Interactive Audio Instruction allows teachers with little or no training in literacy to provide their students with carefully sequenced instruction in the fundamental reading and writing skills.

Reading Skills

1. Instruction is carefully sequenced and delivered via engaging, minds-on learning activities.
   • Each program builds on and extends skills presented in previous programs.
   • Within a single program, each activity builds on the previous ones. Activities are diversified and minds-on in order to maintain student engagement levels.

2. Instruction is focused on the explicit teaching of fundamental reading skills.
   • Students create new words by substituting letters and syllables.
   • Decoding, vocabulary and fluency skills are taught directly and explicitly.
   • Target vocabulary and expressions are used in multiple ways and contexts to build students' oral vocabulary.
   • Students develop strategies to support and enhance their comprehension.

3. Instruction is multichannel.
   • Besides activities directed by audio characters, programs use a variety of print materials (flash cards, posters, decodable texts, read aloud books, etc.), as well as student-teacher and student-student interactivity, to support learning.

4. Instruction links reading and writing.
   • Students are encouraged to translate sounds into written symbols by writing words "as they hear them" and to share their writing with others.

Writing Skills

• Students create new words by substituting letters and syllables.
• Students write words "as they hear them". They "pull apart" words with their virtual friends (audio characters) to isolate each of the phonemes (sounds) – and to assign letters to the sounds.
• Students listen to and follow the guidance of their virtual friends, who model a variety of strategies for figuring out how to write new words.
• The events in the program provide students with authentic, meaningful writing activities. Students are invited to share their writing with other students.

Oral Language Skills

• The vocabulary is adapted to students' age, grade level, realities and interests.
• Sentences are structured according to students' ability levels and whether they are first- or second-language learners.
• Vocabulary is repeated across several broadcasts, helping to facilitate the acquisition and consolidation of new words.
• Pronunciation is carefully modeled in order to respect the students' environment as well as the norms and rules of the target language.
• The extensive use of story, songs and dialogues reinforces and extends students' oral language skills.
Program Structure

A typical Interactive Audio Instruction program episode might include the following segments:

- Opening
- Presentation of text for decoding and comprehension activities (A song, rhyme or poem)
- Phonemic, alphabetic and phonetic awareness activities, based on the text or games
- Decoding, comprehension and fluency activities using targeted text
- Guided and invented writing activity
- Consolidation
- Closing

Reaction

Over 320,000 Malian students currently participate in Interactive Audio Instruction (IAI) lessons to support their literacy learning. According to Mali's Deputy Director for Basic Education, the program has proven to be *an inescapable positive reality* in Malian classrooms. Principals and teachers from school districts using IAI broadcasts shared their thoughts:

"I have to tell you about this little boy who played hooky most of the year. One morning, he took his mom by the hand and announced that he absolutely needed to be in school that morning. Very surprised, his mom asked why. The little boy explained that he *didn't want to miss the radio lesson* about reading and writing. From that day on, *he went to school every day* till the end of the year."

"My own child came home one day from her grade one class and *sang the alphabet without error and with a beautiful pronunciation*. I just didn’t think it was possible. I asked her where she had learned it, and she replied that *she was singing along with the radio every morning*. I then proceeded to test her on the alphabet out of sequence, and she knew the 26 letters of the French alphabet. I was stunned."

"*I will never thank you enough* for putting music and singing back into our classrooms. It had become a thing of the past, but thanks to the radio lessons, our children are singing again."