



USAID/LAC READS CAPACITY PROGRAM

RESEARCH REPORT: READING AND TIME ON TASK IN THE FIRST CYCLE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL IN HAITI

(Grades 2 and 4)

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

5T	Teaching, tongue, tests, time, and texts
AIR	American Institutes for Research
CFEF	Training Center for Primary Education
ENI	Primary Teacher Training School
ICTE	Information and Communication Technologies in Education
InnovEd-UniQ University	Higher Institute for Educational Training, Research, and Innovation-Quisqueya
IPN	National Pedagogical Institute
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
LRCP	Latin America and Caribbean Reads Capacity Program
MENFP	Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training
RQ	Research question
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reading with comprehension allows learners to read for pleasure or acquire new information, but also to succeed in all subjects throughout their lives, in class and outside the classroom. Students who do not master reading in the first years of schooling are much more likely to fail in other academic subjects, to repeat grades, and to drop out of school. Lacking mastery of basic reading skills at a certain age leads to a steady delay in academic progress (Stanovich, 2009). International literature indicates a variety of factors must be present for students to learn to read with comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000; Hoover & Gough, 1990).

Some of the most important factors include teaching in a language spoken and understood by the student, amount of time spent teaching essential reading skills, amount of time spent reading and being read to, availability of a variety of reading materials at the right level and in the right language, and a curriculum that guides teachers through teaching progressions that develop in students the ability to read with comprehension.

In Haiti, more research is needed to learn how the teaching curriculum for reading in the first two cycles of primary schooling aligns with international best practices in teaching students to read. In addition, very little information exists about the amount of time dedicated to teaching reading in the early years of primary education in Haiti. Although the reading curriculum includes timetables, it does not indicate clearly what teachings should contain on a day-to-day basis. In addition, the curriculum does not recommend a time to teach each reading skill. Finally, very little information exists about the language used in materials in Haitian classrooms.

This study, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as part of its partnership with the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training (MENFP) of Haiti and the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Reads Capacity Program (LRCP), was led by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and executed by InnovEd-UniQ (Higher Institute for Educational Training, Research and Innovation-Quisqueya University) in Haiti. The study seeks to address issues around reading and provide a clearer picture of what is happening in Haiti's primary classrooms in terms of language use, curricula, teaching materials, and time spent learning key reading skills. To do this, we asked the following research questions (RQs):

1. How does the detailed reading curriculum for the primary cycle in Haiti conceptualize reading? How does the curriculum define reading, and how does it prescribe methods of teaching reading to students?
2. What is the average amount of time that students spend on each reading skill (defined as vocabulary development, oral fluency, and reading comprehension) in French and Kreyòl during reading class?
3. To what extent are individual reading, teacher-led reading, and collective reading aloud methods used in reading classes for students in Grades 2 and 4?
4. What is the availability of teaching support materials (audio-visual, blackboards, posters, textbooks, and notebooks) in the reading class?

To answer these RQs, we relied on three main sources of data: (1) an analysis of the reading class in the primary cycle of study, (2) the observation of second- and fourth-grade classes to measure the amount of time spent teaching key reading skills, and (3) teacher questionnaires. The data obtained from these sources allowed us to answer each of the RQs, and by triangulating the data with our conceptual framework, we were also able to identify specific recommendations about policies and practices to improve the teaching and learning environments in reading classes in Haiti.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the limitations of this research (e.g., limited sample size, exploratory and nonlongitudinal methodology, constraints encountered in the context of data collection, etc.), the research highlights several conclusions:

First, the design of the curriculum for teaching reading is not consistent with the socioeducational reality of Haiti. This study shows that although the vast majority of students enter school with strong Kreyòl language skills and very little in the way of French language, the emphasis in terms of instruction and available teaching and learning materials is much more on French.

Second, teachers in Haiti use a broad range of methods to teach reading. However, teachers do not spend enough time applying those methods. This is important because of the complex bilingualism in Haitian schools. For example, students may use Kreyòl in everyday life but that does not mean they master the language, and students use written materials mainly drafted in French, having just recently been introduced to French in primary school. Even in a space where students are heavily exposed to French, difficulties persist, and school failure remains a concern.

According to Allington (2002), qualified and experienced teachers may be able to (a) correct potential shortcomings in the curricula and (b) adapt the curricula to meet the needs of their students. However, in Haiti, the abilities and effectiveness of teachers who, in most cases, have not received the training required to be teaching others is of great concern. Furthermore, the teaching and learning materials in the Haitian classrooms are not sufficient or diverse. Therefore, Haitian schools face three challenges: the reading programs are weak; teaching and learning materials are not always available and lack variety; and teaching staff at the primary school level lack training.

One of the key findings from this study is the insufficient time dedicated to teaching reading in Kreyòl and French. In addition, teachers do not implement evenly the number of hours prescribed for reading in the national curriculum. This is particularly evident in Grade 4, where French becomes the main language of instruction and very little attention is given to the continued learning of Kreyòl. The tendency to introduce French as soon as possible and to neglect Kreyòl is not surprising, given the widespread perception that more time dedicated to French equals better skills in French.

More work needs to be done to provide parents and teachers with evidence about how students learn to read best in a language they master and understand and can transfer these skills more effectively into a second language if they have already acquired sufficient vocabulary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To correct or strengthen the teaching–learning mechanism, we recommend the following actions or decisions based on the findings from this study:

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **FOCUS THE PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING CURRICULA ON READING INSTRUCTION.** Teachers in the Haitian primary classroom generally have low levels of initial training, and most receive little to no training in how to teach children to read in Kreyòl. They also receive little to no instruction in how to teach French as an additional language. In addition to learning how to teach children to read in Kreyòl and how to teach French as a second language, the data indicate that most teachers in Haiti need an accelerated class to improve their own Kreyòl writing and French speaking skills.
2. **ENSURE THAT EARLY GRADE TEACHERS RECEIVE UPDATED TRAINING ON LITERACY INSTRUCTION.** In addition to ensuring that the pre-service teacher training curriculum addresses the content and pedagogical knowledge teachers need to know and be able to do to successfully teach children to read, the government also needs to address the issue of providing in-service teachers with this same opportunity to update their skills. Teachers in the early grades have the critical responsibility of helping children to acquire the foundational reading skills necessary to enable them to succeed in all of their subjects. If they are not equipped to handle this task, then students will pass into the upper grades without developing a solid literacy foundation.
3. **CLARIFY AND REINFORCE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION POLICIES AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL.** The evidence clearly shows that children need enough time to develop solid decoding skills in their first language and time to develop their oral French vocabulary before transitioning into French language instruction. Children will have better outcomes both in Kreyòl reading and in French if this transition does not take place before the fourth grade.
4. **REVISE THE NATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM.** The current curriculum does not clearly and sequentially provide specific objectives and pedagogical activities for teachers to implement in the classroom to teach reading in Kreyòl. These materials should be revised to reflect the most recent evidence on the skills children need to acquire to learn to read in a transparent alphabetic script. There should be a strong focus on developing decoding skills as well as building children’s academic oral vocabulary in the early grades. Children must master these two skills in order to be able to read with comprehension.
5. **INCREASE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK DEVOTED TO TEACHING READING IN KREYÒL.** Reading is the foundational skill that determines whether a child will succeed in all other subjects throughout his or her schooling career. The time devoted to teaching reading in Kreyòl is currently insufficient to help children develop a solid foundation, particularly when we consider how much instructional time is lost due to other factors such as school disruptions, teacher and student absences, and time loss in the classroom due to management or discipline activities. It is critical that teachers have enough time to teach the key reading skills as well as to provide opportunities for daily practice.

6. **PROMOTE THE USE OF SCRIPTED LESSONS SUPPORTED BY TRAINING AND COACHING.** In the short term, and given the weaknesses of existing pre- and in-service teacher training programs, providing teachers with scripted lessons can help improve instructional practice and improve time on task. In addition, teachers require a minimal level of training in implementing the lessons as well as coaching support to continue to improve their instructional practice. Experience has shown that interventions to provide teachers with structured lessons to teach reading early in the primary cycle have doubled the time spent on task (Research Triangle Institute, 2016).
7. **ENSURE THAT ALL PRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS HAVE ACCESS TO SUFFICIENT TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS IN KREYÒL.** A print-rich environment provides the opportunity for children to apply the new skills they are learning in the reading classroom. We know that children need access to a variety of reading materials at the right level, in the right language, and that are interesting and contextually appropriate. Some of these materials can be created by teachers and students, but the government should provide at least a basic set of leveled Kreyòl reading materials for each Haitian primary classroom that enable children to practice reading and continue to grow their skills.

PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **TEACH CHILDREN THE CORE READING COMPETENCIES: PHONEMIC AWARENESS, PHONICS, VOCABULARY, FLUENCY, AND COMPREHENSION IN KREYÒL.** The research is clear that in alphabetic languages like Kreyòl, teachers should focus on teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension skills starting with easier concepts and moving to increasingly more difficult skills. Children should practice each of these skills separately, and they should be given the opportunity to combine the skills in the act of reading.
2. **ENSURE THAT THE FIRST AND SECOND YEARS OF FRENCH ARE FOCUSED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS.** Learning to read and learning a new language are two separate activities and should be treated accordingly in the classroom. In the early years of schooling, teachers should focus on teaching children how to read in Kreyòl, and they should teach children to learn French as a second or additional language. French instruction should remain focused on developing students' oral vocabulary in the early years as well as teaching some of the linguistic differences between French and Kreyòl that can support a later transition.
3. **CREATE PRINT MATERIALS TO FILL YOUR CLASSROOM.** Teaching and learning materials do not seem to be widely available in most Haitian primary classrooms. Teachers, students, parents, and communities can remedy this by creating homemade materials to fill the walls, such as alphabet charts, student names, and pictures with an accompanying word. The materials do not have to be professional to be effective.
4. **ENSURE THAT STUDENTS ARE READ TO AND PRACTICE READING DAILY.** Reading and being read to are necessary activities for children to become fluent readers. When a teacher reads to students, the students have the opportunity to witness fluent reading and learn the conventions of print (the direction the teacher reads, how they respond to punctuation). When students practice reading, they get to combine the individual skills they have learned into one process of decoding and comprehending a written text. Practicing reading will improve students' reading abilities and motivate them to read more.

INTRODUCTION

This study, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as part of its partnership with the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training (MENFP) of Haiti and the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Reads Capacity Program (LRCP), was led by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and executed by InnovEd-UniQ (Higher Institute for Educational Training, Research and Innovation-Quisqueya University) in Haiti. The LRCP seeks to generate local evidence that can be used to improve the outcomes of early literacy¹ in the Haitian bilingual context. To do this, the LRCP, through its partner UniQ, designed an exploratory research study to identify the amount of time dedicated to reading activities in the reading class,² as defined by the detailed curriculum of the MENFP, for the second and fourth grades. The research team also examined other factors affecting the teaching of reading, such as the pedagogical methods used to teach reading and the availability of teaching and learning materials in classes.

The main objectives of this study were to analyze (a) the amount of time spent on reading—that is, the amount of time allotted to teaching and learning specific skills in reading in Kreyòl (L1) and French (L2)—during the reading class, and (b) the materials used to teach those skills in the two languages. In the MENFP curriculum, the team focused on the reading class whose emphasis is on teaching vocabulary, spelling, writing, and oral communication.

Four interrelated research questions (RQs) guided this study:

- 1) How does the detailed reading curriculum for the primary cycle in Haiti conceptualize reading? How does the curriculum define reading, and how does it prescribe methods of teaching reading to students?
- 2) What is the average amount of time that students spend on each reading skill (defined as vocabulary development, oral fluency, and reading comprehension) in French and Kreyòl during reading class?
- 3) To what extent are individual reading, teacher-led reading, and collective reading aloud methods used in reading classes for students in Grades 2 and 4?
- 4) What is the availability of teaching support materials (audio-visual, blackboards, posters, textbooks, and notebooks) in the reading class?

For students to acquire the basic reading skills necessary for lifelong learning, they must have access to quality education and an appropriate curriculum, and they must have enough time at school to focus on learning key reading skills and to practice reading. Additionally, reading materials must be created in the right language and at an appropriate level. Results of the Early Grade Reading Assessment in Haiti (2009) revealed that students do not read in either Kreyòl or French with sufficient levels of fluency and comprehension to understand what they are reading. These poor results are largely related to

¹Literacy in the early years covers the period from birth to fourth grade (school year).

²The reading class is the “reading learning class” according to the detailed curriculum developed by the MENFP. The detailed curriculum includes several classes that cover a variety of reading skills, but for the purposes of this study, “reading” or the reading literacy class was selected for observation.

curriculum, which does not cover all of the key reading skills children need to master, the lack of quality materials in the right language, and the pressure to use French over Kreyòl .

The time allocated to reading in the two languages, Kreyòl and French, is the subject of ongoing debate between school officials and practitioners. The prescribed time for teaching reading, writing, and oral communication in the two languages in primary grades is often not observed in practice. This study will help decision makers and practitioners better understand what is really happening during reading classes in Grades 2 and 4 in terms of time spent teaching reading skills and the methods and materials used to do so. For our analysis, we observed (a) the implementation of the detailed curriculum in reading classes to identify the amount of time dedicated to teaching various reading techniques and (b) the pedagogical methods and media used to teach reading.

This research study is organized into several sections. The following section provides a contextual overview of Haiti's social, educational, and bilingual environment of the education curriculum. The next section describes the conceptual framework, including the existing literature on key reading skills, time spent on task, and other inputs required for successful reading instruction in bilingual contexts. The subsequent section outlines the research methodology and identifies the instruments used for data collection. Next, the findings of this study are organized according to the RQs. The document ends with a discussion of the findings and recommendations for policies and practice.

Keywords: reading, literacy, primary school, basic education, curriculum, teaching time, time on task

CONTEXT

Since 2000, the sociopolitical context in Haiti has been marked by instability, economic stagnation, and ineffective leadership. In 2012, Haiti ranked 149 out of 182 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index. Six years later, in 2018, Haiti ranked 168 out of 189 countries and territories on the scale, and it was the only country in the LAC region to appear in the “Low Human Development” category.³ Education statistics reveal an alarming reason for the country’s socioeconomic regression during the past 6 years: less than 50% of Haitians are literate,⁴ nearly 65% of children attend school at primary school level,⁵ less than 35% of students reach Grade 6, only 20% of eligible-aged children attend high school, and 12 out of 1,000 students go to university.⁶

This profound educational crisis is closely linked to the low level of qualifications of and institutional support for teachers. MENFP’s census of 2017 reveals an alarming increase in the number of teachers without formal training: 80% of teachers who teach in primary school (first and second cycles) and 48% of preschool teachers do not have educational degrees. At a national level, in September 2013, approximately 220,000 teachers were registered at the MENFP, of whom about 180,000 (or about 82%) did not have the qualifications required for teaching.⁷ According to the assessments in French and mathematics conducted by the MENFP and World Vision (2013) on primary school teachers in the Central Plateau, in which assessment questions were extracted directly from the examinations of teacher training institutes, only 10% of teachers of French and 22% of teachers of mathematics were able to correctly answer at least half of the questions (MENFP, 2013).

At the national level, the efforts of trainers are failing to meet the demand and needs of the educational sector. Approximately 90 training centers in the 10 geographical departments in Haiti offer training courses, but the State does not guarantee the quality of those training institutions. As a result, the country lacks qualified teachers. In addition, existing teacher training programs do not focus on reading. Instead, teachers-in-training follow a general education program that does not prepare them to teach students how to read and write in the early grades.

MENFP directs the Haitian education system. This ministry is the sole regulatory authority for all levels of education and training in Haiti, from preschool to higher education and vocational education. Despite the efforts of democratization and consolidation over the past 30 years by national and international players, the Haitian education system remains one of the weakest in the LAC region. Aside from the

³ United Nations Development Index. Retrieved from http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/HTI.pdf

⁴ Huebler, F., & Lu, W. (2013). Adult and youth literacy: National, regional and global trends, 1985–2015 (Alphabétisation des adultes et des jeunes: tendances nationales, régionales et mondiales, 1985–2015). Paris, France: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Retrieved from http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/adult-and-youth-literacy-national-regional-and-global-trends-1985-2015-en_0.pdf

⁵ MENFP/UNICEF. (2017). Presentation of the results of the study on children not attending school in Haiti. Document in PDF format shared by the MENFP.

⁶ In a speech delivered by Saulo Neiva, Regional Director of the Francophone University Agency (AUF) and reported by *The Haitian Times*, June 4, 2019.

⁷ Hebblethwaite, B. (2012, January). *French and underdevelopment, Haitian Creole and development: Educational language policy problems and solutions in Haiti (Français et sous-développement, créole haïtien et développement: problèmes de politique linguistique éducative et solutions en Haïti)*. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages (Journal des langues pidgin et créole)*, 27(2), 255–302. Retrieved from <https://www.jbe-platform.com/content/journals/15699870>.

effects of the country's challenging socioeconomic issues, this weakness can be attributed to several other factors:

- Low level of teacher training in the education system;
- Poor quality of school infrastructure;
- Lack of appropriate teaching and learning materials;
- The switch to the French language, which is a second or additional language for the majority of students entering the primary cycle; and
- The majority of students arrive at the primary school when they are at least 2 years older than the age required for the grade concerned.

The primary Haitian education system comprises two categories of schools:

- Private schools—including secular, community, and religious schools (Congregational, Protestant, Adventist, Muslim, etc.)—account for nearly 90% of the system.
- Public schools, including high schools and national schools, represent approximately 10% of the system.

The Haitian education system is structured around academic levels:

- Preschool education lasts 3 years.
- Basic education is divided into three cycles of primary school spanning 9 years.
- Secondary education lasts 4 years.⁸

At the end of this cycle, students take an official examination to earn a national diploma (degree).

The teaching and learning of reading in Kreyòl begins in first grade and continues throughout the three cycles of Primary school; French starts a year later, in second grade. Kreyòl has always been informally present in schools, even though schools, in general, rejected it. French was always the language of instruction. However, the Bernard reform of 1979 introduced Kreyòl as the official language of instruction in schools.⁹ The reform also redefined the role of French in the school system, by recommending the teaching of oral French during the first 2 years of Primary school and the teaching of written French from the second year of the same cycle on.

In 1998, this policy was formalized through the National Primary Education Program (National Pedagogical Institute [IPN], Ministry of National Education, n.d.). The program recommends that (1) reading instruction should begin in Kreyòl in the first year of school and in French in the second year;

⁸ See Article 6 of the MENFP Memorandum (October 11, 2002) on the implementation of the new secondary school in the Haitian education system.

⁹ Bernard, J. C. (1980). *Communiqué from the National Education Department of National Education concerning the orthography of Haitian Creole*. Port-au-Prince, Haiti: Secretary of State for National Education.

(2) the majority of time dedicated to Kreyòl should be allocated to reading, and the majority of the time dedicated to French should be allocated to oral communication; and (3) the transition from Kreyòl to French as a language of instruction should take place early in the cycle during the fourth year.

However, this reform is not applied evenly. Many private schools (such as Catholic schools and some secular schools) teach in only French and consider Kreyòl as a language to be taught only for writing. French is also considered the language of economic progress and social status. This is why many parents encourage schools to focus more on French than on Kreyòl. The MENFP did not apply the Kreyòl -to-gradual-transition-to-French to the teaching policy in the first years of the primary cycle, so most schools acted as they pleased, generally focusing more or only on French.¹⁰

Official curricula at the primary level are also poor, even in classes where Kreyòl is defined as the language of instruction. Most of the textbooks and additional materials at the primary level are written in French. This complicated teaching and learning environment prevents students from mastering reading in Kreyòl and oral communication in French in the early grades. As a result, students are repeating grades or dropping out of school at high rates, and many Haitian students are not succeeding in school or attaining a higher level of education.

¹⁰ For an in-depth analysis and discussion of the Bernard Reform, see Prou, M. (2009). *Attempts at reforming Haiti's education system : The challenges of mending the tapestry, 1979–2004 (Tentatives de réforme du système éducatif haïtien: les défis de la réparation de la tapisserie, 1979–2004)*. *Journal of Haitian Studies*, 15(1/2).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Before collecting data in the field, the research team thoroughly reviewed the literature on the development of initial literacy, the learning of first- and second-language reading, the factors that favor strong development of initial literacy, and the role of time dedicated to the reading task. This section presents the framework for the research design.

DEFINITION OF LITERACY AND OF THE SKILLS IT ENCOMPASSES

Reading and writing are essential processes which form the foundation for a quality education. Children should learn as early as possible the key skills that will help them to become good readers. At home, exposing children to oral language and reading books reinforce basic vocabulary. In preschool, students should learn about concepts of print and develop their oral language and phonological awareness. Subsequently, in primary school, students should be ready to begin print instruction in Kreyòl, building on some of the skills they acquired early on.

Focusing on the core reading skills in the early years is essential because it allows students to develop into strong readers and therefore enables them to learn across all of their subjects as well as outside the classroom. Learning to read is a lifelong process that starts from when the child is an infant beginning to develop their oral language, and progresses as they are exposed to print, and have opportunities to learn key reading skills and to practice combining those skills in the act of reading.

Reading and writing are complex skills, the acquisition of which requires the development of specific and interconnected capabilities that are activated simultaneously. Reading and writing are not learned naturally but must be taught explicitly. The first 3 years of primary school are critical years for students to develop foundational literacy skills. Students at this stage have the cognitive abilities to learn to read. If they have not learned to read by the time they reach fourth grade, they may have trouble catching up to their peers who can read. Students who have difficulties reading often repeat grades or drop out of school (Northern Education Initiative, 2019).

The U.S. National Reading Panel (2000) reviewed experimental and quasi-experimental research about the key components of literacy instruction. The review identified five basic skills that are required for learning to read in the alphabetic languages: phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In the LAC region, the tendency is, more and more frequently, to add writing as another skill—resulting in six essential components (Research Triangle Institute, 2009, Carmargo, Montenegro, Maldonado y Magzul, 2013):

- **Phonological awareness** consists of understanding that language is composed of sounds. Students must learn to segment spoken language into phonemes, without the help of printed letters. There are different levels of phonological awareness and for French and Kreyòl, phonemic awareness is the most important.
- **Phonics** consists of knowing the correspondences between letters and sounds. This skill must be taught explicitly and systematically. In first grade, students must understand the relationships between the written letter (grapheme), the name of the letter, and the sound (phoneme).

- **Vocabulary** consists of understanding the words that a person uses to communicate his or her ideas orally and in writing. The range of a person’s vocabulary constitutes his or her primary capacity for reading comprehension and for higher order processes of the language.
- **Reading fluency** is the ability to read accurately at the appropriate speed and with the appropriate intonation (National Reading Panel 2000). According to the National Reading Panel, reading fluency facilitates the comprehension of text and the development of vocabulary and motivates students to read. Moreover, reading fluency is one of the predictors of reading comprehension performance (Fuchs et al., 2001).
- **Reading comprehension** is a process by which a reader gives meaning to text through his or her interactions with it (Anderson and Pearson, 1984). Children bring their own background knowledge and experiences to help them interpret the meaning of a text, but they must also be explicitly taught comprehension strategies (NICHD, 2000 in Reynolds, Wheldall and Madelaine, 2011).
- **Writing** is a skill with two aspects: drawing letters that correspond with sounds and producing short texts (sentences at first, then paragraphs) that express ideas.

Learning to read involves learning many skills (some universal and others dependent on the target language), must be reinforced by direct and systematic instruction and opportunities to practice, and involves learning the use of all skills in a flexible and automatic manner to clearly understand the text. In a bilingual context like Haiti, there are additional aspects which must be considered when teaching children to read. Haiti is a context where 95% of the population is monolingual in Haitian Kreyòl , less than 5% of the population speaks French, and 5–10% have some understanding of French receptively but cannot speak it (Valdman, 1984; Dejean 2006). In addition, the official curriculum encourages students to learn to read first in Kreyòl while focusing on oral French, and then moving to French as a language of instruction from the fourth year on. This section reviews the literature about learning to read in a first and second language and the implications for instruction.

TEACHING AND LEARNING LITERACY IN THE FIRST LANGUAGE, KREYOL, AND THE SECOND LANGUAGE, FRENCH

Reading with understanding is a complex skill that requires multiple subskills all interacting seamlessly to make it appear simple and effortless. Language ability is at the core of reading ability, and therefore one of the most important factors in developing an effective reading program is that instruction and assessment are tailored to the linguistic context of learning. This section describes what is needed for students to learn to read, as well as the adaptations needed to learn to read different languages. We also discuss the learning processes that underpin multilingual reading and the transfer from L1 to L2.

The benefits of learning to read in a first language or a language a child understands and speaks proficiently is well documented for general academic achievements. In fact, UNESCO has been making a case for Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) for more than half a century (UNESCO, 1953). The advantages include increased likelihood of enrollment and success in school (Ball, 2010; Kosonen, 2002); more parental involvement (Benson, 2005); support for the most marginalized, especially girls and students from remote, rural areas (Hovens, 2002); increased likelihood of cognitive transfer and better biliteracy outcomes (Koda & Reddy, 2008); and long-term cost-effectiveness (Heugh, 2002).

Therefore, to be successful in multilingual contexts, a reading program must effectively promote “biliteracy” or “multiliteracy” outcomes. This is most likely to be accomplished by taking “transfer” into consideration and building skills that are likely to be important not only for L1 reading, but also to predict readiness to read an L2. Most often L1 reading skills facilitate and support the development of L2 reading skills. In addition, in order for successful transfer to occur, students require a level decoding skills in L1 that allows them to transfer that knowledge to L2 (Stone, 2015). However, some studies (Nakamura and de Hoop, 2014) suggest that the teaching of reading in two languages, without ensuring the mastery of at least one language, may prevent students from learning either language.

According to the literature described above, an effective model of teaching reading targets both decoding and oral language skills of the target language. Such a model should also be able to adjust to the relative importance of each of the required subskills, depending on the language and the writing system. An effective program is taught in a language that students understand and speak and allows skills to be transferred, and will only introduce L2 when the appropriate preparation thresholds have been met.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO GOOD LITERACY LEARNING

International research recommends some factors for good literacy learning. In the 5Ts conceptual which is an adaptation of the analysis model defined by Allington (2002), each T provides specific elements that help to determine the effectiveness of literacy instruction:

- **Teaching:** Allington (2002) recognizes that efficient and exemplary teachers are those who explicitly teach basic literacy skills (i.e., they teach and demonstrate specific strategies for consolidating literacy skills), and emphasizes the importance of transferring responsibilities and independence to students so that they gradually learn to self-regulate.
- **Tongue:** Teaching in familiar languages supports the transition from L1 to L2. Numerous studies have shown that children learn to read better and faster if they speak the language in which they learn to read.
- **Tests:** In effective classrooms, according to Allington (2002), assessments of students emphasize such aspects as effort, engagement, and improvement of learning more so than results and actual levels of knowledge. This assessment model anticipates what is expected of students through appropriate and consistent instruments. Formative assessments are critical, as they provide teachers with useable data—on the level of mastery of students’ reading skills—that they can use to make immediate changes to their teaching.
- **Time:** According to Allington (2002), time is a determining factor for literacy teaching. In effective classrooms, students typically spend 50% of their time reading and writing, compared with lower-performing classes, in which other aspects (usually administrative) occupy 80 to 90% of the time and only 10 – 20% is devoted to teaching reading and writing. Teachers should dedicate sufficient time to the teaching of reading, including teaching the key skills (teachers) and practicing reading (students).
- **Texts:** Allington (2002) argues that to learn to read, students need large amounts of varied books that are written to an adequate level. This means that students should be able to apply to those

books the strategies and skills demonstrated by their teachers. Teachers should not limit themselves to reading the teaching manuals.

The study of all these factors falls outside the scope of this research. Therefore, in this study we focus on the amount of time spent teaching various reading skills, methodologies used, and materials available in class for teaching.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AMOUNT OF TIME DEDICATED TO READING ACTIVITIES

International research that examines time spent on task or time dedicated to reading activities confirms the conclusion that students' learning outcomes are maximized when the "engaged learning time" is maximized (Moore, DeStefano, & Adelman, 2012). In fact, according to international best practices, to enhance students' learning opportunities, the school year should include a minimum of 850–1,000 hours of instruction per year. In Haiti, the school year lasts between 720 hours in the first year and 810 hours in the sixth year, which is well below the desired time. In practice, most first-year classrooms are open from only 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. (noon) daily. Even in such cases, courses often start late, end early, and are characterized by teacher and student absenteeism and by school closures due to weather or political instability. As a result, the number of teaching hours is even more reduced.

Interventions aimed at providing teachers with structured lessons to teach reading in primary school can double the time spent on the task (from five 30-minute periods per week to ten 30-minute periods) (Research Triangle Institute, 2016). This is particularly relevant in Haiti, where members of the teaching staff are already undertrained, an aspect that should be considered in the development of future versions of the curriculum.

Teaching time and time spent on the task are two different concepts. Teaching time provides useful preliminary information about the time that students and teachers are both present in the classroom, but it provides only a small picture of the learning environment. A better measure of what is happening in the classroom is to measure the classroom time that is devoted to teaching the curriculum. This is often a much smaller figure than the actual time available. For example, instructional time is often wasted on tasks that are not related to teaching. Studies have shown that, in some classes, only 63% of classroom time is dedicated to teaching activities. In addition, during teaching activities, most of that time is dedicated to lectures rather than interactive lessons (Abadzi, 2006).

For this study, we tried to identify the time spent teaching each skill in the reading class in Kreyòl and French to get a better idea of how and on what teachers concentrate their time. After an in-depth review of the literature, the research team identified several variables that influence the effectiveness of teaching and learning reading in Kreyòl and French in early grades. Given the time constraints imposed on this research, we selected the variables that we thought were most important in the Haitian context, as well as those that were suitable for analysis by classroom observations, which were the main source of data for this study.

MATERIALS

The results of a meta-analysis of approximately 11,600 studies showed strong supporting evidence in the consistent and reliable relationships between children's access to printed materials and literacy

outcomes (Lindsay, 2010). Several studies have shown that easy access to reading materials encourages students to read more, leading to higher levels of literacy (Elley, 1991, 1992, 1998; Elley and Mangubhai, 1983; Krashen, 1995; Lance, Welborn and Hamilton-Pennell, 1993; McQuillan & Au, 2001; McQuillan, 1998a; Rucker, 1982; Worthy, 1996; Worthy, Moorman and Turner, 1999). Given the apparent link between access to printed materials and motivation to read and improvement of literacy development, and given the lack of printed materials (especially in Kreyòl) available in and out of classrooms in Haiti, this research seeks to identify the materials to which students and teachers actually have access that might support teaching and learning reading in the classroom, as well as reading for pleasure outside the classroom.

Therefore, we focused our research on four elements:

1. Time, especially time spent by teachers to teach reading skills in each Kreyòl and French;
2. Official curriculum, particularly how it directs teachers to teach reading in Kreyòl and French;
3. Some specific teaching methods used by teachers to support the development of reading; and
4. The pedagogical materials used during reading classes.

The research around these factors will provide researchers with a clearer picture of the manner in which teachers teach reading in Kreyòl and French and how that aligns with evidence related to best practices in teaching reading.

METHODOLOGY

The main objectives of this study were to analyze the amount of time spent on reading and the materials used to teach those skills in two languages, Kreyòl and French. Four interrelated RQs guided this study:

- 1) How does the detailed reading curriculum for the primary cycle in Haiti conceptualize reading? How does the curriculum define reading, and how does it prescribe methods of teaching reading to students?
- 2) What is the average amount of time that students spend on each reading skill (defined as vocabulary development, oral fluency, and reading comprehension) in Kreyòl and in French during reading class?
- 3) To what extent are individual reading, teacher-led reading, and collective reading aloud methods used in reading classes for students in Grades 2 and 4?
- 4) What is the availability of teaching support materials (audio-visual, blackboards, posters, textbooks, and notebooks) in the reading class?

More specifically, the aim was to analyze the curriculum of the first cycle of primary school, to explore the time allocated to reading activities, the methodology used, and the materials and teaching media used. As noted previously, we observed only the reading class, as specified in the detailed curriculum, and the materials used in that course.

This research is exploratory and favors the qualitative method, using a systematic analysis of the detailed curriculum of the MENFP and an analysis of the data collected from 200 schools located in the West and South departments.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Four tools were designed and used to collect data: a questionnaire for teachers, an observation grid for second and fourth-grade classes, an analysis grid of the textbooks used in those classes, and a protocol for analysis of the detailed curriculum for Grades 1–4 of the primary school. The teacher questionnaire and observation grid were piloted in 20 classes in 10 primary schools in the Center and West departments. The idea was to obtain and then present a picture of the manner in which Kreyòl and French are taught in the observed reading classes.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

This tool collected information mainly about the initial training of teachers, the language of instruction they use, and the availability of the teaching resources they use in their classes. This form was designed to obtain a specific profile of each teacher in the classes in which the survey was conducted, including whether the teacher had a professional background that may facilitate the teaching of reading and its acquisition in a bilingual setting. The questionnaire was completed by 148 second-grade teachers and 153 fourth-grade teachers in 196 schools (see Annex A for the protocol).

CLASS OBSERVATION GRID

The class observation grid was developed to reflect the factors considered in this study to be the main parameters involved in the teaching-learning of reading in Haitian schools. The main factors were the size of the classes observed, the duration of the reading classes, the methodology, and the materials used (see Annex B for the protocol).

PROTOCOL OF ANALYSIS OF THE DETAILED CURRICULUM FOR GRADES 1–4

This analysis reviewed the following items: general objectives, specific objectives, content items, and suggestions for teaching and learning activities and assessments. An analysis of each category was done according to grade level before proceeding to an analysis by comparison to the conceptual framework. Table 1 shows the correspondence between the RQs and the methods used to answer them.

Table 1. Correspondence between the research questions and the methods used to answer them

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	METHOD
1. How does the detailed reading curriculum for the primary cycle in Haiti conceptualize reading? How does the curriculum define reading, and how does it prescribe methods of teaching reading to students?	Analysis of the detailed curriculum for Grades 1–4 of the primary school
2. What is the average amount of time that students spend on each reading skill (defined as vocabulary development, oral fluency, and reading comprehension) in Kreyòl and in French during reading class?	Observation of second- and fourth grade reading classes in Kreyòl and French
3. To what extent are individual reading, teacher-led reading, and collective reading aloud methods used in reading classes for students in Grades 2 and 4?	Observation of second- and fourth grade reading classes in Kreyòl and French
4. What is the availability of teaching support materials (audio-visual, blackboard, textbooks, posters and notebooks) in the reading class?	Observation of second- and fourth grade reading classes in Kreyòl and French and teacher questionnaire

SAMPLE

The sample on which this study is based consists of public and private schools (religious and secular), spread over the West and South departments in Haiti. Of the 200 schools that were randomly selected from a list provided by the MENFP, 120 schools were located in the West and 80 schools were located in the South. They are urban and peri-urban schools. The difference in distribution, which is not representative, considers the fact that the West department has far more schools than the South department. These two departments were chosen because they include the largest number of institutions of initial training for teachers. The hypothesis of the study would state that this large number of training institutions should correspond to a high level of qualification of the teaching and possibly to a better mastery of the language by students.

Unfortunately, data could not be collected from all 200 schools. Some schools could not be surveyed because of either a changed address, or because they had stopped operating, or because of bad weather at the time of the data collection process. Schools that could not participate were replaced by other schools that met the same criteria in the environment in which the survey was to take place.

The survey protocol called for observations in two classrooms per school in second and fourth grades. However, schools could not always comply with this systematic rule because some classes were multigrade classes and because of teacher absences and challenges with bad weather. The final number of schools was 196. Table 2 presents the distribution of schools by category of school and department.

Table 2. Distribution of school participation by category of school and department

DEPARTMENT	CATHOLIC	PROTESTANT	PUBLIC	SECULAR	OVERALL TOTAL
WEST	20	34	24	36	114
SOUTH	20	28	14	20	82
TOTAL	40	62	38	56	196

Catholic schools are run by congregations belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. Protestant schools are institutions of Protestant churches of various types, including Baptist churches, Wesleyan churches, and others. Protestant schools, unlike Catholic schools, do not always have the same degree of organization and infrastructure. Secular schools are nonconfessional schools and diverse in terms of organization and size. Public schools are national schools run by the state and have the same characteristics from an organizational and management perspective as the religious schools.

In these 196 schools, data collectors observed 162 second-grade classrooms and 183 fourth-grade classrooms.

DATA COLLECTION PROTOCOL

Before collecting data, UniQ hired a team of 30 experienced data collectors, most of whom had a background in education training and had previously performed field data collection functions. The research staff of UniQ provided 5 days of training, totaling 40 hours, which combined direct training and practical assignments. During the last day of training, participants implemented the protocols in local schools in Haiti and received feedback from the trainers.

To collect the necessary data for this research and to ensure the quality of the data, the following protocol was executed. First, all schools in the sample were contacted to obtain permission to participate in the study. After obtaining permissions from schools, a team of 30 data collectors was deployed in the two departments. The departments were divided into four areas of investigation, each coordinated by a supervisor who ensured the quality of the data collectors' field work. The data collectors were divided into groups of two, each with between 8 to 15 schools to investigate over a period of 1 month.

To collect data, data collectors used the data collection tools described previously and followed the data collection protocol and the list of schools and classes to be investigated. Data collectors were also tasked with collecting, in each class they observed, all materials relevant to the research, including any curriculum documents or lesson plans.

For classroom observations, data collectors observed both Kreyòl and French reading classes, which generally lasted 1 hour. During each observation, data collectors sat at the back of the classroom and recorded all the data required in the observation protocol. After the observation, the data collector provided the teacher with the questionnaire and made sure that it was accurately and fully completed.

Data collectors reviewed and checked the compliance of their data daily. At the end of the week, data collectors transmitted the complete set of data to the UniQ central office, where a team compiled the data using ComCare and Excel software.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Because this research involved human subjects, the consent of those who agreed to participate was requested in advance. A consent form was developed for school principals, and well before data collectors were sent into the field, an initial verbal consent was obtained from school principals through telephone calls. The consent of teachers was requested and obtained before the initiation of the observation process. Because of difficult logistical conditions, consent could not be obtained from all parents of the students. In addition, during the training, data collectors learned ethical research practices, especially in cases where children were involved.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

The data collected were analyzed in the following stages:

First, at the end of the data collection campaign, a meeting was held with all data collectors to share their experiences and report out on any factors which they experienced which may have influenced the data collected. This allowed, for example, an update regarding the precarious physical state of many schools in the South department and the fact that, generally, courses started later than the time prescribed by the MENFP.

During the second stage, data were entered into software and cleaned and reviewed for any errors. Data were digitized via Comcare, standardized and coded through Excel, and then migrated via SPSS25 software.

The third stage of data analysis generated charts and tables so data could be further analyzed and interpreted. To facilitate the analysis, we prioritized three dimensions of the data: the scale of observation (to highlight department and classroom factors); the facts observed in the classroom and stated by the teachers (e.g., skills taught, duration of teaching, teaching methods, and educational materials available in the classrooms); and the measurement of frequency of the facts observed in relation to the scale of observation.

These three dimensions were analyzed on the basis of the conceptual framework of the study, in which the relationship between the time spent teaching reading, the need for access to high-quality materials, the rigor of the method used in teaching reading skills in a bilingual context are primary to the acquisition of reading skills.

The data collected and the elements of the conceptual framework were triangulated with the analysis of the detailed curriculum of the first cycle of primary school to highlight the discrepancies, strengths, and

contradictions between the ministerial recommendations, the expectations based on theory and best practices in terms of reading teaching-learning, and what is actually happening in the classroom. In addition, a workshop was organized for the co-interpretation of study results among MENFP executives, researchers, civil society actors, and practitioners involved in the teaching-learning of reading. The objective was to share the results with and obtain opinions on possible interpretations from specialists in the field.

RESULTS

This section presents the main findings of this exploratory study and seeks to answer the following four RQs:

- 1) How does the detailed reading curriculum for the primary cycle in Haiti conceptualize reading? How does the curriculum define reading, and how does it prescribe methods of teaching reading to students?
- 2) What is the average amount of time that students spend on each reading skill (defined as vocabulary development, oral fluency, and reading comprehension) in Kreyòl and in French during reading class?
- 3) To what extent are individual reading, teacher-led reading, and collective reading aloud methods used in reading classes for students in Grades 2 and 4?
- 4) What is the availability of teaching support materials (audio-visual, blackboards, posters, textbooks, and notebooks) in the reading class?

RQ-1. HOW DOES THE DETAILED READING CURRICULUM FOR THE PRIMARY CYCLE IN HAITI CONCEPTUALIZE READING? HOW DOES THE CURRICULUM DEFINE READING, AND HOW DOES IT PRESCRIBE METHODS OF TEACHING READING TO STUDENTS?

As noted previously, primary school is divided into three cycles. This study focuses on the first cycle, which spans the first 4 years of primary education. This analysis focuses on the general and specific objectives, activities, and assessments established for Kreyòl and French reading classes for Grades 1–4 and bases our analysis on findings from our conceptual framework.

OBJECTIVES OF THE READING CLASS IN KREYÒL

The teaching and learning of reading in Kreyòl in the first cycle of Primary school (Grades 1–4) revolves around four general objectives and 34 specific objectives. The general objectives focus on two skills: developing oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. The general objectives for each grade are as follows:

- First grade: Fluently read a short text about one’s own experiences;
- Second grade: Read a short text expressively;

- Third grade: Fluently read a short text for information and for pleasure; and
- Fourth grade: Enhance reading skills to exploit the informative and entertaining aspect of reading (IPN/MENFP, 2013, 2014).

Table 3 presents a summary of the grade-specific objectives of reading classes in Kreyòl for Grades 1–4, per the curriculum.

Table 3. List of grade-specific objectives of reading classes in Kreyòl in Grades 1–4

GRADE	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	GRADE	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce expressive and silent reading • Discover themes and character names • Describe the content of the images • Answer questions about a read text • Perform simple instructions 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer questions about a text read aloud or silently • Restate the context of a text in one’s own words • Perform expressive reading • Follow complex instructions • Express one’s opinion on any type of text
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the author • Find the theme of a text read aloud or silently • Introduce illustrations and interpret images • Perform expressive reading • Summarize the text 	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express one’s opinion about a text read • Analyze and identify different types of text • Follow complex instructions • Summarize and interpret a text • Perform expressive reading

The specific objectives found in the curriculum for the Kreyòl reading class seems to ignore some of the essential evidence-based components of teaching reading that are found in our conceptual framework. It may be due to a faulty assumption by teachers and curriculum developers that because most students enter school with fluency in Kreyòl oral language, that they can also recognize letters of the alphabet, match them to their corresponding sounds, and use those letter–sound correspondences to sound out or decode words. This is a faulty assumption. These skills appear to be taught in the French reading class in the second year, but they are absent from the Kreyòl reading class even though they form the building blocks for solid reading instruction. Overall, the objectives for Grade 1 focus on oral reading fluency (expressive reading) but do not appear to help students develop the many other skills needed to achieve fluency.

OBJECTIVES OF THE READING CLASS IN FRENCH

During the first cycle of Primary school, the teaching and reading of written French focuses on four general objectives that extend 3 years (The teaching of oral French begins in the first year of primary school, but students do not begin to read and write in French until the second year. The general objectives are as follows:

- Second grade: Fluently read a short text;

- Third grade: Read a text aloud expressively and understand a text read silently; and
- Fourth grade: Read a text aloud and silently for information and for pleasure (IPN/MENFP, 2013, 2014).

In correlation with these general objectives, the teaching-learning of written French aims to achieve 22 specific objectives over the 3-year period (Table 4).

Table 4. List of grade-specific objectives for reading French in Grades 2–4

GRADE	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize the relationships between phonemes and their graphical representations • Recognize words and groups of words that are similar • Articulate the meaning of words and pronounce words correctly • Observe necessary punctuation and liaisons • Demonstrate comprehension of a text read silently
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine associations between graphemes and corresponding phonemes • Answer questions about a text read by a student • Perform expressive reading • Fill in the blanks of a passage in a text read by a student
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detect similarities or differences between images, words, and sentences • Find words or short sentences that have been read and then hidden • Discover the meaning of a short text in which one or more words have been skipped • Find information in a text that corresponds with a question asked • Restore the chronological order of a text • Arrange words in alphabetical order • Use a dictionary to find information • Use the information contained in a text to carry out a project • Read a text in a lively and intelligible manner • Select texts independently, according to academic and personal interests

From the general objectives, it may be deduced that the privileged skills in the reading class in French are also the mastery of reading and comprehension, as is the case for the curriculum in Kreyòl . However, for reading in French, the specific objectives cover other explicit skills, such as the development of the alphabetic principle, which is a primary requirement to read fluently.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR THE READING CLASS IN KREYÒL

The curriculum for the first grade reading class in Kreyòl is based on the use of different media, ranging from various types of images to very short texts and going through words and phrases associated with images. In terms of real comprehension, the student is introduced to the identification of themes and

characters in a text that he or she read previously, while acting it out and retelling it in his or her own words. The learning of comprehension is also exercised by answering questions about a text or by following simple instructions.

In second grade, students must learn information about the professionals—such as authors, illustrators, publishers, and printers—involved in the production of books. The remainder of the curriculum focuses on comprehension activities. Such activities include identifying and listing themes, identifying words related to themes (groups of words and themes related to the given themes), and identifying the content of or executing simple instructions. In addition, the student continues to practice the two forms of reading (reading aloud and silent reading) initiated in first grade.

In third grade, students are taught to recognize and identify the parts of a book (cover, title, authors, and publisher). With respect to comprehension, while incorporating the previous content elements (themes, characters, actions), the curriculum requires students to work with short texts of various types (informative, narrative, complex instructions) and to pursue expressive and silent reading exercises.

In fourth grade, the entire curriculum focuses on developing comprehension. Learning to read is associated with oral and written production activities (e.g., writing a report that incorporates the content of a read text in one's own words). Other activities center on finding words or information in a reference text (dictionary, glossary, telephone directory).

The curriculum in Kreyòl seems to focus strongly on reading comprehension. As important as reading comprehension is, the strong focus on it seems to overshadow some of the other key skills that are essential for the initial development of reading. For example, there is little focus on phonemic awareness and phonics, which are two factors that are key predictors of reading development in alphabetic languages. In addition, some basic skills, such as factors related to publishing (e.g., familiarity with parts of a book, text directionality, authors, etc.) appear to be taught at a later stage (e.g., in the third year in Kreyòl) than when such concepts should be taught (e.g., in kindergarten or, at least, before beginning print instruction).

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR THE READING CLASS IN FRENCH

The second grade reading program for French initially focuses on the recognition of the link between phonemes and graphemes, comprehension, and the modes of reading aloud and silent reading.

Comprehension is learned through meaning-recognition activities. Particular emphasis is placed on the correct pronunciation of words, which students are expected to copy from the teacher's pronunciation. In general, second grade reading activities for French focus on several high-priority reading components: letter–sound correspondence, words of similar appearance, words, sentences, rebuses, riddles, stories and nursery rhymes, and various informative and narrative texts (preferably short ones).

In third grade, the teaching-learning of French covers the same reading components as in Grade 2, namely letter–sound correspondence, comprehension, and the exercise of two modes of reading (reading aloud and reading silently). The majority of assessment activities and exercises focuses on comprehension, such as question-answer exercises about a read text, reordering parts or sentences of a text, and completing gaps in a text. Content elements from the previous year are also reviewed, including phonemes, graphemes, sentences, riddles, and short texts. By reprising most of the content

elements already presented in the second-grade curriculum, the third-grade curriculum promotes the consolidation of grapho-phonemic recognition, reinforces comprehension, and diversifies learning activities.

In fourth grade, the teaching-learning of French reading—namely letter–sound correspondence, comprehension, and the exercise of two modes of reading (reading aloud and reading silently)—becomes more thorough and is refined through many more activities (about 26) and in more complex terms. The curriculum also prepares students to assert themselves as independent readers who can choose their own readings on the basis of academic or personal interests (IPN/MENFP, 2013, 2014).

TIME DEDICATED TO READING CLASSES, PER THE CURRICULUM, IN THE FIRST CYCLE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL

Table 5 shows the time allotted for teaching reading in Kreyòl and in French during Years 1–4 of the primary cycle. Only 3 hours per week are dedicated to teaching reading in Kreyòl in the first and second years, which are crucial years for students who need intensive instruction on basic reading skills. Later, reading instruction in Kreyòl is reduced to 2 hours per week in Year 3 and 1 hour per week in Year 4. For teaching reading in French, only 1 hour per week is dedicated to instruction in each Years 2–4. Additional classes focus on some of the key reading skills, but they are covered in a class separate from the main reading class.

Table 5. Basic reading curriculum for the first cycle of primary school

SUBJECT	YEAR 1		YEAR 2		YEAR 3		YEAR 4		SUBJECT	
	PER WEEK	PER YEAR	PER WEEK	PER YEAR	PER WEEK	PER YEAR	PER WEEK	PER YEAR	PER WEEK	CYCLE PER YEAR
READING IN KREYÒL	3	90	3	90	2	60	1	30	9	270
READING IN FRENCH	—	—	1	30	1	30	1	30	3	90
TOTAL	3	90	4	120	3	90	2	60	12	360

Teachers in Haiti play a critical role in teaching students to first read and write in Kreyòl and then to read and write in French. But time spent on developing basic skills for reading appears to be insufficient. According to our theoretical framework (Allington, 2002; Moore, DeStefano and Adelman, 2012), the time spent developing key L1 reading skills and developing L2 oral language skills is a critical factor in the success of any L1 reading program that proposes to transition learners from a first language to a second or additional language. International research confirms the conclusion that students’ learning outcomes are maximized when the amount of time spent on task or the “engaged learning time” is maximized (Moore, DeStefano, & Adelman, 2012). Additionally, to enhance students’ learning opportunities, the school year should include a minimum of 850–1,000 hours of instruction per year. An important part of these hours should be dedicated to teaching and learning reading, especially during Years 1–3 of primary school, because reading is a primary skill without which students cannot learn other subjects.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The initial analysis reveals that the Haitian National Primary Education Program does not align with best practices described in the literature. On the basis of this analysis, we have identified several recommendations aimed at improving the reading curriculum in Haiti:

1. Increase the total number of hours per week that teachers dedicate to teaching reading in Kreyòl in the early years. Ideally, teachers should spend at least 1 hour per day teaching students to master reading skills in Kreyòl . The total time can be divided into two shorter segments.
2. Ensure that the progression of skills corresponds with the most recent scientific data on how students learn to read—that is, go from learning the concepts of print, phonological awareness, and oral language to learning other primary skills (e.g., decoding, vocabulary development, oral reading fluency) to learning higher level skills (e.g., reading comprehension). Each skill must be taught systematically and explicitly, and students must have opportunities to combine multiple skills during reading.
3. Ensure the curriculum clearly describes the objectives of each key reading skill and suggests concrete activities that teachers can pursue to teach these skills to students and help them apply such skills when reading.
4. Ensure that the initial teaching of French focuses solely on oral language and that students have enough time to develop strong decoding skills in Kreyòl before they learn to read in French. When instruction on written French begins, students will need to have developed their social and academic language skills in French to better understand what they read in French.
5. Ensure the curriculum explicitly teaches the specific linguistic aspects of French that differ from those of Kreyòl . Much of what students learn by learning to read in Kreyòl will be transferred to their learning of French. The teaching of French, then, should focus on different aspects of the French language, such as differences in grammar and differences in sounds and letters.
6. Ensure that students' transition from Kreyòl to French as a language of instruction occurs later in the primary cycle, after the students have had ample time to develop their decoding skills in Kreyòl and their speaking skills in French.

RQ-2. WHAT IS THE AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME THAT STUDENTS SPEND ON EACH READING SKILL (DEFINED AS VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT, ORAL FLUENCY, AND READING COMPREHENSION) IN KREYÒL AND IN FRENCH DURING READING CLASS?

The objectives of answering this question are to (a) better understand the amount of time allocated to each skill in the reading class and (b) know which skills are being taught most frequently. As noted previously, the reading class curriculum focuses on learning the following skills: vocabulary, reading fluency, and reading comprehension.

TEACHING READING SKILLS IN SECOND GRADE

Table 6 shows the percentage of time allocated in second grade to teaching vocabulary, reading fluency, and reading comprehension in Kreyòl and in French in the West and South departments.

Table 6. Summary of the frequency of teaching reading skills in Kreyòl and in French in second grade

YEAR	LANGUAGE	SKILL	5-10 MIN*	11-20 MIN*	21-30 MIN*	31-40 MIN*
2	Kreyòl	Vocabulary	43.21%	12.96%	2.47%	4.32%
		Reading fluency	35.19%	5.56%	0.62%	0%
		Reading comprehension	17.28%	18.52%	11.11%	2.47%
	French	Vocabulary	11.11%	4.94%	0%	0.62%
		Reading fluency	9.26%	1.85%	0%	0%
		Reading comprehension	1.85%	6.17%	3.09%	2.47%

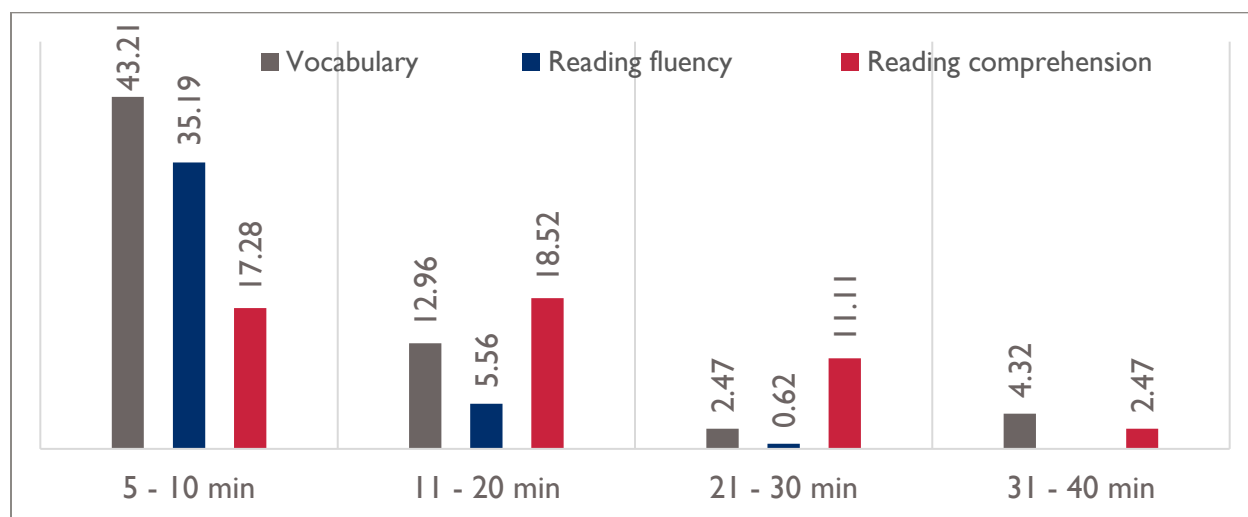
*Per reading class

Table 6 clearly shows that second grade focuses mainly on teaching reading skills in Kreyòl. Vocabulary is taught more in Kreyòl than in French, but students also need to focus on the development of vocabulary in French to succeed. It also appears that classes spend, on average, little time on reading comprehension, even though the data regarding Kreyòl are significantly higher around comprehension than the data regarding French and comprehension. Finally, the time allocated to vocabulary and reading fluency rarely exceeds 20 minutes, which is insufficient.

Teaching Reading Skills in Kreyòl in Second Grade

Figure 1 compares the frequency of teaching vocabulary, reading fluency, and reading comprehension in Kreyòl in second grade.

Figure 1. Frequency of teaching reading skills in Kreyòl in second grade



Analysis of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the most frequently taught component of reading skills in Kreyòl in second grade (Figure 1). This finding is consistent with recommendations of the curriculum, which advocates for immersion in the language at this grade level. According to Escalle and Magnan (2010), vocabulary learning is essential for improving comprehension. They argue that richer vocabulary skills increase comprehension. As shown in Figure 1, the various skills are most frequently taught for approximately 10 minutes. This finding invites questions about the actual learnings of students and about the assessments implemented by teachers to evaluate students who are taught vocabulary skills for a short amount of time, which is particularly concerning given the average class size of 30–40 students.

Analysis of Oral Reading Fluency

The results concerning the ability to read fluently reveal a higher frequency of instruction than that of comprehension, but the time dedicated to fluency is about 10 minutes and rarely exceeds 20 minutes, which is insufficient. Given the average class size of 30–40 students, students would rarely have time to practice their fluency. This finding also raises several questions around the actual learnings of students, whether their needs are being met, and the quality of instruction in such a short amount of time. Teachers clearly spend the most time on reading comprehension, but even that rarely exceeds 30 minutes. Can a student understand what he or she is reading without fluency?

Analysis of Comprehension

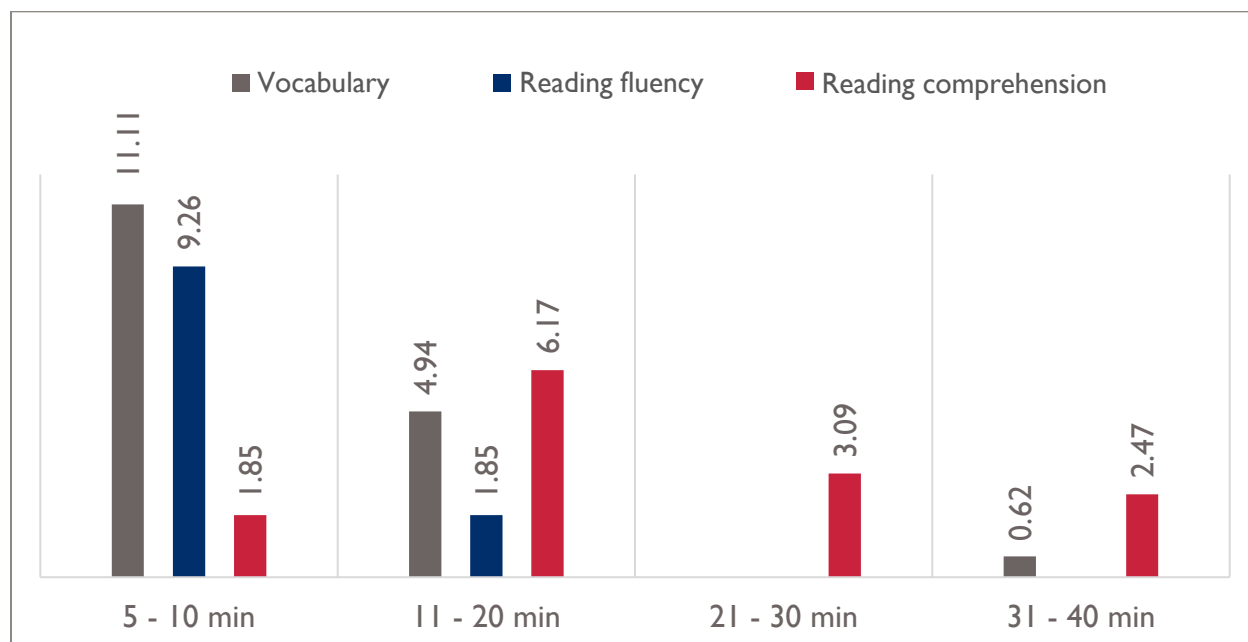
Observations around comprehension considered three main strategies: text analysis, text summary, and content restatement. Data analysis revealed that some of these strategies are more common than others. For example, text analysis (identifying the elements that make up a text and the characters that those elements contain) is practiced heavily, but text summary and content restatement strategies in Kreyòl are not. This finding can be attributed to several reasons: level of difficulty (requires students to have a capacity to synthesize); lack of textbooks in the classroom; and a certain degree of mastery of writing in the target language, which students at this level rarely have.

Generally speaking, the time allocated to teaching comprehension varied between 10 and 30 minutes, making it the reading skill on which teachers focused most. As emphasized in our conceptual framework, reading comprehension will not be attained unless children can decode text (understand how to use the symbol/sound correspondences to read connected text) and unless they have sufficient language comprehension in the language being read. This study found that the detailed curriculum for Year 2 puts very little emphasis on the teaching of these elements, which is likely one of the reasons that children are not reading with comprehension.

TEACHING READING SKILLS IN FRENCH IN SECOND GRADE

Figure 2 compares the frequency of teaching vocabulary, reading fluency, and reading comprehension in French in second grade.

Figure 2. Frequency of teaching reading skills in French in second grade



Analysis of Vocabulary

Vocabulary skills in French are not taught as often as vocabulary skills in Kreyòl in second grade. Time spent teaching vocabulary skills rarely exceeds 20 minutes (Figure 2). This finding does not confer with the theoretical framework of this study, insofar as French is a new language for students in Year 2, so they would likely require more time learning it. The low frequency of teaching vocabulary can lead to early difficulties learning a language that students need to continue their schooling and to function in society.

Analysis of Oral Reading Fluency

Teachers rarely spend more than 10 minutes per class teaching fluency in second grade French. Without fluency, students will find it difficult to read in French. However, this is not that surprising as the first 2 years of French are expected to focus much more on developing children’s oral proficiency and not on print instruction. Oral reading fluency is more of a focus in the Kreyòl reading class in second grade, which makes sense because children are learning the core reading skills in Kreyòl during this year. However, more research is needed to determine how the knowledge that students have already developed in Kreyòl can be better used to facilitate the learning of reading in French.

Analysis of Comprehension

Teaching of comprehension in French occurs with very low frequency in Year 2 (Table 6). However, the range of teaching time dedicated to comprehension—most often 11–20 minutes—is generally higher than the time dedicated to the other reading skills. This finding highlights the overall imbalance in time dedicated to teaching the three skills in Kreyòl and in French, which seems natural given the emphasis on Kreyòl in Year 2 and the fact that students are just being introduced to French in Year 2. This finding is also consistent with the detailed curriculum, which requires 30 hours of reading in French in Year 2. In any case, more time should be allotted to the teaching of this skill in Kreyòl and in French.

TEACHING READING SKILLS IN FOURTH GRADE

Table 7 shows the percentage of time allocated in fourth grade to teaching vocabulary, reading fluency, and reading comprehension in Kreyòl and in French.

Table 7: Summary of the frequency of teaching reading skills in fourth grade

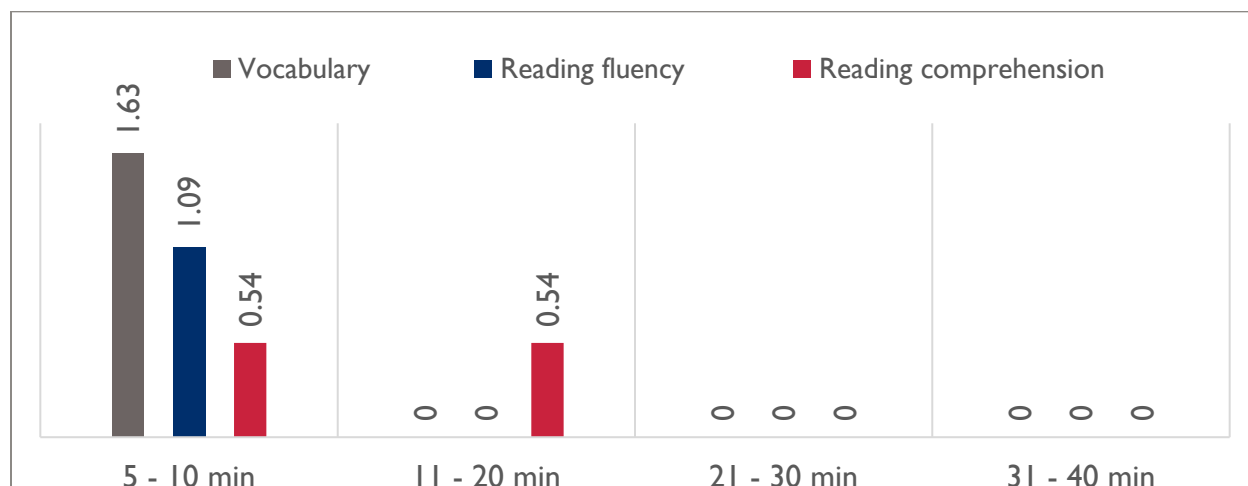
YEAR	LANGUAGE	SKILL	5-10 MIN	11-20 MIN	21-30 MIN	31-40 MIN
4	Kreyòl	Vocabulary	1.63 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
		Reading fluency	1.09 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
		Reading comprehension	0.54 %	0.54 %	0 %	0 %
	French	Vocabulary	53.26 %	17.39 %	3.26 %	2.72 %
		Reading fluency	55.43 %	13.59 %	0.54 %	1.09 %
		Reading comprehension	18.48 %	25.00 %	21.74 %	16.30 %

Table 7 shows, with striking clarity, that teachers concentrate on teaching the three reading skills in French in fourth grade much more so than they do teaching those skills in Kreyòl. Most of the reading skills in French receive no more than 20 minutes of teacher time, which falls considerably short of the 1-hour recommendation from the MENFP.

Teaching Reading Skills in Kreyòl in Fourth Grade

Figure 3 identifies the frequency of teaching vocabulary, reading fluency, and reading comprehension in Kreyòl in fourth grade.

Figure 3. Frequency of teaching reading skills in Kreyòl in fourth grade



Analysis of Vocabulary

Teaching vocabulary in Kreyòl receives very little attention in fourth grade—primarily only 5–10 minutes. The lack of interest in Kreyòl in fourth grade is worrisome, because the learning of vocabulary is an essential skill that never really ends. Instead, vocabulary is a critical part of students' learning throughout their schooling. It is not clear whether the education system and teachers think that students have already mastered vocabulary in Kreyòl by fourth grade or whether teachers and schools choose to transition to French as an instruction language earlier in the school cycle than recommended by the MENFP. In any case, this finding contradicts the official curriculum, which requires regular education in Kreyòl in fourth grade. Schools often conduct a rapid transition from instruction in Kreyòl to instruction in French, even though students can better learn to read in French if they first learn to read in Kreyòl (DeGraff, 2003).

Analysis of Oral Reading Fluency

The teaching of reading fluency was practiced very little in the fourth-grade classes observed by data collectors, and the time dedicated to teaching it never exceeded 10 minutes. Some of this finding may result from the perception among teachers that students have already mastered fluency in Kreyòl by the time they get to fourth grade, given the focus on Kreyòl in previous grades. However, the new ministerial measures oblige schools to teach Kreyòl up to the final year of primary school, but these measures are not systematically applied.

A perception may also pervade that it is not necessary to teach the nuances of expressiveness in Kreyòl, the students' first language. This point of view minimizes, in a way, the teaching of this dimension of the language. Despite the limited importance given to Kreyòl in Year 4 of primary school, Kreyòl is the language of the official grade 4 exam certifying the learning acquired throughout the first cycle of primary school. After grade 4 students are assessed in French, even though up to that point, teaching has been done almost entirely in Kreyòl. This linguistic paradox may not pose a problem for a small number of schools, but in the majority of schools, students face great difficulties because they hardly speak any French.

Another factor that might affect the limited amount of time dedicated to the fluency of oral reading in Kreyòl is the limited availability of printed materials in Kreyòl (e.g., stories, small novels, informative books).

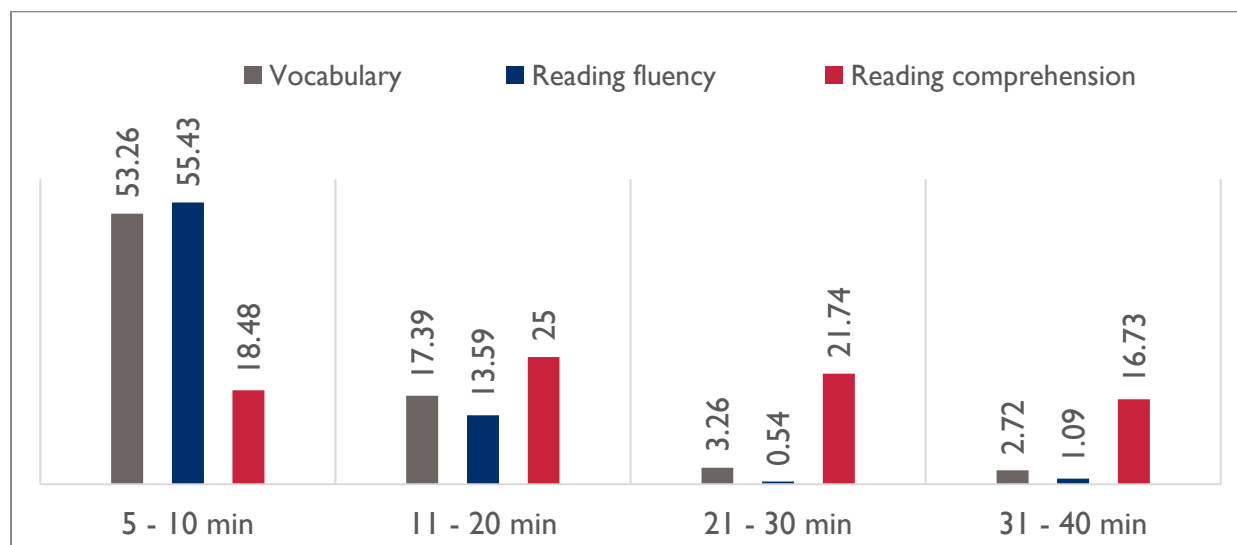
Analysis of Comprehension

Just like with the other skills, teachers spend little time teaching comprehension in fourth grade. Does this mean that the corresponding skill is mastered in Kreyòl? Or is it simply a way of saying that once learned in French, it is transferable to Kreyòl?

TEACHING READING SKILLS IN FRENCH IN FOURTH GRADE

Figure 4 identifies the frequency of teaching vocabulary, reading fluency, and reading comprehension in French in fourth grade.

Figure 4. Frequency of teaching reading skills in French in fourth grade



Analysis of Vocabulary

In fourth grade, vocabulary is taught predominately in French (Figure 4) compared with Kreyòl (Figure 3). The same is true over time, as the frequency of teaching vocabulary in French in fourth grade increases from time spent on this skill in second grade, almost to the point where Kreyòl disappears nearly entirely from the teaching of reading.

Despite the increased focus on teaching vocabulary in French in fourth grade, the skill receives very little teaching time and a limited duration in the classroom, primarily between 10 and 20 minutes. It is unclear whether the intense focus on vocabulary in French in fourth grade makes up for the limited time spent on this skill in previous grades.

Analysis of Oral Reading Fluency

Results show that more time is allocated to teaching oral reading fluency in French in Grade 4 than in Grade 2, which makes sense as the focus on French reading instruction intensifies in fourth grade. The focus in grade 4 of teaching fluency is on precision, intonation, punctuation, pronunciation, liaisons, speed of reading, etc.

Analysis of Comprehension

Teaching of comprehension skills is not more frequent in fourth grade, but more time is dedicated to it (between 20 to 40 minutes). Again, teaching of reading in Grade 4 focuses more on French than on Kreyòl, but this does not mean that Kreyòl is absent from the classroom, as teachers use both languages alternately in the teaching process.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The same reading abilities, in various proportions and according to the year of schooling, are taught in both Kreyòl and French during the first cycle of primary school. Kreyòl is more common in Year 2, but by Year 4, the focus moves to French. Overall, the low level of application of reading skills in Kreyòl could be attributed to the larger focus on French in Year 4. The level of application also corresponds

with the logic of the curriculum established by the MENFP, whereby the focus on Kreyòl diminishes over time—from 90 hours per year in Year 2, to 60 hours in Year 3, to 30 hours in Year 4.

The fact that more time is allocated to the teaching of reading in French in fourth grade corresponds with the idea that this grade, which marks the end of the first cycle of primary school, is pivotal in the systematic use of speaking and writing in French. The increase in the number of hours teaching reading in French in fourth grade may also be explained for certain activities, such as summarizing text, which to this point has been practiced very little in previous years. It remains to be seen whether a better distribution of the teaching of the two languages—instead of concentrating either language in a specific grade—would help more students transition successfully from Kreyòl to French.

In practice, teachers should implement learning strategies to help Kreyòl students meet the objectives of the reading curriculum of the MENFP. For example, at the end of Year 2, the MENFP expects students to be able to

1. Identify the author of a book,
2. Identify and state the theme of a read text,
3. Find the words to summarize a text read silently,
4. Read a short text aloud and expressively,
5. Understand instructions and read silently, and
6. Illustrate a text read silently.

However, results of this study indicate that very little time is dedicated overall to the teaching of reading skills in Kreyòl and in French. The lack of time spent teaching the reading skills for the two languages limits the abilities of students to analyze text (objective 1) and restate content (objective 3) which, in turn, makes it difficult, especially in Year 2, for them to read fluently and comprehend what they are reading. This difficulty is further explained by the fact that students are hardly introduced to writing in Kreyòl.

RQ-3. TO WHAT EXTENT ARE INDIVIDUAL READING, TEACHER-LED READING, AND COLLECTIVE READING ALOUD METHODS USED IN READING CLASSES FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 2 AND 4?

To answer this question, we analyzed, on the basis of the detailed curricula of the MENFP, the following reading methods: individual reading aloud, silent individual reading, collective reading aloud, and reading explained by the teacher.

USE OF READING METHODS IN KREYÒL AND IN FRENCH IN SECOND GRADE

Table 8 shows the results around the frequency of using reading methods in Kreyòl and in French in second grade.

Table 8. Frequency of classes observed using reading methods in Kreyòl and French in second grade

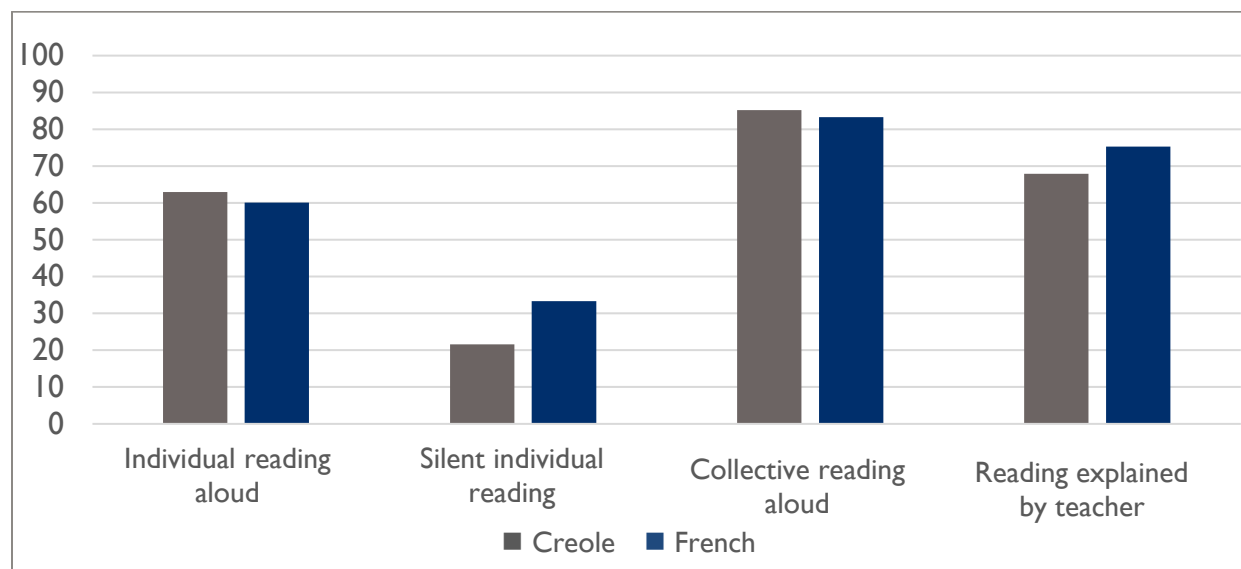
SECOND- GRADE LANGUAGE	METHOD	FREQUENCY OF APPLICATION		
		WEST	SOUTH	TOTAL FOR BOTH DEPARTMENTS
KREYÒL	Individual reading aloud	61.18%	64.94%	62.96%
	Silent individual reading	8.24%	36.36%	21.60%
	Collective reading aloud	87.06%	83.12%	85.19%
	Reading explained by the teacher	61.18%	75.32%	67.90%
FRENCH	Individual reading aloud	50.49%	73.61%	60.10%
	Silent individual reading	29.11%	44.90%	33.33%
	Collective reading aloud	87.11%	82.80%	83.33%
	Reading explained by the teacher	69.32%	79.20%	75.32%

Source: InnovEd-UniQ databases of surveys conducted in the West and South departments.

The two most widely used methods for teaching reading in Kreyòl in second grade are collective reading aloud and reading explained by the teacher. The former is the dominant teaching method in the West department, and the latter is the dominant teaching method in the South department. These same approaches are also the most frequent methods of teaching French in the two departments. Collective reading aloud in French is practiced most often in the West department, and reading explained by the teacher is practiced most often in the South department.

Figure 5 presents in graphic form the data around the frequency of reading methods used for both languages (as shown in Table 8) for the West and South departments combined. Figure 5 clearly shows the high frequencies of collective reading aloud and reading explained by the teacher in Kreyòl and in French.

Figure 5. Frequency of classes observed using reading methods in Kreyòl and in French in second grade for the West and South departments combined



USE OF READING METHODS IN KREYÒL AND IN FRENCH IN FOURTH GRADE

Table 9 shows the results around the frequency of using reading methods in Kreyòl and in French in fourth grade.

Table 9. Frequency of classes observed using reading methods in Kreyòl and French in fourth grade

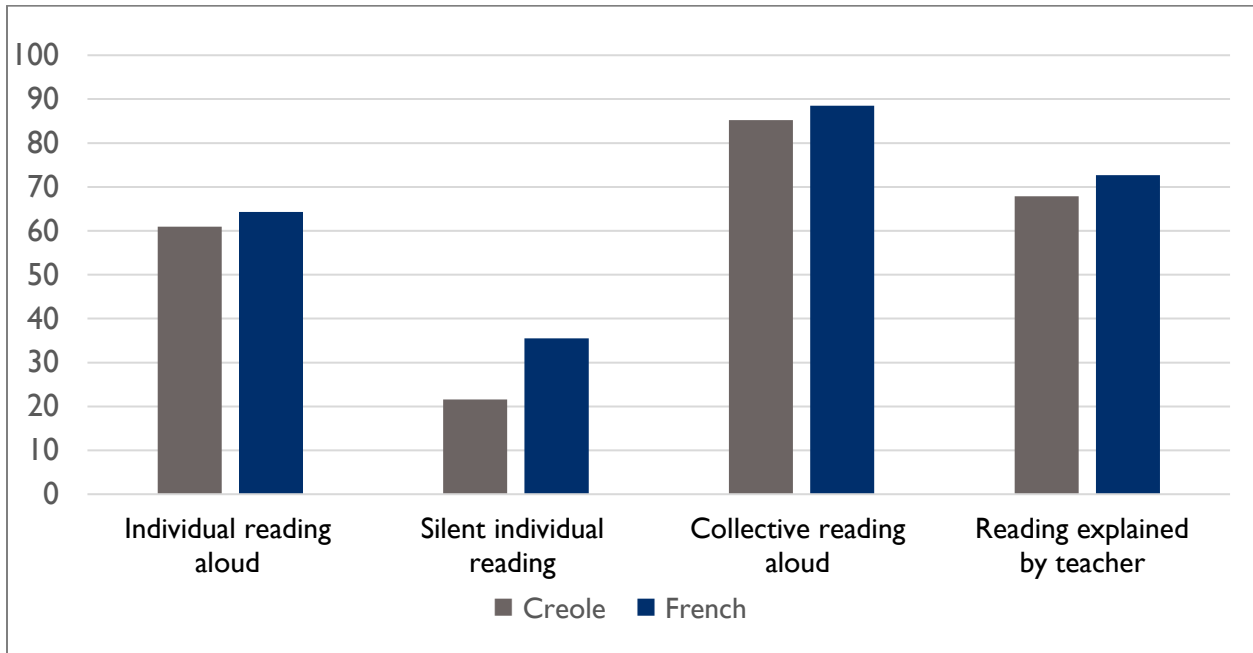
FOURTH-GRADE LANGUAGE	METHOD	FREQUENCY OF APPLICATION		
		WEST	SOUTH	TOTAL FOR BOTH DEPARTMENTS
KREYÒL	Individual reading aloud	60.18%	63.44%	60.96%
	Silent individual reading	5.14%	39.46%	21.60%
	Collective reading aloud	88.12%	85.12%	85.19%
	Reading explained by the teacher	63.17%	71.12%	67.90%
FRENCH	Individual reading aloud	51.49%	75.61%	64.30%
	Silent individual reading	28.71%	43.90%	35.52%
	Collective reading aloud	89.11%	87.80%	88.52%
	Reading explained by the teacher	68.32%	78.05%	72.68%

The two most widely used methods for teaching reading in Kreyòl in fourth grade are collective reading aloud and reading explained by the teacher. Collective reading aloud in Kreyòl is the dominant teaching

method in the West and South departments. These same approaches are also the most frequent methods of teaching French in the two departments. Although individual reading aloud is a method practiced frequently to teach both languages, silent individual reading is the method practiced least.

Figure 6 shows a strong application of all methods for teaching French with a smaller percentage of time devoted to silent individual reading in Kreyòl in grade 4. This makes sense as in grade 4 teachers are expected to be teaching reading in both languages so students should be practicing their reading skills in both languages as well.

Figure 6. Percentage of classes observed using reading methods in Kreyòl and in French in fourth grade



The frequency of the collective reading aloud method in both languages may be the result of the large class sizes. Teachers may perceive these methods as appropriate ways to invoke class participation. In addition, teachers often use this method when they themselves are not confident reading aloud to students.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Results illustrate that collective reading aloud is the most popular method to teach reading in Kreyòl and in French. This finding is likely attributed to the lack of textbooks and large class sizes (30–40 students). This method certainly offers opportunities to involve entire classrooms of students, but such a method has at least two major disadvantages:

1. Teachers may not be able to clearly assess the skills acquired by each student.
2. Vocalization of words and sentences may not induce comprehension of what is being read.

Reading explained by the teacher is the second-most used method of teaching reading in both languages. Undoubtedly, the teacher remains at the heart of the process of learning to read. In this case, a student's participation depends on his or her interaction with the teacher. This method severely limits a student's participation and makes it difficult for teachers to determine the degree to which a student is acquiring reading skills.

The teacher also plays a central role in individual reading, both silent and aloud. Indeed, the context of overcrowded classrooms makes it difficult to have each student read aloud individually. The implementation of either individual reading method is selective, and the teacher still has to intervene to designate potential readers to read aloud.

RQ-4. WHAT IS THE AVAILABILITY OF TEACHING SUPPORT MATERIALS (AUDIO-VISUAL, BLACKBOARDS, POSTERS, TEXTBOOKS, AND NOTEBOOKS) IN THE READING CLASS?

This RQ aims to determine the percentage of classrooms that have access to the following materials for the teaching of reading in Kreyòl and in French: audio-visual (e.g., tape-recorder, projector, TV, or other similar material), blackboards, posters (illustrations, photos, charts with images and/or letters), textbooks (generally approved and recommended by the MENFP), and notebooks (for use during exercises and for note-taking by students)Kreyòl .

AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS, BLACKBOARDS, AND POSTERS

Table 10 summarizes results on the availability of audio-visual materials, blackboards, and posters in classrooms in Grades 2 and 4.

Table 10. Percentage of second- and fourth-grade classrooms that have available teaching support materials: audio-visual, blackboards, posters

GRADE*	SUPPORT MATERIALS	AVAILABILITY		
		WEST	SOUTH	TOTAL
2	Audio-visual	10.58%	6.49%	8.64%
	Blackboard	92.94%	84.42%	88.89%
	Posters	27.06%	7.79%	17.90%
4	Audio-visual	10.77%	4.93%	8.19%
	Blackboard	83.33%	83.95%	83.60%
	Posters	20.79%	9.76%	15.85%

* The unit of measure is the classroom in which students have Kreyòl and French classes.

Audio-visual materials are the least available teaching support materials for second- and fourth-grade reading classes. The absence of audio-visual materials can be attributed to the lack of access to this type of material, the lack of training for teachers on how to exploit the materials effectively, and the lack of access to electricity to power the materials (for a small percentage of schools in Haiti). Additionally, Haitian schools rely on traditional educational approaches whereby the teacher is the main resource and reference in the classroom.

Almost all classrooms have access to blackboards: 93% in the Ouest department and 84% in the South department. On the whole, blackboards are much more available than posters and audio-visual materials. In fourth grade, teachers have the same level of access to blackboards as teachers in second grade (because they are usually in the same classrooms), but access to audio-visual materials and posters is still lacking.

The low availability of posters in classrooms means that images occupy little space in the reading class. This does not align with the objectives of the detailed curriculum of the primary cycle, which includes the interpretation of images and posters among the competencies to be acquired by students by the end of the primary cycle.

Any lack of school equipment may also be attributable to uncertainty around physical spaces. Many schools that participated in this study are housed in buildings that barely withstand rain. In such conditions, the arrangement of classrooms is usually temporary.

TEXTBOOKS AND READING NOTEBOOKS

To determine the availability of such materials as textbooks and reading books, we analyzed availability per student. Table II summarizes the results. In this table, “small minority” refers to situations in which less than half of the class has the material in question; “large majority” refers to situations in which more than half of the class has the material in question; and “available for no students” refers to situations in which students do not have access to the material in question.

Table II. Availability of textbooks and notebooks per second- and fourth-grade student

GRADE	SUPPORT MATERIALS	OBSERVATION	AVAILABILITY		
			WEST	SOUTH	TOTAL FOR BOTH DEPARTMENTS
2	Textbook	1_1_Available for no students	7.06%	7.79%	7.41%
		2_Available for a small minority	17.65%	15.58%	16.67%
		3_Available for a large majority	37.65%	58.44%	47.53%
		4_Available for all	34.12%	18.18%	26.54%
		No observation	3.53%	0.00%	1.85%
4	Textbook	1_1_Available for no students	1.98%	2.44%	2.19%
		2_Available for a small minority	14.85%	34.15%	23.50%
		3_Available for a large majority	45.54%	48.78%	46.99%
		4_Available for all	32.67%	12.20%	23.50%
		No observation	4.95%	2.44%	3.83%
2	Notebook	1_Available for no students	16.47%	15.58%	16.05%

4		2_ Available for a small minority	7.06%	9.09%	8.02%
		3_ Available for a large majority	21.18%	45.45%	32.72%
		4_ Available for all	41.18%	24.68%	33.33%
		No observation	14.12%	5.19%	9.88%
	Notebook	1_ Available for no students	11.88%	12.20%	12.02%
		2_ Available for a small minority	7.92%	6.10%	7.10%
		3_ Available for a large majority	16.83%	42.68%	28.42%
		4_ Available for all	38.61%	30.49%	34.97%
		No observation	24.75%	8.54%	17.49%

AVAILABILITY OF TEXTBOOKS

Among 162 classes observed in Grade 2, only 26% of them provided textbooks to all students. However, there is a clear difference between the two departments: 34% in the West department and 18% in the South department. The difference between departments may be explained by the fact that West is closer than South to the textbook production centers and that parents of students in the West benefit from more policies around subsidies for school materials. In general, classes have textbooks for a large majority of second-grade students: 47% overall; 58% in the South and 32% in the West. Among 183 classes observed in Grade 4, only 23% of them provided textbooks to all students. Overall, textbooks are generally more available for students in the West department than for students in the South department.

By examining only two factors (availability for all and availability for a large majority), results indicate that classrooms are generally lacking reading textbooks. In most cases, only a part of the class has textbooks. According to our theoretical framework, particularly the 5T approach presented by Allington (2002), the limited availability of textbooks hinders effective learning on three levels:

1. The availability of textbooks is an important factor in learning to read because they serve as a primary guide for students. Only a partial reading course can be held in a class where almost half of the students do not have a textbook;
2. Reading skills can be learned only through the practice and performance of tasks modeled by textbooks. A student who does not have the advantage of a textbook will almost certainly miss opportunities to improve his or her learning.
3. Lack of textbooks negatively affects student outcomes on tests and the participation of students in the course.

AVAILABILITY OF NOTEBOOKS

This study designates notebooks as the tool that allows students to carry out their exercises and/or to take course notes. Notebooks are not the same as workbooks, which accompany a specific textbook, for example. That being the case, at the level of the Haitian textbook industry, textbooks are rarely accompanied by workbooks.

Results show that only 33% of all classes observed in the second grade provided notebooks to students for the reading course. As with textbooks, notebooks are generally more available for students in the West department than for students in the South department. Results are no different for fourth grade, for which only 33% of all classrooms provided notebooks to students in the reading course. Overall, both second- and fourth grade reading classes are under-equipped with notebooks. The limited availability of notebooks raises concerns about the frequency with which students can participate, both overall and in practical exercises, in the reading course.

The availability of reading notebooks is related to the perception of reading as an activity. Reading is generally perceived as an accompanying activity to the teaching of writing, resulting in notebooks being used for writing instead of reading practices. Additionally, the official curriculum defines reading as text vocalization, which may help to explain why reading aloud and reading explained by the teacher are the dominant methods for teaching reading.

TEXTBOOKS MOST OFTEN USED BY TEACHERS PER LANGUAGE AND PER GRADE

Table 12 presents the textbooks that teachers report using the most for their reading courses. School regulations require students to purchase textbooks for reading courses in Kreyòl and in French.

Table 12. Percentage of teachers who report using specific textbooks for reading class

GRADE	MOST USED TEXTBOOKS FOR READING IN KREYÒL		MOST USED TEXTBOOKS FOR READING IN FRENCH	
	Textbook Title	Percentage	Textbook Title	Percentage
2	Wi mwen konn li	65%	Youpi ! je sais lire !	33%
	M ap li ak kè kontan	11%	Je lis et j'écris le français	21%
	Kreyòl fondamental	3%	Français en fête	9%
4	Wi mwen konn li	65%	Français en fête	29%
	M ap li ak kè kontan	12%	Pour lire avec plaisir	17%
	Kreyòl fondamental	11%	Je lis et j'écris le français	12%
			Le français par les textes	6%
		Le français fondamental	9%	

Table 12 shows the wide variety of textbooks used for teaching reading in Kreyòl and French. However, teachers use certain textbooks more often than others. Of note, Kreyòl “Wi mwen konn li”, the most used textbook for teaching reading in Kreyòl, is used by 65% of second-grade teachers and

fourth-grade teachers. The consensus regarding titles used for teaching French in either grade is not as clear. Only 33% of teachers use “Youpi! Je sais lire” (Yippee! I can read) in second grade, and 29% use “Français en fête” (French in celebration) in fourth grade. Moreover, second- and fourth-grade textbooks for teaching reading in Kreyòl tend to come from the same publishers. Because the reading classes are part of a progression from second to fourth grade, the same titles are produced for each grade. However, for both second and fourth grades, a greater variety of textbooks are published for teaching reading in French than they are for teaching reading in Kreyòl .

All of the textbooks listed in Table 12 are approved by the MENFP. This means that they underwent a quality control review. It is unclear whether the diversity of textbooks for teaching reading in French translates to good quality, and whether these textbooks, despite their diversity, meet the second- and fourth-grade educational objectives of the MENFP. A summary analysis revealed that (a) some textbooks prioritize certain reading skills over other skills and (b) writing is not systematically included as a part of the reading class.

The availability of diverse textbooks does not translate to the classroom. Instead, teachers generally use only one reference manual and rarely refer to other resources—choosing to use only the textbook selected by the managers of his or her educational institution.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of this study identify some challenges around the teaching and learning of reading in Haiti that should be a priority area of concern for researchers, practitioners, and decision makers. For example, more research is needed on:

- The best pedagogical approaches to help students transfer their Kreyòl reading skills to French
- A detailed mapping of the reading curriculum against the evidence on how children learn to read

Research studies such as this one and the ones identified above can serve to alert decisionmakers about what is happening in the schools and on the mismatch which often occurs between policy and practice. For example, the time dedicated to the teaching of reading in each language is quite different on the ground than what is laid out in the official curriculum. This lack of instructional time is exacerbated by the low overall time dedicated to instruction at the primary level - 710 hours of annual instruction time –which is far below the international average of 850 hours.

Despite the limitations of this research (e.g., limited sample size, exploratory and nonlongitudinal point of view, constraints encountered in the context of data collection, etc.), the research highlights several conclusions:

1. The design of the reading curriculum in Haiti in both Kreyol and French is not sufficiently aligned with the evidence on how to teach children to read in a first language and how to transfer those skills to an additional language.
2. Teachers in Haiti use a broad range of methods to teach reading. However, teachers do not spend enough time applying those methods. In addition, teachers have little understanding about the processes that facilitate transfer from one language to the next nor are they well versed in teaching a language as a second language. These are all essential skills that any teacher entering the primary classroom should have.

The materials used to teach and support reading instruction are not always evidence-based, are insufficient in terms of their availability and they are not always in the right languages. There is a clear need for additional texts and pedagogical materials in Kreyol.

Most teachers have not received the training needed to support children in developing their early literacy skills. The presence of qualified and experienced teachers in the classroom is an asset meant to correct the potential shortcomings of the curricula, but also to ensure that the curriculum can be adapted to the needs of students (Allington 2002). Therefore, Haitian schools face three challenges: the reading programs are weak; teaching and learning materials are not always available and lack variety; and teaching staff at the primary school level lack training.

By measuring the teaching time dedicated to teaching reading in Kreyòl and in French, this study has proved that time dedicated to learning is insufficient. Teachers do not implement evenly the number of hours prescribed for reading in the national curriculum. This is particularly evident in fourth grade, where French becomes the main subject and very little attention is paid to Kreyòl . The tendency to

introduce French as soon as possible and to neglect Kreyòl is not surprising, given the widespread perception that more time dedicated to French equals better skills in French..

More work needs to be done to provide parents and teachers with evidence about how students learn to read best in a language they master and understand and can transfer these skills more effectively into a second language if they have already acquired sufficient vocabulary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To correct or strengthen the teaching–learning mechanism, we recommend the following actions or decisions based on the research:

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **FOCUS THE PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING CURRICULA ON READING INSTRUCTION.** Teachers in the Haitian primary classroom generally have low levels of initial training, and most receive little to no training in how to teach children to read in Kreyòl. They also receive little to no instruction in how to teach French as an additional language. In addition to learning how to teach children to read in Kreyòl and how to teach French as a second language, the data indicate that most teachers in Haiti need an accelerated class to improve their own Kreyòl writing and French speaking skills.
2. **ENSURE THAT EARLY GRADE TEACHERS RECEIVE UPDATED TRAINING ON LITERACY INSTRUCTION.** In addition to ensuring that the pre-service teacher training curriculum addresses the content and pedagogical knowledge teachers need to know and be able to do to successfully teach children to read, the government also needs to address the issue of providing in-service teachers with this same opportunity to update their skills. Teachers in the early grades have the critical responsibility of helping children to acquire the foundational reading skills necessary to enable them to succeed in all of their subjects. If they are not equipped to handle this task, then students will pass into the upper grades without developing a solid literacy foundation.
3. **CLARIFY AND REINFORCE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION POLICIES AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL.** The evidence clearly shows that children need enough time to develop solid decoding skills in their first language and time to develop their oral French vocabulary before transitioning into French language instruction. Children will have better outcomes both in Kreyòl reading and in French if this transition does not take place before the fourth grade.
4. **REVISE THE NATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM.** The current curriculum does not clearly and sequentially provide specific objectives and pedagogical activities for teachers to implement in the classroom to teach reading in Kreyòl. These materials should be revised to reflect the most recent evidence on the skills children need to acquire to learn to read in a transparent alphabetic script. There should be a strong focus on developing decoding skills as well as building children’s academic oral vocabulary in the early grades. Children must master these two skills in order to be able to read with comprehension.
5. **INCREASE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK DEVOTED TO TEACHING READING IN KREYÒL.** Reading is the foundational skill that determines whether a child will succeed in all other subjects throughout his or her schooling career. The time devoted to teaching reading in Kreyòl is currently insufficient to help children develop a solid foundation, particularly when we consider how much instructional time is lost due to other factors such as school disruptions, teacher and student absences, and time loss in the classroom due to management or discipline activities. It is critical that teachers have enough time to teach the key reading skills as well as to provide opportunities for daily practice.

6. **PROMOTE THE USE OF SCRIPTED LESSONS SUPPORTED BY TRAINING AND COACHING.** In the short term, and given the weaknesses of existing pre- and in-service teacher training programs, providing teachers with scripted lessons can help improve instructional practice and improve time on task. In addition, teachers require a minimal level of training in implementing the lessons as well as coaching support to continue to improve their instructional practice. Experience has shown that interventions to provide teachers with structured lessons to teach reading early in the primary cycle have doubled the time spent on task (Research Triangle Institute, 2016).
7. **ENSURE THAT ALL PRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS HAVE ACCESS TO SUFFICIENT TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS IN KREYÒL.** A print-rich environment provides the opportunity for children to apply the new skills they are learning in the reading classroom. We know that children need access to a variety of reading materials at the right level, in the right language, and that are interesting and contextually appropriate. Some of these materials can be created by teachers and students, but the government should provide at least a basic set of leveled Kreyòl reading materials for each Haitian primary classroom that enable children to practice reading and continue to grow their skills.

PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **TEACH CHILDREN THE CORE READING COMPETENCIES: PHONEMIC AWARENESS, PHONICS, VOCABULARY, FLUENCY, AND COMPREHENSION IN KREYÒL.** The research is clear that in alphabetic languages like Kreyòl, teachers should focus on teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension skills starting with easier concepts and moving to increasingly more difficult skills. Children should practice each of these skills separately, and they should be given the opportunity to combine the skills in the act of reading.
2. **ENSURE THAT THE FIRST AND SECOND YEARS OF FRENCH ARE FOCUSED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS.** Learning to read and learning a new language are two separate activities and should be treated accordingly in the classroom. In the early years of schooling, teachers should focus on teaching children how to read in Kreyòl, and they should teach children to learn French as a second or additional language. French instruction should remain focused on developing students' oral vocabulary in the early years as well as teaching some of the linguistic differences between French and Kreyòl that can support a later transition.
3. **CREATE PRINT MATERIALS TO FILL YOUR CLASSROOM.** Teaching and learning materials do not seem to be widely available in most Haitian primary classrooms. Teachers, students, parents, and communities can remedy this by creating homemade materials to fill the walls, such as alphabet charts, student names, and pictures with an accompanying word. The materials do not have to be professional to be effective.
4. **ENSURE THAT STUDENTS ARE READ TO AND PRACTICE READING DAILY.** Reading and being read to are necessary activities for children to become fluent readers. When a teacher reads to students, the students have the opportunity to witness fluent reading and learn the conventions of print (the direction the teacher reads, how they respond to punctuation). When students practice reading, they get to combine the individual skills they have learned into one process of decoding and comprehending a written text. Practicing reading will improve students' reading abilities and motivate them to read more.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX A. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS (2ND AND 4TH GRADES)

		Code :		
Institution :				
Adresse :				
Tél: Email :				
N.B. Pour les rubriques de gauche, les réponses seront inscrites dans la colonne de droite. Quand il faut choisir parmi des réponses multiples, cocher la case correspondant à votre réponse.				
Professeur				
1	Nom du professeur :			
2	Classe enseignée:			
3	Téléphone/email:			
4	Formation académique	ENI..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
		CFEF..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Autre..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Aucune..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
5	Nombre d'années de service	Moins de deux ans..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Deux a 5 ans..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Plus de cinq ans..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Plus de dix ans..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
6	Avez-vous l'habitude de lire?	Oui..... <input type="checkbox"/>	0	
		Non..... <input type="checkbox"/>	1	
		Pas de réponse..... <input type="checkbox"/>	9	
7	(Si oui à la question 6) Dans quelle langue les lisez-vous ?	Kreyòl..... <input type="checkbox"/>	1	
		Français..... <input type="checkbox"/>	2	
		Autres..... <input type="checkbox"/>	3	
		Pas de réponse..... <input type="checkbox"/>	7	
8	Dans quelle langue dispensez-vous vos cours ?	Kreyòl		
		Français		
		Kreyòl et Français		
Lisez-vous (deux réponses peuvent être retenues. Entourez le code correspondant aux réponses):		Oui	Non	Pas de réponse
9	Des articles de journaux ?	1	0	9
10	Pouvez-vous citer un exemple ? (Si la réponse 9 est Oui)			
11	Des magazines ?	1	0	9
12	Pouvez-vous citer un exemple ? (Si la réponse 11 est Oui).			
13	Des romans ?	1	0	9
14	Pouvez-vous citer un exemple ? (Si la réponse 13 est Oui).			
15	Des livres d'histoire ?	1	0	9

16	Pouvez-vous citer un exemple ? (Si la réponse 15 est Oui).			
17	Des bandes dessinées ?	1	0	9
18	Pouvez-vous citer un exemple ? (Si la réponse 17 est Oui).			
19	Y a-t-il une bibliothèque à l'école ?	Oui..... <input type="checkbox"/>		0
		Non..... <input type="checkbox"/>		1
		Pas de réponse <input type="checkbox"/>		9
19	Quel (s) manuel (s) utilisez-vous dans le cadre de votre cours de Kreyòl ?			
20	Quel (s) manuel (s) utilisez-vous dans le cadre de votre cours de français ?			
21	Avez-vous suivi une formation ayant rapport avec l'enseignement-apprentissage de la lecture au cours de votre carrière ?	Oui..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Non..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Pas de réponse..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
22	Avez-vous suivi une formation continue des deux dernières années ayant rapport avec enseignement apprentissage?	Oui..... <input type="checkbox"/>		0
		Non..... <input type="checkbox"/>		1
		Pas de réponse..... <input type="checkbox"/>		9
23	Si oui, indiquez l'institution ayant organisé la formation	MENFP..... <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Autres..... <input type="checkbox"/>		

ANNEX B. CLASSROOM OBSERVATION GUIDE (2ND AND 4TH GRADES)

Ecole :					
Classe observée :					
Heure de début de l'observation :					
Heure de fin de l'observation :					
Nom de l'observateur :					
Code :					
Taille de la classe					
Taille de la classe	Moins de 30 élèves				
	entre 30 et 40 élèves				
	Plus de 40 élèves				
Activités et Temps alloué à la lecture		Type d'activités			
Activités de lecture en français (cochez les cases correspondant aux activités identifiées)	Travail sur le langage (travail sur le vocabulaire et la syntaxe)	Temps alloué (en nombre de minutes)			
		1-10	10-20	20-30	30-40
		0	1	2	3
	Ponctuation/intonation	Temps alloué (en nombre de minutes)			
		1-10	10-20	20-40	30-40
		0	1	2	3
	Evaluation de la perception visuelle	Temps alloué (en nombre de minutes)			
		1-10	10-20	20-30	30-40
		0	1	2	3
	Analyse textuelle (question/réponse)	Temps alloué (en nombre de minutes)			
		1-10	10-20	20-30	30-40
		0	1	2	3
	Résumé du texte lu	Temps alloué (en nombre de minutes)			
		1-10	10-20	20-30	30-40
		0	1	2	3
	Reformulation du contenu	Temps alloué (en nombre de minutes)			
1-10		10-20	20-30	30-40	
0		1	2	3	
Activités de lecture en Kreyòl (cochez les cases correspondant aux activités identifiées)	Travail sur le langage (travail sur le vocabulaire et la syntaxe)	Temps alloué (en nombre de minutes)			
		1-10	10-20	20-30	30-40
		0	1	2	3
	Ponctuation/intonation	Temps alloué (en nombre de minutes)			
		1-10	10-20	20-30	30-40
		0	1	2	3
	Analyse textuelle (exercice de questions/réponses)	Temps alloué (en nombre de minutes)			
		1-10	10-20	20-30	30-40
		0	1	2	3
	Résumé du texte lu	Temps alloué (en nombre de minutes)			
		1-10	10-20	20-30	30-40
		0	1	2	3

	Reformulation du contenu du texte lu		Temps alloué (mn)				
			1-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	
			0	1	2	3	
Méthodes utilisées dans le cadre du cours de lecture	Lecture individuelle à haute voix		Oui	Non	Pas de réponse		
			4	5	6		
	Lecture individuelle silencieuse		Oui	Non	Pas de réponse		
			4	5	6		
	Lecture collective des élèves à haute voix		Oui	Non	Pas de réponse		
			4	5	6		
	Lecture expliquée par le professeur		Oui	Non	Pas de réponse		
			4	5	6		
	Lecture cursive à la maison		Oui	Non	Pas de réponse		
			4	5	6		
	Usage de moyens audiovisuels dans le cadre des cours de lecture		Oui	Non	Pas de réponse		
			4	5	6		
Types de Supports utilisés pour les activités							
Supports disponibles	Manuel de lecture disponible	Classe entière	Plus de la moitié	Moins de la moitié	Très peu	Personne	
	Cahiers d'écriture disponibles	Classe entière	Plus de la moitié	Moins de la moitié	Très peu	Personne	
	Tableau disponible	Oui	Non	Ne s'applique pas			
		1	2	3			
	Affichages liées aux activités de lecture (planche, images, illustration...)						
		Oui	Non	Ne s'applique pas			
		0	1	2			
	Autres	9					