CHAPTER 12

BUILDING ON THE STRENGTHS OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

> *If you care for your own children, you must take an interest in all, for your children must go on living in the world made by all children.*—Eleanor Roosevelt to the Southern Woman's Democratic Union, New York, February 1933

DIGNITARIAN RIGHTS IN SMALL PLACES

Chapter 3 of this book recounts the Tenth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, when Eleanor Roosevelt presented the guide *In Your Hands* to the United Nations. On that occasion, she put forth the challenge to all people to recognize and uphold the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. She emphasized that in order to improve the world, the work at the local, state, and national levels needs to be continuous.

Creating literate communities is one kind of this continual work. These communities are also based on the concept of dignitarian rights that inform the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These rights do not serve the individual alone, but perceive "…the city as a public realm where individual and community are bound together in some degree of reciprocity" (Kommers, 1991, p. 867).

Literacy for Life states:

> …literacy is no longer exclusively understood as an individual transformation, but as a contextual and societal one. (UNESCO, 2005, p. 159)

Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education defines "literate society" in the following ways:

> A social setting within which (a) the vast majority of the population acquires and uses basic literacy skills; (b) major social, political and economic institutions (e.g. offices, courts, libraries, banks) contain an abundance of printed matter, written records and visual materials, and emphasize the reading and writing of texts; and (c) the exchange of text-based information is facilitated and lifelong learning opportunities are provided. (UNESCO, 2006, p. 350)

Collaboration has always been essential to cognitive and emotional development. However, in the 21st century, workers are expected to share responsibility with

diverse, global teams working together to accomplish common goals as never before. In this chapter, I will provide descriptions of initiatives in literate communities that are based on collaboration. They fit the traditional meanings of literate communities, but they could work within mobile-based communities as well.

There are countless successful ways of fostering literacy throughout the world. UNESCO's Global Monitoring Reports describe numerous examples of successful literacy initiatives.

The practices explained in this chapter, however, stem from the kind of work undertaken by the innovators described in this book. These practices build on a person's history of language and literacy. They draw on community funds of knowledge and co-operation. Many involve parents and other community members as participants and contributors. They reflect the dignitarian rights found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights because they are rooted in the learner's language and cultural practices and bind the community together. They also foster reciprocity.

These practices were developed decades ago. There is a resurgence of interest in them today. All involve creating written text from the learner's own language or sharing readings of texts. Most were originally designed for children, but they can be used to support adult literacy as well. Most were designed for learning to read and write in one's first language, but they have been adapted to teach additional languages as well. New technology and tools can be integrated into each practice because they all foster communication, conversation and collaboration.

Children have had exposure to a range of language and literacy experiences that have formed their preschool language capabilities. Individual children begin school "with more or less of the linguistic, social, and cultural capital required for school success." Therefore, "It is the responsibility of teachers to draw on these resources in support of school learning, including teaching language practices valued in school. If there are crucial language experiences needed for school success, then teachers must provide them" (Dudley-Marling & Lucas, 2009, p. 369). In order to support children's language learning, relationships with families are vital. Developing partnerships with families supports a reciprocal sharing of knowledge and experiences from home and school. These partnerships allow teachers to recognize and build upon what children already know. They also allow families to support learning that takes place in school.

THE SPRINGFIELD LEARNING COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE

In 1990, Professors Judith Solsken and Jerri Willett from the Language, Literacy and Culture Program at the School of Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and I began a curriculum-based action research project. The project supported two-way sharing of knowledge and understandings with families. Its purpose was to improve the education of children in urban classrooms by changing the relationships between families and school (Wilson-Keenan, Willett, & Solsken, 1993; Solsken,

Wilson-Keenan, & Willett, 1993; Wilson-Keenan, Willett, & Solsken, 2004). Our definition of "family" was broadly defined as "a circle of people who love you." Student's families were invited to come into the multiage primary classroom and share something about their families and their lives. Family visits included playing guitars and drums, showing photographs of family events, and baking bread. These visits allowed the worlds of home and school to come closer together and enabled the children to bring more of themselves into the classroom. Over two years, 83% and then 87% of the families participated in the project. This level of participation shattered the stereotype that urban families lacked interest in the education of their children.

By 1994, we attained funding from the U.S. Department of Education and the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation, and established the Springfield Learning Community Collaborative (SLCC). The Collaborative enabled 20 Springfield teachers from eight K-5 schools to participate in an off-campus advanced degree program. One principal, Gloria Williams from the Frank H. Freedman School, also attended the program. The courses were designed for urban teachers who wanted to foster family participation in their classrooms and learn new approaches to teaching language arts. In addition to the course work, the SLCC provided hundreds of multicultural books for classroom libraries and other resources for both home and school learning.

The SLCC involved parents and other community informants. Together we negotiated ways of teaching and learning and found innumerable ways for families to share their knowledge, talents and traditions. In some classrooms, families came in and shared their talents, family stories, or information related to their work. The students then constructed shared books and other displays based on the information provided by the families. Other teachers sent books and response journals home and engaged in written exchanges with the families. The SLCC also sponsored summer programs for children. During one summer, a family summer literacy camp was held. Families and teachers discussed learning, read and wrote together, and created books, works of art, and meals that drew upon the families' knowledge and experiences. Shared reading of both commercial titles, and books designed by students and families were a major component of SLCC classrooms. The families then shared their work with each other and others in the community. Teachers and families also traveled together on family field trips to museums and a sea aquarium. The idea of taking the trips was initiated by the families. Approximately 300 people attended the trips.

In 1997, The Annenberg Institute at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island named the SLCC as an exemplary Public Engagement project. The Institute database notes the unusual design of the SLCC as a school-based, teacher-driven project that reaches out to parents and others in the community and values the contributions these constituencies make to schools (Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 1998).

The SLCC had four main goals:

- *Engaging in inquiry of practice*—The first goal required teachers to engage in study and reflect upon teaching practices and explore theories, models and strategies that enhance learning. SLCC teachers redefined their teaching practices through this inquiry.
- *Valuing the contributions of all constituencies*—The second goal honored partnerships with children's families. Teachers and families learned, shared, and celebrated together. Family participation was the centerpiece of the work. Some families came to school to share something about their lives. Several teachers found that written conversations in family journals were an extremely effective way of connecting families with the school. Several other models of new ways of engaging families in homework were developed by SLCC teachers as well. For example, families constructed projects on a monthly basis that were displayed on classroom bulletin boards.
- *Establishing Learning Communities in classrooms*—The third goal involved creating caring learning communities in our classrooms where all teachers, children, families, and others were accepted, valued, and challenged. Rich learning experiences that integrated language arts into all curriculum areas were implemented.
- *Implementing an on-going collaborative assessment process*—The fourth goal established assessment practices that included information from families for the purpose of informing teachers, learners, families, and the community of the strengths, development, and progress of each learner. Findings from the assessments formed the foundation of instruction. Assessments showed that children in several SLCC classrooms exceeded grade level expectations in reading and language (Wilson-Keenan J., 2015).

Although we did not call them dignitarian rights at the time, the work of the SLCC with its emphasis on family, where individuals and community were bound together in reciprocity, embodied the spirit of dignitarian rights. We tapped the language, literacies, memories, and experiences of children and their families to assist them in creating their own learning.

CONCENTRATED ENCOUNTERS: THURSDAY ISLAND 1980'S

In the 1980's, Betty Murray, an educator from Thursday Island in the Torres Straight north of Australia, designed a program to teach English to children who did "not hear English spoken around them" (Murray, 1991, p. 57). Murray described Torres Straight Islanders as speakers of "two or more languages indigenous to the region: the languages of home, ceremonial functions and local trade" (Murray, 1991, p. 58). The children had few opportunities to practice with English speakers, yet English was the official language of school.

Prior to her program, the children were expected to learn English through "teaching materials based on repetitive drills" that did not make sense to either the teachers or the pupils. Murray saw the English that the children were practicing as "utterly irrelevant to the interesting world they were exploring." She added, "For them English was dead" (Murray, 1991, p. 58).

In Murray's program, the Torres Straight English Program, children became involved in real exploration of their world in ways that allowed English to be the valid medium of communication. Murray's lessons were similar to an approach to teaching literacy called "concentrated encounters" (Murray, 1991, p. 59). This approach was developed by Dr. Brian Gray (Gray, 1984), a researcher in the Research and Development Centre of Reading at the Brisbane College of Advanced Education (GM South Africa Foundation, 2009). Murray also drew upon the work of Warwick Elley, a reading authority from New Zealand (Elley, 1982).

The program was designed for the following purposes:

- help children develop functional skills in English
- take account of the isolation of schools
- support the teachers in becoming more fluent in Standard Australian English
- provide inservice education in appropriate teaching methods
- provide content and supporting resources for teachers which would both sustain the unique cultural background of the children and introduce the culture of the language they were learning (Murray, 1991, p. 58).

The organizing principles of the program were "meaning matters," and "sense is everything" (Murray, 1991, p. 60). In this approach, books were used as the "stimulus" for the explorations of the children's world and as "scaffolds for teachers' and students' language growth." The adults were no longer simply instructors of language forms. Their role changed to being sharers of "new experiences" and supporters of "the child's exploration and explanation of his or her world." The task of the adult was a "genuine negotiation of meaning through the medium of English where this is appropriate" (Murray, 1991, p. 59). A common experience was shared through the "senses, story, pictures, song, chanting, telling stories, testimony of past experience, role play, drama" (Murray, 1991, p. 60). Parents and other community members were encouraged to participate in the sharing of the experiences that resulted from the studies. The sharing ensured that schooling did "not become distanced from the community and that the children's own cultural mores are supported and valued" (Murray, 1991, p. 64).

Since the purpose of language is communication, the program focused on "the children, their interests, their levels of maturity and their natural language learning abilities" (Murray, 1991, p. 59). The Torres Straight English Program consisted of both "work units and supporting teacher inservice materials" (Murray, 1991, p. 61). Murray used repetitive texts in the early years to provide enjoyable ways for the children to learn and use English structures.

The shared book experience was "used extensively." It gave children opportunities "to hear spoken language, to discuss their own related experiences, to make predictions and to use the language of the texts as a model as they express their own ideas and experiences" (Murray, 1991, p. 61). Learners sought meaning and learned much more than the conventions of print, although they learned these as well. It is interesting to note how Murray began with a commercial text, but connected it directly to the experiences of the children on Thursday Island.

View from a Small Place

> Murray provides a sample lesson using the shared book *There's a Hippopotamus on Our Roof Eating Cake* (Edwards H., 1980). She explains that the themes of this book are "the seeming unfairness of family rules and the desire for a world in which children might do as they wish. A secondary theme is that of approved and disapproved behaviours."
>
> Then Murray takes the children through the steps of the routine that include a first-hand experience (in this case reading the book), an opportunity to talk about the experience, time to think about what the experience shows or what learners need to clarify or understand, a response or action and an opportunity to share the new experiences. (Murray, 1991, p. 61)

Another series of lessons from Murray's program from Thursday Island is based on the shared experience of a book about turtles that are found on the islands (Murray, 1991). Talk about the book leads to a shared understanding of the life cycle of the sea turtle and the food chain, as well as the specific language used in the book. She also includes discussions that focus on why turtles leave the nest, dangers small turtles encounter, and how a turtle might feel when it reaches the sea. The study of the book leads children to engage in using language in several ways that include describing, explaining a sequence of events, and summarizing. Children talk, read, write, retell and dramatize the stories. Fiction, poetry, and informational texts are the focus of study.

Included in Murray's lessons are suggestions for suitable responses to the text. These responses include:

- telling a similar story or writing a similar book that is familiar to class members
- reminiscing, e.g., 'I remember when…'
- singing songs appropriate to the theme or incorporating language functions related to the theme
- researching/describing animals e.g. hippos
- role playing
- preparing a list of rules for the classroom (Murray, 1991, p. 64).

Earlier in this book, several of these ways of responding to the texts were explored, including reminiscing, singing songs, and telling stories. These ways

honor children's language, knowledge, memories, and developing literacy. They are compatible with the findings of brain research today.

In addition to commercially published texts, there were locally produced texts that focused on the introduction of English translations of traditional Torres Straight stories and on materials that explain mainstream culture to children who were unfamiliar with that culture (Murray, 1991, p. 61). Books written by the children and adults of the Torres Straight Islands are still available today. These books contain traditional island stories, songs, recipes, and children's writings.

The Torres Straight English Program was written for the children of the Torres Straight Islands, however, Murray envisioned a far broader audience. She was "confident that its underlying rationale and the kinds of resources, activities and techniques that it employs have much wider application" (Murray, 1991, p. 65).

Murray's prediction has turned out to be correct—the idea has gone to scale.

THE CONCENTRATED LANGUAGE ENCOUNTER: GENERAL MOTORS SOUTH AFRICA 2015

Concentrated Language Encounter techniques now have much wider application. They are used to teach both children and adults in their own language as well as English. In 2009, General Motors (GM) South Africa published a teacher's guide entitled, *Concentrated Language Encounter: A proven and effective method of teaching reading* (Allen, 2009).[1] They also produced a DVD. The guide explains that the term "Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE)" came from Courtney Cazden's (Dean of the Graduate School of Education, Harvard, at the time) statement that children learn language through concentrated language encounters. The guide states that the methodology was strengthened by Dr. Brian Gray's research in the 1980's (Allen, 2009, p. 1).

By 1985, CLE had spread to Thailand. There, a CLE pilot (Thai language) was used in elementary schools where literacy teaching was failing. CLE had a high success rate in these schools, and by 1991, the Thai government extended its use into elementary schools throughout Thailand. The GM guide reports that by 2009, the CLE methodology had been "extended by Rotary to many countries throughout the world, including Brazil, the USA, several countries in Africa, the Philippines, Nepal, India, Egypt, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Laos, Cambodia, Turkey and several Pacific Island countries" (Allen, 2009, p. 1).

The CLE begins with a shared reading of a book that has a "good story line and illustrations." After the reading, participants "review the story, carry out role-plays, and talk about the story." Next, participants "recall the story in their own words" and collaborate to "develop their own class version of the story." The members of the group dictate the text to the instructor who writes each sentence on a poster-size sheet of paper. The words they speak are transformed "into written form before their eyes." As it is written, each sentence is read aloud. Changes can be negotiated by the group, and details can be added. When the text is complete, the instructor and the

learners "read it aloud together." The illustrations are added to the story. Then group books and individual copies of the book are made (Allen, 2009, pp. 4–14). As a final step, learners engage in activities and games based on the text.

There are three stages of programs: Stage 1 for lower grades, Stage 2 for middle grades, and Stage 3 for upper-school grades (Allen, 2009, p. 2). Like the methods designed by Sylvia Ashton Warner and the other educators profiled in this book, the CLE is not meant to stand alone. It is described as "best applied as part of a balanced approach to literacy where other methodologies are also incorporated in the teaching of literacy" (GM South Africa Foundation, 2009, p. 1).

As the CLE guide for Stage 1 explains:

> The CLE approach to developing literacy is particularly effective in challenging environments, for example, where there are few reading books or where learners are taught in a medium of instruction other than their mother tongue. CLE literacy programmes prove their effectiveness in a remarkable short time, and they are extremely cost effective, because teachers can develop most of their own materials and learners write and make their own books. (Allen, 2009, p. 2)

> In addition, because local teachers decide the informational content of the programme, there is every opportunity to foster understanding of the learners own cultural heritage, to situate stories in the learner's own context, and to increase awareness of medical, nutritional, environmental and other matters that are important to the lives of the learners and the general welfare of the population and the country. Above all, CLE teaching brings high success in teaching children from illiterate populations to read and write, where other programs have failed. (Allen, 2009, p. 2)

Training materials are available online and may be downloaded at no cost by agencies interested in implementing the approach.

www.gmsouthafricafoundation.com

BREAKTHROUGH TO LITERACY

In 1979, Holdaway described a British program called Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL) in the following way:

> The most recent attempt at a radical reformulation of the literacy undertaking, and the only one which has attempted to face up squarely to language implications, arose from the application of recent linguistic theory in England. "Deeply indebted to the language experience tradition, Breakthrough to Literacy, highlights the importance of creating written language from the earliest stages." (Mackay, Thompson, & Schaub, 1970) in (Holdaway D., 1979, p. 33)

Holdaway describes Breakthrough to Literacy as employing "techniques and supporting materials" that enable "the beginner to express personal meanings in written language at the same time as he learns to read." Earlier we saw that Holdaway believed that oral language did not have to be completely in place before children began to handle books and take up reading. Here, written expression is developing at the same time the child is learning to read. Writing is not put on hold until the process of reading is completely in place.

Holdaway adds, "The major impediments to written expression—handwriting and spelling are bypassed" initially because the learner is provided with "a convenient file of printed word cards." These cards are used to construct "meaningful sentences in a 'Sentence Maker.'" Later the sentences are copied into a "personal reading book." At a later stage of development, the child manipulates letters to make words. "Grammatical understandings of syntax are facilitated by the use of prefixes and suffixes. These affixes build on base words, rather than treating each derivative as a separate word." One of the aspects of the program that Holdaway views as a limitation is that upper case letters are not presented from the beginning. Commenting on experimental situations that piloted Breakthrough in New Zealand and Australia, he cites difficulties of an organizational nature in the program. He believes it is "not easy for teachers to understand fully" (Holdaway D., 1979, p. 33).

Over the past twenty years, the Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy[2] has created the Molteno Project to disseminate the Breakthrough practices in Africa. The project consists of two approaches: Breakthrough to Literacy— for children in the primary grades; and Bridge to English—for children learning English (The Molteno Institute for Langauge and Literacy, 2012, p. 4). Breakthrough to Literacy is focused on in this chapter.

The institute describes its progress:

> Breakthrough is now available and used in all official South African languages plus the San languages of the Northern Cape Province and Namibia. To date it is available in 9 African countries, Angola, Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia; and fifty-one indigenous African languages. It has been extensively evaluated and found to be peerless as a mother-tongue literacy course for both children and adults, e.g. testing in Zambia in 1999 revealed that Grade One children were reading and writing at levels equivalent to Grade Four and higher. (The Molteno Institute for Langauge and Literacy, 2012, pp. 2–3)

According to the Molteno Institute, "The Breakthrough to Literacy course systematizes the Language Experience Approach to the mother tongue enliteration process…" It builds upon the listening and speaking skills "the child brings from home into the classroom as the basis of learning to read and write." The underlying belief is that the listening and speaking skills that the child brings from home are "basic to successful learning, and they constitute a starting point in the teaching

of literacy through the Breakthrough methodology" (The Molteno Institute for Langauge and Literacy, 2012, p. 1).

The implementation of Breakthrough in the mother tongue is seen as providing an "ideal foundation" for learning other languages. It is not viewed as negating the value of additional languages like English, Afrikaans, French, or Spanish. Through the use of Breakthrough to Literacy, teachers develop "knowledge and skills in initial literacy teaching and in learner-centered class management." One benefit of the program is that these skills then transfer to other areas of the curriculum (The Molteno Institute for Langauge and Literacy, 2012, p. 2).

Over the past two decades, several evaluations of the project were conducted. The reports cited here focus on the results of the implementation of Breakthrough to Literacy. I cite evidence from a range of reports, because over time, the results evolve from improving literacy to showing evidence of the development of thriving literate communities.

In 1980, the British Council commissioned an evaluation conducted by R. Colet. He reported:

> Breakthrough suits local conditions and is effective in developing very early functional literacy skills. It conveys immediate benefits to pupils and teachers. "…quite simply, the Molteno Project must be acknowledged as one of the most significant, realistic and radical agencies of constructive, speedy and peaceful change in southern Africa." (Molteno 2010, p. 4)

The results were favorable from another evaluation of Breakthrough commissioned by UNESCO, and conducted in nineteen schools Botswana. The evaluation reported "a high standard of teaching, learning, motivation and organisation." The positive results of the evaluation "led to the introduction of Breakthrough in 672 schools." A follow-up evaluation in 1992 for the Overseas Development Administration found that Breakthrough had a 'powerful influence towards methodological change' (Molteno 2010, p. 5).

In 1994, Dr. P. Rea-Dickens conducted an evaluation of Breakthrough to Literacy in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa. The evaluation was commissioned by the Overseas Development Administration. Rea-Dickens "compared Molteno and non-Molteno schools and found 'extensive evidence of improved teaching and learning.'" For example, 'chorusing,' a practice of large groups chanting together, was observed in only 15% of Molteno classes, but in 93% of non-Molteno classes. Instead of chorusing, Molteno Breakthrough classes focused on collaboration. Activities included "pair and group work, pupil demonstrations, pupils' own use of language, and pupils playing language games…" These changes "were observed in significant percentages of Molteno classes but not at all in any non-Molteno classes" (Molteno 2010, pp. 5–6).

In 1999, an evaluation of the Icibemba Pilot Project in Zaire was conducted by Herman Kotze of South Africa, Cathal Higgins of Ireland, and contributed to by Geoffrey Tambulukani and Dr. Israel Chikalanga. The project was identified as an

"unqualified success" for Breakthrough to Literacy. Furthermore, there was evidence that the method and teaching strategies were being transferred to other curriculum areas. The report stated that there were "clear indications that a significant new philosophy of education was evolving in project classes; specifically a growing child-centred, problem-solving approach was apparent" (Molteno 2010, p. 8).

The results led Mr. Shay Linehan, Secretary of the National Reading Committee, to remark:

> …this high degree of success would compare with more developed countries—indeed he noted that both external consultants felt that Breakthrough reading and writing levels were above what would be normally found in well-resourced Grade 2 classrooms in South Africa, UK or Ireland. He stated that this must be a major success if children in remote areas of Kasama district were outperforming children from Dublin, London and Johannesburg. (Molteno 2010, p. 8)

The report from Uganda in 2002 shows evidence of the development of a learning community. It stated that Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL) classrooms were "child-friendly." Enrollments and participation in the BTL schools surpassed enrollments in non-BTL schools. There was also a "heightened interest and participation of parents in children's learning activities and in their involvement in school activities. More important, parents have come to view school as a place that reinforces the children's cultural heritage" (Molteno 2010, p. 10).

The report adds that in these schools "learners take more responsibilities for their work and regulate their time and attention between the tasks they have to perform." Children are respected as learners in these schools. There is "evidence of mutual respect by teachers for the ability of the learners and their efforts, with teachers actively promoting leadership skills, as well as the life skills of communication and critical thinking" (Molteno 2010, pp. 10–11).

Additionally, "BTL classrooms have ushered in a new culture of co-operative learning, with evidence of having acquired a new value of democratic decision making." Teachers gave accounts of "new group dynamics in their classrooms, where leaders would unanimously vote out a leader who didn't lead them satisfactorily, and vote in someone else to lead them" (Molteno 2010, p. 11).

All of these gains would be impressive in any school, but there is a final factor here. The gains in the BTL project in Uganda are being realized in typical Ugandan schools where class size on average is eighty learners, and sometimes there are up to two hundred learners per class! (Molteno 2010, p. 10).

The 2006 report from Malawi by Frances Sampa also documents positive results. It states that Molteno Breakthrough to Literacy (MBTL) teachers were "more innovative, resourceful and committed to improving the teaching and learning than other teachers." Literacy skills improved as well. In MBTL standard 2 classrooms, "handwriting, reading and writing" all improved. These improved "skills were not stand-alone but transferred to other learning areas." Teachers here also "employed

learner-centered practices in teaching MBTL." These practices had a broader impact as they "improved the teaching and learning process in schools and made children learn in an interesting way" (Molteno 2010, p. 12).

During the past five years, the Molteno Institute has also implemented the Bridges to the Future Initiative in Johannesburg. This approach utilizes "the power of interactive, easy-to-use, computer-based instruction for literacy learning in primary schools." This program has the potential to reach 30,000 children within a two-year period.

The Molteno Institute has launched a Facebook page that will "essentially" help "teachers help themselves and one another." The innovation will support teachers who have a mobile phone with Internet (The Molteno Institute for Langauge and Literacy, 2012, pp. 1–2). Historically, non-government organizations like Molteno have often "operated through initiatives" in which they "might spend three years training and supporting teachers with relevant skills for their job, or supplying them with materials to support their teaching practice" (The Molteno Institute for Langauge and Literacy, 2012, p. 1). The use of social networking changes, enhances, and expedites that process.

The learning also becomes more democratic as teachers post messages to the page. Their colleagues read and react to the messages. Subject Specialists post tips on how to teach first, or first and additional languages. Teachers download and comment on the tips. Participants can "read and write messages about topics of interest, upcoming events, questions for the field, resource sharing, research interests, or other issues that affect national and international language policy research."

The Molteno Institute sees the role it is playing to facilitate "dialogue among teachers" as "transformative and exciting." They view this initiative as a "partnership taken to higher level" that will "effectively spark positive change within a school community to define its aspirations and the means to achieve them" (The Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy, 2012, p. 2).

This chapter explored the longevity and success of the Concentrated Language Encounter and Breakthrough to Literacy. Both of these approaches honor learners' language, culture, stories, and memories. These initiatives have succeeded in places where other approaches have failed. Their success is testimony to the work of the literacy innovators who developed them.

NOTES

[1] From Concentrated Language Encounter: A proven and effective method of teaching reading by Helen Allen, (Ed.), Copyright © 2009. Reprinted with permission of Roger Matlock, General Manager, The GM South Africa Foundation.

[2] Quotes and descriptions of the work of the Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy used with permission of Masennya P. Dikotla, Chief Executive Officer, The Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy, Braamfontein, South Africa.