

TEACHER EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE
INCORPORATION OF READING DISCIPLINE COURSES IN PRESERVICE
TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract: This qualitative study explores the perceptions of teacher educators regarding the implementation of a new reading discipline in the Bachelor of Education elementary programme in Pakistan. Eight teacher educators from public institutes of teacher education in the province of Sindh participated in semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal that teacher educators viewed the new reading discipline positively, recognising the potential of the new reading courses to enhance pre-service teachers' knowledge and skills of teaching reading effectively in the elementary grades. However, the implementation of the new discipline presented several challenges, such as unclear course guidelines, discrepancies between course goals and assessments, complex and technical reading content, and pre-service teachers' insufficient academic preparation. These challenges suggest the need for a more comprehensive approach to the implementation of new disciplinary initiatives in teacher education programmes, such as providing professional development opportunities and ongoing support for both teacher educators and prospective reading teachers. These findings have significant implications for initiating and implementing curriculum reform in teacher education in Pakistan and other similar contexts.

Keywords: Curriculum Innovation, Implementation, Reading Discipline, Teacher Educators

INTRODUCTION

Reading instruction takes up a large portion of the elementary school curriculum because it is both fundamental to academic success and the primary focus of most classroom activities. Nevertheless, national surveys in Pakistan have revealed alarmingly low reading scores among elementary school students. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) has been conducted annually since 2008, and it consistently shows that a small fraction of children can read sentences or stories even after four years of schooling. Despite overwhelming evidence linking teachers' knowledge and practise to children's reading achievement, most elementary teachers lack formal training in the science of reading and are thus ill-equipped to provide high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction. Indeed, elementary teachers lack appropriate content knowledge and pedagogical skills in the areas that are theoretically important for effective reading teaching (Stark, Snow, Eadie, & Goldfeld, 2015), and as many as half of preservice teachers reported feeling unprepared to teach primary students the core reading components (Meeks & Kemp, 2017). Thus, preparing prospective teachers by means of sufficient course work and related field experiences in reading is essential to preventing reading problems among elementary students (Lipp & Helfrich, 2016; Meeks, Stephenson, Kemp, & Madelaine, 2016).

In an effort to improve the quality of reading instruction and assessment, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan and the Pakistan Reading Project collaborated in 2014. This partnership led to the creation of a discipline in reading instruction consisting of a sequence of four reading courses followed by a practicum. These reading courses are now being integrated into elementary education programmes such as the Associate Degree in Education and Bachelor of Education (Honours) degrees. By providing preservice teachers with a solid foundation in reading instruction, this initiative is likely to prepare better reading teachers who are capable of improving the quality of reading instruction and assessment in the country's elementary schools.

However, like many other curriculum reforms, the implementation of the reading discipline courses is a challenging task. While it is hoped that the new reading courses will improve the reading-related knowledge and pedagogical skills of pre-service teachers, others fear that implementing curriculum change presents a number of obstacles, including tensions created when curriculum initiatives derived from foreign policy and designs clash with the preferences of local actors and the realities of local contexts (Huma, 2013). Even with all such reforms, the various aspects of the innovative curriculum and decisions about their implementation are still worked out and determined at the level of the local actors (Honkimäki, Jääskelä, Kratochvil, & Tynjälä, 2022). Thus, it is important

to consider teachers' perspectives on the new curriculum and the challenges they confront during implementation in order to establish strategies for its sustainability (Fullan, 2001; Rahman, 2014).

This research examines the perceptions and responses of teacher educators on the introduction and implementation of a new discipline in reading instruction and assessment, which has been developed for the first time in Pakistan. Thus, the need for a broad understanding of teacher educators' perceptions and challenges is particularly timely with the implementation of the reading discipline courses in the B.Ed. elementary programme. This study was conducted specifically to answer the following research question: What are the perceptions of teacher educators regarding the introduction and implementation of a new discipline for reading instruction and assessment in a pre-service elementary teacher education programme?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conception of Curriculum Innovation

Curriculum innovations are initiatives that are regarded as "new" by those who design and implement them but are not necessarily groundbreaking in terms of being completely original (Halpin et al., 2004). According to Fullan (2001), a curriculum may be considered innovative if it incorporates any modifications to its guiding principles, objectives, structures, resources, instructional methods, learning strategies, or assessment process. In that sense, curriculum innovation may refer to the modification of a single course or the revamping of an entire programme.

Curriculum innovation has been recognised as a crucial aspect of educational development because it reflects the need for change and adaptation to meet the changing needs of students and society (Mața, 2012). In the context of preservice teacher education, curriculum innovation is particularly important because it shapes the preparation of prospective teachers and their ability to address the evolving challenges of the teaching profession (Meena, 2009). With technological advancements and the increasing importance of 21st-century skills, there is a greater need for including new disciplinary areas and competencies into teacher preparation programmes. This necessitates not only the creation of new courses and content but also the incorporation of innovative pedagogies and assessment methods (Kosnik et al., 2017).

Curriculum Innovation and Teachers

Curriculum innovation is a common practise in many nations around the world, with the goal of enhancing the outcomes of education and preparing students for the challenges of the twenty-first century. However, the success of such curriculum reforms depends not only on the content of the curriculum but also on how teachers interpret and implement it in actual classrooms (Chiu, 2017; Bongco & David, 2020). Teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes about a new curriculum have a significant impact on their motivation to incorporate it into their teaching practise and the overall quality of the implementation process (Aboagye & Yawson, 2020; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). The active participation and contributions of teachers are essential to the success of any curriculum innovation (Yang, Shu, & Yin, 2022). Disregarding the critical role that teachers play in driving the process forward will hinder the achievement of a successful curriculum change (Fullan, 2001).

Additionally, research has shown that teachers' involvement and participation in implementing a new curriculum are heavily influenced by their perceptions of it (Bonner et al., 2020; Boubris & Haddam, 2020). This is due to the fact that the perceptions of teachers serve as a bridge between the formal curriculum and the actual practises that take place in the classroom (Abdi & Asadi, 2015). Another reason why teachers' attitudes towards new curriculum matter is because they can determine whether teachers will embrace or resist the change. When teachers have favourable perceptions of the new curriculum, they are more likely to be motivated and engaged in its implementation (Aboagye & Yawson, 2020). On the other hand, when teachers have negative perceptions of the new curriculum, they may resist or avoid its implementation, which can lead to subpar results. This was evident in Bantwini's (2010) study, which found that teachers believed that the new curriculum did not differ significantly from the previous curriculum, making it difficult for them to comprehend the vision and goals of the reformed curriculum. This perception impeded the implementation of the new curriculum, which was intended to provide greater clarity and a simplified version of the curriculum for teachers to implement with ease.

Although the success of the new curriculum is contingent on the teachers' energy and skills, one of the primary challenges in implementing curriculum change is ensuring that teachers are willing and capable of adopting and implementing the new curriculum. Studies have consistently shown that teachers may have trouble adjusting to a new curriculum as it often requires changes in their knowledge and practises. Thus, when teachers cannot update

their knowledge and practises to best fit the reform curriculum, they often develop feelings of discomfort and anxiety, and their self-esteem is threatened (Hall & Hord, 2015).

Besides, it is common for teachers to make significant modifications to the official curriculum in order to make it reflect their ideals and the realities of their classrooms when they find the planned curriculum to be a poor fit with their prior knowledge and experience (Park & Sung, 2013). It is also worth noting that teachers' perspectives on new curriculum may be shaped by their own prior experiences with such shifts. For example, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) found that teachers who had positive experiences with past changes were more likely to view new changes in a positive light, while those who had negative experiences were more likely to be sceptical. Research has also shown that teachers are reluctant to accept new curriculum when they are not part of the reform process (Aboagye & Yawson, 2020). On the other hand, involving teachers in the curriculum development process can increase their engagement and confidence in teaching it (Iqbal & Tatlah, 2022).

To prepare effective reading teachers, preservice teacher education programmes are needed to incorporate recent and evidence-based innovations and practises into their curriculum. In recent years, the reading curriculum and instruction in teacher education have been designed to incorporate big ideas of reading (Vesay & Gischlar, 2013), evidence-based strategies of teaching reading (Koch & Spörer, 2017), metalinguistic concepts (Purvis, McNeill, & Everatt, 2016), tutorial experiences (Hoffman, et al., 2019), and multimedia tools (Ely et al., 2014). Yet, the successful implementation of these innovations depends on teacher educators' perceptions and attitudes towards them. Examining teacher educators' perceptions of recent curricular innovations can provide insight into the efficacy of such initiatives and provide information on whether the curriculum design has been successfully implemented, which can be used to assess the current state of implementation and its alignment with the original design (Könings et al., 2007). Consequently, it is important to investigate teacher educators' perceptions of recent innovations in reading curriculum and instruction in pre-service teacher education programmes.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to explain the perspectives of teacher educators on the implementation of the new reading discipline curriculum, as well as the challenges they experienced throughout the implementation. The researcher used a qualitative method for data collection and analysis, notably the multiple case study design. The decision to undertake a qualitative multiple case study was motivated by the need to grasp the implementation process from the perspective of the participants. Qualitative approaches are well suited for a comprehensive analysis of the implementation process (Patton, 1990). Consequently, a small sample of teacher educators was chosen with a focus on depth rather than breadth in data collection and analysis.

Eight teacher educators engaged in individual face-to-face interviews with one of the researchers. Participants were identified from four public institutes of teacher education in Sindh province, Pakistan. Various national and international assessments highlight the catastrophic reading condition in Sindh province, where 83% of pupils struggle with reading in regional languages and 91% cannot read sentences in English (ASER, 2016). The existing status of reading instruction in the province makes it all the more important to examine new initiatives, such as the incorporation of RDC into the pre-service programme, which aims to prepare effective reading teachers for elementary classrooms. Specifically, the participants consisted of two teacher educators from each of the four institutes. As reading discipline programmes are offered in the B.Ed. honours programme's Part III (5th and 6th semesters) and Part IV (7th semester), teacher educators teaching these courses and semesters were invited to participate in the study. Table 1 provides further information on each participant, including teaching experience, reading course and semester taught, institutional background, and experience teaching other reading courses than the one for which they were interviewed.

The data from the interviews were analysed using an inductive thematic analysis guided by Braun and Clarke's (2012) six-step process. This implies that inductive coding based on participants' experiences was used to ensure data analysis did not completely replace participants' narratives, but rather the findings were grounded in the teacher educators' actual perspectives and practises. In the first step, all interview transcripts were reviewed several times to become familiar with the content of the interviews. In step two, the first researcher, using both in vivo and descriptive codes, generated a list of initial codes and their defining characteristics. The third step consisted of arranging the codes into categories that better reflected the data's larger meaning units. Using constant comparison and integration of the coded data, themes were developed that emphasised an important aspect of the data as it linked to the research problem. After identifying themes, the fifth step was defining and naming them. In the sixth and final step of data analysis, researchers took notes on the logical connections between themes and also determined the order of these themes.

Table 1

Description of Study Participants

Teacher (Pseudonym)	Years of Teaching Experience	Type of Institute	Teaching Reading Discipline Course	Experience other Reading Courses	Other information
Sadia	15	College	Foundations of Reading	Yes	An acting college principal
Rashid	12	University	Foundations of Reading	No	Teaching reading discipline for the first time
Simra	05	University	Reading Assessment	No	M.Phil. scholar temporarily assigned as a teacher assistant to teach reading courses
Imran	22	University	Reading Difficulties	Yes	Department head and doctorate candidate in the faculty where he teaches
Fatima	19	College	Teaching of Reading	Yes	The teacher who attended professional development for reading instructors
Hamza	10	College	Teaching of Reading	Yes	A computer science teacher, teaching reading course due to a teacher shortage at his institution
Rehan	17	College	Reading Assessment	Yes	Attended professional development for reading instructors
Kiran	03	University	Reading Difficulties	Yes	A recent B.Ed. grad who is temporarily assigned as a teacher assistant to teach reading courses

In addition, the interpretive data analysis in this multiple case study was conducted in two steps. In the first step, data for each teacher educator was analysed separately. This was accomplished by transcribing and coding the recorded interviews, followed by preparing a summary of all pertinent data for each teacher educator. In the second step, the “constant comparative method” was used for an ongoing comparison of the preliminary interpretations of the eight teacher educators with the narratives of other participants. This method helped to identify patterns and mechanisms of teacher educators’ perceptions and problems faced in implementing the reading discipline courses.

FINDINGS

The findings of the study demonstrate that teacher educators overall had a positive perspective on the inclusion of reading as a discipline in pre-service teacher education programmes. They expressed excitement regarding the potential benefits the reading discipline courses could offer pre-service teachers as they learned the content and methodology necessary to become effective reading teachers. The teacher educators had a clear understanding of the goals and expectations of the new curriculum; however, they also acknowledged that the implementation of the new curriculum was not without challenges. Teacher educators reported that the new courses contained complex and technical content, which made it difficult for them to teach effectively. Additionally, several teachers expressed concerns regarding a lack of clarity in the procedures and activities required to achieve the goals of the new curriculum. As a result, some teachers expressed frustration and low morale in implementing the changes.

Theme 1: Favourable perceptions of teacher educators about 'reading' as a discipline

The perceptions of the eight teacher educators about reading as a discipline were explored during the interview using a few general and open ended questions. The analysis revealed that teacher educators who were currently teaching reading discipline courses had favourable impressions of reading as a discipline, and most saw the inclusion of this particular field in the B.Ed. Elementary programme's content courses as a positive development. Almost all of the teacher educators acknowledged the importance of reading abilities and deemed them indispensable for the academic and personal success of elementary students.

The favourable perceptions of teacher educators about this recently added field of specialisation to the B.Ed. Hons. Elementary degree stemmed from their expectations that it would produce better reading teachers for elementary schools where many students are struggling with reading. Fatima's perspective on reading discipline was based on her generalisation that students in primary schools lacked reading abilities and that their instructors lacked the pedagogical competence to deliver effective reading instruction. She acknowledged that preparing elementary school teachers who are able to tackle the issues of reading development in the classroom should be a top priority of preservice teacher education programmes, and she noted that new reading discipline courses could play a part in achieving this goal.

This discipline, I believe, will go a long way towards sensitising people to the importance of reading. So this is the first step in this direction, and it will eventually result in improvements not just in how reading teachers are prepared but also in reading gains in elementary classrooms, which is the main goal of the reform. (Fatima)

Like Fatima, Rehan and Sadia also envisioned this curriculum as a much-needed initiative in teacher education programmes to improve reading instruction outcomes in the country. Rehan was supportive of the reading discipline due to its focus on "preparing prospective teachers to engage with students who are not readers and convert them into readers." In particular, Sadia expressed a great deal of excitement for the discipline, with the hope that at least preservice candidates would know that reading is not something that just "clicks" for certain individuals but rather something that must be learned by all children through a system of careful and explicit instruction.

The entire curriculum framework makes sense to me; you know beginning with the integration of reading and its basic components in earlier courses and coming to more advanced knowledge of reading instruction and assessment in discipline courses. The courses have such a broad focus that prospective teachers not only learn about reading content knowledge but also pedagogical skills to teach early grade reading. (Sadia)

Besides, teacher educators thought that RDC's singular focus on reading made it a better curriculum than the one they had been using before because it allowed them to pay closer attention to the various aspects of reading instruction and inspire PSTs to learn and successfully implement effective and evidence-based reading instruction.

In a developing country like Pakistan, such focused and intensive work on one element of language literacy—you know, language has four components—and picking one single element and going through such deep and intensive work on it, there is no such precedent. (Rashid)

Teaching reading as a separate course enables you to include other languages in it. If you make it a part of your English language teaching course, you must use English language examples. The second point is that the reading content is so detailed and very technical... and there are many in-depth topics

and theories that our teachers completely ignore when teaching reading as part of a language teaching course. (Simra)

Some teacher educators also shared that they came to the curriculum reform with some apprehensions about introducing reading discipline, particularly in terms of the depth and scope of the content in all four courses. Hamza shared:

I was a little surprised when I first heard that five separate courses were developed about the reading. It actually took me a while to understand what was so important about reading that you took so much effort to convey it to PSTs.

Hamza's first concerns were a result of his lack of prior teaching expertise in language education as well as his concerns about how his student teachers would react to this new discipline. But in response to a question about how these concerns really worked out, he responded that they were unfounded and that the "four reading courses followed by a practicum offer a comprehensive package to study and apply the information, attitude, and abilities required to become an effective reading instructor." Teacher educators' perspectives on reading were shaped not only by their understanding of the current situation, which is characterised by low reading achievement among elementary school students, but also by their expectations for the new discipline and the courses it offered, as well as their own experiences with the implementation of the new curriculum.

Theme 2: The Challenging nature of the content in the reading discipline courses

Teacher educators generally agreed that the reading discipline curriculum was a necessary and effective initiative to produce competent reading teachers, but they also raised concerns about the complex nature of reading content and the lack of clarity in teacher course guides. The "challenging and rather technical nature" of the reading content included in the new courses was viewed by TEs as an impediment to the faithful implementation of the new curriculum. Some teacher educators even explained that it was impossible to finish the reading courses in an honest way given the little time available for teaching, the difficult nature of the course material, and the excessive number of required assignments. As examples of challenging material covered in reading discipline courses, teacher educators often point to reading's components and subcomponents, types, diagnosis and symptoms, and intervention strategies for struggling readers. The content of the Reading Difficulties course, in particular, was deemed by teacher educators to be the most difficult to teach and explain to prospective teachers. For example, Imran explained,

Our prospective teachers don't have the background knowledge necessary to properly understand the technical nature of many of the topics and issues, particularly those related to the medical field.

Some teacher educators stated that their limited understanding of reading difficulties and observations of struggling readers made it challenging for them to explain and teach such complex topics in a manner that facilitates easier and more meaningful learning. As Kiran said,

Reading Difficulties is a difficult course for teachers who haven't spent much time in the classroom, and it can get very theoretical if they don't have examples and cases to study to truly understand what's happening when children learn and how they struggle with reading.

Theme 3: Lack of clarity in course guides

Fullan (2001) emphasises that change is often accompanied by a tangled web of complexity and ambiguity. Complex reforms are often unclear to those responsible for implementing them. The findings indicate that many essential aspects of this curriculum change were unclear to teacher educators throughout the process of implementing new reading curricula. According to teacher educators, this was because course manuals lacked detailed descriptions of all such components. For example, course guides did not explicitly inform teacher educators about the overall goals of the reading curriculum, the numerous supplementary resources that accompanied the new curriculum, the description of the reading standards and how they were to be implemented during the implementation of the reading curriculum, or the assessment policy. Several teacher educators also complained that the session plans and activities in the course manuals were vague and hard to follow. This was particularly true for Hamza and Rehan, who noted:

Most of these session plans and activity details were beyond my understanding. So, I decided not to use them. (Hamza)

For me, the course content was difficult but not impossible to understand; with some effort, I could grasp it, but the instructional plans and the activities themselves are not inherently difficult to follow, but the way they were written made them vague and obscure. (Rehan)

Some teacher educators drew the conclusion that parts of the session designs wouldn't work in their classrooms since they weren't clear on the activity specifics. For example, when Kiran found that some session plans contained in-session handouts, but the activity specifications gave no guidance on how and when to use them during the session, she mostly decided to omit them. Similarly, when Hamza did not comprehend what was expected of him throughout the session, they instantly opted to change the activities. Teacher educators might thus stray from the desired goals and methods if they fail to fully grasp the theory and critical aspects underlying the curriculum reform and its practical ramifications, particularly when the reform is believed to be complicated as well.

Theme 4: Neglect of assessment in the new course design

The findings in this theme suggest that all four reading courses did not provide sufficient guidance on how teacher educators should assess these courses. Without clear guidance on the types of assessments that should be used to evaluate the learning of pre-service teachers, most teacher educators were inclined to rely too heavily on traditional theory-based written exams as opposed to skill-based and practical assessments, which were the primary focus of the new reading courses. This could result in a misalignment between the course objectives and the types of assessments used to evaluate the progress of pre-service teachers as reading teachers. Fatima stated;

The new courses were heavily focused on developing reading skills, but there was no mention of how these skills would be assessed. As a result, we found ourselves relying on traditional, theory-oriented exams rather than skill-based assessments, which we knew would not accurately reflect our students' abilities. (Fatima)

This situation created tensions for both teacher educators as they attempted to adopt the new reading discipline courses but were not provided with clear guidelines on how to assess prospective teachers' progress towards the intended learning outcomes. Teacher educators were struggling to design fair, balanced, and effective assessments for reading discipline courses, while prospective teachers were struggling to understand what was expected of them. Hamza stated:

There were no guidelines given to us on how to evaluate students in these new reading courses. Teachers like me, who don't come from a linguistics background, found this to be a source of stress and uncertainty as I tried to figure it out on my own. (Hamza)

Another college-based teacher educator shared a similar concern, finding it difficult to strike a balance between theory and practise during teaching due to a lack of clear assessment guidelines.

"We had to make sure they were getting the practise they needed, but we also had to get them ready for the more conventional tests they would face down the road." (Sadia)

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study are an important first step in consolidating our understanding of the perceptions of teacher educators regarding the inclusion and implementation of reading discipline courses in the B.Ed. Elementary programme. Overall, the findings indicated that teacher educators held a favourable attitude towards the introduction of a discipline in reading instruction and assessment and all four reading discipline courses. Clearly, the implementation of curriculum reforms tends to be a complex process, and teachers' perceptions and beliefs have a major impact on how they participate in such reforms. Besides, previous research has documented teachers' resistance to top-down curriculum reforms. For instance, in Li's (2017) research on the implementation of English education policy in China, teachers actively resisted a top-down policy decision because they believed it was inappropriate for their norms and local students. In contrast, the current study found that teacher educators were more favourable to a top-down, reading-related curriculum reform. They saw it as an important step in addressing the persistent problem of elementary students' dismal reading proficiency across the country. Thus, the findings highlight the need for curriculum reform initiatives to be contextually relevant and address local needs and challenges.

However, despite teacher educators' positive attitude, the implementation of the new curriculum was faced with some challenges. One of the main challenges highlighted by the teacher educators was the absence of detailed descriptions of the new reading curriculum's components. Specifically, the lack of information on the curriculum's overall goals, supplementary resources, reading standards, and assessment policies may have left teacher educators uncertain about how to implement the curriculum effectively. In addition, unclear and difficult-to-follow session plans and activities may have added to the difficulties they faced in implementing the new curriculum. According to Kirgkoz (2008), teachers' level of reform implementation is significantly influenced by their understanding of the underlying principles and components of reform strategies. Several studies, such as those by Boesen et al. (2014) and Rahman (2014), have indicated that teachers may experience greater uncertainty and difficulties in implementing a curriculum reform when they perceive the new curriculum or its supporting materials to be vague and insignificant.

Additionally, the findings of this study indicate that the teacher educators' assessment policy and practices were not aligned with the skills and knowledge focused on in the new curriculum. This misalignment may result in an inconsistency between what is taught and what is assessed in reading discipline courses, creating a gap between the intended and actual learning outcomes of pre-service teachers. Biggs (2012) noted that assessment should be aligned with the learning outcomes and objectives of the curriculum to ensure that the prospective teachers are adequately prepared for the skills and knowledge required in their future professions. However, numerous studies have reported that an important barrier to the success of curriculum reforms is the existing exam-oriented assessment procedures that are not aligned with the goals of the new curriculum. Examining the implementation of the new English curriculum reform in China, Yan and He (2012) found that the exam-oriented educational system, which prioritises the acquisition of distinct language knowledge over communicative competence and logical reasoning, posed a challenge to the success of the reform. According to Rahman (2014), teachers implementing the English primary curriculum in Malaysia experienced confusion regarding assessment and perceived a mismatch between the objectives of the curriculum and the execution of current exams. This misalignment may result in negative outcomes, such as teachers focusing on teaching to the test rather than developing broader knowledge and skills and students losing interest in learning. To address this issue, it is essential to ensure that assessment procedures are aligned with the objectives of the new curriculum, which may involve revising examination procedures and providing training and support for teachers (Yan, 2017).

CONCLUSION

This qualitative study sheds light on the introduction and implementation of a new discipline in reading instruction and assessment in the B.Ed. Elementary programme in Pakistan from the perspectives of teacher educators. The study suggests that teacher educators were enthusiastic about the inclusion of the reading discipline and its corresponding courses. Moreover, their favourable impression was framed by their awareness of the poor state of reading in elementary schools and the pressures on elementary teacher preparation programmes to produce competent reading teachers through course work and field experiences. It is therefore crucial to take into account the larger socio-cultural and local contexts when introducing new curricular initiatives. When teachers perceive that curriculum initiatives are culturally appropriate and meet the needs of the local community, they are more likely to view them positively, even if they are implemented through a top-down approach.

Despite teacher educators' enthusiasm for new reading discipline courses, the implementation of new reading discipline courses in the B.Ed. Elementary programme presents several challenges that necessitate a comprehensive and systematic approach. To overcome these obstacles, it is crucial to establish clear course guidelines, align learning objectives with assessments, and provide opportunities for professional development among teacher educators. These measures can ensure the successful implementation of these courses designed to equip pre-service teachers with the essential competencies and knowledge necessary to improve the reading abilities of elementary students.

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