

What is Mother Tongue Based Bi/multilingual Education? Pamphlet 2

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This pamphlet is available in Tshivenda,
isiXhosa, Sepedi, isiZulu, Sesotho, Afrikaans,
Setswana, Xitsonga, siSwati, isiNdebele, Sign
Language and English.

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What is a mother tongue(s)?

Yintoni ulwimi lwebele/lweenkobe (ulwimi lwasekhaya)?

A mother tongue is the most familiar language(s) that the child brings when they begin formal schooling. It can be more than one language. Typically, it is the language(s) the child uses regularly for communication in their home and/or community. It is usually the language which the child learns at Home Language level in school.

The most familiar language(s) of the child is also known by other terms such as primary language(s), first language(s), home language(s) or mother tongue(s).

The mother tongue can also be the father's tongue/language or the grandmother's language. The crucial point is that it is the language(s) that is most familiar to the child and spoken by the child. Mother tongue(s) include dialects or varieties of a particular named language.

What is 'mother tongue' education?

Yintoni imfundo 'ngolwimi lwebele' (iMTE ngoshunqulelo lwesiNgesi)?


In South Africa, mother tongue Education is associated with the use of the child's mother tongue as a Language of Learning, Teaching and Assessment (**LOLTA**). This means content subjects such as mathematics and lifeskills are taught in the mother tongue.

For example, dialects such as isiHlubi, isiMpondo, and isiBhaca, are included in isiXhosa as a mother tongue. Therefore, a teacher of isiXhosa is required to teach standard or written isiXhosa in

such a way that the dialects are acknowledged, respected and used as a resource for learning. Currently mother tongue is used as a **LOLTA** only for the first four years of schooling (Grade R-3) for the vast majority of African language speaking children. For English and Afrikaans speaking learners, the mother tongue is used as the **LOLTA** from Grade R to Grade 12 and beyond. Mother Tongue Education privileges language separation and provides for a single language of instruction, throughout schooling and education.

Mother Tongue Education is associated with monolingual education.

This means learning and teaching support materials (e.g. textbooks) are made available in one language, interaction between teachers and learners is conducted in one language, and assessments are conducted in one language. In this model, additional languages are offered only as subjects. For example, English/Afrikaans/isiZulu/ Setswana are offered as First Additional and Second Additional Language subjects. However, there are other forms that offer two language subjects at a Home Language level.



What is Mother Tongue Based Bi/multilingual Education (MTBBE)?

Iyintoni iMfundo eLwimimbini/eLwimininzi eSekelwe kuLwimi lwaseKhaya (iMTBBE ngoshunqulelo lwesiNgesi)?

Mother Tongue Based Bi/multilingual Education (**MTBBE**) is the use of more than one language as a Language of Learning, Teaching and Assessment (**LOLTA**). This means content subjects such as

mathematics and natural science and technology and social sciences are taught in two or more languages. This model is referred to as mother tongue based because it continues to use the child's mother tongue

as the **LOLTA** in Grade 4 while adding another, typically less familiar language (in most cases, English), as a complementary **LOLTA**.

MTBBE is a response to historical language and educational inequities in the South African education system where English and Afrikaans learners have benefitted the most from the use of their mother tongues as **LOLTA**'s beyond grade 3.

In **MTBBE**, learning and teaching support materials (e.g. textbooks) are made available in two or more languages and assessments are conducted in more than one language. In this model, the **LOLTA**'s are also offered as language subjects at either Home Language or First Additional Language level. Successful implementation of **MTBBE** is partly dependent on quality subject teaching of languages used as **LOLTA**'s.



Why Mother Tongue Based Bi/multilingual Education?

Kutheni ibalulekile iMfundo elwimimbini/ elwimininzi eSekelwe kuLwimi lwaseKhaya?

The goal of Mother Tongue Based Bilingual/multilingual Education is to create conditions for children to develop deep knowledge and proficiency in their mother tongue(s), English and other African languages. The majority of children in South Africa have an African language(s) as their most familiar language or their mother tongue. Research shows that learners learn best in the language(s) that they are most familiar with. Deep knowledge of their languages enables learners to learn new content and even to learn other languages.

International assessments of reading suggest that children do not read and write for meaning in African languages in Grade 4 and beyond, even though they have been taught through an African language in Grade R to 3. This does not mean that African languages are not effective as **LOLTA**'s. What these results show is the lack of investment in teaching through African languages.

For example, English and Afrikaans teachers are trained and provided with teaching and learning support

materials in the languages in which they teach. Most African language speaking teachers, on the other hand, are trained in English and most learners do not have adequate access to quality reading materials in African languages.

Research shows that people who speak more than one language use all their languages to make meaning. Using more than one language as a **LOLTA** can offer many cognitive benefits for learners, including the fact that bi/multilinguals draw on more than one language resource to make and convey meaning.

Strengthening the use of the children's familiar language as **LOLTA** while adding a complementary **LOLTA**, can enhance a learner's sense of self-worth, identity and culture. It can also enable children to bring and make connections between knowledge produced in their communities and those produced in school.

MTBBE aims to promote individual multilingualism to enhance cross-cultural communication, understanding and social cohesion.

The **MTBBE** model envisages a situation where learners can learn through their mother tongue(s) and through a language of wider communication (English), and, in addition, to learn another African language (a language not related to their mother tongue). **MTBBE** enables children to learn through the languages they know best as well as develop proficiency in English.

MTBBE also makes sense for economic development, as it prepares learners to participate in both local and international economies. It prepares learners to navigate different life worlds, so that they can function in work environments where English is valued (the formal economy) and those where African languages are valued (informal economy).



*Advice for schools
changing to MTBBE -
how could it work in the
classroom?*

*Ingcebiso kwizikolo
ezitshintshela
kwiMTBBE – ingasebenza
njani kwigumbi lokufundela?*

Scenario 1: For schools who have isiXhosa Mother Tongue in the Foundation Phase and English Medium from Grade 4-12 (rural/township school)

- Learners speak isiXhosa as an HL (some learners may speak a dialect of isiXhosa)
- Teachers speak isiXhosa as an HL
- Teachers and learners use English to a limited extent outside the classroom.
- IsiXhosa is the **LOLTA** in the Foundation Phase and English is the official **LOLTA** from Grade 4.

Recommended MTBBE Practices: Dual Medium Practices IsiXhosa LOLTA in the Foundation Phase and isiXhosa-English LOLTAs (Grade 4 and beyond)

Lesson planning: The teacher needs to establish what language(s) learners speak. Then they need to consider carefully whether to use isiXhosa or English or both and in what parts of the lesson. Thinking through this can help teachers to make a shift away from English only training and orientation to think multilingually about teaching and learning. It can strengthen the quality of lessons by encouraging teachers to access and use standardised terminology in isiXhosa and English in their lessons. Finally, it can assist teachers to plan for language use in the classroom.

Materials acquisition and use:

Teachers may need to make conscious decisions about quantities of materials to be bought in the **LOLTA**'s used in the classroom. In a class of 40 learners, for example, 20 English science textbooks and 20 isiXhosa science textbooks can be purchased. Also, monolingual and bilingual technical glossaries, dictionaries and **LTSM**'s texts can be purchased. A data free app with multilingual glossaries across all subjects can be useful in this situation.

Formative and summative

assessment: Teachers and subject advisors will need to consciously plan for language use in assessment (e.g bilingual or monolingual assessments depending on the goal of the lesson and language ability of learners). This includes guidance about which language(s) to use in formative and summative assessment; in a specific grade level; or in what part of the assessment.

Language use in the classroom

(by teachers and learners): Teachers encourage learners to use all their language resources/varieties for making and conveying meaning. Teachers should also model language use for meaning making.

Following is an example of how language use can be thought about for different grade levels in scenario 1.

Grade	Language use by percentage as recommended by DBE	Language support resources	Workbooks/ LTSMS
4	<p>LOLTA 80% isiXhosa 20% English</p>	<p>Bilingual word walls, glossaries, environmental print & notes</p>	<p>Monolingual texts Mostly isiXhosa workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual Texts some bilingual texts in one book/set of notes.</p>
5	<p>LOLTA 70% isiXhosa 30% English</p>	<p>Bilingual word walls, glossaries & environmental print & notes.</p>	<p>Monolingual texts Mostly isiXhosa workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual Texts isiXhosa/English bilingual text in one book or set of notes. some bilingual texts in one book/set of notes.</p>
6	<p>LOLTA 60% isiXhosa 40% English</p>	<p>Bilingual word walls, glossaries, environmental print and notes.</p>	<p>Monolingual texts Half isiXhosa workbooks Half English workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual Texts some bilingual isiXhosa-English texts in one book/set of notes.</p>
7	<p>LOLTA 50% isiXhosa 50% English</p>	<p>Bilingual wordwalls, glossaries & environmental print and notes.</p>	<p>Monolingual texts Half isiXhosa workbooks Half English workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual Texts some bilingual texts in one workbook/ set of notes.</p>

Scenario 2: For schools who have IsiXhosa-English and Sesotho-English bilingual parallel medium school

- Most learners speak isiXhosa or Sesotho as HL (some learners may speak a dialect of isiXhosa or Sesotho).
- Teachers speak either isiXhosa or Sesotho as HL.
- Teachers and learners use English to a limited extent outside the classroom.
- IsiXhosa and Sesotho are parallel **LOLTA**'s to grade 6. English is offered as a **FAL** from grade 1.

Recommended MTBBE Practices Parallel Medium & Dual Medium Practices

Lesson planning: The teacher needs to establish what language(s) learners speak. Then they need to consider carefully whether to use isiXhosa or English or Sesotho or English or both and in what parts of the lesson. This is important to help teachers shift from English only training and orientation to think multilingually about teaching and learning. It will also enable teachers to access and use standardised terminology in isiXhosa/Sesotho and English in their lessons. Finally, it can assist teachers to plan for language use in the classroom.

Materials acquisition and use:

Teachers may need to make conscious decisions about quantities of materials to be bought in the **LOLTA**'s used in the classroom. In a class of 40 learners, for example, 20 English science textbooks and 20 isiXhosa/Sesotho science textbooks can be purchased. Also, monolingual and bilingual technical glossaries, dictionaries and **LTSM**'s texts can be purchased. A data free app with multilingual glossaries across all subjects can be useful in this situation.

Formative and summative

assessment: Teachers and subject advisors may need to consciously plan for languages of assessment (e.g bilingual or monolingual assessments) and explicitly instruct learners in which language/s learners need to respond at each grade level. It is recommended that the Home Language and the First Additional Language be used as languages of assessment.

Language use in the classroom

(by teachers and learners): Teachers should encourage learners to use all their language resources/varieties to make and convey meaning. Teachers should also model language use for meaning making.

Following is an example of how language use can be thought about for different grade levels in scenario 2.

Grade	Language use by percentage as recommended by DBE	Language support resources	Parallel to dual-medium isiXhosa/Sesotho classes, Workbooks/LTSMs	
4	<p>LOLTA 80% isiXhosa/ Sesotho 20% English</p>	<p>Bilingual word walls, glossaries, environmental print & notes.</p>	<p>Monolingual texts Mostly isiXhosa workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual texts some bilingual isiXhosa/English texts in one book/set of notes.</p>	<p>Monolingual texts Mostly Sesotho workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual texts some bilingual Sesotho/English texts in one book/set of notes</p>
5	<p>LOLTA 70% isiXhosa/ Sesotho 30% English</p>	<p>Bilingual word walls, glossaries, environmental print & notes.</p>	<p>Monolingual texts Mostly isiXhosa workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual texts some isiXhosa/English/bilingual text in one book/ set notes.</p> <p>Monolingual texts Mostly Sesotho workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual texts some Sesotho/English bilingual texts in one book/set of notes</p>	
6	<p>LOLTA 60% isiXhosa/ Sesotho 40% English</p>	<p>Bilingual word walls, glossaries, environmental print & notes.</p>	<p>Monolingual texts Mostly Sesotho workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual texts some Sesotho/English bilingual texts in one book/set of notes</p> <p>Monolingual texts Half isiXhosa workbook Half English workbook</p> <p>Bilingual texts more bilingual isiXhosa/English texts</p>	

7	LOLTA 50% isiXhosa/ Sesotho 50% English	Bilingual wordwalls, glossaries, environmental print & notes.	<p>Monolingual texts Half isiXhosa workbooks Half English workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual texts more bilingual isiXhosa/English texts in one book/set of notes</p>	<p>Monolingual texts Half Sesotho workbooks Half English workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual texts more bilingual Sesotho English texts in one book/ set of notes</p>
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In scenario 2, it is recommended that as many opportunities as possible should be created to combine learners who speak different languages (isiXhosa and Sesotho or any of the South African languages). The learners could be combined for English First Additional Language classes and the Sesotho learners can be offered isiXhosa as a first or second additional language and the isiXhosa speaking learners, Sesotho.

Scenario 3: IsiXhosa-English and Sesotho-English bilingual parallel medium schools in the foundation phase and then isiXhosa-Sesotho-English multilingual school (some schools implementing MTBBE in the Eastern Cape)

- Learners speak isiXhosa or Sesotho as an HL (and, typically some learners speak both isiXhosa and Sesotho to varying degrees)
- Learners are taught in either isiXhosa and Sesotho in parallel medium class.
- In Grade 4, Sesotho and isiXhosa speaking learners are mixed in one class.
- Teachers speak isiXhosa and Sesotho to varying degrees. Some teachers are HL speakers of isiXhosa and others of

Sesotho. Teachers and learners use English to a limited extent outside the classroom. IsiXhosa and Sesotho are parallel **LOLTA's** from Grade R-to 3, English is offered as FAL from grade 1, and then isiXhosa and Sesotho, combined with English, are **LOLTA's** in the same classroom from grade 4.

Recommended MTBBE Practices - Dynamic/Flexible Multilingualism Practices

Lesson planning: Teachers need to make conscious decisions about how the lesson plan accommodates separate uses of language and for mixing of languages depending on the purpose. This is important to help teachers to work flexibly with languages. In this scenario, it is much more important for teachers to consult other teachers or subject advisors to clarify terms and find terms well in advance of the lesson.

Videos in different languages explaining the concepts will be very useful to assist teachers who are not equally competent in both Sesotho and isiXhosa. It would be helpful if the videos had subtitles in isiXhosa, Sesotho and English (but not necessarily on the same video copy). It will also enable teachers to access and use standardised terminology in isiXhosa, Sesotho and English in their lessons.

Materials acquisition and use:

Teachers may need to make conscious decisions about quantities of materials to be bought in the **LOLTA**'s used in the classroom. In a class of 40 learners, for example, 20 English science textbooks and 20 isiXhosa/Sesotho science textbooks can be purchased.

Also, monolingual and bilingual technical glossaries, dictionaries and **LTSM**'s texts can be purchased.

A data free app with multilingual glossaries across all subjects can be useful in this situation.

Formative and summative

assessment: Teachers and subject advisors will need to consciously plan for languages of assessment (e.g bilingual or monolingual assessments) and explicitly instruct learners in which language/s learners need to respond at each grade level. It is recommended that the Home Language and the First Additional Language be used as languages of assessment.

Language use in the classroom

(by teachers and learners): Teachers should encourage learners to use all their language resources/varieties for meaning making. Teachers should also model language use for meaning making.

Following is an example of how language use can be thought about for different grade levels in scenario 3.

Grade	Language use by percentage as recommended by DBE	Language support resources	Parallel to dual-medium isiXhosa/Sesotho classes, Workbooks/LTSMs
4	LOLTA 80% isiXhosa/ Sesotho 20% English	Bilingual word walls, glossaries, environmental print & notes.	<p>Monolingual texts Mostly isiXhosa workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual texts more bilingual isiXhosa/ English texts in one book/ set of notes</p> <p>Monolingual texts Mostly Sesotho workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual texts more bilingual Sesotho English texts in one book/ set of notes</p>
	LOLTA 70% isiXhosa/ Sesotho 30% English	Bilingual word walls, glossaries, environmental print & notes.	<p>Monolingual texts Half isiXhosa workbooks Half Sesotho workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual texts isiXhosa/English bilingual texts in one book/set of notes. Sesotho/ English bilingual texts in one workbook/set of notes.</p>
6	LOLTA 60% isiXhosa/ Sesotho 40% English	Bilingual word walls, glossaries, environmental print & notes.	<p>Monolingual texts Half isiXhosa workbooks Half Sesotho workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual Texts isiXhosa/English bilingual texts book/set of notes Sesotho/ English bilingual texts in one book/set of notes.</p>
	LOLTA 50% isiXhosa/ Sesotho 50% English	Bilingual word walls, glossaries, environmental print & notes.	<p>Monolingual texts Half isiXhosa workbooks Half Sesotho workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual texts isiXhosa/English bilingual texts book/set of notes Sesotho/ English bilingual texts in one book/set of notes.</p>
7	LOLTA 50% isiXhosa/ Sesotho 50% English	Bilingual word walls, glossaries, environmental print & notes.	<p>Monolingual texts Half isiXhosa workbooks Half Sesotho workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual texts isiXhosa/English bilingual texts book/set of notes Sesotho/ English bilingual texts in one book/set of notes.</p>

Scenario 4: Parallel Afrikaans-English-isiXhosa classes

- Afrikaans as **LoLT** throughout (Afr HL subject, English FAL subject) alongside English as **LoLT** (Eng HL subject, Afr FAL). Widespread in urban areas and some rural towns and in quintile 1 schools.
 - Former Afrikaans-medium schools increasingly defaulting to English. Still parallel-medium, but with the Afrikaans classes diminishing in number every year, while the English stream grows.
 - Afrikaans/English parallel medium is still an urban phenomenon but also occurring in towns and rural areas.
 - Eventually the standard Afrikaans stream may be phased out altogether due to the demand for English. Currently, many (esp 'coloured') children in these schools speak Kaaps first and do not identify culturally with standard Afrikaans experience challenges in Afrikaans HL as a subject. Inclusion of Kaaps as language variety in the classroom then becomes necessary.
 - Also, many parents try to raise their children in English at home, even though they themselves speak Afrikaans to each other.
 - One result is that English HL as a subject is often taken by children who do not speak English (much) at home.
- with both standard versions of Afrikaans and English, resulting in new challenges for teachers used to "traditional" English/Afrikaans HL dominant classes.
 - There are also communities where isiXhosa/Sesotho/Setswana speaking families live together with Afrikaans speaking families. Schools need to address language diversity in the community so as to serve all children living in those communities. Another parallel isiXhosa/Sesotho/Setswana steam would be ideal for the children.
 - Afrikaans as LoLT throughout (Afr HL subject, English FAL subject) alongside English as **LoLT** (Eng HL subject, Afr FAL). Widespread in urban areas and some rural towns and in quintile 1 schools.
 - Former Afrikaans-medium schools increasingly defaulting to English. Still parallel-medium, but with the Afrikaans classes diminishing in number every year, while the English stream grows.
 - Afrikaans/English parallel medium is still an urban phenomenon but also occurring in towns and rural areas.
 - Eventually the standard Afrikaans stream may be phased out altogether due to the demand for English. Currently, many (esp 'coloured') children in these schools speak Kaaps first and do not identify culturally

Children who are multilingual and speak different varieties in this way, experience difficulties

with standard Afrikaans experience challenges in Afrikaans HL as a subject. Inclusion of Kaaps as language variety in the classroom then becomes necessary.

- Also, many parents try to raise their children in English at home, even though they themselves speak Afrikaans to each other.
- One result is that English HL as a subject is often taken by children who do not speak English (much) at home. Children who are multilingual and speak different varieties in this way, experience difficulties with both standard versions of Afrikaans and English, resulting in new challenges for teachers used to “traditional” English/ Afrikaans HL dominant classes.
- There are also communities where isiXhosa/Sesotho/ Setswana speaking families live together with Afrikaans speaking families. Schools need to address language diversity in the community so as to serve all children living in those communities. Another parallel isiXhosa/ Sesotho/Setswana stream would be ideal for the children.

Recommended MTBBE Practices - *Dynamic/Flexible Multilingualism Practices*

Lesson planning: Teachers need to make conscious decisions about how the lesson plan accommodates separate uses of language and for mixing of languages depending on the purpose. This is important to help teachers to work flexibly with languages. In this scenario, it is much more important for teachers to consult other teachers or subject advisors to clarify terms and find terms well in advance of the lesson. Videos in different languages explaining the concepts will be very useful to assist teachers who are not equally competent in both Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English. It would be helpful if the videos had subtitles in Afrikaans, isiXhosa and English (but not necessarily on the same video copy). It will also enable teachers to access and use standardised terminology in Afrikaans, isiXhosa, and English in their lessons.

Materials acquisition and use: Teachers may need to make conscious decisions about quantities of materials to be bought in the **LOLTA**'s used in the classroom. In a class of 40 learners, for example, 20 Afrikaans science textbooks, 20 isiXhosa science textbooks and 40 English textbooks can be purchased. Also, monolingual and bilingual technical glossaries, dictionaries and **LTSM**'s texts can be purchased. A data free app with multilingual glossaries across all subjects can be useful in this situation.

Formative and summative assessment: Teachers and subject advisors will need to consciously plan for languages of assessment (e.g bilingual or monolingual

assessments) and explicitly instruct learners in which language/s learners need to respond at each grade level. It is recommended that the Home Language and the First Additional Language be used as languages of assessment.

Language use in the classroom (by teachers and learners): Teachers should encourage learners to use all their language resources/ varieties (e.g Kaaps) for meaning making. Teachers should also model language use for meaning making.

Here is an example of how language use can be thought about for different grade levels in scenario 4.

Grade	Language use by percentage as recommended by DBE	Language support resources	Dual-Medium classes with separate language and bilingual workbooks/LTSMS
4	<p>LOLTA 80% Afrikaans& 20% English</p> <p>80% English& 20% Afrikaans</p> <p>80% isiXhosa 20% English</p>	<p>Bilingual word walls, glossaries, environmental print & notes.</p>	<p>Monolingual texts Half Afrikaans workbooks Half English workbooks Half isiXhosa workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual Texts Afrikaans/English bilingual texts in one book/set of notes. isiXhosa/English bilingual texts in one workbook/set of notes.</p>
5	<p>LOLTA 70% Afrikaans& 30% English</p> <p>70% English & 30% Afrikaans</p> <p>70% isiXhosa 30% English</p>	<p>Bilingual word walls, glossaries, environmental print & notes.</p>	<p>Monolingual texts Half Afrikaans workbooks Half isiXhosa workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual texts Afrikaans/English bilingual texts in one book/set of notes. isiXhosa/ English bilingual texts in one workbook/set of notes. Trilingual texts</p>

<p>6</p>	<p>LOLTA 60% Afrikaans& 40% English</p> <p>60% English & 40% Afrikaans</p> <p>60% isiXhosa& 30% English</p>	<p>Bilingual word walls, glossaries, environmental print & notes.</p>	<p>Monolingual texts Half Afrikaans workbooks Half isiXhosa workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual texts Afrikaans/English bilingual texts book/set of notes IsiXhosa/ English bilingual texts in one book/set of notes.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>LOLTA <i>Afrikaans/English parallel classes combine.</i> 50% Afrikaans& 50% English</p> <p>50% isiXhosa& 50% English</p> <p>Learners can be combined for English as a subject classes</p>	<p>Bilingual word walls, glossaries, environmental print & notes.</p>	<p>Monolingual texts Half Afrikaans workbooks Half isiXhosa workbooks</p> <p>Bilingual texts Afrikaans/English bilingual texts/set of notes isiXhosa/ English bilingual texts/set of notes.</p>

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