

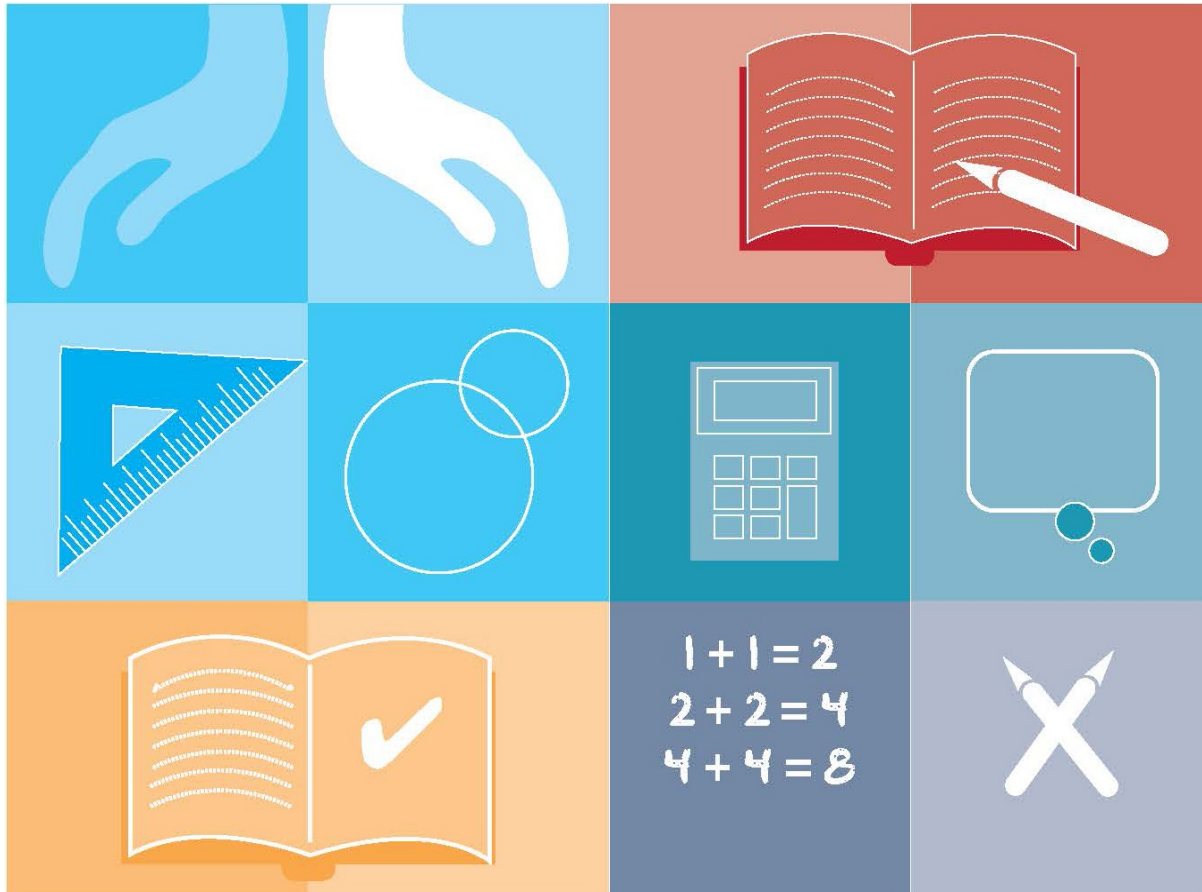


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## Foundation and Intermediate Phase B.Ed. programmes at selected South African universities: languages and literacies components

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# Introduction

To inform the development of a curriculum framework and a set of core standards for the languages and literacies component of the B Ed degree for primary school teachers and with a view to publishing examples of good practice on the Prim TEd website, the Consolidated Literacy Working Group of the national Prim TEd project undertook a two part audit: (i) interviews with teacher educators and document collection at ten South African universities; (ii) an analysis of official curriculum documents presented to the Department of Higher Education and Training by sixteen HEIs when the latest iterations of the B.Ed. Foundation Phase degrees were being approved.

The ten universities at which interviews were conducted are broadly representative of South Africa's complex tertiary education contexts. They are situated in urban, rural and peri-urban-rural locations, include universities categorised as advantaged or disadvantaged during the apartheid era and one that has been established post-1994, and offer distance learning or on-campus programmes or both, at a single campus or on multiple campuses as indicated in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Universities at which interviews were conducted with languages and literacies teacher educators**

University	Urban/Rural	FP / IP	Previously Advantaged/Disadvantaged	MRTEQ: Old/New/Transitioning
<b>A</b>	Rural	FP	New	Old
<b>B</b>	Distance (U&R)	FP & IP	Advantaged, but with many students from disadvantaged backgrounds	Transitioning
<b>C</b>	Urban	FP & IP	Advantaged	Transitioning
<b>D</b>	Urban	FP	Disadvantaged	Transition completed
<b>E</b>	Urban	FP & IP	Disadvantaged	Transitioning
<b>F</b>	Urban & Rural (2 campuses)	FP & IP	One advantaged & one disadvantaged campus	Transition completed
<b>G</b>	Urban & Rural & Distance (3 campuses)	FP & IP	One advantaged and two disadvantaged campuses	Transitioning
<b>H</b>	Urban	FP & IP	Advantaged	Transitioning
<b>I</b>	Urban	FP & IP	Merger of advantaged & disadvantaged institutions	Transitioning
<b>J</b>	Urban	FP & IP	One advantaged and one disadvantaged campus	Transitioning

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## The research process

As indicated in Table 1, teacher educators were interviewed at eight urban campuses, one rural campus and at three universities which have both urban and peri-urban-rural campuses. One university offers distance learning programmes, one offers both on-campus and distance learning programmes and the other eight, on-campus programmes. One is planning to offer its programme on-line by 2020. In terms of initial education for primary school teachers, eight offer both Foundation and Intermediate Phase programmes and two Foundation Phase only. Three of the universities can be categorised as advantaged during the apartheid era, two as disadvantaged and four as partly advantaged and partly disadvantaged, depending on the location of a particular campus, and one is new.

Representatives of some of the ITE FP & IP programmes at universities not listed in the table, who had expressed initial willingness to be interviewed, were unavailable at the times negotiated with them, or had different institutional roles from when they had first expressed interest and were thus no longer available for interview and document collection. At a national consultative workshop on draft standards and curricula framework for languages and literacies initial education of primary school teachers, (January 2019), representatives of several universities not included in the initial audit expressed interest in their programmes being included in it. However, in view of the need to complete the audit report so that it can be used to inform other activities of the PrimTEd project, the CLWG decided to restrict the audit to the ten universities, given their representivity, but to include feedback from workshop participants in the designing of the standards and curricular framework documents.

Despite many expressions of interest in participating in the audit when the research project was initiated in February 2016, the research team found arranging and conducting interviews and collecting documents, such as course outlines, from languages and literacies teacher educators across the country a considerable challenge. One reason for this is the on-going, intermittent disturbances to teaching and learning on many campuses which began in the latter part of 2016 and which are evident again on some campuses at the beginning of the 2019 academic year. Another is human resource constraints such as lecturers being appointed to short term or part time contracts and having limited knowledge of whole B.Ed. programmes, while those in permanent posts have increasingly heavy workloads which have made it difficult for them to find time to engage with the researchers. A third reason is that B.Ed. curricula are in the process of being revised to conform with the requirements of MRTEQ, a document which itself has already been revised since it was originally compiled (and is now in the process of a third revision). As indicated in the final column of Table 1, at the time of the interviews teacher educators were currently using 'old' and 'new' curricula with cohorts of ITE students across the four years of the degree, with the majority of B.Ed. programmes being 'in transition'.

## Data collection

The CLWG research team devised and piloted a set of interview questions to ask all, or as many as possible, of the languages and literacies teacher educators at each participating university. These questions are appended to this report. In any interview, the questions included and those excluded and the phrasing of the questions included, position interviewees to respond in particular ways, though such positioning may be resisted. Some of the contributions of participants at three national

consultative workshops – one focusing on research into the teaching of African languages, one focusing on draft standards for B.Ed. languages and literacies curricula and a third on a draft B.Ed. languages and literacies curriculum framework and on languages and literacies initiatives in the NGO sector and by the DBE – suggest that if some of the questions asked had been phrased differently and /or different questions had been asked, interviewees’ responses may have differed from those recorded. For example, the question *Are the usual components of a teaching of reading and writing programme present in a coherent sequence?* positions interviewees to accept that there is agreement on the nature of such components. As a second example, while the compilers of the questions assumed that interviewees would describe the role of digital literacies in their programmes, no questions specifically addressed digital literacies and this may be one reason why there was so little reference to this important resources for teaching and learning reading and writing / presenting texts in a range of modes.

Nevertheless, the CLWG suggests that the information obtained is of value for understanding what is currently offered in the languages and literacies components of B.Ed. degrees for prospective FP and IP teachers, how these components are taught and assessed and by whom.

After obtaining ethics clearance from the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand and consent from the academics interviewed, each semi-structured interview was facilitated by two researchers (only one, in two instances where it was not feasible to have a team of two), audio-recorded and transcribed by an external transcriber. The interviewers also made field notes before, during and after the interviews (for example, notes on interesting materials used by lecturers). It should be noted that at most universities not all of the lecturers involved in languages and literacies education were available to participate in the interview because of teaching or other commitments.

In addition to data from interviews and documents provided by interviewees, further information on Foundation Phase languages and literacies modules was obtained from the official curriculum documents presented to the DHET by a total of sixteen HEIs when the latest iterations of the B.Ed. Foundation Phase degrees were being approved.

It should be noted that it is sometimes difficult to discern the content of a module from its title. For example, it is not always clear whether the focus is on literature or on linguistics or on pedagogies for teaching languages and literacies at ‘home’ or first additional language level or on using a dominant language as LoLT. As a result of this lack of clarity, there may be inaccuracies in what is reported in the second section of this report. One of our recommendations is that universities should be encouraged to give greater thought to the naming of language and literacy related modules, to the connections between modules and to the avoidance of duplication or overlap.

## The themes identified in the initial analysis of data from interviews and documents

A first cut analysis of the transcriptions resulted in the identification of a set of themes. This was followed by a second round of more detailed analysis of each interview transcript in order to compile the composite information presented in this report under theme headings.

The identified themes were:

1. Variation in lecturers' academic and professional 'preparedness' for curriculum design and 'delivery' of languages and literacies courses for student teachers enrolled in FP or IP programmes
2. Varying levels of lecturer 'investment' in the preparation of FP or IP languages and literacies teachers
3. Presence / absence of intellectual leadership in the field of languages and literacies teacher education
4. Variation in location and weighting of languages and literacies courses within the B.Ed. degree and in assessment of student teachers' knowledge and skills as teachers and as assessors of reading and writing
5. The complexity of the linguistic profiles of student teachers, learners in schools and the complex language requirements of both the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and MRTEQ
6. Variability in the separation or connectedness of ITE courses for student teachers specialising in FP or IP
7. Variation in attention given to student teachers' development of academic literacies
8. Variation in curriculum 'coverage', curriculum coherence/incoherence re languages and literacies for 'home' and 'additional' language teaching of African languages, English and Afrikaans across the four years of a B.Ed. curriculum
9. Variation in focus on teaching learners to read and to write (theories and practices) and to use reading and writing for learning. In most B.Ed. programmes learning to teach reading is given much more attention than learning to teach writing / composing on the page or screen, though in some, both reading and writing receive limited attention.
10. Variation in development of resources/use of published resources to support languages and literacies teacher education
11. Variation in the design and implementation of the teaching practicum across the four years of the degree
12. Similarity of concerns expressed by languages and literacies teacher educators



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## The themes analysed

### **1. Lecturers' academic and professional preparedness for curriculum design and 'delivery' of language and literacy courses for student teachers enrolled in FP or IP programmes**

At universities C, G, I and J, and to some extent at universities E and H, there is evidence in the interview data that the whole lecturing team understands theories and practices that are likely to enable appropriate curriculum design and provision of quality ITE to Foundation and Intermediate Phase language and literacy teachers. At the other universities where interviews were conducted, FP and IP lecturers were sometimes unable to understand or to respond appropriately to the interviewers' questions or their responses were at the level of 'slogans' / jargon which they could not explain when interviewers attempted to probe their superficial responses. For example, in replying to a question about how she teaches phonics, a lecturer at one university stated, 'I follow exactly what the prescribed textbook says', with a lecturer at another endorsing this approach by saying 'phonics is in the prescribed textbook.' When asked about approaches to teaching reading another lecturer stated, 'We follow what CAPS wants – the bullets under reading'. Having stated that she teaches student teachers how to prepare a 'story sandwich', when asked to describe a story sandwich a part-time lecturer was unable to do so, stating only that it is part of her 'practical approach'.

Several lecturers were very confident that their experiences as classroom teachers (even if not in the FP or IP) or in some cases as NSC examiners in a language subject, or as writers of texts for classroom use, were an excellent preparation for teaching in FP and IP languages and literacies courses. At universities C, G, H, I and J, postgraduate studies and / or on-going research in a relevant field were mentioned as contributing to expertise in languages and literacies teacher education but at the other five no reference was made to research informing practice. In several of the interviews there was evidence of the learner paradox, that in order to learn about something, you must first know that thing, with some lecturers being unaware of the gaps in their own subject and pedagogic content knowledge, particularly with reference to theories underpinning practice.

At universities B, F and H subject knowledge courses for first and second year students are taught in a separate faculty from pedagogic content knowledge courses, with lecturers in each not always aware of what is taught in the other's courses. Some of lecturers in English, Afrikaans or African languages may have little if any knowledge of the domain of literacies. Responses to questions asked in the interviews suggest that this separation contributes to under-theorisation of language and literacy teaching and learning practices at universities B and F and to 'scatterings of content' (comment from one interviewee at university F) across modules.

Table 2 below summarises the academic qualifications, and teaching experience in schools and universities of staff at each of the universities participating in the audit. Unfortunately, there are some gaps in the data as not all interviewees were asked or responded to all questions.

**Table 2: Summary of qualifications, previous and current teaching of FP and IP languages and literacies teacher educators at the time of the interview**

**University A**

Staff member	Highest academic qualification	Years teaching at University A	Courses taught currently	Background	Phase (s) teaching in
A	MA	3	English FAL	High school teacher; provincial DBE head of additional languages; UNISA tutor	FP
B	MA; reg for PhD	6	Siswati	FET & SP teacher; author of texts for Siswati FP	FP
C	MA	6	isiNdebele as HL & FAL	FET & SP teacher; author of texts for isiNdebele	FP

**University B**

Staff member	Highest academic qualification	Years teaching at University B	Courses taught currently	Background	Phase(s) teaching in
A	PhD	5	Academic literacy; HL reading	Qualified to teach in high school and primary school; most teaching in colleges of education and universities	?
B	?	3	FAL	Qualified to teach in high school and primary school; NGO work; most teaching in grades 2 to 4; most teaching in Maths	FP & IP
C	M Ed	3	HL reading, writing, spelling	Qualified to teach in high school and primary school; most teaching in grades 2 to 4	FP
D	PhD	28	?	High school teaching; most teaching at two universities	FP & IP; PGCE; B.Ed. Hons

## University C

Staff member	Highest academic qualification	Years Teaching at University C	Courses taught currently	Background	Phase
A	PhD	19	Undergrad and post-grad Literacy courses – Eng HL & FAL	Qualified as high school teacher; part time tutoring from 1999; full time employment from 2005	FP & postgraduate courses and research supervision
B	PhD (In Ed. Leadership)	19	Literacy 2 & 3 New Literacies; Eng HL & FAL	Initially trained as junior primary teacher	FP
C	MA; reg for PhD	15	Literacy 3 (4 <sup>th</sup> yr course) ENG HL & FAL	Qualified as a primary school teacher; used to teach library courses on children's lit.; has taught SP, IP & FP; focused on FP for last several years	FP
D	MA; reg for PhD	7	Literacy 1, 2 & 3; Eng HL & FAL & some Hons. teaching	Worked for NGO READ; has taught FP courses at Uni C for 7 years	FP
E	PhD	14	New literacies for teachers; literacies for the IP	Worked for NGO READ; has contributed to IP English HL & FAL textbooks	IP
F	MA; reg for PhD	10	Literacies for the IP; HL & FAL Zulu	High school teaching; has written teaching materials for isiZulu	IP
G	PhD	19	Undergrad and post-grad Literacy courses – Eng HL & FAL	High school teaching; materials development and materials review for English HL & FAL readers and textbooks; works with FunDza	IP & postgraduate courses and research supervision

## University D

Staff	Highest academic qualification	Years teaching at University D	Courses taught currently	Background	Phase/s taught at Uni D
A	MA; reg for PhD	8	English literacy; isiXhosa; supervisors B.Ed. Hons research	FP teacher; 2011 language resource manager at Uni D; 2013 changed to lecturing	Mainly works in SP but does some work in FP
B	PhD	1	Teaches English methodology and English communication to PGCE and FET B.Ed. students	HL s Arabic; had been a university lecturer in Libya, teaching TEFL before coming to SA in 2015 to do a PhD;	FET & PGCE
C	MA	1	Teaches isiXhosa HL	Five years teaching FP in schools	FP
D	MA; reg for PhD	1	Teaches English methodology HL and FAL	19 years teaching FET, SP and IP in schools	FP
E	MA	1	Teaches Afrikaans HL& FAL; Afrikaans methodology	Retired teacher with experience in primary and high schools in SA and overseas; principal of a high school & of a primary school; five years teaching on an in-service teacher ed programme at another university	FP & SP
F	MA	8	Teaches Afrikaans, Second Additional Language, Ed. linguistics	Uncertain whether F has taught anywhere other than Uni D.	SP

### University E

Staff member	Highest academic qualification	Years teaching at University E	Courses taught currently	Background	Phase
A	PhD	13	isiXhosa	Primary school teacher; researcher; materials developer	FP
B	Registered for MA	6	English FAL	Foundation phase trained; school principal; NGO worker; TEFL teacher in Taiwan; education projects in Bosnia, Syria and Iraq; ECD trainer at Rhodes	FP and IP and adult education.
C	MA; registered for PhD	?	?	Teaching experience	IP
D		Linked to university	Not a teacher but a developer of isiXhosa materials for reading	Author of isiXhosa texts and producer of audiobooks; literacy specialist at MNI; facilitator of book clubs; works with FunDza	FP
E	PhD	8	English FAL	High school teacher	FP & IP

### University F

Staff member	Highest academic qualification	Years teaching at University F	Courses taught currently	Background	Phase
A	?	?	3/4 <sup>th</sup> yr English	Teacher (1996)	IP
B	Ba Hons	2	Sesotho	Teacher (1981) Part time From humanities	IP SP
C	BA Hons	2	Sesotho HL FAL	From CUT- English FET FP and FET teacher 2002	
D	?	10	FP – ECD Afrikaans HL FAL	Teaching since 2002	ECD FP
E	PhD	12	English HL and FAL	Teacher KZN Taught at UKZN	FP
F	?	2	Language modules, HL and FAL, Life Skills, Psych based modules	Psychology background	
G	?	9	Afrikaans and English English IP and FET, Afrikaans IP	High School teacher, then Dept Afrikaans and Dutch, Reading skills for English Dept	

## University G

Staff member	Highest academic qualification	Years teaching at University G	Courses taught currently	Background	Phase
A	PhD	?	English FAL; leader of WIL at the university	Has taught in schools at all levels and English in the UAE for two years; reading specialist working at FP and IP levels	All phases; now FP/IP specialist
B	PhD	17	Afrikaans HL & FAL with an emphasis on teaching reading & supporting students in designing and making children's books	Multilingual: Afrikaans, English, French, Italian & 'some African languages'; has taught in primary and high schools	FP I& IP specialist
C	PhD	?	On-line materials developer, print text designer, designer of interactive micro-teaching scenarios	Specialist in technology in education; particularly for reading development & promotion of children's lit.	FP and IP
D	MA; reg for PhD	17	Teaches HL Setswana to all phases, developer of reading materials in Setswana	Trained as primary school teacher, taught in high schools, mainly university teaching	FET & SP teaching in schools; all phases at Uni G
E	PhD	?	Teaches HL Sepedi	Trained as an FET teacher; taught in high schools, taught at Uni B before transferring to Uni G	FET & SP teaching in schools; Teaches FP & IP at Uni G
F	?	?	Teaches Setswana	Taught at Uni B before recently transferring to Uni G	At Uni G teaches IP, SP & FET

## University H

Staff member	Highest academic qualification	Years teaching at University H	Subjects taught currently	Background	Phase
A	MA; research done for PhD	?			FP
B	BA; PGCE (FP)	?	English HL – content and methodology	Teacher development work with an NGO; Gr 2 teacher, part time lecturer	FP
C	B.Ed. FP; doing Honours degree in special needs education	?	English HL methodology	Gr 1 teacher; part time FP lecturer	FP
D	B.Ed.; M Ed; PhD	?	Children’s lit. Designing of reading materials Teaching in multilingual contexts	High school teaching; FP research	FP
E	B.Ed. FP; doing Honours	?	Teaching reading and writing; teaching isiXhosa as additional language; teaching materials development	FP teacher	FP
F	MEd	?	FAL content and methodology	IP & SP teacher of isiXhosa	FP
G	ACE in FP teaching; B.Ed. Hons	?	Teaching reading Teaching isiXhosa additional language methodology	FP teacher	FP

**University I** (Note: Lecturers in African languages were unable to attend the interview due to workshop commitments)

Staff member	Highest academic qualification	Years teaching at University I	Subjects taught currently	Background	Phase
A	PhD	?	HOD focuses on teaching practicum	20 yrs in schools	FP & IP
B	MA, PhD in progress	1	Literature	ISEA & high school teaching	FP & IP
C	MA, PhD in progress		Academic Literacy	High school followed by remedial teaching	FP & IP
D	MEd in progress	3	English Methodology; English literature	FP, IP & high school teaching; also remedial teaching	FP & IP
E	MEd	?	?	?	?
F	MEd in progress		Literature, Literacy, IP Methodology	High school & primary school teaching	IP
G	MEd in progress	4	Methodology FP, English HL & FAL & involved in teaching practicum	20 years in schools	FP

**University J**

Staff member	Highest academic qualification	Years teaching at University J	Subjects taught currently	Background	Phase
A	?	35	Methodology for FAL (English and Afrikaans)	High school teaching initially; mostly college of education and university teaching	FP
B	MA; PhD in progress	20	Methodology for HL English	Primary and high school teaching; college of education and university teaching	FP
c	MA; PhD in progress	2	Methodology for isiXhosa HL, FAL; SAL	Primary school teaching; provincial curriculum advisor; PRAESA researcher; teaching at two universities	FP & IP



## **2. Level of lecturer ‘investment’ in the preparation of FP / IP languages and literacies teachers**

With the possible exception of two lecturers at one university, lecturers’ responses to interview questions and their discussion of materials, course files, etc., indicated investment in their work and in some instances very high levels of motivation. However, there is evidence in the interviews of a lack of intellectual leadership of FP and IP programmes at several universities, with only universities C, G, H, I and J having strong intellectual leadership, with such leadership evident to some extent at universities B and E. At most universities, while the lecturers interviewed were motivated and invested in their work, they expressed concern about ever-increasing workloads and lack of time for intellectual engagement with colleagues and for dialogue with school principals and teachers.

Some of the engagement with students is undertaken by staff on part time and /or short-term contracts (e.g. universities D and H) or by retired teachers acting as mentors (university D) or e-tutors (university B) or retired teachers (University J) or adult educators (University G, rural campus) supervising teaching practice. The investment of these part time or short-term contract staff, according to the observations of their colleagues, and in some instances evidenced in the interviews where part time staff were present, varies from excellent to limited.

## **3. Presence / absence of intellectual leadership and mentoring**

Absence of intellectual leadership is a striking feature of some interviews, although at others it is clearly evident (universities C, G, H, I and J) and to some extent university E, though at the latter, the person able to lead has a range of responsibilities and thus limited capacity. Absence of leadership is most strikingly obvious at universities A and D. At university A, one concern is the lack of experience and lack of undergraduate and postgraduate study in the area of Foundation Phase teaching and learning. At university D the concern is that the majority of lecturers, at the time of the interviews, were in their first year of teaching at the university and data from the interviews suggest that they are not being mentored. At university H there is currently strong academic leadership but from a senior staff member of retirement age and given the many part time appointments at this university, continuity of leadership may be a problem in future.

While the lecturers at the rural campus of university F stated that there was co-operation between themselves and their urban campus colleagues, in reality the rural campus appears positioned as a satellite, with courses, assignments and examinations designed on the urban campus and sent to the lecturers on the rural campus to implement, leaving them feeling marginalised with few opportunities for professional development. The lecturers interviewed at university G stated that efforts are made to design assignments and examination papers jointly with colleagues at the peri-urban-rural campuses but acknowledge that such involvement is time-consuming and sometimes difficult to sustain. Lecturers at university J were concerned that communication between lecturers at the two campuses has become much less frequent than in the past, with disturbances on one of the campuses during the various student protest campaigns and increased workloads cited as two reasons for this limited contact.

#### **4. Location and duration of languages and literacies courses within the B.Ed. degree and in assessment of student teachers' knowledge and skills as teachers and as assessors of reading and writing**

The difficulty in working out, from the responses to interview questions, where languages and literacies courses are located within the B.Ed. degree, is an important indicator of lecturers working in 'silos' at several universities. (A similar finding was reported from the ITERP). At three universities (B, F and H) for years 1 and 2, language subject content is taught by lecturers in the Faculty of Humanities with pedagogic content ('didactics' / 'methodology') taught in a School /College / Faculty of Education. Only at university C (in its new B.Ed., though not in the past) and at universities G and I, is there a clear connection between the FP and IP programmes.

While languages and literacies modules have a central place in the B.Ed. curriculum at universities C, G, H, I and J, in several universities very little time appears to be allocated to languages and literacies (either theory or practices), with some having only one module with a focus on languages and literacies pedagogies. For example, a lecturer at the rural campus of university F stated that within a language and literacy module 'only one or two weeks are spent on teaching phonics'.

With reference to assessment tasks, there were significant differences in quantity, challenge and diversity of tasks for both formative and summative assessment across the ten universities. Most FP and IP programmes included assignments with a focus on designing and making teaching resources for use in the classroom, particularly additional reading materials but also information charts (e.g. for vocabulary development). Lecturers at universities A and H mentioned editing these to make sure that teachers used only resources of good quality with learners.

#### **5. The complexity of the linguistic profiles of student teachers, learners in schools and the complex language requirements of both the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) and MRTEQ**

This complexity and the challenges arising from it for lecturers and student teachers in universities, and for teachers and learners in schools, was raised in all of the interviews. Two brief quotations from interview transcripts and one from a commentary on the first draft of the languages and literacies standards document, illustrate aspects of the challenges faced by lecturers and teachers:

When they come to me there are in front of me English speakers who are going to teach Afrikaans as an additional language, there are Afrikaans students who are going to teach English as an additional language or Afrikaans as an additional language because we find that the Afrikaans students are bilingual, they can go either way. And then we've got isiXhosa students who are going to teach English as an additional language but they happen not to go that way. Many of them actually go into English schools where they teach English as a first language and where they would have to teach Afrikaans as an additional language although they themselves are third language speakers of Afrikaans.

In some schools the home language teacher no longer knows whether she should be using home language methodology because a significant number of children in her class actually need the other methodology. So she just pretends they don't exist and she pitches somewhere that probably very few of the children understand.

Given that bi/multilingualism is the norm, teacher educators need to know how to teach bilingually depending on contexts in which they teach and they need to know how to support bilingual learners in monolingual spaces.

## **6. Separation or connectedness of ITE for student teachers specialising in FP or IP**

While two of the universities in the study offer only FP programmes (A and D) and one other (C) is moving to develop closer curriculum links between FP and IP programmes, only at universities G and I was there evidence from the interview data and course outlines of close links between FP and IP. University I uses a Dropbox in which guides for all courses are placed so that colleagues can refer to these and make links between one course and another.

## **7. Attention given to developing student teachers' academic literacies**

Across the universities visited, developing student teachers' academic literacies was considered a priority in some of them, with specific courses offered at some universities (especially to students in their first year of study), with academic literacies incorporated in most or all modules at others, taught by specialists outside the B.Ed. programme in one, and given very little specific attention at three universities. While the researchers cannot claim to have a complete picture of the assignment and examination demands of the various courses across the institutions, it seems that at least some of these would be difficult for some students to manage without support for extending their academic literacies, including digital literacy for academic purposes.

## **8. Curriculum 'coverage', curriculum coherence / incoherence re languages and literacies for 'home' and 'additional' language teaching of African languages, English and Afrikaans across the four years of a B.Ed. curriculum**

Coverage and coherence are quite difficult to identify from the transcripts of interviews conducted at several universities. Of concern is the apparently limited focus on reading and writing in some programmes. Some universities have no modules /courses dedicated to theories and practices associated with reading and writing. Instead, lecturers claim that these are 'integrated' (e.g. universities D and F) but there is no clarity on what is integrated with what or how such integration occurs.

The privileging/advantaging or disadvantaging of some languages taught as 'home' or 'first additional' is another cause for concern. For example, lecturers on the rural campus of university F stated that while there is a unit in the English curriculum on teaching children's literature, there is no corresponding unit in the curriculum for Sesotho or isiZulu. Modules are designed in English and then translated into Sesotho but such translation is not done for module readings.

It is difficult to work out from the interviews how the various universities design and teach curricula for languages as 'home' and 'additional' languages. With the exceptions of universities G, H, I and J, there appears to be insufficient attention paid to English (an additional language for the majority of

student teachers and learners) as the main language of instruction (LoLT) from the Intermediate Phase onwards. All student teachers need to understand how to use English (or in some instances Afrikaans) as LoLT (e.g. how to work with learners' linguistic repertoires, how to work multilingually, how to support language development in general, and specialist subject vocabulary in particular, in the LoLT).

University G offers English, Afrikaans and two African languages as 'home' and 'additional' languages across all four years of the B.Ed. The lecturers stressed that the curricula for African languages 'did not go through the translation route' but was developed from scratch and that the teaching of English as LoLT is supported by a series of textbooks which students are expected to purchase. University I is also an exception, with all FP and IP student teachers taking courses in English (at Home Language level, even though only a small minority are HL speakers of English) and in either isiZulu or Sesotho (at either HL or AL levels) in each year of their studies. All students at university H take courses in learning and teaching English and isiXhosa as 'home' and 'additional' languages and at university J all students take courses in teaching English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa as 'home' and 'additional' languages.

## **9. Variation in focus on teaching learners to read and to write (theories and practices) and to use reading and writing for learning.**

In most B.Ed. programmes learning to teach reading is given much more attention than learning to teach writing/composing on the page or screen, though in some, both reading and writing receive limited attention.

The evidence in the interview data of the limited understanding of what student teachers need to know and be able to do in order to teach learners to read and to write and to use reading and writing for learning, is a particularly serious concern (Again, universities C, G, H, I and J are exceptions). In the data there are examples of lecturers equating teaching reading comprehension with testing comprehension and of teaching writing being restricted to teaching handwriting. In general, teaching learners to write in a range of genres, appears to receive less attention than teaching reading at all the universities at which interviews were conducted, with the possible exception of university J.

While there is evidence in some of the interviews of lecturers promoting student teachers' use of digital technology for creating teaching resources such as storybooks and information charts (universities A, C, E, G, H and J), there were only two references to guiding student teachers to teach learners how to use the affordances of digital technology to read and write on the screen (phone, tablet or desktop computer) as well as on the page.

## **10. Development of resources/use of published resources to support languages and literacies teacher education**

This was an aspect of their work about which lecturers at several universities spoke with confidence. Some have engaged in extensive materials development (e.g. some staff at universities D, E, H and the rural campus of university F). Lecturers at university B utilise some of the distance learning resources for language and literacy teacher education devised by the TESSA (Teacher Education for Sub-Saharan Africa) project – for example student teachers use TESSA lesson plans for planning lessons during the teaching practicum. Lecturers at university G are experimenting with virtual classrooms for micro-teaching and one lecturer has prepared some interesting booklets to support understanding of key concepts in languages and literacies. Lecturers at university H guide student teachers in the development of bilingual reading materials and have included an innovative course titled *Performance and Multimodalities* to prepare FP student teachers for the creative arts component of the Life Skills curriculum. Lecturers at university J guide student teachers in the writing and designing of stories for Big Books in three languages. Lecturers at university A guide students in the preparation of reading materials in the two African languages dominant in the area in which the campus is situated. By contrast, there are examples in the interview data of some lecturers (e.g. at universities D and F) using, apparently uncritically, published textbooks which, while of some value, have considerable limitations. Lecturers at university I prepare reading packs which are posted on-line but not made available to students in hard copy.

## **11. Variation in the design and implementation of the teaching practicum across the four years of the degree**

At some universities, there appears to be little connection between on campus lectures and tutorials and the off campus teaching practicum, while at others the two are closely connected. Given that staff at university B are unable to visit the vast number of classrooms in which students undertake practice teaching, students are required to present a portfolio of lessons and reflections on these which is signed by a supervising teacher. Some lecturers expressed concern about the veracity of these portfolios. In recognition of the dominance of Sepedi in the schools in the vicinity of university A, in which students undertake practice teaching, the Foundation Phase lecturers have now introduced Sepedi alongside Siswati and isiNdebele as a language in which students can major.

FP and IP student teachers at university I prepare lessons for micro-teaching sessions on campus before teaching them, on a rotational basis, at the university's primary school where they are mentored by teachers who participate in professional development activities with the FP and IP lecturers. According to the lecturers, this two-phase process assists in the student teachers' preparation for the off-campus teaching practicums. A similar practice is evident at university H at which micro-teaching on campus is coupled with weekly visits to schools in the first two years of the B.Ed. to work with individual children or small groups, particularly in relation to reading development. In the third and fourth years, students at university H teach in a school for a whole term. University G uses a virtual classroom set up with avatars for students to use for practice teaching. Lecturers at university J expressed concern that valuable micro-teaching experiences previously offered on campus were no longer available to students as a result of funding and staffing constraints.

## **12. *Main concerns expressed by lecturers***

Concerns expressed by many of the interviewees were as follows:

- On the majority of campuses high student teacher to lecturer ratios make it difficult for lecturers to set quality assignments which require in-depth investigation and documentation because they no longer have time to assess these, to offer micro-teaching sessions on campus or to visit all the students during a teaching practicum.
- In some instances legacy curricula have been massaged to conform with new DHET requirements at the expense of curriculum coherence and the prioritising of key modules (in particular, modules that would allow for a greater focus on languages and literacies).
- Resources for teaching African languages as home or additional languages are limited, particularly for some languages. (Some universities are working proactively to address this concern.)
- In some universities, consultations among all lecturers on curriculum changes / developments have been minimal to non-existent.
- At several universities there is pressure on staff to complete higher degrees while continuing to carry a full work load.
- Teaching in a school and teaching part time in a university B.Ed. programme makes it difficult to find time for liaison with colleagues (though at some universities access to information on line helps to address this concern).
- Sustained co-operation across campuses of the same university is difficult to achieve.

Throughout the time period of the audit, the majority of South African universities have been affected by the #FeesMustFall movement and other protests. As a result of disruptions to the academic and examination programmes, students have not always completed full academic terms; with the disruptions at some universities lasting for periods of weeks, or even months. The response to the reduced academic year has varied across universities. For example, one university cancelled one of its two teaching practicums to allow for the completion of programme modules. At another, students did not write end-of-year examinations in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Instead their final results for those years were calculated according to year marks. The differing responses to disruption may be an indicator of what each university prioritises in its ITE programme but neither the responses nor the reasons for them were a focus of the audit interviews.

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## Findings from an analysis of curriculum documents presented to DHET by sixteen HEIs for approval of revisions to B.Ed. Foundation Phase degrees

From an analysis of documents from 16 universities, the following categorisation of modules was developed:

- a. Modules with a focus on literature (with a high level of student competence in the language assumed). In some universities these are taught outside the Faculty or School of Education
  - b. Modules about a language (though these may include some literature study) that
  - c. focus on the linguistic features of the language and which may be particularly
  - d. useful to teachers who have to teach the language as a FAL.
  - e. Beginner language modules which aim to enable students to achieve conversational competence in a new language
  - f. Language modules that are pedagogically orientated (and usually focus on either Home Language or First Additional Language teaching)
  - g. Literacy or reading modules, including literacy related modules of a more specialised nature on only one aspect of literacy, e.g. emergent literacy; children's literature
  - h. Modules with a focus on working with learners' linguistic repertoires in
  - i. multilingual classrooms
  - j. Foundational English or academic literacies modules
- a. Modules with a focus on the literature of a language (with a high level of student competence in the language assumed, and sometimes taught outside the Faculty or School of Education)**

Language	Number of universities	Number credits
Afrikaans	3	60/15/8
English	2	60/8
isiNdebele		
isiZulu	3	8/48/96
isiXhosa	2	60/12
Sepedi	2	12/84
Sesotho	1	12
Setswana	1	12/84
siSwati	1	12
Tshivenda	1	12
Xitsonga	1	12
African	1	32

There were surprisingly few of these with only six of the 16 universities in the sample including them in a Foundation Phase B Ed programme.

- b. **Modules about a language (though these may include some literature study) that focus on the linguistic features of the language and which may be particularly useful to teachers who have to teach the language as a FAL**

In the modules analysed all focused on understanding the language for the purpose of teaching it as a FAL.

Language	Number of universities	Number credits
Afrikaans	1	12
English	1	12
isiNdebele	1	12
isiZulu	2	12 /72
isiXhosa	1	12
Sepedi	1	12
Sesotho	2	12 /72
Setswana	1	12
siSwati	1	12
Tshivenda	1	12
Xitsonga	1	12

Eight universities had these, with one university offering them in ten languages and another university offering substantial credits (72) for the module offered in each of two languages



**c. Beginner language modules which aim to enable conversational competence**

Virtually all these modules aim to meet the MRTEQ requirements that all teachers have at least conversational competence in an African language.

Language	Number of universities	Number credits
Afrikaans	4	36/40/5/16
isiNdebele	1	12
isiZulu	4	24/36/12/12
isiXhosa	4	36/40/5/12
Sepedi	1	12
Sesotho	5	24/36/24/12/12
Setswana	2	36/12
siSwati	1	12
Tshivenda	1	12
Xitsonga	1	12

Only nine of the 16 universities in the sample offer these which raises issues of compliance with the MRTEQ language requirements for the others (unless students at these universities are not main language speakers of African languages).

The range of credits is large – clearly some universities take language competence more seriously than others.

d. Language courses with a pedagogic orientation (usually focused on either at Home Language or First Additional Language teaching)

**Home Language**

Language	Number of universities	Number credits
Afrikaans	5	30/96/30/7/36
English	10	34/48/30/96/30/7/36/64/48/24
isiNdebele	2	40/12
isiZulu	3	6/80/12
isiXhosa	4	34/30/15/12
Sepedi	2	6/12
Sesotho	2	96/12
Setswana	3	96/2/12
siSwati	1	12
Tshivenda	1	12
Xitsonga	2	6/12

**FAL**

Language	Number of universities	Number credits
Afrikaans	4	22/30/36/12
English	9	19/18/30/48/20/20/36/64/24/40
isiNdebele	1	12
isiZulu	3	36/32/12
isiXhosa	3	22/25/12
Sepedi	1	12
Sesotho	1	12
Setswana	1	12
siSwati	1	12
Tshivenda	1	12
Xitsonga	1	12

What is noticeable is the range of credits – from 12 to 48. A serious question has to be raised about the depth of pedagogic preparation for language teaching.

Thirteen universities offer these courses.

- e. **Literacy or reading courses including literacy related courses of a more specialised nature on only one aspect of literacy, e.g. emergent literacy; children's literature**

Name	Number of universities	Number credits
Early literacy	1	6
Emergent Afrikaans	1	20
Emergent English	1	20
Emergent isiXhosa	1	20
Literacy	3	36/12/48
Teaching methods	1	12
Afrikaans literacy (HL)	1	40
English literacy (HL)	3	18/40/44
Xhosa literacy (HL)	1	40
Pedi literacy (HL)	1	44
Tsonga literacy (HL)	1	44
Across the curriculum English	1	20
Across the curriculum Afrikaans	1	20
Across the curriculum Xhosa	1	20
Reflective Literacy Practice Afrikaans	1	20
Reflective Literacy Practice English	1	20
Reflective Literacy Practice Xhosa	1	20
Literacies in Education (English)	1	24
Literacies in Education (Afrikaans)	1	24
Literacy practices (Afrikaans)	1	30
Literacy practices (Afrikaans FAL)	1	6
Literacy practices (English)	1	30
Literacy practices (English FAL)	1	6
Children's literature	2	12/12

Only seven universities have courses that explicitly focus on literacy, and some of these refer to only one aspect of literacy (e.g. *Emergent literacy*) or to a particular approach to literacy. This is a cause for great concern. Credits ranged from 6 to 48.

**f. Modules with a focus on working with learners' linguistic repertoires in multilingual classrooms**

One university offers a 10 credit module

**g. Foundational English or academic literacies modules**

Three universities offer modules for 10 credits (2) or 12 credits (1).

Findings from this overview of modules which focus on languages and literacies in Foundation Phase B.Ed. degrees suggest that the 16 universities in the sample place very different value on languages and literacies in their initial teacher preparation programmes. Only seven universities offer modules with a specific focus on literacy / literacies. The very limited offering of modules with a clear focus on teaching young learners to read and to write is extremely concerning.

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## Conclusion

The main purpose of this audit has been to investigate 'what is' for three purposes: (i) identifying examples of good practices in the design and teaching of languages and literacies modules in FP and IP programmes and using these to inform the design of standards and curricular frameworks for FP and IP initial teacher education, so that practices identified in the audit as likely to result in inadequate preparation of FP and IP languages and literacies teachers can be addressed, with support from DHET and from each university; (ii) publishing examples of good practice and useful resources on the Prim TEd website; (iii) promoting on-going conversations about quality initial teacher education programmes for primary school teachers of languages and literacies.

# Appendix

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The focus of the interview and of the collection of documents is on literacies and languages programmes, courses and modules within the B.Ed. for student teachers preparing to teach in the Foundation and /or Intermediate phases. These programmes, courses or modules could focus on any of the following:

African languages as Home and Additional Languages

English as Home and First Additional Language

Afrikaans as Home and First Additional Language

### **1. The organisation of the languages and literacies components**

How do these 'fit' within the Faculty's / School's organisational structure?

Are the Foundation and Intermediate Phases conceptualised and 'handled' together or in close association or are they completely separate?

Are the lecturers teaching in a particular phase specialists in that phase? (If not, how have they developed their current expertise?)

What specialised knowledge do they have?

What knowledge (content and pedagogic) is needed to teach new literacies teachers?

### **2. The details of the overall qualification and the place of the languages and literacies courses / modules within it**

Ask interviewees to discuss the following:

- a visual representation of courses / modules year by year, including credit points and NQF levels
- the complete timetable for the four year B.Ed. programme for FP students and for IP students
- which courses/modules are compulsory and which elective
- whether MRTEQ enables sufficient choice and flexibility

### **3. Course /module handbook entries; course/module outlines and other information**

Do students receive the following:

- a recommended reading list for each module?
- textbooks / reading packs/study guides/ tutorial letters (hard-copy or on-line)?
- assessment instruments for each module: assignments, test(s), examination paper?
- briefing documents for school experience / teaching practicum, particularly with reference to literacy teaching?

Who is responsible for the preparation of these documents? When do students receive them?

#### **4. Components of the literacy programmes**

Are the usual components of a teaching of reading and writing programme present in a coherent sequence?

Where are the 'Big Five' addressed (phonemic awareness; phonics (decoding), fluency, vocabulary and spelling, and comprehension? If addressed separately, are they also addressed together?

How is the assessment of reading and writing taught?

How are the CAPS documents used?

Are the DBE workbooks used and if so, how?

What attention is given to planning reading and writing lessons?

What attention is given to emergent literacy, critical literacy, children's literature, teachers' own reading and writing?

If various components of languages and literacies are taught in disaggregated modules, what hold them together? (Is there a flow chart to illustrate connections?)

#### **5. Conceptual development**

How is the conceptual development of student teachers' languages and literacies addressed?

#### **6. Preparation for practice**

How are new teachers of literacies prepared for practice?

#### **7. Nature of the language courses / modules**

What language courses are there in FP and IP and at what NQF level for:

Home Language(s)?

First Additional Language(s)?

English or Afrikaans as language of instruction in multilingual classrooms?

Transitioning from home language (R to Gr 3) to English or Afrikaans in Grade 4?

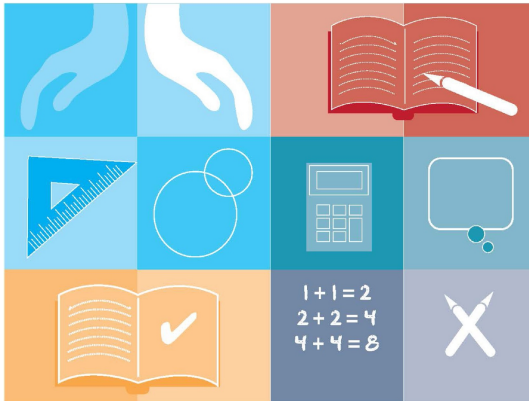
Are these courses /modules about language, about teaching language, about literature ?

What knowledge of language(s) and expertise in teaching how to teach language(s) do the current lecturers have?

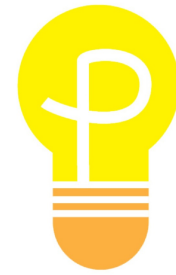
Are HL and FAL taught separately or together?

What are the strengths and limitations of current course / curriculum design?





The Primary Teacher Education Project collaborates with all South African universities to improve initial teacher education for primary school teachers with a special focus on reading and mathematics.



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