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**Baseline Assessment of
Pre-Service Teacher Education Programs at
Colleges of Teacher Education in Ethiopia**

December 2013

The READ TA Project

Initiated in October 2012, the Reading for Ethiopia's Achievement Developed Technical Assistance (READ TA) Project is a five-year initiative to improve the reading and writing performance of 15 million primary grade students in seven (7) Ethiopian languages (Amharic, Afaan Oromo, Sidamu Afoo, Af Somali, Tigrinya, Wolaittatto and Haddiyisa), in addition to English as a second language.

The READ TA Project is implemented by Research Triangle Institute (RTI) and its partners: Save the Children, Inveneo, Florida State University (FSU), SIL LEAD, WhizKids Workshop and Africa Development Corps.

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DISCLAIMER

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CTE	College of Teacher Education
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
FCRR	Florida Center for Reading Research
FSU	Florida State University
ICT	information and communication technology
IQPEP	Improving Quality of Primary Education Program
LSI	Learning Systems Institute
MOE	Ministry of Education
MT	Mother Tongue
NGO	nongovernmental organization
READ TA	Reading for Ethiopia's Achievement Developed Technical Assistance Project
RSEB	Regional State Education Bureau
RTI	Research Triangle Institute International
SC	Save the Children
SCC	School Cluster Center
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region
TELL	Teaching English for Life Learning
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

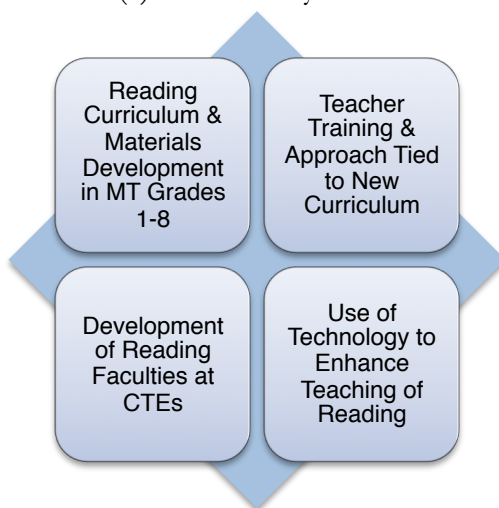
TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND.....	4
INTRODUCTION.....	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT TEACHING PRACTICES, PROGRAMS, AND RESOURCES FOCUSING ON READING INSTRUCTION FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS AT COLLEGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA.....	11
PURPOSE.....	11
ASSESSMENT DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	11
DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS.....	12
FINDINGS: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS.....	13
STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	21
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	25
ABOUT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY	30
APPENDIX A: PROPOSED PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING.....	31
COURSE CONTENT	

Background

A USAID-funded Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) performed in May and June of 2010 in six languages and seven of Ethiopia's nine regional states revealed shockingly poor results in reading achievement. By the end of 2nd grade, 34% of students were unable to read even one word and 48% of students scored a zero in comprehension. Grade 3 students were 20% nonreaders and 30% with zero comprehension.¹ These results diverge greatly from the MOE's minimum learning competencies – the national standards that expect a child to be reading near levels of fluency, with appropriate levels of comprehension, by the end of Grade 1. The Reading for Ethiopia's Achievement Developed Technical Assistance Project (READ TA) is a 5-year initiative, in collaboration with MOE and funded by USAID, to improve the reading and writing performance of 15 million primary grade students in five regional states and seven Ethiopian Mother Tongue languages.

As implementer of READ TA, RTI, in collaboration with MOE and its Partners, intends to achieve these results by focusing on these four (4) main activity areas:



Beginning in Spring 2013, MOE, in collaboration with READ TA, began the process of developing new reading curriculum and materials for MT reading in grades 1-8 by first reviewing and validating findings for what was currently in existence. A similar process for the remaining three activity areas began in May 2013 with rapid baseline assessments for pre- and in-service teacher training and ICT in Colleges of Teacher Education and primary schools. This report is one in the series that outlines not only the findings and validation process for the baseline assessment for the respective activity area, but also presents conclusions and recommendations to MOE for review and approval so that READ TA work under the associated activity area can begin.

¹ Piper, B. (2010). *Ethiopia Early Grade Reading Assessment, Data Analytic Report: Language and Early Learning*. Report prepared for USAID/Ethiopia under Ed Data II Task Number 7 and Ed Data II Task Number 9.

INTRODUCTION

The Reading for Ethiopia's Achievement Developed Technical Assistance (READ TA) Project supports the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (MOE) in its efforts to develop a nationwide reading and writing program. The objective of the project is to improve the reading and writing skills of children in grades one through eight in both their Mother Tongue and English, as measured by improvements in learning outcomes. The project is expected to reach 15 million children by 2017. Previously, there has been no specific reading curriculum in Ethiopia, nor have teachers been specifically trained in how to teach reading. This is unfortunate given that the teaching of reading requires specialized knowledge and expertise. As the American Federation of Teachers aptly stated: "Teaching reading is rocket science". Given that reading is a foundational skill that directly links with academic success, the READ TA project will directly address reading in the primary grades.²

As part of this effort, READ TA Partner Florida State University (FSU), through its Learning Systems Institute (LSI), will provide support to the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Regional State Education Bureaus (RSEBs) in building the capacity of Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) to implement strategies focused on improving the quality and efficacy of teacher education in reading and writing instruction in Mother Tongue and English in primary grades.

Florida State University is tasked with the following activities in support of READ TA and the Ethiopian MOE's objectives:

- Examine CTEs' existing institutional capacity, identify needed areas of growth and capacity development, and outline a specific plan and set of strategies for putting into place instruction, professional development, and practical training related to the teaching of reading.
- Provide the technical assistance and training to build each CTE's capacity in the areas of reading and writing instruction, including assisting CTEs in developing a curriculum for pre-service teacher education that is directly linked to the reading and writing curriculum and training that MOE and READ TA will support for each language.
- Support READ TA's strategies and inputs for the development and institutionalization of pre-service teacher training programs in reading and writing that are explicitly aligned with the reading and writing curriculum and materials that will be developed by each region.
- Develop and share innovative models, resources, and tools for reading curriculum development for grades one through eight in collaboration with MOE and RSEB officials; and support the facilitation of training of instructors in pre-service teacher education programs at CTEs.

² In this document, "lower or early grades" of primary school are equivalent to grades 1-4 or the first cycle of primary education. The 'learning to read' phase takes place during the first cycle, while 'reading to learn' phase takes place during the second cycle of primary school or grades 5-8. Note that in the proposed teacher training course content for Grades 1-8 Mother Tongue Reading and Writing (Annex A), Content 1 (Early Grades Reading) applies to grades 1-4; Content 2 (Cognitive Development) applies to grades 5-8; Content 3 (Differentiated Instruction/Assessment) applies to grades 1-8; and Content 4 (Language and Literacy) applies to grades 1-8.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to achieve its objectives, a team from FSU composed of reading researchers, language specialists, and experts in teaching pre-service teachers in the United States and abroad, as well as educators with a vast range of experiences working in development and international settings, traveled to Ethiopia to conduct a rapid baseline assessment of teacher education programs at CTEs in each of the five regions (i.e., Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, SNNPR, and Somali) of the READ TA project. FSU conducted this rapid assessment of CTEs with an eye on existing resources and structures that facilitate teaching and professional development of CTE faculty in the areas of literacy and reading instruction. The main objective of this “snapshot” exercise was to allow the FSU team and READ TA partners to become familiar with the situations, systems, and procedures involved in pre-service teacher education in Ethiopia.

Between April and June 2013, FSU teams visited CTEs in Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, SNNPR, and Somali to conduct this assessment of the colleges’ existing capacity and needs related to the provision of adequate pre-service teacher training in primary grades reading instruction. FSU distributed survey questionnaires to CTE instructors, conducted interviews with college deans and vice deans, surveyed sub-samples of Language Department instructors, and conducted focus group discussions with available instructors. The focus groups involved a total of 70 individuals, only 16% of whom were female faculty members. Slightly more than one-third of the focus group participants were Mother Tongue instructors while almost two-thirds taught English language courses. Only four individuals from other departments (Education, Special Education) participated in the focus groups. At two CTEs, FSU also interviewed CTE students (i.e., pre-service teachers).

FSU developed the instruments used to assess (a) the infrastructure, (b) existing courses that might have a reading component, (c) perceived needs in the area of reading instruction, (d) existing materials and technology, and (e) pre-service teacher education curriculum and instruction related to reading/writing in MT and English for grades 1-8. The results of field visits to Colleges of Teacher Education and focus group interviews with faculty and students are described in the next pages.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Overall, the findings revealed that current the CTE faculty do not have the professional knowledge to teach teacher candidates on reading instruction. The following is a summary of what the FSU team members were able to observe during their visits to CTEs in five regions. These preliminary findings take into account what the team learned from interviews with CTE deans and vice deans, and focus groups with Language, Education, and Special Education instructors at nine CTEs, as well as pre-service teacher candidates at two CTEs.

- A. CTE programs of study do not include explicit training in primary reading instruction.
- B. CTE lecturers are not trained in primary reading instruction.
- C. There is a strong disciplinary orientation in CTE organization and programs of study.
 - i. Departmental organization
 - e.g. Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Language, Education/Professional Studies, Special Education, Math and Aesthetics
 - ii. Disciplinary focus
 - Linear modality
 - Cluster modality

- D. Lecturers report that CTE students tend to have weaker academic backgrounds and poor reading skills.
- i. Students are selected from among 10th grade graduates academically ineligible for university admission.
 - ii. CTE students show poor reading, writing and language skills in both MT and English.
- E. Lack of instructional support and reading materials for Mother Tongue and English languages.
- i. CTEs and primary schools have complex MT linguistic environments, but no explicit instruction in language learning and literacy.
 - ii. There is a severe shortage of reading materials in the Mother Tongues for CTE students, so they have little or nothing to read.
 - iii. Available reading materials largely haphazard collections of donated English materials.
- F. Special challenges in SNNPR and Somali Regions
- i. SNNPR
 - Multiple Mother Tongues are used within schools.
 - There is an ongoing shortage of trained Mother Tongue teachers.
 - Mother Tongue diploma programs were only recently established in some CTEs.
 - Teachers sometimes do not know the language of their students.
 - Amharic seems to be the “default” language.
 - English is reported to be the CTE medium of instruction.
 - ii. Somali
 - The population 85% pastoralist.
 - Roughly half of schools are mobile.
 - Half of Somali’s 12,000 teachers are Alternative Basic Education Facilitators with grades 6-8 education.
 - There is pressure to train 16,000 new teachers by 2015.

The findings above indicate that CTEs visited in the course of this rapid assessment face a number of serious challenges in fulfilling their role in the improvement of primary grades reading instruction in Ethiopia. However, in each college we visited, we met deans, vice-deans, and lecturers acutely aware of the poor reading levels achieved by Ethiopia’s youngest learners, cognizant of the challenges that must be overcome in order to improve reading achievement in the early grades, and eager to play a part in overcoming those challenges and helping to create conditions in which all Ethiopian children learn to read. Such understanding and commitment on the part of CTE faculty, along with the support of the Ministry of Education, the Regional State Education Bureaus, and READ TA, will be an indispensable asset in achieving the goal of teaching 15 million Ethiopian children to read by 2017.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAKEHOLDER INPUT

In order to minimize the possibility that these preliminary findings and recommendations could be biased or inaccurate due to the relatively small sample size of our preliminary assessment or the FSU team’s lack of familiarity with the Ethiopian educational context, READ TA organized a sequence

of stakeholder meetings to review and validate our assessment and offer recommendations for its improvements.

These meetings included:

- READ TA Partners' Meeting in June 2013, where the FSU assessment and recommendations were shared with READ TA Partners and Staff for feedback and suggestions.
- The Ministry of Education/READ TA Taskforce on Improving the Teaching of Reading in the Mother Tongues (MT), biweekly meetings from July to September 2013, in which an FSU representative participated. The taskforce, which was established to ensure effective use of READ TA's technical support, reports to the Teacher and Educational Leaders Development Director Directorate.
- Pre-Consultation Meeting review with MOE on November 19, 2013, in which a representative of the FSU team shared our preliminary findings and recommendations with key Ministry of Education stakeholders and received feedback and suggestions.
- Baseline Assessment Consultation Meeting held November 21-22, 2013, in Adama, Ethiopia, and attended by more than 80 stakeholders from the Ministry of Education, Regional State Education Bureaus, Colleges of Teacher Education, and READ TA Partners. The meeting consisted of a full day of Partner presentations of findings from their respective baseline assessments as well as feedback sessions following each. The second day consisted of deep dive workshops where participants and READ TA Partners could go into more detail with their findings reports and engage in discourse around them.

These meetings are specific examples of opportunities READ TA and FSU have had to receive input from a variety of stakeholders across MOE—and indeed Ethiopia—in response to the team's initial findings and recommendations. These, however, have not been the only opportunities for mutual collaboration and information sharing. The full report discusses these interactions in detail and explains how they have helped READ TA evolve its understanding of the CTE's current capacities in terms of teacher training in the areas of MT reading and writing instruction. The recommendations that follow have likewise evolved to reflect ideas of how FSU can provide technical support to MOE.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the feedback received from key stakeholders and partners to date in a variety of forums, READ TA and its Partner, FSU, offer the following recommendations:

1. MOE should continue stakeholder engagement with collaborative dialogue.

Planning careful coordination of efforts amongst various stakeholders (MOE, RSEBs, READ TA, FSU, CTEs, USAID, etc.) will ensure effective and systematic implementation of both pre- and in-service teacher education, and relevance of curriculum and materials for primary grades teaching. Engaging stakeholders in close discussions regarding the most effective approaches to early grade reading, research-based interventions, and best practices in both reading and MT reading instruction will help ensure READ TA and other MOE resources are efficiently utilized.

Also in-line with the MOE’s suggestion at Adama, and to aid its role in this collaboration, FSU will, as soon as practical, identify and assign an FSU in-country representative to serve as its liaison with the Ministry of Education and the READ TA team.

2. FSU should assist MOE in revising/developing a sequence of courses in primary grades reading instruction for all CTEs.

Under the guidance of the Ministry of Education and READ TA, the FSU in-country representative and the FSU team should collaborate with the Mother Tongue Taskforce to identify specific courses for revision/development and work with them to carry out any necessary revision/development as requested. It is recommended that FSU assist MOE in revising or building out the courses already in development by MOE.

To carry out its role for this recommendation, FSU anticipates assisting MOE to do the following:

1. Identify courses, within the new CTE MT courses, that specifically provide training in teaching primary—and especially early grades—literacy with a focus on MT pedagogy.
2. Provide support to the MOE in identifying and/or developing course content that focuses on MT instruction in multilingual environments.
3. Revise or develop the identified courses to ensure their consistency with the new Mother Tongue Reading and Writing Curriculum produced by the MOE. This process includes:
 - a. Examining the new MT Primary Reading Curricula;
 - b. Identifying content to be included that supports the Primary MT Scope and Sequence progression of literacy acquisition, and instructional and assessment strategies; and
 - c. Identifying indicators within course content that supports inclusion and gender equity.
4. Provide support in adapting the new course outlines to the seven (7) identified Mother Tongues.
5. Provide support in developing related training modules to ensure their consistency with the new Mother Tongue Curriculum and the related instructional materials developed by the Ministry of Education.

FSU proposes that the skills and strategies found in *Appendix A* be considered in the development of new courses and revision of the proposed courses in the new MT program of study taught at CTEs. Including these skills and strategies would (a) address the findings from the rapid assessment, (b) integrate and align the MT primary school reading curricula and materials, and (c) promote inclusion and gender equity.

3. Build the capacity of lecturers in each CTE to teach reading courses for pre-service teachers.

Training of Trainers (TOT)

FSU primary grades reading instruction experts, in collaboration with in-country co-trainers, should train at least 150 lecturers (4-8 lecturers per college) representing all colleges of teacher education to teach the revised courses and offer effective, research-based instruction in primary grades reading for pre-service teachers.

Development of Modules and Instructional Materials

FSU should also support MOE, RSEBs and CTE staff to develop materials for use in the CTE reading and writing teacher training programs that integrate with the new Primary MT curricula. Special attention will also be paid to developing course modules and associated materials to train prospective teachers on gender equity in the classroom and on inclusive education.

Action Research Workshops

FSU should provide ongoing support and collaboration on the use of Action Research as a way to evaluate the impact of new instructional strategies and interventions in the pre-service teacher education program. FSU experts can train and collaborate with CTE instructors in Action Research designed to adapt and refine the implementation of revised Mother Tongue courses to the unique conditions of individual colleges of teacher education.

4. Establish primary grades MT reading and writing courses as part of the formal CTE pre-service teacher education curriculum.

In collaboration with RTI, MOE, RSEBs and CTEs, FSU should help work to establish these courses as part of the formal curriculum of the colleges by identifying and implementing strategies designed to ensure the sustainability of READ TA achievements in schools and colleges of teacher education.

5. In cooperation with the Peace Corps and other organizations, identify, train and place volunteer reading facilitators/coaches in each of the targeted CTEs.

READ TA and FSU should work with the Peace Corps and other voluntary organizations to train and place reading facilitators in each college of teacher education to support Mother Tongue lecturers in their implementation of revised Mother Tongue reading courses.

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT TEACHING PRACTICES, PROGRAMS, AND RESOURCES FOCUSING ON READING INSTRUCTION FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS AT COLLEGES OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN ETHIOPIA

This report describes the activities carried out by READ TA Partner Florida State University from January to November 2013. It is centered on the assessment of Colleges of Teacher Education in Ethiopia, focusing on their current teaching practices, programs, and resources related to reading instruction for pre-service teachers. The next pages describe in detail: (1) Purpose and methodology of the rapid assessment; (2) Findings; (3) Conclusions and recommendations.

PURPOSE

Florida State University was assigned the task, within the overall scope of the Ethiopia READ Technical Assistance Project, of working with Ethiopian Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) to enhance their capacity to provide up-to-date, effective pre-service teacher training in primary level (Grades 1-8) reading instruction in seven local languages designated as official media of instruction, plus English, in the following five regions: Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), and Somali. Fulfillment of this task will require a thorough understanding of the current policies and practices of the colleges that directly and indirectly influence their capacity to provide effective pre-service teacher training in primary grades reading instruction. To begin developing that understanding, members of the Florida State University team in support of READ TA and MOE, visited a total of nine Colleges of Teacher Education between April 26 and June 18, 2013. The primary purpose was to conduct a rapid baseline assessment of the colleges' existing capacities and needs related to the provisioning of adequate pre-service teacher training in primary grades reading instruction.

TABLE 1 - CTEs ASSESSED BY FSU, APRIL – JUNE 2013

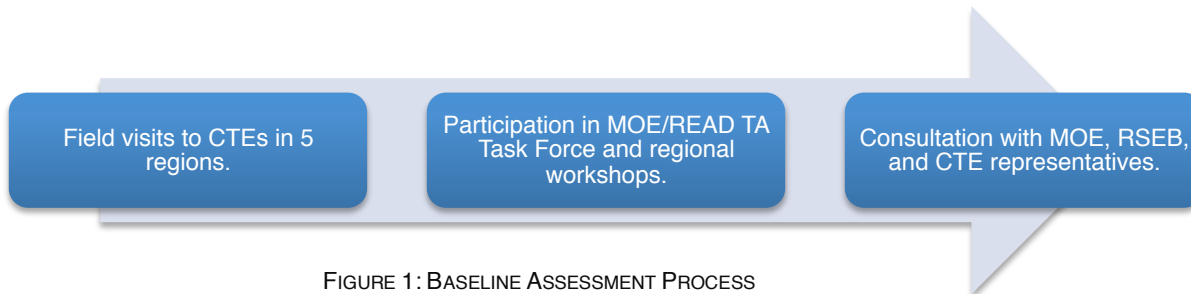
CTE	REGION
DEBRE BIRHAN	AMHARA
GONDER	AMHARA
ASSELA	OROMIA
CHIRO	OROMIA
ADWA	TIGRAY
HAWASSA	SNNPR
ARBA MINCH	SNNPR
HOSANNA	SNNPR
DR. ABDUL MEJID HUSSEIN	SOMALI

ASSESSMENT DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In all the CTEs visited, FSU conducted interviews with college deans or vice deans, surveyed sub-samples of Language Department instructors, and conducted focus group discussions with available instructors. These focus groups involved a total of 70 individuals, only 10% of whom were female faculty members. Slightly more than one-third of the focus group participants were Mother Tongue instructors while almost two-thirds taught English language courses. Only four individuals from

other departments (Education, Special Education) participated in the focus groups. At two CTEs, FSU also interviewed students (i.e., pre-service teachers).

A qualitative research model was used to design and develop the surveys and questionnaires. Questions focused on understanding the status of the CTE reading programs and the current supports, including questions that addressed (a) identification of current classes that teach reading and the strategies used, (b) the infrastructure (e.g. administrative structure, programs of study), (c) available materials and resources, (d) in-service training available to instructors, and (e) status of technology. The FSU team examined the data and triangulated the results to identify consistent patterns and to report the findings contained in this report.



Data Collection Instruments

The FSU team designed and produced four instruments for the purpose of collecting relevant data from key informants at CTEs. These instruments were reviewed by READ TA staff and then reproduced and distributed to faculty members at nine CTEs. These instruments included:

1. Interview Guide (protocol) for CTE Deans and Vice Deans

The guide consists of a set of 31 items—including unstructured and closed-ended questions - and a checklist related to the infrastructure, organizational structure, governance, and the physical environment at various CTE campuses.

2. Survey Questionnaire

The survey contains 51 questions with multiple choice answers and space for comments in relation to respondent's (1) demographic information (i.e., gender, language, age, professional preparation, and teaching practices; and (2) curriculum (i.e., education, reading, course content, instructional materials, use of technology, inclusion and special education). The paper-pencil survey questionnaire was distributed to more than 70 CTE instructors. However, due to errors in the administration of the survey, only 56 of those were tabulated and analyzed. Over half of the respondents are Lecturers in Language Departments; in addition to a few Graduate Assistants, and Assistant Professors with Bachelor's degrees and Master's in English or Education. 94 percent of the respondents work with linkage schools and 81 percent of them supervise student teachers. The average age of respondents is 42 years old.

3. Focus Group Discussion Guides

- 19 guiding questions were used in collective interviews with CTE faculty.
- 11 guiding questions were used in collective interviews with CTE students.

The data collection instruments were administered to participants during the visits to CTEs. The data collected from interviews, focus groups, and survey questionnaire was later reviewed, tabulated and analyzed on a qualitative basis. The data from the survey questionnaire was used to compare responses amongst the different CTEs as well as to provide an overall picture, in graphic form, of available instructional resources. Also analyzed were CTE instructors' academic background, teaching practices, gender, training in reading instruction, Mother Tongue and English proficiency, use of technology, courses taught and time dedicated to teaching, administration and research.

FINDINGS: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

The following is a list of the major findings deemed relevant to consider in assessing the resources and needs of CTEs regarding pre-service teacher education in general, and MT reading instruction in particular. These findings take into account information learned from interviews with CTE deans and vice deans, focus groups with Language, Education, and Special Education instructors at nine CTEs, as well as pre-service teachers at two CTEs.

A. Lack of explicit pre-service training in primary grades reading instruction

Focus group discussions revealed two broad findings of immediate relevance to READ TA: First, there does not appear to be any explicit, systematic or sustained instruction of pre-service teachers in how to teach reading to children in the primary grades.

Second, CTE faculty participants in the discussions are aware of the problems revealed in the Early Grades Reading Assessment (EGRA 2010)³, are concerned about its effect on the training of their students and the reading ability of Ethiopian children, and are genuinely interested in contributing to efforts intended to remedy this deficit. In fact, two of the CTEs visited—Hawassa and Adwa—have begun their own efforts to improve pre-service training in primary grades reading instruction. These findings underscore the need for READ TA engagement with the teachers colleges, as well as the presence of the fundamental pre-requisite for the future success of that engagement: faculty buy-in.

Participants in each of the eight focus groups indicated that their programs did not offer adequate training to enable pre-service teachers to effectively teach reading in the primary grades. What they do offer is insufficient and/or inappropriately focused. For instance, each of the colleges offers a course entitled Reading and Study Skills; however, this course is focused on the reading and study skills that CTE students will need to be successful in their academic programs. While some of these skills may be the same ones that need to be developed in beginning readers through a primary reading program, the course is not designed or intended to equip pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills they will need to teach young children to read in either their Mother Tongue or English.

³ The Early Grade Reading Assessment for Ethiopia (2010), United States Agency for International Development. RTI conducted an Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) in 8 of Ethiopia's 11 regional states to assess students' ability to recognize letters, read words and simple stories, and comprehend what is read. The EGRA team assessed more than 13,000 students in second and third grades in over 330 schools in 6 local languages. The study established a nationally representative baseline to inform educators and policy makers of the current status of students' reading performance. The results of the EGRA prompted the Ministry of Education to have each Regional Education Bureau review its mother-tongue reading curricula so that revisions to textbooks and teaching guides will address deficiencies revealed in the assessments. Source: RTI International (2013) International Development available at <http://www.rti.org/page.cfm?objectId=CE17E1EA-FC84-2EF9-5E9F25BF973CA4A2>

The Education Departments of the colleges do offer courses on teaching methodologies in the second and third years of students' programs of study; however, these courses were described as "generic" rather than focused on a particular content area or skill. Methods of teaching reading may be addressed in specific units of these courses, but if they do so the coverage is brief—perhaps as little as two to three weeks—and superficial.

More specific discussions of the skills addressed in these two courses, as well as the curriculum and strategies employed in first cycle primary schools, suggest an implicit assumption of a pre-existing ability to read. Participants in SNNPR, for instance, reported that the first cycle primary curriculum assumes children have attended kindergarten, which is by no means universal, particularly in rural areas. Therefore, teachers are not trained in and largely neglect instruction in the phonemic and graphophonemic awareness and decoding skills needed to learn to read.

Grade one instruction begins with reading of whole words, using a "look-say" approach with flash cards or paired word-picture combinations, before moving on to the writing of sentences. While participants report some effort by teachers, apparently unsystematic and often mistaken, to teach the relationship between letters and sounds (in some languages), their efforts are hamstrung by their lack of systematic training in these skills as well as their own confusion about the correct relationship between particular letters and sounds, especially in those Mother Tongues that are written in Latin script. To the extent that the existing Reading and Study Skills course includes content relevant to primary reading, especially grades 1-4, it assumes a pre-existent ability to read, teaching, for instance, skills such as "pre-reading strategies," "skimming," and "comprehension." But, it does not address how teachers develop the pre-requisite reading skills in young children and the more advanced strategies necessary for improving comprehension.

B. Lack of CTE instructor expertise in primary grades reading instruction

Focus group participants attributed the general lack of systematic pre-service training in primary grades, specifically in the first cycle (grades 1-4), reading instruction to a) their own lack of training as instructors in the theory and pedagogy of early grades reading, and b) the lack of explicit early grades reading coursework in the CTE curricula developed and approved by the Regional State Education Bureaus (RSEB). Most of the participants held master's degrees in the Mother Tongue (Amharic, Afan Oromo, etc.) or English, thus their academic training and instructional focus are on the acquisition of the language (in the case of English) and its proper usage in both spoken and written forms. Though few instructors from the Education Departments participated in the focus groups, the subject areas these departments reportedly address (e.g., psychology, educational psychology, pedagogy/methods, aesthetic education) suggest a similar lack of expertise in primary grades reading. Note that none of the degrees were for reading development and instruction, which requires its own specialized knowledge. While FSU did encounter one or two instructors who had undertaken recent research projects related to reading and a few others who had received recent EGRA training, no one reported having received training in primary grades reading or identified themselves as reading specialists. This is consistent with the experience of READ TA staff, which reports that the project has been unable to identify a single Ethiopian reading specialist.

TABLE 2 - READING INSTRUCTION AT CTES

CTEs	Language of Instruction	Training in reading instruction	EGRA knowledge	Quality of reading instruction	Reading Unit	Reading courses
Chiro	English	100%	100%	100%	No	-
Debre Birham	Amharic and English	71%	86%	29%	No	100%
Asella	English and Afan Oromo	50%	80%	40%	No	78%
Adwa	Amharic and Tigrinya	67%	100%	75%	No	56%
Gondar	English and Amharic	38%	88%	13%	No	88%
Dr. Abdulmejid Hussein	English	75%	75%	33%	No	Yes
Hawassa	English	100%	100%	33%	No	Yes
Arbaminch	English and Gotta	50%	100%	50%	No	Yes (1) /No (1)

In addition to the little training CTE instructors have received in the areas of literacy and reading/writing instruction appropriate for children in the first cycle of primary school (grades 1 to 4), CTE instructors also have limited experience teaching in primary schools. This situation may also contribute to the limited knowledge and experience CTE instructors have in order to prepare pre-service teachers for the challenges of teaching MT literacy (reading/writing instruction) in primary grades.

Despite the limited experience in teaching in primary schools, CTE instructors seem to be well versed in various teaching methods that can be easily adapted to teaching primary grade reading courses to pre-service teachers. Figure 2 shows the result of survey responses from CTE lecturers to the question of what methods of instruction they use most frequently. This figure shows very little use of technology. Lectures, group activities and active learning methods seem to be applied more often.

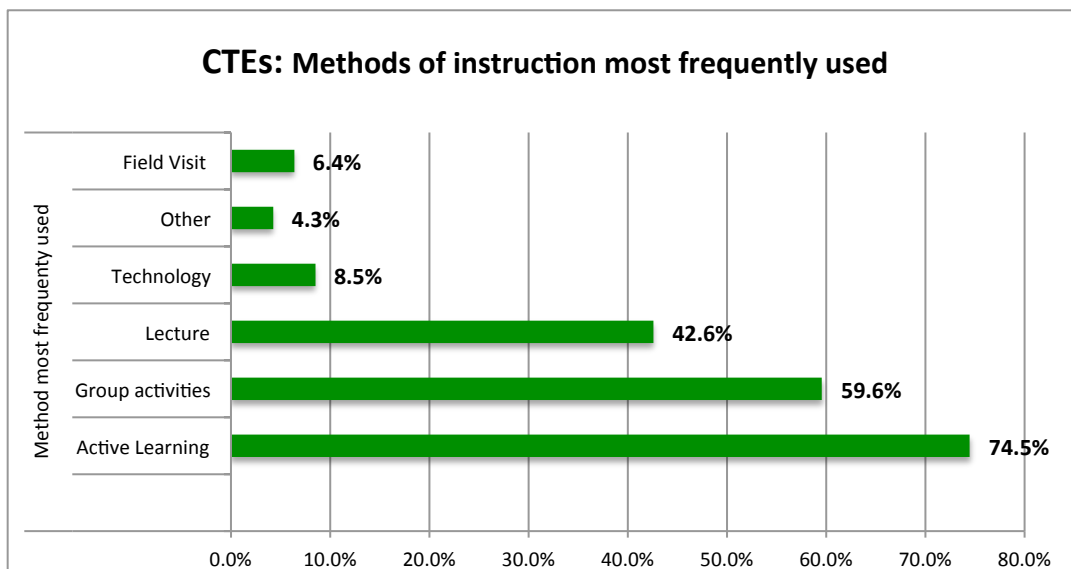


Figure 2: Methods of instruction most frequently used by CTE instructors

C. Organizational and disciplinary orientation of the colleges

While there are laudable recent efforts by CTEs in Adwa—where an IFESH volunteer has encouraged an initiative to utilize reading modules developed under the IQPEP⁴ program in pre-service training—and Hawassa—where lecturers are utilizing IQPEP modules and offering up to 90 hours of additional training in reading instruction for third-year students, there appears to be no formal coursework offered in primary grades reading instruction at CTEs, especially in grades 1-4.

The almost complete lack of explicit attention to the teaching of early grades reading seems to be part of a broader relative inattention to the teaching of developmentally appropriate content in the first cycle of primary school (grades 1-4). The participants themselves brought this issue up in all focus groups. They noted that previously, when the CTEs⁵ were offering only the one-year certificate programs, the content focused exclusively on pedagogical skills in the primary grades. However, after the CTEs were authorized to offer three-year diploma programs, the focus shifted to specific subject-matter specializations (e.g., mathematics, biology, history, etc.). This appears to have been at least partly a result of policy changes, or at least the perception that pre-service teachers lacked the necessary academic preparation in the subjects they were to teach. The result is a common perception among focus group participants that their colleges are primarily preparing teachers for the subject areas taught in the second cycle of primary school (grades 5-8,) where teachers are expected to teach a single subject, and not on teaching in the lower grades.

This orientation seems to be reflected in the majors available to teacher trainees. All of the CTEs visited reported two tracks, or “modalities,” for prospective teachers: the “linear” modality and the “cluster” modality. The linear modality requires a student to major in a single subject, such as biology, history, mathematics, etc., and is intended for students who plan to teach in grades 5 to 8.

The cluster modality is intended for students planning to teach in grades 1-4. However, the content of these “cluster” modalities appears to reflect the clusters of subjects addressed in each department: Natural Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics), Social Sciences (History, Geography, Civics), or Language (English and Mother Tongue). Thus, students preparing to teach in grades 1-4 appear to earn a major in Natural Sciences or Social Sciences rather than a degree in Elementary Education or Early Childhood Education that is focused on teaching a broad curriculum to young children. There was some confusion among participants over whether this reflected an emerging policy requiring multiple subject specialists teaching each classroom of students or whether this was evidence of a serious mismatch between what they were training teachers to teach and what they were actually expected to teach in schools. Either way, participants acknowledged there were serious disconnects between what the CTEs are doing and what is actually happening in schools. This mismatch between CTE curricula and teachers’ instructional responsibilities in schools appears, in some cases at least, to be a result of policy decisions. In SNNPR and Somali, for instance, participants reported

⁴ The Improving Quality of Primary Education Program (IQPEP) is a national program managed by FHI 360 and funded by USAID. It aims to improve educational planning and management in Ethiopia; to strengthen linkages between CTEs and primary schools; to enhance the professional capacity of primary school teachers; to build capacity at regional, woreda (district) and local education offices; to empower communities to manage their own school development; and to make basic education more accessible to out-of-school children. The project focuses on pre- and in-service training that promotes fundamental changes in the teaching-learning processes, including strengthening teachers’ ability to teach reading to young learners. IQPEP has developed and is delivering teacher guides in four Ethiopian languages and English for early grade reading, math and science. By emphasizing active learning and child-centered teaching-learning methodologies, IQPEP aims to increase pupils’ engagement, improve retention and learning, and develop critical thinking skills.

⁵ Previously, Teacher Training Institutes (TTI) carried out the training for pre-service teachers at the first cycle of primary schools. In the 2000’s, pre-service teacher education was expanded to include grades 1-8 in what became known as Colleges of Teacher Education (CTE).

that the CTE curriculum deliberately mirrored the curriculum of the university preparatory schools (grades 11 and 12) in order to preserve the option for CTE graduates to attend university after receiving their diploma from the CTE.

The strong disciplinary orientation in the training of CTE instructors and the curriculum they offer to pre-service teachers appears to be reflected in the organization of the colleges as well. The colleges visited typically reported five departments: Language (local language and English), Natural Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics), Social Science (History, Geography and Civics), Mathematics, and Professional Science/Education (psychology, pedagogy, aesthetic education, and physical education). Two of the colleges also had a Special Needs Education Department. Thus the institution itself appears to be organized around academic disciplines rather than areas of pedagogical/developmental specialization—early childhood, elementary, middle grades, etc. This organizational structure, when seen in the context of the academic preparation of instructors (whose professional identity seems to be with their discipline rather than education) and the majors offered to students appears to constitute a confluence of organizational circumstance and interests—intended or not—that create a situation where early grades education, and thus early grades reading, has fallen through the cracks.

TABLE 3 - SPECIAL EDUCATION, INCLUSION, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT PREPARATION AT CTES

CTEs	Courses addressed children with special needs	Courses addressed children with Physical Disabilities	Professional Development Opportunities	Average Student Preparation (1=Not prepared; 5=highly prepared)
Chiro	No	No	-	5.0
Debre Birham	29%	29%	EGRA workshop & Improve your English program	3.5
Asella	50%	57%	Continuous Professional Development (CDP), CTE training, HDP program, MOE and EGRA workshop	3.0
Adwa	63%	25%	HDP Program, Introduction to Early Grade Reading and EGRA workshop	3.2
Gondar	No	No	Online courses and Workshops	2.1
Dr. Abdulmejid Hussein	Yes	No	TELL (USAID) & ELTIP	2.8
Hawassa	Yes	No	USAID & CTE	2.3
Arbaminch	Yes (1) No (1)	Yes (1) No (1)	-	2.8

D. Academic preparation of CTE students

In addition to the lack of explicit instruction and their own lack of training in how to teach reading to children in the primary grades, focus group participants identified a number of other challenges that directly or indirectly affect their ability to equip pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively teach reading. One of the most commonly cited challenges was the academic preparation of the pre-service teachers themselves. After completing the 10th grade,

Ethiopian students interested in higher education are required to take a university entrance examination. Those students who score above a pre-determined cut-off score are eligible for admission to university; those who do not are eligible for admission to Colleges of Teacher Education. It is likely, therefore, that many—if not most—pre-service teachers have entered teacher education programs because it was the only choice left to them, not because they wanted to be teachers. Their relative youth—16 or 17 years old upon admission to the CTE—along with an admission policy that deliberately funnels the less academically prepared into teacher education means that CTE students are more likely to have serious academic deficits.

Participants in all nine focus groups reported that their students had poor reading and writing skills themselves. At least one participant described some CTE students as reading at a primary school level, while a Peace Corps volunteer assigned to one of the CTEs reported having to resort to upper elementary level reading materials to find texts his English students could comprehend. Clearly, teachers who themselves do not or cannot read effectively are unlikely to teach others to read effectively.

Figure 3 shows results from survey responses regarding self-perceived proficiency levels (ranging from 1=low to 5=high) of oral, reading and writing skills in English and in the language of instruction amongst CTE instructors.

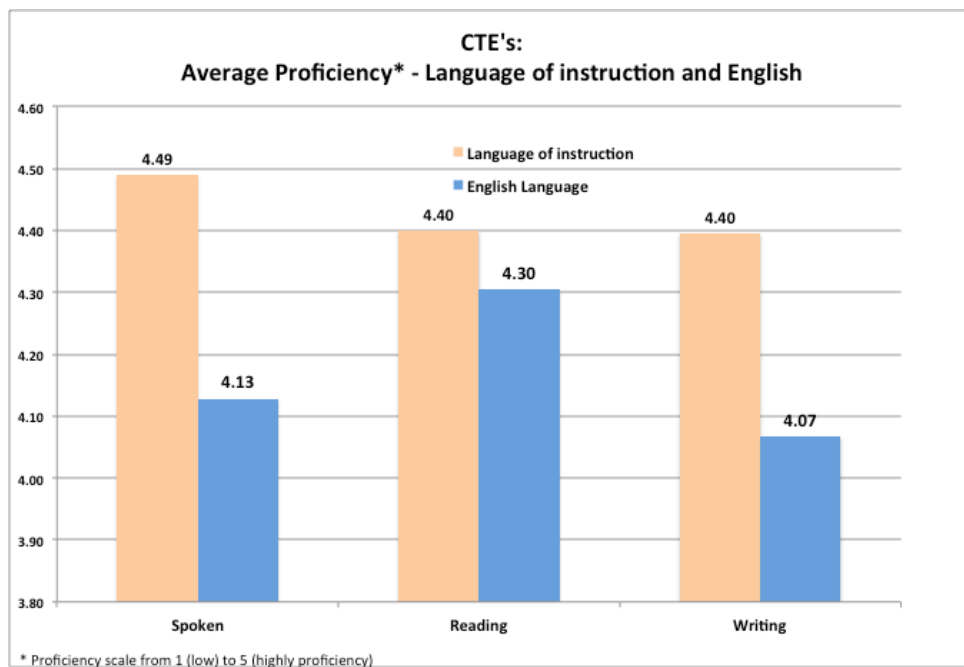


FIGURE 3: CTE FACULTY LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

E. Lack of instructional support and reading materials for Mother Tongue and English languages

One challenge noted by many instructors was implementation of MT reading instruction in the multilingual contexts in which both instructors and pre- and in-service teachers sometimes find themselves. Instructors across CTEs discussed how pre-service teachers may be in classes where the MT used for instruction is not the student's primary MT. Discussions also revealed that some primary students also attend schools where the language of instruction is not their primary MT. In either scenario, it means that students must essentially acquire an additional language in order to learn the material in the class. This multilingual situation is not uncommon in countries that choose to implement MT policies, but it is important to understand its major implications on learning to read and write in MT and on teaching others to read and write in MT.

MT instruction should incorporate both language instruction and reading instruction. The knowledge of language is the foundation of learning to read, but learning a language is different than learning to read in a language. Word reading requires mapping sounds and symbols, and therefore, knowledge of the sound structure of the language of instruction is essential for developing word-reading skills. Likewise, knowledge of oral language (e.g., vocabulary, syntax) of the language of instruction is essential for reading comprehension. These realities make learning to read in a second language context a greater challenge than learning to read in first language. CTE instructors seemed aware of the issue. There were discussions that focused on a need for course content that explicitly addresses second language acquisition in the context of MT instruction to address these complex linguistic environments. This type of content would introduce basic theories and concepts of language acquisition and their importance in learning to read and write, and would not only provide support to the pre-service teachers themselves, but would also prepare them for teaching primary school students who do not have linguistic knowledge of the language of instruction. Note that this approach is widely endorsed and increasingly implemented in other contexts such as US schools where many children of immigrants enter school without proficiency in English. Therefore, teacher training in the US includes content on language acquisition and instruction in second language.

Another frequent concern reported by focus group participants was the lack of reading materials in both the Mother Tongue and English in schools and the colleges of teacher education. While each of the CTEs visited had a library, they appear to be stocked primarily with donated books in English from the United States and perhaps other countries. The collections therefore are haphazard and of dubious cultural and professional relevance to the Ethiopian educational context. This dearth of relevant reading material undermines whatever efforts instructors may make in individual courses to improve the reading abilities of pre-service teachers or to enhance literacy more generally.

The problem of scant materials seems to be particularly acute in non-Amharic speaking regions. In Oromia, Tigray, Somali and SNNPR, participants highlighted the mismatch between the media of instruction—Afan Oromo, Tigrigna, Somali and multiple Mother Tongues respectively—and the reading materials available—donated books written largely in English. Students were being taught in a language where there was very little to read but expected to read materials in a language that they may speak, but which they had not mastered in any formal academic sense. At Asella, participants spoke rather movingly about the continuing lack of reading materials in the local language twenty years after the policies allowing Afan Oromo as the medium of instruction were implemented. They expressed their strong desire for support to develop reading materials in Afan Oromo and their deep skepticism about efforts by experts from Addis Ababa to develop such materials.

TABLE 4 - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AT CTES

CTEs	Instructional Material Available			Syllabi			
	Textbook	Early grade reading modules	Others	Yes	Syllabi Development		
					CTE Faculty	RSEB	MOE
Chiro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Debre Birham	43%	29%	-	67%	40%	0%	60%
Asella	71%	14%	57%	88%	13%	25%	50%
Adwa	60%	-	-	88%	25%	0%	71%
Gondar	50%	25%	38%	88%	13%	50%	25%
Dr. Abdulmejid Hussein	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	Yes
Hawassa	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	Yes
Arbaminch	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	Yes

F. Special challenges in SNNPR and Somali

While these problems were highlighted in focus groups in all five of the regions visited, SNNPR and Somali appear to face additional challenges. In SNNPR, for instance, the presence of multiple Mother Tongues presents unique problems. First, and most obvious, the CTEs must train teachers in up to four Mother Tongues that have been formally recognized as media of instruction. While there are obviously many native speakers of these languages there is a dearth of instructors and teachers who are trained in the art and science of teaching those languages to young children in primary grades.

Hossana College of Teacher Education, for instance, only began offering diplomas in the Mother Tongues last year. The multiplicity of languages, the often close proximity of communities speaking those languages, and the shortage of trained teachers of those languages means that in some instances multiple Mother Tongues may be spoken in a single classroom or the teacher may not actually speak the Mother Tongue spoken by her students. In such conditions Amharic seems to be the most common default language of instruction.

In Somali, challenges that appear to be common to other regions are complicated by a mobile population, 85% of whom are pastoralists, relatively lower levels of development, and a teacher corps with particularly low levels of professional training. According to the dean of the Dr. Abdul Mejid Hussein College of Teacher Education, of Somali's 12,000 teachers, roughly half are actually Alternative Basic Education Facilitators with between six and eight years of formal schooling. Half of the schools in Somali are mobile, moving with the pastoralist communities they are intended to serve. And pressure from the Ministry of Education to achieve 2015 Millennium Development Goals for full enrollment in Somali means that 16,000 new teachers must be trained for a region that has only one college of teacher education. To meet this goal, the college of teacher education is preparing pre-service teachers to the certificate level (10th grade plus one year of training); however, they are attempting to squeeze the normally full year of certificate level of training into an intensive 85-day training program. Thus, for the foreseeable future, Somali children will be taught to read, if they are taught at all, by teachers with only the most rudimentary of training.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to minimize the possibility that the preliminary findings and recommendations could be biased or inaccurate due to the relatively small sample size of the preliminary assessment or the FSU team's lack of familiarity with the Ethiopian educational context, READ TA organized a sequence of stakeholder meetings to review and validate our assessment and offer recommendations for its improvements. These meetings included:

- The READ TA Partners' Meeting in June 2013 where the FSU assessment and recommendations were shared with READ TA Partners.
- Bi-weekly meetings of The Ministry of Education/READ TA Taskforce on Improving the Teaching of Reading in the Mother Tongues (MT) from July to September 2013 in which an FSU representative participated.
- Pre-Consultation Meeting review with MOE on November 19, 2013, in which a representative of the FSU team shared our preliminary findings and recommendations with key Ministry of Education stakeholders. In attendance were the Director, Curriculum Development and Implementation Directorate; the incoming Director, Curriculum Development and Implementation Directorate; the Director, Teacher Professional Development Directorate; the Pre-service Training Team Leader, TPD; and representatives of READ TA, Save the Children, Inveneo and FSU.
- Baseline Assessment Consultation Meeting held November 21-22, 2013, in Adama, Ethiopia, and attended by more than 80 stakeholders from the Ministry of Education, Regional State Education Bureaus, Colleges of Teacher Education, and READ TA Partners

MOE/READ TA Taskforce

In a meeting called by His Excellency the State Minister for General Education, it was decided that a taskforce would be established comprised of the relevant Directorates of the MOE and Partners of READ TA, and reporting to the Teacher and Educational Leaders Development Directorate. The purpose was to ensure effective use of READ TA's technical support.

The Ministry of Education/READ TA Taskforce on Improving the Teaching of Reading in the Mother Tongues (MT) was tasked with meeting the following objectives (MOE, 2013b):

- a. Align the technical support provided through READ TA with strategies, directions, and timeline set by the MOE for RSEBs, CTEs, and schools.
- b. Integrate the newly revised Mother Tongue curriculum with the pre-service and in-service primary teacher development programs for reading and writing.
- c. Promote the transfer of skills and capacity development between READ TA experts and those of the MOE and RSEBs.
- d. Review progress in the implementation of planned actions through regular meetings.
- e. Facilitate communication among various stakeholders involved in planning, implementing and monitoring activities of READ TA, MOE, and RSEBs.

Taskforce members include:

- MOE Teachers and Educational Leaders Development Directorate representing both pre-service and in-service teacher education programs (4 persons)
- MOE Curriculum Development and Implementation Directorate (1 person)
- READ TA/RTI representing the curriculum components (2 persons)
- READ TA/Save the Children representing in-service teacher development (1 person)
- READ TA/Florida State University representing pre-service teacher education (1 person)
- Representatives from Special Needs Education, ICT, and Examinations

The taskforce has been a productive method of ensuring collaboration and information sharing between the various stakeholders from both MOE and READ TA, and ensuring technical support resources are invested in the optimal way. For example, during the initial meeting of the taskforce, MOE staff informed the group that there was in fact already an ongoing effort within MOE to develop a new primary MT CTE course of study. Previously unbeknownst to READ TA, the workgroup involved had recently finished a two-year outline of courses and related course descriptions, and were in the process of validating the new program. MOE provided the proposed course of study and the MT course outlines to the READ TA taskforce members for review. FSU had already been able to lend its expertise to this exercise. For example, one course entitled “Cognitive Development and Reading Skills,” did not yet have a course outline, and MOE was able to request READ TA and FSU’s assistance in developing the course outline.

MOE, RSEB, and CTE representatives from all regions have also worked together to (a) review the new proposed MT course outlines in view of the revised primary school curricula; (b) discuss core content areas in MT reading instruction that are relevant to the training of pre-service teachers at CTEs; (c) invite suggestions from RSEB and CTE instructors on implications for pre-service teacher education, and (d) discuss ways to increase CTE capacity development in providing effective early grades literacy instruction.

In addition, READ TA and FSU have also supported the MOE and the RSEBs in reviewing and revising the national mother tongue (MT) syllabi, one for Grades 1-4 and one for Grades 5-8. The draft national MT syllabi were validated at a workshop held in Adama, June 19-21, 2013, pending recommended revisions. The Grade 1-4 syllabus was sent to regional teams to adapt into a scope and sequence for each of the identified MT languages. Parallel to this process, assessments including this one have been conducted to learn the current state of affairs in teacher education (pre- and in-service) and the use of technology for teaching/learning reading in Ethiopian primary schools, School Cluster Centers and Colleges of Teacher Education.

During the rapid assessment and conversations with MOE staff, discussions have also revealed that the traditional practice has been to teach theory and pedagogy in separate classes. Recent conversations with different stakeholder groups have focused on the idea of integrating theory and practice into the same class. For example, presenting the theory of a concept (e.g. the major areas of reading) and the related pedagogy (e.g. what that looks like in the classroom and how to teach)

together so that the CT students can see the connection. This has been an important development and it is recommended that this conversation be continued as the courses are revised.

READ TA Consultation Meeting, November 21-22, 2013

On November 21st and 22nd, READ TA convened a Baseline Assessment Consultation Meeting in Adama, Ethiopia, with invited MOE representatives from throughout Ethiopia. The invited guests represented a cross-section of departments, directorates, languages, regions, and special interests, such as gender and inclusion. In the end, the participant list included over 80 stakeholder representatives from across Ethiopia.

The meeting consisted of a full day of Partner presentations of findings from their respective baseline assessments as well as feedback sessions following each. FSU presented preliminary findings and recommendations to attendees who were then given the opportunity to ask questions, make suggestions, and provide feedback. The following day consisted topic-based breakout sessions, with FSU's pre-service assessment workshop attended by approximately 20 stakeholders representing the MOE, RSEBs, and CTEs.

Participants were invited to provide feedback on FSU's finding and recommendations, and were then asked to identify three items they agreed with, three items they disagreed with, items that should be added, and their recommendations.

Their comments are summarized below followed by a narrative response:

Three Items of Agreement:

1. It is agreed that Mother Tongue lecturers at colleges of teacher education need training in reading and writing instruction for the purpose of educating would-be-teachers focusing on primary, and especially early grades.
2. Courses for pre-service teachers in reading need to be revised.
3. Mother Tongue reading materials are scarce.

Items of Disagreement:

None

Top Recommendations:

1. FSU must reconcile its objectives with the Ministry of Education to revise the entire Mother Tongue curriculum rather than just three or four courses.
2. The number of courses to be offered at CTEs should be determined later based on content rather than fixing the number at three or four now.
3. The Mother Tongue Task Group in the MOE must be revitalized to lead the course revision.
4. There needs to be one FSU in-country representative.

Things to be added:

1. Mechanisms should be in place to disseminate skill beyond Mother Tongue reading and writing to other subject areas.
2. The sustainability issue must be taken into consideration. One possible way to ensure sustainability is to perhaps open a master's program.

Consultation Meeting Response

It is agreed that Mother Tongue lecturers at colleges of teacher education need training in reading and writing instruction for the purpose of educating pre-service teachers focusing on early grades 1 to 4. In the consultative meeting, stakeholders also agreed that MT reading materials are scarce. Realizing that CTE programs of study do not include explicit training in grades 1 to 4 reading instruction, and that CTE lecturers are not trained in early grades reading instruction has prompted the MOE to focus its effort on revising and developing courses for pre-service teachers that integrate knowledge and skills in MT instruction with pedagogical methods appropriate for teaching young children to read.

Stakeholders suggested that FSU must reconcile its objectives with the Ministry of Education to revise the entire Mother Tongue curriculum rather than just three or four courses. They also suggested that the number of courses to be offered at CTEs should be determined later based on content rather than fixing the number at three or four courses. FSU suggests that under the guidance of the Ministry of Education and READ TA, that an FSU in-country representative be appointed per the participants' suggestion and that the FSU team collaborate with the Mother Tongue Task Force to identify specific courses for revision/development and provide support with any necessary revision/development. The FSU team may also provide support in adapting the new course outlines to the seven identified Mother Tongues, and in developing related training modules to ensure their consistency with the new Mother Tongue Curriculum and the related instructional materials developed by the Ministry of Education. FSU suggests that, for the purposes of training CTE instructors in revising/developing the content of the MT courses, the focus be on priority areas and CTE needs in relation to reading/writing instruction. FSU primary grades reading instruction experts, in collaboration with in-country co-trainers, can provide MT lecturers representing all CTEs to teach the revised courses and offer effective, research-based instruction in primary grades reading for pre-service teachers.

Another suggestion made by the participants was that the Mother Tongue Taskforce in the MOE be revitalized to lead the course revision. FSU will, as soon as practical, identify and assign an FSU in-country representative to serve as their liaison with the Ministry of Education and the READ TA team, and would welcome the opportunity to have a representative take part in MT taskforce meetings should the MOE continue that effort.

Among the 'things to be added,' stakeholders mentioned the following: (a) Mechanisms should be in place to disseminate skill beyond Mother Tongue reading and writing to other subject areas; (b) The sustainability issue must be taken into consideration; (3) One possible way to ensure sustainability is to perhaps open a Master's program. The team agrees that the efforts to improve MT reading/writing instruction at CTEs must be sustained beyond the life of the READ TA project. It is imperative to engage the collaboration amongst all stakeholders to establish the revised courses as part of the formal curriculum of the colleges. FSU is willing to work with the Ministry of Education, READ TA, Regional State Education Bureaus, and the Colleges of Teacher Education to identify and implement strategies designed to ensure the sustainability of READ TA achievements in schools and colleges of teacher education. FSU agrees that a Master's level program in Reading Instruction could help ensure sustainability of these efforts, however, such the creation of such a program at a University is outside of the scope of READ TA.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The colleges of teacher education visited in the course of this rapid baseline assessment obviously face a number of serious challenges in fulfilling their role in the improvement of primary grades reading instruction in Ethiopia. However, in each college deans, vice-deans and lecturers are acutely aware of (a) the poor reading levels achieved by Ethiopia's youngest learners, (b) the challenges that must be overcome in order to improve reading achievement in the primary, especially early grades 1-4, (c) eager to play a part in overcoming those challenges and (d) want to help create conditions in which all Ethiopian children learn to read. Such understanding and commitment on the part of CTE faculty, along with the support of the Ministry of Education, the Regional State Education Bureaus, and READ TA, will be an indispensable asset in achieving the goal of teaching 15 million Ethiopian children to read by 2017.

These recommendations are limited to the scope of work of the READ TA project, and are not intended to provide the MOE with suggestions for overall reforms regarding teacher education programs. The recommendations listed herein are intended to guide the technical assistance provided by READ TA partners to support the MOE, RSEBs and CTEs in building the capacity of teacher educators to improve the quality, relevance and effectiveness of Mother Tongue reading/writing instruction in pre-service teacher education programs.

1. MOE should continue stakeholder engagement with collaborative dialogue.

Planning careful coordination of efforts amongst various stakeholders (MOE, RSEBs, READ TA, FSU, CTEs, USAID, etc.) will ensure effective and systematic implementation of both pre- and in-service teacher education, and relevance of curriculum and materials for primary school-level teaching. Engaging stakeholders in close discussions regarding the most effective approaches to primary grade reading, research-based interventions, and best practices in both reading and MT reading instruction will also help avoid duplication of efforts and confusion as strategies are set and plans drawn for such important long-term initiatives as the development of reading curriculums for MT and English instruction and the planning of training regimes. For instance, a IFESH volunteer has been collaborating with the Ministry of Education Teacher Development Directorate on organizing CTE curriculum to be used throughout the country. This person has proposed topics for consideration for the development of two Reading courses; however, the FSU Reading faculty team, in collaboration with READ TA and regional working groups, have also suggested topics and a sequence of courses to be implemented at CTEs. It was only by way of the MOE/READ TA MT Taskforce that the discovery of this duplicative effort was made in time for collaboration to occur. Continuation of the taskforce as suggested by Consultation Meeting participants is highly recommended.

Also in-line with the MOE's suggestion at Adama, and to aid its role in this collaboration, FSU will, as soon as practical, identify and assign an FSU in-country representative to serve as its liaison with the Ministry of Education and the READ TA team.

2. FSU should assist MOE in revising/developing a sequence of courses in primary grades reading instruction for all CTEs.

Under the guidance of the Ministry of Education and READ TA, the FSU in-country representative and the FSU team should collaborate with the Mother Tongue Taskforce to identify specific courses for revision/development and work with them to carry out any necessary revision/development as requested. Initially, based on preliminary findings and using the data collected at the CTEs and the new Primary MT Scope & Sequence, FSU recommended four possible courses that would prepare pre-service students to teach primary literacy. Subsequently, it was discovered that MOE was already in the process of developing and validating a new course of study that focuses on teaching primary literacy. Therefore, it is recommended that FSU assist MOE in revising or building out the courses already in development by MOE. The MT Taskforce had outlined a two-year sequence of courses and course outlines for all but one course. FSU was asked to provide support in developing a course outline for this course. A request was also made that support be provided to develop a course in teaching reading in content or subject areas to provide training to content (subject) area pre-service teachers.

To carry out its role for this recommendation, FSU anticipates assisting MOE to do the following:

1. Identify courses, within the new CTE MT courses, that specifically provide training in teaching primary—and especially early grades—literacy with a focus on MT pedagogy.
2. Provide support to the MOE in identifying and/or developing course content that focuses on MT instruction in multilingual environments.
3. Revise or develop the identified courses to ensure their consistency with the new Mother Tongue Reading and Writing Curriculum produced by the MOE. This process includes:
 - a. Examining the new MT Primary Reading Curricula;
 - b. Identifying content to be included that supports the Primary MT Scope and Sequence progression of literacy acquisition, and instructional and assessment strategies; and
 - c. Identifying indicators within course content that supports inclusion and gender equity.
4. Provide support in adapting the new course outlines to the seven (7) identified MTs.
5. Provide support in developing related training modules to ensure their consistency with the new Mother Tongue Curriculum and the related instructional materials developed by the Ministry of Education.

Development and validation of the proposed program should include representatives across stakeholder groups, especially representatives with expertise in the local languages and cultures. Members of the FSU team can offer support in course development and training, so that the courses are structured around current research findings in early grades reading and tailored to the unique characteristics of individual Mother Tongues and local cultures.

FSU proposes that the skills and strategies found in *Appendix A* be considered in the development of new courses and revision of the proposed courses in the new MT program of study taught at CTEs. Including these skills and strategies would (a) address the findings from the rapid assessment, (b) integrate and align the MT primary school reading curricula and materials, and (c) promote inclusion and gender equity.

3. Build the capacity of lecturers in each CTE to teach reading courses for pre-service teachers.

Training of Trainers (TOT)

FSU primary grades reading instruction experts, in collaboration with in-country co-trainers, should train at least 150 lecturers (4-8 lecturers per college) representing all colleges of teacher education to teach the revised courses and offer effective, research-based instruction in primary grades reading for pre-service teachers.

Training content of CTE teacher educators should include:

- Foundational knowledge of literacy development in languages with Latin alphabet or Ge'ez script;
- Effective research-based instructional approaches for early literacy development;
- Assessment and use of student data to inform reading instruction;
- Differentiation of instruction using small groups;
- Adaptation from Mother Tongue to English and teaching of 2nd languages; and
- Use of new MT Primary Teaching Materials.

FSU can provide technical assistance and support to help CTEs focus on training using the new primary curricula to encourage the different teacher behaviors needed to obtain better student outcomes. CTEs will be supported in identification of the specific linguistic features of the languages in which their pre-service teachers will be expected to teach, as well as recognition of the cultural and socioeconomic contexts of the schools and communities in their regions. This is critical, as the skill of teaching children how to read is hugely complex, and requires that teachers understand the interdependence between the process of language development and the acquisition of reading skills in young learners. CTE plans may include specific targets for institutional capacity development, and may specify the type and timing of the technical assistance that FSU will provide to the CTEs. Benchmarks will be established for measuring progress at midterm and end of project. Plans will also address how CTEs intend to use ICT to support the pre-service training of teachers of reading and writing.

Professional development of CTE instructors through “Training of Trainers” (TOT) workshops may include different modalities and delivery systems depending on available resources. Trainings may include face-to-face workshops at the regional level led by FSU faculty and local reading experts. If ICT infrastructure allows, FSU faculty may provide additional online training modules, as well as ongoing support and follow-up through Web-based interactions, DVDs and email. Each team of CTE participants in the trainings will be connected to and continue to work with the same group of FSU faculty to permit a high degree of continuity

Development of Modules and Instructional Materials

FSU will also support MOE, RSEBs and CTE staff to develop materials for use in the CTE reading and writing teacher training programs that integrate with the new Primary MT curricula. This will include providing some short-term technical assistance to support the development and design of the curriculum for the pre-service reading and writing training program. CTEs will not only need copies of the new curriculum and teaching materials that pre-service teacher will be expected to use in their classrooms, but will also need additional materials that can provide pre-service teachers with the required foundational knowledge (a) in how children learn to read, (b) in the linguistic considerations that need to be addressed in developing reading and writing activities, and (c) in

approaches to assessing reading and writing competencies, etc. Special attention will also be paid to developing course modules and associated materials to train prospective teachers on gender equity in the classroom and on inclusive education. Pre-service teachers will need to learn the background and justifications for addressing equity and inclusion, as well as acquire specific skills and strategies for addressing them in their future classrooms.

Action Research Workshops

Additionally, FSU should provide ongoing support and collaboration on the use of Action Research as a way to evaluate the impact of new instructional strategies and interventions in the pre-service teacher education program. FSU experts can train and collaborate with CTE instructors in Action Research designed to adapt and refine the implementation of revised Mother Tongue courses to the unique conditions of individual colleges of teacher education. Critical to building the capacity of CTE faculty, as well as pre-service and in-service teachers, is the ability to test new ideas and systematically assess the impact of teaching interventions. For this purpose, FSU proposes to support MOE, RSEBs and CTEs in the implementation of a series of action research workshops to introduce CTE faculty to the action research method, guide and coach them to engage in their own action research projects to examine the impact of new MT reading and writing interventions. This will also support the MOE in its plan for reviewing pre-service teacher education Training Curriculum in Mother Tongue. *“Both teacher educators and students will conduct research (school-based studies or action research) in primary schools, when possible in research teams that include primary teachers and administrators”* (MOE, 2013, Draft Proposal for Reviewing Primary School Teachers’ Training Curriculum in Mother Tongue).

4. Establish reading and writing courses as part of the formal CTE pre-service teacher education curriculum.

In collaboration with RTI, MOE, RSEBs and CTEs, FSU should help work to establish these courses as part of the formal curriculum of the colleges by identifying and implementing strategies designed to ensure the sustainability of READ TA achievements in schools and colleges of teacher education. FSU can also support the MOE in the development and institutionalization of pre-service teacher training programs in reading and writing that are explicitly aligned with the new Primary MT reading and writing curriculum and materials under development by each region.

Efforts to revise, develop and institutionalize pre-service teacher education programs in line with new primary school curricula is already underway as the *MOE Draft Proposal for Reviewing Primary School Teachers’ Training Curriculum in Mother Tongue* suggests:

“With recent revision of the Mother Tongue primary school curriculum, it is high time to review the primary school teachers’ training curriculum before its implementation by the upcoming academic year” (MOE, 2013b, p. 3).

The planned activities focus on the revision of the MT Primary School Teachers curriculum and development of syllabi for CTE Coursework for the MT primary school teacher educators. The expected outcomes are a MT primary school teachers’ curriculum that is aligned with the new primary school MT curriculum, using quality MT syllabi. It is expected that syllabi will be developed for 13-14 courses in 7 MT languages.

According to the MOE draft document the curriculum for primary MT teacher education will be offered in six semesters. The structure of the First Cycle Primary Teacher MT Education Program will be composed of five components: (1) Subject matter/Content; (2) General Education/Pedagogical Knowledge and Skill; (3) Pedagogical Content Knowledge; (4) Practicum/field experiences; and (5) Common Courses, Seminars and Research.

5. In cooperation with the Peace Corps and other organizations, identify, train and place volunteer reading facilitators/coaches in each of the targeted CTEs.

READ TA and FSU recommend working with the Peace Corps and other voluntary organizations to train and place reading facilitators in each college of teacher education to support Mother Tongue lecturers in their implementation of revised Mother Tongue reading courses. The purpose of the reading facilitators will not be the training of CTE lecturers but rather maintaining the focus and enthusiasm of CTE lecturers beyond the FSU-led training workshops and maintaining communication between FSU reading specialist and CTE lecturers participating in the training. READ TA does not have the power to control the outcome of this recommendation. However, it would be beneficial to the project to engage the support of voluntary organizations, such as the Peace Corps, to place trained volunteers at CTEs.

About Florida State University

The Learning Systems Institute (LSI) at Florida State University (FSU) is a leading provider of research and professional development related to teaching reading. LSI is home to the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) the nation's premier research organization devoted to literacy and the Center for International Studies in Educational Research and Development (CISERD). The FSU team brings expertise in reading research and international development education from FCRR, CISERD, the School for Teacher Education and the College of Communication and Information to assist the MOE in improving the reading and writing performance of 15 million primary grade students in five regions and seven Ethiopian MT languages and English.

Appendix A:

PROPOSED PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING COURSE CONTENT

Prior to FSU conducting the rapid assessment, READ TA had begun development of a new National Primary Reading Scope and Sequence. There were two National Syllabi developed, one for grades 1-4 and one for grades 5-8. These were validated during June 2013, pending recommended revisions. The next step was to adapt the National Syllabi and develop scope and sequences for each of the seven Mother Tongues. Once these have been validated, work will begin on development of the primary classroom materials.

The 1-4 Scope and Sequence focuses on teaching children to read (Learning to Read). The 5-8 Scope and Sequence moves from 'Learning to Read' to 'Reading to Learn.' Both products include the five basic foundation areas of reading (phonological awareness, graphophonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension). Writing skills that support reading have also been included. Both outline developmentally relevant skills and include both teaching strategies and classroom assessment measures. In addition, the classroom materials will include techniques that support inclusion and that promote gender equity. These materials, combined with the findings of the rapid assessment, provide the foundation for the recommendations.

FSU suggests that the following skills and strategies content be considered in a review of the new CTE MT course outlines. Including these skills and strategies would (a) address the findings and resulting recommendations from the rapid assessment, (b) integrate and align the MT primary school reading curricula and materials, and (c) promote inclusion and gender equity.

Review and validation of the proposed CTE MT program should include representatives across stakeholders, especially representatives with expertise in the local languages and cultures. In addition, representatives that have experience in reading, an understanding of language and linguistics, and participants in development of the primary reading materials should be included.

Finally, discussions should also focus on practices that promote inclusion and gender equity. This would provide multiple perspectives in reviewing, revising, and adapting the proposed CTE courses. The following outlines suggest content to be included in the proposed CTE courses. It is a way to begin the dialogue between all stakeholders, in order to ensure that the courses use effective reading and writing skills and strategies, and that the courses integrate the Primary MT curricula.

SUGGESTED CONTENT TO INCLUDE IN COURSE OUTLINES THAT WOULD SUPPORT CTES IN IMPLEMENTING THE NEW THE NEW MT READING COURSES AND THAT INTEGRATE THE NEW PRIMARY MT CURRICULA INCLUDE:

1. Early Grades Reading & Writing
2. Cognitive Development, and Reading and Writing Instruction
3. Differentiating Instruction/Assessment
4. Language and Literacy

COURSE OUTLINES SHOULD INCLUDE:

1. Early Grades Reading & Writing

This content is designed to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching beginning reading and writing in a primary classroom setting. The content would focus on learning to read and be built on the knowledge of instructional, research-based practices that promote reading success for all students. It would identify and integrate best classroom practices in order to implement instruction that targets the individual needs of a wide range of learners, including those of varying abilities and from diverse cultures. The content should also promote gender equity and inclusive practices. Teacher trainees will understand how writing, listening, and speaking support the teaching of reading, and how family involvement supports student achievement in reading.

This content is built on the new primary reading curricula and includes the following elements: phonological awareness, graphophonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary development and comprehension strategy instruction for a wide variety of texts. Vocabulary, at this level, includes both listening and oral language; comprehension includes listening comprehension and reading text that uses words that have been taught. Discussions and activities should address curriculum, instruction, assessment, technology, and collaboration with other professionals and parents. In addition, the Ethiopia Reads MT Primary Curricula, for grades 1-4, should be integrated into the course content and hands-on activities; including the use of the direct instruction model for teaching.

2. Cognitive Development, and Reading and Writing Instruction

Pre-service teachers will acquire the knowledge and strategies necessary to teach advanced reading and writing skills for students in Grades 5-8; the content transitions from learning to read to reading to learn. The focus includes the cognitive development and progression of developmental stages in learning to read and write. Also included, is an overall understanding of the major areas of reading and the specific skills and strategies that students need to learn in Grades 5-8, especially as the demands of understanding content area information increases. The pre-service teachers will learn and be able to teach these more advanced skills and strategies related to reading and writing. Advanced reading skills include (a) Oral and Written Language (e.g. morphology, syntax, semantics), (b) Vocabulary (e.g. content area academic vocabulary), (c) Comprehension (e.g. content specific strategies), and (d) use of writing to support reading. Discussions and activities should address curriculum, instruction, assessment, technology, and collaboration with other professionals and parents. In addition, the Ethiopia Reads MT Primary Curricula, for grades 5-8, should be integrated into the course content and hands-on activities.

In the event MOE chooses to develop such a course, FSU recommends that representatives from the CTE's Department of Psychology be included in the process.

3. Differentiating Reading & Writing Instruction/Assessment

The primary goal of this recommendation is to develop the knowledge and skills needed to address prevention, identification, and remediation of reading difficulties. These strategies will provide the skills and knowledge needed to understand the role of classroom-based assessments in guiding

reading instruction and instructional decision making for students including those who are making adequate progress, those who demonstrate accelerated progress, and those who are struggling and considered to be at-risk. The course will also provide strategies to support inclusion and promote gender equity. This content builds on prior reading content (e.g. recommendations 1 & 2) that addresses the foundations of language and cognition, elements of direct instruction, and the major reading components (e.g.: listening comprehension, oral language, phonological awareness, graphophonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing). As a result of this content, teacher candidates will (a) have a broad knowledge of students from differing profiles, (b) understand how to select and use assessment to differentiate instruction, (c) understand and apply differentiated research-based instructional practices, and (d) be able to use a systematic problem solving process. The content will also address differentiation of instruction that supports inclusion and gender equity. **(Note:** There is a current course that is titled Assessing Language and Listening Skills. It is recommended that content be added that expands assessments to all literacy areas, which are imbedded in the new Primary MT Scope and Sequence, to writing, and to include how to use assessments to differentiate instruction.)

4. Language & Literacy

The primary goal of this content is to help pre-service teachers understand language acquisition and development, and how various aspects of language skills build on the foundation of reading and writing development. The need for this content was cited across focus groups, interviews, etc. The content will include first language acquisition, as well as second or foreign language acquisition, and literacy instruction for multilingual students including those whose primary language(s) are not the language of instruction. Foundational knowledge as well as instructional approaches will be covered. Emphasis will be placed on the “transfer” of metalinguistic awareness, the knowledge that can be drawn from the child’s experiences in L1, especially phonological awareness, and (listening) comprehension. The content will also examine the aspects of language acquisition, in relation to differences and similarities in (a) orthography, (b) script (e.g. Latin /Fidels), (c) syllable structure, (d) word length, (e) tone, and (f) dialect. Pre-service teachers will also examine and understand the differences in the basic structures of language across different languages (e.g. letters/fidels in relation to words and sentences).

Based on conversations with the MOE staff and examination of the new proposed CTE course of study, Table 5 provides the following correlations between the new of MT course of study for CTEs and the course content proposed by FSU (in parenthesis). This correlation is also offered to support a dialogue across stakeholders. The focus should be on how to best prepare MT pre-service teachers to teach early literacy skills, using the new Primary MT Scope and Sequence and related classroom materials.

TABLE 5 - CORRELATION OF CONTENT AREAS AND NEW MT CTE COURSE OUTLINES

Semester To Be Implemented	New MT Course Outlines	Proposed Courses
2014 (September-December)	COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND READING SKILLS	NEW
2015 (January-June)	TMOT 222: TEACHING READING AND WRITING IN MOTHER TONGUE	EARLY LITERACY LEARNING
2015 (September-December)	TMOT 323: TEACHING LISTENING AND SPEAKING IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL)	LANGUAGE & LITERACY
2016 (January-June)	TMOT 322: ASSESSING LANGUAGE AND LEARNING SKILLS	ASSESSMENT & DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION
To Be Determined	TEACHING READING IN THE CONTENT AREA	NEW

Content Area Reading & Writing*

In addition, the FSU partners were asked to assist in the development of a Content Area Reading & Writing Course. This course would be designed for content area pre-service teachers and focuses on the acquisition of the specific, research-based content area knowledge and skills needed to provide access to content area information. This course focuses on the understanding of classroom-based, content area reading and writing strategies that will provide access to subject area concepts. Pre-service teachers will learn and practice reading and writing strategies that can be used across subject areas and that are specific to the discipline being studied. Discussion and activities will address curriculum, instruction, assessment, technology, and strategies for collaborating with other professional and parents.