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Supervision & Facilitator Support

Mainus Sultan

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supervision

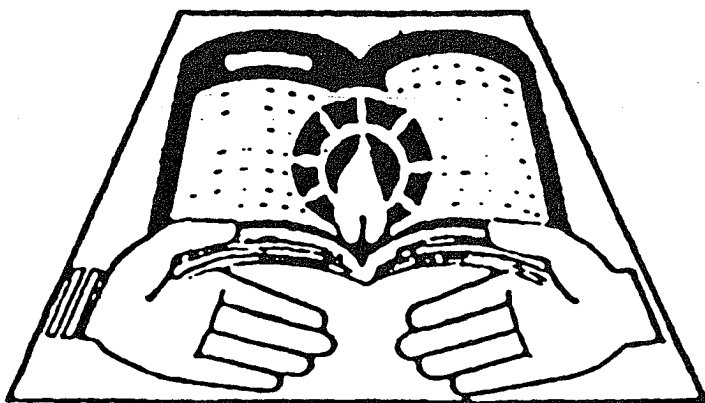
& facilitator support

Action-Learning Manual

A Guide for Literacy Practitioners

by

Mainus Sultan



A Literacy Linkage Series Manual from the
Literacy Linkage Program

Supervision and Facilitator Support Action-Learning Manual

A Guide for Literacy Practitioners

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Mainus Sultan

The **Literacy Linkage Program**
The Center for International Education
Research Center for Educational Innovation and Development

The Literacy Linkage Series Manuals

Producing a Newsletter for New Literates

Role Play

Whole Language: An Integrated Approach to Reading and Writing

Literacy and Learning in Families and Communities

Assessment

Supervision and Facilitator Support

Gender Perspectives in Literacy

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Foreword

This manual is part of a series of Action-Learning Manuals that was developed to assist community-based practitioners to expand their knowledge of the theory and practice of adult literacy and nonformal education. The purpose of the series is to assist practitioners to develop literacy activities and materials based on local needs, interests and resources.

The series offers the practitioner a wide variety of activities to choose from to meet the diverse needs of community literacy groups. The manuals are designed to complement each other, but can also be used independently. Two of the manuals, *Whole Language: An Integrated Approach to Reading and Writing*, and *Literacy and Learning in Families and Communities*, provide the core concepts for literacy learning. The other five manuals provide creative ideas and techniques for implementing those concepts. It is not imperative that *Whole Language* and *Family Literacy* be read before a practitioner attempts to implement ideas found in the *Role Play* manual, for example, but it might be helpful.

The *Whole Language* manual introduces basic concepts and strategies for teaching reading and writing skills by involving learners in the creation of lesson activities and learning materials. The *Literacy and Learning* manual introduces basic concepts and strategies that develop locally relevant literacy activities and materials through researching issues and resources in the family and community. The other manuals in the series provide additional information and guidelines for implementing effective local literacy programs.

The information and activities in this manual, *Supervision and Facilitator Support*, were designed for organizations that employ facilitators in many different sites and need to provide them with on-going supervision and support. It was developed by Mainus Sultan of the Center for International Education, based on his experiences organizing and supervising literacy programs for Friends in Village Development Bangladesh. The manual was reviewed and edited by staff and graduate students of the Center for International Education.

The Action-Learning Series was developed by the Literacy Linkage Program - a collaboration between the Center for International Education at the School of Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA and the Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID) at Tribhuvan University in Nepal. Send inquiries and correspondence to:

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Introduction

What is the purpose of this manual? The focus of this manual is to help you understand and implement an effective approach towards supervision and facilitator support. The manual provides a framework for exploring the principles of supervision and a series of activities to use in your program. Each activity is a step-by-step guide to help you collect information to design effective in-service training and support systems for the facilitators in your program. By the time you complete the manual, you will have developed a new support system tailored for your program.

Who is this manual for? This manual is intended for literacy and nonformal education practitioners who are responsible for organizing classes and supervising facilitators. The activities can be used to start a new program or improve an existing program.

How do you proceed? Read the manual and think about how it applies to your work situation. Use the seven activities to create or improve an existing support system for the facilitators with whom you work. At the end of each activity, there is a written assignment that asks you to reflect on your experience and write a brief paper. You may also be asked to compile and organize the information you have gathered in lists or charts. These assignments are important because they are part of your personal learning process and will help you develop a deeper understanding of your work in literacy education.

PROCESS

1. Read the manual carefully and think about the process.
2. Try out each activity by following the instructions.
3. The activities are designed to be completed in order, but you do not have to follow the sequence mechanically. For example, if your field situation does not allow you to implement a certain activity, proceed to the next one and return later to the one that you skipped.
4. All activities require you to compile information and reflect on your learning experience. The exercise of writing a brief reflection is intended to help you consolidate your ideas. As you complete the activities in the manual you will generate lists or charts of information. To keep this information organized, make a personal learning file out of a file folder or notebook. Keep a copy of all your written assignments in your personal learning file. You will find it useful to review the file contents occasionally to see how much you have learned from the activities in this manual.

5. Make a filing system. You will need a file for each facilitator you supervise, as well as separate files for the activity reports. Making the files as you do each activity will help you to organize the documents. When you finish the manual, you will have a well-organized filing system that will help you continue to track your facilitators' progress in the future.
6. You may find that through your job you have already done some of the activities listed in the manual. If this is the case, use the activity to review and improve your program and skills by following the instructions.
7. Go through the manual at the pace that your situation permits. You should be able to complete the activities within six months.
8. Some of the words in the manual have specialized meanings. A glossary of key vocabulary words is at the back of the manual.
9. If you have questions about any of the concepts or activities in the manual, or if you would like to discuss your experiences with others, contact the Literacy Linkage Program at one of the addresses listed in the foreword.

ACTIVITY #1: WRITING A REFLECTION PAPER

The purpose of supervising literacy and nonformal education classes is to make certain that the classes, materials, and methods are effective in helping people learn new skills and ideas. Class facilitators are key people in the learning process because they work directly with the learners. Facilitators need good training and support in order to do their jobs well.

There are two ways to observe a facilitator. One way to supervise is to "count the numbers": How many regular students? How many books? How many hours of instruction? How many drop-outs? and so forth. The implications of this method of supervision are that when the numbers don't measure up, supervisors look for weaknesses in the facilitator. They find fault with and criticize the person. These supervisors think that the solution is to tell the facilitator what they are doing wrong.

The alternative is to look at the learning situation: What is happening in the class? What other things require the learner's time? What is the facilitator doing to address problems? and so forth. Such supervisors recognize all of the difficulties a facilitator faces in teaching a class. They can see the weaknesses, but they also see the facilitator's strengths and encourage him/her by providing positive feedback.

If you focus on faults and errors and on filling out reports with only numbers, you are following a traditional approach for supervising. The goal of the traditional approach to supervision is judgement. In the second

approach you will also find problems, but the goal is to provide support and training to overcome these problems. Let's look at each of these approaches in more detail.

Traditional Approach: The traditional approach to supervision is somewhat problematic in that the relationship between a supervisor and a facilitator is not equal. The supervisor does not become a friend of a facilitator. A facilitator always feels accountable to a supervisor. Power dynamics between a supervisor and a facilitator hinder friendship. Power can create an environment of fear in which facilitators do not feel comfortable enough to ask the supervisor for help in solving problems.

Another problem with the traditional supervision system is that the supervisor tries to evaluate the job performance of the facilitator. The focus is on faults. As a result, facilitators can become very defensive of their work. They may feel reluctant to provide accurate information about a program and they may hide problems.

Alternative Approach: An alternative approach to supervision provides support to the facilitator. This approach does not emphasize finding an individual's fault. Rather, it focuses on developing a system to help facilitators. The assumption is that through support, you can help facilitators to overcome their limitations.

In the alternative approach, you evaluate each facilitator's performance by analyzing his/her work context. The work context refers to many things: What is the work situation? How large is the group of learners a facilitator is organizing? Does this facilitator have enough time to do the job? What other problems exist in this particular literacy class? What is the educational/training background of this facilitator?

This information will make it easier for you to analyze the context of the work situation. This analysis will help you to understand why a facilitator is having problems in terms of teaching or organizing a literacy class. You will then be better able to work with the facilitator to address difficulties in the work context.

It is up to you to decide which approach to take. You can either act as a traditional supervisor and detect the errors, or follow an alternative approach and develop a system for supporting facilitators. If you choose to follow the alternative approach, the activities in this manual will help you organize support for the facilitators. The following activity is designed to help you decide if the alternative approach is right for you.

Reflection Activity: Analyze your personal views on supervision by reflecting on your own experience. You may choose to write a reflection paper to help you to think systematically. When you write a reflection paper, you write about yourself. This includes your thoughts about your experiences and your ideas. It is called a reflection paper because like a

mirror, it reflects what you see inside yourself.

The reflection paper does not have to be longer than two or three pages. Imagine that no one will read this paper; it is only for you. You may ignore grammatical correctness. You are writing this reflection paper to help you make decisions and organize your own self-learning process. Consider the following questions as guidelines for your paper:

1. Describe an experience of being supervised in a work situation.
2. What was your feeling when you were supervised? Did you feel judged, supported, or encouraged?
3. What approach did the person supervising you follow?
4. Do you think the approach was effective? If not, why?
5. What is your opinion of the alternative approach to supervision?
6. What kind of a supervisor would you like to be?

Writing a reflection paper will help you decide which approach you want to follow for supervising your literacy program. If your inclination is towards the alternative approach, the following activities can help you provide support to the facilitators. Keep a copy of the reflection paper in your personal learning file.

ACTIVITY #2: COLLECTING INFORMATION

The alternative approach to supervision is based on understanding the facilitators and their work context. The work context refers to things that affect the work situation of a facilitator including the number of learners, time constraints, external problems that affect a class, as well as their own experience, education and training background. This is the kind of information that you won't find in any handbook or supervision manual. You will need to collect this information from the people you supervise.

Why Collect Information?: Collecting information will enable you to see the larger picture of a literacy program. It will enable you to analyze the work context effectively and better understand each individual facilitator's abilities. Through this process you will become more aware of the problems of a literacy class or facilitator.

How to Collect Information: Begin the process of collecting information by designing a form to help you compile and organize the information (see p. 6, figure A). The form should include the following categories, but add others as needed:

1. Name of facilitator
2. Sex of facilitator
3. Name and location of literacy class
4. Educational background of facilitator
5. Training experience of facilitator
6. Number of learners
7. Sex of the learners (male and female)
8. What other jobs does this facilitator have? (home or farm included)
9. How much time can the facilitator contribute to a literacy class?
10. What, if any, problems has the facilitator experienced at the beginning of the class?

Collect this information at the beginning of a class. If you have too many classes to supervise, ask an assistant to fill out the forms for you. Once the forms are completed, compile the information so that you can identify issues and problems that exist in the your program's work context. Study the example in the sample chart (p. 6, figure A) and see if you can find at least three issues that are revealed by collecting and compiling information.

Compilation: In Activity #2, you collected information about the facilitators and classes you supervise. Now it is time to compile the data; this entails putting similar things together. This can be done using lists or charts, or the blank chart that is provided (see p. 7, figure B). If you have difficulty using the blank chart, follow the guiding questions and write down the information. Add or change the questions and chart as needed.

1. How many facilitators work for the literacy project you supervise?
2. How far do you travel to visit them?
3. How many facilitators are male and how many are female?
4. How many learners are currently enrolled in each class?
5. How many learners are male and how many are female?
6. What is the total number of classes?
7. Make a list of the educational/training background of each facilitator.
8. Make a list of the constraints the facilitators face in the field.

It is a good idea to post the compiled results on the wall of your workplace. Also, keep a copy of the chart in your personal learning file.

Figure A. Sample summary chart, facilitators' work context

Name	Sex	Village/location background	Educational experience	Training of facilitators	Number of learners	Sex	Other jobs	Available time	Problems with beginning class
Dil	M	Asa: 2 days walk from center	grade 10	9 day pre-service training	30	25 female 5 male	village health worker, family vegetable garden	villagers call on him frequently for help	missed first class for a medical emergency in village
Sam	M	Basa: 5 hours walk from center	grade 8	9 day pre-service training	21	21 female	odd jobs when he can find them	other jobs can't be planned for	difficult time recruiting learners
Mina	F	Casa: 1 hour walk from center	grade 6	9 day pre-service training	32	24 female 8 male	housewife with 3 small children	needs help with childcare	sometimes has to bring baby to class
Ram	M	Dasa: 2 days walk from center	grade 10	9 day pre-service training	22	22 female	family farm, out-of-school program teacher	less farm work during the off season	difficult time recruiting learner
Fred	M	Esa: 1-1 1/2 days walk from the center	grade 10	9 day pre-service training	29	23 female 6 male	odd jobs when he can find them	started class 3 days late due to another job	difficult time recruiting learners

Figure B. Practice chart, facilitators' work context

[illegible]

Record Keeping: Keeping good records of the facilitators' progress is key to providing support to facilitators. For this reason, we encourage you to create a filing system to organize the information you collect and create for each activity. If possible, make a file folder for each facilitator to store the information that you collect from him/her.

A portfolio is a file folder or notebook that is used to collect information about a person's progress. The process of collecting information in a file folder is called *portfolio assessment*. It can be used with literacy learners as well as with facilitators. Information that you include in a portfolio are survey forms, class observation notes, letters, notes, and other written records made by you or the facilitator. As the number of documents in the portfolio increases, you will have a written record of the progress the facilitator is making in his or her work.

We also suggest that you create a file folder or notebook to keep copies of the information you compile for this manual. There are no supervision manuals that can tell you everything you should do, thus, the information you write for yourself is your most valuable resource for decision-making, planning, and in-service training.

ACTIVITY #3: INTERVIEWING FACILITATORS

In all literacy programs, the facilitators and learners are generally the best information sources in terms of what is happening in their class and community. Traditional supervisors rarely tap this information. In the alternative approach to supervision, you start to build an information support system by asking for input from those who know the most about the work context - the facilitators themselves. You can gather information through an interview.

Why Interview?: The interview provides you with an opportunity to speak with a facilitator face to face. You become personally acquainted with the facilitators. Speaking with the facilitators will provide you with the kind of information that you cannot get from observation. An interview also helps you to understand a facilitator's attitudes and become familiar with the problems of a literacy class.

How to Interview: Interviewing requires an atmosphere in which the facilitator feels safe to discuss different issues. You can call it an informal conversation or chat instead of an interview to make the facilitator feel more at ease. You can hold the interview over a cup of tea. Begin your discussion by asking some social questions such as- How are you? Why are you facilitating a class? The beginning of a discussion is also a good time to tell a facilitator how much you like his or her work.

An interview should be a two-way exchange of information.

Encourage the facilitator to ask you questions about the program and your work as a supervisor. Tell the facilitator that the purpose of this discussion is to learn more about his/her work. Show interest when a facilitator is talking. Your interest will motivate a facilitator to provide information. Do not interrupt a facilitator in the middle of a conversation. Take notes, if it is culturally appropriate. If you decide not to take notes during the conversation, do it right after the interview. You can come up with your own questions for the interview, or you can use following the guiding questions.

1. Why is the facilitator conducting a class?
2. Does the facilitator have enough time to run a class?
3. What does the facilitator feel is going well in the class?
4. What kinds of personal problems is the facilitator facing?
5. What kinds of problem exist in the class?
6. What kinds of support does the facilitator expect or need from a supervisor?
7. What does the facilitator understand about the purpose of a supervising system?
8. Does the facilitator have any questions regarding the interview or the literacy program, or have any concerns about the classroom?

If you are supervising a small literacy program (three to six classes), interview all of the facilitators. If your program is large (30 to 40 classes), interview only six facilitators. This requires that you select your interviewees by sampling. Make sure your sample represents the diverse background of the facilitators. For example, if you are interviewing three male facilitators, also interview three female facilitators. If your facilitators are from diverse religious backgrounds, make sure all of the religions are represented in sampling. If your program covers urban and rural programs, interview facilitators from both places, and so forth.

If your program is very large, you can train assistants using the above instructions to conduct interviews. Prior to training your assistants, interview at least six facilitators by yourself. Be sure to teach your assistants the difference between traditional and alternative supervision styles.

Compilation: After you have interviewed the facilitators, it is time to compile the information. Make three lists. These lists will help you organize the information from the interviews.

1. List the problems the facilitators are facing. Take note of how many face similar problems. Note the range of problems.
2. List skills or strengths the facilitators demonstrate. Make note of those who might be able to advise or assist others.
3. List the kind of support the facilitators expect from you the supervisor, and from your organization.

You may want to hang the lists on the wall of your workplace as a reminder of the problems that need to be addressed. Keep a copy of the lists in your personal learning file.

Record Keeping: Put your interview notes in the file folders (portfolios) of each of the facilitators you interviewed. It may be helpful for you to review this information when you observe their classes and prepare in-service lessons.

ACTIVITY #4: CLASS OBSERVATION

The best place for you to learn about the work context of your facilitators is in their classes. Through observation you can collect information and ideas that you can use to advise facilitators and organize in-service training workshops.

Why you should do a class observation: Observing a literacy class allows you to see how a facilitator performs in a real situation. You will better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the facilitator. Observation will also allow you to get acquainted with the learners and become familiar with the on-going problems of a literacy class. Through observation, you can study the learner - facilitator relationship.

How to observe a class: Try to observe the class of a facilitator whom you have already interviewed. Decide what to look for prior to the actual observation. Talk to the facilitator and explain why you want to observe a class. Mention that your intention is to learn about the class rather than to judge the facilitator. You may ask the facilitator if he or she wants you to notice anything in particular. At the time of the observation, introduce yourself to the learners and tell them why you are there.

How to record your observations: It is important to make written notes for each of the classes you observe. The notes will help you remember details about each of the classes later. The information will be helpful later when you plan your supervision and training activities. The easiest way to take observation notes is to write things in a notebook during the observation. If this is not culturally appropriate in your situation, write

them down as soon as possible after the class.

The Observation Guidelines (see page 12) explain what you should be looking for when you observe a literacy class. Try to observe and take notes according to the guidelines. You may want to make an outline or chart for yourself that you can fill in during the observation. Don't be restricted by the guidelines. If you observe other things that interest you, write them down.

How many classes to observe: If yours is a small program, observe at least one class taught by each facilitator. If you are supervising a large program, observe the classes of the facilitators that you interviewed and train your assistants to conduct additional observations. Repeating observations in the future will show you how facilitators are improving their classes. You may even arrange for facilitators to observe each other. Many things can be learned about literacy learning through observing classes and talking about what happens. Study the following Observation Guidelines to prepare yourself (and your assistants) to do the observations.

Observation Guidelines

Before the Class: Meet with the facilitator before the class to discuss the purpose of your observation. Explain that you are there to learn, not to judge. Ask if there is anything in particular that the facilitator would like you to notice. This can be particularly useful when you know a facilitator is having problems. Ask what the trouble areas are and if they would like you to watch for things with which you might be able to help.

Classroom Manners: Arrive on time. Introduce yourself to the class. Stay to the very end. Do not leave in the middle of the class; you need to observe the beginning, middle and end. The facilitator also deserves to have you see how they handle all of the class activities. Take notes only if it is culturally appropriate.

What to Watch For: **1. Observing the Big Picture:** What is the classroom like? Is there enough light, materials, etc? Is it clean and free from outside distractions?

2. Impressions: What is your impression of the class? How do the learners seem to feel? How would you describe the energy of the class members? Are they happy, bored, enthusiastic, shy, fearful, eager, tense, relaxed, etc?

3. Interactions: How does the facilitator interact with the learners? Is it one way, two way, multi-way? (See page 14, figure C.) Is anyone left out? Do the learners help each other? Is there a difference between the way men and women participate?

4. Learner Performance: How well do the learners perform on reading and writing practice? Do they help each other? What is the range of skill levels among the learners? What is the attendance pattern: are people late, missing, leaving early?

5. Facilitator performance: What does the facilitator do well? Are some of the learners overlooked? In what ways would you like to see the facilitator improve?

Feedback Guidelines: What to do after class observation

Observation provides an opportunity to learn about the literacy learning process. After your observation, speak with the facilitators and learners about what you saw. Ask them to tell you more about their learning experiences. Ask them how they use their new reading and writing skills in their daily life. You can give the facilitator some feedback about the class, but do not give negative feedback to the facilitator in front of the class. Giving feedback entails telling someone what you thought about what you observed. The purpose of feedback is to encourage the good things and to provide constructive criticism. Positive feedback is particularly important for anyone learning to be a facilitator.

Positive Feedback: During or after the observation, make a list of the positive things you saw. Tell the facilitator and class what you liked. When you talk to the facilitator after class, comment on creative things you saw him/her do. Ask him/her how they came up with the idea. Ask him/her if you can share his/her ideas with other facilitators. •

Negative Feedback: Negative feedback should be handled carefully. Remember that your goal in observing the class is to collect information. Don't tell the facilitator everything with which you found fault. Too much at once can discourage the facilitator, but this feedback may be helpful at another time. Make notes about the problems you observe. This information can be used in planning in-service training. There are three occasions when you should discuss problems right after an observation. 1) If the facilitator asks for help and you have a constructive answer, go ahead and respond. 2) If the facilitator seems to have forgotten basic techniques taught in the training and is having serious problems, review them in a positive way. 3) If the class seems to be falling apart, ask the facilitator and/or learners what they think is going on. Collect as much information about the situation as possible before advising on a solution.

Follow-up: Write careful notes about your observations. This is valuable information for planning in-service training. Use your notes to remind you of positive things done by facilitators and ask them to share their ideas or to demonstrate a technique at a future meeting. Use notes about problems to design case studies and workshops to help facilitators improve skills.

The chart on page 16 (figure D) provides an example of how you can summarize and compare the information you gain from observing several classes. What problems listed would be suitable for an in-service facilitators training? What positive feedback could the supervisor give to the facilitators and learners?

Compilation: Your observations have probably made you aware of many things going on in the literacy classes in your program. You won't be able to solve all problems at once. Therefore, it is helpful to organize the information you have recorded.

1. Make a chart or list to summarize and compare the information you collected from your classroom observations. Feel free to use or modify the blank chart on the following page to suit your situation.
2. Summarize your chart by making two lists. The first list should include positive things or strengths you observed about the facilitators and their classes. Include people's names. The second list should include the negative things you want to help improve.

Hanging the lists in a visible place in your office may help you remember the issues and problems. Keep a copy of the charts and lists in your personal learning file. To consolidate your learning, you may also want to write a brief reflection paper about what you learned from your observations.

Record Keeping: Put a copy of the notes from each class observation in the file of the appropriate facilitator. You may want to write a letter or report about the observations for your own supervisor or program director. Keep a copy of the letter in your personal learning file.

Figure C. Classroom interactions chart

<p>One-Way Interaction:</p> <p>By doing all of the talking and directing the activities, the facilitator acts like a teacher. The learners do what the teacher tells them to do.</p>	
	<p>Two-Way Interaction:</p> <p>The facilitator acts like a teacher, but the learners feel free to ask and answer questions of the facilitator. The facilitator still directs all activities.</p>
<p>Multi-Way Interaction:</p> <p>The facilitator acts like a facilitator and organizes the class so that the learners help each other learn. The learners help each other, discuss the lesson with each other and sometimes lead the class in a drill, game or other activity.</p>	

Figure D. Sample summary chart for classroom observations

Class	Big Picture	Energy	Interactions	Learner Performance	Facilitator Performance
A.	The learners built the room themselves and keep it very clean.	Everyone seems enthusiastic except for one woman who sits in the back of the room and looks worried.	Mostly two way, but with men asking and answering the questions.	There is a whole range of how well people are able to do the writing exercises.	He has a good sense of humor, tends to favor the men but treats everyone well.
B.	The room is rather shabby, the light is poor.	The learners all arrive at least 20 minutes late.	The facilitator encourages multi-way interactions, but the learners are very shy.	Most of the learners are struggling with the material; two are doing very well and help the others.	She seems a little frustrated by the shyness of the learners, but continues to encourage them.
C.	The room is very shabby, the light is too dim.	Learners were on time. There is a lot of good humor in the class. People are not afraid to risk making mistakes in order to learn.	The facilitator encourages multi-way interactions. Three of the learners lead activities.	Three of the learners seem slower than the rest of the group. The rest of the group seem as though they enjoy learning.	He moved forward with the majority of the learners. He asked for help about what to do with the three slow learners.
D.	The room is decorated with calendars and posters donated by one of the learner's brothers.	Learners were there on time, but the facilitator was late. They grumbled about his frequent tardiness.	Most of the interaction is two-way.	There are some very bright learners in the group. They challenge the facilitator. They are all women and they are older than the facilitator.	He is a little bit intimidated by the learners who challenge his position. He seems to feel that he should direct the class, but the women are older than he and challenge his authority.

Summary chart for class observations

Class	Big Picture	Energy	Interactions	Learner Performance	Facilitator Performance
A.					
B.					
C.					
D.					

Add more pages or modify the chart as necessary

ACTIVITY #5: CASE STUDY

In the previous activities you collected and organized information. In this activity, you will use that information to create a case study for use in in-service training. A case study is a detailed summary of an event or problem. It is a way to record on-going events, incidents, or problems in a literacy class.

Why write a case study: Writing and analyzing a certain case helps you to develop a greater understanding of the field reality. A case study can allow you to analyze a problem in detail. It provides a framework to look back at a situation and learn from the event. You can use a case study as a training method to help facilitators learn problem-solving skills.

How to collect information: The first step to writing a case study is collecting information. When you observed the literacy classes, you probably encountered certain events or problems which require special attention. Now you can collect more information regarding the event by asking questions (see next page). Both the class facilitator and the learners are information sources. They can also help you verify information.

1. What happened?
2. Who are the people involved in this event?
3. What role did the facilitator play?
4. What role did the learners play?
5. How has this event affected the literacy class?
6. Has this event divided the cohesiveness of the learners?
7. How has this event affected the facilitator-learner relationship?
8. What are the ramifications of this problem? (Ramifications refer to the meaning and consequences of the problem)

If you have any questions, verify the facts with the learners and/or the facilitator. Write the first draft of the case. You may use the format of the sample case study, found at the back of this manual, as a model.

Writing a Case Study: Finalize your two to three page case study using the following guidelines.

1. Write a paragraph describing the setting of the event. Use imaginary names of the location and participants instead of the real ones.
2. Write a paragraph or two describing what happen. You can elaborate by providing descriptions of who played what role in this specific event.

3. Write a paragraph focusing on the core problem of the event. You can add another paragraph describing the ramifications of the problem.
4. Write a last paragraph or two describing the effect of the event on the literacy program.
5. Do not provide any ideas regarding a solution to the problem.
6. Use an easy language style for writing the case. Remember, your facilitators are going to be reading the case study. Be clear and concise.
7. Once you have written the case study, have the facilitator who was involved with the event read it and provide feedback. You can incorporate this feedback into the case study. If it is not possible for the facilitator to read the case study, have a colleague read it. The purpose of having people read the case study is to determine if it is understandable. If it is not, you need to rework the case study.
8. Once you are sure that the case study is complete, make several copies.

Record Keeping: Make a file for case studies. When you observe interesting problems or issues in class, you can make additional case studies. Use these case studies for your in-service training meetings.

ACTIVITY #6: MEETING REGULARLY WITH FACILITATORS

The goal of your observations and interview activities has been to prepare you to be an informed facilitator at an in-service training. Now, with the information you have gathered in the previous activities, you are ready to take action. In-service training is specifically designed for people who are already working in the field. It should be organized on a regular basis to provide support to the facilitators. In-service training should never be one-way teaching. It should provide multi-way interactions so that facilitators can share ideas and solve problems together.

Why organize meetings with facilitators: Meetings with facilitators can serve multiple purposes. A meeting will allow you to discuss the on-going situation of a literacy class. It will increase your personal connection with the facilitators, and it will provide an opportunity for facilitators to collectively discuss the problems of a literacy class. Regular meetings will enable facilitators to create an informal support network and learn from each other. You can reinforce their teaching ability by providing specific training.

Frequency of meetings: It is recommended that you organize a facilitators' meeting either once or twice a month, depending on the needs of your program. If this is not possible, try to arrange a meeting every six to eight weeks.

The logistics of a facilitators' meeting: Find a comfortable, accessible location where facilitators can spend a few hours discussing various issues uninterrupted. You can use your office or a training space for this purpose. If the facilitators are coming from far away, you may need to find a middle ground where all can meet conveniently. Arrange to have a blackboard, some newsprint/poster paper and markers. If you do not have enough chairs for the meeting, find a mat or something which will allow everybody to sit comfortably for several hours. If there are five or six participants, organize a half day meeting. If the number is 10 or more, arrange a full day meeting. A full day meeting will allow everybody to share their ideas in a relaxed manner. If you are going for a full day session, provide lunch.

How to organize a meeting: The following steps are to help you organize a meeting. You do not have to follow these steps mechanically. You are encouraged to come up with new ideas and activities to have a successful meeting.

1. *Create an appropriate environment:* At the beginning of a meeting, it is necessary to create an environment where facilitators feel safe to share ideas and problems. A warm-up or ice-breaking exercise can help the facilitators relax. A story, joke, game, or song can be a warm-up exercise. Have the facilitators sing a song, tell a story, or lead a game.
2. *Reporting:* Encourage the facilitators to report orally about the situation of their classes. You can help the facilitators in reporting by asking them to tell what they are doing or what is happening with the learners in their class. When a facilitator is reporting, allow other facilitators to ask questions. Based on the report, ask other facilitators their impressions of what the problems are. For example, some questions that might be asked are:
 - * What are the learners doing in your class?
 - * Is any learner dropping out of the class?
 - * What are the reasons for drop out?
 - * What kind of problems is a facilitator facing?
 - * How is he/she trying to solve the problem?
3. *Problem solving:* When all of the facilitators have reported, ask them what they think the problems are that need to be solved. List the problems on the blackboard or newsprint, then break the facilitators into small groups and have them discuss the issues. Encourage them to come up with problem-solving ideas. You can have the facilitators discuss the problems in pairs and then report back to the group. When the facilitators are reporting, feel free to offer input.

4. *Feedback:* By observing literacy classes and interviewing facilitators, you already have some information regarding facilitators' performances. Remember, you made two lists of feedback after class observations. Now is the time to tell the facilitators what your observations were. First report the positive feedback. You can mention the name of each facilitator and tell them what you consider their strengths to be. Acknowledge their contribution and praise them in front of the group. The positive feedback will surely increase their motivation.

You also have a list of observed negative feedback or weaknesses. As a supervisor, you must be careful providing negative feedback because if you do so indiscreetly, a facilitator's motivation can be greatly decreased. Do not mention names when giving negative feedback. Address the whole group and describe the issue or limitation. For example, if you have noticed during the class observation that several facilitators are not able to generate participatory discussion, introduce this as a point of weakness. You can use role play to show the group an element of participatory discussion. By watching the role play, the facilitator who possesses the weakness will learn how to overcome it without having been singled out.

5. *Case study:* You can use the case study you have written as a problem-solving training technique. Divide the facilitators into small groups or pairs. Have them read the case study. Ask them to reflect and discuss the issues. You can use the following questions to facilitate the discussion:

- * What is the problem?
- * How is the problem affecting the literacy class?
- * Who is responsible for this problem?
- * How can we solve this problem?

Once small group or pair discussions are over, have the facilitators mingle and share their problem-solving ideas. At this point, you can provide insights that contribute to problem-solving ideas that have emerged.

6. *Suggestions:* At the end of the meeting, ask the facilitators the following questions:

- * What have you learned from the meeting?
- * What other activities do you want to see in a meeting?
- * Is this meeting helpful in terms of increasing your skill?
- * When and where shall the next meeting be?

Reflection: After your facilitator in-service meeting, take time to reflect on your experience. The following lists may help you to organize your ideas and reflect on your learning:

1. List the suggestions the facilitators provided at the meeting.
2. List other ideas you have for organizing future meetings.
3. List what you learned from organizing facilitators' meetings.

You may choose to hang these lists in a visible place in your workplace. You can update these lists after each facilitator in-service meeting. Keep a copy of the lists in your personal learning file. Refer to them for ideas about how to organize an in-service meeting.

Record Keeping: Make a file for facilitator meetings. Store notes from each meeting you hold with the facilitators. Keep a copy of your reflection paper in your learning file for future reference. You may want to write reflection papers after each meeting to document what you are learning.

ACTIVITY #7: PEER OBSERVATION (OPTIONAL)

Now that you know how much you can learn from observing classes and discussing them with facilitators, you may want to organize a forum for facilitators to observe each other. This activity is optional because time and distance between programs may inhibit facilitators from observing their fellow facilitators.

What is Peer Observation?: Peer Observation is an activity in which facilitators take turns observing each other. If your literacy classes are located close together, this is an excellent way for facilitators (even learners) to learn from each other.

Why do Peer Observation?: Facilitators can learn many things from each other. Often it is easier to understand why a teaching technique works or doesn't work when you watch someone else. By watching each other, facilitators will learn new skills. They will also learn to identify teaching problems which they can work on together.

How to organize Peer Observations: Present the idea of peer observation at a facilitator in-service meeting. If the facilitators are interested in trying it out, divide the group into pairs and have them talk to each other about their classes, questions they have, and problems they are facing. After the pairs are acquainted with each other, train them in the observation techniques you used in Activity #4. Finally, agree on a time for reporting the observations.

Designing a training session on Peer Observation: Use the Observation Guidelines in Activity #4 to design a training session on observation. Have the facilitators practice each of the skills during the training session. In pairs they can plan what they want to watch for.

Reflection: If you decide to organize a Peer Observation, it will be useful to reflect on the experience. You may choose to write a reflection paper. The purpose of the paper is to help you organize what you learn from the experience. A reflection paper is for your benefit; you are the only reader. Do not worry about grammatical correctness, just put down your thoughts on a piece of paper. You may want to use the following questions as guidelines:

1. What did you learn about observation by teaching others how to do it?
2. What did the facilitators learn from their observation experience?
3. What new ideas do you and the facilitators have for future training, observation, and support activities?

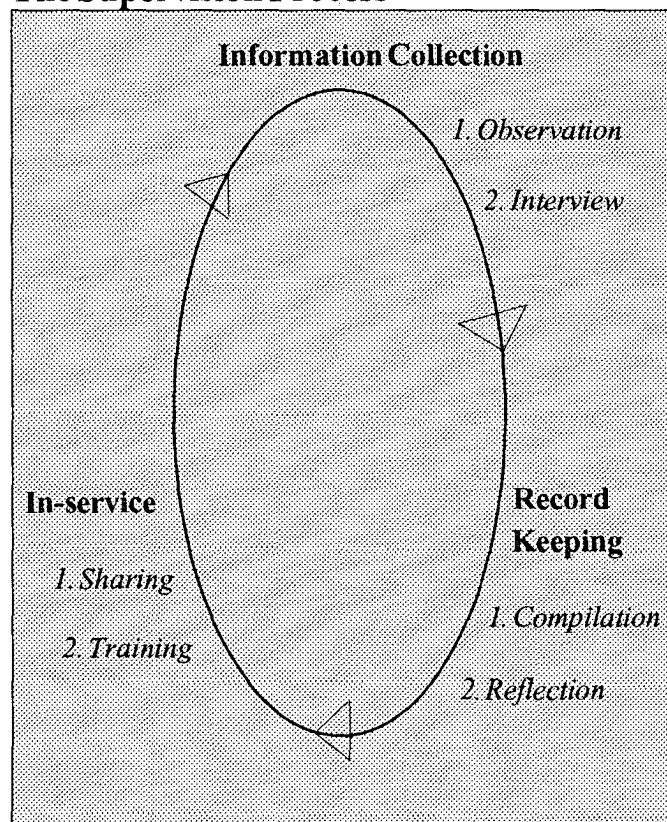
Record Keeping: Add the observation notes and training outline from your Peer Observation experience to your personal learning file. Also, keep a copy of your reflection paper.

CONCLUSION

You have now completed the Supervision and Facilitator Support Manual. By completing each of the activities, you not only learned about the principles and practices of supervision, you also set up a system for tracking and supporting the facilitators in your program. You should have a small filing system containing information about all the facilitators, records of your observations, interviews, and reflection papers. You should also have files with case studies and lists which you can use to create future training and sharing sessions.

You have completed one full cycle of the supervision process which includes information collection through observation and interview, compilation and record-keeping, and in-service training and meetings. One sequence of the cycle is not enough. As you continue to supervise facilitators, you will repeat this cycle of activities many times. With each cycle, you

The Supervision Process



and your facilitators will learn new things that you will want to share with each other. Each time you complete this cycle of activities, you will realize that your skills and the skills of your facilitators are improving. This improvement is possible because you are working together to observe and learn from your own experience.

A good alternative supervision system is similar to a good continuing education system. There are many things that you and your facilitators can learn together. At times, you may want to invite an outside expert to teach you a new technique. But the outside knowledge will only become valuable and useful as you and your facilitators practice using it. Your role as a supervisor or facilitator supporter is to observe their progress, and provide them with opportunities for additional discussion, training, and observation until everyone is comfortable with the new practice.

This cycle of supervision and support activities takes time. It is designed for programs that are committed to providing continuing education to facilitators as well as to adults learners and neo-literates. A commitment to alternative supervision is an investment in the future of your program and the communities and people you serve. Many literacy program directors want instant results. They want to solve all the problems with quick-fix training workshops. But learning is a slow process. It takes committed supervisors, facilitators and learners. If you continue to repeat the activities in this manual, you will always find new ways to improve your program. You can use this system to acquire new skills invented by your own facilitators, to introduce outside information, or to add new components to your program. The important thing is to commit your program to continuing education for everyone facilitators as well as learners.

A CASE STUDY

The facilitator, Kasem, has been conducting an adult literacy class in his own village for about a month. The class has twenty male learners. All of them are poor farmers. They work in the rice field during the day and attend class in the evening. An average of 13 to 16 of the total learners attend the class regularly. Apart from the teaching job at the literacy class, Kasem has one other responsibility. He works part time in a grocery store in a local bazaar. In the grocery store he maintains the cash register and takes care of daily accounting. Despite his workload, he is enthusiastic to conduct this class. The learners seem to like him.

The class has been going very well under the leadership of Kasem. One day he was an hour late for some reason. When he arrived, he found that the learners were waiting for him along with the supervisor, Hannan. Hannan works with a local NGO which sponsors this literacy class. Kasem felt ashamed for being late. Hannan did not allow him to explain the situa-

tion. Hannan was irritated and started talking to the learners. At some point, Hannan became angry and said, "If a delay happens again, my NGO will not pay." Kasem was insulted, but did not dare to argue with the supervisor.

This small incident made Kasem unhappy, but it did not disrupt the momentum of the class. Since then, he has been conducting the class as usual. Then one day something happened in his family which made it impossible for Kasem to conduct the class. He talked with the learners and canceled the class for a week. He did not dare to inform Hannan that he had postponed the class. He thought that Hannan would not discover the situation.

Hannan came to visit the class while the class was postponed. He did not find anybody in the classroom and was very surprised. Then he talked with the neighbors. The neighbors told him that Kasem had canceled the class. Hannan became angry and returned to his NGO office. The next day he terminated Kasem for disciplinary reasons.

Hannan tried for a month to find another facilitator to run the class, but no one was available to do the job. It was apparent that the entire class was coming to a halt. At this point, the coordinator of the literacy program, Turab Ali, decided to conduct an inquiry. He went to the village and spoke with Kasem and a few learners. Kasem told him that his daughter was seriously ill and he had to take her to the hospital which is far away. It took a week to get to the hospital and return to the village. He also mentioned that he was afraid to inform the supervisor regarding the cancellation of the class. Two elderly learners expressed their strong resentment that they were not even asked before terminating the facilitator.

Turab Ali tried to reorganize the class. He apologized to Kasem and asked that he come back and facilitate the class. First Kasem refused. Turab Ali kept requesting and tried to motivate him again. Eventually Kasem agreed to do the job. Kasem tried to reorganize the class. By this time, more than a month had passed. Many learners felt disoriented. Some had become involved with other work in the evening and were reluctant to come back. Kasem, along with Turab Ali, went door to door trying to motivate the students. As a result some learners, but not all, rejoined. The class had started with 20 learners, but after the disruption only 7 to 8 returned.

When he began teaching again, Kasem discovered another problem. Most of the learners had forgotten what they had learned previously. Kasem had to begin the lessons all over.

Evaluation of Manual

1. How did you use the manual?
2. Did you do every activity in the manual? Which ones did you do?
3. What did you like best about the manual?
4. What did you like least about the manual?
5. How long did it take you to complete the manual?
6. In your opinion, was the amount of work required by the manual too much, about right, or too little?
7. What advice would you give to someone who wanted to use this manual?
8. Was the information in the manual complete? What should be added?
9. Was the writing in the manual clear? Were you able to understand all of the concepts easily? Which concepts were somewhat difficult to understand? Which were the most difficult?

Please mail your
evaluation to:
Literacy Linkage Program
Center for International
Education
285 Hills South
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA 01003, USA

10. Other comments.

Thank you for your feedback!

Glossary

Alternative supervision: This supervision approach does not focus on judgement and fault-finding. Its purpose is to support the facilitator and identify ways to help improve his or her skills.

Compilation: To bring things together and put them in order. When you compile the information you collect, you organize it into lists and charts. Compiling and organizing information is important for setting up a supervision and support system and for planning future action.

Facilitator: Nonformal education and adult literacy programs do not use teachers in the traditional sense. The leader of the class is called a facilitator because this person organizes activities and discussions to help participants with their learning process. The facilitator does not impart knowledge from the top down as a traditional teacher does.

Interview: This means to ask questions in order to get information from someone. Interviews can be friendly, informal conversations or they can be formal events with structured questionnaires. For the purposes of alternative supervision, informal conversations work best. You can write down the information during or after the interview conversation depending on the situation.

Observation: This means to watch a particular activity or event with the purpose of collecting information. Observation is frequently used in educational research and evaluation to improve understanding of what really happens in the learning process.

Peer observation: A peer is a person who is your equal in age, type of work, or interest. Peer observation refers to facilitators who observe each other in their classes and give advice to each other.

Portfolio assessment: A portfolio is a file folder or notebook used to collect information about a person's progress. Portfolios can be used for learners as well as facilitators. Documents that are put into a portfolio include survey forms, class observation notes, letters, notes, and other written records made by the supervisor or facilitator. As the number of documents in the portfolio increases, you will have a written record of the improvement the facilitator is making.

Reflection paper: When you write a reflection paper, you write about yourself; about your thoughts, your experiences, and your ideas. It is called a reflection paper because it is like a mirror that reflects what you see inside yourself. You do not need to have perfect grammar and

writing because no one else needs to see this paper. The purpose is to help you think about your own ideas.

Sampling: This means to select members from a group who represent the larger group. The sample must represent each of the types of people in the group such as male, female, rural, urban, younger, older, etc.

Traditional supervision: In this approach, the relationship between supervisor and facilitator is not equal. The facilitator is accountable to the supervisor who evaluates job performance in a critical manner.

Work context: This refers to things that define a facilitator's specific work context including number of learners, time constraints, outside problems that affect a class, as well as the experience, education, and training of a facilitator. The work context affects the quality of learning in the class. Your goal as a supervisor is to help the facilitators and learners improve their work context and skills.