during or after class work, or ask individuals to complete the exercises at the chalkboard with their classmates watching or shouting out the right answers thus stimulating collective responses following individual work. This was also seen as helpful to support those with difficulties in the subject to relearn and self-correct their work.

Class work was used to:

- *Develop students' ability to study individually and to use their exercise books as reference materials in lieu of text books*
- *Give time for teachers to differentiate between students and provide extra support*
- *Allow teachers time to assess students' work verbally and in writing, and as a collective activity*
- *Summarise, provide further cognitive challenge and consolidate the topic area*

Assessment

Continuous assessment took the form of questions, listening to responses, group presentations, class work and homework and as with student talk and social interaction, was a constant and significant part of the pedagogy. Chuni, for example, gave feedback on the spot following one group's presentations, and continually checked understanding in her lessons. Danchille frequently asked group leaders to hold up the results of their discussions on the mini chalkboards to check understanding, with mistakes corrected without any reprimand or sense of opprobrium. No assignments, quizzes, tests and exams were administered during the observation period in all lessons observed.

What levels are students attaining in relation to the Minimum Level Competences?

It was difficult to ascertain precisely what pupils had learnt as so much of the learning is iterative, a spiral curriculum in miniature by means of covering the same ground through different activities and media and with consolidation of content every lesson. Learning outcomes would need to be assessed over a week's worth of work. The close adherence to planning around the national curriculum textbook, itself closely aligned with the MLCs, would suggest, along with the high success rate of 96% of students integrating into mainstream school, that the MLCs for Primary 3 and 4 are generally met.

Discussion

The success of the teaching is framed and determined not only by the pedagogy but also by the curriculum and training. Speed School students experience the full weight of the three years of the national Ethiopian primary curriculum. However, more time is allocated to the teaching of a narrower range of subjects, and curriculum coverage is ensured by the heavy focus on annual and daily planning at the training, the longer teaching days, low tolerance of absenteeism of students and teachers, frequent in-class support and monitoring by Community Mobilisers. Use of the textbook by teachers as a reference point ensures curriculum coverage and use of mother tongue and code-switching between languages greatly facilitates learning and comprehension. In addition, there is a discernible purpose to the Speed Schools, which is to get students to the MLCs within a short timeframe and this also frames but does not drive the pedagogy. The month allocated to revision at the end of the 9 months of curriculum coverage may also remove daily pressure to 'teach to the test' that is characteristic of many classrooms in Sub-Saharan Africa, and globally.

Advantaged in this way, the different parts of the overall pedagogy work together, as seen in the most successful facilitators:

- *Summaries give constant revision without undue repetition so that student remember what they have learnt.*
- *Explanations of new content from the textbook are imaginative, given in several different formats and versions and there is direct association of concepts with concrete materials that support the transfer of knowledge into physical or auditory embodiments.*
- *Questioning motivates students, allows shared knowledge, provides a factual baseline and cognitive challenge and a form of differentiation.*
- *Student talk supports the social construction of knowledge with every student talking and interacting in every lesson. Non-cognitive skills of cooperation and negotiation are developed as an overt part of the pedagogy.*
- *Group work extends this student talk into purposeful collaborative and dialogic talk with new content practiced and represented through different multimodal means in performances*
- *Classwork gives individuals time to study independently, offers further cognitive challenge, for differentiation and further support.*
- *Teachers observe, listen, assess, intervene to give further explanations, and constantly gauge how and what learners learn, so adapting pace and content.*

All four teachers, however, demonstrated some remarkable aspects of pedagogy, embedded within this given but flexible structure. Abel approached new content from many different angles, utilizing a range of local materials and verbal explanations to get across concepts to ways that all his students could grasp. Danchille paid close attention to individuals and raised cognitive levels through asking students to summarise their diverse points of view on mini blackboards. Chuni's patience was extraordinary and she created a warm sense of the collective for her learners. Birru used icebreakers, music and imaginative use of resources to support his learners.

To the untrained eye, the four teachers may appear to be teaching in similar ways: they managed their classrooms with the fixed four groupings, and delivered learning through the given lesson structure of recap, explanation, group work and presentation, classwork and homework. Even so, the following aspects happen in most lessons even when certain sections are not quite as successful in one lesson than in another, or where two teachers as in these case studies, were less secure in their teaching than others. These aspects illustrate the remarkable nature of the pedagogy:

- Teachers ask students to describe and report back on what they have done, creating space for metacognition and reflexivity
- There is much repetition but in different multimodal forms which also creates reflection on what is learnt
- Talk is salient, focusing on communication and dialogue with the underlying idea that knowledge is constructed through activity and through dialogue
- The small classes do not in themselves produce the results that are looked for but they do enable the pedagogy to be operable
- Group work gives concreteness and different modes of presentation to new content learnt
- Students are socially comfortable with the teachers and there is a democratic, collective spirit
- The very nature of the pedagogy requires creative thinking and planning by the facilitator to adapt the pedagogy for their particular classes, and also to allow their students parallel space and time to rethink the learning.
- This creates similar adaptability and autonomy of learning in the students, who are positioned in the class as teachers in the representation of learning including reimagining the classroom space. There is thus a physical reconstruction of what it means to learn.

Conclusions

The research strongly suggests that the combination of intensive and principled teacher training and pedagogic structure means that students in Speed Schools are enabled to access the curriculum and achieve the high levels of attainment expected by the end of the ten months. Their learning is characterized as **activity-based learning through group work, and flexible lesson planning and delivery, enhanced by a wide range of resources, all of which develop reflexive student thinking and the verbalization of knowledge**. Even accounting for considerable teacher variation in the way that particular sections of the lesson are taught, as the four case studies here illustrate, these characteristics remain true and consistent as they are created from the pedagogic structure and principles of the accelerated learning.

All of the teachers seemed to be teaching in ways that are different from that which is expected in government school and all seemed to be achieving some success. It seems that the training they are receiving as well as the reinforcement from the visits of the community mobilizers serves to emphasize that Speed Schools do not use the same methods as the government schools and that the methods it does use are effective. This involved crucially understanding that what is taken for granted within mainstream schooling about how teaching and learning should function and that they might bring from their education is disrupted, questioned and, in the main, rejected. All of the teachers have absorbed some of the practices of the SS pedagogy and converted these into activities.

However there is something here which is about more than methods. The Speed School approach has much in common with critical pedagogy in that it questions assumptions prevalent amongst people all over the world about who can and who cannot learn. The children the Speed School teachers are working with are those who are usually assumed to be the least educable, from poor and often illiterate families and having come late to schooling or at least had their education disrupted. The teachers talked sometimes about slow learners but this was not a euphemism: they seemed convinced that all the children could and would learn what was necessary to succeed within the curriculum. It is clear that the Speed School Program in its training had been successful in getting teachers and students to reconceptualise who can learn and why and had given the teachers a structure and a set of practices that, with very little training, they could all use successfully. In this way, all four facilitators self-identify as community or development workers. Even so, within the group of four teachers whose pedagogy was studied there was one teacher, Birru, for whom the Speed School approach remained purely a set of given practices that he could apply to his classroom situation. To a lesser extent this was also the case with Chuni. However Abel and Danchille seemed to embrace the approach in a much more profound way in that they seemed to identify with the theory behind it. In particular this is seen in their much more dialogic approach to interaction and the sense that their practice involved the spirit as well as the letter of the School approach.

The whole experience over the ten months appears to create learners who are not only reflexive but autonomous and resilient, having learnt how to learn over the ten months of their immersion in the Speed School. In knowing how to process and make creative and intellectual use of new concepts learnt, and how to problem-solve and work collaboratively in groups, graduates are well set up to succeed in the contrasting classrooms and social environment of the Link School when they integrate. Research on this transition from the Self-Help Group Report suggests that Speed School graduates arrive with this advantage over their mainstream peers, able to not only cope well with the learning, but to take some leadership in the classroom, and many are staying on and completing the Second Cycle of Primary School as a result.

The pedagogy is therefore appropriate to these OOSC children and the remarkable social nature of the learning can take place in every class. Equally, however, there were discernible gaps in the observed pedagogy: optimal learning that the pedagogy and smaller classes make possible is more likely to happen if these gaps can be filled, as discussed:

Gaps that arise between the philosophy, documentation and practice

The gaps identified are not overly demanding or costly, although costs are implied in raising teachers' salaries, providing supplementary class readers and considerations of classroom size and geographical location. The majority of the gaps could be filled through attention to them at facilitator training events, refresher courses and through the on-going monitoring by community mobilisers, and the payoff in terms of improving the pedagogic practice of all facilitators and therefore of all learners, would be great.

1. Engagement and application of the methodology for teachers can be demanding, especially the lesson planning demands, frequent observations and studying at weekends. Programme designers have to give serious thought to the workload implications so that teachers do not fall into a bureaucratic routine of meeting instructional planning and management requirements, and thereby lose much of the quality and diversified instruction that the pedagogy promotes. Using video clips of really dynamic teachers in Speed School classes would give new teachers the example of the pedagogy in practice, and how the different parts add up to the whole. In this, the training becomes a study of the practice. Teachers may already be able to go out to observe teachers as part of their training, and this is another way of studying the practice.
2. Optimal training for facilitators should ideally consist of a Professional Qualification and several rounds of facilitator training to consolidate understanding of the Speed School principles and pedagogy.
3. The low teacher salary may not always attract or motivate the most enthusiastic or well trained teachers, nor retain them over the ten months of the Speed School calendar year.
4. Teachers' knowledge of Amharic and English may need to be strengthened for them to have the appropriate skills knowledge to teach up to Grade 3 in those subjects.
5. With different Implementing Partners, how the pedagogy is taught to facilitators is bound to vary although this may be a strength as each woreda will have its own characteristics and the pedagogy including language of instruction has to be adapted to this.
6. The pedagogy requires a certain amount of physical indoor and outdoor space, including access to water, particularly for the long days young children have to be in school for. Two of the classes were in the same compound as a larger primary school, sometimes with limited space and this constrained teachers and students, particularly with other children looking in at breaktimes.
7. Assumptions are made in the Speed School curriculum and Handbook that there are ample resources, particularly for handicraft and supplementary readers. While it is a strength that teachers and students make use of very locally resourced materials, the lack of supplementary readers in Amharic, Local Language and English, means that the practice of reading and of longer continuous text, is not as frequent as it needs to be to meet the MLCs. The African Storybook Project may be a cheap way of getting hold of texts in the different local languages (<http://www.africanstorybook.org/>).
8. While the textbook is a key resource, its use varied from direct reproduction with students copying large chunks of it from the board to their exercise books and drilling of content, to simply used a guide. Consistent use of the textbook and imaginative ways of drawing on it could be improved in the training.
9. Teachers' questions could be further developed to support higher level questioning, as well as encouraging teachers to get students to ask their own questions, as reflected in the Facilitators' Guide.
10. With fixed stable mixed ability groups, some more able, confident or older students can dominant the learning: teaching facilitators to be more flexible in terms of groupings and to differentiate learning through targeted questions and

differentiating tasks will ensure those with SEN, specific learning difficulties and the older/more able can be fully included and challenged. With these more vulnerable groups, failure to grasp content may lead to them feeling dispirited, and eventually dropping out.

Appendix 1 Observation template and interview guide

ALFA facilitator interview schedule

Key Research Question: How can the pedagogy used by facilitators in ALFA schools be characterised?

Notes to the Interviewer

1. It is helpful to agree the interview in advance with the facilitator, preferably following a lesson observation.
2. Allow time, however, for the facilitator to have a break after the lesson.
3. Choose a time and place convenient to the facilitator, somewhere quiet and private, in the school, perhaps the classroom itself if it is not being used. Arrange the seating so you are near one another but avoid the more formal interview seating arrangements.
4. Ask permission verbally and in writing if appropriate, again, to hold the interview and to tape record it.
5. Introduce yourself, and the aims of the interview, making it clear that you wish to find out more about the pedagogy used in ALFA and their own experience and views of the training and teaching. Make it clear that you are not assessing the teacher. Give a timeline – no more than 25 minutes for the interview. You might want to say something positive about the lesson you have observed to make your respondent feel relaxed.
6. Check that the tape recorder works by asking a few relaxed questions and play it back to yourselves.
7. These questions are designed to find out more about the lesson observed, the facilitator's background and training. They need to be semi-structured, to allow you to ask specific questions as you see fit about the lesson observed. If the facilitator does not understand the question at first, repeat it or rephrasing it. Be prepared to prompt further if you want more details. Some questions may be covered in the responses so you do not have to ask them.
8. Try to maintain eye contact with your facilitator, nodding your head to encourage them.
9. Thank the facilitator after the interview for their time.

Interview schedule

Teachers' background

- Are you from the area and speak the local language? And Amharic?
- What prior teaching experience do you have, and qualifications?
- How long have you been teaching in the ALFA school?
- How did you get to hear about the post as facilitator?

1. Attitudes towards their students and training:

- What do you see as the particular needs of the children who attend your classes?
- What do you see as the benefits of ALFA for these children?
- What do you think they enjoy the most?
- How do you see your role as their teacher?
- What do you do when a student is absent?

3. Teachers planning & sequencing of lessons

- How typical were these lessons in terms of its sequencing, groupings?
- How much freedom do you have to plan your lessons?
- How do you know what content to include in each lesson? [reference points, annual & daily lesson plans, text books from GOE]
- How do you know what level the children should be working at? [knowledge of the Minimum Learning Competencies]
- How do you ensure you get students through each of the three Phases? (October, just beginning Phase One Mother tongue)
- Which lessons/curriculum areas do you find easiest to teach, and why?
- Which lessons/curriculum areas do you find hardest to teach, and why?
- What kind of atmosphere do you try to create in your lessons?

Use of Teaching and Learning materials

- What books or text books or other teaching and learning materials do you have to use in the classroom?
- Who supplies these texts and are they in sufficient numbers for the students?
- Have you made the charts, wall displays etc in this classroom? Who supplies you with the materials? How do you use these displays?
- Can you tell me about any supplementary reading books available for the children? Can and do they take these home? How do you monitor whether they have read the books?

Student groupings

- Why are the students grouped as they are?
- How do you decide what task to give to which group?
- Do they stay in these groups or do you move them around?

Demonstration & explanation

- How do you approach giving out new content or ideas to the learners? What do you draw on to illustrate the content?
- How do you decide what questions you will ask of the students?
- While there are obvious advantages to using mother tongue in the classroom, are there any problems or disadvantages with this?

Paying attention, and giving feedback

- Who are the students who are doing best, and why?
- Which students have the most difficulty with learning? How do you help them with their difficulties?
- What use do you make of repetition? [or you used repetition a great deal in this lesson: what do you see as its purpose?]
- What kind of individual written records do you keep?

End of year and transition to Link primary school

- What content do you prioritise for the last revision month? What competency levels are you aiming the students to reach?
- To what extent are you able to follow up where each ALFA student goes, and how they get on in their primary school?
- What contact do you have with these Link schools, the Teacher Trainer and their teachers?
- How familiar are you, and the students, with the routines and pedagogy in the Link schools?
- Is there any kind of briefing or induction for the ALFA students from you on their transition?
- What do you think is the 'secret' of the ALFA schools?

Training

- How did you get to hear about the ALFA schools and teaching opportunities?
- What did you like most about your training?
- What did you like the least, or found the least helpful?
- What have you found easiest/most useful to implement in the classroom?
- What has been the most difficult aspect to implement?
- How often does the TO visit you and what do they do on their visits?
- How often does the CM visit you and what do they do on their visits?
- How often do you have refresher courses and how helpful are these?
- To what extent do you think government schools could take up some of these aspects?
- How long are you planning to stay as an ALFA facilitator?

LESSON OBSERVATION TOOL

Details	Preliminary/Pilot research		
School Name			
Teacher			
Subject and Topic observed			
Observer's Name			
Interpreter's Name			
Start time		End time	
Language			
Date of visit			
Number of boys present			
Number of girls present			
Lesson plan photographed		Annual Plan photographed	
Lesson video recorded		Lesson audio recorded	
T interviewed		Ps interviewed	
Assessment record			
Others interviewed			
Attendance sheet photo			
Classroom photographed			
EXTRA NOTES/LESSON SUMMARY (including structure)			

Timing ref	Rating	OVERALL LESSON OBSERVATION Notes on the teacher's actions, the flow of class activities, positive/negative occurrences, etc.	Initial Analysis

Timing ref	Rating	OVERALL LESSON OBSERVATION	Initial Analysis

Timing ref	Rating	OVERALL LESSON OBSERVATION	Initial Analysis

WHOLE CLASS ANALYSIS

	Specific events and competencies to watch for:	Examples	Timing Ref photo/ voice	Rating
1.	SUMMARIZING: T reviews previous learning or recaps earlier parts of lesson or summarizes at the end of a lesson (asks questions about what students have learned, what they remember, what they liked etc.)			
2.	EXPLAINING: T presents clear explanations for or demonstrates new activities, concepts, knowledge, skills or assessment criteria (gives examples, provides a variety of explanations)			
3.	RESPONDING: T listens/observes and responds to Ps' actions/answers. Look for multiple T-P exchanges and constructive as well as judgmental feedback (analyzing, inviting further response from Ps, correcting, discussing, praise).			
4.	USING MATERIALS to facilitate learning (real-life objects, made objects, chalkboard, pictures, body movements, newspapers, teaching aids, textbooks, reference books, supplementary books)			
5.	QUESTIONING: the range of questions T uses (simple, challenging, helping, multiple-answers, one-answer).			

6.	<p>PUPIL TALK: Ps speak for longer or ask questions Note both examples of Ps' talk and the way that the T encourages them.</p>			
7.	<p>ASSESSMENT: T assesses Ps' understanding (through activities, questions, exercises or group work). T may adjust the pace and content of the lesson accordingly.</p>			
8.	<p>CLASSROOM CULTURE AND MANAGEMENT: T uses strategies to encourage desired behaviour, respond to undesired behaviour and encourage respect between Ps. (strategies to get Ps to pay attention, eliminate teasing, share resources, help each other). Time management</p>			
9.	<p>OUTCOMES: What Ps appear to be learning, the success of the lesson (what they say, what is in their books, the extent to which it corresponds with the lesson plan)</p>			

GROUPWORK ANALYSIS

	Specific events and competencies to watch for:	Description / Examples	Timing refs	Rating
10.	OBSERVATION: T observes or listens to what is going on in groups.			
11.	INTERVENTION: T joins in with group activities (Questioning, assessing, demonstrating, leading, disciplining etc).			
12.	P INTERACTION: Ps include/exclude each other, work together/individually, are on task /off task, discuss, solve disagreements.			
13.				

INCLUSIVENESS (gender, disability, social and economic status etc).			Timing references to events and T actions that contribute to this
14.	All Ps appear to be able ask questions or make mistakes without risk of embarrassment or punishment (T encourages all)		
15	All Ps appear to be able ask questions or make mistakes (T includes).		
16.	All Ps have access to resources at least some of the time (such as textbooks, teaching aids, learning materials)		
17.	Ps interact freely with T and each other irrespective of other divisions. (T challenges gender and other norms).		

