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AUTHOR Bhola, H. S.
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ABSTRACT

At the heart of the enterprise of providing reading materials to new readers is the writer. The writer must write before the new literates can read and must write both effectively and interestingly. Although talent helps, acquired skills play an important part in writing, especially in expository writing. More important, to enable them to produce good expository writing, the new writers must be provided assistance in the process of "message making" or getting the message across to the reader. A proposed model of message-making illustrates that the process of decision making when developing a message in print is neither linear nor one-directional. Major steps in the model are selection of subject or topic; definition of general and specific objectives; content planning in the field; the choice of appropriate literary treatment; development and outlining of the argument of the book; development of subject-matter skills and collaboration with subject-matter specialists; vocabulary research by the writer; writing to be read and to be understood; pretest of material for feedback; and working with the illustrator and the editor. The writer must also keep in mind the problems of adaptations and translations. (YLB)

PREFACE

The Education, Science and Documentation Centre of the German Foundation for International Development is preparing a new series of occasional papers on practical issues of basic education both formal and non-formal. The papers will come out from time to time if need be and whenever meaningful material becomes available.

The first paper in the series deals with writing for new readers.

A growing number of new readers come out from primary schools and literacy programmes. They have acquired literacy skills to communicate better and at a distance, to gain new knowledge in agriculture, health, home economics or crafts, to participate more actively in village manangement, to cope with administration from the post-office to their role as taxpayers and to understand better what is going on around them in the village, the district, the nation and maybe all over the world.

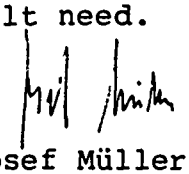
New readers need appropriate reading materials to stabilize and widen literacy skills, to continue learning and to apply what has been learnt for personal, social and vocational development. New readers need a literate environment. They need "their" rural newspaper, "their" stories and novels, and functional reading material to improve their daily life.

Such reading material is not readily available. It has to be created by writers, content specialists, extension agents, teachers, literacy workers and, last not least, by the new readers themselves or at least with their assistance.

Writing for new readers is more than just simple writing. The message to get across must be carefully planned, structured, outlined, written, tested, reviewed, rewritten, illustrated, edited and finally printed. These steps are not simply linear. They are interrelated. The present paper outlines these interrelated steps in form of a model for message-making. The paper is a spin-off of several writers' workshops in which the German Foundation for International Development was engaged during recent years. It is the core chapter of a handbook which exists

in draft form and might be published after some time and after some more "testing in use". The author, H.S. Bhola, presently professor of education, Indiana University, Bloomington/ Indiana, USA, has worked in literacy programmes in India and Tanzania, he edited a series of training monographs "Literacy in Development" published by the International Institute for Adult Literacy Methods, Tehran, between 1976 and 1979, he directed workshops for the German Foundation and others and did consultancy work for a variety of organizations.

We hope the paper and the others to come will meet a felt need.



Josef Müller
German Foundation for International Development
Non-Formal Basic Education Section

WRITING FOR NEW READERS:
MESSAGE-MAKING IN PRINT

Summary

Writing for new readers is not just a matter of writing something that is easy-to-read. The message must get across to the reader. It is quite possible that a writer is using simple and concrete words, and is making short and direct sentences, and yet the message fails to get through. The teaching objectives of the book are not fully realized.

Before writing, a writer of follow-up books must plan the book as a whole. The writer must engage in a careful and systematic exercise of message-making. Such an exercise would involve choice of instructional and motivational objectives for the book; content planning within the social milieu of potential readers; outlining the argument of the book, including appropriate logical and persuasive elements; choice of the literary treatment of the content; acquiring knowledge in the subject matter, and establishing collaborations with the subject-matter specialists; and undertaking the necessary vocabulary research. Then, the writer must do some clear and attractive writing; pre-test materials to obtain evaluative feedback; work with the illustrator; and collaborate with the editor.

In many situations in the Third World, the writer may have to write in an official or national language from which translations must be made later in the regional languages. Special requirements of translation must be kept in mind when writing in such national contexts.

At the heart of the enterprise of providing reading materials to new readers, is the writer. The writer must write before the new literates can read. This chapter has been written to enable the writer to write both effectively and interestingly.

In an earlier chapter, we had talked of the various categories of writers: already published creative writers; professors, journalists and social commentators doing specialized writing; budding writers who have published a piece here and there, but who have not yet established themselves as writers; and "the new writers" -- the pool of better educated government officials, working in the departments of extension and education. We had also suggested that, presently, in most parts of the Third World, "the new writers" constitute the most promising pool of writers available to a planner, engaged in the task of providing reading materials for the newly literate. The so-called budding writers may be our second best bet, at least in countries like India and Egypt.

While the new writers are the most promising pool for the recruitment of writers for training workshops, writers belonging to the other categories must not be forgotten. Policy makers and planners do need to invite established creative writers to accept the challenge of writing for new readers. Planners have to convince published creative writers that they can write for new readers, on their own terms, without compromising their creativity. Professors, journalists and social commentators must also be contacted and invited to make contributions to the national movement of

social writing. And, what we have called budding writers should receive the same attention as those we have called the new writers.

It needs to be understood that our new writers are also caught in the "creativity trap." They do not believe that they are creative enough to be writers. It is a tough task convincing them of the idea that "If you can read and write, you can be a writer -- at least of expository materials." Fortunately, it has been much easier to demonstrate practically that the new writers can do a very good job of social writing; and that they can play an important role in disseminating useful information among farmers, workers, home makers and youth, and all others hungry for development information.

To convince the new writers of their potential, we should tell them that while it helps to be talented, "acquired skills" play an important part in writing, especially in expository writing. More importantly, the new writers must be provided assistance in the process of "message-making", to enable them to do good expository writing. We will deal with these questions, in the following pages.

The role of talent and skill in writing

Talent is a natural gift, some special aptitude, a disposition with which an individual is born. A skill, on the other hand, is expert knowledge or accomplishment in a craft which can be acquired. Of course, there is something called the talent for writing. Some individuals are, indeed, born with that talent. But talent is not everything. Writing

skills, acquired through training, are equally important. Great writing talent sometimes may not even surface, for a lack of training in writing skills. On the other hand, some modest writing talent can go a long way when combined and complemented with training in writing skills. It is correct to assume that most people have some undiscovered talent for writing, howsoever modest. Therefore, we believe that most people can be helped to acquire the skill to write. Let us be reminded: "If you can read and write, you can be a writer -- at least a writer of expository materials."

The role of skills (as compared with talent) in expository writing is especially crucial. In talking earlier about successful writers, we discussed the meanings of creativity, and thus provided an indirect definition of creative writing. Creative writing (also called expressive writing) can be taught as well. However, it is something more difficult to teach and more difficult to practice. It demands from the writer a keen and insightful mind. The creative writer must look at the world around -- at personal tragedies, human dramas and social events -- and then represent them, wrapped in imagination. This "imaginative reconstruction of reality" is not something that comes easily to people; and is not something that can be easily taught. Talent does count. Expository writing is somewhat different from creative writing. And, it can be more easily taught.

Expository writing: writing by objective

Writing for new literates, or new reading publics, is not simply a matter of "expressive behavior" on the part of the

writer. It is not simply a matter of "imaginative reconstruction of reality." It is much more specific than that. The objective for the new writers may be to create a new social awakening; to help marginal people on the periphery of the society; and, most certainly, to teach people new information, new attitudes and new skills needed to participate in the social, political and economic life of the nation. The writer of materials for new literates must be helped to understand his social mission. And, once the mission has been understood, the question of message-making should be taken up in earnestness. The writer must be taught to understand about choice of subject, content, treatment, style, and readability levels of materials written; the need to develop self-consciousness about the writer's craft; and the need to cooperate with the content specialist in writing development-oriented materials. This means that the new writer must be taught to "write by objective", for real people, living in real places, having real information needs, for the solution of their problems, and the problems of the nation.

A "Model of message-making for development support communication, using print media" is presented below. It consists of ten major steps or procedures:

(1) Selection of subject or topic of the book

(2) Definition of the general and specific objectives of the book

(3) Content planning for the book

(4) Choice of the literary treatment of subject matter

(5) Content outline based on the argument to be presented in the book

(6) Developing personal knowledge of subject matter, and establishing collaborations with subject-matter specialists

(7) Conducting vocabulary research

(8) Writing to communicate effectively

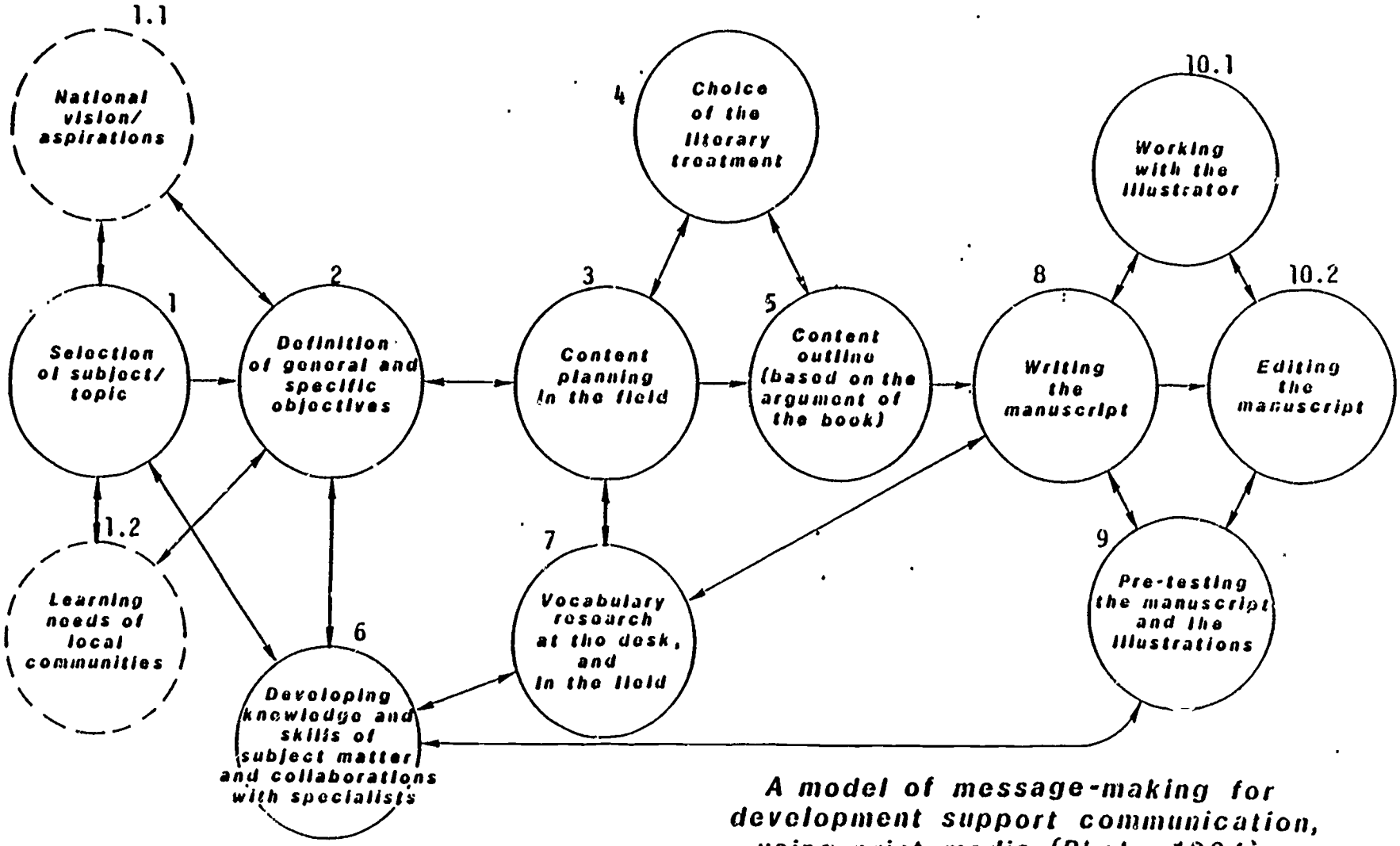
(9) Pre-testing of the written manuscript, and

(10) Working with the illustrator, and the editor.

Steps in the model of message-making are not linear

The process of decision making, when developing a message in print, is neither linear nor one-directional. Some procedures must be performed concurrently, some steps overlap, still others are in an interactive relationship, that is, each defines the other. Relationships between and among the various procedures in the Model may be best presented graphically. (See figure on next page.)

It should be clear from the figure that Step 1 results from an interaction among Steps 1, 1.1 and 1.2. Steps 1,2,3,5,8 and 10.2 are more or less linear, except for Steps 2 and 3 which are in an interactive relationship. As the writer goes into the field to do "content planning," he or she may come back with a completely revised set of general and specific objectives, because the realities in the field so demand.



A model of message-making for development support communication, using print media (Bhola, 1984).

The writer will find it sensible to do research on "living vocabulary" (Step 7) while he or she is in the field doing content planning (Step 3), rather than having to return to the field again for this aspect of work. To go from Step 3 to 5, the writer must make decisions about the "literary treatment" of the book (Step 4) because that is what will determine the mix of ideas and artfulness planned by the writer. Consequently, the content outline of the book as it is divided into chapters and sections, or parts of a story, will be determined by the choice of the literary treatment.

The writer will not have to wait to complete his or her writing before establishing contacts with the illustrator (Step 10.1) and the editor (Step 10.2). Again, pre-testing will take place concurrently with writing the manuscript, as well as at the end, when the manuscript has been completed. Finally, as the writer is engaged in the process of writing, it will be necessary to return to vocabualry research (Step 7), this time to make lists of technical words; and to subject-matter specialists for help on the subject matter (Step 6).

Let us now deal with each of the major steps and procedures in the Model in somewhat greater detail.

(1) Selection of subject or topic

The writer of books for new literates is engaged, not in self-expression, but in social writing. The writer is interested is spreading new knowledge, attitudes and skills

among communities that do not have them. But what knowledge? What attitudes? What new skills? Are there some special individual or national needs that must be met on an urgent basis? What are the priorities among those special needs?

Depending upon the social context, the program philosophy and the relationship between the writer and the publisher of reading materials, writers will have more or less freedom in the choice of subjects and topics for the books they undertake to write. To make the choice of subject and topic by writers both relevant and significant, program organizers should systematically go through the process of developing lists of titles on which books are needed, within the context of a particular development program, in a particular region or society.

These lists should result from the marriage of two processes: (i) developing a list of books as suggested by development planners and policy makers; and (ii) going to the field to make a needs assesment of the learning needs according to client groups. The first process will require that program organizers look at the development agenda of the country or the region; examine the communication needs to support the overall development process; and see which communication needs can be fulfilled by print media, especially books. At the same time, program organizers must conduct effective needs assesments within communities. Such needs assesments can be more or less elaborate, but planners must go to a sample of typical clients and ask them about their reading interests and reading needs. A final list of subjects and topics must come out of the marriage of these two

processes. Writers in workshop may then choose topics from such a list; or they may be assigned appropriate topics by planners.

(2) Definition of general and specific objectives

Once the general subject matter or the topic of the book has been selected by (or assigned to) the writer, the writer must think in terms of general and specific objectives of the book. Writing general and specific objectives for a book is often difficult because as writers we are not always clear about what we want the book to say, to whom, and with what expectations of results. Does the book want to inform? Does the book seek to persuade? Does the book seek to teach some particular set of skills? In other words, are objectives of the book knowledge-related, or attitudinal, or skill-oriented? Typically, one small book will not be able to fulfill all the three types of objectives at the same time. One type of objectives will have to be predominant in a book. Though, it must be indicated that to change attitudes, one must also provide some information. Persuasion can not take place in a vacuum of information.

As writers we are also not always clear about our audiences. Therefore, our first need as writers is to have as clear an idea of our audiences as possible. Then, we should learn to identify with the reader and ask the following questions: What should the reader know after having read the book? How should the reader feel after having read the book? What should the reader be able to do after having read the

book? Looking at the objectives of the book from the reader's perspective will make the book "user friendly."

It is important to begin with a statement of the general objectives of the book to be written. However, general objectives are not enough. General objectives must be translated into specific objectives. As indicated elsewhere, one can not generate a good set of objectives -- particularly specific objectives -- without sufficient knowledge of the subject matter. In addition, writing of general, specific, and second-level specific objectives does require technique. With practice, the technique can be mastered. Experience tells us that after an initial struggle, almost every new writer is able to generate an acceptable set of objectives for the book he or she is going to write.

The following display will show how the general and specific objectives of a book for new readers may look like:

Subject/Topic: Growing Sunflowers

GENERAL OBJECTIVE(S)

To inform farmers on how to grow, store and market sunflowers, to produce cooking oil for use at home, and for obtaining disposable cash income.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES (FIRST LEVEL)

Some specific objectives of this book may be stated as follows:

1. To introduce farmers to the advantages of growing sunflowers in Zambia; and to inform them of the two main varieties of sunflowers grown in the country.

2. To inform farmers about available extension services and to guide them on how to establish proper relationships with extension agents.

3. To enable farmers to make choices about sunflower cultivation in consideration of the soil conditions of the land they cultivate.

4. To teach farmers on how to prepare land for sunflowers and how and when to plant sunflowers.

5. To bring to the attention of farmers the role of honey bees in cross-polination, and what they should do and what they should not do, to make honey bees work for them.

6. To teach farmers the use of various fertilizers, including kraal manure, in growing sunflowers.

7. To introduce to farmers some basic ideas of field management, including crop rotation, prevention of soil erosion and precautions against plant diseases and pests.

8. To introduce to farmers some basic but essential ideas for harvesting, drying and storing sunflowers.

9. Teaching farmers how to make sunflower oil for use in the family kitchen, and

10. To teach farmers how to market sunflowers for best returns on the sale of produce.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES (FOR OBJECTIVE #10 ABOVE)

Some of the first-level specific objectives stated above could be translated into a second level of specification. For instance, the first-level specific objective #10 above could be translated into the following more specific objectives:

1. To help farmers to understand the market cycle in the case of the sunflower crop in Zambia.

2. To help farmers to understand the role of the middle man in the marketing of sunflowers; and how prices may be manipulated, in relation to supply, at a particular time of the year.

3. To encourage farmers to join cooperatives to have a better control on market forces, and

4. To teach farmers to understand the force of contracts; and the need to enter contracts with complete understanding of obligations.

The process of delineation of general and specific objectives will always bring out the possibility, or the impossibility, of achieving different sets of objectives in one small book. In some cases more than one book may have to be planned.

(3) Content planning in the field

Whether the topic of a book has been selected through some sort of needs assesment, or simply assigned to a writer, "content planning" should be an essential step in planning and writing a book for new readers. Content planning is not a substitue for the writing of general and specific objectives, but something that should be done, in addition. In most cases, content planning would lead to a restatement of both the general and specific objectives of the book.

While the writing of general and specific objectives is a logical process, content planning is a social process. The writer goes to the people, where they are. He seeks to learn

about their world-view and about their worldly needs. He can thereby learn about how to write a book in their behalf. In more concrete terms, the writer, in the process of content planning, must find out about the real shape of the problem that he is to deal with in the book: Is it a problem of motivation? Is it a problem of lack of knowledge? Or, is it a problem of scarce resources? Writing about fishing, in general, may not make much sense, if the problem is that in that region there are no fish in the rivers. Or, the boats and nets used by fishermen are not good enough. Or, the problem is really with the storage and transportation of fish to the markets. On the basis of such content planning, the general topic should become a specific topic. Thereby, content planning also becomes a process of validation of the logically derived general and specific objectives.

The second question that content planning must answer is: How do people in communities relate to the problem? What are their understandings of it? What are their perceptions of it, and what are their emotions about it? To continue with our example about fishing: How are the fish and fishing woven in the consciousness, and into the fabric of social life and cultural forms of the people? Where are the fish stuck in their web of perceptions? What are the people's emotions and cognitions about the fish and fishing? What is their logic-in-use, their "living logic", as they discuss and cope with the problem of fishing?

The third part of content planning has to deal with people's behavior in regard to information seeking and information utilization. Where do they go looking for the

information that they must obtain? How is the new information legitimized within the community? What do people do to reduce economic and social risks as the new information is put through a process of adoption?

Finally, content planning must give the writer a sense of the "language of discourse" of people about fish and fishing. The writer must make a list of words in the living vocabulary, and look particularly for the various colloquialisms in use.

This kind of content planning is quite different from a survey of reading interests of adults. It can not be done by a quick questionnaire or hurried interviews with some adult men and women. The writer must establish, with some of his potential readers, relationships of mutuality so as to engage in a genuine dialog. This can be accomplished through visits to the communities for which the book is intended. Ideally, the writer should visit more than one community, but even a single community visit will teach a lot to the willing writer. The book that is written will not, of course, be only for the one particular community which the writer happens to visit! It will be useful to all those comunities where people with similar problems, similar needs, and similar social patterns live and work.

To plan is to choose. Content planning is to choose those items of content in which potential readers will be most interested and to put into focus those ideas with which they would be able <u>to do something practical</u> in real life. A good content planning exercise should force a second look at the general and specific objectives. (Refer to Steps 2 and 3.) There would perhaps be a slight revision of the general

objecties. Some specific objectives may have to be discarded and new ones may have to be added. The various specific objectives may have to be given new relative emphases. In some rare cases, the general and the specific objectives may have to be thrown away altogether and a completely new beginning may have to be made.

Content planning should already give the writer ideas about what might be the best choice of a literary treatment (Step 4); and it will be during the content planning visit that research related to the "living vocabulary" will be conducted (Step 7). At the end of the content planning stage, the writer should be ready to develop a content outline.

(4) The choice of appropriate literary treatment

Treatment means the literary handling of a subject in terms of style, that is, mode and form of expression.

Different instructional objectives will suggest different kinds of literary treatments. The writer of easy-to-read materials can choose among four basic literary treatments: Didactic Narrative, Question and Answer, Dialog, and Story. Each has a different carrying capacity in regard to the load of concepts it will carry.

A closer examination of the four literary treatments will show that they can be put on an "impersonal--personal" continuum. The didactic narrative is the most impersonal but can carry the heaviest concept load. Question and answer treatmet is almost equivalent to the didactic narrative in its carrying capacity, as also in its incapacity to personalize information. The dialog treatment is a step towards the

personalization of the information. It has to serve two masters: information and art. It has to pay some attention to the imaginative reconstruction of a social context in which dialog between actors can take place, and can be made believable. The dialog treatment, therefore, can not carry as much concept load as, for example, the didactic narrative, and the simple question and answer treatment. Finally, the story treament has the best potential in personalizing information, but one can not load a story with too many concepts and too much instruction. Understandably, stories are often written to persuade rather than to transfer a big load of concepts.

A piece of advice is in order here: Do not mix treatments in a book for new readers. Stick with one literary treatment. Mixing of treatments in the same one book confuses new readers, and the message gets lost.

Let us now return to some examples of literary treatments.

(a) Didactic narrative treatment

We will deal with the development of didactic narrative treatment in detail under the topic of outlining an argument in the next section. In the following, we will make some comments on other literary treatments.

(b) Question and answer treatment

Question and answer treatment is not the same as dialog. (See below). Question and answer treatment brings directness and clarity to the message to the outmost point. Everything

is to the point; the language is almost legalistic; and answers are clear and direct -- these do not have to be searched in the text.

The following is a good example of how the question and answer technique can be used in message-making.

Q. What is a Credit Union?

A. It is a non-profit cooperative organization of people having a common fund created for the purpose of promoting thrift and providing a source of credit at a reasonable rate of interest.

Q. How do I join the Credit Union?

A. Visit a Credit Union office and complete a membership card for either a single or joint account. Requests for membership may also be made by mail. To open an account, a person must purchase at least one share ($5.00) at the time the application is completed.

(c) <u>The dialog treatment</u>

The dialog treatment involves, not just questions and answers, but "conversations" between or among people. The style of dialog is not definitional and legalistic. Dialog is personalized and intimate. It discusses issues not in authoritative, but in personal terms.

Good dialog can be very effective in posing problems, clarifying issues, expressing misgivings and reaching consensus. Writers need not always invent all dialog in their heads. Indeed, a good method to follow would be to have a

real group to engage in a real dialog on an issue, record the dialog and then edit it as a written piece.

It should be noted, however, that in such a case, the participants in the dialog must first be enabled to understand the argument pro and con. Before they begin the dialog, they should decide upon the positions they will take in regard to the issue under discussion. If those engaging in the dialog are not familiar with the total argument, the dialog may be partial, that is, it may not discuss an issue comprehensively. What is more serious, the argument may get completely lost and the issue may become more confused than before. Or, the argument may be resolved in a way contrary to the instructional objectives being persued by the writer.

(d) The story treatment

For motivational purposes, ideas may sometimes be put in the form of a story. We will not pretend to teach our readers the art of story writing in two pages of this book. Yet we do wish to point out that motivational ideas can be given a story treatment using some rather simple steps:

1. Begin with a clear idea of the argument to be clothed in story form.

2. Choose a protagonist, a person around whom the action will move. This will be the person who will play the "leading" role in the story.

3. Introduce another person who opposes the leading character and thus holds views contrary to those held by the protagonist.

4. Develop a social setting in which action will unfold and choose events and happenings that create tension and conflict around the issue to be discussed.

5. Create a critical event that provides a climax situation.

6. Lead the action to another event that resolves the problem and releases the emotional tensions build by the conflict, and in doing so promotes the thesis of the book.

Let us try the first few steps in writing a story on a deveopmental theme:

Theme and argument: The theme relates to the evils of the dowry system in India. The argument to be presented is that the dowry system should be abolished and that honor lies in accepting a daughter-in-law on the basis of her personal worth, rather than on the basis of the dowry she brings. The point also needs to be made that the anti-dowry initiative lies in the hands of the parents of bridegrooms, who by refusing to accept the dowry, will be seen as setting new social standards, on principle. The initiatives of parents of brides, in not offering the dowry for their daughters, could be misunderstood.

Story outline: A son returns home from the university with a medical degree. The parents, according to the time-worn Indian custom, begin the search for a bride. They want not only a beautiful girl from a good family, but also a big dowry for the son who is a doctor.

After considerable soul-searching, the son picks up the courage to tell his parents that the search for a bride for him is futile. He has already decided to marry one of his old

classmates in the medical school. Who is she? She is an orphan, brought up by an uncle who is a low-paid clerk in the Indian railways. The girl is beautiful and bright, and has done all her studying on scholarships.

The boy's parents are greatly disappointed since the bride's family is not good and there is no expectation of a big dowry. The son is unable to persuade his parents to accept his choice. After all, the father had provided big dowries for the two older daughters. All the relatives were now expecting their traditional gifts as the family would marry off their only son. The son suggests to his father that that was just the time to make an important social statement: That you do not want dowry, on principle; and that you want the evil practice to end. When it is time to give away his youngest sister in marriage, the father would be able to say "no dowry" on principle. All this falls on deaf ears, however.

The son leaves home to join his duty as a government doctor in a remote rural area. A few days later, his jeep overturns during one of his visits to the interior, and while the doctor survives, he loses one of his legs. His "market value" as a bridegroom goes plummeting down. Now, it is only his old classmate who comes to give him strength and stays to marry him. She brings to the family a life-time of earnings as a lady doctor and a person worth her weight in gold. The boy's parents are full of happiness and remorse.

The outline above could easily be developed into an interesting story but a point has to be made here that there is no short-cut to writing a story. A writer has to sit down

and think about the theme, the setting, the plot, the climax, the characters and all the other aspects of a story in order to develop an effective content outline. This is so because the content outline of the book which will tell a story, is the outline of the story itself.

(e) Books of songs

Songs are a perennial favorite of people. Writers may write their own songs. Or, they may collect folk songs sung by the people on various occasions, adapting them here and there to suit new needs and values.

Writers do not always have to write songs all by themselves, they can invite the common folk to write them. A beautiful book on Songs for Health was done in Africa. All the songs had been contributed by the people. In Tanzania, there are occasional competitions on literacy songs. The number and quality of songs sent in by the people from all over Tanzania has been nothing less than amazing.

(f) A note on humor

Humor is a dynamic and constructive force. It forces people to reconsider the world around them. It breaks the magic of their own social conditioning. It enables them to see themselves as other see them -- with their deformities, dogmatisms, coventionalisms, intolerances, and prejudices. Humor, however, is not easy to handle and requires both sensitivity and experience on the part of the writer. The best humor, of course, is humor at the writer's own cost!

(5) Developing and outlining the argument of the book

Content outlining (Step 5) should follow content planning and choice of the literary treatment (Steps 3 and 4). Content outline involves both knowledge and imagination on the part of the writer. We need knowledge of the subject matter and of our readers' problems and interests. But we also need creative imagination in regard to form and sequence of the content in the book. Both the persuasive and the information-related elements must be carefully chosen, weighed and arranged into an argument that will make an impact on the reader. The total argument (or flow of information, of ideas, and of values) must be broken into chapters, sections and, finally, into paragraphs.

All messages should have a structure or an argument built into them. This is true of all messages whether they seek to teach, or to train, or to persuade their readers.

(a) Informative messages

A book to be effective should have a thesis, a position that is clearly laid down, substantiated and defended. This would mean presenting a good argument. A claim should be made that is warranted by data. The claim should be defended against possible rebuttals. The whole discussion, pro and con, should be grounded in the reader's world-view.

In informative messages, the appeal is typically to the head, not to the heart. The idea is to prepare a logical argument. But the writer must understand that there are more than one logics around in this world. The writer must know the logic-in-use or the "living logic" within the community of

his potential readers. The arrangement of facts, and of statements for and against a position should fit the "living logic" of communities. Approaches taught for problem solving should fit the readers information-seeking behavior.

The statement of objectives, general and specific, completed under Section (2) above will help in outlining the argument of the book but the objectives and the argument will often have quite different structures. In outlining the argument, one will use a different sequence in presenting the content of the book. One will have to choose the facts to be presented and the statements to be made about those facts. One will have to decide what miseducation has already taken place that must be corrected; and what misperceptions exist that must be tackled. One must remember that we can not take care of counter-arguments simply by neglecting them, and by pretending that they do not exist. A good argument faces counter-arguments directly and honestly and deals with them effectively.

An important part of structuring the argument is chunking the content, that is, dividing the whole argument in chapters and paragraphs. Chapters are, of course, the main divisions of a particular content. Chapters are more or less self-contained and can be presented independently. Paragraphs, as we shall see later, are smaller chunks within a chapter. A good paragraph deals with one idea or thought or a clearly related family of ideas.

By way of summary, the following should be kept in mind to give the book both unity and integrity as a message:

1. Include every main point that is required by the topic.

2. Leave out any point that suggests a different topic.
3. Working from the top down, divide each main point into sub-points that belong to it.
4. Make sure that all the main points are about equal in importance; all subpoints are about equal in importance; and all points and sub-points are in the right order.
5. Make sure that, in the process of outlining the book, you do not lose track of the argument you are making. Also, remember to relate to the counter-arguments that your potential audience might have made as you interacted with them during your content planning.
6. Finally, remember to use the living logic of your potential readers in the very construction of the argument of your book.

A writer need not follow his or her own outline rigidly. After all, it is the writer's own outline and if, in the process of writing, changes become necessary, the writer should feel free to make the changes that must be made.

(b) Persuasive messages

To build good persuasive messages with motivational and attitudinal content, we again need clear and cogent arguments. Persuasion involves an appeal to the heart, but one can not persuade in a vacuum, free of facts. Facts are an important part of persuasion, though there is more to persuasion than the mere statement of facts.

As in the case of constructing informative messages, persuasive and motivational messages must also relate to the perspectives, perceptions, and logics-in-use of the potential

readers. Contrary beliefs or attitudes should not be avoided, but must be honestly dealt with. Misconceptions and taboos (howsoever ridiculous they may seem to the writer personally) must be handled directly and forthrightly.

Sometimes, the appeal of motivational or attitudinal messages can be increased simply by personalizing the message by use of "I" and "You", and the introduction of personal anecdotes in the book. At other times, a writer may want to introduce the message through a dialog between two people. Or, the idea may be dramatized as a story to humanize the message.

Persuasive writing, as we have suggested above, gains in effectiveness by the introduction of the personal element. Other strategies that help persuasive writing include: use of testimonials from well-known public figures (The President wants us to become self-sufficient): use of the band-wagon appeals (Everybody is doing it); use of fear appeals (Drugs kill); appeal to individual interests (You can have a school that your child can go to); and by careful use of repetition.

One needs to be careful about the excessive use of fear appeals. Negative appeals do elicit more "verbal" promises to comply and more "reports" of having complied. On the other hand, positive appeals have been found to be more effective with regards to the "retention" of the message and "actual" compliance. Again, appealing to individual interest has proved to be more effective than appeals to collective social good. It does not mean though that collective appeals are not good enough in any set of circumstances. Indeed, collective appeals can sometimes be both strong, and moving. Some

cultural metaphors can be explosively strong motivators. Finally, too much repetition of an idea or a theme may become counterproductive. One needs to diversify rather than to merely repeat the message.

An error often made by writers of persuasive messages is that they do not fully explain what they want people to believe, and how they want people to act. Or, what they ask people to do is not doable. These errors must be avoided. The book should state clearly what you want people to believe; and how you want them to behave. And what you demand should be possible to deliver in real life.

(c) Performance-related messages

Performance-related writing requires that the reader should be able to perform some tasks on the basis of what is taught through a piece of writing. These tasks may involve preparation of a pesticide solution for application to a crop; to construct a storage bin; or to service a generator.

The following elements are important for doing performance-related writing: a careful task analysis of the main performance task; operationalization of concepts and precautions being taught; statement of both do's and don't's in actions and decisions; and use of such concepts as the "zero-angle" in the preparation of illustrations.

The major performance task should be broken into smaller tasks or sub-tasks. The main task of applying pesticides to a crop may be first divided into the following sub-tasks: preparing a proper working space; obtaining and arranging all needed supplies; the choice of proper containers; preparing the correct solution; use of the sprayer; cleaning the sprayer

and containers for later or for alternative uses; and storage or disposal of supplies not used. Then, each sub-task may be explained by turn.

Operationalization is another important concept for the writer of performance-related materials. Do not just say "Be careful." Explain, the operations and actions that the task performer must undertake to be considered careful.

This leads us to the next important point in the writing of performance-related materials. Include both do's and don't's in your writing. Readers must not only know what to do but they must also know what they should not do. In many cases knowing what to do is only half the learning. The other half consists in knowing what not to do. "The usefulness of errors" is an important concept. It is necessary to set up all critical alternatives, and to teach the learner to choose among them.

The concept of the "zero-angle" referred to above is an important one. If we face a person performing a task, the performer's right hand is on our left and vice versa. There can be confusion if the writer's vantage point in relation to the task under performance is not the same as that of the reader. To write with the zero-angle is to look at the task from over the shoulder of the reader. All arrangements and tasks could then be written about from that point of view. The use of the zero-angle can be crucial in the preparation of illustrations and diagrams.

(d) Collective messages

Finally, there may be messages that, for want of another more appropriate name, may be called collective messages. Committing oral literature, and oral history to writing is becoming more and more popular. Such writing involves going to the people to hear their songs and stories and to probe their memories to retrieve historical and cultural information that is not otherwise available. The writer must first become an informed interviewer and then go to the field with a tape recorder. He should approach the people with a lot of respect and with an inexhaustible patience. He must help them peel back the layers of their memories, overcome their reserve, recall events, and think aloud. Back in the office, the writer must transcribe the material and write a connected account that can be read with interest. Such material should be based on what the people spoke, with as little intervention by the author as possible.

(6) Developing subject-matter skills and collaborating with subject-matter specialists

To write on a subject, one must know the subject. However, one does not have to be an internationally or a nationally known specialist; or even to have had a university degree in the subject chosen for the book. What one must have is sufficient initial knowledge, and willingness to learn more about the subject.

It is at this time (Step 6) that a list of good dependable reference books should be made. A writer of new literates must learn to make good use of the libarary and of

government documentation. Most of the information needed by the writer will be available in technical publications of extention departments of the Government. One must obtain these materials as soon as possible during the book planning process. The writer must be sure that what he or she says is correct and up-to-date.

More importantly, the writer must get in touch with the content experts in the extention departments, the university, the teachers' college or the higher secondary school in the locality. Collaborations between the writer and the content experts must be established to ensure correctness of material in the book as well as to legitimize the message of the book when it becomes available.

Looking back at the model of message-making presented above, one should be able to realize that a good enough level of initial knowledge (Step 6) will have to be assumed even for the selection of the topic (Step 1). One could perhaps develop general objectives for the book (Step 2) from sheer common sense, but it will be impossible to write a good set of specific objectives without adequate initial knowlege of the subject matter.

(7) Vocabulary research by the writer

In a later chapter, we will be discussing the research needs of writers for new readers and will make the recommendation that universities and national research centers should provide the needed research assistance to writers. If such research is not available, then the writer must do some

of this research on his own, especially the required vocabulary research.

This will mean, first of all, undertaking research on the living vocabulary of new readers. By living vocabulary we mean the words and sentences actually spoken by the people in communities. What are the words they use? What idioms? What aphorisms? How do they construct their sentences? This research should be completed by writers at the same time that they are in the field doing content planning for their books.

Another aspect of vocabulary research will be making lists of words already used in primers and graded books, so that the vocabulary introduced in follow-up books has some relation with what has been learned already. This is most important.

Finally, the writers will have to do research on vocabulary necessary for the codification of new messages. This will mean preparing lists of words that must be taught to new learners to ensure the communication of certain concepts, in nutrition, or family planning, or small-scale dairy farming, or whatever else happens to be the subject of the book.

Most writing for new readers is, understandably, being done in local languages and vernaculars. Many of the vernaculars which are being used today as languages of literacy in Africa and Asia have never been used as languages of science and technology, often not even as languages of governance and commerce. Naturally, these vernaculars lack scientific and technological words. And many times writers for new readers not only have to borrow words from other

languages but have to invent new words to make the messages meaningful to their readers. Also, it has to be realized that scientific concepts and words used in the books for new literates have to be made meaningful in terms of what the readers could actually experience in their lives. "Increased blood volume" would not mean much to a pregnant woman, but "fatigue" and "increased palpitation of the heart" would be experienced and, therefore, will be meaningful.

(8) Writing to be read and to be understood

This is the step in which the writer must execute the plans to achieve the communication objectives of the message. It is the time to combine talent and skills to bring a content outline alive.

Typical advice given to the writers at this stage is to use simple words, concrete nouns, active verbs, short sentences, and short paragraphs. These are good suggestions but there is much more to good writing. Some suggestions follow:

1. Set the stage for the introduction of the book

Like the writer of a play, the writer of a book for new readers must set the stage for his book. By way of setting the stage, a book on dairy farming may have opening paragraphs such as the following:

> Independence is not just a matter of change of flags. Independence means freedom to develop our country and to improve the lives of our people. That means responsibility. That means hard work.

In Zambia today we need to do many things. We need to produce more from our mines and factories. We need to grow more maize so that the nation can be well fed. We need to produce more milk, so that our children and growing youth can have enough milk to drink and lead healthy and productive lives.

2. Provide a frame for the information provided

Before providing substantive information on dairy farming, for example, set a proper frame for the information. Tell the reader whether you are talking of a small dairy farmer or a big dairy farmer. Tell whether the ideas provided apply to all regions in the country or only to some regions. Tell whether the ideas apply to all breeds of cattle or to some breeds of cattle but not to others. Every time the frame shifts let the reader know.

3. Relating with the readers assumptions and their level of knowledge

The writer must relate with the readers' assumptions determined during the content planning stage as well as with the readers' level of knowledge. Concepts of time (10:00 AM is four o'clock in the Swahili system); measurements of length, volume and weight; and values of currency should be paid special attention.

4. Chunking, bridging and use of subheadings

Divide the book into chapters and sections. Each chapter or section should deal with a sub-topic, a portion of content that can stand by itself. One should be able to take such a portion out of the book and read it as a self-contained piece

of information on an aspect of the general theme. For example, in a book on sunflowers, preparing the land and planting could form one chapter. Use of pesticides could be another chapter. Storing and marketing could be one chapter or two chapters, depending upon the amount of content. One would not think of dealing with pest control and marketing in the same one chapter.

Chapters should be divided into paragraphs. Each paragraph should deal with one main idea. As you read, you should notice that I have dealt with the concept of chapters in one paragraph. (See paragraph above). I deal with paragraphs in a separate paragraph. (This one). And I will deal with the concept of bridging in a separate paragraph below. Each single idea has been dealt with in a separate paragraph.

The flow of reading from one chapter into the next, or from one paragraph to the next paragraph, is not always natural. Readers have to be assisted in making the transition. This may be done by what we have called bridging, that is, by writing bridge sentences. Bridging may be done by recollecting and anticipating: "Now that we have done A, let us move to B"; "But this is not always the case"; "X, however, presents a different set of problems"; etc., etc.

Appropriately written sub-headings within the text can also serve the bridging function by letting the reader know where he is, where he has been, and where he is going.

5. Learning to list

Listing is not a matter of recording whatever comes to mind in whatever sequence and then numbering the various items. Items in a list should have a definite structure. The listing should be done according to a scheme: temporal, hierarchial, logical, sociological, or some other, but there should be some sense to the organization of lists and the reader should be able to see through the scheme used.

6. Managing the concept load

Make sure that too many concepts are not introduced in a book too quickly, in too short a space of time and text. Introduction of new concepts should be carefully managed. New concepts appear as new words and in practical terms management of concept load means the management of words. Too many new words should not be introduced on any one page. Readability requires that a reader should already possess 80 per cent of the information conveyed in the message, to be able to assimilate the 20 per cent of the information that was previously lacked. That should give us a rough and ready idea on how to manage the concept load in our writing.

7. Making concepts concrete

Concepts are often abstract. More significant concepts are very abstract indeed. Democracy, self-reliance, humanism, etc., are examples of concepts that are highly significant and highly abstract.

Make concepts concrete by stating them in operational terms: Self-reliance means being responsible, first as

individuals, then as a community. It means doing whatever is possible now, by oneself, without waiting for outside help. It means not leaving everything to the government.

8. Learn to cue and be careful not to miscue

Prepare readers for significant ideas by cuing them properly. For example, in discussing the history of slavery in the 1800s, do not shift to the 1900s without cuing the reader by a sentence such as: A century later, in the 1900s, however, the situation changed. On the other hand, writers should be careful not to miscue the readers by promising to do something and then forgetting to do that.

9. Write short and natural sentences

Sentences should be short. However, in making sentences short, we should not make them absurd. The rhythm of the language, as naturally spoken, should not be violated.

10. Use simple words

"Fortitude" is a complex word, "table" is simple. Simple words are often concrete words. These can be seen, heard, touched and recognized.

But new learning means, quite often, learning new words which may be complex and abstract. Many of the words used in the discussion of nutrition, health and family planning, cooperatives and government will be new words. In our desire to use simple words we can not avoid the teaching of new words. These must be introduced, with appropriate explanations provided. Sometimes these new words may have to

be explained using parantheses: "Obesity (an unhealthy condition of being very fat) can be found in children also."

11. Learn to use punctuation effectively

Writers should use punctuation effectively. Particularly, in languages using the Latin script, writers should learn to choose between (,) and (;) and between (;) and (:). Also they must learn to use the hyphen (-) and the dash (--) properly.

12. Write proper conclusions

Use the conclusion to summarize or to put things in perspective. A good conclusion should also make the reader to want to know more about the topic.

13. Manage yet to keep the flair

Even while writers follow all the rules and principles of message making and writing that we have suggested above, they should yet be able to show a flair for writing. They should develop a love for words and learn to play with them, without getting lost. They should learn to make good use of both the "ordinary language" and the "literary language."

In learning to a good writer, one must learn to be a good reader. Read a good book. Whisper it to yourself. Read it aloud. Try to appreciate its particular magic. Read a paragraph that you particularly like. Close the book and try to reproduce it from memory. Compare your efforts with that of the author. Analyze the magic of the original. How close did you get?

(9) Pre-testing material for feedback

In a later chapter, we will discuss the problems of formative evaluation of books before publication. In this section we will only discuss what we can call the writers feedback.

Three different sources of writers feedback can be visualized: feedback from readers, from peers and from experts.

The feedback from readers can be most informal. Often it may involve no more than the writer and one of his readers sitting under a tree. The reader reads and does some thinking -- aloud. The writer listens, asks questions, probes and asks for suggestions on words and phrases.

The writer's own peers (that is other writers like himself or herself) may also provide useful feedback in a brief encounter with the book and without involving too much time. Finally, the experts (the subject-matter specialist, the adult educator or the literacy worker) may provide useful ideas to the writer during this stage.

(10) Working with the illustrator and the editor

In a chapter to follow, we will discuss in detail the special role and characteristics of illustrations in books written for new readers. We will also deal with the editorial process in a separate chapter. The writer should read both those chapters to be able to collaborate effectively with the illustrator and to make the best use of the services of the editor.

It is quite clear that the writer has to be involved in the preparation of the manuscrript for printing. This would mean that the writer understands the use of illustrations in books, types of illustrations that can be used and the costs of reproducing them. The writer must also know the various typefaces, type sizes and proof-reader's signs to be able to write instructions for the print shop in regard to size of illustrations, display of material and corrections in the text.

Possibilities and problems of adaptations and translations

In this final section, we will deal with two somewhat related issues: adaptation and translation.

Adaptation. By adaptation we mean an abridgement or a re-write of an existing classic or popular work to suit the special interests of a group of readers. Those of us who have been educated in the English tradition will remember the Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare or abridged editions of some famous novels. Adaptation is an old and frequently practiced art in the literary world. In the field of writing for new readers, we can practice this art with considerable benefit. We recommend it to the writers of books for new readers.

Translation. It is often suggested that to make a large variety of reading materials available to new readers, planners should promote translations of books published in other languages of the country, or even in foreign languages. There have been examples of co-publication where the same book of folk-tales was published in multiple language translations, e.g., in India, Thailand, Burma, Viet Nam and Japan.

In some countries, the translation problem presents itself more immediately and urgently. There is more than one accepted language of literacy in the country. A master follow-up book has to be written in English or French; and, then, translations have to be prepared in all the languages of literacy. Zambia is an example of such a country.

It is not possible to treat the problems of translation in two short paragraphs and yet to have said all that is necessary to say on this important topic. The only thing we do want to suggest here is that translators should not attempt to make literal translations from one language into another. An attempt should be made to make free translations, paragraph by paragraph. This will keep the structure and argument of the original book intact; and yet will not tie the translator down to the original syntax of sentences or to particular vocabulary. After a free, para by para, translation has been made, the text should be revised for readability control. Special attention should be paid to the translation of scientific and technological terms which simply may not exist in the language of literacy and may have to be invented. These should be properly checked by a linguist or someone else with the necessary competence.

We should hasten to add that translations of literacy primers are not possible; indeed it will be absurd to try to translate a primer since the easy and frequent words in one language may not be the easy and frequent words in another language.

Things to do or think about

1. Choose the subject or topic of a book you would like to write for new literates. Justify your selection of the topic, and develop a list of general and specific objectives.

2. Take a development theme (such as the need for immunization against polio, family planning or nutrition) and plan a manuscript with dramatic treatment. What will be your basic message? What will be your story outline? What is the role of the content specialist in writing such a book?

3. Think of some books published nationally (or even internationally) which you think are good candidates for adaptation as follow-up books for new readers.

4. What topic from the oral history or folklore tradition of your country will make a good book for new readers?

5. Describe the kind of humor which is enjoyed and appreciated in the communities where you work. What kind of humor might be found offensive?

6. Take a passage from a follow-up book in one language and do a free translation of the passage in a second language. Then, give the translated passage to a colleague and ask him or her to make a free translation of the passage back into the original language. Compare the original with the "translation of the translation." What are the various problems you see?

7. List some topics for books which women readers would enjoy most. Are these topics different from what you think they should read to serve development purposes?