

## The Role of Teachers in Increasing Low-Grade Students' Interest in Reading

**Aulia Fajar Khasanah\*, Ririn Setyowati**

STKIP Modern Ngawi

\*Corresponding Author Email: [aulia.fajar83@gmail.com](mailto:aulia.fajar83@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Teachers are not only one of the key factors in developing students' interest in reading, but also must have the ability to adjust to the various characteristics of students to increase their enthusiasm for reading. The aim of this study is to explain the role of teachers in stimulating students' interest in reading as well as identifying factors that may hinder their interest in reading. The research design is qualitative collaborated with descriptive approach. Based on the results of research that has been obtained from the results of interviews and observations show that students' interest in reading is still low. One of the reasons is the lack of motivation of students to read books. Many ways can be done by teachers so that students' interest in reading increases. The role of teachers in increasing students' interest in reading is as a creator, inspirer, facilitator, motivator.

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## Introduction

Effective education creates a learning environment that supports learners in developing their potential, including religious and spiritual strength, self-control, individuality, intelligence, good morals, and skills needed for themselves and society. In an effort to achieve educational success, it is important to develop students' reading skills (Mirnawati, 2020). In this case, interest tends to focus on children's reading interest. (Erlina, 2020) argues that interest in reading is a person's desire and attention, accompanied by effort and pleasure in reading. Reading interest can also be interpreted as a pleasant learning ability and can affect the form and seriousness of a person in setting future goals. Otherwise, efforts to get children to read more books will not be effective (Mansyur, 2020).

A teacher is a professional educator who educates, teaches knowledge, guides, trains, assesses, and evaluates students. The definition of a teacher is someone who has devoted himself to teach a science, educate, direct, and train his students to understand science and can improve student achievement. A teacher must be able to create an atmosphere and environment in the classroom. In the context of learning, teachers are expected to be able to stimulate students' interest in reading, including providing strong encouragement to read (Mirnawati, 2020). Teachers play an important role in ensuring the quantity and quality of the lessons they provide (Rintang et al., 2021). Teachers are responsible for conducting educational activities in schools in terms of guiding and teaching students.

Teachers are individuals who hold crucial positions and responsibilities in the world of education. When discussing education issues, the role of teachers should be the focus of discussion, especially when it comes to formal education in the school environment. As

educators, teachers are responsible for providing knowledge to students and shaping their character and spirit to achieve positive goals in the future (Mulyasa, 2015). In addition, the role of the teacher has a significant impact in guiding and motivating students during the learning process at school. This role reflects an evolving status, and when someone fulfills their rights and obligations, then they have fulfilled their role well.

The role of an educator involves any behavior or action involved in transferring knowledge to students (Wulanjani & Anggraeni, 2019). The success of a teacher can be measured through the implementation of the rights and obligations attached to his/her position. Teachers have a crucial role in stimulating students' interest in reading, which includes various tasks such as providing assistance, providing motivation, supervising, guiding and training children to comply with the rules. The teacher's role also includes the norms of life in the school, family and community environment (Safitri & Dafit, 2021a).

These tasks are concerned with supporting children's growth and development and enabling them to gain more experience. Therefore, the role of a teacher can be considered as a child educator and caregiver. Previous research shows that the teacher's role involves guiding students in finding appropriate reading books (Sari, 2018). In the context of learning, teachers function as facilitators who provide services to facilitate the learning process (Safitri & Dafit, 2021b).

Further research shows that the teacher's role also includes motivation for student learning. To fulfill all these roles, a teacher needs to be knowledgeable, master various types of learning materials, understand educational theory and practice, and master the curriculum and learning methods. Teachers also need to be sensitive to development, especially in terms of educational innovation. The teacher's responsibility is to help students develop their full potential. The potential of students that must be developed not only concerns intelligence and skills, but concerns all aspects of life. Teachers are not only required to have an understanding or ability in the field of learning and learning but also in motivating students. A teacher must understand the concept of motivation in order to function as a facilitator of student development, both concerning intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects. Based on this, in this study the researcher is interested in raising research on the role of teachers in fostering low-grade students' interest in reading at SDN Jambangan 4 Paron.

## **Research Method**

This research uses a qualitative approach and descriptive method. . Descriptive qualitative is a research that focuses on the subject's perspective, namely to recognize the behavior of the subject obtained from the way of behaving and thinking (Shidiq & Choiri, 2019). Qualitative design uses systematic observations so as to gain knowledge, and solutions to the questions being studied without manipulating the data, because researchers only take the data information consistently with the results of observations and series of information in the field. The data collection techniques used in this research are observation, interview, and documentation. Data validity is done by triangulation.

The first data analysis technique used in this study, by collecting data obtained from sources related to the role of teachers in the interest of reading Grade II students Sdn Jambangan 4 Paron by noting in detail. Second, data reduction on the data that has been recorded carefully and in detail found. Reduction of data conducted in this study is the reduction of observational data and documentation related to the role of teachers in the interest of reading Grade II students SDN Jambangan 4 Paron. Data analysis through reduction is done to summarize, choose the main things, focus on important things, and look

for themes and patterns of findings. Third, the presentation of Interview data and observation results are presented in the data collection. Through the presentation of data, the data will be organized, arranged in a pattern of relationships, so it will be easier to understand and plan the next work. Fourth, draw conclusions. Researchers draw conclusions after doing data reduction and data presentation. In this last step the conclusions made are still provisional conclusions and will be established as final conclusions. The initial conclusions are still tentative and will change if no strong evidence is found to support the next stage of data collection.

## **Result and Discussion**

The research findings show that teacher involvement has a significant impact in increasing the interest in reading of grade II students. Teachers can create a supportive environment for reading activities by providing a variety of interesting books in the classroom, organizing reading activities together, and setting an example as an active reader. In addition to this, teachers can also inspire students through praise and appreciation of their achievements in reading. The results also show that utilizing technology in the reading learning process can increase students' interest in reading. Teachers can utilize interactive software and engaging mobile applications to enrich students' reading experience. In an effort to increase students' interest in reading, the teacher's role as an innovator is crucial in designing reading activities with a view to stimulating students' interest.

In the learning process, teachers must be able to cultivate students' reading interests. Reading interest is a strong desire accompanied by one's efforts to read (Sudarto, Nugrahani, & Susanto, 2019). Teachers as teacher initiators are required to determine new ideas that can realize progress in teaching in accordance with the times in the current era, especially in the field of education. Teachers who are able to know and understand the condition of students, the environment, talents, habits, conditions of parents, subjects, failures and successes of students, and are required as teachers to initiate new ideas that can help achieve progress in learning activities that match the conditions of the current era, especially in the aspect of education. In addition, educators are also required to have knowledge related to environmental conditions, strengths, habits, weaknesses, interests, successes, failures, parents and everything related to student education.

The role of the teacher here is to help direct students to use the free time they have with useful activities such as reading, instead of playing games or just scrolling social media. In addition to encouraging students to read, teachers are also required providing books of various versions, such as learning books, fiction story books (fables, fairy tales, and the like), picture books (educational comics), package books, or other general knowledge books related to things that interest students to reading.

In increasing students' interest in reading, teachers act as creators by creating reading activities. The creation of reading activities aims to keep students interested and not bored in the reading process. The creations carried out include holding literacy activities in the morning for 10 minutes before learning begins by one by one students read fairy tale books that have been provided by teachers in a loud voice. This approach not only increases interest in reading but also spurs reading skills in younger students. This is in accordance with the research of Azizah (2018) who explained that reading activities in morning is an important thing to get used to and increase interest in reading. In addition, it is it can also encourage learners to have fluency in reading. Although morning literacy activities have been shown to be effective in increasing interest in reading, especially when students have a high level of

attention in the morning. Literacy activities in the morning are considered effective to increase students' reading interest, especially in the morning the concentration level of students is quite strong (Salma & Mudzanatun, 2019). However, some students are still less enthusiastic about the activity.

In addition to organizing literacy activities, the teachers also organized a contest to read children's story books of various types of Class II at SDN Jambangan 4 Paron, Ngawi District. The purpose of this activity is to increase students' reading interest. This reading competition is held in a simple and followed by all second grade students of SDN Jambangan 4 Paron Ngawi District. This event is held every month, and every student is required to participate. In the children's storybook reading competition, each student reads individually. The teacher's assessment of the participants was based on reading fluency, clarity of voice, and mastery of punctuation. Students are expected to actively participate in this activity. The jury of the reading competition this time was the homeroom teacher, and they gave awards or prizes in the form of books, pencils, pens, and other stationery to students who successfully met the assessment criteria. According to Hayani (2017), organizing a reading competition is one of the ways that teachers can use to familiarize reading activities so as to increase students' reading interest. Through the competition learners are motivated to get ranked/champion.

The purpose of the above activities is an attempt made to attract interest participants are encouraged to read a variety of books. Books that most attract students most are illustrated storybooks, because the illustrations make it easier for participants educate in understanding the things you want to convey from the book. Even more so when illustrating presented is full of color, which psychologically it is very stimulating interest read from students. Teacher as a teacher, explaining the purpose and manfaat of reading books and teachers are required to inspire students to be dissolved and enjoy reading activities by providing new thoughts related to students' reading interests. Furthermore, to increase the desire to read from students, educators can take advantage opportunity when in class to provide motivation or related matters with increased interest in reading students or with the strategy of repeating the material with question and answer model by marking important points on the learning material.

The role of teachers as facilitators in increasing students' interest in reading involves providing physical facilities, as described by Minsih & Galih (2018) and M. Rahmawati & Suryadi (2019). For example, at SDN Jambangan 4 Paron, Ngawi Regency, the grade II teacher actively provides facilities such as reading corners in the classroom and the school library with the aim of ensuring a smooth learning process. To increase students' reading interest, teachers provide facilities such as classroom reading corners and school libraries as well as efforts used to carry out the teaching and learning process so that it runs well. Based on the research of Asniar et al. (2020), high reading interest is one of them shown by students often visit the library. Application of habituation of learners visiting the library can be a means to increase interest in reading. In addition to providing and providing services related to learning facilities, teachers as facilitators must also provide good direction and provide enthusiasm to students. Providing a reading corner is a form of habituation and development to increase students' reading interest.

Teachers as facilitators should have knowledge and understanding associated with a good educational environment. Then educators are required to have knowledge related to wells that can be used to maximize teaching and learning activities. For example, internet sources, newspapers, package books, magazines, or media that help student learning



activities. And it should be noted, to get the results as expected, the facilities available are required to be qualified. So as to provide maximum output.



Figure 1. Reading Corner

The teacher's role not only includes providing learning facilities, but also involves functioning as a facilitator who provides appropriate guidance and encouragement to students. The reading corner aims to familiarize and develop students' interest in reading. The books in the classroom reading corner come from the library and are regularly replaced every month. In addition, the classroom reading corner library is also enriched with book donations from students, including educational books, fairy tales, comics, and various other types of stories.

In addition to setting up reading corners in the classroom, teachers also offer school library services, allowing students to borrow and enjoy a variety of books. The school library is considered a key supporting facility to increase interest in reading, as seen at SDN Jambangan 4 in Paron, Ngawi district. There, teachers have provided a variety of books that students can read or borrow. In addition to providing physical facilities, teachers also provide non-physical facilities in the form of services such as providing advice to students related to books to be read, where students are advised to read readings according to interest and age (Taib et al., 2022). Teachers recommend that students choose readings that suit their interests and age, in line with the findings of (Rahayu, 2016). For example, teachers also act as facilitators in students' reading activities in the morning, where students are given time by the teacher to read and understand the material before learning begins.

The teacher's role includes the dimension of being an energizer. As a motivator, teachers have the responsibility to inspire students by guiding them to improve their skills, providing encouragement and guidance to make learning more effective, and providing recognition through gifts, congratulations, praise, and the like. Teachers also provide verbal encouragement motivation in the form of words or praise to students to be more diligent and enthusiastic about reading (Monika & Adman, 2017). This teacher motivation aims to strengthen students' spirit during the learning process. The results of an interview with a grade 2 teacher at SDN Jambangan 4 Paron, Ngawi district, showed that the teacher used a verbal approach to encourage students to be more enthusiastic in reading through positive words and praise. The teacher also warns students about the importance of reading in broadening their horizons and knowledge. In addition, teachers also proactively inspire students by involving them in positive actions, such as encouraging applause,

providing support, and saying thank you to classmates who dare to recite poems or stories in front of the class.

Educators are the most important motivators to stimulate students to become a person who is eager to receive learning and enthusiastic about the difficulty of reading. Motivation is considered important because in essence, learners he is a human being with a spirit that is sometimes weak. At the stage when lazy students, the role of motivation is needed to restore the spirit of students in learning. Teachers at SDN Jambangan 4 Paron not forget to motivate students to love to read. In addition, the role of parents is also important in raising students' reading interest

Teachers provide additional encouragement to students by appreciating those who dare to perform in front of the class. This appreciation can be in the form of positive praise or prizes such as stationery and candy. Positive phrases such as "Wow, your kids are amazing!" or "Your kids are on fire" are used to strengthen students' motivation. The aim is to increase students' enthusiasm and encourage them to be active in reading activities, such as reciting poems or sharing reading experiences with classmates at SDN Jambangan 4 Paron, Ngawi Regency. As an evaluator, the teacher has a role in collecting data related to students' learning progress. Evaluation is carried out to measure the achievement of student learning objectives and the success of teachers in carrying out planned activities. The results of interviews with grade II teachers show that assessment is also applied in reading activities to measure students' understanding of reading material. Aspects such as pronunciation, reading fluency, and punctuation comprehension are evaluated, with a focus on developing strategies to increase students' interest in reading.

Grade II teachers at SDN Jambangan 4 in Paron, Ngawi district, act as dynamizers in their efforts to increase students' interest in reading. The role of teachers as dynamizers is implemented so that reading activities accompanied by reading interest continue to experience sustainability (Adipta, Maryaeni, & Hasanah, 2016; Santika, 2018). They stimulate students' interest by directing them to read in the morning, viewing this activity as a way to improve reading skills, concentration and shape students' character. There is no specific day designated for reading activities, but it is done classically at the discretion of the class teacher. In addition, teachers use library visits as a strategy to dynamize reading activities. Students are required to borrow and read books as part of the effort to create a sustainable reading habit and make it a culture in the school environment.

## **Conclusion**

The role of the teacher as an educator provides direction, gives assignments to students, the role of the teacher as an initiator provides ideas for the progress of the times, has broad knowledge and knows the environment of his students, the role of the teacher as an inspirer is an example of an example for students so as to be able to inspire students, find new ideas to achieve these goals, Clearly, in efforts to increase student interest in reading, educators have a crucial role, which at least has several roles that must be pursued such as the role as an initiator in getting used to reading to students. Educators who act as inspirers who become role models for students, especially with matters related to reading. Educators act as motivators who always try to encourage students to read and read to become superior individuals. Educators act as facilitators who provide students' needs in fostering students' interest in reading. Teacher involvement has a significant influence in motivating students' interest in reading. Teachers can shape an environment that supports reading activities,

integrate technology as a learning tool, and provide incentives for students to increase their interest in reading. Therefore, success in stimulating learners' motivation depends on teachers' creativity in choosing and using appropriate media during the learning process.

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