

Implementation of Level Books to Improve Reading Skills for Illiterate Children in Teladan Binjai Private Elementary School

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 27 June 2024

Accepted 30 June 2024

Published 30 June 2024

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ABSTRACT

This study is aiming to determine the efficiency level of using level books media in improving the reading fluency of students who struggle with reading at Teladan Binjai Private Elementary School. This qualitative study utilizes data collection techniques through documentation and observation involving 10 respondents who are non-readers from Grade I to Grade VI. The focus of this research is on implementing the Demonstrative Learning Method for Illiterate Children with Level Book Learning Media. The findings of this study indicate that students can learn to read with high enthusiasm and eagerness using the demonstration method with level books as learning media. Students are able to gradually read using this learning media. This implies that this learning media is effective in addressing illiteracy. Overall, the results of this research demonstrate that the use of level books media in education has a positive effect on the reading fluency of students who struggle with reading. Therefore, this research highlights the importance of integrating level book learning media in the learning process to assist students in overcoming illiteracy and enhancing their reading skills.

Keywords

Implementation, Learning Media, Level Books.

How to cite: Ulfah, A. L., Yusnadi & Machmud, M. T. (2024). *Implementation of Level Books to Improve Reading Skills for Illiterate Children in Teladan Binjai Private Elementary School. International Journal of Educational Practice and Policy, 2(1): 27-32.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Literacy is the inability of an individual to read, write, and do basic arithmetic. Illiteracy is one of the factors that hinder the quality of human resources (Jessica et al. 2017). One fundamental requirement to improve the quality of human resources is the eradication of illiteracy among the population. Indonesia is a country with a high literacy rate. The illiterate population in Indonesia is 3.56%, equivalent to 5.7 million people (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2015). Jumeri, the Director General of Early Childhood Education, Basic Education, and Secondary Education at the Ministry of Education, stated that the National Socio-Economic Survey conducted by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2020 showed a significant decrease in the illiteracy rate. He mentioned that the illiteracy rate was 1.78% or 3,081,136 people in 2019, and it decreased to 1.71% or 2,961,060 people in 2020. Every year, Kemendikbudristek continues to promote structured programs to eliminate illiteracy.

According to the National Socio-Economic Survey by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2022, the illiteracy rate among Indonesians aged 15 to 59 years was 1.50%, approximately 2,666,859 people. This marks a decrease compared to the illiteracy rate of 1.56% or about 2,761,189 people in 2021. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency of Medan City, the literacy rate in North Sumatra was 98.92% in 2016, 98.96% in 2017, and 99.14% in 2018. In Binjai City, based on the same data, the literacy rate was 99.77% in 2016, 99.58% in 2017, and 99.53% in 2018. This indicates an annual increase in literacy rates in North Sumatra. However, in Binjai City, North Sumatra, there was a decrease in literacy rates over the past two years. Therefore, this serves as an important note to ensure that the literacy rate does not decline annually in the community. To prevent an annual increase in illiteracy and to increase literacy rates, children must receive education from an early age, whether it be informal, formal, or non-formal education, to help them learn and prevent the roots of illiteracy from emerging.

In improving literacy rates among children or reducing the illiteracy level, parents and educators must collaborate to address these issues. While children receive education and instruction at school, there are still some who struggle with reading or even lack basic letter recognition, as observed in Teladan Binjai Private Elementary School where several students face difficulties in reading and letter recognition. Handling illiterate children can involve various approaches, particularly focusing on teaching methods. Teaching methods are crucial in education, especially in the teaching and learning process. They serve as pathways to deliver educational content. Teaching methods are instructional strategies designed to present, explain, demonstrate, and provide exercises to students in order to achieve specific learning objectives (Nuraiha, 2020). The use of effective teaching methods can facilitate and expedite the learning process towards comprehension. Educators must understand their students and be adept at observing and assessing their understanding to ensure that the material is comprehensible and not confusing. Therefore, selecting the appropriate teaching method is essential for educators.

One crucial component that supports learning success is learning media. According to Pane & Dasopang (2017), media serves as tools to facilitate the delivery of instruction, making it more efficient and effective in achieving learning objectives. In the functional literacy learning process, learning media plays a critical and necessary role. It serves as a channel through which teachers can convey information to students and helps learners better understand the material presented by tutors. Thus, the proper use of learning media can enhance information delivery and aid in achieving learning goals effectively. To improve literacy rates among children and reduce illiteracy levels, parents and educators must collaborate in addressing these challenges. While children receive education and instruction at school, some

still struggle with reading and even lack basic letter recognition. This issue is evident at Teladan Binjai Private Elementary School, where several students face difficulties in reading and basic letter recognition.

Illiterate children at Teladan Binjai Private Elementary School encounter challenges in developing reading skills due to a lack of early exposure to letters and words. This impedes their language and literacy development, often exacerbated by inadequate access to reading materials suitable for their reading abilities. The shortage of age-appropriate books can hinder their learning process. The teaching methods employed in teaching reading to illiterate children at Teladan Binjai Private Elementary School may not be adequate. Using level books media that match the reading abilities of illiterate children can help enhance their learning process and foster their interest in reading. There might be a lack of understanding among teachers regarding the needs of illiterate children. Teachers at Teladan Binjai Private Elementary School may not fully comprehend the challenges and requirements of illiterate children in the reading learning process. Deep understanding is needed on how to teach and develop reading skills tailored to the needs of illiterate children. Level books media is considered an effective method to improve reading skills among illiterate children. Its use can assist illiterate children in gradually learning to read and increase their reading interest.

2. METHODOLOGY

The data collection technique involves documentation and observation with 10 students to assess their ability in letter recognition and reading comprehension. The focus of this research is on implementing the Demonstration Learning Method for Illiterate Children using Level Book Learning Media. This study is qualitative in nature, employing a descriptive approach with observational methods. Data collection includes direct observation through classroom teachers and interviews with each teacher regarding students who have difficulties in reading. The direct observation aims to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of using level books in enhancing students' reading abilities. The research is conducted in Binjai City District, specifically at Teladan Binjai Private Elementary School, scheduled according to the existing issues regarding illiteracy among students from Grade 1 to Grade 6. The study date is October 28, 2023, and the location is Teladan Binjai street, Binjai City. The research subjects are individuals associated with the study who can provide information about various conditions at the research site, ensuring accurate data collection. There are 10 subjects directly involved in the study, all of whom are students at Teladan Binjai Private Elementary School. The research object includes the implementation of level book media to improve reading skills among illiterate children.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research activities were conducted at Teladan Binjai Private Elementary School. In this school, there are 52 students from Grades I-VI, with 10 of them classified as illiterate at varying levels: 3 students who do not recognize letters at all, 3 who recognize letters but cannot connect them, and 4 who are not fluent in reading and still spell out words. According to Hermansyah (2017), primary school students' inability to read and write is due to the slow acquisition of verbal responses becoming abstract symbols in the form of letters and punctuation. Even though students may speak well, if their ability to understand letters is slow, it will affect their reading and writing abilities. In the classroom teaching process, teachers typically follow the curriculum and Lesson Plan. Teachers also conduct individual reading

exercises to improve students' reading skills using theme books and readings written on the board. While teachers assist students in learning to read, some students still struggle and are unable to read fluently due to difficulties in concentration or focus while reading. They easily forget letters and readings when something else catches their attention. For instance, they may remember letters and readings when something interesting happens, but then forget when they try to read again.

To address these challenges, the researcher provided reading exercises for 10 students who were unable to read at Teladan Binjai Private Elementary School. These reading exercises were conducted at the end of the lessons to avoid disrupting the learning process at school. The researcher conducted the research activities for four sessions within a month to monitor the students' reading progress, followed by observations by the teacher to assess their reading development. The researcher used level book learning media to enhance students' learning interest. Before starting the lessons, the researcher administered a pre-test to assess the students' reading abilities by displaying letters and short readings written on the board. Then, the researcher taught reading using the demonstration method, where students actively participated in the learning process. Students engaged directly with the learning media used, such as magic turmeric and level books. According to Dhieni et al. (2008), factors influencing reading ability include motivation, family environment, and reading materials. Therefore, level books as a learning medium significantly influence improving students' reading abilities. In efforts to enhance reading skills, aside from the level book approach, children's psychological aspects should also be considered, as per Rahim theory (2007). Factors such as motivation, interest, family environment, and the quality of reading materials play crucial roles in supporting students' reading abilities. Integrating these approaches is key to ensuring success in improving students' reading skills. Awareness and conscious reading activities: (3) The family environment also becomes one of the factors that can affect a child's reading ability; children greatly need exemplary behavior in reading. This exemplary behavior should be demonstrated by parents as often as possible. (4) Reading materials: Reading materials that are too difficult can kill the desire to read. Therefore, the topic or content of the reading material and its readability should also be considered. Then, the instructional media are picture-level books and colorful. Level books are children's reading learning books made starting from letters to introduce letters, vowels, short and brief readings to long readings. These level books are reading books that have levels in every reading. This level book media is taught by students so that students can train to read from easy to difficult levels, so students are expected to be able to read. These level books are also given to teachers so that teachers can continue to train students after the research is completed. Students do not feel bored because students play an active role in this activity. This level book media is very helpful especially by using demonstration methods that make students actively participate in this learning activity. Learning is not monotonous and students do not feel bored, focus and concentration while painting and reading is what happens in this activity. Some students can recognize the letters that they had not recognized before, have developed a little in reading. Therefore, the researcher provides the results of students' paintings that have been painted and read so that students can repeat reading at home. Level books are also given to teachers so that teachers can continue to train students after the research is completed. The results of this study are students can learn to read with enthusiasm and high enthusiasm using the demonstration method with level book learning media. It is also important to note that this study highlights that each student has uniqueness and different levels of difficulty in the learning process; therefore, the appropriate and focused approach to individual needs is also the key to helping their reading restriction system. Students are able to read little by little using this instructional

media. This means that this instructional media is efficient for overcoming illiteracy. Overall, this research shows that the use of level books in learning has a positive effect on the fluency of students who have difficulty reading. Therefore, this study highlights the importance of integrating level book instructional media into the learning curriculum to help students overcome illiteracy and improve their reading ability.

4. CONCLUSION

From the research results, it can be concluded that the demonstration learning method can assist educators in the learning process to prevent boredom and monotony. The level book instructional media can help improve children's reading because it includes reading levels that facilitate children in practicing reading, making learning to read enjoyable for them. The development of students' reading abilities is evident from the research results and observations; students gradually recognize letters, and others show improvement in reading. The instructional media strongly support the development of children's abilities. Engaging instructional media also significantly influence children's enthusiasm in the learning process. With engaging media, children do not get bored quickly and become responsive because it is enjoyable, but it must be consistently implemented. In level books, there are stages of reading for children, allowing them to practice reading starting from the lowest level and progressing to the next, which also facilitates learning for children. Therefore, competent and creative instructional media have a significant impact on the learning process and outcomes. In conclusion, the results of this study show that students can learn to read with high enthusiasm and excitement using the demonstration method with magic turmeric and level books as instructional media. Students can gradually learn to read using this instructional media. This means that this instructional media is efficient for overcoming illiteracy.

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