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Article

A Comparative Analysis of Preservice Teachers' Knowledge of Reading Instruction and Their Confidence in Supporting Struggling Readers: A Study of India and England

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Abstract: This study examines the knowledge and preparedness of preservice teachers in India and England regarding the teaching of foundational reading skills. Recognising the critical role of teachers in preventing reading difficulties through explicit instruction in phonics, vocabulary knowledge, and reading comprehension strategies, we aimed to compare preservice teachers' knowledge in these areas between the two countries. A survey was developed for this study and administered to preservice teachers enrolled in teacher education programs in India and England. The survey assessed their phonics knowledge, pedagogical practices across key reading domains, and confidence in supporting students with reading difficulties in inclusive classrooms. Descriptive analyses indicated that English preservice teachers demonstrated greater familiarity with phonics knowledge and were better prepared in pedagogical practices, particularly in phonics instruction, phonological awareness, and reading fluency. Both groups showed low preparedness in teaching vocabulary knowledge. Notably, Indian preservice teachers reported higher confidence levels in supporting students with reading difficulties despite lower performance in knowledge assessments. These findings suggest a need for enhanced focus on explicit phonics instruction in Indian teacher education programs and increased emphasis on vocabulary instruction in both countries. Implications for early childhood education policy are discussed, particularly with regards to preparing teachers to provide high-quality literacy instruction that supports children's academic success.

Keywords: preservice teachers; reading instruction; phonics knowledge; teacher education; India; England

1. Introduction

Global early childhood education policies increasingly recognise literacy as a cornerstone of children's overall well-being and long-term success (UNICEF, 2019). The ability to read is among the most fundamental skills young learners need to develop, as pupils who experience significant reading challenges are at a heightened risk of negative outcomes such as dropping out of school (Fall & Roberts, 2012), involvement with the criminal justice system (Cassidy et al., 2021), unemployment (Aro et al., 2019), and mental health problems later in life (Aro et al., 2019). Furthermore, longitudinal research indicates that children who do not master foundational reading skills by the end of Grade 1 rarely attain proficient reading levels in subsequent years (Double et al., 2019), underscoring the importance of effective early literacy instruction.

A key factor in supporting and enhancing reading development is for teachers to provide explicit phonics instruction in the early years of schooling. Phonics instruction refers to explicitly teaching students the grapheme–phoneme association rules. For example, the sound /m/ [phoneme] is associated with the letter 'm' [grapheme]. There are several letters or letter teams (e.g., 'ch', 'ing') that have consistent grapheme–phoneme associations. Several past studies demonstrated the benefit of teaching explicit phonics in supporting and strengthening reading development. (Slavin et al., 2011).

In addition to explicit phonics instruction, teachers must also regularly teach new vocabulary (Beck et al., 2013) and explicitly teach students to use various reading comprehension strategies to support their understanding of the text (Gersten et al., 2001). These strategies include but are not limited to helping students in identifying the main idea of a story, summarising the read content, making predictions about the story, and asking questions about the text to monitor their understanding (Foorman et al., 2016; Stevens et al., 2019; Daniel & Williams, 2021). Thus, preservice teachers need to develop specialised knowledge in teaching early primary year pupils to read and understand English language text. This specialised knowledge refers to knowledge of the developmental progression of the reading skills pupils need to master (Leppänen et al., 2004), knowledge of phonological awareness and phonics instruction (Rose, 2006), knowledge of teaching vocabulary (Beck et al., 2013), skills in teaching students specific reading comprehension strategies (Gersten et al., 2001), and developing fluency in reading text (Therrien, 2004).

Some past studies have explored how teachers' knowledge of teaching reading is associated with students' reading outcomes. Some of these studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between teacher knowledge of reading-related constructs and their use of effective practices to promote positive growth in students' reading skills. For instance, Piasta et al. (2009) reported that teachers who were more knowledgeable about reading-related constructs were associated with students who demonstrated stronger growth in word-reading skills compared to students of teachers who were considered less knowledgeable. The correlational results demonstrate that teachers who understand and demonstrate their knowledge of the structure of English words are better prepared to teach these skills to early primary year pupils. These findings have also been corroborated with experimental studies. For instance, Podhajski et al. (2009) demonstrated that providing in-service teachers with professional development on scientifically based reading instructional practices significantly increased treatment group teachers' knowledge of reading-related constructs compared to controls. Furthermore, the treatment group teachers' students also outperformed those of their control group peers on various reading assessments.

However, not all findings are consistent. For instance, Carlisle et al. (2009) found that teachers' content knowledge about early reading did not significantly predict students' gains in word analysis or reading comprehension, possibly due to the complex interplay among teacher knowledge, instructional context, and daily practices. This mixed evidence from Western contexts underscores the importance of expanding research to diverse educational settings. Given that most studies on teacher knowledge and student outcomes have been conducted in Western countries, there is a pressing need to explore how well preservice teachers in India are prepared to teach early reading skills. Understanding the preparedness of Indian preservice teachers is particularly crucial given the country's unique linguistic landscape and the growing number of students learning English as an additional language. An additional component assesses their self-reported confidence in supporting students experiencing reading difficulties within mainstream classrooms.

2. English Language Reading in India

India is a country of many languages. There are 22 major spoken languages that are officially recognised, and over thousands of dialects. Hindi and English are the official languages of the Government of India, and most states have their own official languages. Schooling in India is multilingual, with all students expected to learn at least three languages. However, given the linguistic diversity within the country, around 25% of children attend a school where the medium of instruction is not their home language (Jhingran, 2009). This is particularly true in the case of English as a medium of instruction. According to the last census in 2011, 10.6% of the population spoke English. However, 26% of the school-age population, or approximately 65 million students, attends English-medium schools, where English is the primary language of learning and instruction (Nagarajan, 2021; Snigdha, 2021). A significant portion of students attending English-medium schools are therefore English language learners, many of whom have limited exposure to the language in their home and community settings (Endow, 2018; Treffers-Daller et al., 2022). This paper seeks to better understand how prepared preservice teachers are to teach English reading skills, given this unique landscape.

3. Reading Outcomes in India

According to the 2017 National Achievement Survey, almost half of the students in primary grades in India did not achieve proficiency levels in reading (NCERT, 2019). Another national survey paints a bleaker picture indicating that more than 50% of Grade 5 students cannot read Grade 2 level text (ASER Centre, 2023). This literacy crisis is not unique to India but part of a global 'Learning Poverty' where many children around the world are not learning to read proficiently (World Bank, 2019).

Recognising the need for change, India's National Education Policy of 2020 has prioritised developing students' foundational literacy skills. While the National Education Policy (Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India, 2020) places substantial emphasis on achieving foundational literacy and numeracy in early years of schooling, and indeed accords the "highest priority" to literacy, it offers comparatively fewer specific directives for teacher preparation to deliver these goals. The policy underscores the importance of quality teacher education but does not detail clear mechanisms or timelines or teaching licensure requirements by which teachers will be trained, mentored, and supported to implement the foundational literacy agenda in the classroom. Consequently, although the National Education Policy sets ambitious benchmarks for improving children's reading outcomes, the critical issue of robust and continuous teacher development, essential for sustaining any literacy initiative, remains partly unaddressed. This gap highlights the need for a more comprehensive teacher preparation policy that includes research-based coursework, extensive practicum experiences, and ongoing professional development to ensure that teachers can effectively translate the National Education Policy's literacy priorities into meaningful classroom practice.

While reading progress for all children is a critical concern, outcomes for children with disabilities require particular attention, as international data show they often progress at a slower rate and may be one to two years behind their peers (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Daniel, 2024). Furthermore, international studies indicate that English language learners with disabilities tend to face additional challenges, performing significantly below their monolingual English speaking peers with disabilities (Cooc, 2023; Daniel, 2025). The Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2020) indicates that students with disabilities in the Global South, or lower income countries (Dados & Connell, 2012), are 19% less likely to achieve minimum proficiency in reading as compared to their peers. Thus, although India is committed to building an inclusive education system and helping all children reach their

potential, students at risk for disabilities may be left behind. Clearly there is an urgent need to address these concerns.

According to the Indian National Education Policy, the foundational school years span from preschool to Grade 2. The National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Years released by the National Council of Education, Research, and Training (NCERT, 2022) clearly delineates many curricular goals under various domains. For instance, curricular goal number 10 states that 'children develop fluency in reading and writing' and mentions various competencies the students are expected to acquire in the foundational years, encompassing skills such as phonological awareness, letter knowledge, vocabulary and oral language comprehension, and reading and comprehending texts.

Teacher Preparation in India

In the Indian context, Schools of Education at different institutions prepare preservice teachers to teach students at different levels, and teachers acquire qualifications accordingly—pre-primary and primary (Early Childhood Care and Education), elementary (Grades 1 through 7 or 8), and secondary and higher secondary (Grades 8 to 12). Preservice teacher candidates interested in working with children with disabilities can also enrol in programs that specialise in working with students with specific disability types.

Creating a strong reading foundation for school students in the foundational years requires that their teachers are equipped with specialised knowledge and skills of literacy instruction and reading instruction. However, it is not clear how well various teacher preparatory programs are preparing teachers to teach foundational reading skills such as word reading, reading fluency, vocabulary knowledge development, and reading comprehension.

We believe that our study explores an under-investigated population and that there is a great need to understand if teachers are prepared in using evidence-based practices to teach reading in the early primary years and provide foundational reading instruction to students experiencing reading difficulties in secondary grades. Results from our study can guide future education policy. The study results could also highlight areas of strengths in current teacher preparatory programs and highlight areas of needs that teacher preparatory institutions and universities need to focus on.

4. Reading Instruction and Teacher Preparation in England

Given the recognition that "reading is fundamental to education" (DfE, 2023, p. 4), it is unsurprising that standards in reading, including international comparisons, are an ongoing area of interest for the English government. This focus is reflected in initiatives targeting various aspects of reading education, from early childhood to adult literacy, the merits of which are evidenced in England achieving the fourth highest achievement score in the global Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (Mullis et al., 2023) and achieving significantly above average reading scores in the 2022 PISA assessment (Ingram et al., 2023).

Grounded in research, policy, and educational outcomes, the dominant approach to teaching reading, and the method attributed to England's improving standards in this area, is systematic synthetic phonics (SSP). This method was identified within the influential Rose (2006) review as "offer[ing] the vast majority of young children the best and most direct route to becoming skilled readers and writers" (Rose, 2006, p. 4). Reflecting this landscape, higher education institutions in England demonstrate a strong emphasis on SSP and early reading within their teacher training curricula. Higher education institutions provide focused school experiences that require trainees to observe and deconstruct the SSP approach, and all programs allocate a significant proportion of English teaching modules to this focus. This reflects the expectations of the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011), which

all trainee teachers in England are required to meet in order to achieve Qualified Teacher Status by the end of the course, which explicitly state that trainees must "demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics" (DfE, 2011, p. 11). This priority is also reinforced in the Initial teacher education inspection framework and handbook (2024), which states that "Inspections of primary and early year phases will always include a focused review and trainee visits on early reading, including systematic synthetic phonics" (Ofsted, 2024, section 89) and places a specific focus upon whether trainees "if teaching early reading, demonstrate a clear understanding of systematic synthetic phonics by the end of their training" (Ofsted, 2024, section 210).

A further rationale for English trainee teachers' secure understanding of phonics instruction and phonological awareness may be the explicit and structured nature of SSP teaching. It is, perhaps, unsurprising that trainee teachers find the rigid sequence and structure of SSP teaching, based on a pre-determined scheme of work, to be easier to identify, evaluate, and replicate successfully than less prescribed aspects of the English curriculum.

Such a prescriptive approach also lends itself to 'deliberate practice' (Ericsson et al., 1993), which underpins the updated initial teacher training criteria that have become statutory from the academic year 2024/25. This practice-based approach consists of "strategies, routines, and moves that can be unpacked and learned by teachers" (Grossman, 2021, p. 5). In response to the government's growing emphasis upon SSP, teacher educators in England have adapted their programs to reflect this priority and align with practice in the school contexts which they serve. For example, in order to prepare trainee teachers to teach early reading successfully, whilst all validated programs meet the 'essential core criteria' (DfE, 2023), higher education institutions have had to adapt their programs to provide exposure to the particularities of the specific programs which students may encounter in practice. This has required a significant investment of time, working alongside partners to identify the schemes commonly adopted and negotiating access to planning and resources, which enable teacher educators to provide representations through live modelling and recordings that accurately reflect practice in schools.

5. Study Purpose

Cross-national research has increasingly examined teacher education (Adamson, 2012). For example, Washburn et al. (2016) administered a common knowledge survey to pre-service teachers in four English-speaking countries, Canada, England, New Zealand, and the United States, to compare their grasp of basic language constructs. These comparative studies often reveal strikingly similar patterns of strengths and gaps in teacher knowledge across contexts.

In an earlier US–UK comparison (Washburn et al., 2013), for instance, preservice teachers in both countries demonstrated accurate understandings of reading difficulties yet also shared prevalent misconceptions. Both American and English preservice teachers, for example, incorrectly believed that reading disabilities like dyslexia are primarily marked by seeing letters "backwards". Such findings suggest that despite differences in teacher education systems, preservice teachers may exhibit comparable knowledge profiles.

For the purpose of our study, England offers a valuable benchmark for reading instruction due to its strong phonics-based approach and demonstrated success on international literacy measures. Government-led policy frameworks over the last two decades have firmly established systematic phonics at the core of early reading pedagogy in England. Building on Rose's (2006) review recommendations, England's national curriculum was redesigned to mandate early phonics instruction, and a statutory phonics screening check was introduced in Grade 1 to ensure that all pupils master foundational decoding skills. This emphasis on code-based instruction is reflected in England's literacy outcomes.

Comparing Indian preservice teachers with those from England can thus yield important insights. By contrasting Indian trainees' knowledge with that of their English counterparts, who are trained under a nationally enforced phonics paradigm, we can identify specific gaps that may be unique to the Indian context or common internationally. England's well-established approach provides a high-performing reference point to gauge the preparedness of Indian preservice teachers. In essence, using England as a benchmark helps contextualise India's teacher preparation, aligning this study with prior comparative research and informing efforts to strengthen reading instruction in India.

A secondary aim of this study is to understand how preservice teachers perceive their level of preparedness to teach reading to students with learning difficulties (such as dyslexia) in inclusive classrooms. The term inclusive classroom refers to all students, those with and without disabilities, receiving instruction in the same classroom setting. Some past research suggests that teachers may not be well-prepared to accommodate and differentiate instruction effectively for students with learning difficulties (Washburn et al., 2011). One challenge with interpreting these results is that most of these studies have been conducted with American preservice teachers, and it is not clear if these trends can be generalised to teachers in India.

6. Research Questions

1. To what extent are preservice teachers in England and India familiar with foundational reading knowledge, and what are the differences in phonics knowledge between these two groups?
2. How well prepared are preservice teachers to teach phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and reading comprehension strategies, and what are the differences in pedagogical knowledge between English and Indian preservice teachers?
3. What is the level of confidence that preservice teachers report in teaching reading to students experiencing reading difficulties in inclusive classroom settings, and what are the differences between English and Indian preservice teachers?

7. Methods

7.1. Sample

This study received approval from the Ethics Board at the primary investigator's university. The sample for this study was recruited from two countries: England and India. In England, two universities participated by sharing the survey link with students enrolled in their School of Education's Bachelor of Arts (BA) Primary Education programs. In India, the survey was distributed through 17 Schools of Education. Course instructors at these institutions shared the survey link with students enrolled in Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programs, specifically those focused on teacher training. In this study, the terms trainee teachers and preservice teachers are used interchangeably to refer to individuals undergoing initial teacher education before obtaining full teaching qualifications.

Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. All participants provided informed consent prior to data collection. Additionally, all survey questions were optional, allowing participants to skip any question they were uncomfortable answering. This recruitment approach was designed to capture a diverse sample of future educators across both countries, allowing for comparative analyses of preservice teachers' knowledge and beliefs about foundational education practices. See Table 1 for participant demographics.

Table 1. Demographic information.

	n	India	*n*	England
Mean Age in Years (SD)	149	26.67 (6.79)	141	21.70 (5.41)
Female	131	87%	121	85%
Year of Study				
- First	67	45%	49	35%
- Second	59	40%	43	30%
- Final	21	14%	42	30%
- Not reported	02	1%	07	5%
Past Teaching Experience				
- Yes	55	37%	71	50%
- No	93	62%	63	45%
- Not reported	01	1%	07	5%
Qualified Teaching Age Post-Graduation				
- Primary school	29	19%	27	19%
- Secondary school	86	58%	19	14%
- All age groups	31	21%	93	66%
- Do not plan to teach	02	1%	02	1%
- Not reported	01	1%	-	
Total Courses Taken on Teaching Reading				
- One	66	44%	40	29%
- Two	23	15%	34	24%
- Three or more	11	8%	58	41%
- None of the courses focused on teaching reading	48	32%	09	6%
- Not reported	01	<1%	-	-
Total Courses Take on Inclusive Education				
- One	55	37%	40	28%
- Two	20	13%	46	33%
- Three or more	16	11%	27	19%
- None of the courses focused on inclusive education	24	16%	08	6%
- Not reported	34	23%	20	14%

7.2. Survey Instrument

We developed the survey instrument based on prior research in similar studies that assessed teachers' knowledge of reading-related constructs (e.g., Hikida et al., 2019; Washburn et al., 2011). To ensure its content validity, we shared the draft version of the survey with educational experts from both India (*n* = 2) and England (*n* = 2). These experts have extensive experience in reading instruction and teacher education. The experts provided feedback on the language used in the survey. For instance, one expert in India suggested that individuals may not be familiar with the term "manipulate sounds", and thus, we changed this to "orally swap sounds" to ensure participants' understanding. Our expert in England suggested explaining the term "mainstream classroom" at the start of the section regarding confidence in supporting struggling readers to ensure clarity. After receiving feedback, we revised the survey to incorporate their suggestions, improving the clarity and relevance of the items. The final survey instrument consisted of four sections.

7.2.1. Section 1: Demographic Information

The first section included nine questions that gathered participants' demographic information, including their age, gender, year of study, past teaching-related work experience, and qualifications. Participants were also asked to specify the age groups of students they intended to teach after completing their teacher training. Additionally, participants were asked to report the number of courses they had completed during their programs related to teaching reading and inclusive education.

7.2.2. Section 2: Knowledge of Reading-Related Constructs

The second section assessed preservice teachers' knowledge of key reading-related constructs, with a focus on their declarative knowledge. The development of this section was informed by previous studies that have assessed teachers' phonics knowledge, such as Washburn et al. (2016) and Clark et al. (2017), ensuring that our items align with established measures in the field. For example, participants were asked: *If "wug" is a word, the letter "u" would most likely sound like the "u" in which word?* (correct answer: duck). Another example included asking: *How many syllables are in the word "table?".* This section was designed to measure participants' foundational understanding of phonics-related content. All 13 questions were multiple-choice, and participants were encouraged to select a "not sure" option if they were uncertain of the correct answer.

7.2.3. Section 3: Knowledge of Reading Instruction

The third section focused on preservice teachers' procedural knowledge of how to teach reading-related skills to school-age students. We asked preservice teachers questions on how they would teach phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. We developed these items based on past recommendations in the field on evidence-based practices in teaching phonemic awareness, phonics (Rose, 2006), reading fluency (Therrien, 2004), vocabulary knowledge (Beck et al., 2013), and comprehension (e.g., Gersten et al., 2001). For example, one phonemic awareness question asked: *Which activity would you use to develop phonemic awareness?* (correct answer: recognising initial and final sounds in spoken words). Another question asked how teachers would introduce a new vocabulary word, such as "amiable", to students. The correct answer was to explain the meaning of the word in everyday language. See Appendix A for the survey questions.

For reading comprehension instruction, participants were given a list of strategies and asked to identify which strategies were evidence-based reading comprehension strategies that they could teach students to help support comprehension of text. The correct evidence-based strategies in the list included summarisation, main idea generation, self-questioning, and making predictions, while distractors such as "8-way comprehension" and "Alphabet soup" were included to assess whether participants could distinguish evidence-based approaches from non-existing strategies.

7.2.4. Section 4: Confidence in Supporting Students Experiencing Reading Difficulties

The final section assessed participants' self-reported confidence in supporting students experiencing reading difficulties within mainstream classrooms. Preservice teachers were provided with definitions of both "struggling readers" and "mainstream classrooms" and asked to rate their confidence on a scale of 1 (not at all confident) to 10 (very confident). Items in this section were developed using guidance in the literature on how to support students in inclusive classrooms (e.g., Lindner & Schwab, 2020) and measured confidence across several inclusive practices, including identifying students experiencing reading difficulties, using assessment data to guide instruction, collaborating with colleagues to plan instruction, differentiating instruction, providing modifications and accommodations, engaging with parents, and motivating students experiencing reading difficulties to participate in reading tasks.

8. Analytic Approach

We used R (R Core Team version 2021, R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria) to conduct data cleaning and perform descriptive analyses. To maximise the use of the available data and avoid unnecessary exclusion of participants, we created

separate datasets for each section or subscale being measured rather than employing listwise deletion, which would have excluded any row with missing values. This approach allowed us to calculate the mean and standard deviation for each subscale based only on the participants who completed all items of that particular section of the survey. By doing so, we were able to include as many cases as possible for each subsection analysis, thus minimising data loss and enhancing the validity of the findings. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each subscale to assess internal consistency, ensuring the reliability of the survey constructs.

9. Results

The present study investigates the familiarity of preservice teachers in England and India with foundational reading knowledge, focusing specifically on phonics knowledge and associated pedagogical knowledge. The sample demographics are presented in Table 1.

9.1. To What Extent Are Preservice Teachers in England and India Familiar with Foundational Reading Knowledge, and What Are the Differences in Phonics Knowledge Between These Two Groups?

Phonics knowledge was assessed using a scale with a range of 0 to 13. As shown in Table 2, English preservice teachers (M = 10.60, SD = 2.05) scored higher than their Indian counterparts (M = 7.30, SD = 3.36), with a large effect size. This substantial difference indicates a considerably greater familiarity with phonics knowledge among English preservice teachers compared to those in India.

Table 2. Mean score assessing preservice teachers' phonics knowledge and knowledge of teaching reading.

Items	α	No. of Items	Min–Max	India			England			Effect Size (*d*) (95% CI)
				n	Mean	SD	*n*	Mean	SD	
Phonics Knowledge	0.81	13	0–13	141	7.30	3.36	140	10.60	2.05	−1.18 (−1.43, −0.92)
Pedagogical Knowledge	0.65	19								
- Phonological Awareness		5	0–5	130	1.56	0.99	134	2.01	0.95	−0.46 (−0.70, −0.21)
- Phonics		2	0–2	127	0.85	0.70	134	1.45	0.64	−0.89 (−1.14, −0.63)
- Reading Fluency		4	0–4	128	2.05	1.21	128	2.51	1.08	−0.40 (−0.64, −0.15)
- Vocabulary		4	0–4	125	1.79	1.16	125	1.91	0.98	−0.11 (−0.35, 0.13)
- Reading Comprehension		4	0–4	114	1.70	1.18	121	2.13	1.02	−0.39 (−0.64, −0.13)
Self-Reported Confidence to Support Struggling Readers	0.91	10	10–100	107	72.02	14.36	117	65.19	12.31	0.51 (0.24, 0.77)

Furthermore, as shown in Tables 3 and 4, item-level analysis of the phonics knowledge assessment revealed distinct patterns in response accuracy and uncertainty between English and Indian preservice teachers. English preservice teachers demonstrated higher accuracy overall, with 80% of English preservice teachers correctly answering 8 out of the 13 items of phonics assessment. In contrast, only 60% of the Indian sample correctly answered 4 of the 13 question items, with approximately 50% of participants selecting the correct response for the rest of the phonics knowledge questions. Notably, there was one exception: only 28% of the Indian sample answered correctly on the question, "Which of the following pairs of words contain the same vowel sounds?" (correct answer: true and you; Item 8). For

English preservice teachers, the most difficult item was correctly identifying the number of syllables in the word "chart", with nearly half answering incorrectly (item 10).

Table 3. Percentage of correct, incorrect, and unsure responses by preservice teachers in England and India on the phonics knowledge items.

Phonics Knowledge	% Correct		% Incorrect		% Unsure	
	India	England	India	England	India	England
Item 1	57.44	95.00	29.07	4.28	13.47	0.71
Item 2	54.60	92.85	24.11	5.00	21.27	2.14
Item 3	54.60	61.42	19.14	12.14	26.24	26.42
Item 4	50.35	59.28	28.36	20.71	21.27	20.00
Item 5	52.48	90.00	36.17	9.28	11.34	0.71
Item 6	65.95	97.85	19.85	0.71	14.18	1.42
Item 7	75.88	87.14	17.73	11.42	6.38	1.42
Item 8	28.36	87.85	65.24	8.57	6.38	3.57
Item 9	63.82	88.57	19.14	8.57	17.02	2.85
Item 10	46.80	57.85	36.87	37.85	16.31	4.28
Item 11	56.73	89.28	25.53	8.57	17.73	2.14
Item 12	69.50	70.71	17.02	8.57	13.47	20.71
Item 13	53.90	82.14	15.60	7.14	30.49	10.71
Mean %	**56.19**	**81.53**	**27.22**	**10.99**	**16.58**	**7.47**

Table 4. Percentage of correct, incorrect, and unsure responses by preservice teachers in England and India on the pedagogical knowledge items.

Pedagogical Knowledge	% Correct		% Incorrect		% Unsure	
	India	England	India	England	India	England
Phonic Item 1	62.20	82.83	35.43	16.41	2.36	0.74
Phonic Item 2	22.83	61.94	60.62	26.86	16.53	11.19
PA Item 1	23.07	24.62	67.69	73.13	9.23	2.23
PA Item 2	25.38	47.01	68.46	50.00	6.15	2.98
PA Item 3	47.69	72.38	37.69	22.38	14.61	5.22
PA Item 4	43.84	41.04	45.38	52.23	10.76	6.71
Fluency Item 1	43.75	54.68	53.90	42.96	2.34	2.34
Fluency Item 2	53.12	72.65	43.75	25.00	3.12	2.34
Fluency Item 3	42.18	60.93	45.31	24.21	12.50	14.84
Fluency Item 4	65.62	62.50	16.40	14.06	17.96	23.43
Vocab Item 1	62.40	40.00	29.60	57.60	8.00	2.40
Vocab Item 2	30.40	52.00	47.20	20.80	22.40	27.20
Vocab Item 3	30.40	20.00	37.60	30.40	32.00	49.60
Vocab Item 4	56.00	79.20	23.20	4.80	20.80	16.00
RC Item 1	43.85	53.71	44.73	32.23	11.40	14.04
RC Item 2	30.70	55.37	57.01	38.01	12.28	6.61
RC Item 4	39.47	24.79	33.33	28.09	27.19	47.10
RC Item 5	56.14	79.33	29.82	12.39	14.03	8.26
Mean %	**41.85**	**52.70**	**44.46**	**33.93**	**13.67**	**13.35**

Fluency = reading fluency; PA = phonemic awareness; RC = reading comprehension; Vocab = vocabulary.

9.2. How Well Prepared Are Preservice Teachers with Pedagogical Practices to Teach Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Reading Fluency, Vocabulary, and Reading Comprehension Strategies, and What Are the Differences in Pedagogical Knowledge Between English and Indian Preservice Teachers?

The next section of the survey examined the preparedness of preservice teachers in England and India with respect to pedagogical practices in teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension strategies. The assessment of pedagogical knowledge was subdivided into five key reading areas: phonological awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

English preservice teachers scored higher on all domains of teaching reading, but effect sizes varied across reading domains. For phonological awareness and reading fluency, moderate effect sizes ($d = -0.46$ and $d = -0.40$, respectively) indicated better preparedness of English preservice teachers. The large effect size for phonics instruction ($d = -0.89$) suggests that English preservice teachers are far better prepared than their Indian counterparts to teach phonics, a critical component of early reading instruction. Interestingly, both Indian and English preservice teachers had low scores on the teaching vocabulary section and scored similarly on their vocabulary pedagogy. For reading comprehension, the moderate effect size ($d = -0.39$) showed better awareness of English preservice teachers in supporting students' understanding of text.

We also assessed participants' awareness of various evidence-based reading comprehension strategies. As shown in Figure 1, more than 60% of English preservice teachers correctly identified *making predictions* and *summarisation* as evidence-based comprehension strategies. In contrast, fewer than half of the Indian preservice teachers were familiar with one or more of the evidence-based reading comprehension strategies. Notably, a higher percentage of Indian preservice teachers selected distractor items—non-existent comprehension strategies—indicating a degree of confusion or misunderstanding about effective practices for supporting students' comprehension of text.
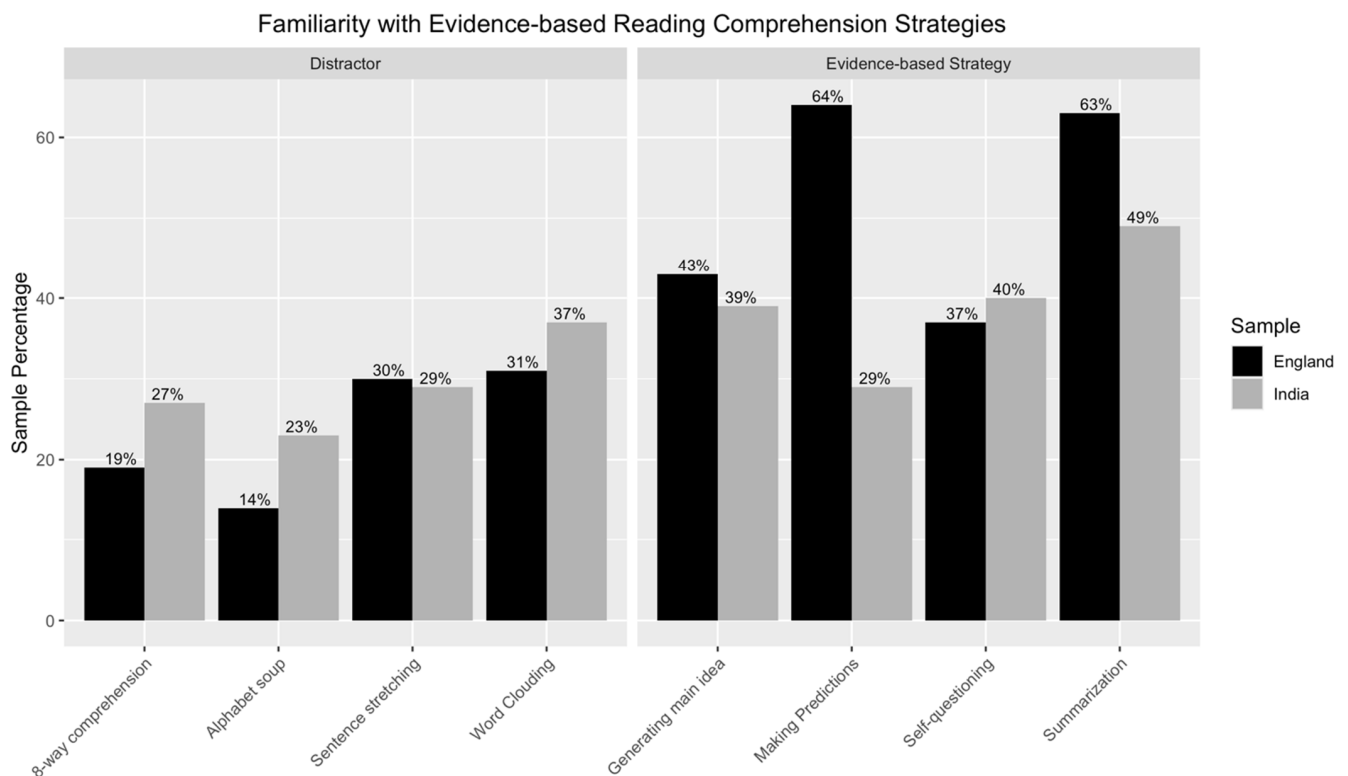

Figure 1. Preservice teachers' familiarity with evidence-based reading comprehension strategies.

9.3. What Is the Level of Confidence That Preservice Teachers Report in Teaching Reading to Students Experiencing Reading Difficulties in Inclusive Classroom Settings, and What Are the Differences Between England and Indian Preservice Teachers?

To address the third research question, participants were asked to rate their level of confidence in teaching reading to students experiencing reading difficulties in inclusive classroom settings. This section of the survey comprised 10 items, each assessing preservice teachers' self-reported confidence in specific areas, such as identifying students experiencing reading difficulties, selecting appropriate strategies, using assessment data, and collaborating with specialists. As shown in Figure 2, Indian preservice teachers generally

reported higher confidence levels across most areas related to supporting students experiencing reading difficulties in mainstream inclusive classrooms, with an overall mean score approximately 0.5 standard deviations higher than their English counterparts.
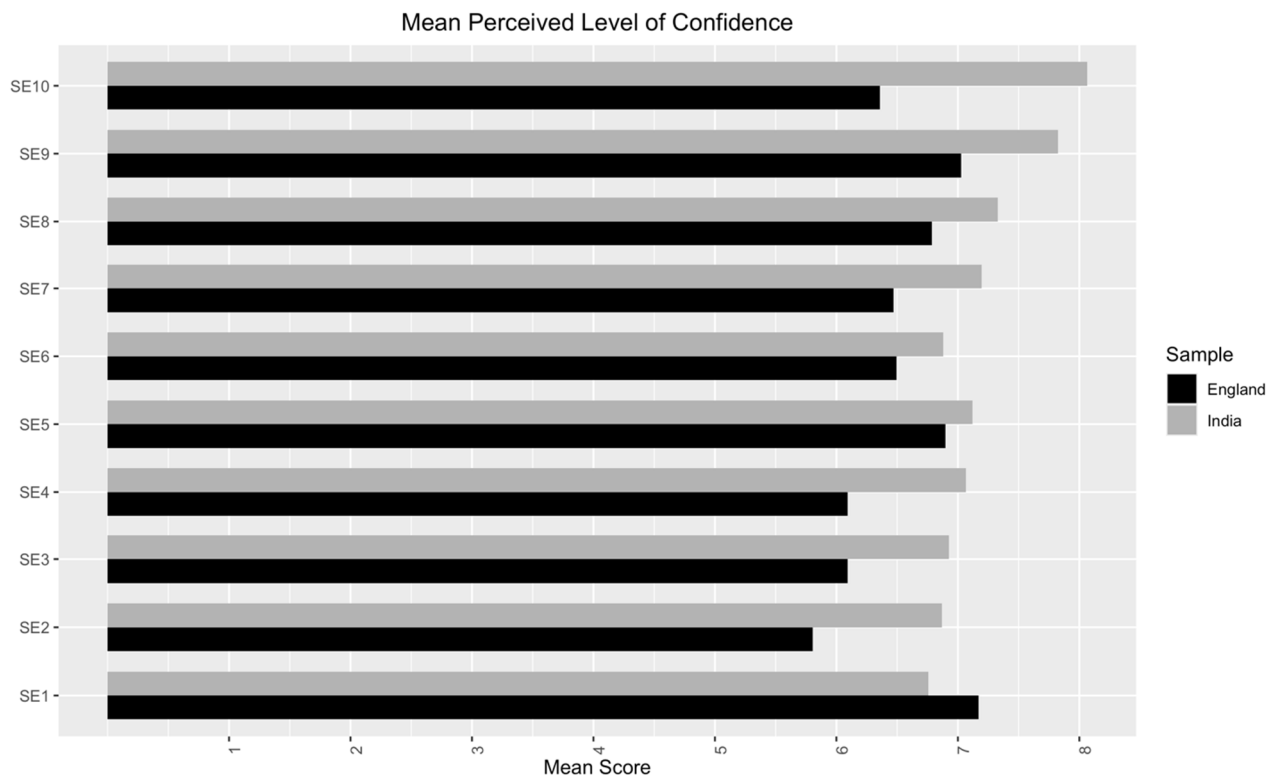

Figure 2. Preservice teachers' perceived level of confidence in supporting struggling readers in inclusive classrooms. SE = self-report. SE1 = Identifying struggling readers; SE2 = Selecting appropriate strategies; SE3 = Using assessment data to inform instruction; SE4 = Implementing effective educational practices; SE5 = Collaborating with specialists or support staff; SE6 = Differentiating instruction; SE7 = Using lesson modifications to ensure access to the curriculum; SE8 = Implementing accommodations; SE9 = Motivating struggling readers; SE10 = Involving parents or guardians.

10. Discussion

The present study aimed to understand preservice teachers' knowledge and preparedness in teaching reading in India and England, focusing on foundational reading knowledge, pedagogical practices, and confidence in supporting students experiencing reading difficulties within inclusive classrooms. The findings reveal significant differences between the two groups, shedding light on the effectiveness of teacher education programs in both countries and highlighting areas for improvement.

10.1. Foundational Reading Knowledge

English preservice teachers demonstrated a significantly higher familiarity with foundational reading knowledge, particularly in phonics, compared to their Indian counterparts. The large effect size indicates a substantial gap, with English preservice teachers correctly answering 80% of the phonics knowledge items, whereas Indian preservice teachers averaged around 50%. This disparity aligns with the strong emphasis on SSP in England's national curriculum and teacher training programs (DfE, 2014; Rose, 2006). The English education system mandates a clear understanding of phonics instruction for all trainee teachers, reinforced by rigorous assessments and inspections (Ofsted, 2024).

In contrast, the lower performance of Indian preservice teachers in phonics knowledge may be attributed to several factors. The multilingual context of India, where English is

often a second or third language, poses challenges in standardising phonics instruction across diverse linguistic backgrounds (Jhingran, 2009). Additionally, teacher education programs in India may not prioritise explicit instruction in English phonics to the same extent, possibly due to curricular constraints or differing educational priorities. This gap is particularly concerning given the increasing number of students attending English-medium schools in India (Nagarajan, 2021), underscoring the need for enhanced training in foundational English reading skills.

10.2. Pedagogical Preparedness in Teaching Reading

When assessing pedagogical knowledge across five key reading areas—phonological awareness, phonics instruction, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension strategies—English preservice teachers consistently outperformed their Indian peers. The most significant difference was in phonics instruction, where the large effect size emphasised the effectiveness of England's focused approach on SSP within teacher education. This structured and prescriptive method potentially provides trainee teachers with clear guidelines and practical experience in teaching phonics, contributing to their higher preparedness (Grossman, 2021).

In terms of phonological awareness and reading fluency, the moderate effect sizes suggest that English preservice teachers are better equipped with strategies to develop these skills in their students. These findings reflect the comprehensive training provided in England, where teacher education programs integrate evidence-based practices and emphasise the importance of these foundational skills in early reading development (DfE, 2024).

Interestingly, both groups of preservice teachers achieved similarly low scores in teaching vocabulary. This suggests that vocabulary instruction may be a neglected area in teacher education programs in both countries. Given the critical role of vocabulary in reading comprehension and overall literacy development (Beck et al., 2013), this finding highlights a universal need to strengthen training in effective vocabulary teaching strategies.

This issue is particularly pressing in the Indian context, where close to 60% of preservice teachers reported plans to teach in secondary schools. At the secondary level, students are expected to engage with more complex texts and abstract concepts, which require advanced vocabulary knowledge and sophisticated comprehension skills. Therefore, the limited preparation in teaching vocabulary among Indian preservice teachers is concerning, as it may hinder their ability to support students in meeting the academic demands of secondary education.

Finally, in teaching reading comprehension strategies, English preservice teachers reported greater familiarity with evidence-based practices, such as summarisation and making predictions. The higher rates of selection of distractor items by Indian preservice teachers indicate potential confusion or limited exposure to effective comprehension strategies. The limited preparedness in teaching vocabulary and comprehension strategies among Indian preservice teachers is particularly concerning, as it may contribute to ongoing challenges in literacy outcomes observed in national assessments (NCERT, 2019; ASER Centre, 2023). If teachers are not equipped with the necessary skills to enhance students' vocabulary and comprehension abilities, students may continue to face challenges in academic achievement and lifelong learning opportunities.

10.3. Current University Coursework in Reading and Inclusive Practices

An additional factor that may contribute to the differences observed in preservice teachers' knowledge and preparedness is the amount of coursework dedicated to teaching reading and inclusive education within their training programs. Our data indicate that a significant proportion of Indian preservice teachers have had limited exposure to courses

on teaching reading. Specifically, 32% of Indian preservice teachers reported that none of their courses focused on teaching reading, compared to only 6% of English preservice teachers. Furthermore, only 8% of Indian preservice teachers had taken three or more courses on teaching reading, whereas 41% of English preservice teachers had done so. This disparity suggests that the lower performance of Indian preservice teachers in foundational reading knowledge may be linked to less formal instruction in this domain during their teacher education programs.

In terms of inclusive education, both countries show room for improvement, but the issue is more pronounced among Indian preservice teachers. For example, 16% of Indian preservice teachers reported having taken no courses focused on inclusive education, compared to 6% of English preservice teachers. These findings highlight the need for teacher education programs to enhance their focus on inclusive education. Ensuring that preservice teachers receive adequate training on inclusive practices is crucial for preparing them to effectively support students experiencing reading difficulties and students with diverse learning needs in mainstream classrooms.

10.4. Confidence in Supporting Students Experiencing Reading Difficulties

Contrary to their performance in the knowledge assessments, Indian preservice teachers reported higher confidence levels in supporting students experiencing reading difficulties in inclusive classrooms across most surveyed areas. This discrepancy between self-reported confidence and actual knowledge has been noted in previous studies (Cunningham et al., 2004; Washburn et al., 2011). Several factors may contribute to this phenomenon.

Firstly, cultural influences might play a role in shaping self-perceptions of competence. In some contexts, expressing confidence is culturally encouraged, or there may be limited opportunities for critical self-assessment within teacher training programs. Additionally, Indian preservice teachers may have limited exposure to practical classroom challenges due to fewer opportunities for hands-on teaching experiences during their training, leading to an overestimation of their abilities.

On the other hand, English preservice teachers, despite their comparatively higher knowledge levels, reported lower confidence. This could be attributed to the rigorous assessment and accountability measures embedded in their training programs, which may foster a more critical self-appraisal of their skills (Ofsted, 2024). The structured nature of SSP instruction might also make them more aware of the complexities involved in teaching reading effectively, leading to a more cautious assessment of their preparedness.

10.5. Implications for Teacher Education Program and Policy

The findings of this study have implications for teacher education programs and policy in both India and England. In India, there is a need for teacher education programs to prioritise explicit instruction in phonics and phonological awareness, especially in the context of teaching English as a second language in the early schooling years. Incorporating evidence-based practices and providing resources for teaching English reading can help bridge the knowledge gap. Given India's multilingual environment, curricula should also be adapted to address the specific challenges of teaching English reading, including strategies for supporting students who may have limited exposure to English outside the classroom. Teacher training programs may need to include reflective practices that encourage preservice teachers to critically assess their skills, aligning their confidence levels with their actual competencies. This can be achieved through increased practical teaching experiences and feedback mechanisms from teacher training institutions (Crichton & Valdera Gil, 2015; Slade et al., 2019).

Moreover, these findings underline the importance of promoting equity in early childhood education, particularly in multilingual contexts where children enter school with diverse linguistic backgrounds. Bilingual children may require more targeted instructional strategies and policy support to ensure consistent, high-quality literacy instruction from an early age. Addressing such linguistic diversity explicitly in teacher education curricula, through coursework on multilingual pedagogy and inclusive literacy practices, can help mitigate academic disparities and support more equitable educational outcomes for young learners. Importantly, the proficiency level of the teachers themselves is a critical factor; one cannot effectively teach a language or specific literacy skills without fully mastering them. Strengthening teachers' own English language skills should thus be a core component of preservice and in-service training, especially in settings where English is taught as a second or additional language.

Establishing a clear set of standards to ensure that preservice teachers meet requisite knowledge benchmarks before completing their programs may also be beneficial. In England, for instance, the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011) provide a nationally recognised framework delineating specific competencies and expectations in subject knowledge and pedagogy, including literacy instruction. Adopting or adapting a comparable framework in India could help articulate explicit performance outcomes for preservice teachers, ensuring that crucial areas—such as phonics instruction, reading comprehension strategies, and inclusive literacy practices—are systematically developed and evaluated prior to certification.

In England, despite a strong performance in phonics-related knowledge, the low scores in vocabulary instruction suggest a need to strengthen this aspect of teacher training. Integrating effective vocabulary teaching strategies (e.g., Beck et al., 2013) into the curriculum can potentially lead to enhanced preservice teacher preparedness in supporting students' language development, especially in the early years of schooling. Teacher education programs might consider providing additional support to build preservice teachers' confidence in their abilities, ensuring they feel equipped to meet the challenges of diverse classroom settings.

For both India and England, emphasising all components of early reading instruction—phonics, phonological awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension—is crucial. Teacher education programs should strive for a balanced approach that prepares teachers comprehensively. Furthermore, recognising and addressing the unique cultural and linguistic contexts in which preservice teachers will work can potentially enhance the relevance and effectiveness of their training.

10.6. Limitations

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. It is important to acknowledge that direct comparisons between preservice teachers in England and India, while methodologically informative, carry inherent ethical and cultural implications (Robinson-Pant & Singal, 2013). Such comparisons may inadvertently reinforce deficit models by suggesting that one educational system is inherently superior to another (Crossley & Tikly, 2004). This risk is particularly acute when differences in teacher preparation are examined without sufficiently contextualising the distinct sociocultural, linguistic, and institutional environments in which these programs operate. In the context of India, for example, the multilingual educational landscape and varied instructional priorities present unique challenges that are not readily comparable to the structured and prescriptive approaches seen in England's SSP framework. Therefore, the differences observed in our study should be interpreted not as absolute indicators of teacher quality, but rather as reflections of the diverse educational contexts and priorities that shape teacher education

in each country. Additionally, this study did not directly measure participants' proficiency in English, which may be especially relevant in India's multilingual context and could partially explain the differences found in phonics knowledge. Due to differences in institutional contexts (e.g., the types of programs in India and England, and the variability in the year of study or teaching experience among participants), comparing the two groups should be interpreted with caution; these unmeasured factors might also contribute to the observed differences in knowledge and confidence.

The sample size was relatively small and may not be representative of the broader populations in India and England. Furthermore, as the survey was distributed via gate-keepers to various departments without direct monitoring, the total number of potential participants remains unknown, precluding the calculation of a response rate and potentially introducing recruitment bias. Additionally, the use of self-report measures for assessing confidence and pedagogical knowledge may be subject to social desirability bias and may not accurately reflect actual competencies or classroom practices. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design captures preservice teachers' data at a single point in time, without accounting for the progression of knowledge and confidence throughout their training. Longitudinal studies could provide a deeper understanding of how these factors develop and interact over time. Although the survey instruments demonstrated acceptable reliability in some domains, the relatively low reliability ($\alpha = 0.65$) for the pedagogical knowledge scale calls for caution when interpreting those findings.

Appendix A

Preservice Teacher Survey (England version)

Survey Purpose:

The primary aim of this survey is to assess the effectiveness of educational institutions in preparing future teachers to teach foundational English reading skills to young learners. While the survey will be taken by university students aspiring to be teachers, the focus is not on individual performance but rather on the collective effectiveness of teacher preparation programmes at various universities. Therefore, we encourage participants to respond to the best of their ability, as your responses will provide valuable insights into the quality of teacher education in reading instruction.

Your responses to this survey questionnaire are entirely voluntary and will be used, anonymously, in our research study. You may withdraw your participation at any time and may choose to skip any question. By completing this survey, you agree to be in our study. For our part, we agree to report the finds as aggregate data. A check box indicates that you

have read and understand the terms of this agreement, agree to participate in our study, and allow the use of your information in the questionnaire for research purposes:

__Yes

__No

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Your age _____ (in years)
2. Gender _____ M/F/non-binary
3. Please specify the name of the higher education institution (i.e., university) where you are currently enrolled. _____
4. Programmes _____ (e.g., BA in . . ..)
5. Programmes Year of Study _____ (first, second, final)
6. Do you have any past teaching experience in a school? (Y/N)

    a. If yes, you worked as a

        i. Instructional aide/teaching assistant
        ii. Teacher
        iii. School administrator
        iv. Other

7. What age group of children do you plan to teach after graduation?

    a. Early childhood (Nursery to Reception);
    b. Primary school (Years 1 to 2—Key Stage 1),
    c. Later years (Years 4 or later, Key Stage 2 or later)

8. What subjects are you interested in teaching? (Select all that apply)

    a. English
    b. Science
    c. Social studies/history
    d. Art
    e. Music
    f. Physical education
    g. Languages other than English
    h. Special Education
    i. Other (Please specify) _____

9. Please indicate the number of modules you have taken during your Bachelor's programmes of study that focused on teaching reading to primary or pre-primary age students.

    a. One module
    b. Two modules
    c. Three or more modules
    d. None of the modules focused on how to teach reading

Before responding to the following questions, please consider it as an opportunity to reflect on your understanding of teaching English reading skills. If you are uncertain about any of the following questions, please feel free to select the "*I am not sure*" option. Your honest feedback is crucial for identifying professional development needs in reading instruction.

Section 2: Phonics Knowledge Check

1. If **wug** is a word, the letter 'u' would probably sound like 'u' in:

    a. cute
    b. **duck**
    c. about

    d.   I am not sure

2.   If **flek** is a word, then the letter 'e' would probably sound like 'e' in

    a.   **bend**
    b.   her
    c.   me
    d.   I am not sure

3.   A combination of two or three consonants that are pronounced separately, each keeping its own unique sound, is called

    a.   Silent consonant
    b.   **Consonant blend**
    c.   Schwa sound
    d.   I am not sure

4.   Choose the word below that has a consonant blend in it:

    a.   **Black**
    b.   Ship
    c.   What
    d.   I am not sure

5.   How many individual speech sounds or phonemes are represented by the word **cat**?

    a.   2
    b.   **3**
    c.   4
    d.   I am not sure

6.   How many individual speech sounds or phonemes are represented by the word **goat**?

    a.   **3**
    b.   4
    c.   5
    d.   I am not sure

7.   Which of the following pairs of words begin with the **same sound**

    a.   **Cat and Kite**
    b.   Chess and chorus
    c.   Gold and Gentle
    d.   I am not sure

8.   Which of the following pairs of words contain the same vowel sounds-

    a.   Good and Zoom
    b.   Foot and Boot
    c.   **True and You**
    d.   I am not sure

9.   How many syllables are in the word 'table'?

    a.   One
    b.   **Two**
    c.   Five
    d.   I am not sure

10.   How many syllables are in the word 'chart'?

    a.   **One**
    b.   Two
    c.   Five

d. I am not sure

11. How many syllables are in the word 'basketball'

    a. Two
    b. **Three**
    c. Nine
    d. I am not sure

12. Which of these words is a compound word?

    a. University
    b. Computer
    c. **Firefly**
    d. I am not sure

13. What is a CVC word?

    a. **A single syllable word with a consonant-vowel-consonant pattern.**
    b. A nonsense word that is made up of a consonant, a vowel, and a consonant.
    c. A word that is made up of the smallest unit of sound in a language, called a phoneme.
    d. I am not sure

Section 3: Teaching Pedagogy
Phonics Instruction

1. How would you assess and monitor students' progress in word reading skills?

    a. Regular tests or quizzes
    b. Through observing students during literacy activities
    c. Informal reading assessments
    d. **Combination of the above**
    e. I am not sure

2. Phonics instruction typically starts with

    a. Vowel sounds
    b. **Consonant sounds**
    c. Schwa sound
    d. All of the above
    e. I am not sure

Phonemic Awareness Instruction

1. In early literacy, what is phonemic awareness?

    a. Understanding letter-sound correspondence
    b. Identifying rhyming words
    c. **Recognising individual sounds in spoken words**
    d. All of the above
    e. I am not sure

2. Which activities or strategies would you use to develop phonemic awareness in preschool/kindergarten children?

    a. Reading words in isolation
    b. **Recognising initial or final sounds in spoken words**
    c. Printing or writing letters
    d. All of the above
    e. I am not sure

3. Which of the below is one way to teach phonemic awareness skills to preschool/kindergarten children?

    a. **Have students look at a picture of hat and segment each sound by clapping**

    b. Have students choose rhyming words from word cards

    c. Have students read as many words as possible in one minute

    d. Have students read words from words cards to their partner

    e. I am not sure

4. How would you assess students' phonemic awareness skills?

    a. Asking them to orally manipulate sounds in words

    b. Administering formal assessments

    c. Observing how students read unknown or pseudo words

    d. **All of the above**

    e. I am not sure

Reading Fluency Instruction

1. What is reading fluency? It is the ability to . . .

    a. read independent words accurately

    b. **read with speed and accuracy**

    c. comprehend and understand the meaning of text

    d. write fluently and coherently

    e. I am not sure

2. What are some ways in which teachers can help students become fluent readers?

    a. Model fluent reading

    b. Repeated reading

    c. Assisted reading with audiobooks

    d. **All of the above**

    e. I am not sure

3. How can teachers assess students reading fluency?

    a. Check to see which fonts students can read in best

    b. Check students' vision

    c. **Check the number of words students can read correctly in a minute**

    d. Check if students can memorise and recite the passage and record the number of ideas they recall accurately

    e. I am not sure

4. Pairing students who struggle to read fluently with peers who read more fluently during reading fluency activities can help improve struggling readers' reading fluency.

    a. **True**

    b. False

    c. No past studies have explored peer impact on reading fluency

    d. I have never heard about students working in pairs before

    e. I am not sure

Vocabulary Instruction

1. You are a primary school teacher and today you are introducing a new vocabulary word "amiable" to your students. Which of the below methods would you use to first introduce this word to ensure that all students understand its meaning?

    a. Ask students if they know what the word means

    b. **Explain the meaning of the word in everyday language**

    c. Ask students to read a definition from the dictionary

d.   Have students memorise the meaning of the new word

e.   I am not sure

2.   Which of the following options best describes contextual analysis in vocabulary instruction?

a.   A method of breaking down words into their individual sounds to determine their meaning.

b.   An approach that emphasises the use of synonyms and antonyms to understand word meanings.

c.   **The process of using surrounding text or clues to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words.**

d.   A strategy that focuses on teaching word origins and etymology to expand vocabulary knowledge.

e.   I am not sure

3.   Which of the following options best describes morphemic analysis in vocabulary instruction?

a.   An approach that encourages students to use gestures and physical movements to act out and learn new vocabulary.

b.   The process of memorising word definitions through repetition.

c.   An approach in which students are taught to make use of morphograms to understand the morpheme-grapheme relationship.

d.   **An approach that involves teaching students to analyse the structure and meaning of words by examining the smallest meaningful parts of words.**

e.   I am not sure

4.   Which of the following options best describes the effectiveness of teaching prefixes to support students' vocabulary growth? For example, the prefix "re" means again as in resell or to sell again.

a.   Teaching Latin and Greek prefixes has no impact on students' vocabulary development.

b.   Teaching Latin and Greek prefixes is only beneficial for advanced learners.

c.   **Teaching Latin and Greek prefixes significantly enhances students' vocabulary growth.**

d.   Teaching Latin and Greek prefixes is a time-consuming strategy with limited benefits.

e.   I am not sure

Supporting Reading Comprehension

1.   What is the Simple View of Reading?

a.   Reading comprehension is simply dependent on decoding skills

b.   **Reading comprehension is a combination of decoding and language comprehension skills**

c.   Reading comprehension is viewed as a performance in fluency and automaticity in reading

d.   Reading comprehension is viewed as a combination of reading speed and level of focus to understand the text.

e.   I am not sure

2.   Which of the following options best describes reading comprehension strategies?

a.   Techniques used to decode words and improve reading fluency.

b.   Strategies to enhance vocabulary and word recognition skills.

c.   Methods to improve grammar and reading proficiency

d.   **Approaches to understand and interpret the meaning of written text.**

e.   I am not sure

3.   Choose all of the below that are evidence-based reading comprehension strategies that you could teach students to help support their comprehension of the text:

    a.   **Summarisation**
    b.   **Generating main idea**
    c.   **Self-questioning**
    d.   **Making predictions**
    e.   8-way comprehension
    f.   Alphabet soup
    g.   Sentence stretching
    h.   Word clouding
    i.   I have never heard of these before

4.   Which of the following options best describes reciprocal teaching?

    a.   **A strategy in which students take turns acting as the teacher to facilitate group discussions and comprehension monitoring.**
    b.   A teaching method that focuses on individualised instruction for struggling readers
    c.   An approach that emphasises the use of visual aids and graphic organisers to enhance comprehension.
    d.   A technique that promotes the development of reading comprehension through peer work
    e.   I am not sure

5.   Which of the below is a way to assess students' level of reading comprehension?

    a.   Administering a timed reading comprehension test to measure accuracy and speed.
    b.   **Asking students to retell or summarise the main idea and details of the text.**
    c.   Conducting a vocabulary quiz to assess students' comprehension of word meanings
    d.   Observing students' comprehension of the text during guided reading sessions
    e.   I am not sure

Section 4: Confidence Supporting Struggling Readers in Mainstream Classroom

In the last section, we want to know your perceived level of confidence in supporting struggling readers in your inclusive classroom.

Key terms

Struggling readers are defined as students who encounter difficulties in effectively and fluently reading words and/or comprehending text compared to their age-level peers and may be identified with specific learning difficulties.

Inclusive classroom refers to general education or regular classroom setting where students of all abilities are educated together.

Rating system: 1 (not at all confident), 5 (somewhat confident), 10 (extremely confident)

Rate your level of confidence in:

1.   **Identifying** struggling readers in your mainstream classroom
2.   Selecting appropriate **strategies** for supporting the needs of struggling readers
3.   Using **assessment** data to inform your reading instruction for struggling readers
4.   Implementing **effective educational practices** to support reading development for struggling readers in your mainstream classroom
5.   **Collaborating** with specialists or support staff to address the needs of struggling readers
6.   **Differentiating instruction** to meet the needs of struggling readers
7.   Using various lesson **modifications** to ensure struggling readers can access the curriculum
8.   Implementing **accommodations** to support students' diverse learning needs
9.   **Motivating** struggling readers to engage with reading tasks

10. **Involving parents or guardians** in supporting reading development of struggling readers

Last Question

Please tell us how many modules you have taken during your studies that focus on inclusive education and supporting diverse learners in classrooms.

a. 1 module
b. 2 modules
c. 3 or more modules
d. None of the modules' core focus was on inclusive education

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