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USAID Malawi National Reading Strategy Implementation Phase II **FINAL REPORT**

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ACRONYMS

ASPIRE	Girls' Empowerment through Education and Health Activity
DIAS	Directorate of Inspection and Advisory Services
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Activity
LB	Learner's Book
MERIT	Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology
NRP	National Reading Program
NRS	National Reading Strategy
NRSTF	National Reading Strategy Task Force
RTI	Research Triangle Institute International
SEGREM	Strengthening Early Grade Reading in Malawi
STS	School-to-School International
TG	Teacher's Guide
TOT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the National Reading Strategy Implementation Phase II contract, School-to-School International (STS) provided expert technical assistance to the Malawi Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) to develop a comprehensive implementation plan for the National Reading Program (NRP). Support incorporated the four main components of the National Reading Strategy (NRS): instruction, assessment, teacher preparation, and family and community participation.

In 2014, the Government of Malawi's MoEST approved a five-year NRS to improve reading levels and guide the teaching of Chichewa and English in Standards I through 4. The NRS focuses on four basic intervention areas: reorganizing and aligning reading instruction, assessing the education system to identify gaps, preparing teachers through pre-service and in-service training, and engaging families and communities in the importance of reading. The elements of the NRS that are non-negotiable and require special attention include improving instructional focus on the five components of reading, oral language, and writing; improving instructional quality through standards setting, aligning curriculum to standards, developing and distributing teacher and student materials; and equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge to effectively teach students how to read.

This report details the technical assistance provided by STS over the period of August 2015 to November 2017 in the following areas:

- Support to national education policy decisions
- Support to the design, development, review and revision of Standard 1-4 English and Chichewa curricula and instructional materials
- Support to the design of the NRP teacher training program
- Support to improving teachers' English proficiency
- Strategy for setting early grade reading benchmarks

Senior STS reading and teacher training experts contributed years of in-depth experience in education research and advising international education development projects to the design and delivery of technical assistance to multiple facets of Malawi's NRP. Using the MoEST-approved NRS as a guide, STS worked to ensure that NRP implementers were aware of evidence-based best practices in early grade reading as well as the country's own approved strategy for increasing early grade readers. Support aimed to enable the MoEST and education partners to systematically improve reading instruction throughout the country through effective and sustainable changes.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) mission in Malawi supported an Early Grade Reading Assessment to evaluate the reading skills of primary students on a national scale. This assessment, conducted in the Chichewa language, showed overall early grade reading levels were extremely low. Nearly three-quarters (72.8%) of Standard 2 students and half (41.9%) of Standard 4 students could not read a single word of the sample text presented to them. An even larger percentage of students were unable to answer even one comprehension question associated with the reading. As a result of these findings, it was recommended that the Government of Malawi review and revise several elements of its education system including policies affecting early grade reading, early grade reading curriculum and classroom materials, and teacher training.¹

In 2014, the Government of Malawi's MoEST approved a five-year NRS to improve reading levels and guide the teaching of Chichewa and English in Standards 1 through 4. The NRS focuses on four basic intervention areas: reorganizing and aligning reading instruction, assessing the education system to identify gaps, preparing teachers through pre-service and in-service training, and engaging families and communities in the importance of reading. The elements of the NRS that are non-negotiable and require special attention include improving instructional focus on the five components of reading, oral language, and writing; improving instructional quality through standards setting, aligning curriculum to standards, developing and distributing teacher and student materials; and equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge to effectively teach students how to read.

USAID/Malawi contracted STS to provide technical assistance to the MoEST to develop an implementation plan for the five-year NRS. This final report presents a summary of the activities conducted over the life of the contract period from August 13, 2015, through November 10, 2017.

Highlights of the National Reading Program

National Reading Strategy

The goal of the NRS is to ensure that children learn to *read with understanding* by the end of Standard 3.² To realize this goal, the NRS focuses on the following strategies:

- Effective reading instruction
- Assessment
- Teacher preparation
- Family and community support

Strategy 1: Effective Reading Instruction

An explicit approach to reading instruction across the primary grades includes a focus on five essential components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These are explained in further detail in the following section.

Strategy 2: Assessment

Assessment is an important part of reading instruction. A teacher's understanding of what learners are able to do well on their own as well as the areas where they need support is important. The primary

¹ USAID Malawi Teacher Professional Development Support Activity. (2012). *2010 Early Grade Reading Assessment: National Baseline Report*. Retrieved from EdData website <https://www.eddataglobal.org/eddata/egra-report-malawi-2010>.

² Government of Malawi, Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. (2014). *Malawi National Reading Strategy (2014-2019)*. Lilongwe, Malawi.

purpose of classroom-based assessments is to inform what adjustments should be made during reading instruction so that all learners' needs are met.

Strategy 3: Teacher Preparation

Teachers need support to understand how to teach reading. Professional development will focus on knowledge of the five components of reading instruction, the stages of reading acquisition, strategies to build on existing reading skills, and ways to strengthen home-school-community partnerships that support children's development into proficient readers. Professional development will also address the particular needs that arise in each individual's teaching practice.

Strategy 4: Families and Communities

Schools, parents, and community members need to work together to nurture a habit of reading. Educating parents about ways to incorporate reading at home is critical to children's process of learning to read. In the community, reading centers located near schools can foster a love of reading by providing opportunities for children to read supplementary books and stories. Additionally, reading centers allow children to select books and synthesize the reading skills taught in the classroom.

The Five Components of Reading Instruction

Teaching children to read involves many layered and interactive processes.³ In phonetic languages, girls and boys must learn about the relationship between the sounds they hear and the alphabet letters that represent those sounds. To build children's awareness of the relationship between spoken and written language, it is important to model reading skills so that learners can see what reading looks like and hear what reading sounds like. Effective reading instruction also involves supporting children as they gradually acquire fundamental literacy skills. These fundamental skills are known as the five components of literacy instruction and include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.⁴ In the following section, each component is described and its relevance to the process of learning to read is discussed.

Component 1: Phonemic Awareness

A child who is developing phonemic awareness can listen to spoken words and identify the different sounds that make up the word. The word *phonemic* is related to the word *phoneme*, which refers to the smallest unit of sound in a spoken word. For example, if a teacher says the Chichewa word *ana*, a student would be able to hear the individual phonemes—/a/, /n/, and /a/—that make up the word. When teachers support children in the development of phonemic awareness, they set the stage for gradually making connections between the sounds of spoken language and the letters that represent these sounds. The development of strong phonemic awareness is important because it lays the foundation for learners to read printed words.

Children come to school with the knowledge of words they use in their everyday lives in informal conversations with family and friends or in oral storytelling. Some instructional routines that help learners build strong phonemic awareness include singing songs, reciting poems, oral storytelling, identifying the beginning sound in words, matching words with their beginning sounds, blending sounds to form syllables and syllables to words, counting syllables, and segmenting words into syllable parts.

³ Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2006). *Teaching for comprehending and fluency: Thinking, talking, and writing about reading, K–8*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

⁴ National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel. *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Component 2: Phonics

The alphabetic principle refers to the understanding that words are made up of letters, which represent speech sounds. As children learn the alphabetic principle, they begin to recognize letters' shapes and names, gradually making the connection between letters' names and sounds. For example, when children see the letter *b*, they may notice the long vertical line and the circle attached to its lower right side. They may see a picture of a bottle next to the Chichewa word *botolo*, recognize the shape of the letter *b*, and make the connection between this letter and its sound—/b/—as the first sound in the word *botolo*. As children encounter more words in books and supplementary reading materials, they will notice the letters and begin to understand that letters fit together to make words.

Children come to school with some degree of exposure to the alphabet. They see the letters that make up store names and printed on some household items. Through phonics instruction, teachers use varying approaches to support children's learning of the alphabetic principle. Related activities include teaching the letters' names, shapes, and sounds; looking at pictures of objects that start with a certain letter; and identifying capitalized and lowercase letters in books.

Component 3: Fluency

Children who read with fluency can correctly read with expression at a pace that is neither too fast nor too slow so that they can comprehend what they are reading.⁵ Children must apply their growing phonemic awareness skills, knowledge of the alphabetic principle, and background knowledge of decoding, or figuring out how to read a word correctly, to read with fluency. Simple words—such as *ana*, *ndi*, and *za* in Chichewa—frequently appear in books and supplementary materials; children given opportunities to read often will begin to recognize simple words and read them with automaticity. Reading with fluency is critical because it helps children to understand what they read. Based on their informal conversations at home and in the community, children come to school with some understanding of what spoken language sounds like and that words have shades of meaning. In school, oral language continues to serve as a critical scaffold as children learn to read with fluency and understanding.

Some of the instructional activities that help children read with fluency include actively modeling how to read with expression at a good pace by reading aloud to them and providing opportunities for children to practice reading syllables, words, and sentences in groups, in pairs, and individually.

Component 4: Vocabulary

When children expand their vocabulary and acquire new words, they are better able to communicate through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As children learn to read, they draw from the oral vocabulary they have learned by listening and speaking to others. In the classroom, the explicit teaching of oral vocabulary is a bridge for learning the meaning of new words they come across in texts.⁶ Vocabulary acquisition is critically important because it supports children's ability to read with understanding.

Teachers may teach vocabulary *directly* by telling children the meanings of words by acting out words, showing pictures that represent words, or using words in model sentences and discussions. Teachers may teach vocabulary *indirectly* by introducing new words in a book or supplementary materials. There, the meanings of new words can be explored through discussions, questioning, drawing on background knowledge, and using pictures and nearby words to as ciphers.

⁵ Moore, P. & Lyon, A. (2005). *New essentials for teaching reading in preK-2: Comprehension, vocabulary, fluency*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

⁶ Ibid.

Component 5: Comprehension

When children read with comprehension, they can understand the meaning of the pictures, words, and sentences they come across in books or supplementary readers. Even when children are still in the process of learning to read fluently, they can still develop comprehension skills by actively listening to stories. This is an important point because the overall purpose of teaching children how to read is to enable them to read with understanding.⁷

Children come to school with informal experiences related to stories they listen to or tell others. They are also familiar with real-life topics such as fetching water, helping with chores, growing maize or tobacco, and recognizing the kinds of animals that live in their community. Children, therefore, hold many memories of stories and informal knowledge based on their lived experiences. It is important to weave relevant sources of knowledge into reading instruction because these can connect to children's lived experiences in a way that supports learning to read with understanding. Activities that deepen children's listening and reading comprehension skills include asking literal questions—ones that create opportunities to recall basic details about the who, what, when, where, and why in a story—and inferential questions—ones that invite readers to extend the meaning of the text to understand why characters behave in a certain way or what the message of the story could be.

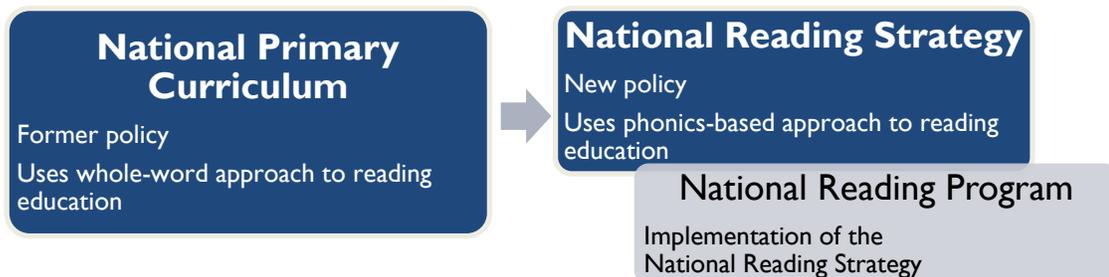
Two Additional Components—Oral Language Development and Writing

Oral language development and writing skills help children develop reading skills and are instrumental when reading in a non-mother tongue language. The amount of time allocated to oral language development and writing should vary by grade to reflect the developmental nature of reading acquisition and research evidence.

2. CONTEXTUAL FACTORS OF EDUCATION IN MALAWI

STS provided technical assistance to USAID/Malawi and its partners by advising on evidence-based, international best practices for early grade reading policy and for the design of teaching and learning materials and teacher training for the NRP. Throughout its work, STS considered the complex context of the Malawian education system, notably the political dynamics of policy decisions—including the key stakeholders who influence and enact education policy reform, their motivations, the development partners currently supporting education initiatives in Malawi, the prevalence of large class sizes in the early grades, and the national mechanisms for rolling out a *teacher training cascade*.

Figure 1



⁷ Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2006). *Teaching for comprehending and fluency: Thinking, talking, and writing about reading, K–8*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

At the start of the contracting period, Malawi's primary education reform effort was at a turning point. There was a mélange of approaches to teaching reading in early Standards that varied between schools in different parts of the country. The National Primary Curriculum, introduced by the Government of Malawi, utilized a whole-word approach to reading, while other interventions, such as the Malawi Early Grade Reading Activity (EGRA) and the MoEST-approved NRS, emphasized the use of a phonetic-reading approach. The National Reading Program (NRP) is the implementation process of the NRS. The NRP is an MoEST-led program that aims to scale early grade reading interventions for students and teachers in Standards 1–4, beginning in September 2016.

Although its official language is English, Malawi has over 16 national languages. Chichewa is the most common of these national languages, spoken by an estimated 65% of the population.⁸ The current public primary education system uses Chichewa as the medium of instruction in Standards 1 through 4 in all subjects except English as a second language; students are then transitioned to English-medium instruction for all subjects in Standard 5.

At the national level, the parliament passed the *Education Act* in 2012, which stated that English should be the medium of instruction in Malawian public schools beginning in Standard 1. However, the current minister of education has expressed that full implementation of the *Education Act* should wait until the education system is prepared for such a change. The process of completely transitioning Malawi's education system to English poses several dilemmas including a lack of English materials for Standards 1–4, deficiencies in Standard 1–4 teachers' current English skills, and difficulties in teaching children to read in a language that most do not speak or understand.

Key Government Stakeholders

STS collaborated with officials from the MoEST to provide the technical support outlined in this contract. STS worked most closely with the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) for the development, review, and revision of the NRP's teaching and learning materials. MIE is Malawi's national curriculum development center for primary and secondary education as well as the main provider of primary school teacher education. In addition to developing curricula, it orients teachers to new curricula or curriculum changes through teachers' continuing professional development, writes syllabi, produces primary school textbooks, selects secondary school textbooks from private-sector publishers, develops primary teachers' education materials, and collaborates with teacher training colleges.

USAID Investments

During the duration of STS's contract, several other international nongovernmental groups were also supporting education initiatives were active in Malawi. Selected USAID/Malawi-funded education initiatives coinciding with STS's contract are described in the following section. These programs were key partners in providing technical assistance as they each perform different roles that support Malawi's early grade reading reform.

Malawi Early Grade Reading Activity

Implemented from 2013–16 by RTI International (RTI), the EGRA was designed to improve the capacity of Malawi's Standard 1–3 teachers to provide quality reading instruction to students, improve the learning outcomes of their students, increase parental and community engagement to support student reading, and reduce the repetition and dropout rates in early grades by providing a quality learning environment. EGRA worked in 11 education districts in Malawi. EGRA staff participated in the NRS task

⁸ National African Language Resource Center, Indiana University. (n.d.) *Chichewa*. [Brochure] Retrieved from <http://www.nalrc.indiana.edu/brochures/chichewa.pdf>.

force workshop, contributing important perspectives and lessons learned from the implementation of the program.

Strengthening Early Grade Reading in Malawi

Implemented by MIE staff from 2014–17, the Strengthening Early Grade Reading in Malawi (SEGREM) program aims to design teaching and learning materials that promote early grade reading. STS worked with SEGREM staff on the design and development of materials for the NRP.

Representatives from both the EGRA and SEGREM programs reported experiencing a tension between the National Primary Curriculum’s and the NRS’s approaches to reading instruction. At the start of STS’s contracting period, staff from the EGRA program shared that while the Chichewa-medium curricula for Standards 1 through 3 had been adapted to reflect the five components of reading, the English-medium curricula and reading materials remained misaligned with the NRS. Instead of utilizing the five-components approach, many reading materials continued to use the whole-language approach.

Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement Activity

Begun in 2015 and contracted through 2020, the Malawi Early Grade Reading Improvement activity (MERIT) aims to assist the Government of Malawi’s efforts to improve the reading skills of students in Standards 1 through 4 by improving early grade reading instruction, increasing parental and community engagement in student reading, creating safer learning environments for reading, and instituting pathways for sustainability. One of MERIT’s critical mandates is to synthesize the technical learning from two previous USAID investments: EGRA and SEGREM. Additionally, MERIT is designed to coordinate the NRP’s implementation activities. STS worked closely with MERIT staff in the design, development, review, and revision of the NRP’s teaching and learning materials as well as the teacher training cascade on the new curriculum and materials.

Girls’ Empowerment through Education and Health Activity

Begun in 2014 with implementation activities planned through 2018, the Girls’ Empowerment through Education and Health Activity (ASPIRE) is designed to address the challenges that girls face in the Malawian education system. It is a collaborative, co-funded activity between USAID/Malawi’s education and health offices. It is being implemented by the Save the Children Federation Inc. and focuses on all primary and secondary schools in the Balaka, Machinga, and Zomba districts of Malawi. The main goals of ASPIRE are to improve the reading skills of girls in upper primary school, increase the adoption of positive sexual and health-care seeking behaviors, and decrease key structural and cultural barriers to girls’ access to schooling. STS collaborated with staff members of ASPIRE on the development of an assessment to evaluate Standard 4–8 teachers’ English language proficiency and on the subsequent design of a pilot program to improve teachers’ English language proficiency.

3. DATA METHODS AND ANALYSIS

No quantitative data were collected during the life of this contract. STS’s role focused on the provision of technical assistance to implementing partners in Malawi. The details of this assistance are provided in the Findings section.

4. FINDINGS

In this section, methods of providing technical assistance and resulting findings are presented. This includes the descriptions of contracted activities, their relevance to the education sector, and the actions taken by the MoEST and other partners as a result of STS’s technical assistance. STS provided in-

person and remote support to USAID/Malawi, the MoEST, and other education partners in Malawi through a contract in effect from August 13, 2015, to November 10, 2017. Because much of this work met siloed needs, rather than progressively building upon itself, the findings section is subdivided into five areas: (1) NRS task force workshop; (2) materials development for Standards 1–4 English and Chichewa subjects; (3) support for teacher training; (4) teachers’ English proficiency support; and (5) advice for early grade reading benchmarking.

National Reading Strategy Task Force Workshop

In December 2015, the NRS task force (NRSTF), composed of technical experts from various departments of the MoEST and development partners, was constituted to guide the implementation of and advising on major technical issues associated with the NRP—the implementation process of the NRS. The NRP is an MoEST-led program that aims to scale early grade reading interventions for students and teachers in Standards 1–4, beginning in September 2016.

The NRSTF convened for the first time in Lilongwe on December 10 and 11, 2015, to discuss key issues that required immediate action and aimed to improve reading instruction in Chichewa and English.

During the first workshop, the NRSTF tackled three major issues:

- Time allocation for English and Chichewa instruction in Standards 1–4
- Scope and sequence of curricula materials in Standards 1–4
- Medium of instruction in Standards 1–4, including the process of transitioning from Chichewa to English

Prior to the workshop, staff members from the USAID/Malawi Education Team and STS participated in a series of meetings with key stakeholders and decision-makers to gather background information for synthesis by the larger task force. During the December 2015 workshop, NRSTF members presented evidence and information, discussed perspectives, and came to consensus on the three major issues. Each major issue, including its relevance to the NRSTF and the resulting decisions, is described in the subsequent section.

Time Allocation

Context: At the time of NRSTF workshop, the official class schedule for Standards 1–4 in Malawi allocated instructional time in 30-minute segments. In Standard 1, seven periods were allocated for Chichewa-medium instruction and three periods for English; in Standard 2, nine periods were allocated for Chichewa and five for English; and in Standard 3, seven periods were allocated for Chichewa and six for English.

The amount of time allocated to different content areas was defined in a ministry-approved timetable, which varied by Standard. Historically, reading was not taught as a stand-alone subject. Rather, it was considered one of the four communicative skills that were incorporated into the periods and the five components of reading were not taught in a systematic manner.

Prior to the workshop, the MoEST approved one additional hour to be added to the school day for students in Standards 1 through 8; this change was confirmed in a meeting with the minister of education.

NRS Guidelines: Recognizing that the development of proficient reading skills requires adequate time devoted to the teaching of reading, the NRS proposes a reduction in the number of content areas taught in Standards 1 and 2 to three core subjects: Chichewa, English, and mathematics. The change aimed to ensure that teachers have time to teach and assess students in the fundamentals and that children have time to develop and practice foundational skills. Beginning in Standard 3, the NRS states that all content

areas will be included in the schedule.

Additionally, the NRS states that, at a minimum, reading instruction should last for 60 minutes each day. To ensure that children acquire the reading skills they need, instruction should focus on the five components of reading. Time should also be allocated to oral language development and writing as these two skills will help children develop reading skills and be instrumental when they begin to read in a second language. The amount of time allocated varies by grade to reflect the developmental nature of reading acquisition and research evidence.

Task Force Recommendations: The NRSTF proposed using part or, in certain Standards, all of the additional time to allow for Chichewa and English language instruction to be taught for an hour each day.

After considering evidence on the amount of time children require to learn to read with fluency and comprehension in any language, the NRSTF agreed to support the guidelines of the NRS. Specifically, the task force came to a consensus that **time for language instruction should increase to one hour per day, five days per week in Chichewa and one hour per day, five days per week in English for Standards 1–4 beginning in the 2016–17 school year.** To implement this change, the group decided that the NRP should provide materials and training to Standard 1 teachers prior to the start of the 2016–17 school year.

Given that textbooks, teacher guides, and training through the NRP would not be available to Standards 2–4 until future school years, the NRSTF recommended that students and teachers in Standards 2–4 use the extra hour for remediation, differentiation of instruction, and additional reading practice utilizing supplementary reading materials. This recommendation was based on results of the national Early Grade Reading Assessments results, which showed that a significant number of students were still unable to read at grade-level benchmarks in Standards 2 through 4. Helping students acquire the foundational skills essential to early literacy success is a key step towards ensuring improvements in student learning outcomes.

To help Standard 2–4 teachers make efficient use of the extra hour, the task force decided that the NRP should work on developing guidelines for appropriately supporting remediation, differentiation, and additional reading practice; these should be shared with districts and schools. The NRP should also address these issues and provide technical guidance in trainings for head teachers, primary education advisors, and, possibly, teachers. The goal is to ensure that the additional allocated time translates into academic learning time during which students are actively engaged and acquiring new skills and knowledge.

Scope and Sequence

Context: There are two strands of materials' scope and sequence to be effective: the *phonics or code strand* and the *comprehension or meaning strand*. The phonics strand encompasses the skills and knowledge associated with learning to decode words in reading. Equally important is the comprehension strand, which is associated with the skills and knowledge necessary to understand what is read. The comprehension strand includes comprehension strategies, oral language, and vocabulary.

The design of instructional materials should allow students to progressively build their reading skills and provide enough practice to enable them to read grade-level text with proficiency. As the first step of this process, *letter sequence* should be introduced in Standard 1 in a way that is productive, balancing letters' frequencies with the need to have students read words quickly. An imbalance can result in students developing issues with *decoding*, which in turn, can be one of the greatest barriers to reading. This barrier can be mitigated by a productive sequence of curricula materials that maximizes students'

reading practice. A variety of materials that reflect instructional standards and align with students' emerging reading skills are needed, including a primer or textbook, decodable texts, and leveled readers. Prior to the workshop, reading experts from STS had met with the MoEST officials and recommended that the education system in Malawi think beyond the sequence of letters introduced and also give appropriate attention to the comprehension strand. Specifically, STS recommended that a scope and sequence should be developed with four key criteria in mind: a strong focus on the five components of reading; a map of each objective from easiest to more difficult; a mindful distribution of skills and knowledge within and across standards; and a reliance on a systematic instructional design.

At the time of the NRSTF workshop, there was a range of differing opinions among education stakeholders about the optimal sequence for introducing Chichewa letters and sounds. The EGRA project used a sequence called ANIKUMETO, which was based on an analysis of the most frequently used letters in Chichewa. In it, letters are generally arranged in order of most frequent to least frequent. However, to ensure that words could be formed, each vowel is followed by two or three consonants before another vowel can be introduced. Additionally, ANIKUMETO introduced most consonant blends after each letter in the blend had been introduced. However, ANIKUMETO was only adopted in EGRA intervention schools.

At the time of the workshop, the NRSTF felt that Malawi needed a nationally-accepted sequence that could be implemented with fidelity in all schools.

Task force Recommendations: The NRSTF decided that the MIE, together with other key NRP implementers, should use the phonics strand to determine the best sequence to introduce letters in Chichewa that enables students to read within the first few weeks of Standard I. This decision should be made by experts using their own experiences and assisted by language analysis software that will generate sequences based on letter frequency in age-appropriate texts.

The NRSTF decided that a broader scope and sequence be developed for Chichewa and English in Standards 1–4 that includes both phonics and comprehension strands. This should be determined in January 2016 and, in turn, facilitate the review and revision of Standard 1–4 teaching and learning materials. The MIE should lead this process as part of its efforts to align the existing syllabi and assessment standards to the NRS.

Medium of Instruction

Context: Malawi's Education Act, 2012 identifies the need to improve children's English skills in primary school and calls for the use of English as the medium of instruction starting in Standard I.⁹ The NRS lays out a gradual and evidence-based approach to introducing the language of instruction in order to produce optimal reading competencies at the primary school level. The approach should take into consideration children's English skill levels when entering Standard I.

Although the MoEST and its partners continue to increase support for early childhood development initiatives, many students do not have access to programs that might introduce them to English. Therefore, a majority of children in Malawi enter Standard I with little or no prior experience communicating in English. While not all children in Malawi speak Chichewa before attending primary school, a majority of children do. This is a rare situation in sub-Saharan Africa that could be utilized to the country's advantage to facilitate literacy acquisition.

⁹ Education Act, 2012, Laws of Malawi. (2012, c. B-35). Retrieved from the Malawi Legal Information Institute website <https://www.malawilii.org/mw/legislation/act/2012/35>

Evidence shows that a child only learns how to read once and learning to read is dramatically easier in a child's first language or in a language a child understands. Reading in a second language is facilitated when decoding skills and comprehension strategies learned in their first language are transferred to other languages. Even though the transfer is not automatic, it is easily incorporated into instruction. Finally, the gradual transition from a primary or mother language to a second language has been proven to be more effective than an abrupt transition to a secondary language in all subjects at once.

Task Force Recommendations: The NRSTF recommends a staggered approach to transitioning to English as the medium of instruction; it is designed to help all students gain the foundational skills necessary for school success. The approach includes an English-language program for Standards 1–4 that is based on best practices for successful language acquisition and transition; it also suggests options for more intensive pre- and in-service trainings for English teachers.

The task force decided that Chichewa should remain the medium of instruction for all subjects except English in Standard 1. This would allow children entering primary school across Malawi to develop the minimum requisite English-language competencies to handle learning in an all-English classroom environment. Additionally, the task force recommended that students learn to read in Chichewa and that the English taught in Standard 1 should focus on oral language development. By allowing students to learn to read in Chichewa and focusing on oral skills in English in Standard 1, they are able to establish a solid foundation in basic reading skills—especially the alphabetic principle and decoding—before applying these skills to English. Additionally, by enabling children to build their oral language skills in English in Standard 1, they develop the vocabulary needed to transition to English reading.

The task force recommended that beginning in Standard 2, students should start learning to read in English. Subsequently, one subject per year should be added using English as the medium of instruction, with all subjects, except Chichewa, taught in English by Standard 5. By phasing English in gradually as the medium of instruction, students have the opportunity to build their English competence progressively while continuing to strengthen their foundation of reading in Chichewa. Assessments of students' English proficiency can be conducted over time to ascertain whether a quicker transition from Chichewa- to English-medium instruction is possible.

Finally, the NRSTF recommended that while the curriculum is being reviewed and revised, methods should be introduced that support cross-linguistic transfer. Elements that are similar and different in the two languages should be explicitly taught in a logical sequence, and unnecessary repetition of common elements should be avoided.

Results Following the December 2015 Workshop and Proposal to the Minister of Education

The NRSTF's recommendations were provided to the Directorate of Inspection and Advisory Services (DIAS) for review and approval in the form of an abbreviated proposal dated December 21, 2015. DIAS approval was required before the requisite materials for nationwide-implementation of the NRP in Standard 1 could be designed. Implementation of Standard 1 materials was planned for the beginning of the 2016–17 school year; it was to be preceded by Standard 1 materials development and printing, teacher training, and the development and dissemination of an NRP communications campaign.

Following the presentation of recommendations, DIAS allocated one hour to both Chichewa and English instruction in Standards 1 through 4, approved the sequence of teaching English oral language skills in Standard 1, and implemented the focus on cross-linguistic transfer, which is evident in the approved scope and sequence.

Materials Development for Standards 1–4 English and Chichewa Subjects

As the MoEST worked with education stakeholders and development partners to design and develop the teaching and learning materials for the NRP, STS was asked to provide support to the implementers and assure fidelity to the evidence-based principles outlined in the NRS. From February 2016 to May 2017, STS provided remote and in-country support to the NRP’s materials development and finalization process.

To support the development of reading materials STS collaborated with staff members from the USAID/Malawi Education Office; staff members from the USAID-funded MERIT, SEGREM, and EGRA projects; cadres of the MIE; and other key MoEST leaders. STS’s reading experts, Dr. Sylvia Linan-Thompson and Dr. Sharolyn Pollard-Durodola, provided key technical assistance, drawing upon their rich and extensive experience in research on literacy acquisition and English as a second language. USAID/Malawi called upon STS experts on an as-needed basis to guide writers of teacher’s guides (TG) and learner’s books (LB) through the materials development process, including supporting scope and sequence development and reviewing and revising English and Chichewa materials for Standards 1 through 4.

The guiding principles of STS’s technical support were threefold: to ensure students build English oral language skills first; to leverage students’ literacy skills in their first language to build academic language and literacy in English; and to separate language instruction from literacy instruction and use best practice to teach each. These principles, grounded in research evidence, were the basis for developing the scope and sequence and are reflected in the materials.

The following section describes STS’s support to an English language panel that reviewed existing materials and set an agenda and framework for developing the NRP’s new English materials; a Standard 2 English literacy and language workshop that focused on how to teach each of the five components of reading; online workshops for developing frameworks for English and Chichewa Standard 2–4 Scope and sequence; and review and quality control of Standard 2–4 English-medium and Standard 3–4 Chichewa-medium materials.

English Language Panel

Background

STS’s reading expert, Dr. Sylvia Linan-Thompson, traveled to Malawi to support an English language panel that convened in February 2016. The task of the panel was to review existing English language materials for Standards 1 through 4 and develop a plan for further development of materials, ensuring alignment to the NRS.

Context

At the time of the workshop, English language instruction was provided in 30-minute periods that ranged from three to seven a week in Standards 1 through 4. The English language syllabi in each standard identified six core elements: listening, speaking, reading, writing, critical thinking and reasoning, and structuring and using language. For each of these elements, six focus areas are specified: assessment standards; success criteria; theme or topic; suggested teaching and learning activities; teaching, learning, and assessment methodologies; and suggested teaching and learning resources. Using the syllabus as a guide, LBs for Standard 1 were developed in 2015.

Participants

Panel members represented the MIE and teacher training colleges. Faculty members were experts in English language instruction and teacher training.

Workshop Objectives and Results

Align the Scope and Sequence of English Instruction in Standards 1 through 4 to the NRS. The panel aimed to review the existing scope and sequence of the English language subject for Standards 1 through 4 and propose adjustments to ensure full alignment with the NRS. Using the goals and skills students would develop by the end of Standard 4, the panel identified needed literacy skills and distributed across Standards 1 through 4. The proposed literacy scope and sequence is provided in Annex 1: English Literacy Scope and Sequence.

Review and propose changes to Standard 1 Learner’s Book & Teacher’s Guide. The panel was tasked with reviewing the existing Standard 1 materials to propose changes to the TG to be made prior to training for Standard 1 teachers, and taking account of the increased time allocation for English.

A review of the Standard 1 LB identified six main issues. First, the time distribution between language and literacy activities was not aligned with the NRS. Second, only 10 minutes of the instructional time was dedicated to explicit instruction; the remainder of the time was allocated to songs. Third, even though the lesson topics were aligned with the syllabus’s themes and topics, only part of the lesson was aligned to the syllabus. The fourth issue was related to the selection of vocabulary words for literacy tasks: the alphabetic order was used to sequence the introduction of vocabulary words, which meant that during the first week, five words beginning with A were used, during the second week, words beginning with B, and so forth. Fifth, introduced words were semantically unrelated to each other, and their meanings were not taught, both of which make using and learning the meaning of words more difficult. Finally, effective practices for teaching English as a second language were not included; the lessons only included rote memorization and repetition. As a result, the panel decided that working with the existing LB was not advisable, and consequentially extended their charge to design a plan to revise the LBs as well as the TGs.

Plan to align Standard 1 & 2 Learner’s Books to NRS-aligned scope and sequence. The panel aimed to design a plan to align the Standards 1 and 2 LBs to a scope and sequence that follows the principles of the NRS and allowed for both versions to be printed prior to the start of the 2017–18 academic year. |

The English language panel engaged in a number of activities to develop a framework for English language instruction that aligned with the NRS and was based on evidence-based practices. During the workshop, the panel completed the following tasks:

- Identified goals for English development
- Reviewed the current English-language syllabi for Standards 1 through 3
- Determined time allocation for components to align with the NRS
- Identified topics for English instruction
- Began alignment of English instruction across the curriculum
- Examined language transfer from Chichewa to English
- Reviewed effective teaching practices

Goals for English Development

The first activity was the identification of goals for English language development. After careful consideration of the current context, the panel identified six characteristics of successful English-language learners. The panel agreed that in order to be considered proficient in English students should be able to complete the following six tasks by the end of Standard 4:

1. Follow written and oral instructions in the classroom
2. Express thoughts, feelings, and ideas orally in response to a prompt or question, and to initiate a conversation or discussion
3. Read a narrative or informative passage of approximately 500 words, or three to four paragraphs, that includes a variety of simple and complex sentences and utilizes a varied vocabulary with commonly used and conceptual words.
4. Use comprehension strategies to understand English texts
5. Write a simple dictation consisting of one to two paragraphs, or approximately 100 words
6. Write a simple, cohesive passage that is two to three paragraphs in length, with correct spelling and punctuation, using simple and compound sentences and more than one tense

Alignment to the National Reading Strategy

To reach these goals, instruction beginning in Standard 1 should build students' language and literacy skills in English. Since many children enter school with limited or no knowledge of English, instruction in Standard 1 will focus on building their oral language skills. Literacy skills will be introduced gradually. The percentage of time allocated to literacy increases from 5% in Standard 1 to 25% in Standard 4. Using the recommended time allocated to teach English found in the NRS—one hour—the core elements of the syllabus were distributed into language and literacy blocks. The proposed distribution is found in Annex 2: English Language Panel Time Allocation.

Lessons

As noted in the NRS, effective instruction requires both explicit and systematic of knowledge and skills as well as opportunities to practice those developing skills. Introduction lessons should be explicit. Lessons should follow a standard instructional sequence: first model, then guide practice, and finally offering independent practice.

In addition, scaffolding, or breaking up instruction into smaller chunks to facilitate students' advancement to higher levels of learning, should be provided as needed. After a skill has been introduced, opportunities to practice that skill should be provided as practice provides students with opportunities to solidify and generalize their skills. Practice activities are interactive. See Annex 3: Examples of Skills and Knowledge Required in Four Communicative Domains.

In addition, practices found to be effective with second language learners should be incorporated. Effective practices in English instruction include

- Use visuals to exemplify concepts
- Use gestures to support spoken language
- Model language and tasks
- Use interactive and socially mediated activities
- Use graphic organizers

More details on the distribution of concepts across Standards developed in the workshop can be found in Annex 4: English Language Panel Concepts.

Integrate language transition issues into scope and sequence, materials, and teacher training

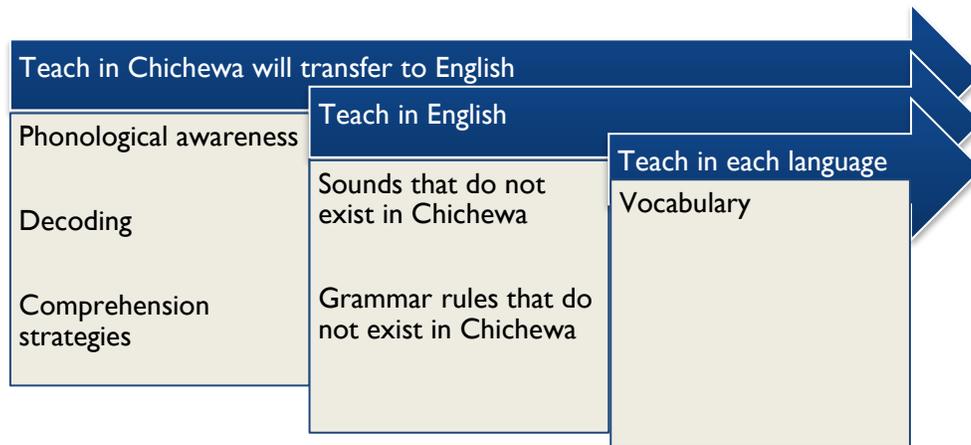
The panel discussed issues related to language acquisition transition from Chichewa to English and how these should be integrated into the scope and sequence, LBs, TGs, and teacher training.

During the discussion, specific attention was paid to one of the key elements in second language learning identified in the NRS—the importance of transfer in learning. Some literacy skills learned in the first

language will transfer to the second language.^{10, 11, 12} However, development of biliteracy requires the active transfer of knowledge and skills as well as the awareness and development of new linguistic components. Activities to promote transfer must be included when planning instruction.

Understanding how the languages compare is also important in planning instruction since the extent to which two languages share features facilitates or hinders transfer. Because English and Chichewa are both alphabetic languages, they share many phonological and orthographic features. However, there are grammatical differences that will have to be taught explicitly. Figure 2 depicts the components that will transfer to English if they have been taught in Chichewa, the components that will have to be taught in English because they do not exist in Chichewa, and the components that must be taught in each language because they differ.

Figure 2



Next Steps

The panel identified eleven next steps in the process:

1. Develop a scope and sequence chart for Standards 1–4
2. Refine and align the syllabus to the work completed by the panel
3. Align the TG and LB to the syllabus
4. Develop scripted lessons
5. Develop texts, vocabulary, and sentence frames for the lessons
6. Address differentiation in the TG
7. Develop practice activities and supplementary material
8. Pilot materials
9. Revise materials
10. Provide professional development to master trainers, supervisors, and teacher trainers
11. Provide professional development to teachers in Standards 1–4

¹⁰ Durgunoğlu, A.Y., Nagy, W.E., & Hancin-Bhatt, B.J. (1993). Cross language transfer of phonological awareness. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 85, 453-465.

¹¹ Bialystok, E., Luk, G., & Kwan, E. (2005). Bilingualism, Biliteracy, and Learning to Read: Interactions among Languages and Writing Systems. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 9, 43-61. doi:10.1207/s1532799xssr0901_4

¹² Geva, E., & Yaghoub Zadeh, Z. (2006). Reading Efficiency in Native English-Speaking and English-as-a-Second-Language Children: The Role of Oral Proficiency and Underlying Cognitive-Linguistic Processes. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 10, 31-57. doi: 10.1207/s1532799xssr1001_3

Standard 2 English Literacy and Language Workshop

Background

STS Technical Expert, Dr. Sharolyn Pollard-Durodola, traveled to Malawi in July 2016 to facilitate the Standard 2 English literacy and language workshop. The workshop aimed to address the issues uncovered by the English language panel, namely:

- Only ten minutes were dedicated to explicit instruction and the remaining time was allocated to songs
- Only part of the lesson was aligned with the syllabus
- Alphabetic order was used for the selection of vocabulary words for literacy tasks
- Effective practices for teaching English as a second language were not used, and instead, the materials focused on rote memorization and repetition

Workshop participants also sought to agree upon best practices for teaching the five components of reading.

Context

The new expectation was to allocate 60 minutes each day to English instruction with time segmented between English language and literacy. STS experts noted that the existing Standard 2 curriculum did not provide instructions that were conducive to early literacy development. This was partially due to a poor utilization of instructional time and a phonics program that was established on a poor theoretical framework.

Participants

The workshop's 16 participants were language experts with a range of literacy knowledge backgrounds, although they all possessed good English linguistics knowledge. The group included representatives from the MIE, SEGREM, teacher training colleges, and other government entities; RTI and MERIT staff also contributed technical assistance to the workshop.

Workshop Objectives & Results

During the workshop, STS worked to strengthen participants' capacities on understanding and implementing the literacy aspects of instructional design, presenting a rationale for the major shifts in content priorities from English instruction in Standard 1 to 2 prior to approaching any decisions on Standard 2's scope and sequence. STS led the discussion and provided guidance on each agenda topic.

Scope and Sequence. Dr. Pollard-Durodola explained the importance of early literacy program shifts from initial phonemic awareness and letter-sound knowledge tasks to word work—including, decoding, encoding, spelling—fluency building, and comprehension tasks. This sequence prepares children to read decodable text and use metacognitive strategies to monitor their own comprehension—all expectations of the NRS.

Time Allocation. The group discussed excerpts from the NRS's expectations for time allocated to reading instruction, specifically that ten minutes of daily practice building fluency with leveled texts is sufficient for young readers and that children should have access to narrative and informational texts to expand their vocabularies and build important background knowledge required for comprehension development. STS advised that the hour of English instruction allotted each day should be divided according to Figure 3.

Figure 3

English Period 1: Literacy
10 minutes: Introduce the concept
10 minutes: Reading
5 minutes: Writing and spelling
5 minutes: Summary
English Period 2: Language Development
5 minutes: Introduce the concept
20 minutes: Oral language, and structure and use of language
5 minutes: Summary

Theme and subtopic organization across three terms. In small groups, participants narrowed the selection of topics and themes for Terms I, II, and III. Participants agreed on two factors: determining the scope and sequence for cumulative reviews of thematic concepts and how often the concept should be reviewed; and the importance of placing significant forethought into the vocabulary selection process and best practices in vocabulary selection criteria. See Annex 5: Standard 2 English Literacy and Language Themes.

Design of read alouds. As a group, participants reviewed the concept of *read alouds*, meaning materials that facilitate an adult reading out loud and talking about a story or informational text with a small group or class of students. The group also reviewed the specific NRS suggestions for the read-aloud approach in Standard 2 as well as the benefits of following best practices related to read alouds with young children, especially for children who enter school with more limited oral language abilities in the language of instruction. For more details, see Annex 6: Effective Strategies for and Decisions on Read Alouds.

Overall, workshop participants agreed that questions drive the learning experience during the read-aloud lesson and that it can be utilized to extend children’s language and conceptual understandings. Additionally, STS provided examples of how vocabulary strategies that use visuals can be effectively implemented with young children with limited, or pre-functional, levels of English language proficiency to represent abstract concepts and to assist in the recall of information.

Vocabulary selection criteria. Workshop participants held small group discussions related to vocabulary selection criteria and the number of new words to be introduced each week thematically. Participants discussed how vocabulary could be selected and explicitly used in the weekly theme-driven read aloud. There was a consensus that four or five words, per read aloud, might be sufficient; the group offered a few suggestions, such as specific criteria, for how to select appropriate vocabulary. Dr. Pollard-Durodola suggested selecting vocabulary by focusing on words that are of high utility, related to the content topic, necessary for understanding new concepts, or needed to understand text.

Sequence of introducing and reviewing letters and sounds in English in relation to Standard I Chichewa. In small groups, participants discussed, selected, and sequenced simple spelling patterns to be taught in Standard I. RTI staff member, Dr. Paula Green created a list of letters and sounds that were the same in Chichewa and English and ordered them in relation to the phonics sequence that is used in Standard I Chichewa. Workshop participants agreed that the phonics sequence provided in Chichewa Standard I closely matched the NRS’s expectation for English instruction beginning with the phonological awareness task and following a related phonics sequence with connected text.

From the list of Chichewa Standard I letters and sounds, non-alphabetic scope and sequence examples of English sounds were reviewed. It was noted that neither of the approaches utilized an alphabetic sequence in the selection of vocabulary or other content for a phonics lesson. Participants agreed to use a specific scope and sequence template for daily phonics instruction. This scope and sequence is similar to the one used in Standard I English language instruction but includes the new NRS expectations for fluency and phonics.

In the revised Term I developed during the workshop, most phonics lessons focus on sounds and letters taught in Chichewa to facilitate English acquisition. This is a complicated process that includes not only the initial identification of letters and sounds from Chichewa Standard I but also requires a strong knowledge of sequencing this information in such a way that it provides multiple and systematic opportunities for multiple activities:

- Reading decodable text that progresses in complexity over time
- Introducing simple spelling patterns that derive from the phonics lesson
- Providing opportunities for students to trace and write taught words
- Providing opportunities to learn both upper- and lowercase letters in a systematic manner
- Selecting phonological awareness activities that support and build competencies required for the phonics lesson
- Providing opportunities for students to extend their vocabularies by understanding the meaning of words used in the phonics lessons

New letter and sound knowledge is provided towards the end of Term I and continues into Term II. In the latter terms, students should be better able to generate their own sentences with initial teacher modeling how to write a composition.

Similarities between English and Chichewa that can be addressed in Standard 2 to accelerate English literacy instruction. In small groups, participants worked to identify letters and sounds taught in Standard I Chichewa that are the same in English. This group also began to think of a phonics sequence and the specific decodable words that children would be able to read in Term I based on their Chichewa phonics instruction in which letter-sound combinations, similar to many in English, were taught and practiced using decodable text.

The initial review of Standards I and 2 English materials indicated that there was not an established routine for phonics English instruction. STS experts have a keen understanding of the importance of the sequence of letters and sounds to generate decodable words and sentences early on that the student can read. The objectives of this phase of the workshop were to increase participants' awareness of the importance of utilizing an English phonics sequence that would help children to read in English and to develop a phonics scope and sequence that would fit into the overarching Standard 2 English language and literacy scope and sequence.

This phase of planning was critical, and STS emphasized through examples that phonics instruction cannot be driven by an alphabetic sequence of letters by demonstrating that if sounds for A and B or even C were reviewed in a lesson, a student would not be able to read any words or connected text. The group came to a consensus that this method of instruction would result in children not being able to read at the end of Standard 2.

Dr. Pollard-Durodola explained that there are certain sounds and letters that are easier to articulate in English and are typically represented early on in English phonics programs because they can be combined to form decodable words, sentences, and stories to facilitate opportunities for reading connected text. STS provided an example letter and sound scope and sequence from a reading program, and the group

discussed the decisions that guide the development of phonics instruction to ensure that early reading experiences are planned systematically with few obstacles to learning:

- Confusing letters and sounds are not presented close together, for instance *B* and *D*
- New letters and sounds are not introduced daily because children need sufficient practice time to learn and master the knowledge
- Early words that students can decode in English tend to represent simple word patterns and, over time, include more complex word patterns
- Children need daily structured opportunities to practice reading decodable words, sentences, and other writings fluently
- Fluency building can be at the word, sentence, or paragraph level with the intent that students can practice rereading content with speed and accuracy
- An error-correction procedure should be standardized so that students have consistent feedback and are able to make progress in positive ways

Participants agreed that too many letters and sounds introduced in a week would not ensure that children were able to internalize the phonics knowledge and apply it in reading the decodable text.

How instruction should be distributed across the week. Participants worked to distribute instructional areas across an example week of class. See Annex 7: Standard 2 English Template for Daily Lessons' Scope and Sequence for more information.

Revised Plan and Final Objectives—Phonics Instruction

Small groups were assigned to begin inputting content into the broader scope and sequence template revised by SEGREM and EGRA staff that included the NRS expectations for Standard 2 English literacy and language. Each group shared the content that they were able to create for feedback from the other participants.

Workshop Recommendations

It can be challenging to shift attitudes that impact instructional decisions and curriculum planning. Although workshop participants discussed the importance of vocabulary selection criteria in the workshop and the importance of high utility words that provide young children with more sophisticated vocabulary terms for familiar concepts, some panelists continued to only select basic vocabulary for the read alouds because basic words were perceived as “more appropriate.” However, there is evidence that children learning English as a second language benefit from a mix of basic words and more complex vocabulary.

Furthermore, although the workshop highlighted the utility of the read-aloud process for developing oral language vocabulary with the potential for integrating critical thinking tasks, panelists had a strong preference to include traditionally formulated, thematic dialogues. Participants explained that large class sizes dictate instructional approaches that can support the teacher in managing many young children. This reference to class size was apparent also in the discussion on fluency-building instruction with the general conclusion that all teachers must build fluency using specific strategies but may not be able to monitor students' progress on a daily or even a weekly basis. It was shared that it is more feasible for teachers to gather fluency data during the formal evaluation period that occurs every two weeks. For this reason, it may be beneficial to include fluency tips in the TG as well as in teachers' professional development sessions to ensure that the scheduled fluency-building activities are respected.

For phonics instruction, STS recommended encouraging a careful review of the phonics process and activities to avoid potential instructional inconsistencies. For example, any sound and letter correspondence that is introduced must be included in the practice sequence—for instance, reading

words and sentences—and in connected text. There should be a simple routine to ensure that lower- and upper-case letters are introduced and read in words and sentences. Likewise, teachers should not introduce an upper-case letter without explicitly pointing out that it also makes the same sound as the lower-case letter. Lastly, there should be a simple error-correction procedure so that students receive feedback in positive ways.

Standards 2–4 English and Chichewa Scope and Sequence Development

Workshops

Background and Context

STS led online workshops with stakeholders in Malawi in September 2016 to provide guidance for the development of a framework for the English and Chichewa scope and sequence for Standards 2 through 4. These workshops reviewed and built upon the version of the scope and sequence under development at the time.

The MIE provided three background documents: a list of comprehension strategies to be taught in Standards 1 through 4, phonics elements to be taught in English in Standards 2 and 3, writing tasks in Standards 1 through 4, and themes and subthemes in Standard 3. These documents, in combination with the NRS and the documents developed at the English language panel workshop, served as the basis for the development and refinement of the scope and sequence chart and sample lessons with time allocation for each standard.

Workshop Objectives

Vertical alignment across standards. The primary objective of the workshops was to ensure vertical alignment of the scope and sequence across standards. Workshop participants ensured vertical alignment by distributing assessment standards in language and literacy across standards and including a review from one standard to the other as needed. Although phonics elements should guide the development of the scope and sequence in Standards 1 and 2, the introduction and practice of comprehension strategies had to be distributed across Standards 1 through 4 in Chichewa and Standards 2 through 4 in English. The scope and sequence should explicitly identify when each vocabulary and comprehension strategy will be introduced. Further, each strategy is first introduced and practiced in Chichewa and then transferred to English. Examples of lessons to teach comprehension and vocabulary explicitly are provided in Annex 8: Example Lesson 1 for Teaching Vocabulary and Comprehension.

Alignment of English sequence with that of Chichewa. A second objective was to review existing documents to ensure that across standards, the introduction of concepts in English followed introduction and instruction in Chichewa. All language and literacy elements that exist in both languages should first be introduced in Chichewa, then in English. By introducing strategies and concepts in a language that learners know, instruction in English is facilitated, and students will only have to learn the labels for concepts they already know. Elements that differ—such as letter sounds—should be introduced explicitly in the appropriate sequence for the language. For example, long vowel sounds in English are introduced after short vowels, and non-decodable, high-frequency words are introduced as needed to provide learners reading practice.

Alignment with NRS. A third objective was to ensure that the scope and sequence aligned with the NRS. To meet these goals, general and standard specific guidelines were developed. The NRS provides guidance for the allocation of time by language and literacy component for each standard. Time allocation in the NRS is based on one hour of continuous time being allocated daily for both English and Chichewa; however, the hour is divided into two 30-minute periods. The division of the hour into two periods results in time being lost to lesson introduction and closing for each period and an awkward

division of time. To maximize instructional time, content alignment is critical. Sample lessons were developed for this purpose. To integrate content in Standards 2, the following is provided as an example.

After introducing the greetings, read a story about a child that greets various people along the way. The students can then practice using the greetings. After reading a story related to the theme, students in Standards 3 and 4 can discuss the story using vocabulary that was taught.

According to these three objectives and the considerations described, workshop participants proceeded with the development of scope and sequence charts, following the general instructions provided in Annex 10: Instructions for Scope and Sequence Chart Development. In addition, standard-specific guidance can be found in Annex 11: Standard-specific Scope and Sequence Guidance.

Review and Quality Control of Standard 2–4 English and Standard 3–4 Chichewa Materials

From November 2016 to May 2017, STS reading expert, Dr. Sylvia Linan-Thompson, provided remote and in-person support to the review and quality control of Standard 2 through 4 English materials and Standard 3 and 4 Chichewa materials.

In November 2016, Dr. Linan-Thompson performed a review of the Standard 2 and 4 TG, providing feedback on one unit for each standard: Standard 2, Unit 8; Standard 3, Unit 1; and Standard 4, Unit 1 were reviewed. Dr. Linan-Thompson gave feedback to MIE and SEGEM staff, supervisors, and team leaders. This section presents a selection of highlights of this feedback.

Overall, the units are well developed. Particular strengths included

- Read alouds in Standard 2 and reading texts in Standards 3 and 4 were well written and well aligned with the theme.
- The unit activities were well sequenced. Activities in the early lessons introduce topics or skills, and subsequent lessons practice and expand those topics and skills.

Recommendations

- Use the *I do/we do/you do* model only for phonological awareness, phonics, new word activities, or any activity in which there is only one correct answer.
- To maximize language use, turn and talk after modeling language. This should be used during the introduction, dialogues, and comprehension.
- During the introduction to the lesson, provide more background about what is going to happen and provide some key vocabulary, “Today we are learning about the different times of the year. They are summer, rainy, and winter.” Then ask, “What is your favorite time of the year?”
- During new word activity, be sure to give a meaning either through demonstration, gesture, or visual. It is also helpful to give a short verbal definition.
- Decodable stories should be cohesive. It is better to have a shorter but cohesive story than a longer story that is disjointed. Another option is to have students decode multiple sentences rather than one story.
- When introducing a comprehension strategy, provide the purpose for the strategy—how will it help the reader—prior to modeling. For example, “To get ready to read, I think about what the story might be about. I read the title and make a guess about what the story will be about.” The teacher can then read the title and say, “The title is..., I think this story will be about...”
- The second time a comprehension strategy is used, the students should be guided by the strategy. For example, “Remember, to get ready to read you can look at the title. Now let’s

read the title together. Then turn to your partner and tell him or her what the story might be about. Now the other person, tell your partner what you think.” Ask a few students to give their prediction. After the students have practiced the strategy two or three times, move to reminding students to use the strategy. For example, “Remember that you can use the title to help you think about what the story might be about.”

- Depending on the comprehension strategy, the practice may occur when the strategy is introduced. For example, when showing students how to answer questions, the teacher can model with one question, and the students can practice with others.

Observation of English Materials Writing Workshops

During that same visit, Dr. Linan-Thompson observed English materials writing workshops, specifically training on formatting the units including the type of activities and the integration of feedback from the previous day in Standard 2; reviewing of stories in Standard 3; and editing of stories and activities for various activities. Dr. Linan-Thompson’s general observations and recommendations were as follows:

- Teams should ensure the examples match the task learners will complete. An example of flawed design is an activity where the objective is to identify the noun, the noun is the subject, but in all the sentences for students, it is the object.
- Some stories need stronger conclusions that actually return to the point of the story or introductions that are focused on what the story will actually be about.

Dr. Linan-Thompson reviewed the revised TG and conducted a debrief with the Standard 4 team leaders. This activity was followed by observations in classrooms.

In January 2017, Dr. Linan-Thompson reviewed English Standard 2 materials and met with other reviewers to identify strengths and gaps in the lessons. After reviewing the findings with MIE personnel, she worked collaboratively with English Standard 2 writers to address the gaps in the materials and worked with the team to begin the modifications to the program. Next Dr. Linan-Thompson and the MIE focused on the revision of the read-aloud stories using the quality control checklist. After the workshops, the writers applied the checklist to all texts. By the end of the week, the writing team had applied the checklist to rewrite the decodable text for 22 units and revise five read alouds.

Following the materials writing workshops, Dr. Linan-Thompson guided writers through the process of applying quality control checklists to Standard 3 and 4 English and Chichewa texts. She also advised on the need for instructional language in the TGs to teach students reading strategies. Dr. Linan-Thompson worked to ensure that elements of reading comprehension were properly and sequentially integrated into Standards 3 and 4 English and Chichewa materials, especially integrating higher levels of comprehension, not only explicit comprehension. She worked with the Standard 2 English team to improve upon decodable texts so that they did not focus solely on decoding but also were cohesive and held meaning for the reader. Finally, Dr. Linan-Thompson reviewed, in their entirety, a sample of lessons from Standards 2, 3 and 4, chosen from the beginning, middle and end of the school year. She provided feedback to writers and found that overall Standards 3 and 4 were of acceptable quality when she received them. See Annex 12: Materials Review Guidance is clear documentation of the decisions made during STS’s participation in the materials review process in January 2017.

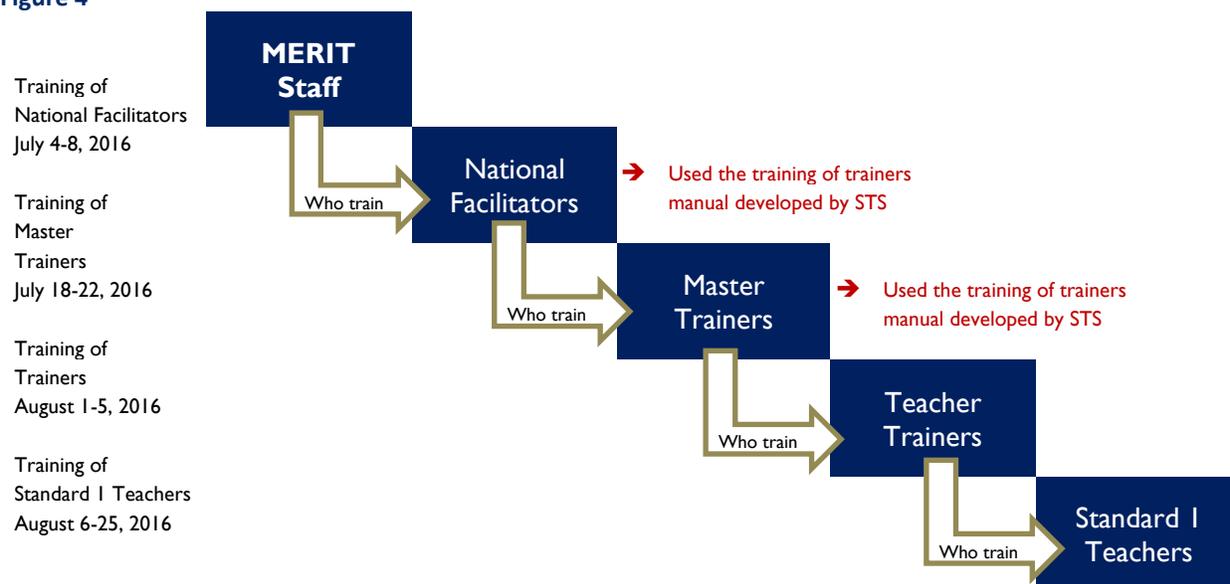
In May 2017, Dr. Linan-Thompson traveled to Malawi to provide targeted technical assistance to materials review and quality control in collaboration with representatives from USAID/Washington. In concert with Dr. Marcia Davidson, USAID/Washington Reading Team Lead, Dr. Linan-Thompson performed a review of TGs and LBs for Standards 2, 3, and 4 in English and provided actionable feedback to personnel from USAID/Malawi, MIE, and MERIT. Upon arrival in Zomba, Dr. Linan-Thompson met with staff from SEGREM, MIE, and MERIT. She performed a comparison of the version of the LB she had last reviewed in January 2017 with the March version. Dr. Linan-Thompson’s initial

feedback on the Standard 2 and 4 English materials is detailed in Annex 13: Review of Standard 2 Materials.

Support to Teacher Training

In mid-2016, the MoEST, with technical and operational support from the USAID-funded MERIT program, aimed to roll out the NRP to Standard 1 classrooms across the country. In order to do this, a cascade model of training that trickled down from MERIT Staff to national facilitators, to master trainers, to a larger group of teacher trainers, and finally to all Standard 1 teachers. This cascade model is outlined in Figure 4 and a more complete schedule with resources can be found in Annex 15: Teacher Training Cascade and Draft Manual Excerpt.

Figure 4



STS teacher training and learning specialist, Ms. Kristina Solum, joined the MERIT team in Malawi over a two-and-a-half-week period in June and July 2016 to assist in the design and delivery of training of master trainers. STS's role was to support the preparation of master trainers for the cascade training of Malawi's Standard 1 Teachers in both English and Chichewa subjects under the new NRP.

STS provided technical leadership to ensure that the NRS was implemented with fidelity for the NRP's initial training of master trainers. The MERIT team was in the process of finalizing the LB and TG for Standard 1 in both Chichewa and English at this time, and the MERIT national training specialist was working to complete the training manuals for both languages along with an external short-term technical assistant from RTI.

The MERIT team oriented Ms. Solum to the current work in progress and the stakeholders involved in the process. Upon learning of the current cascade model design, STS identified a need to develop a training of trainers (TOT) manual to complement the training manual being developed. STS proposed to develop a TOT to be used during the first three steps of the cascade. See Annex 15: Teacher Training Cascade and Draft Manual Excerpt

Training Cascade Schedule

Activity	Dates	Trainers	Participants	Resources Needed for Trainers	Resources Needed for Participants
Orientation of National Facilitators	July 4-8, 2016	MERIT Staff	National Facilitators	Agenda for Training of National Facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide to Training Master Trainers • Trainer of Trainer Manual • Training Manual • Teacher's Guide • Learner's Book
Training of Master Trainers	July 18-22, 2016	National Facilitators	Master Trainers	Guide to Training of Trainers Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of Trainer Manual • Training Manual • Teacher's Guide • Learner Book
Training of Trainers	August 1-5, 2016	Master Trainers	Teacher Trainers	Training of Trainer Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Manual • Teacher's Guide • Learner Book
Training of Standard I Teachers	August 8-25, 2016	Teacher Trainers	Standard I Teachers	Training Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher's Guide • Learner Book

Excerpt from Training of Trainers Manual for methods used in the training guide.

Rationale. The cascade training schedule only allowed for five days of training to prepare the trainers who would eventually deliver ten days of training to teachers. The TOT manual compresses ten-days' worth of activities that model the important aspects of the training and preview the remaining sessions. The TOT manual aims to assist trainers in being active and participant-oriented in their approach. It contains sessions that both model and reflect on the kind of facilitation needed. In this way, the training not only models the behavior needed but also discusses the rationale for behavior and provides tips to ensure that trainers understand the expectations. As a key supplement to other training materials, the TOT manual also further expounds on the content the trainers that need to master in order to respond to questions and support teacher change in the classroom.

Process. STS first reviewed and provided technical feedback on the Standard I English training manual to be used to train teachers. This allowed STS to comment on the document to ensure proper alignment with the NRS and inclusion of good adult learning practices. The Standard I Chichewa training manual was not ready to be reviewed at that time.

Next, STS collaborated with the national training specialist to develop the TOT manual. The TOT manual was developed based on the draft versions of the training manuals in Chichewa and English as well as a draft version of the TG in Chichewa and English.

Thirdly, STS supported the orientation of national facilitators. At this time, the national facilitators were presented with the draft LB, TG, training manual, and the TOT manual. Originally, the team hoped to

use the TOT manual as a way to guide the sessions with the national facilitators. However, the national facilitators did not have a chance to review either of the training manuals prior to the sessions. Many of the national facilitators developed sessions and activities, and upon seeing the materials, they wanted to provide feedback regarding the content, approaches, and comment on the updates made to the manuals. This changed the focus of the sessions; starting on July 5, the sessions became review and feedback sessions.

The shifted focus provided quality feedback and buy-in from the national facilitators. One challenge was the one-week window between the orientation to the national facilitators and the training of the master trainers, which meant that there was limited, if any, time to have a dedicated training of the national facilitators. While the team recognized that the national facilitators had been instrumental in the development of the manuals and other content, and are highly regarded as trainers, the cascade model depends on their performance as the first and foundational layer of the NRP rollout and the TOT manual was designed to serve as a guide to ensuring that both the content and the necessary facilitation skills are addressed during the training of the master trainers. The TOT manual provided a way to ensure that the national facilitators and the master trainers have a clear way of condensing the actual ten-day training for teachers into the five days allotted for the training of trainers. The national facilitators were familiar with the content, but the TOT manual provides strategies for boosting the master trainers' facilitation skills.

Key challenges. Throughout the process, the team experienced a number of challenges. The materials were being developed simultaneously, creating discord between the TGs and the training manuals. Without a finished LB and TG, there was a lack of clarity around the elements that the manual should cover. Additionally, the MIE facility often lacked power and created upheaval in the working patterns of the team, STS included. Those involved worked in three different locations over the course of two weeks. These disruptions limited the time in the work day and impacted the ability to deliver under tight timeframes.

The need for feedback from the various stakeholders created confusion about who is responsible for the final review and when the product is deemed ready for approval. This was true within the MERIT team, the panel working on the development of the manuals, and the different 'owners' of the NRP. Finally, while there were many different stakeholders working on parts of the NRP, they were not always working in sync with each other. STS recommends more collaboration and support of the different processes taking place. When key decisions makers are absent, work is delayed.

Teacher English Proficiency Support

Review of Teacher English Proficiency Test

Under the USAID-funded ASPIRE project, led by Save the Children, a test of English proficiency was developed to assess teachers' skills and knowledge of English's structure and use of language, reading comprehension, and writing. STS's review of the test revealed five key findings:

1. The structure and use of language section had 40 items that assess several grammatical elements. Although all the elements being assessed were important, there were too few items for each of the elements. Reducing the number of elements and increasing number of items per element should provide more reliable data on teachers' understanding of English.
2. The reading comprehension measure had ten multiple-choice questions related to a narrative passage; the majority of the questions were literal. The inclusion of an informative passage and more inferential questions was recommended.

3. The writing section provided three prompts, giving teachers the option to choose one prompt; one prompt was not parallel to the others. Rewording or replacing that prompt was suggested.
4. The rubrics needed further development. Anchors were needed for each level.
5. Listening and speaking sessions were needed.

A summary of STS's revisions to the test is provided in Annex 16: Teacher's English Proficiency Test—Summary of Item Revision.

Reporting Results

The use of rubrics for the listening, speaking, and writing sections provides a means for presenting teacher proficiency in three broad levels—high, medium, and low—in each of these areas. In addition to providing information on the percentage of teachers in each category, scores by the teacher will provide a profile of each teacher's relative strengths and areas for improvement. This data can be used to inform a revision of the content taught in teacher training colleges, provide professional development or provide reinforcement.

STS recommended that the ASPIRE team complete item development; pilot a new version of the assessment to validate items, scoring, and to determine the length of the assessment; and use data from the test pilot to finalize items.

Support to Pilot Program for Improving Teacher English Proficiency

STS reading expert, Dr. Sylvia Linan-Thompson, traveled to Zomba in November 2016 to collaborate with the ASPIRE team on a pilot program to improve the English language skills of Standards 4 through 8 teachers. Prior to travel to Malawi, Dr. Linan-Thompson collaborated with USAID/Malawi and Save the Children staff to review the findings of an assessment conducted by ASPIRE project to measure teachers' English proficiency levels. The results of this assessment were taken into consideration for the design of a pilot program to improve teachers' English skills, with the aim of facilitating English-language instruction in their classrooms.

Dr. Linan-Thompson met with the USAID and ASPIRE teams to discuss the scope of the envisioned pilot. It was decided that the intervention would concentrate on teachers of students in Standards 4 through 8. Together, the team reviewed the content manual that MIE had created for the intervention and determined that the activities in each unit were appropriate. Next, the team identified a model with three modalities—cluster meetings, peer meetings at the school level, and independent work—to deliver the content. Five cluster meetings would be distributed over the academic year, during which teachers are assembled by cluster to complete activities. Peer meetings and individual work would be conducted between cluster meetings.

In the team's review and revision session, the basic format and themes of the MIE-developed manual were kept, but the content was distributed for each of the modalities. The components of the program included listening comprehension and speaking, reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and writing. The content of the peer group and individual work included the practice of skills and knowledge addressed in the cluster meeting. The team worked on one unit to determine the viability of the process, and the process was deemed effective. The team ultimately identified five units from the manual to be revised. The remaining four units requiring revision; these units were reviewed and revised by two groups each handling two units. Finally, the team revised the book plan to reflect the new model and identified next steps.

Advising on Early Grade Reading Benchmarking

Along with representatives from USAID/Washington, STS reading expert, Dr. Linan-Thompson traveled to Zomba and Lilongwe in May 2017 to collaborate with USAID/Malawi staff, MIE staff, MoEST leadership, and MERIT technical and programmatic staff.

With representatives from USAID/Washington, Dr. Linan-Thompson discussed options for early grade reading benchmarking in Malawi. Dr. Linan-Thompson's recommended standard for accurately setting benchmarking is to use longitudinal data—reading assessment data for the same students over time—on two different types of reading metrics to develop predictive benchmarks. For example, a cohort of students in Malawi would be administered an appropriately adapted Early Grade Reading Assessment in Standard 2; these same students would be tracked over time and their Standard 2 scores aligned to their scores on the Standard 4 primary end of year exam. Through this process, implementers and stakeholders would have an evidence base for creating benchmarks that predict a student's probability of passing the end of year exam in Standard 4.

Due to the current state of investment and plans for an Early Grade Reading Assessment in Malawi, benchmarking using longitudinal data is not currently feasible due to a lack of available student reading performance data. In addition, currently available Early Grade Reading Assessment data is not suitable for the benchmarking exercise due to the high percentage of students who were unable to complete any element of the assessments subtasks. As a result, the team proposed alternative, interim options to address the current state of overly ambitious reading benchmarks in Malawi. Since MERIT is currently collecting reading assessment data, stratifying this data according to breakpoints to set interim benchmarks was seen as the most viable option. Benchmarks identified through this process would not be considered predictive but would be based on data. Additionally, Dr. Linan-Thompson had previously employed this process under the USAID/Egypt Girls' Improved Learning Outcomes program.

Dr. Linan-Thompson and representatives from USAID/Washington, USAID/Malawi, and MERIT met with the MoEST to discuss planned benchmarking and indicators and target setting work. Dr. Linan-Thompson and others presented options for early grade reading benchmarking based on research and experience from other countries. In general, the ministry expressed enthusiasm for the process, but USAID and others were careful to explain funding and data limitations to pursuing certain avenues for benchmarking. More information on meetings discussing benchmarking can be found in Annex 17: Benchmarking Meeting Summaries.

6. CONCLUSIONS

From August 2015 through November 2017, STS served as a key resource to the MoEST, USAID/Malawi, and other key education partners for ensuring fidelity to the NRS in the rollout of the new NRP. STS's support spanned the broad domains of education policy, curriculum and materials design, teacher training, assessing and designing a pilot program, and advising on benchmarks. STS contributed seasoned and evidence-based literacy expertise to the implementers of Malawi's NRP. As USAID noted in STS's Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System reports:

STS has been a key partner with USAID in the development of the new materials to go with the rollout of the NRP. They provided policy support in the development of a productive scope and sequence which is now being used to develop the curriculum. [Their] materials are of high quality and meet international best practices in reading. Several times at USAID's request STS has flown in experts to supervise the

*materials development workshops and provide some feedback at a distance. All this has been highly effective and produced good results.*¹³

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, STS recommends the following practices to improve future NRP implementation efforts by USAID/Malawi and the MoEST.

Critical to improving the NRP rollout process is the clear designation of those individuals who hold final decision-making authority for technical literacy issues. Many stakeholders and partners were involved in the development and implementation of the NRP. While multiple experts' inputs were key to a well-rounded and well-informed reading program, the existence of so many actors at times blurred the decision-making lines and delayed the evolution of materials due to conflicting perspectives around the most appropriate or effective decisions.

In the same way, there were often issues with the transfer and continuity of prior decisions and technical assistance to the development of materials. This often resulted in work being duplicated or overlooked due to a lack of clear communication and knowledge sharing. In the continued implementation of the NRP, STS recommends more communication between implementers of the NRP and the identification of a small group responsible for organizing technical inputs and making final decisions. This will help USAID/Malawi and the MoEST to avoid unnecessary conflict, delays, and duplication of effort.

Finally, STS recommends that longer-term benchmarks for early grade reading be set methodically only once longitudinal data on two different literacy measures are available for analysis. In the duration, until this data is available, STS recommends that the existing benchmarks be replaced with interim benchmarks, which should be set according to the breakpoints uncovered in the reading assessment data currently being collected through the MERIT project.

¹³ Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System. (2017, January). *Contractor Performance Assessment Report: Malawi National Reading Strategy Implementation Phase II*. Retrieved from https://cpars.cpars.gov/cpars/app/appviewevaluation_input.action?id=1087900&requestType=P

8. ANNEXES

Annex 1: English Literacy Scope and Sequence

		Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Standard 1	Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phonological awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concepts of print 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alphabet knowledge
	Writing			
Standard 2	Reading	Phonics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple spelling patterns Read words 	Phonics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long vowels Read short sentences 	Phonics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More complex elements Comprehension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predict and verify Self-monitoring
	Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy words Write words with simple spelling patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy sentences Write words with simple spelling patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write short sentences
Standard 3	Reading	Phonics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spelling Read words Read sentences Comprehension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predict and verify Self-monitoring 	Phonics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spelling Read words Read sentences Comprehension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer/generate questions 	Phonics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spelling Read sentences Read paragraphs Comprehension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retell stories Identify the main idea
	Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write words Write simple sentences Dictation (distinguish between homonyms using context) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write simple and compound sentences Write an invitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write simple and compound sentences Write one paragraph
Standard 4	Reading	Phonics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a story or informative text Interpret a graph or table Comprehension: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retell a story Identify the main idea 	Phonics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a story or informative text Read Poems 	Phonics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read a story or informative text Read Poems
	Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compose a story with one or two paragraphs Take dictation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compose a story with two or three paragraphs Write letters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compose a story with two or three paragraphs

Annex 2: English Language Panel Time Allocation

Standard 1

Component	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Literacy (5 minutes)			
Reading	Phonological awareness	Concepts of print	Alphabet knowledge.
Writing			
Language (55 minutes)			
Concepts (20 minutes) (Critical thinking and reasoning)	See Annex C for concepts to be taught across the year.		
Structure and use of language (15 minutes)	Sentence frames related to the concept taught		
Listening and speaking (15 minutes)	Read alouds, songs, and games related to concept		
Summary (5 minutes)			

Standard 2

Component	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Literacy (15 minutes)			
Reading	See Table I for content		
Writing	See Table I for content		
Language (45 minutes)			
Concepts (20 minutes) (Critical thinking and reasoning)	See Annex C for concepts to be taught across the year.		
Structure and use of language (20 minutes)	Question words Punctuation Sentence frames related to the concepts taught	Sentence frames related to the concepts taught	Sentence frames related to the concepts taught
Listening and speaking	This component will be integrated into the instruction of the concepts.		
Summary (5 minutes)			

Standard 3

Component	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Literacy (20 minutes)			
Reading	See Table I for content		
Writing	See Table I for content		
Language (40 minutes)			
Concepts (15 minutes) (Critical thinking and reasoning)	See Annex C for concepts to be taught across the year.		
Structure and use of language (20 minutes)	Punctuation Sentence frames related to the concepts taught	And, or, but Sentence frames related to the concepts taught	Sentence frames related to the concepts taught
Listening and speaking	This component will be integrated into the instruction of the concepts.		
Summary (5 minutes)			

Standard 4

Component	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
Literacy (25 minutes)			
Reading	See Table I for content		
Writing	See Table I for content		
Language (35 minutes)			
Concepts (15 minutes) (Critical thinking and reasoning)	See Annex C for concepts to be taught across the year.		
Structure and use of language (15 minutes)	Sentence frames related to the concepts taught		
Listening and speaking	This component will be integrated into the instruction of the concepts.		
Summary (5 minutes)			

Annex 3: Examples of Skills and Knowledge Required in Four Communicative Domains

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to spoken language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses language meaningfully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands written text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces written text
Skills and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary • Syntax 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonemic awareness • Alphabet knowledge • Alphabetic principle • Vocabulary • Comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alphabetic principle • Spelling rules • Vocabulary
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonological awareness • Phonemic awareness • Directions • Invitations • Dialogue • Questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiates language use to give opinions, dialogue, ask questions • Responds to questions or invitations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonemic awareness activities • Alphabet games • Read alouds • Partner reading • Independent reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dictation • Journal writing • Story writing: co-constructed & independently

Annex 4: English Language Panel Concepts

Standard 1	Standard 2	Standard 3	Standard 4
<p>Socialization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greetings • Casual and formal introductions <p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying objects in class <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking for and giving information (personal) <p>Health and hygiene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for my body • Caring for my classroom <p>Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words associated with a certain sex (man, boy, girl) <p>Feelings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing likes and dislikes <p>Abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing what they can do <p>Classification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size, shape, color <p>Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food, dress, special days <p>Socialization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting and rejecting requests <p>Socialization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction or self and others • Environment • Outside environment <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving directions <p>Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words associated with a particular sex <p>Feelings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing apologies <p>Abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing what they cannot do <p>Classification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colors, shapes <p>Communication</p>	<p>Naming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naming objects and animals • Naming family relations <p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural features at home and modeling natural features • Naming and modeling manmade features found at home <p>Health and hygiene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for homes: things that make homes unclean, dangers of living in unclean homes, ways of caring for homes • Food: things that make food unclean' dangers of unclean food, ways of caring for food <p>Requests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking for and giving information • Making a polite request <p>Commands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving and obeying commands • Giving and obeying commands <p>Socialization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeting others and formally and responding to greeting formally • Greeting and responding to greetings casually • Welcoming others and bidding farewell <p>Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of culture: food, dances, dress, language, religion • Religion: religious beliefs 	<p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Features in the community, use of features • Natural and artificial environment • Care of natural and artificial environment <p>Health and hygiene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitation: our school/our home • Sanitation: our community <p>Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Folktales: unity or respect and friendship or love • Rites: marriages and births and death • Types of food and dances <p>Security and safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At school: in class and outside, during play • At home: in the house and on the way to school and back • Community: at the market, at church, at work, around home, and during community activities <p>Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles: at home and school • Roles: community and nation • Importance of gender equity <p>Religious beliefs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types: in the family and community • Practices: Similarities and differences • Misconceptions: clearing misconceptions <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types and modes: at home and school 	<p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common natural disasters • Effects of natural disasters <p>Health and hygiene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal hygiene • Environmental hygiene <p>Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional dances • Food • Social interaction <p>Careers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinds of careers and professions • Employment options <p>Farming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farming methods • Food storage <p>Citizenship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles of children at home • Our duties in the community <p>Money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses of money • Taking care of money <p>Rites and celebrations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural festivals • Modern festivals, such as Christmas • Rites of passage <p>Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equity at home • Gender equity at school <p>HIV/Aids</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Aids • Causes of Aids • Prevention measures <p>Drug and substance abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drugs and substances • Effects of drug and substance abuse • Prevention <p>Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety at home • Safety at school • Road safety

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making and rejecting requests • Commands • Giving and following commands <p>Recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing games • Singing songs <p>Profession</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naming professions (teacher, nurse) <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving information (instructions) <p>Feelings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing wants <p>Abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing what they can and cannot do <p>Categorization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colors and shapes <p>Recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing games and singing songs <p>Command</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give and follow commands <p>Professions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name professions (police officer, carpenter) <p>Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food/drinks and dress 	<p>Effect of religious beliefs on our lives</p> <p>Climate change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes of climate change: afforestation and deforestation • Effects of afforestation and deforestation, care of natural resources <p>Emerging Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of emerging issues: how they occur or are caused, for examples, drug and substance abuse, gender • Ways of avoiding or preventing them <p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Means of communication: old and modern • Means of communication: transportation (road, water) • Means of communication: barriers to communication <p>Farming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crops grown in the area: grouping them into food and cash crops • Animals raised in the area • How to care for crops and animals <p>Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names associated with a particular sex • Roles and duties • Gender equity <p>Citizenship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning and roles of citizen in an area • Duties of a citizen <p>Drugs and substance abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of drugs and substances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types and modes: traditional and modern • Advantages and disadvantages <p>Recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples: music and dances • Instruments used for music and dance • Costumes: drama and dance <p>Professions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types: in urban and rural areas • Common professions: self and employed • Profession identification: dress, equipment, and importance of education <p>Drug and substance abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types and effects • Preventive measures • Signs of addicts <p>Farming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our school garden and types of farming • Crops grown in my village • Food and cash crops <p>Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Means and types of transports, including air, land, and water • Importance of transport • Modes of transport <p>Socialization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making requests at school and home • Accepting and rejecting requests politely 	<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal communication skills • Using communication technology such as cell phones <p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses of technology at home • Uses of technology at school <p>Child rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing our rights • Knowing our responsibilities <p>Life Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer pressure • Self esteem
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effect of drug and substance abuse• Drug and substance abuse prevention Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examples of recreational activities in the areas• Importance of recreation Expressing ability and inability		
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Annex 5: Standard 2 English Literacy and Language Themes

Themes	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making new friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familial relations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and hygiene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking care of food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good eating habits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking care of clothes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relating well with others, including no bullying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights and responsibilities including focus on caring for the surrounding and part of entrepreneurship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Drug and substance abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dangers of smoking • Peer pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-based relations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festivals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the cellphone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to the radio (power generation: electricity, batteries, solar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending messages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather patterns and seasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes, effects of and managing climate change) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing climate change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crops we grow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our birds (Birds we keep for food) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature and environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The beautiful village • Our natural surroundings, including rivers, mountains, vegetation, soil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking care of trees and its different parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food chain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review

Annex 6: Effective Strategies for and Decisions on Read Alouds

Effective read-aloud strategies utilize

- Open-ended questions^{14, 15}
- Interactive dialogues^{16, 17}
- High-cognitive tasks¹⁸

Effective book reading structures utilize

- Multiple exposures to vocabulary and concepts¹⁹
- Before, during, and after reading instruction and talk
- Repeated readings of stories²⁰
- Explicit instruction on content-related vocabulary prior to reading the book or embedded²¹

Effective book discussion practices integrate critical thinking skills. Deep processing strategies provide opportunities for English language learner children to think analytically about word associations:

1. What is the difference between the *woods* and a *garden*?
2. Would there be a *building* in the *woods*? Why or why not?
3. What is the difference between a tree *trunk* and *twigs*?
4. Would a tree trunk be underground? Why or why not?

In this process, however, the teacher plays an important role in scaffolding the English discussion.

Contrasted lower- and higher-cognitive question types and related learning experiences:

- Labeling or identifying questions: What is a *friend*? This is a *robe*.
- Defining: A city is a place many people live.
- Associating or connecting: What is the difference between a *city* and a *building*? Can we find farm animals in a *city*? Why or why not?

Some key decisions made during the English language and literacy workshop discussion included the following:

1. Each read aloud text would be read twice in the week so that children would have multiple opportunities to hear and utilize the vocabulary related to the concept.
2. Four to five words would be selected per read aloud, for a total of eight to ten words, that can be feasibly taught and learned across a week.

¹⁴ Justice, L.M. (2002). Word exposure conditions and preschoolers' novel word learning during shared storybook reading. *Reading Psychology*, 23, 87-106. doi: 10.1080/027027102760351016.

¹⁵ Sénéchal, M. (1997). The differential effect of storybook reading on preschooler's expressive and receptive vocabulary acquisition. *Journal of Child Language*, 24, 123-138.

¹⁶ Whitehurst, G. J. and Lonigan, C. J. (1998). Child Development and Emergent Literacy. *Child Development*, 69, 848-872. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.1998.tb06247.x

¹⁷ Wasik, B. A., Bond, M. A., & Hindman, A. (2006). The effects of a language and literacy intervention on Head Start children and teachers. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98, 63-74. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.98.1.63

¹⁸ Dickinson, D.W., & Smith, M.W. (1994). Long-term effects of preschool teachers' book readings on low-income children's vocabulary and story comprehension. *Reading Research Quarterly* 29 (2), 104-22.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Justice, L.M., Meier, J., & Walpole, S. (2005). Learning new words from storybooks: An efficacy study with at-risk kindergartners. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 36, 17-32.

²¹ Justice, L.M. (2002). Word exposure conditions and preschoolers' novel word learning during shared storybook reading. *Reading Psychology*, 23, 87-106. doi: 10.1080/027027102760351016.

3. Critical thinking skills will be integrated into the read aloud experience.
4. Vocabulary selected should be connected to the concept theme that guides the development of the read aloud lesson.

Annex 7: Standard 2 English Template for Daily Lessons' Scope and Sequence

Week 1: Monday			
Minutes	Lesson 1	Minutes	Lesson 2
3	Introduction to Theme	3	Introduction
		5	Phonological Awareness (review letter/sound from Standard 1 Chichewa that is the same as English letter/sound knowledge) EXAMPLE: Tasks focus on attending to /a/ /m/
10	New Words Related to The Theme (See Appendix)	10	Phonics—New (Practice reading decodable words, sentences; and/or Fluency-Building tasks) EXAMPLE: am + Sight Word (I) I am _____ (Student name)
10	Thematic Dialogue	10	Thematic Read Aloud (Related to the Dialogue via topic and same vocabulary) Comprehension—Literal Questions WH Questions (What, Where, Why, How)
2	Closing	2	Closing
30		30	

Week 1: Tuesday			
Minutes	Lesson 3	Minutes	Lesson 4
3	Introduction	3	Introduction
5	Phonological Awareness /a/ /m/	10	Phonics Recap (NB fluency) /a/ /m/ I am. I am (Picture of Happy). I am (Picture of Sad). I am (Picture of Hot). I am (Picture of Cold).
10	Phonics (New decodable words, sentences if possible) I am _____ Trace and write: I am _____ Read Cloze Sentences: I am (Picture of Happy). I am (Picture of Sad). I am (Picture of Hot). I am (Picture of Cold).		
10	Thematic Dialogue Recap		
2	Closing	2	Closing
30		30	

Week 1: Wednesday

Minutes	Lesson 5	Minutes	Lesson 6
3	Introduction to theme	3	Introduction
		5	Phonological awareness (review letter/sound from Standard I Chichewa that is the same as English letter/sound knowledge) EXAMPLE: Tasks focus on attending to /t/, /s/
10	New words related to the theme	10	Phonics (practice reading decodable words, sentences; and/or fluency-building tasks) am, mat, mats, at, Sam, Tam
15	Thematic dialogue (new; integrates new words)	10	Thematic read aloud (new)
2	Closing	2	Closing
30		30	

Week 1: Thursday			
Minutes	Lesson 7	Minutes	Lesson 8
3	Introduction	3	Introduction
5	Phonological awareness EXAMPLE: Tasks focus on attending to /t/, /s/	5	Phonics recap (NB fluency) I am Sam. I am (name); Sam sat. Sam sat <u>on the</u> mat. I sat <u>on the</u> mat. I sat <u>on the</u> mats.
10	Phonics (new) am, mat, mats, at, Sam, Tam spelling pattern: Forming the plural (add s) Sight words: on, the	15	Re-read thematic read aloud + extension activity Higher order thinking questions comprehension— (e.g., summarize, inferential questions; retell; alternative story ending; predict what will happen next and why; story grammar—characters, story problem; informational text: new information learned)
10	Dialogue Recap		
2	Closing	2	Closing
30		30	

Week 1: Friday			
Minutes	Lesson 9	Minutes	Lesson 10
3	Introduction	3	Introduction
15	Independent reading (LB) Decodable text (e.g., words, sentences, paragraphs, supplementary readers) NB fluency-building tasks I am Sam. I am (name); Sam sat. Sam sat <u>on the</u> mat. I sat <u>on the</u> mat.	12	Revision of challenging aspects of the previous segment of dialogue

	I sat <u>on the</u> mats.		
10	Choosing and recording books to borrow for next week.	13	Revision of challenging aspect of previous segments of read aloud. Can include extension activities (e.g., critical thinking: riddles, dramatization)
2	Closing	2	Closing
30		30	

Week 1: Lessons 2, 3, 4			
Letters/sounds	Words	Sight Words	Sentence
/m/ /a/	am	I	I am _____

Week 1: Lessons 6, 7, 8			
Letters/sounds	Words	Sight Words	Sentence
/t/ /s/	am, mat, mats, at, Sam, Tam spelling pattern: Forming the Plural (add s)	On, the	I am Sam, I am (name); Sam sat. Sam sat <u>on the</u> mat. I sat <u>on the</u> mat. I sat <u>on the</u> mats.

Week 2: Monday			
Minutes	Lesson 1	Minutes	Lesson 2
3	Introduction to Theme	3	Introduction
		5	Phonological awareness (review letter/sound from Standard 1 Chichewa that is the same as English letter/sound knowledge) EXAMPLE: Tasks focus on attending to /e/ /g/ Tasks can also focus on medial sound discrimination /e/ vs /a/ because children are reading words where the medial sound includes these sounds. Example strategy: Teacher segments or stretches the sounds using fingers or children touch shapes in LB (form of Elkonin Boxes) : /mmm/ /aaa/ /ttt/ vs /mmm/ /eee/ /ttt/ See: http://bogglesworldesl.com/elkonin_boxes.htm
10	New Words Related to The Theme (See Appendix)	10	Phonics—New (Practice reading decodable words, sentences; and/or Fluency-Building tasks) EXAMPLE: met, get, set, I get the mat. I get the mats. I set the mats.
15	Thematic Dialogue	10	Thematic Read Aloud (Related to the Dialogue via topic and same vocabulary) Comprehension—Literal Questions WH Questions (What, Where, Why, How)
2	Closing	2	Closing
30		30	

Week 2: Tuesday			
Minutes	Lesson 3	Minutes	Lesson 4
3	Introduction	3	Introduction
5	Phonological Awareness EXAMPLE: Tasks focus on attending to /e/ /g/ Tasks can also focus on medial sound discrimination /e/ vs /a/	10	Phonics Recap (NB fluency) Sam met Tam. I met Tam. I met Sam and Tam. Sam and Tam get the mat.
10	Phonics (New decodable words, sentences if possible) Sam met Tam. Sam and Tam get the mat. Sam sets the mat. Sight Word: and Trace and write: Model: Teacher writes: set, get, met	15	Re-Read Thematic Read Aloud + Extension Activity Higher Order Thinking Questions Comprehension— (e.g., Inferential Questions; alternative story-ending; predicting what will happen next and why)

	Lead: Teacher and students write; set, get, met (LB). Say the sound as you trace it. Test: Students write set, get, met, independently saying the sounds as they write the letters.		
10	Thematic Dialogue Recap		
2	Closing	2	Closing
30		30	

Week 2: Wednesday			
Minutes	Lesson 5	Minutes	Lesson 6
3	Introduction to Theme	3	Introduction
		5	Phonological Awareness (review letter/sound from Standard I Chichewa that is the same as English letter/sound knowledge) EXAMPLE: Tasks focus on attending to /d/ /n/
10	New Words Related to the Theme	10	Phonics (Practice reading decodable words, sentences; and/or Fluency-Building tasks) net, man, men, Dan, den, dam, mad,
15	Thematic Dialogue (New; integrates new words)	10	Thematic Read Aloud (New)
2	Closing	2	Closing
30		30	

Week 2: Thursday			
Minutes	Lesson 7	Minutes	Lesson 8
3	Introduction	3	Introduction
5	Phonological Awareness EXAMPLE: Tasks focus on attending to /d/ /n/	5	Phonics Recap (NB Fluency) net, man, men, den, dam, Sam is a man. Tam is a man.
10	Phonics (New) net, man, men, den, dam, mad, Sam is a man. Tam is a man. Sight Words: Is Writing: Trace and write 2 words and sight word. Spelling: 1 man 2 men	15	Re-Read Thematic Read Aloud + Extension Activity Higher Order Thinking Questions Comprehension— (e.g., Summarize, Inferential Questions; retell; alternative story ending; predict what will happen next and why; story grammar—characters, story problem; informational text: new information learned)
10	Dialogue Recap		
2	Closing	2	Closing
30		30	

Week 2: Friday			
Minutes	Lesson 9	Minutes	Lesson 10
3	Introduction	3	Introduction
15	Independent Reading (LB) Decodable Text (e.g., cumulative review of words, sentences, paragraphs, supplementary readers) NB Fluency-Building Tasks I am Sam. Sam sat. Sam and Tam get the mat. Sam sat <u>on the</u> mat. Sam is a man. Tam is a man.	12	Revision of challenging aspects of the previous segment of dialogue
10	Choosing and recording books to borrow for next week.	13	Revision of challenging aspect of previous segments of read aloud. Can include extension activities (e.g., critical thinking: riddles, dramatization)
2	Closing	2	Closing
30		30	

Annex 8: Example Lesson 1 for Teaching Vocabulary and Comprehension²²

<p>1. Present word to students.</p>	<p>Our third word for today is branch. [Write the word on the board.] Let’s say the word together.</p>
<p>2. Discuss with students what is known about the word.</p>	<p>Raise your hand if you have ever heard the word branch. Raise your hand if you know something about it. [If at least three-quarters of your students have heard the word, continue with the directions below. If not, skip to step 3.]</p> <p>Think about the word branch. What do you know about the word?</p> <p>Turn to your partner and tell them one idea about the word. Be prepared to share with the rest of the group what you and your partner talked about.</p>
<p>3. Discuss the word. Provide a student-friendly definition. Provide visuals. Highlight word parts. Lead students in identifying word parts and reading words with those word parts.</p>	<p>The definition for branch is:</p> <p>“A part of a tree that grows out of its trunk.”</p> <p>[Point to the illustrations of branches in the book.]</p> <p>Let’s read the definition again and discuss what the definition tells us. [Discuss how branch is a noun.]</p> <p>Now, let’s look at the words branch out. We added the word out to branch to make a verb. Branch out describes an action. It means “to spread out or become bigger.” For example, roots branch out underground as the plant grows bigger. [Discuss the meaning of the words branch out.]</p>
<p>4. Engage students in deep-processing activities with the word.</p>	<p>Let’s play some more with our word, branch. Let’s answer “true” or “false” to the following statements using our true and false cards. Make sure you think about the word before raising the correct card.</p> <p>“A tree can have branches of many different sizes.”</p> <p>“The painter used branches to paint the house.”</p> <p>“Thick branches are good places to hang a swing.”</p>

²² Linan-Thompson, S. & Mielke, A. (2010). *Academic language and vocabulary development*. Austin, TX: Texas Education Agency.

Before Reading—Day 1	1. Present word to students.	<i>Our third word for today is protect.”[Write the word on the board.] Let’s say the word together.</i>
	2. Discuss with students what is known about the word.	<p><i>Raise your hand if you have ever heard the word protect. Raise your hand if you know something about it. [If at least three-quarters of your students have heard the word, continue with the directions below. If not, skip to step 3.]</i></p> <p><i>Think about the word protect. What do you know about the word?</i></p> <p><i>Turn to your partners and tell them one idea about the word. Be prepared to share with the rest of the group what you and your partner talked about.</i></p>
	3. Discuss the word. Provide a student-friendly definition. Provide visuals. Highlight word parts, if applicable. Lead students in identifying word parts and reading words with those word parts.	<p><i>The definition for protect is:</i></p> <p><i>“To take care of something or someone.”</i></p> <p><i>[Show the picture in the book of the seeds in the suitcase and explain how the suitcase protects the seeds from being destroyed.]</i></p> <p><i>Let’s read the definition again and discuss what it tells us. [Discuss the word, emphasizing that it’s an action word. For example, helmets protect our heads from injury.]</i></p>
	4. Engage students in “deep-processing activities” with the word.	<p><i>Let’s play some more with our word, protect. Let’s answer “true” or “false” to the following statements using our true and false cards. Make sure you think about the word before raising the correct card.</i></p> <p><i>“Sunglasses protect your eyes from the sun.”</i></p> <p><i>“A soldier can protect the sun and the moon.”</i></p> <p><i>“Cotton candy protects my hands from the rain.”</i></p>

Annex 9: Example Lesson 2 for Teaching Vocabulary and Comprehension²³

Discuss the strategy.

- Explain the new strategy, noting when and how the strategy is used.

Today we will read a book and practice a strategy that will help us understand what we are reading. The strategy is to find the main idea and details of a text. Expository texts usually have several main ideas. The main idea is the most important idea of a topic that the author wants us to know. The main idea gives us general information about something. Details are the more specific information about that main idea. A main idea always has several details.

Model the strategy using think-alouds.

- Model and explain how to use the strategy

“Blue whales are the largest sea animals. Blue whales can weigh up to 300,000 pounds. Blue whales can be as long as three school buses. Blue whales have hundreds of teeth.”

- Follow-up.

Today we will read a book and practice using our main idea and details strategy to help us understand what we read. Remember: We will look for the main idea and supporting details of different parts of the text and the whole book. What is a main idea? Turn around and tell your partner. What are details? Turn to your partner to discuss details.

Discuss the strategy.

- Explain the new strategy, noting when and how the strategy is used.

Today we will read a book and practice a strategy to identify and answer explicit and implicit questions in an expository text. An explicit question can be answered with information that is “right there” in the text. You have to go back, reread, and find the answer in the text. An implicit question can be answered “on your own” by combining what you learned from the text and what you already know. You have to think about what you know to answer this type of question.

- Exemplify the strategy using a graphic organizer.

Look at the graphic organizer for explicit and implicit questions. First, I have to identify what kind of question it is. Next, I answer the question.

Model the strategy using think-alouds.

- Model and explain how to use the strategy while stopping in one place during the reading. Pages to be read today: 4–11.

²³ Linan-Thompson, S. & Mielke, A. (2010). *Academic language and vocabulary development*. Austin, TX: Texas Education Agency.

Let's read "Dinosaur Hunters." Follow along as I read aloud. As we read, I will model how to answer explicit and implicit questions.

Read pages 4–5. After reading page 5, stop to model the strategy using explicit/implicit graphic organizer.

Discuss the strategy.

- Explain the new strategy, noting when and how the strategy can be used.

Today we will learn a strategy that will help us understand what we read. The strategy is to find the cause and effect relationships in a text.

- Relate strategy to real-life situations.

You see examples of cause and effect relationships every day. Look at this paragraph:

"Mr. Pacheco has several plants in his house. One day, he left town rapidly and for a long time. He didn't ask anyone to take care of his plants. When he returned home, all his plants were dead."

Let's look for a cause and effect relationship in this example. First, I ask myself: "What happened?" The plants died. Then I ask myself: "Why did this happen?" Because nobody watered them. The fact that the plants were not watered is the cause. The cause is the reason that something happened. The effect is that the plants died. The effect is what happened as a result of the cause. I can make a complete sentence about this cause and effect relationship:

"The plants died because nobody watered them."

- Exemplify the strategy using a graphic organizer.

Look at the graphic organizer for cause and effect relationships. In the first box, we will write the cause. We will write the effect in the second box. [Complete the graphic organizer with the example of Mr. Pacheco and his plants.]

Model the strategy using think-alouds.

- Model and explain how to use the strategy while stopping in two places during the reading [pages to be read today: 4–17]. Start reading on page 4.

Now, we will read part of "Life Cycle of a Pumpkin." I will read aloud, and you will follow along. As we read, I will model how to find cause and effect relationships in a text to better understand what we read.

[At page 7, stop to model the strategy. Have the graphic organizer on cause and effect ready to be completed.]

Self-regulation:

1. Students read a short text or paragraph.
2. They ask themselves, Did I understand what I read?
3. If they answer yes, they answer the following questions:

- a. Who or what is it about?
 - b. What is an important thing about the who or what so far?
 - c. Then they keep reading.
4. If they answer no, they ask themselves the following questions and look for the answers.
 - a. Who or what is it about?
 - b. What is an important thing about the who or what?
 - c. Then they keep reading.

Annex 10: Instructions for Scope and Sequence Chart Development

1. The element driving the scope and sequence will vary by Standard and language. The table below shows which element will drive the development of the scope and sequence.

Standard	English	Chichewa
2	Phonics	Comprehension
3	Phonics	Comprehension
4	Comprehension	Comprehension

2. The elements that will be included in the scope and sequence for each standard are identified in the NRS. The elements to be included in each standard and the amount of time allocated to each are included below.

English

Component	Standard 2	Standard 3	Standard 4
Phonological awareness and Phonics	10 minutes		
		5 minutes 2 x week	5 minutes 2 x week
Fluency			
Vocabulary		10 minutes	5 minutes
Comprehension		15 minutes	15–20 minutes
Writing	5 minutes	5 minutes 2 x week	10 minutes 2 x week
Language	45 minutes	30 minutes	30 minutes

Chichewa

Component	Standard 2	Standard 3	Standard 4
Phonological awareness			
Phonics			
Fluency		10 minutes	
Vocabulary			10 minutes
Comprehension		40 minutes	30 minutes
Writing		10 minutes	20 minutes
Language			

3. Include the lesson cycle schedule: introduction, practice, and assessment in the scope and sequence.
4. Ensure that all elements that are taught are included in the English scope and sequence have been previously taught in Chichewa. This applies to the topics and transferable skills, language and literacy skills such as letters and their sounds, how to decode, comprehension strategies, and vocabulary strategies.

Annex 11: Standard-specific Scope and Sequence Guidance

English Standard 2 Scope and Sequence Guidance

1. Phonics elements drive the sequence of instruction.
 - a. All letters will be reviewed at the beginning of Standard 2.
 - b. Two to three minutes of phonological awareness especially for sounds that do not exist in Chichewa
 - c. Instruction will include word and sentence reading.
2. Comprehension instruction is introduced in Term 3 with read aloud
 - a. Comprehension strategy: prediction/verification and self-monitoring if they have been taught in Chichewa
3. Writing instruction will include words from phonics instruction. Activities will include copying and dictation. Students will write sentences in the third term.
4. Language instruction will be based on a read aloud that will be used to introduce the topic.
 - a. Key vocabulary words will be taught explicitly followed by practice activities.
 - b. Activities will promote language production. Sentence frames can be used as a scaffold in the first term. Also, make use of the sentence structures used in the phonics lesson.

English Standard 3 Scope and Sequence Guidance

1. Phonics
 - a. Elements from the list that was developed
2. Vocabulary
 - a. Key words related to the topic will be taught explicitly followed by practice.
 - b. Additional related words related to the topic that can be taught easily with pictures or gestures are also taught.
 - c. Provide opportunities to practice using the words orally and in written assignments.
3. Comprehension
 - a. Introduce comprehension strategies that have been introduced in Chichewa
 - b. Sequence instruction to include practice of strategies in text.
 - c. Use text that is related to the topic and has been introduced during language lesson
4. Writing instruction will be related to the text read
 - a. Activities can include the use of vocabulary to write about the story, write summaries, or about the character or the topic or other activities that allow learners to practice.
5. Language instruction will be based on a read aloud that will be used to introduce the topic.
 - a. Key vocabulary words will be taught explicitly followed by practice activities.
 - b. Activities will promote language production. Sentence frames can be used as a scaffold.
 - c. Build in discussion related to the story read.

English Standard 4 Scope and Sequence Guidance

1. Vocabulary
 - b. Key words related to the topic will be taught explicitly followed by practice.
 - c. Additional related words related to the topic that can be taught easily with pictures or gestures are also taught.
 - d. Provide opportunities to practice using the words orally and in written assignments.
2. Comprehension
 - a. Introduce comprehension strategies that have been introduced in Chichewa
 - b. Sequence instruction to include practice of strategies in the text.
 - c. Use text that is related to the topic and has been introduced during language lesson
3. Writing instruction will be related to the text read
 - a. Activities can include the use of vocabulary to write about the story, write summaries, or about the character or the topic or other activities that allow learners to practice.
4. Language instruction will be based on a read aloud that will be used to introduce the topic.
 - a. Key vocabulary words will be taught explicitly followed by practice activities.
 - b. Activities will promote language production. Sentence frames can be used as a scaffold.
 - c. Build in discussion related to the story read

Chichewa Standard 3 Scope and Sequence Guidance

1. Comprehension strategy instruction
 - a. Introduce the steps in a strategy and provide practice
 - b. Use texts related to the topic to identify key vocabulary to teach and use the text to allow learners to practice the strategy taught.
 - c. Ensure that the strategy chosen to teach is appropriate for the topic.
2. Writing to support comprehension and develop language
 - a. Use a number of activities to support comprehension such as completing graphic organizers, writing summaries or opinions among other activities.
3. Fluency to build automatic reading with comprehension
 - a. Paired reading

Chichewa Standard 4 Scope and Sequence Guidance

1. Comprehension strategy instruction
 - a. Introduce the steps in a strategy and provide practice
 - b. Use texts related to the topic to identify key vocabulary to teach and use the text to allow learners to practice the strategy taught.
 - c. Ensure that the strategy chosen to teach is appropriate for the topic.
2. Vocabulary and academic language
 - a. Teach key academic vocabulary and language (phrases) related to the topic
 - b. Provide a number of activities to practice using the vocabulary words that require students to produce language (no repetition).
 - c. Use vocabulary in writing activities
3. Writing

- a. Use a number of activities to support comprehension such as completing graphic organizers, writing summaries or opinions among other activities.

Annex 12: Materials Review Guidance

GUIDANCE FOR MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT²⁴

Text Development

The role of texts in a reading program is to provide students practice, so they develop the language and literacy skills they need. Reading as a task should always be meaningful; therefore, all text developed should be well organized and coherent. Writers were given indicators in five areas to use as a checklist to review the texts they have written (see Table 1). The contribution of each indicator to reading and writing was provided. The writers used the checklist as a group to evaluate the quality of stories they had written. This checklist was applied to decodable texts, read alouds, stories, and poems.

Table 1. Writing criteria

Writing Component	Quality Indicator
Organization (<i>sequence</i>)	Sequence of ideas is logical.
Topic Maintenance	The topic is maintained and developed or elaborated throughout the entry.
Cohesion (<i>transitions and reference</i>)	Transitions are used appropriately to cohere sentences and ideas.
Referential cohesion	Referential cohesion is maintained such that the reader is never confused as to pronominal reference.
Complexity (<i>sentence structure and vocabulary</i>)	Complex sentence structures are varied and are used appropriately.

Additional criteria provided were related to the topics. Writers were advised that they should avoid stories that include violence or bad behavior, and the use of drugs or alcohol.

Comprehension

Writers participated in a workshop that focused on teaching comprehension strategies explicitly. Comprehension strategies are implemented before, during, and after reading.

BEFORE	DURING	AFTER
Get ready to read	Monitor your reading	Check you understanding

²⁴ Shanahan, T., Callison, K., Carriere, C., Duke, N. K., Pearson, P. D., Schatschneider, C., & Torgesen, J. (2010). *Improving reading comprehension in kindergarten through, 3rd grade: A practice guide* (NCEE 2010-4038). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U. S. Department of Education.

Prediction	Self-questioning	Retell
Activate/ build background knowledge	Inferences	Summarize
		Answer and generate questions

Writers were provided examples of how comprehension strategies help readers enhance their understanding. They were also provided with the distinction between comprehension activities and strategies. A strategy is the intentional application of a cognitive routine by a reader before, during, or after reading a text. Explicit instruction of strategies includes:

- Teach students about the value of using strategies to understand what they read so that they understand that strategies are important to the assignment and reading in general.
- Teach students how each strategy is applied (the steps).
- Model the strategy.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the learners that the words who, what, why, and how are used in asking questions. Say: who is used to ask for a person or people in a story, what is used for things that happen, why is used for reason and how is used to show ways of doing things. • Model answering comprehension questions in full for example, • Say: The first question is: Who are the three learners in the dialogue? First, I look at the question word, <i>who</i>; who tells me the answer will be people. I look at the text and find the name of the people in the story. Then I can say, “The three learners are Mwayi, Tadala, and Fatsani.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw learners’ attention to questions in their books. <i>Read the second question:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What does Tadala like to do? • Help learners to give correct responses to the questions by saying: remember What is used to ask for things or actions. • Ask learners more questions from their books. • Let learners respond to the questions orally in groups, pairs and individually.

Writers practiced developing the instructional language needed to teach strategies. Instructional language for four strategies was developed in the workshop. Writers were going to develop the others in their groups.

To ensure that students learn and use the strategies, to help students move from overt to covert to automatic use of strategies, a process for teaching the strategies was

1. When introducing a comprehension strategy, provide the purpose for the strategy (how will it help the reader) prior to modeling. For example, “To get ready to read, I think about what the story might be about. I read the title and make a guess about what the story will be about.” Teacher reads the title and says, “The title is..., I think this story will be about...”
2. The second time it is used the students are guided through the strategy. “Remember, to get ready to read, you can look at the title. Now let’s read the title together. Then turn to your partner and tell him or her what the story might be about. Now the other person, tell your partner what you think.” Ask a few students to give their prediction. After the students have practiced the strategy two or three times. Move to reminding students to use the strategy. For example, “Remember that you can use the title to help you think about what the story might be about.

- Depending on the comprehension strategy, the practice may occur when the strategy is introduced. For example, when showing students how to answer questions, the teacher can model with one question, and the students can practice with others.

Phonics

The goal of phonics instruction is to teach children to use letter-sound relationships to read and spell.

Most sounds were taught in Chichewa and English in SI. Therefore, in Standard 2 English instruction includes:

- Review sounds mapped to print.
- Review blending sounds to read words.
- Practice decoding words in isolation.
- Practice reading words fast in isolation.
- Teach 1–2 high-frequency words.
- Practice reading decodable words in sentences first then texts. (See Figure 1)

Six changes were made to the Standard 2 English materials:

- Phonemic awareness tasks were changed to letter name and sound recognition.
- Blending of sounds was changed to include print.
- List of decodable word was aligned to include only words that are used in the lesson.
- An activity to teach high-frequency words was included. The list of high-frequency words is generated from the sentences and texts that students will read (See figure 2 for a sequence of instruction).
- Decodable text was rewritten so that the stories are comprehensible and follow the criteria provided.
- Writing activities were examined to ensure they meet the objective: teaching students to use the letter/sound relationship to spell (See figure 3 for an example of an introduction activity). Other activities in the TG and LB were reviewed.

Figure 1. Letter to Word Reading Sequence

Letter sounds	A	m
Blend sounds	A	m
Read in isolation	<u>am</u>	
Read fast	<u>am</u>	

Figure 2. Phonics Sequence

- Letters reviewed: a, m, s, t
- Read decodable words: am, Sam, at, mat, sat
- Read high-frequency words: has, on,
- Read sentences:

Sam has a mat.

Sam sat on a mat.

I am Tam.

Figure 3. Writing words correctly: Introduction

- The first time students write the word, it should be dictation.
- Children should say the sound as they write each letter.
- After they write the word, they read it fast.

Other Decisions Standards 3 and 4

1. Review the time allocated for activities against the components to ensure that there is adequate time to complete it.
2. Examples to extend the lessons by introducing new vocabulary taught were discussed.
3. Some instructions were rewritten for clarity.
4. Standard 3:
 - Reading of text 1: The comprehension strategy is introduced and is the focus of instruction.
 - Reading of text 2: Fluency is the focus of instruction.
 - Reading of text 3: Practice Comprehension strategy.

Annex 13: Review of Standard 2 Materials

General comments

The LB is a reading book, not a workbook. Activities that are formatted to look like activities requiring students to write or draw in the book may be confusing to the student or the family when they are taken home. Those activities should be changed or reformatted to reduce confusion and to ensure that the objective of the activity is clear.

In general, the script boxes are too wordy, and it is difficult to identify clearly what the teacher should say and do.

Standard 2 Teacher's Guide & Learner's Book

Teacher's Guide Activity 1.1.1 Learning New Words

Story words for read aloud are taught without support. These words should be listed in the LB with an illustration. The activity in which learners name items in the picture should be part of learning new words, not preparing to listen to the story.

Teacher's Guide Activity 1.1.2 Preparing to listen to the story

In the instructions, the teacher is directed to make all the predictions, so there are none for the learners to make. They are just repeating the teacher's predictions. They also don't reference that students have already learned to make predictions.

Teacher's Guide Activity 1.1.4 Understanding the Story

Students are expected to answer why questions. They may not have the language skills to answer this type of question. What type of guidance will teachers be given to support learners that does not involve the teacher stating the answer and the learners repeating it. In addition, students are introduced to 3 questions words in the first lesson (who, where, and why) in a very general term and without any connection or attempt to leverage what they learned in Chichewa. Instead, the teachers are directed to explain the question types in the local language.

Rather than teaching three question types in one day, it may be better to distribute the different types of questions and include more practice not only answering the questions but also ensuring they understand the difference between the types of questions.

Learner's Book Phonics Section

Illustrations next to letters and words should be removed to ensure that the lesson focuses on letter sounds and letter-sound correspondences and to ensure there is enough time for a complete phonics lesson.

Teacher's Guide Activity 1.2.2 and 1.2.3

Saying the names and sounds of the letters a and m; Reading a decodable word.

Without illustrations and the additional instruction related to the illustration, letter name and sound instruction can be reduced from 8 to 4 minutes. Reading a decodable word can be reduced from 8 to 4 minutes. This will allow time for high-frequency words and sentence reading. Once the number of decodable and high-frequency words increases over time, the time allocations may vary, but there should always be at least one sentence read on the first day to help with comprehension. Further, there is no need for the type of explanation related to the difference in words at this point.

Teacher Reflection:

When will teachers do this? What will students be doing while the teacher works on the reflection?

Activity 1.3.3

The teacher will reread the story read the first day in section 1.3.2. In Section 1.3.3 teachers ask questions. The same concerns as stated above remain. In this activity, the teacher reviews the three question types (where, who, and why) but students are asked a who question, a why question, and a question that is stated as, “Do you think Mwayi is happy? Why or why not?” They need to be taught to answer this type of question nor are they prompted to use what they learned in Chichewa about answering this type of question.

The text states, “Ask students why they are happy to be at school” but they have not been taught any vocabulary to be able to answer that question.

Activity 1.4.2

It is not clear if the text that is provided is what the teacher will say or an explanation for the teacher to paraphrase in the local language. It would be more beneficial to provide a brief explanation in script form.

Learner Book Decodable Sentences

Sentences in which the final word was an illustration were changed from:
“I am happy. I am sad. I am big.” to “I am a teacher. I am a girl. I am a boy.”

Activity 1.4.3

In the TG, teachers are directed to read the sentence as “I am a girl.” However, the article ‘a’ was missing from the sentence in the LB. As a result, the sentence would be read as “I am girl.” etc.

Learner’s Book Conclusion

Two minutes are allocated to this section, but the TG asks that teachers ask each student one by one to stand up and state either “I am a girl” or “I am a boy,” as appropriate. This is likely to not be enough time in many classrooms with large class sizes.

Activity 1.5.1 Learning New Words

Words in the LB should be paired with illustrations. The activity in which learners name items in the picture should be part of the Learning New Words not preparing to listen to the story.

Activity 1.5.2 Preparing to Listen to a Story

In the instructions, the teacher is directed to make all the predictions, so there is none for the learners to make. They are just repeating the teacher’s predictions.

Activity 1.5.4 Understanding the Story

Teachers are directed to explain how to answer ‘who’ and ‘what’ questions then the teacher models a ‘who’ question and students only answer ‘what’ questions. The teacher should model what the students will do. There is also no reference to what students may have learned in Chichewa.

Activities 1.6.2 and 1.6.3

Same concerns regarding illustrations and the length of instruction as stated for Activities 1.2.2 and 1.2.3

Learner’s Book Phonics Section

Same concerns regarding the illustrations paired with decodable words.

Activity 1.7.3

Teachers are prompted to remind students how to answer 'who' and 'why' questions, but students are not asked to any 'who' or 'why' questions. All the questions are 'what' questions.

Activities 1.8.1 and 1.8.2

Same concerns regarding instruction for decodable and sight words.

Teacher Reflection: Same questions regarding reflection activity

Activity 1.9.3

Activities that ask students to draw are time consuming. The time may be better used with a dictation activity or another activity that focuses on practicing reading skills.

Annex 14: Review of Standard 4 Materials—Units 1 and 2

Proposed Unit Design (template)

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	Language	Language	Language	Reading	Supplemental readers
	Oral language	Oral language Grammar	Oral language Grammar Prepare for writing	Read story Generate questions	
2	Reading	Reading	Reading	Writing	
	Story vocabulary Introduce strategy Read story	Story vocabulary Read story Comprehension questions	Story vocabulary practice Read story Build fluency	Write paragraph	

Unit 1: My New Friends, in Proposed New Format

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	Language	Language	Language	Reading	Supplemental readers
	Oral language: Introducing self and others Activity 1.1.1, 1.2.1	Oral language: Describing friends Activity 1.3.1 Grammar: Simple present Tense New Activity 1.3.2	Oral language: What they do with friends Activity 1.5.1 Grammar: Simple present tense: New Activity 1.5.2	Read story: Read silently Modified Activity 1.7.1 Generate questions: New Activity 1.7.2 Talk about the text: Modified Activity 1.7.2	Activity 1.9.1 Activity 1.9.2 Readers' Theater
2	Reading	Reading	Reading	Writing	
	Story vocabulary: Activity 1.2.1 Introduce strategy: Activity 1.2.2 Read story: New Activity 1.2.3	Story vocabulary review: New Activity 1.4.1 (unknown words from the story) Read story: New Activity 1.4.2 Answering comprehension questions: Activity 1.4.3	Story vocabulary practice: New Activity 1.6.1 Read story: Build fluency New Activity 1.6.2	Prepare for writing: Activity 1.8.1 Write paragraph: Modified Activity 1.8.2	

Specific Comments Unit 1 Learner's Book:

1. Materials are out of order. For example, Activity D in the LB is taught in TG Lesson 1 before Activities A, B, and C in the LB. Activities A and B appear in Lesson 2. Activity C appears in Lesson 4.
2. At times, the objective of the activity is not clear. For example, Activity D.
3. It is not clear how the words for the various activities were chosen.
4. Are students expected to recreate the graphic organizer in their exercise books? Is time allocated for this?

Specific Comments Unit 1 Teacher's Guide :

1. In general, scripts are too descriptive and do not provide teachers the specific support they may need. For example, Activity 1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.3.2, and 1.3.3.
2. Also, the time allocated for some activities is not appropriate for the activity. For example, 12 minutes for Activity 1.1.2, 1.2.2, and 1.3.2.
3. The direction, "Help the learner to respond." is often used. These should be changed to specify how teachers should help. For example, in Activity 1.1.2, that direction can be changed to, "Provide the learner the sentence stem for the sentence. Also, Activity 1.3.2 "Help the learners to make sentences," it is not clear what students should do. Another example: Activity 1.5.2.
4. Need clear instructions about how and when teachers should complete the reflection.
5. Activity 1.2.1, giving meanings of words needs clear directions. There is no direction for the teacher to give the definition of the word. The instructional sequence should include:
 - a. Write the word on the chalkboard.
 - b. Read and the word.
 - c. Ask students to read it twice.
 - d. Give a definition
 - e. Give a sentence

Some of these steps are included in the current version, but others are not.

6. Provide the teachers definitions for the words.
7. Activity 1.2.2 has no time allocated, and there are no directions to refer to the story in the LB even though this is a reading comprehension activity. The directions should be more specific. For example, "Read the first five sentences..." etc.
8. The instructional objective of Activity 1.2.3 "Readers' Theater" is not clear.
9. There are numerous errors in the directions in Activity 1.3.2 and there are several concepts taught: nouns and verbs, pronouns, subject/verb agreement, singular and plural nouns and verbs. The focus of the activity is not clear. In addition, the directions are confusing. For example, teachers are asked to circle the noun in the sentence, and it is later equated with the subject of the sentence, but in two of the three examples the subject of the sentence is a pronoun, and the nouns are the objects in the sentences.
10. Activity 1.3.3 needs specific directions in combination with some of the directions in Activity 1.3.2.
 - a. Identify singular nouns and pronouns.
 - b. Give the rule for noun/verb agreement.
 - c. Give examples in which you circle the subject and then write the correct verb form.
 - d. Repeat with plural nouns and pronouns.
11. Activities 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 are repeated from the previous day with no extension. Activity 1.4.1, self-questioning should not be repeated with the same text. 1.4.2 includes directions to confirm predictions, but students are not asked to make predictions.
12. Activity 1.4.3 was taught in Standard 3 and should just be reviewed here. Also, the directions for answering the questions do not direct the learners to read the text again. This is a reading comprehension activity; therefore, learners should not be encouraged to just look through the text to find the answers.
13. Activity 1.5.2 these should not be a purely oral activity. The sentences should be written on the board.
14. Activity 1.5.3 ask the learners to write the sentences.
15. Activity 1.6.1 students are asked to identify words that are unfamiliar to them as they read the text for the third time. This implies that they read the text at least two times without understanding. This should be linked to self-questioning since one of the reasons that learners

sometimes do not understand text is that they do not know the meaning of the words. This should be moved up.

16. There is a mismatch between the directions in the LB and TG for activity I.6.3.
17. Activity I.7.1 students are directed to answer very basic pre-questions after reading the text for the fifth time. Many may be able to answer the pre-questions before reading the text again.
18. Activity I.7.2 the modeling is not correct. The statement, "I think this is a good dialogue" implies that the characteristics of a good dialogue will be discussed. The text states, "The evidence, it tells to be good to others" as the answer to, "I learned a lot from this dialogue."
19. In Activity I.7.3 the directions are too vague. What is the objective in copying questions that have already been answered into a notebook to answer again?

Annex 15: Teacher Training Cascade and Draft Manual Excerpt

Training Cascade Schedule

Activity	Dates	Trainers	Participants	Resources Needed for Trainers	Resources Needed for Participants
Orientation of National Facilitators	July 4-8, 2016	MERIT Staff	National Facilitators	Agenda for Training of National Facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide to Training Master Trainers • Trainer of Trainer Manual • Training Manual • Teacher's Guide • Learner's Book
Training of Master Trainers	July 18-22, 2016	National Facilitators	Master Trainers	Guide to Training of Trainers Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of Trainer Manual • Training Manual • Teacher's Guide • Learner Book
Training of Trainers	August 1-5, 2016	Master Trainers	Teacher Trainers	Training of Trainer Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training Manual • Teacher's Guide • Learner Book
Training of Standard I Teachers	August 8-25, 2016	Teacher Trainers	Standard I Teachers	Training Manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher's Guide • Learner Book

Excerpt from Training of Trainers Manual Draft

Professional Development and Teacher Change—Methods Used in the Training Guide

The purpose of teacher professional development is to introduce teachers to new, and presumably, better practices.

- ✓ This training provides content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and instructional strategies. Effective training is built on a theory of change about how teachers change their practice.
- ✓ Effective Professional Development includes the presentation of theory, demonstration of that theory into practice, practicing in a safe environment and getting prompt feedback as they implement new practices.
- ✓ Teachers must attain at least a basic level of knowledge or skill in a new approach before they can implement.

What helps teachers learn?

- Collaborative environments that allow teachers to have input in the decision making and problem-solving,

- Teachers are provided feedback as new methods are integrated into their current teaching practices
- Student data is used to examine the effects of implementing new teaching methods
- Teachers are engaged as active learners who provide support and feedback to each other about new literacy practices.

KEY TAKEAWAYS—

- **Adults need to know WHY they are learning something and be COMMITTED to the learning for the new ideas to become permanent.**
 - **Adults learn by DOING, so focus on activities that allow the participants to SOLVE their problems.**
-

Annex 16: Teacher’s English Proficiency Test—Summary of Item Revision

SECTION A: STRUCTURE AND USE OF LANGUAGE:

Verb tenses: Number of different verb tenses will be reduced to assess only the most problematic constructions. Deleted items will be replaced by more items testing the targeted tenses.

Vocabulary: Question format will be changed. The prompt will be a sentence with a word underlined, and test takers will choose among the options the word/words that best define the underlined word in that context.

Clauses: Only the type of clause will be tested.

Punctuation: Items will be deleted and replaced with a passage without punctuation that test takers will punctuate.

Fill in the blank: 1–2 more distractors will be added.

Word usage: Only there/their, effect/affect, and accept/except will be tested. 1–2 items per pair will be added.

SECTION B READING COMPREHENSION:

Narrative passage: Questions 3, 4, and 6 were deleted.

Retell: This item was maintained. A scoring rubric will be developed.

Close Passage: The passage was completed and will serve as an informational text in the test. There will be 5–7 multiple choice questions.

The Baobab Tree

Read the passage below and answer the comprehension questions that follow:

The baobab tree is one of the most well-known trees in Malawi. It grows into such a big tree with a huge trunk. It is usually grey in color. Without considering the rest of the branches, one would think it is a huge elephant. As a matter of fact, from afar some people have mistaken an elephant for a baobab tree trunk. They would only later discover that it is an elephant when it begins to move.

Since its discovery, the baobab tree has been useful to people in some parts of Malawi. The baobab tree was used as a place of worship before Christianity and Islam were introduced. It was believed that ancestral spirits dwelt in and around the baobab tree. Generally, the area around the baobab tree was regarded as sacred. Therefore, nobody could visit the place except when it was time to offer sacrifice to the spirits. Sacrifices were made for thanks giving and good harvest. Sometimes they were made to ask the gods for rains in times of drought or protection from incurable diseases. In addition, the baobab tree provided the people with materials for making clothes. The inner side of the bark of the tree was removed, processed and used for clothing.

Therefore, the baobab tree was very important to our ancestors.

1. What are two the characteristics of the baobab tree?
 - a. It is grey with a small trunk.
 - b. Grey with a huge trunk
 - c. Brown with a huge trunk
 - d. Grey with one branch
2. Why were baobab trees important to our ancestors?

- a. They look like elephants.
- b. They were a place of worship.
- c. They were big.
- d. They are grey.

The ASPIRE team will develop the remaining questions for a total of seven.

SECTION C: COMPOSITION WRITING

Item 2 was revised to read:

1. There are no textbooks at your school that your learners can use for reading. Write a folktale that you would use as a read aloud if you are in lower primary or for students to read if you are in upper primary.

SECTION D: LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Listening: Audio recorded

Report on student behavior at school. The teacher will have to translate for parents who do not speak English.

Introduction: Good morning, thank you for coming to the school...

Statement of the issue: We asked you to come because there is a problem with...

The effect on the student/class: This behavior has resulted in ... to your son... In addition, the behavior affects the class in the following ways...

Enlist the help of parents: We would like your help in addressing this issue.

Recommendations: We ask that you...

Thank you:

Score with a rubric: Examples of areas that will be assessed are accuracy and fluency.

Speaking: (15 minutes) audio recorded

1. Tell me about yourself.
 - a. Is there anything else?
2. Can you tell me what you like and don't like about being a teacher?
 - a. Is there anything else?
3. What is the role of continuous professional development in teaching?
 - a. Is there anything else?

Scored with a rubric possibly adapt the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix.

Annex 17: Benchmarking Meeting Summaries²⁵

1. Meeting with Minister Emmanuel Fabiano of the MoEST

Attendees: MoEST, USAID/Malawi, USAID/Washington, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), STS.

Key Takeaways

- The MoEST is anxious for the learning materials to be delivered to primary schools by the start of the school year in the fall.
- The MoEST is interested in benchmarking and agreeable to USAID meeting with Directorates to discuss benchmarking in Malawi.

2. Meeting with RTI International

Attendees: USAID/Malawi, USAID/Washington, USDA, RTI.

Key Takeaways

- Completing materials is the priority. RTI is reviewing the scheduled rollout of teaching materials.
- USAID briefed RTI on its proposal to the MoEST to implement a national reading fluency benchmark.
- USAID ended the meeting with future plans to distribute success stories to the media.

3. Meeting with the DIAS and Directorate of Education Planning

Attendees: MoEST: DIAS, Directorate of Education Planning, Office of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation; USAID/Malawi, USAID/Washington, STS, USDA.

Key Takeaways: The Directors understood the benchmarking concept and identified with the effort quickly. Their enthusiasm for this new benchmarking must be kept in check, as funding constraints will not allow for it to be implemented in the near future.

4. Meeting with RTI International

Attendees: USAID, STS, RTI, Infonex.

Key Takeaways

- Currently available Early Grade Reading Assessment data is not suitable for benchmarking exercise since the percentage of zero scores is high. Data collected by MERIT this year will be used to develop preliminary benchmarks by October using the model that Sylvia Linan-Thompson and Robert Latowsky used in Egypt. Infonex will take the lead in this process.
- USAID will make decisions on other benchmarking activities at a later date.

²⁵Notes taken by Daniel Alvarado, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service.

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