

Low-cost & No-cost Learning Materials ©



Summary: A shortage of standard school supplies for students to use in their lessons need not burden the teaching and learning process. While the absence of certain items surely limits instructional options, teachers, students, and even parents can fabricate substitutes for many of these from low-cost and no-cost inputs and objects that are readily available. Indeed, doing so can yield valuable learning benefits that store-bought products do not offer.



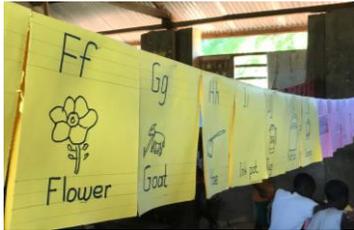
Low-Cost / No-Cost Learning Materials ©



What are they?

Low-cost / no-cost learning materials are items that teachers can use to support the quality and relevance of learning of their students by giving them objects they can:

Observe



Play with



Transform / Create with



Handle / Manipulate



Experiment with



Etc...



What are they made of?

Low-cost / no-cost learning materials are made of resources that are readily available locally, often in abundance and accessible to all:

Natural items



(Rocks, clay, leaves, sticks, ...)

Recycles items



Cartons, bottlecaps, cans, paper, cloth ...

Basic supplies



(Paper, glue, tape, pens, chalk, ...)

Household & productive items



(Tools, food, handicrafts, clothing, ...)

Combination



Who makes them, & how?

Low-cost / no-cost learning materials can be prepared or provided by a variety of persons in a variety of ways:

- **Teachers** may work alone or together to create learning materials from their school supplies, natural, recycled, and other objects.
- **Learners** can gather items with which to make learning materials or to use directly (e.g., counting stones); they can also make materials.
- **Parents** (and other community members) can be enlisted to make learning materials or to provide and demonstrate the use of household or productive objects as part of a lesson.

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What types of learning materials?

Low-cost / no-cost learning materials include many different sorts of objects that learners can use to understand their lessons better:

Posters & other displays



Flash cards



Counting/ calculation



Models



Tools / artifacts



Experiments



How to use them?



Low-cost / no-cost learning materials support learning by:

- Surrounding learners with visual cues and reminders of written language, numbers, & information – posters, models, real-life objects.
- Demonstrating how lessons link to the learners' lives – Cultivating plants; a Classroom store; Clay models of objects from home and work.
- Allowing them to learn by touching and manipulating, not just by reading and listening – counting sticks; game boards; planting; using tools.
- Letting learners create, both to develop skills and to stimulate their imagination – drawing, using clay, constructing with sticks, making letters, numbers, images from found materials (natural and recycled).
- Permitting and encouraging independent learning, individually and in groups.
- And more ...

