

# Analysis of Teacher Strategies for Overcoming Reading Difficulties in Elementary School

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## Keywords

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze teacher strategies in overcoming reading difficulties in Elementary School. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with 17 students as subjects, and data is obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. Teacher strategies are a series of planned steps such as collaboration with parents, implementing reading rules before breaks, linking reading material to everyday life, using peer tutors, playing word card games, integrating digital based edugames, and implementing the "Selasa Membaca" literacy program to overcome reading difficulties in elementary school students. This study aims to conduct an in depth analysis of how teacher process, such as low parent participation, limited teacher time, and challenges in consistently implementing strategies in the classroom with students of varying reading abilities. The combined application of traditional methods and digital media, has proven effective in enhancing motivation, engagement, and the development of students reading skills according to their individual needs..

## 1. Introduction

There are four skills that an individual needs to communicate effectively, namely reading, listening, speaking, and writing (Farha & Rohani, 2019). Reading skills are one of the functions of elementary schools in developing students' basic skills, namely reading, writing, and arithmetic, so it is very important to teach them to students as a prerequisite for further education (Sparapani, 2018). There are two aspects of students' reading ability: early reading ability and reading comprehension ability. The aspects assessed in early reading include students' ability to recognize the alphabet, recognize linguistic components (phonemes, words, phrases, clause patterns, and sentences), recognize the relationship between writing and spelling, and students' reading speed (Juhaeni et al., 2022).

In Indonesia, it is still common to find students who cannot read well and fluently at an age when they should already have mastered reading skills. Students with low reading skills will find it more difficult to master various subjects, which will impact their academic performance, social life, and psychology (Saputra & Noviyanti, 2022). According to a UNESCO survey, the reading interest of the Indonesian public is still relatively low. Indonesia ranks second from the bottom in terms of literacy, at approximately 0.001%. This indicates that only 1 out of 1,000 Indonesians are avid readers (Karim et al., 2023). According to the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which conducted research on literacy among elementary school students, Indonesia's literacy skills rank 41st out of 45 countries and are below international standards (Kurniawati, 2020).

Difficulty in reading skills, commonly referred to as dyslexia, is a condition where students lack the ability to read as expected. Symptoms of dyslexia include difficulty in learning the components of words and sentences (Melita et al., 2022). Difficulties in reading can complicate the learning process for students, as they may feel overwhelmed by the teacher's instructions to complete assigned tasks, since they cannot understand the instructions or guidance provided by the teacher. Teachers play an important role in helping and guiding students both inside and outside of school (Jannah et al., 2022). Therefore, appropriate strategies are needed for teachers to implement with students, especially those who experience difficulties in reading.

Research on strategies for overcoming reading difficulties in elementary school students has been conducted extensively. However, most previous studies have tended to focus on general

teaching methods and have not emphasized specifically how teachers apply strategies practically and adaptively in accordance with the context of student conditions and the learning environment. Unlike previous studies, this study specifically analyzes the strategies developed by teachers to address the challenges and obstacles that arise during the reading learning process in elementary schools. This approach is expected to provide a more in-depth and practical contribution, not only in the theoretical realm but also in terms of practical solutions that teachers can use as a guide to improve students' reading skills.

There are internal and external factors that influence students' reading difficulties. Internal factors originate from within the students and can include: cognitive or affective abilities, while external factors originate from the students' environment (Siregar et al., 2022). Based on findings from other studies, teachers can assist students who experience reading difficulties by using engaging concrete media with various methods, motivating students, providing special attention, utilizing reading corners, and encouraging students to develop reading habits (Juhaeni et al., 2022).

## 2. Method

This study uses a qualitative method with descriptive analysis. Qualitative research is conducted to understand the phenomena occurring in the research subjects and focuses on the process of how the observed phenomena occur, as well as interpreting the results of observations in the field in accordance with the previously determined research focus (Lambert, 2012). Qualitative research aims to produce descriptive data on the behavior of the subjects being observed. The researcher will analyze these phenomena and describe the findings to draw conclusions about the strategies applied by teachers in overcoming students' early reading difficulties. The subjects in this study were 17 second-grade students at Elementary School.

This research was conducted in June 2025 at Elementary School, specifically on second- grade students in the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The data collection techniques used included semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation. Observations were conducted during the learning process using a reading test administered to each student and recording the reading difficulties experienced by each student. The interview subjects were teachers at Elementary School, who provided information about the types of reading difficulties experienced by students and how teachers designed, implemented, and evaluated strategies applied to students with reading difficulties. The data obtained was then analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

This study also applied several validation techniques, namely data source triangulation, which was carried out by comparing information obtained through various data collection techniques such as interviews, observation, and documentation, thereby producing a comprehensive and consistent picture. Furthermore, the member checking process was carried out by presenting the preliminary analysis results to the teachers as sources for confirmation and clarification if there were things that needed to be corrected or clarified

## 3. Results and Discussion

Based on interviews conducted by researchers with second-grade elementary school teachers, it was found that there were 17 students in one class, consisting of 12 male students and 5 female students. From the teachers' statements, it was found that the students had reading skills that ranged from fluent to less fluent to unable to read. The study found that there were 4 students who could not read, 7 students who read less fluently, and 6 students who read fluently. Difficulties in reading made it difficult for them to understand the learning material provided by the teacher. Difficulties in recognizing letters were the students' ability to distinguish between letters that looked similar, both in shape and in the students' inability to distinguish between upper-case and lower-case letters.

The level of reading ability among students varies greatly. Four students cannot read at all. For example, students still have difficulty naming most letters of the alphabet, including spelling and combining letters into words. Students can only name letters at the beginning of the alphabet but have difficulty with letters at the end. They cannot read even though they can spell. There are also students who face challenges in pronouncing letters, spelling, and combining letters. Meanwhile,

there are students who only recognize the letters A and B, and even when imitating writing, their attempts are still incomplete.

Additionally, there are seven students categorized as having difficulty reading fluently. They generally recognize alphabet letters when they are arranged in order, but still get confused when the letters are scrambled, have difficulty reading digraphs such as “ny,” “sy,” and “ng,” and tend to omit letters in a word, have difficulty distinguishing between letters that are similar in shape, and often add letters incorrectly when forming words. Students G and H also have difficulty distinguishing letters such as “b” from “d” or ‘p’ from “q,” and struggle with reading letter combinations like digraphs.

Meanwhile, three students showed reading difficulties related to cognitive and concentration factors. All three lacked focus when reading and had weak memory. They also frequently omitted letters in their reading and did not fully understand the text, for example, they were still confused about the pronunciation of the letters “f” and “v” and often made mistakes with letters in certain digraphs. The reading difficulties identified include recognizing letters with similar shapes, inability to form letters into words, mispronunciation, and lack of understanding of the meaning of the text. This situation indicates that students face reading difficulties across various aspects, from the phonological stage to basic comprehension, necessitating different approaches and strategies by teachers in the classroom.

The strategies used by teachers to address reading difficulties in students need to be carefully considered so that the strategies employed can be implemented effectively and minimize the reading difficulties experienced by elementary school students. The following are some strategies used by elementary school teachers to address reading difficulties in students:

#### Approaching Parents

Teachers are more transparent and open about students' reading progress at school. Teachers also collaborate and communicate openly with parents about their children's abilities at school through regular reports. In this approach, teachers not only convey the obstacles students face in reading, but also provide advice on how parents can assist their children at home. This way, parents can encourage their children to develop their reading skills at home.

#### Teachers Implement Reading Rules Before Breaks

Teachers implement activities for students to practice discipline in reading by applying reading rules in turns before breaks. This is done by teachers by cutting the break time by about 5 minutes to ask students to take turns coming forward and reading books provided by the teacher. Students who have come forward to read are then allowed by the teacher to take a break. This approach can make students more motivated and enthusiastic about learning to read.

#### Teachers Link the Importance of Reading to Daily Life

Teachers attract students' interest in reading by linking reading activities to students' experiences in daily life or activities they enjoy, such as reading instructions on a game or a recipe for making food. In this way, students can understand that reading is not just a school assignment, but also an important skill that can be used in various situations. Teachers can invite students to discuss, ask questions, and share their experiences after reading.

#### Peer Tutoring

Teachers ask students to help their peers who are struggling. This is done by asking students who are already proficient in reading to assist their peers who are having difficulty reading and understanding the meaning of a sentence. This method is highly effective because students feel more comfortable and at ease when learning with their peers. In addition to helping students who struggle with reading, this method also fosters a sense of responsibility and care for others.

#### Word Card Games

To make the learning process more enjoyable, teachers develop innovations by creating and providing word and image cards. Students are asked to arrange letters into words or match images with corresponding words. This activity can be done individually or in groups to enhance vocabulary and students' ability to understand word meanings. This game also helps improve concentration and cooperation among students.

#### Use of edugames

By leveraging technological advancements, teachers utilize educational applications or edugames available at the school. Through edugames, students can learn to read in a more interactive manner. Teachers also collaborate with peer tutors and form groups between students who are proficient readers and those who are less proficient or even unable to read, thereby facilitating collaborative learning. The use of edugames can increase the motivation of students who tend to get bored with conventional methods, as well as support audio and visual reading learning.

#### Literacy Program "Tuesday Reading"

The literacy program, which is held every Tuesday, aims to increase the interest and reading skills of all students, especially those who still have difficulty reading. This program is usually conducted in the classroom but occasionally also on the school grounds. Students are asked to read books they enjoy, after which they are required to retell the content of the book. Through this program, students who cannot yet read are provided with intensive, alternating guidance from teachers. This program supports the school's literacy movement and fosters a fun reading culture within the school.

They should be combined. The study results should be clear and concise. Restrict the use of tables and figures to depict data that is essential to the message and interpretation of the study. The results should be presented in a logical sequence in the text, tables and illustrations. The part of result exposes the findings obtained from research data which is related to the hypotheses. The results should summarize (scientific) findings rather than providing data in great detail. The discussion should explore the significance of the results of the work. Explains the findings obtained from research data along with theory and similar research comparison. Make the discussion corresponding to the results, but do not reiterate the results. The following components should be covered in discussion: How do your results relate to the original question or objectives outlined in the Introduction section (what/how)? Do you provide interpretation scientifically for each of your results or findings presented (why)? Are your results consistent with what other investigators have reported (what else)? Or are there any differences?. Include in the discussion the implications of the findings and their limitations, how the findings fit into the context of other relevant work, and directions for future research.

### **3.1. Discussion**

Based on research conducted on elementary school students, there are still students who have difficulty reading, ranging from those who are not fluent to those who cannot read at all. One of the causes of this is their lack of knowledge of the alphabet. Elementary school students, especially those in lower grades, need to be introduced to the alphabet. This is important to do in lower elementary grades so that students can develop the ability to convert alphabetical symbols into meaningful sounds, as understanding this can make it easier for students to read and comprehend a text smoothly and fluently (Putri, 2022). This indicates that students in this study experience difficulties when entering the next stage of learning, which can affect their ability to follow the learning process (Nordström et al., 2019). Reading skills are very important to master because they can help students acquire new information and knowledge (Juhaeni et al., 2022).

Reading skills for students are outlined in Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 21 of 2016, which states that students are required to have reading skills. The importance of reading for students is outlined in Law No. 19 of 2005 on national education standards, Article 6, Paragraph 5, which states that reading, writing, speaking, and arithmetic skills are very important for students (Melita et al., 2022). The learning difficulties often experienced by students in upper grades are a result of early reading problems that were not properly addressed (Fuad et al., 2020). Teachers play

a role as motivators who are expected to foster students' interest in learning, so that learning can be carried out optimally, relevantly, and enjoyably (Moats, 2019).

Learning difficulties in upper grades are a consequence of students' reading problems that were not properly addressed (Fuad et al., 2020). Students who experience difficulties in reading or have low reading abilities do so because of their low ability to process or connect written symbols with the sounds they produce (Akyol & Boyaci-Altinay, 2019). Difficulties in recognizing letters and learning motivation are factors that cause students to experience reading difficulties. The actions taken by teachers to overcome reading difficulties can be adjusted to the conditions experienced by students (Rogers, 2019). Therefore, varied interventions provided by teachers to students must be different because each student's problems are different and require different approaches using different strategies.

Teaching strategies are concrete actions taken by teachers in implementing teaching that are considered more effective and efficient (Jannah et al., 2022). Efforts that teachers can make to address problems in elementary school students include collaborating with parents and communicating students' reading difficulties to their parents, so that parents and teachers can collaborate to address the problems experienced by students in order to support their development (Anjarwati, 2020). Collaboration between teachers and parents can be done through digital applications such as Google Classroom or WhatsApp Education. Through the use of these digital media, teachers can share reports with parents about their children's progress and provide appropriate recommendations regarding reading activities for students at home, as well as strengthen the role of parents in accompanying their children while learning to read or literacy at home.

Teachers also enforce reading rules before breaks and provide word card games so that students can spend time practicing reading with teachers and peers (Yaqin et al., 2023). The use of technology can be seen in the availability of learning or digital literacy applications that offer gamification, audio-visual features, and feedback that allow students to learn independently at their own pace. Strategies that can be applied by teachers, such as word cards and peer tutoring, can be strengthened by utilizing digital media, such as providing interesting and adaptive reading exercises. Teachers can also use platforms to monitor student progress and adjust materials based on each individual's abilities. In addition, technology can also support differentiated learning, where teachers can provide learning materials that suit students' learning styles and ability levels.

The use of edugames as a strategy implemented by teachers by utilizing existing digital media in schools. The use of technology can help teachers overcome time constraints in paying attention to each student through a smart learning system that can provide reading exercises for students, monitor progress, and suggest materials according to each student's needs. This allows teachers to focus more on guiding students directly. This runs smoothly by providing training to teachers in the use of technology, such as online learning platforms or interactive applications.

The strategy implemented by the school is the "Tuesday Reading" program, which can be developed into a digital literacy program involving the use of interactive e-books, the school's digital library, and picture stories accessible through an application. This allows students to explore various types of interesting readings according to their interests, thereby fostering a culture of literacy within them. With technological support, literacy activities are no longer limited to the classroom or school but can be accessed more easily anytime and anywhere.

The results of this study are expected to help teachers apply various strategies to students who have difficulty reading. Despite the benefits provided by the researchers, there are also challenges faced by teachers in implementing these strategies, such as parents who do not contribute enough to improving their children's reading skills at home, a lack of consistency in implementing these strategies, and too many students who cannot read well or at all, making it difficult for teachers to allocate additional learning time for these students. These challenges result in the strategies implemented by teachers having a low success rate. Despite the various challenges in their implementation, commitment and consistency from all parties will greatly help improve students' reading skills, enabling them to participate in the learning process more effectively

### 3.2. Conclusion

This study shows that reading difficulties among elementary school students remain a challenge that can affect their academic and psychosocial development. The difficulties experienced by students range from letter recognition, distinguishing between letters that are similar in shape, word formation, to understanding the meaning of a text. To address these issues, teachers can implement various strategies such as collaborating with parents, establishing reading rules before breaks, linking reading materials to daily life, using peer tutors, playing word card games, utilizing technology-based edugames, and implementing the “Selasa Membaca” literacy program. This study emphasizes the importance of collaboration between teachers and parents, as well as the need for variety in applying learning strategies tailored to the individual needs of each student. This study provides concrete examples of strategies that teachers can implement and that other elementary schools in Indonesia can adopt to support school policy development, teacher training, and innovation in reading instruction in the digital age.

### Author Contributions

Aru Ratna Nanda Suranto: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing - Original draft. Santy Dinar Permata: Supervision, Validation, Reviewing and Editing.

All the authors have read and approved the final manuscript..

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