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Report on teaching reading in Sesotho and isiZulu at Higher Education Institutions

Compiled by the Sesotho and IsiZulu Reading Project



REPORT ON TEACHING READING IN SESOTHO AND ISIZULU AT HEIs

1. BACKGROUND

The Sesotho and IsiZulu Reading Project (SIRP) was conceived by the Literacy Working Group of PrimTEd. The objectives formulated for the Literacy Working Group are the following:

- To describe primary school teachers' required content knowledge and pedagogic content knowledge and applied knowledge towards developing children's literacy levels in South African Languages.
- To identify strategies for teaching reading in African languages. This will include identifying strategies that will inform how to teach learners to decode text, to read fast and fluently and accurately and with proper intonation (at a rate appropriate to their grade), with meaning and for pleasure.
- Describe suitable methods of teaching reading for enjoyment and as a learning tool for the learners in their Home language and their First Additional language.
- Describe suitable methods of teaching for teaching writing in learners' Home language and their First Additional language
- To describe what university lecturers need to know about literacy and its instruction in South Africa's languages in order to help educate teachers to assist learners in achieving the required literacy standards in all our languages.
- Generally, through the activities of the Working Group within the PrimTEd project as a whole build a cohesive community of practice in the Higher Education Institutions involved around the training of language and literacy teachers.

CALT@UJ was tasked by DHET to coordinate and drive the (SIRP) initiative. Within the ambit of the objectives stated for the Literacy Working Group, SIRP developed a work plan that translated into nine major tasks. These tasks are the following:

- 1) To prepare for empirical research to determine the present state of the teaching of reading at the 12 HEIs training Sesotho and isiZulu teachers;
- 2) Identify and liaise with other stakeholders in the field of early language literacy;
- 3) Conduct empirical research to determine the present state of reading training at the 12 HEIs that train Sesotho and isiZulu teachers and draft a report;
- 4) Develop, standardize and conventionalize terminology needed for the teaching of reading at FP and IP level;
- 5) Arrange a conference to introduce the project to stakeholder institutions and reach consensus on the 6 core study units¹ to be developed to facilitate reading development;
- 6) Review and align the SIRP work with the curriculum frameworks and knowledge and practice standards developed by PrimTEd working group;

¹ Note that the term "study unit" is used instead of "module" for the core material to be written for inclusion in the B Ed programmes of the participating HEIs.

- 7) Develop the content of the agreed 6 study units essential for developing reading for both Sesotho and isiZulu;
- 8) Train HEI lecturers to offer the study units developed;
- 9) Offer institutional support for the curriculum review, obtaining approval and implementation of the newly developed study units on reading.

The SIRP has three main components. The first is to establish the state of teaching reading at those HEIs that train Sesotho and isiZulu Foundation Phase teachers in their BEd programmes. The second is to identify and develop six key study units and learning materials focusing on teaching reading in Sesotho and isiZulu to be implemented in the BEd programmes of the participating HEIs. The third component is the development and conventionalising of Sesotho and isiZulu terminology needed for teaching at Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase levels of schooling. CALT@UJ will collaborate closely with the DHET and DBE, the HEIs that offer education to Sesotho and isiZulu student teachers and all other institutions and initiatives in the field of basic language literacy development such as the NECT, the NRC, Funda Wandu, Vula Bula, and the African Storybook Project.

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2. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The primary focus of this report is to establish the present state of teaching Sesotho and isiZulu reading as HL at the FP level at those HEIs that offer training to Sesotho and isiZulu student teachers. This report will enable SIRP to approach the planned intervention according to a change management approach.

The poor reading performance of the South African learners (and the African language learners in particular) at the end of FP is well known. It is also a well-known fact that learners should be able to read with comprehension at the end of the FP level of schooling, however for most South African learners this is not the case. This state of affairs can be ascribed to the inadequate teaching of reading at the Foundation Phase level. Since the teaching of learning to read should ideally be completed at the end of Grade 2 and consolidated during Grade 3 it is essential that SIRP focuses on the development of learning units to focus on reading development at Foundation Phase.

The honing of the reading skills needs to continue throughout the IP level, but due to limitations on time and resources we need to focus on reading development at Foundation Phase level at the moment. Hopefully, the intervention in the teaching of reading at FP level that we are working on at the moment will be extended to the IP level after the completion of this first phase.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

This report is an exploratory, descriptive survey to determine the state of teaching reading in Sesotho and isiZulu at those HEIs that offer training to Sesotho and/or isiZulu student teachers at Foundation and Intermediate Phase levels.

CALT@ UJ's first task was to determine which HEIs offer Sesotho and/or isiZulu in their programmes for the training of FP and IP student teachers. CALT@UJ used a two-pronged approach to collect the data from the participating HEIs for this report. First, information was garnered from the BEd programme submissions to the DHET and second, from the answers supplied to the questions contained in a questionnaire completed by staff members from the participating HEIs.

The first step was to determine which HEIs offer FP and/or IP education to Sesotho and/or isiZulu students. CALT@UJ established that there are presently twelve such HEIs. Ten of the identified institutions are public Higher Educational Institutions while another two are private Higher Education Institutions. These institutions will be referred to collectively as the "Participating HEIs". The participating Public Higher Education Institutions are the following: Central University of Technology (CUT), North West University (NWU), University of the Free State (UFS), University of Johannesburg (UJ), University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), University of South Africa (UNISA), University of Zululand (UNIZULU), University of Pretoria (UP), Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS). The participating Private Higher Education Institutions are Embury and the Independent Institute of Education (IIE). (A few more institutions have applied for accreditation for programmes for the teaching of Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase teachers but have not yet obtained accreditation.)

4. INFORMATION ON THE TEACHING OF SESOTHO AND ISIZULU READING OBTAINED FROM THE HEI'S PROGRAMME SUBMISSIONS

Most of the participating HEIs offer Sesotho and/or isiZulu as home language (HL) while others offer these languages as both HL and first additional language (FAL) and one institution offers the language as FAL only.

Some of the participating HEIs offer training only for Sesotho student teachers, while others offer training for isiZulu student teachers only and yet others offer training for both Sesotho and isiZulu student teachers. Most of the HEIs offer a programme at Foundation Phase level while others offer a programme at Intermediate Phase level and yet others offer programmes at both FP and IP level.

Instead of reporting on the items that are related to language teaching and teaching reading in particular per HEI, the data gleaned from the programme submissions of the individual HEIs are categorised into broad themes. The selected themes are, 4.1) Language structure, 4.2) Language acquisition, language learning and teaching, 4.3) Literature, 4.4) Literacy, 4.4.1) Reading, 4.5) Language and culture, 4.6) Multilingualism and language planning, and 4.7) Assessment.

Even though the HEIs listed most of the topics as bullet points, some individual topics are specified in some detail, but even in those instances it is not always clear what the focus is or how a particular desired outcome will be achieved. Consider for instance the following statements:

“Graduates should have deepened knowledge and skills of how to promote listening, speaking, reading and writing skills by using appropriate methodologies, activities and resources.”

“To develop the students’ ability to use isiZulu literacy as social practice rather than as technical skills.”

The wide-ranging and generalised descriptions of the programme content as quoted above may be deliberate to allow the HEI to have some manoeuvrability in the offering of the content.

While diverse topics may have been lumped together in the programme submissions, these have been somewhat separated into the specific themes selected for this report.

(The responses to the questionnaires generally reveal more detail on the Sesotho and isiZulu content.)

The details of the content of the participating HEIs’ programme submissions to the DHET are listed below according to the seven main themes identified above.

4.1 Language structure

The aspects of language structure contained in the programme submissions of the participating HEIs are listed below. While most synonymous terms used by different HEIs have been listed in brackets, not all of them have been listed.

- Develop high reading skills based on a sound knowledge of the basic grammar of the language.
- An introduction to the structure of words, word categories (classes), the noun system and grammatical agreement.
- Knowledge and application of grammar.
- Word formation processes.

- Word classes/parts of speech: noun (including derived nouns), verb (including moods, tenses and verbal extensions), adjective, possessive, pronoun, enumerative.
- Dictionary skills and vocabulary use.
- Homonyms, synonyms, antonyms and the use thereof in sentences.
- Morphology (morphemics, word formation processes; inflection and derivation), phonetics (sound system), phonology (including sound changes, assimilation, elision, coalescence), phonics, syntax (clauses and phrases) and the noun class system.
- Vocabulary, tone and spelling development in meaning making.
- Semantic analysis, idiomatic expressions and sayings, sentence ambiguity.
- Pragmatics.
- An introduction to syntactic principles ((basic) sentence structure) and semantic relations.
- Writing and spelling rules, principles of grammatical analysis.

A number of inferences can be made from the information above, collected from the programme submissions.

According to the programmes submitted by the HEIs the four levels of linguistic study, namely phonology, syntax, semantics and morphology receive attention, however only a few HEIs include the study of syntax in their curriculum, while more than half of the institutions also do not pay attention to morphology. Apart from the traditional four levels of linguistic study, one HEI gives attention to phonetics while another also includes pragmatics.

One HEI lists idiomatic expressions and sayings as topics that it teaches. Two institutions indicate that they teach spelling and dictionary usage in particular. Another institution also includes homonymy, synonymy and antonymy (which resort under semantics) as areas of focus. Understanding these relationships between words helps the child's cognitive development and vocabulary building, but these concepts are hopefully introduced later in the child's development. It can be very daunting for a learner to grapple with these lexical semantic relationships when she/he is still acquiring basic vocabulary.

Most HEI's submissions emphasise the importance of teaching the word categories. In most instances the emphasis is on the noun and the verb, while others also include other word categories. One institution mentions in particular the adjective, possessive and enumerative as word categories to be studied. It seems strange that the HEIs do not include (apart from the noun and the verb) some of the word classes with a higher frequency of usage such as the pronoun, conjunction, adverb and ideophone. Moreover, the HEIs do not specify the order in which these word categories are to be introduced and their distribution over the Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase years.

Additional topics included in the curricula of individual institutions are, vocabulary, dictionary usage, spelling, idiomatic expressions and sentence ambiguity, moods, tenses and verbal extensions.

4.2 Language acquisition and language learning and teaching

- Language theories.
- Language learning and teaching.
- The ability to relate theories of language acquisition to practice and language teaching approaches.
- First Language (Home Language) acquisition theories.
- Knowledge of theories and principles underlying First Additional Language acquisition teaching.
- Theories of language development and their relationship to emergent literacy.
- Teaching language skills.
- Children language learning.
- Listening skills.
- Listening comprehension.
- Speaking skills.
- Academic writing skills.
- Vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories.
- Language methodologies.
- Understanding of HL methodology terms, concepts, content, principles and theories; introduction to CAPS document for HL; basic principles of lesson design, lesson planning, CLT (communicative language teaching), integration of language skills; language teaching approaches, methods of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.
- Equip student teachers with specialised knowledge and understanding of early childhood learning to read and write (emergent literacy).
- Implement approaches to Sesotho/isiZulu first additional language instruction appropriate to the early childhood development.
- Creating a language-rich environment.
- Communication theory.
- Oral Communication for different purposes.
- Instructional communication (immediacy, clarity, credibility).
- Acquire the language skills to confidently express and justify either orally or in writing, own ideas, views and emotions.
- The use of ICT in language.
- The use of multimedia tools (social networking sites as well as blackboards).
- Acquire the language skills to confidently express and justify either orally or in writing, own ideas, views and emotions.
- Integration of the language skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing in a variety of texts.
- Create an original informative piece, and analyse and edit writing.

As far as language acquisition and language learning and teaching is concerned the curricula of most HEIs include some reference to language theories, in particular first language acquisition and language learning theories. One HEI refers to language development in the

young child and its impact on language teaching. Another HEI emphasises the importance for the student teacher to be able to do proper planning, understand the terminology, principles, concepts, contents and methodology and to have the ability to integrate the language skills, approaches and methods.

Attention to the language skills for the sake of successful communication is emphasised by a few of the participation HEIs.

The development of writing skills is emphasised by a few of the HEIs while one institution mentions the use of ICT and another mentions the use of multimedia tools to promote language learning. The creation of a language rich environment is also mentioned by one HEI.

4.3 Literature

- Literature as a module for Grades R to 3 will provide the qualifying graduate with knowledge and skills to enhance children's reading and writing abilities.
- The qualifying graduate will be able to interpret the children's literature from different perspectives and acquire the ability to interact with it differently.
- Equip the student with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to develop and enhance the young child's literacy through the use of children's literature.
- Demonstrate the presentation of different genres of children's literature and teach them to compose their own stories and illustrations.
- Generic module aimed at the acquisition of literature and literary concepts in the relevant languages such as literary text(s), topics, characters, events, time, space, plot and style.
- Analysis of short stories, narrative structure and story development through plot, character, setting and theme.
- The role of the author in addressing societal issues is discussed.
- The connection between culture and language as portrayed in literature, is discussed.
- Children's literature is explored as well as its relevance to language and the child's cognitive, emotional, social, moral and religious development.
- The application of various literary theories to African languages literature is introduced.
- Genre features, interpretation of a selection of poetry, prose and drama including poems for children, storytelling and folklore for children, a drama text for children.
- Qualifying graduates are guided on how to analyse different types of texts and to critique various literary genres found in African languages (such as children's literature, youth literature, folklore, etc.)
- Literary works in African languages are critiqued: short stories, novels and novelettes.
- Critically analyse, interpret and distinguish between traditional and modern literature genres.
- Critical analyses of selected literary texts.
- An understanding of the genres used in Primary school.
- Establish criteria for selecting and grading quality literature books.

- An introduction to literary communication (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and elementary concepts generally associated with literary texts, by means of uncomplicated oral storytelling and short narrative poems.
- Ability to analyse and evaluate the use of language in children’s isiZulu/Sesotho literature and various isiZulu/Sesotho media texts by focusing on narrative strategies.
- Critically evaluate children’s literature, engage and analyse literary texts, discuss the transferal of various literary elements from one genre to another – from a novel to film.

All the HEIs include literature in their curricula. Consideration is given to the distinction between traditional and modern literature. The submissions cover the whole spectrum of literary genres, namely short stories, novels and novelettes, folklore, youth literature, children’s literature, poetry and drama.

A number of diverse aims are stated for the reading of literature. These include enhancing the children’s literacy skills; interpret the literature from different perspectives; demonstrate the presentation of different genres, the acquisition of literature and literary concepts such as character, time, space, plot and style; highlight the role of the author in addressing societal issues; illustrate the relationship between language and culture and to explore the relevance of literature in the child’s social, cognitive, emotional, moral and religious development.

One HEI indicates that the literary text has to be analysed and critiqued using different literary theories, while others specify that the students should be able to identify genre features and analyse and critique different texts, including children’s literature.

Some of the topics included in the individual submissions of the participating HEIs relate to the analysis and evaluation of literary texts. The emphasis is on fiction/narrative texts while not much attention is given to the reading of information/expository texts which play such a strong role in “reading to learn”. Students are expected to be able to establish criteria to select and grade literary texts. Students should be able to analyse and evaluate language usage in literary texts. The students should also be able to discuss the transfer of literary elements from one genre to another, for example from a novel to a film.

4.4 Literacy

- Concepts related to literacy.
- Emergent literacy.
- It is intended to equip qualifying graduates with the knowledge, skills and techniques of teaching Emergent Literacy in a Foundation Phase class.
- Perceptual skills – and their relevance to emergent literacy.
- Explain how the language development of the young child relates to phonemic awareness (emergent literacy) and identify the skills needed to acquire language.

- Holistic approach to emergent literacy as part of the language development of the 0 to 9-year old child.
- Graduates should have deepened knowledge and skills of how to promote listening, speaking, reading and writing skills by using appropriate methodologies, activities and resources.
- Listening and speaking skills.
- Develop an appropriate level of communicative language competency.
- Planning, teaching, assessing, and developing resources to teach Sesotho/isiZulu at the Foundation Phase (this includes the teaching of all literacy skills).
- Engage with various texts in order to develop speaking, listening and critical understanding through reading, writing and discussion.
- Argumentative essays and visual literacy.
- The module aims to equip students with effective writing skills.
- Creative writing.
- Writing and presenting skills.
- Note taking.
- Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills for effective teaching.
- Acquire knowledge about children's auditory and visual perceptual skills.
- An understanding of strategies and principles for teaching the macro skills associated with listening, speaking, reading, viewing, writing.
- Instilling a love for reading through storytelling and story reading.
- Choosing resources for language teaching and learning.
- Reflective teaching infused in all themes and topics for the module.
- Integrate play in their teaching strategies.
- Incorporating play in the teaching of literacy.
- Parental involvement and its significance in emergent literacy.
- Acquire the language skills to confidently express and justify either orally or in writing, own ideas, views and emotions.
- The acquisition and inculcation of advanced communicative skills within a larger number of social, occupational and educational situations, further heightening awareness of the nature and function of language structures.
- Identification of learners with barriers in the learning of literacy.

All the HEIs refer to the language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing in some way. Not all the HEIs include all four language skills in their curriculum though. Some HEIs do not refer to the oral language skills at all while yet others do not include listening skills in their curriculum. Reference to the four language skills do not necessarily imply that a systematic and integrated programme for reading is included. There is no highlighting of the importance of reading at the FP level.

A number of HEIs indicate that they give attention to emergent literacy, while one HEI suggest that their students will be able not only to source and evaluate teaching material but also to develop such material. Particular attention is also given to different forms of writing. Story telling and the reading of stories are seen as an ideal vehicle for developing literacy. The use of oral and written communication to express ideas, views and emotions is emphasised by one

of the HEIs. The use of ICT and the involvement of the parents in developing the child's literacy are also addressed by two separate HEIs. The introduction of play to teach literacy is also mentioned. Reading comprehension is listed by one institution while the identification of children with reading barriers is also included in the submission of one institution.

4.4.1 Reading (and writing)

- Reading and writing theories.
- The purpose of the module is also to provide students with in-depth knowledge and practical application of reading skills.
- Various strategies for teaching reading and writing.
- Reflect on the different reading methodologies of teaching reading.
- Evaluate the different reading approaches, strategies and skills within the context of curriculum policy for the FP.
- Reading skills (purpose, types, strategies).
- Application of different reading strategies.
- Effective reading instruction.
- Early reading.
- Reading and pronunciation.
- Reading for meaning.
- Development of phonetic knowledge in grade 1.
- Basic word-sound system and its important relationship to reading and pronunciation.
- Teaching of reading will be foundational as reading is basic to learning other subjects. Hence promote the ability to decode reading texts and the meaning thereof.
- Ability to sensitively read and critically analyse 'seemingly' simple texts.
- Critical appreciation of the work of a range of authors of children's Sesotho/isiZulu literature.
- Critical analysis of a reading programme.
- Assessment of reading.
- Reading problems and intervention strategies.
- Writing and handwriting.
- Teaching handwriting in pre-school and foundation phase.
- Discuss the features of young learner's early forms of writing-drawing and writing.
- Design a pre-readiness programme for writing in the foundation phase.
- Critically reflect on the different approaches to the teaching of handwriting.
- Teaching writing.
- Written correspondence (letters, emails, memorandum, reports, etc.).
- Creative writing: interviews, meetings.
- Language skills – writing and critical thinking.
- Evaluate the teaching of handwriting (teachers and learners).
- Barriers to reading and writing.
- Comprehension.

The HEIs refer to reading theories and the development of reading in their programme submissions. The question is how updated these theories are and whether they are evidence-

based. Students are also expected to analyse reading programmes. Listing topics such as “Early reading”, “Application of different reading strategies”, “Reading and pronunciation” and “Reflect on the different reading methodologies of teaching reading” is evidence that the HEIs attend to various aspects of reading. But again, the question arises as to how these topics are taught. Focusing on an evidence-based method of teaching reading that yields results is far more important than introducing students to various (sometimes outdated) theories. There is also reference to pre-reading programmes. It is also not clear what is included in the pre-reading programme. There is no evidence of a comprehensive, evidence-based programme for reading. Particular attention is given to writing (including handwriting of both the students and the learners). There is also focus on different forms of writing such as correspondence, and creative writing. The development of reading and decoding skills are listed by one institution. Even though comprehension is mentioned it is no indication of how this is to be achieved.

4.5 Language and culture

- The connection between culture and language is discussed.
- A wide-ranging overview of various isiZulu/Sesotho cultural phenomena.
- Discuss the relationship between language and culture as it is reflected in literary texts.

Only three HEIs refer to culture in particular. Culture is discussed from two points of departure namely from the viewpoint that language and culture are intertwined and secondly from literary texts. Cultural phenomena that appear or are eluded to in reading texts are discussed and clarified.

4.6 Language planning and multilingualism

- Language policies.
- Language and the Legislative Framework in South Africa.
- The valuing and respecting of all the home languages spoken in South Africa.
- To develop an understanding of Sesotho/isiZulu language and literacy development in multilingual contexts.
- Critical insight into multiculturalism and multilingualism with reference to language learning.
- The influence of language contact.
- Dialectal variation and major differences between the dialects.
- Differences between spoken and written language.

A number of HEIs refer to the language policies and framework within which the learners acquire their Home Language and the mutual influence between the HL and other languages with which the speakers of the HL are in contact with. Some attention is also given to dialects and the difference between spoken and written language. The teaching of the particular language in a multilingual and multicultural South Africa is addressed.

4.7 Assessment

- Assessment approaches for teaching and learning within the CAPS curriculum framework.
- Develop students' knowledge of assessment for reading and writing.
- Assessing language learning. / Different forms of assessment in Home Language teaching.

Surprisingly, only a few of the HEIs include a reference to assessment in their programme submissions. The reference to assessment is also very broad and does not supply any detail of which aspects of language or language teaching will be assessed.

4.8 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS OBTAINED FROM THE PROGRAMME SUBMISSIONS

It is clear that while most HEIs pay attention to the Sesotho and isiZulu content to be taught, some institutions do not distinguish clearly between the knowledge and skills the student teachers have to acquire and that which the children will have to acquire.

Most of these HEIs emphasise the role of literature and language structure in teaching language literacy in general. The content of the modules devoted to the development of reading (and writing) skills, is however, often quite generic and it is difficult to determine exactly which and how these skills are taught. While the submitted programmes reflect the devotion of time to the honing of (already existing) reading skills there is little evidence that time is devoted to the development of initial reading skills. In the case of some HEIs the assumption is made that the skills developed for English literacy can simply be transferred to the African language(s).

An analysis of the participating HEIs programme submissions to DHET reveals that some attention is devoted to the teaching of language literacy skills in the BEd programmes of these institutions but the amount of time these institutions spend on teaching reading differs vastly. The focus in teaching literacy also differs vastly. In many instances the “literacy modules” seem to be add-ons to an otherwise traditional literature or grammar based curriculum.

The topics listed in the curricula sometimes resembles a “kind of shopping list”. None of the universities draws a distinction between learning to read and honing or improving reading skills. There is furthermore no motivation for the teaching of grammar at the different levels.

5. INFORMATION ON THE TEACHING OF SESOTHO AND ISIZULU READING OBTAINED FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRES COMPLETED BY THE PARTICIPATING HEIs

This part of the report accounts for 11 institutions. The University of KwaZulu-Natal did not respond to numerous emails and phone calls inviting the colleagues to participate in the project and the conference.

One private higher education institution, namely IIE did not complete the questionnaire in full and neither did they respond to the repeated invitation to attend the conference. The discussion on the questionnaires is therefore based on ten HEIs while the data from an eleventh institution is factored in in certain questions. A third HEI indicated that they have only introduced the programme this year and could therefore not respond to all the questions in the questionnaire.

In this section a consolidated account is given of the responses to each question contained in the questionnaires completed by the individual HEIs. In order to keep the responses supplied by the individual HEIs anonymous the responses of the individual institutions are merely indicated by using a number (where applicable) instead of the name of the institution.

GENERAL

Question 1:

Are the Sesotho and/or isiZulu courses offered to the student teachers at your institution tailor-made for Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase teacher education in particular? (In other words, they are not generic modules offered in another faculty.)

8 of the 11 institutions indicated that the Sesotho and/or isiZulu courses are tailor-made for FP and/or IP students.

2 institutions indicated that their courses are partly tailor-made.

1 institution indicated that these courses are not tailor-made.

Question 2:

Are the Foundation Phase student teachers at your institution trained separately from the Intermediate Phase student teachers as far as Sesotho and/or isiZulu courses are concerned?

5 of the 11 institutions indicated that their FP and IP students are trained separately.

5 institutions indicated that their students are not trained separately.

1 institution indicated that its students are partially trained separately.

Question 3:

Are there separate courses for the students who are trained to teach Sesotho and/or isiZulu as Home language from those that are trained to teach the African language as First Additional Language?

6 of the 11 institutions indicated that they have separate courses for Home language and First Additional Language.

3 institutions indicated that they offer the same courses to HL and FAL students.

1 institution indicated that it has partially separate courses for HL and FAL.

1 institution indicated that it offers only FAL.

Question 4:

How many modules² of the Foundation Phase curriculum are devoted to the teaching of Sesotho or isiZulu as Home Language (or FAL) at each year level?

Level	Modules per institution										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 st year	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	4
2 nd year	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	4
3 rd year	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4
4 th year	1	0	2	2	5	2	2	2	0	2	4
Total	4	3	8	8	9	8	6	8	4	8	16
Course average	7.45										

Question 5:

Indicate how many of the total number of modules in question 4 above are devoted to the teaching of:

5.1 language structure

# modules	HEI										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	1	3	-	5	2	1	3	7	2	3	1

² Note that the credit weighting of a module and thus its length may vary quite substantially from one university to another.

5.2 reading and writing

	HEI										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
# modules	1	2	-	3	2	2	3	2	3	0	1

5.3 children's literature

	HEI										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
# modules	2	1	-	7	0	5	3	2	3	1	0

5.4 language pedagogy

	HEI										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
# modules	2	2	-	8	0	2	0	2	3	2	1

5.5 Vocabulary

	HEI										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
# modules	1	2	-	2	0	2	3	2	3	0	0

Question 6:

How many staff members teach the Sesotho and/or isiZulu modules in the Foundation and/or Intermediate Phase programmes?

	HEI										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
# staff members	2	5	1	6	4	4	2	4	1	2	5

6.1 Are any of these staff members specialists in teaching at these two levels?

	HEI										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Yes/No	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

6.2 If so, how many?

	HEI										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Number	1	2	1	1	4	3	2	4	1	1	4

6.3 How many of the staff members in 6 (above) were specialists elsewhere but had to retrain to teach at FP/IP level?

		HEI										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Number		2	3	0	4	4	1	1	0	0	0	0

Question 7:

Are the Sesotho/isiZulu modules within the FP and IP programmes taught by staff members in the Faculty/School/College of Education?

		HEI										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Yes/No		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Yes		=		9		No		=		2		

Question 8:

Are the Sesotho/isiZulu modules taught as Home Language and as First Additional Language as well, at your institution?

		HEI										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Yes/No		N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Yes		=		7		No		=		4		

Question 9:

Which of the following types of study material do the students receive?

9.1 student/study guides

		HEI										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Yes/No		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Yes		=		All								

9.2 tutorial letters

		HEI										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Yes/No		N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N

Yes	=	4	No	=	7
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9.3 handbooks/textbooks

		HEI										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Yes/No		Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Yes	=	5			No			=	6			

9.4 reading packs

		HEI										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Yes/No		N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y
Yes	=	5			No			=	6			

9.5 reading lists

		HEI										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Yes/No		N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Yes	=	8			No			=	3			

9.6 other

Reading references on blackboard.

Videos on blackboard.

Question 10:

Which types of assessment are used to assess the African language modules? Please list the assessment types below.

- tests, assignments, exams.
- analysis grid, writing of articles.
- formative & summative assessments.
- oral & written assessments.
- oral (and visual) presentations, lesson planning, micro teaching.
- practical activities, design & portfolio.

FOUNDATION PHASE LEVEL

Question 1

How many modules of the programme for the training of Foundation Phase teachers at your institution focus on *Sesotho/isiZulu literacy*?

	HEI										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
# of modules	7	2	-	12	4	4	7	0	4	0	0

Question 2

At which year-level are the modules in question 1 above offered? Please specify if the same module themes are offered at more than one year-level.

Year level	Number of modules offered per institution										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 st year	2	0	-	2	0	2	2	0	1	0	0
2 nd year	2	1	-	2	0	2	2	0	1	0	0
3 rd year	2	1	-	4	2	0	2	0	2	0	0
4 th year	1	0	-	4	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	7	2	-	12	4	4	7	0	4	0	0

Question 3

Please specify the name and central topic of each of the modules referred to in question 1 and 2 above.

Phonetics.
 Reading instruction.
 Strategies for teaching language components as per CAPS.
 Using a dictionary.
 Word identification.
 Parts of speech.
 Oral language fluency.
 Listening.
 Speaking.
 Reading.
 How children learn to read.
 Writing.
 Handwriting.
 Vocabulary building.
 Language study.
 African language grammar.
 Phonetics and phonemic awareness.

Morphology.
Syntax and fluency.
Semantics and vocabulary.
Discourse analysis and pragmatics.
Language teaching methodologies.
Language technologies.
Language learning and teaching.
Multilingualism and intercultural communication.
Language and cultural diversity.
Literature.
Traditional literature.
Children's literature.
Storytelling and reading.
Drama and plays.
Oral poetry.

Question 4

Please list the names and supply a short description of the focus of the FP modules relating to the teaching of **reading** specifically (mentioned in your answer to question 3 above).

Skills that influence reading comprehension:

- Oral language development
- Vocabulary development
- Decoding
- Fluency.

Appreciation of literature and other texts.

Question 5

Which modules (listed in your answer to question 4 above) do you regard as absolutely essential for **teaching reading**?

Schemata, schema and codes.
Encoding and decoding spoken and written messages.
Developing bottom-up (phonological) skills.
Phonemic awareness and phonics.
The alphabetical principle.
Practical communication skills.
The four language skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Question 6

Which modules (listed in your answer to question 4 above) do students seem to enjoy most?

Developing bottom-up (phonological) skills.
Encoding and decoding oral and written messages.
Syntax and fluency.
Reading methods.
Children's literature.
Language and communication skills development.

Question 7

Which modules (listed in your answer to question 4 above) do students have the most difficulty with in terms of understanding and/or application?

Grammar.
Schemata, schema and codes.
Applying principles in the practical teaching.
Communication dynamics.

Question 8

Are there any unique methods or techniques you employ to teach Reading in isiZulu/Sesotho in the case of any of the modules listed in your answer to question 4 above? If so, please supply a brief description.

Faculty/College of Education offer the methodology while the Department of African. African Language Department teaches the African language content.

Question 9

Please briefly explain how grammar is taught (if any) at the FP level.

Grammar is taught in context.
Deducted from language in context: speech or writing or reading texts.
Parts of speech are identified.

Question 10

Is any attention paid to the teaching of oral language skills (speaking and listening)? If so, please supply a brief account.

Specific methods of teaching speaking and listening skills.
Strategies for teaching and assessment of listening and speaking skills are taught.
Students have to listen to audio recordings and taped dialogues.

Question 11

Is any attention given to the teaching of vocabulary? If so, please supply a brief account.

Vocabulary is introduced during the oral.

The scaffolding that is used during the writing phase exposes the learners to new vocabulary that needs to be learned.

The language used as LoLT must be proper.

Learners are given vocabulary lists at the start of a particular theme.

Question 12

Is any attention given to the sourcing and selection of children's literature for the purpose of teaching reading at FP level?

Programme development requires the sourcing and selection of suitable children's literature. Students are made aware of the selection of suitable sources available on internet and YouTube.

Students are given guidelines for the selection of suitable children's literature.

Question 13

For what purposes is the children's literature used in the teaching at Foundation Phase level?

To show students how empowering reading training can be at FP level.

To give learners the opportunity to select books they like.

To select reading passages, practise reading, give explanations on grammatical forms, select examples of phonics, improve fluency, build vocabulary and hone comprehension.

Prompt the child to show and express emotions.

Identify different genres.

Question 14

Is any attention given to dialect differences in isiZulu/Sesotho and how teachers should deal with this in the FP classroom?

Teachers are sensitised for dialect variations in language.

Attention is incidentally given to dialectal differences.

Teachers are made aware that learners may use different dialects in class.

Question 15

Is there a topic related to teaching reading not included in the Foundation Phase curriculum at present that you would like to include? If so, please specify.

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Question 16

Are there any challenges that your department/faculty experiences with regard to the teaching of reading and writing in Sesotho and/or isiZulu as Home Language in the Foundation Phase? Please explain briefly.

Books on literacy for FP are not available in the African languages and need to be translated from English.

Availability of sources on literacy is a problem.
Lack of suitable readers.
Readers not written by mother tongue speakers.
Lack of book clubs.
Lecturers of the FP literacy programmes are not mother tongue speakers.
Not enough time for students to attend to the practical application of teaching reading.

FINAL ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The African language part of the teachers' training programme at the majority of participating HEIs focuses primarily on theories and approaches to language acquisition and language learning, grammar and literature. Simply focusing on different theories of language acquisition and language learning will not lead to the language teacher executing her task better. No particular attention is given to the question of how to teach a child to read. There is reference to the use of reading texts and different genres and even the fact that grammar is taught based on reading texts or oral work but no mention is made of a how to teach children to read. What is lacking is a comprehensive and integrated evidence-based method of teaching reading. At some HEIs a large part of the student's education centres on literature while at others the main focus is on grammar. The grammar teaching seems to be the traditional approach to the study of grammatical phenomena. In most instances the goal of teaching grammar is not spelled out. It seems to be a continuation of a tradition. No reference is made to the role of grammatical knowledge in learning to read. When it comes to teaching reading the focus should be on the role of those aspects of grammar that enable the child to decode written text.

It is equally true that in the teaching of literature the focus is strongly on narrative texts while the informative texts are not referred to. Equally, the focus in the case of literature should be on children's literature while attention should also be given to the role of graded texts in early reading. The sourcing, selection and grading of children's literature is important as is the use of literature to teach reading. The order, methods and techniques used to teach the components of reading is of utmost importance. While it is true that the FP teacher should have a wider knowledge of the grammar and literature of the Home Language than that needed to teach the FP learners, it is imperative that the aspects related to teaching literacy, reading in particular, are taught systematically and thoroughly. The role that oral language development plays in learning to read needs to be emphasized.

At the majority of the HEIs the lecturers who teach the Sesotho or isiZulu content also teach the methodology. In the case of at least three of the institutions the lecturers who teach the African language content and those who teach the methodology or didactics have no or very little contact with each other. This is a very unfortunate situation.

Preparation for reading in the pre-reading phase needs to be attended to systematically. Possibly too little attention is given to the factors influencing reading (and writing)

development. Aspects such as the systematic development of oral language skills and the early introduction of phonological awareness are mostly absent. The development of oral language proficiency (listening and speaking) as a prerequisite for reading and methods to improve the child's oral skills have to form part of the curriculum. The importance of cognitive development and the inclusion of information texts in the reading programme must be stressed. Including informative texts in the reading programme greatly contributes to the child's development towards reading to learn and is therefore imperative.

The role of the parents and/or guardians in creating a print-rich environment and to act as additional role models for reading also needs to be emphasised. Getting parents involved is extremely difficult as is evident from research done in this area but that does not mean that it should be neglected.

To prepare the child for writing it is essential to develop her/his fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination among other things.

This survey reveals that only a few of the HEIs focus specifically on language literacy and even fewer on teaching *reading with comprehension* in particular. Seemingly, only a few HEIs teach "learning to read" even though an integrated approach is absent. The focus is rather on honing already existing reading skills or on advanced reading skills. While a number of HEIs have included some of the components of teaching reading in their curriculum, none of them have included all of them. No attention is, for instance paid to oral reading fluency or the various linguistic aspects of decoding, or automaticity, while comprehension is merely mentioned in the curriculum of one HEI. It is important to focus on aspects such as oral reading fluency, phoneme awareness and phonics and to introduce the full spectrum of graphemes of the particular language systematically when teaching reading. It is equally important to emphasise the principles and order in which these graphemes are to be taught. The integration of the components of reading is also neglected. Research has shown that focusing on only one, or a few of the components of reading while neglecting others will not lead to successful reading.

The HEIs should provide in the dual needs of the student teachers. On the one hand the student teachers themselves need to acquire the necessary deeper knowledge and skills relating to the Home Language literature and grammar, and on the other hand they must acquire the knowledge and the know-how to teach the children to acquire language literacy in the Home Language. The latter process will obviously include topics such as children's literature and the linguistic knowledge of the HL to enable them to decode text for reading purposes.

At some institutions no attention is given to African language literacy teaching at all. Seemingly, the assumption is made that the principles for English literacy teaching can simply be transferred to Sesotho or isiZulu. At some HEIs the FP and IP student teachers have to attend the African language classes with the BA students who are taught traditional language and literature courses within a BA programme that focus on grammar teaching and analyses and

critique of literary texts. In such instances no attention is given to the needs of the FP and IP teachers and no consideration is given to basic literacy or reading in particular.

None of the HEIs refers to the “Big Five” of reading. A structured and systematic approach to reading is missing. The lack of focus on and an integration of the core components of reading cannot lead to successful reading. It is imperative that the HEIs ensure that the curriculum includes at least the core components of reading and that proper attention is given to their integration into a proper programme to teach reading comprehension.

It is not known what textbooks are prescribed for the student teachers. It may be better to compile a reading pack for the students, including scientific articles in particular because the latest developments are often contained in scientific articles rather than in textbooks.

Some colleagues seem to be oblivious to the fact that there are various reading texts available in the African languages that can be downloaded from the internet for use. The same is true for instance in terms of the availability of various videos on aspects of literacy teaching created by Funda Wandé.

In triangulating the findings contained in the programme submissions with the responses to the questions in the questionnaire a number of discrepancies were evident. There may be various reasons for this but the fact remains that this should not be the case.

The lack of adequate time allocated to the teaching of literacy (reading in particular) in the Home Language should also be addressed. This need has been expressed by colleagues from a number of the participating HEIs.

Five of the HEIs indicated that some of the staff members teaching Sesotho and isiZulu at FP and/or IP levels were not (initially) trained to teach at these levels. It may thus be necessary to introduce a (re)training programme to ensure that all staff members teaching the HL modules have the necessary knowledge and skills for teaching reading at the FP and IP levels.

One of the colleagues expresses the following wish as a response to a question in the questionnaire:

“I wish the DHE and DBE would design an African languages curriculum for all institutions of higher learning which will link with the school’s curriculum. This curriculum must cater for all skills prescribed in CAPS. It should be a practical and implementable curriculum that will take the country forward not only focusing on theories of different scholars.”

With reference to the above-mentioned yearning, we can rejoice in the fact that the SIRP initiative offers an even better outcome than that wished for. The DHET, the DBE and Nedbank are offering us the opportunity to develop and implement our own curriculum content to address the shortcomings in teaching reading that exists in our schools at FP and IP level. Let

us grab this opportunity with both hands and in a spirit of collaboration turn this opportunity into a game-changing intervention to empower our young learners to become successful readers and life-long learners.

We, as the SIRP collective need to agree on six modules to be developed and integrated into the BEd programmes at the participating HEIs. These modules will address the core issues associated with teaching reading. CALT@UJ will also seek further funding to develop Teaching Support Materials to accompany the selected modules and to pilot the modules before they are finalised.

The CALT@UJ Team

(Ally Cassiem, Ntsiki Msimango, Lionel Posthumus, Fikile Simelane and Maria Vaz)