

Failures and Successes in Literacy
in the Gulf Province

and

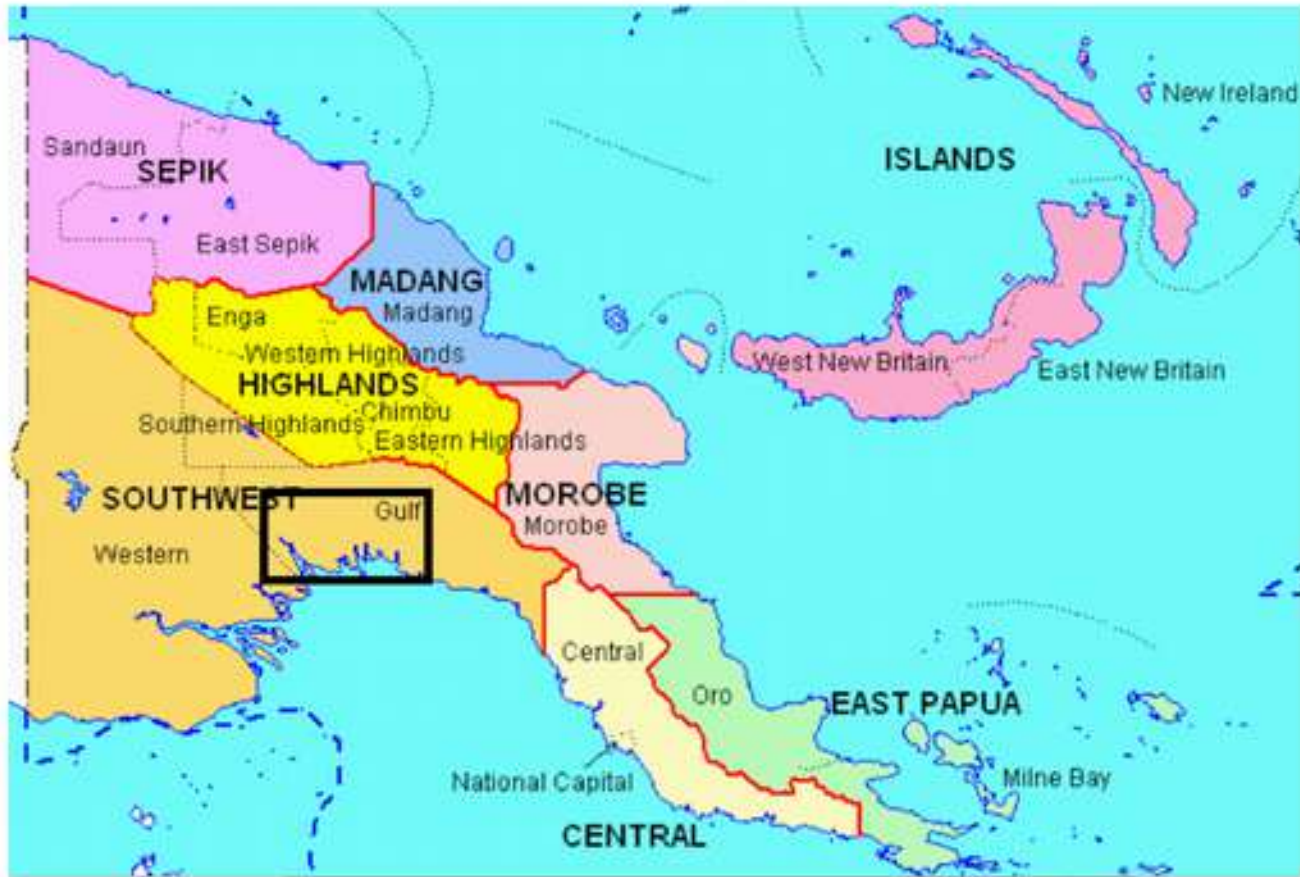
Efforts to Raise Literacy Rates

with

“creative new programs”

such as

Iconic Phonics - Uniskript



2011

Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE)
PNG Education Advocacy Network (PEAN)

published a literacy survey of 5 PNG provinces
including Gulf (1440 people in 15 villages)

This is what they concluded ...

2011

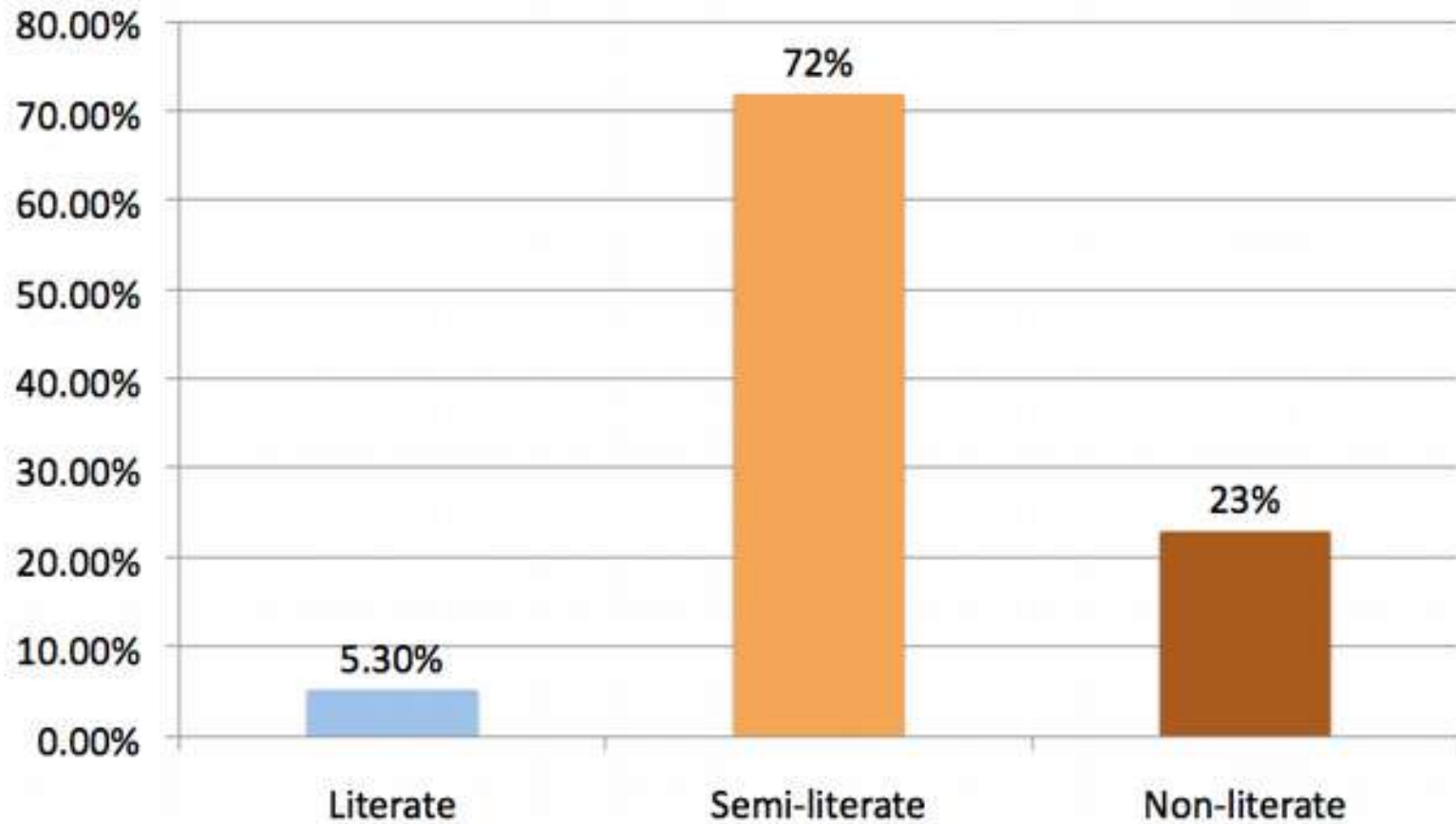
Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE)
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published a literacy survey of 5 PNG provinces
including Gulf (1440 people in 15 villages)

- “Attending school was no guarantee of achieving literacy.”
- “The education system produces mainly illiterates.”
- Need for “creative new programs”

...the Gulf Province had the worst rates of all 5 provinces surveyed

Literacy Rates – Youth now in School



This was not unnoticed elsewhere in the country:

Letters to the **newspapers** and statements by **politicians** **blamed three main things:**

- the Elementary School System (ESS)
- Vernacular First Education (VFE)
- Outcomes Based Education (OBE)

Ministry of Education circular:

“... society ... blamed the poor standard of spoken and written English because of the use of **vernacular** in schools.”

(Luke Taita, Circular No. 04/2013)

VFE – the first to go to the firing squad
condemned by the Trial of Public Opinion,
(as reliable as that is!)

WHAT IS REALLY NEEDED:

Crime Scene Investigation and an Evidence-based Trial

Let's start with The Law

A reform in Education was enacted in **1995**. The act said:

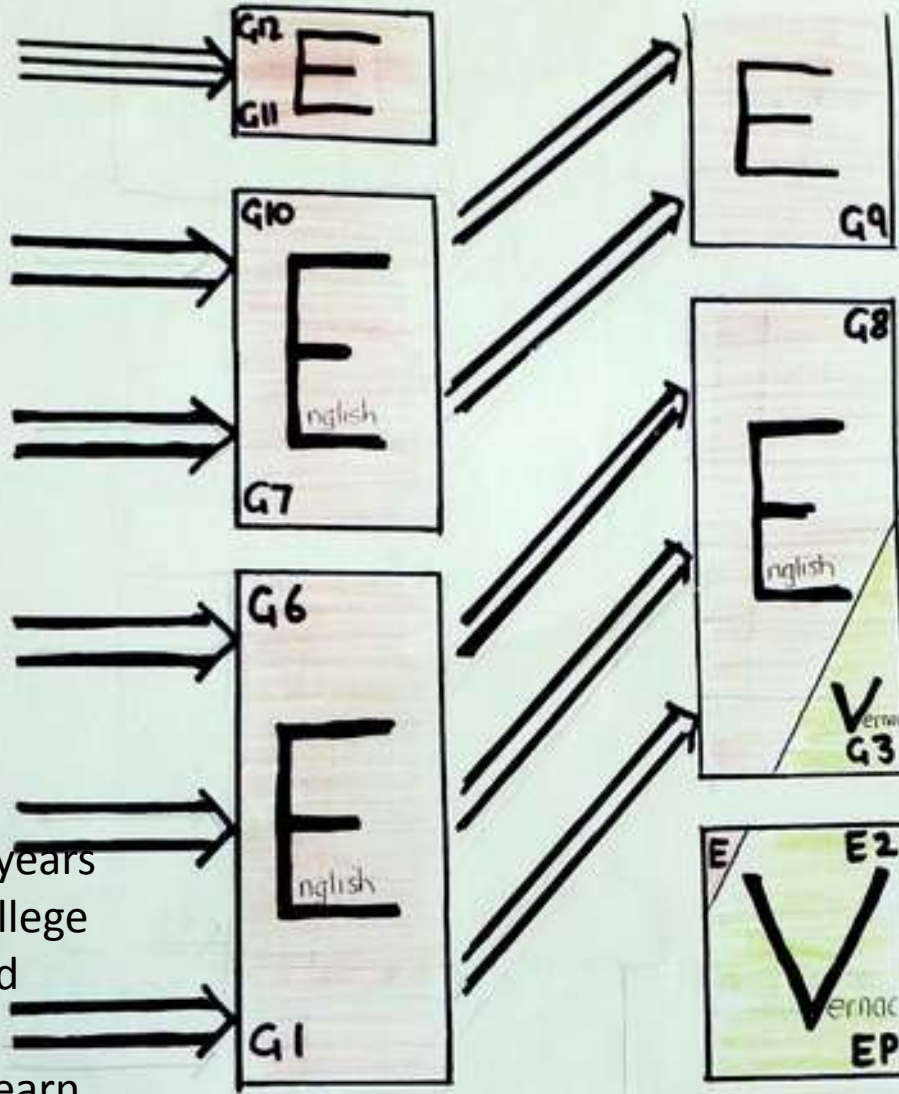
“elementary education” ... means a full-time education comprising a preparatory class and Grades 1 and 2 ... and in a language spoken by the student.

This resulted in a structural reform, and an introduction of vernacular education into the first three “elementary” years, by teachers with minimal training.

(Education Act 1983, consolidated to No. 13 of **1995**)

'OLD'

RESTRUCTURED



Primary school teachers had two years of training at a college before they started teaching. Children were to learn literacy in English.

Elementary teachers received 6 weeks of training "on the job" in each of their first three years of service

← — —

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Children were to learn literacy in a language that they spoke.

SYSTEM REFORM

1. Was education in “a language spoken by the children”

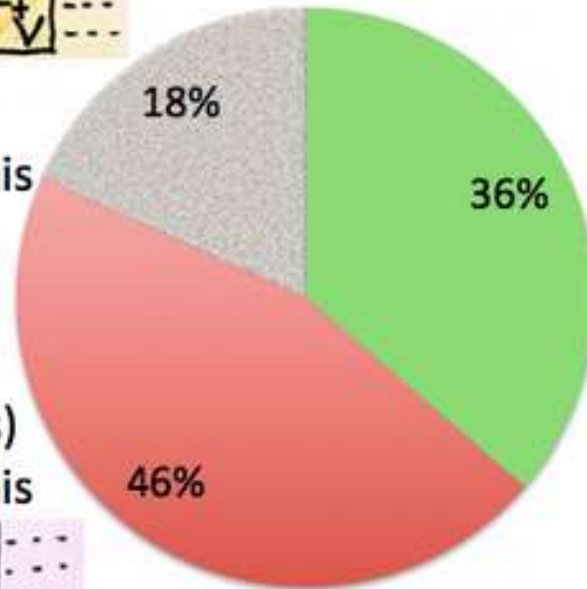
6 of 33 schools
103 of 577 children

English and vernacular
(at the same time)
with no training to do this

English-only
(to non-English speakers)
with no training to do this

15 of 33 schools
270 of 577 children

Language of Literacy



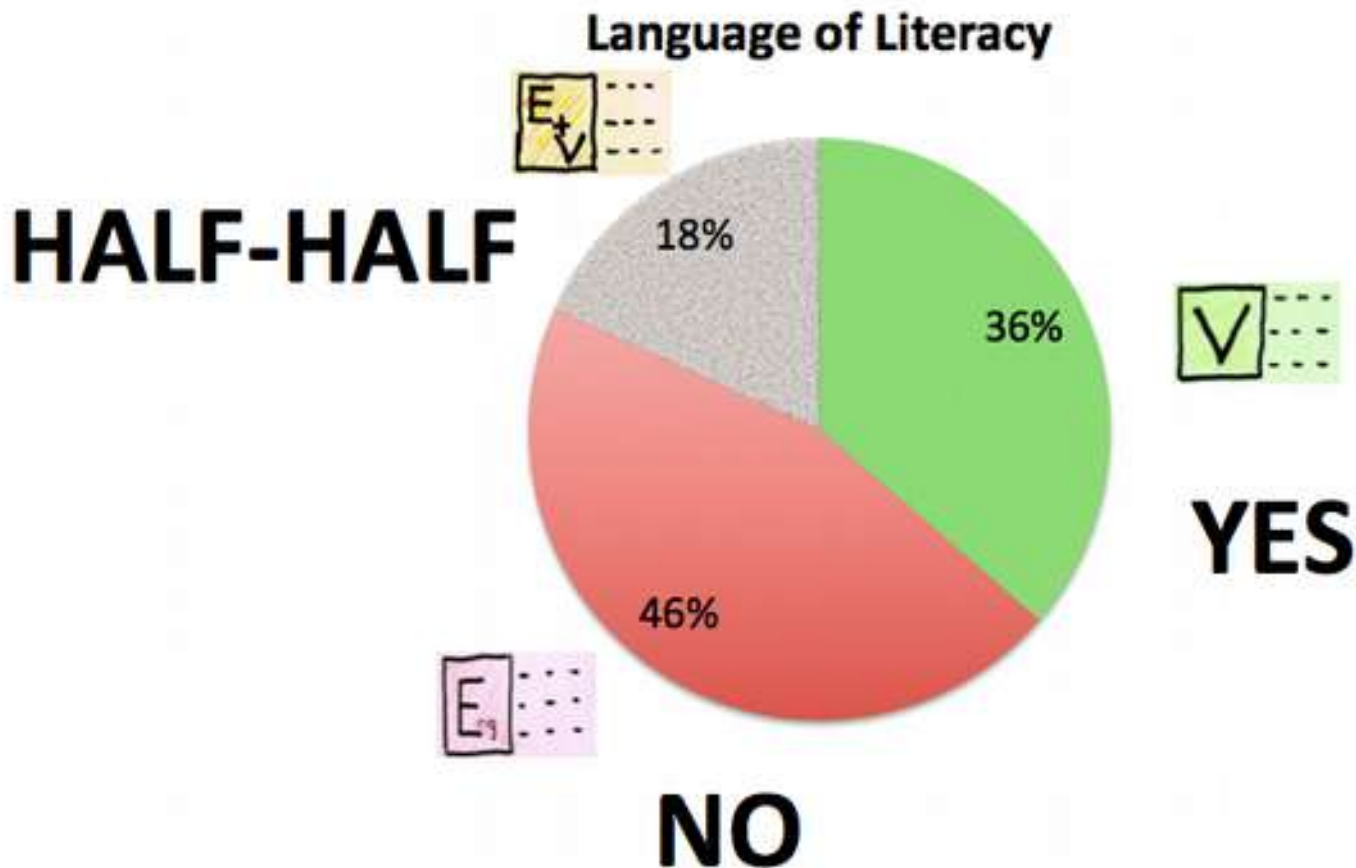
as per Education Act
and as trained



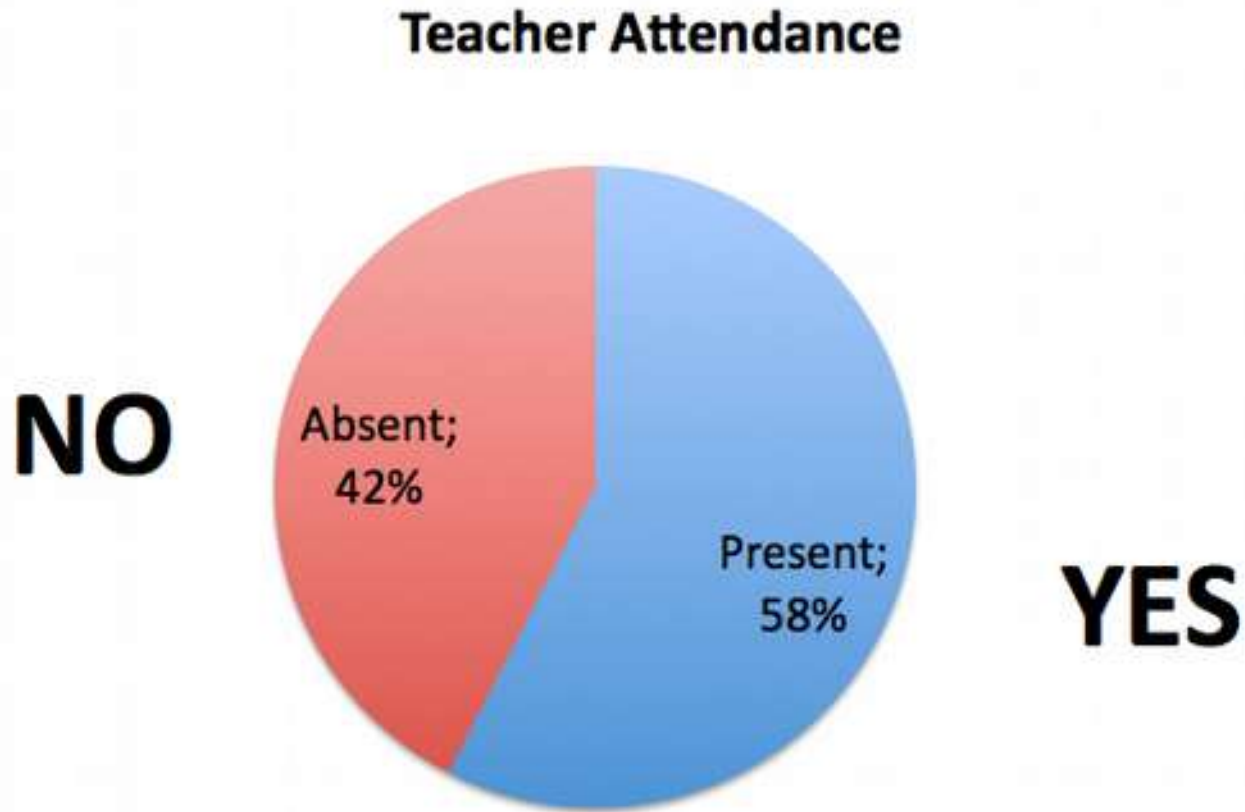
12 of 33 schools
204 of 577 children



1. Was education in “a language spoken by the children”?



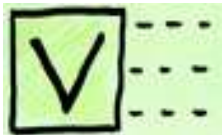
2. Was education “full-time”?



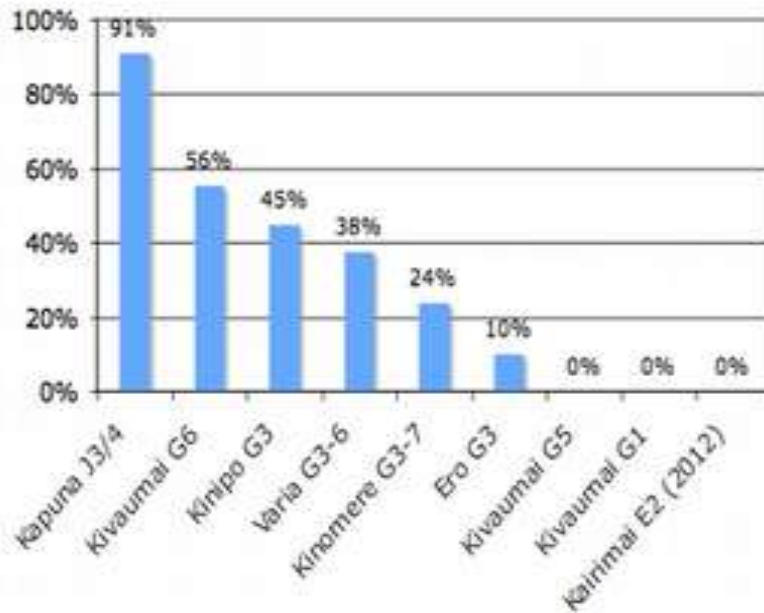
3. Was it “education”?

Did the students learn to read?

Percent of class successful at acquiring English literacy

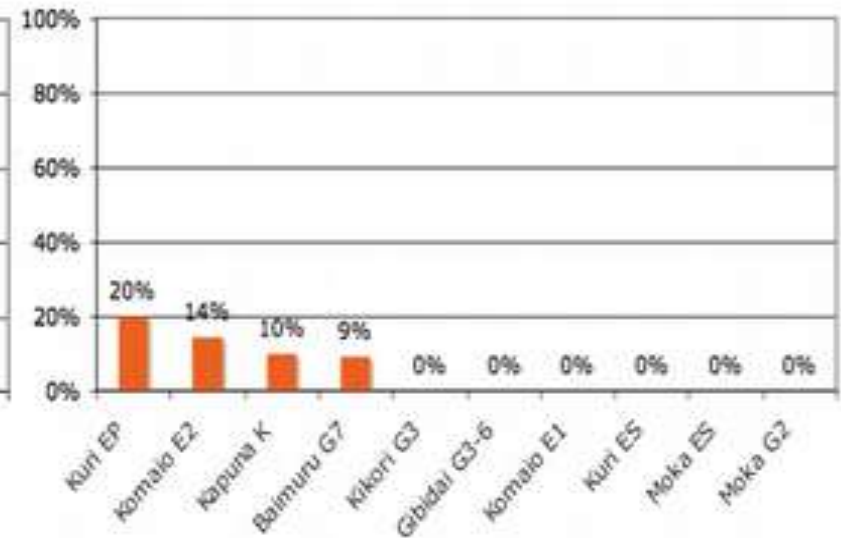


Vernacular First



MANY – NONE

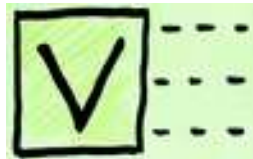
English-only



FEW – NONE

Summary of Situation

only one third of schools followed education reform policy



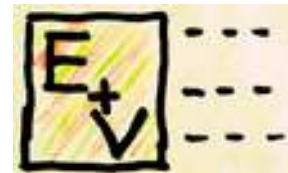
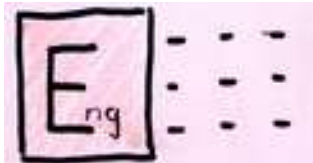
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- two thirds followed non-standard policies that they were not trained in

-

-

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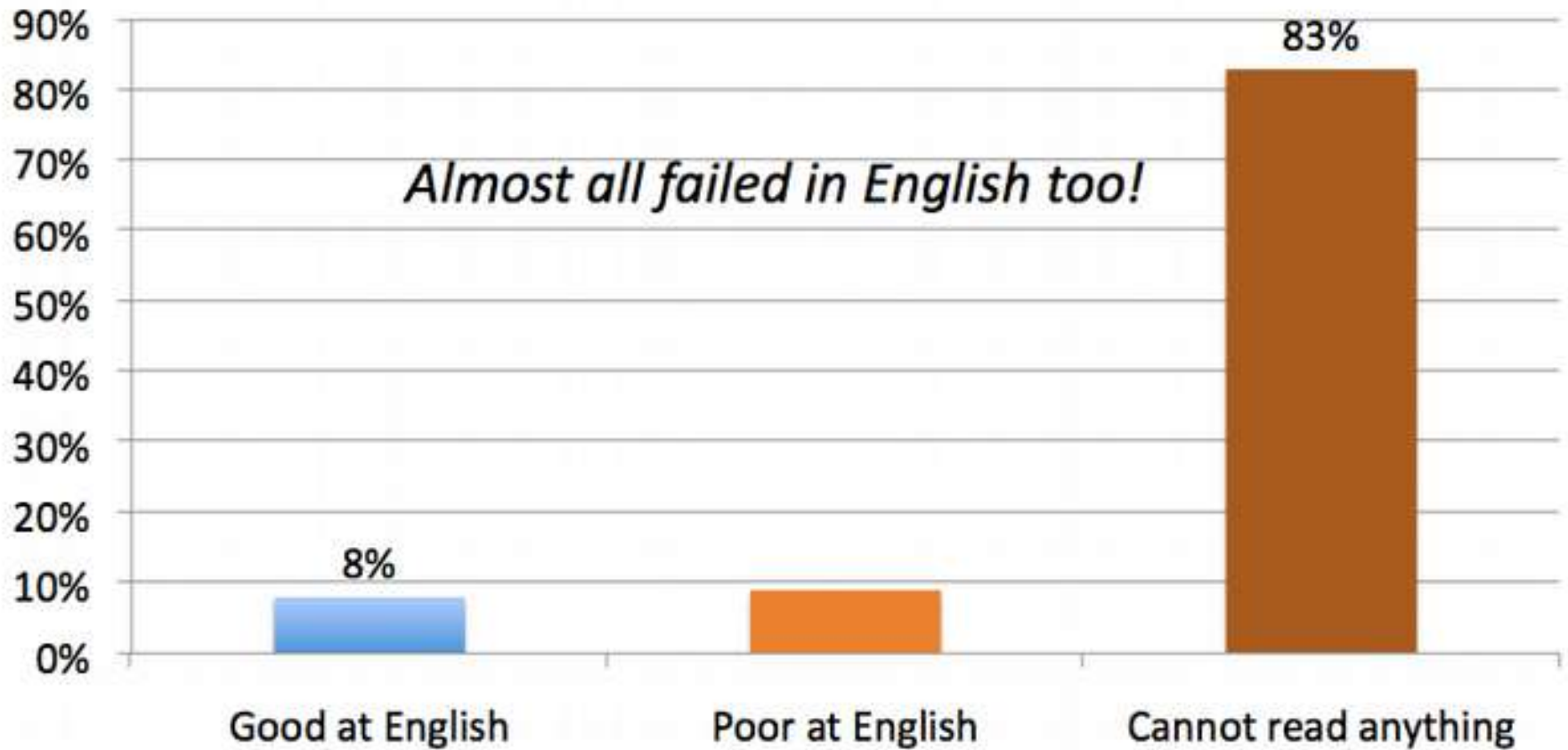


- complicated by quality problems

Here is what has resulted ...

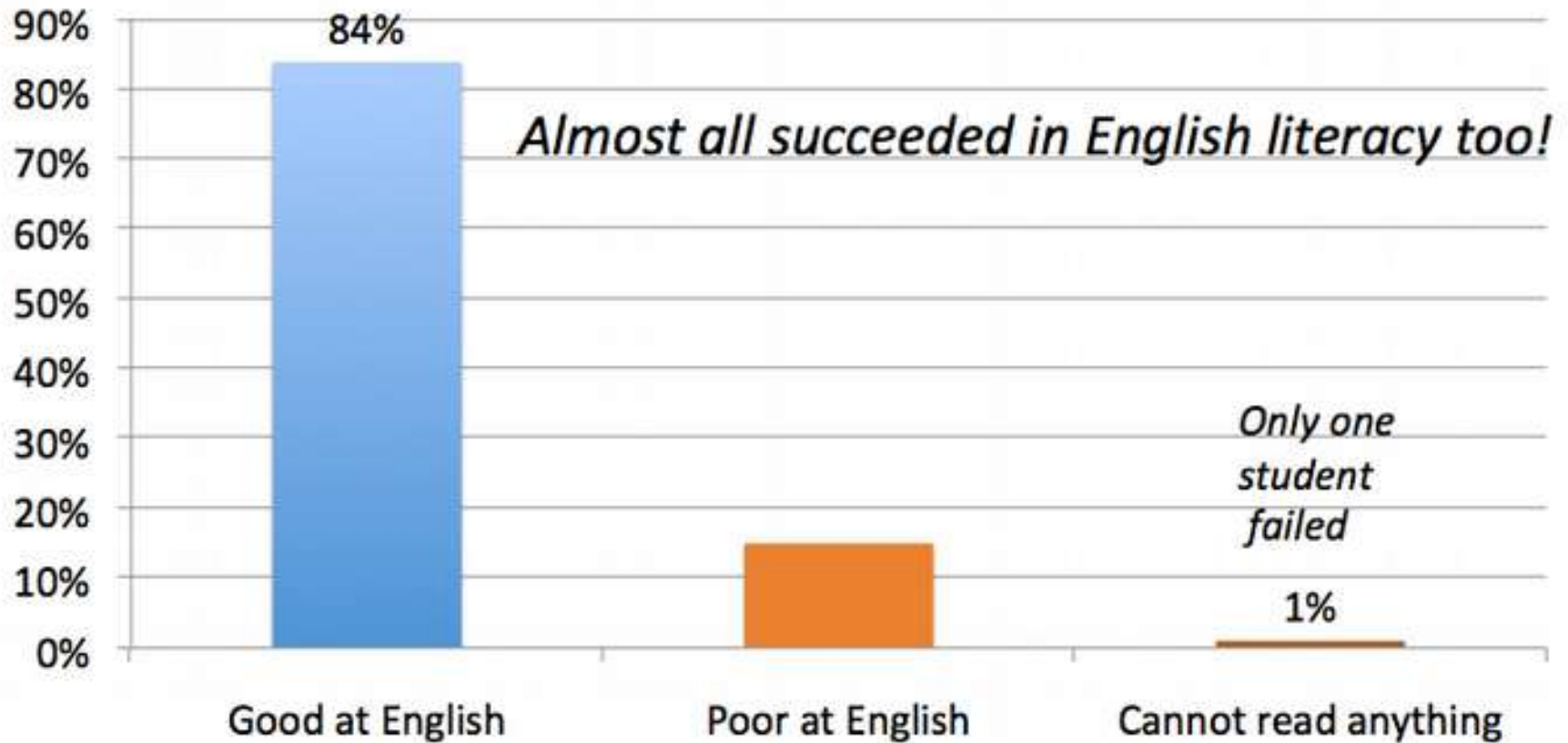
When vernacular is NOT taught at all

393 PS students

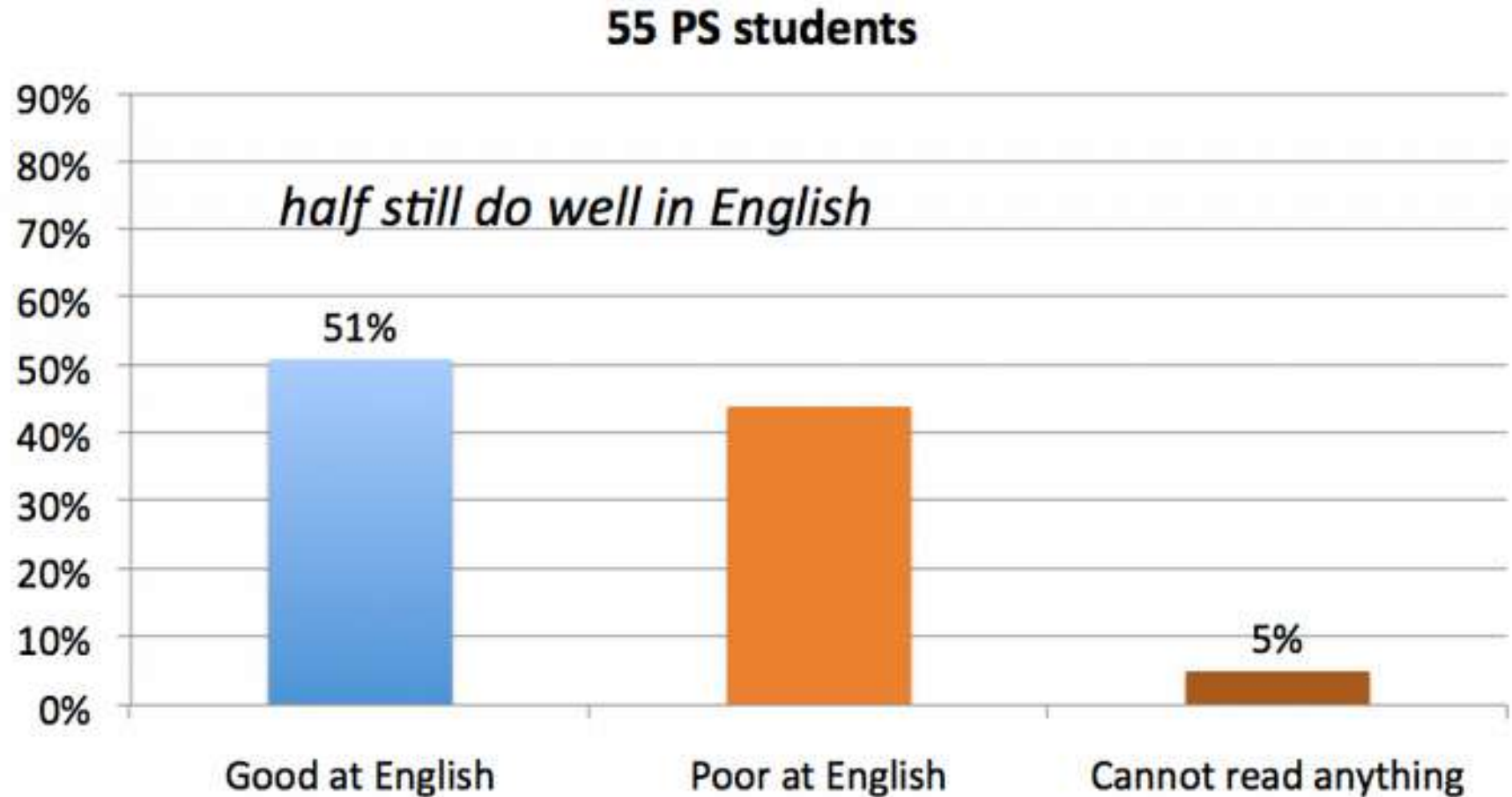


When vernacular is taught PROPERLY first

76 PS students



When vernacular is only POORLY taught



It was popular to blame failure in English literacy on teaching of vernacular literacy ...

BUT

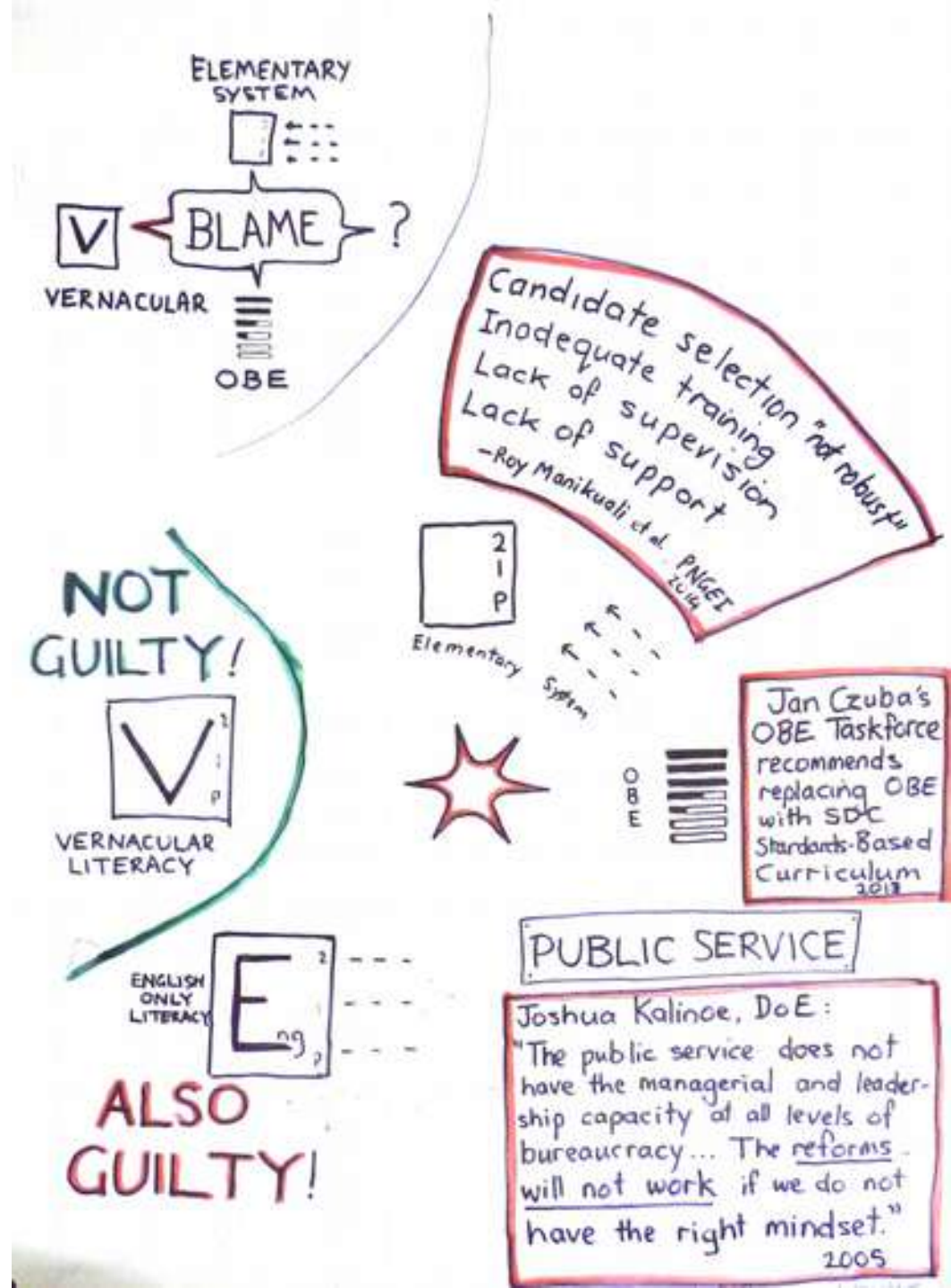
the evidence-based

JUDGEMENT

is

Vernacular literacy education is *"NOT GUILTY"*

The un-noticed literacy teaching in English-as-a-foreign-language is *"ALSO VERY MUCH GUILTY"* (alongside poor training, supervision, and other factors)



The way to prosperity
is the wise use of our
resources!
(including language)



Another resource we can use for literacy

...

our faces!

Uniskript is a new (and also very old) idea that we can use for teaching literacy.

Instead of using letters of arbitrary shape for writing words
(as we normally do)

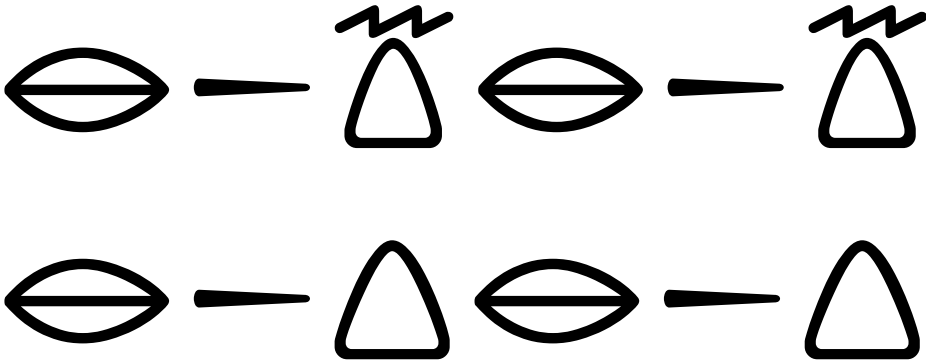
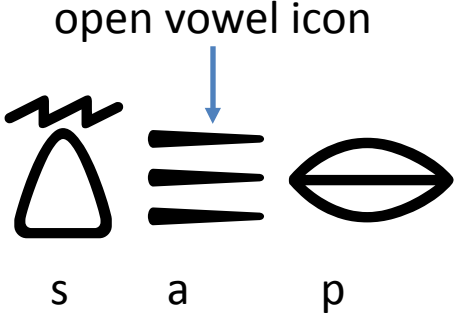
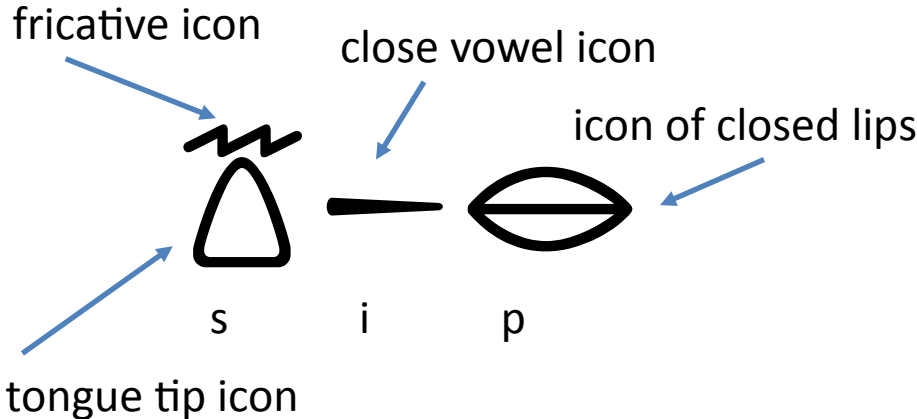
why not design letters that are icons

of the articulators of the phonemes of our speech?

That will help learners recall the letters, and give them enhanced phonic awareness.

Also useful for students of linguistics!

For example (Tok Pisin words):



pispis
pitpit

pas

Who is using Uniskript?

It was tried out in 2 classes last year

- one was very successful

(children can read and write both vernacular and literacy)

- one was not successful

(teacher teaches both vernacular and English, Uniskript and Roman – too much information for poor little kids)

- What made the difference?

- good teacher training

This year?

This year it is being tried in non-formal literacy classes in 6 villages (3 languages)

- one is very successful (literate in both vernacular and English in less than a year)
- others are a bit slower (children becoming literate in vernacular)

What is making the difference?

- training + close assistance from mentor