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The Role of Teacher in Improving Students' Learning Interest and Reading Skills in Grade III at SD Inpres Pucuke

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Abstract
This study aims to describe the role of teachers in improving the learning interest and reading ability of third-grade students at SD Inpres Pucuke. This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The research subjects consisted of one third-grade teacher and five third-grade students at SD Inpres Pucuke, selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Data analysis involved data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that the teacher played an important role in improving students' learning interest and reading ability by modeling correct reading, providing direct guidance, conducting repeated reading exercises, using question-and-answer methods, and offering motivation and appreciation. These efforts were intended to encourage students to become more active, confident, and interested in participating in learning activities and reading exercises. Therefore, the teacher's role is essential in supporting the improvement of learning interest and reading ability among third-grade students at SD Inpres Pucuke.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a very important role in improving elementary school students' learning interest and reading ability, particularly in the lower grades, where students are still developing basic literacy skills. In the learning process, teachers do not merely deliver material, but also act as guides, motivators, facilitators, and classroom managers who create an active and enjoyable learning environment. Teachers provide assistance to students who experience reading difficulties, guide them in using appropriate intonation, pronunciation, and punctuation, and provide motivation through praise and engaging literacy activities. In addition, providing a reading corner and utilizing the school library are also efforts made by teachers to foster students' interest in reading. Creative and innovative teacher roles in managing learning have been shown to improve reading skills and students' participation in learning in elementary schools (Juhaeni et al., 2022; Afriani et al., 2024).

Field realities show that many elementary school students, particularly those in the lower grades, still have low learning interest and reading ability. Some students are not yet able to read fluently, have difficulty understanding reading content, lack focus during lessons, and easily become bored during reading activities. Differences in reading ability among students also present a challenge for teachers because each student has different characteristics and learning needs. To address these problems, teachers apply various motivational strategies and individual approaches in reading instruction. Teachers provide praise, rewards, and engaging literacy activities to increase students' learning motivation.

In addition, teachers provide special guidance for students who experience reading difficulties, utilize the library and reading corner as enjoyable learning environments, and use varied teaching methods such as phonics and multisensory approaches to help students understand texts better. Approaches that take students' individual characteristics into account can help improve elementary school students' reading ability and participation in learning (Rahayu et al., 2023; Nurhayati et al., 2024).

A structured daily literacy movement is one important strategy for developing reading habits among elementary school students, particularly in the lower grades. Literacy programs implemented gradually through 15-minute reading activities before lessons, the use of supplementary books, and the integration of literacy activities into various subjects have been shown to increase students' interest in reading. Teachers habituate students to reading regularly every day with brief guidance, making students more accustomed to reading and more enthusiastic about participating in lessons. In addition, activities such as read-aloud sessions, storytelling, shared reading, literacy games, and the use of interactive learning media and applications also help improve reading ability, enrich vocabulary, and build students' confidence. Daily literacy programs have a positive impact on the development of students' reading ability and academic achievement, although their implementation still requires continuous support and reinforcement through rewards, reading challenges, and regular visits to the school library (Amalia & Sukarno, 2023; Barlina & Suryani, 2024).

Several studies in recent years have examined the role of teachers in improving elementary school students' interest in reading and reading ability. Research by Rahayu, Wahib, and Besari (2023) showed that providing a reading corner and teacher-guided reading habits can increase elementary school students' interest in reading. In addition, Oktadela et al. (2024) found that literacy programs through reading corners can help improve literacy skills and student participation in classroom reading activities. Another study by Afriani et al. (2024) explained that teachers play an important role as learning facilitators who create an active learning environment and support students' literacy development. Furthermore, Zahra, Syachruroji, and Rokmanah (2023) stated that the use of engaging learning media and strategies can increase elementary school students' learning interest. These findings indicate that the success of literacy programs is strongly influenced by teachers' involvement in guiding, facilitating, and continuously habituating students to reading activities. Nevertheless, previous studies have generally focused on only one particular aspect, such as reading corners, learning media, or reading interest. In addition, most studies have not examined in depth how teachers integrate literacy habits, learning media, and reading assistance in an integrated manner to improve the learning interest and reading ability of third-grade elementary school students. Therefore, there remains a research gap concerning teacher strategies for integrating various literacy activities to improve students' learning interest and reading ability sustainably.

Based on these conditions, this study is important because learning interest and reading ability are two interrelated aspects that support successful learning among elementary school students. Students with low learning interest tend to be less active in learning and less motivated to read, so their reading ability does not develop optimally. Meanwhile, reading ability is an important foundation for third-grade elementary school students in understanding learning materials across various subjects. Therefore, teachers need to create literacy activities that are engaging, active, and appropriate to the characteristics of elementary school students through reading habits, the utilization of literacy facilities, and interactive learning strategies. This study aims to determine how teachers contribute to improving the learning interest and reading ability of third-grade elementary school students through literacy activities implemented in the school

environment. The results are expected to provide an overview and alternative learning strategies that are more innovative and effective in building a literacy culture and improving elementary school students' reading ability.

2. RESEARCH METHODT

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. This approach was used to provide an in-depth description of the teacher's role in improving students' learning interest and reading ability in Grade III of an elementary school through literacy activities at school. The research subjects consisted of the Grade III teacher and Grade III students who were involved in literacy learning activities. Data collection techniques included questionnaires, observations, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly examine literacy activities in the classroom, while interviews were conducted with the teacher to obtain information regarding the strategies implemented to improve students' learning interest and reading ability.

The data obtained were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was examined through source and technique triangulation to ensure that the data obtained were valid and reliable. The results of the analysis were then described narratively to comprehensively illustrate how the teacher created a literacy-rich environment, developed reading habits, and improved the learning interest and reading ability of Grade III elementary school students.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted at SD Inpres Pucuke with third-grade students, with the aim of determining the role of teachers in improving students' learning interest and reading ability. The data were obtained through observations of learning activities, documentation of the teaching process, interviews with the third-grade teacher, and interviews with students. The data were then analyzed to determine how the teacher contributes to improving students' learning interest and reading ability.

1.Observation Results

Based on the results of observations conducted in Grade III at SD Inpres Pucuke, the teacher played an active role in improving students' learning interest and reading ability. The teacher employed several teaching strategies, such as modeling correct reading, implementing turn-taking reading activities, guiding students who experienced reading difficulties, asking questions about the content of reading materials, and providing motivation and praise to students. The teacher also provided repeated reading exercises to help students read more fluently and understand the learning materials. Through these strategies, the teacher sought to create an active and enjoyable learning environment in order to improve students' learning interest and reading ability.

2. Results of the Interview with the Teacher

Based on the results of the interview with the third-grade teacher at SD Inpres Pucuke, it was found that the teacher made various efforts to improve students' learning interest and reading ability. The teacher modeled correct reading, guided students who experienced difficulties, asked students to read in turns, and corrected errors in pronouncing words and sentences. In addition, the teacher used question-and-answer methods, provided repeated reading exercises, and explained the learning materials in language that was easy for students to understand. The teacher also provided motivation, praise, and encouragement to help students become more confident, willing to read aloud, and actively participate in learning activities. Through these efforts, the teacher hoped that students

would become more interested in learning and that their reading ability would develop effectively.

3. Student Questionnaire Results

Based on the questionnaire administered to five third-grade students at SD Inpres Pucuke, it was found that the students provided varied responses regarding learning activities and literacy practices at school. The questionnaire was used to obtain information about students' learning interest and their interest in reading activities. The questionnaire results served as one source of data for identifying students' responses to the teacher's instructional practices. These data also supported the observation and teacher interview findings in describing the teacher's role in improving students' learning interest and reading ability.

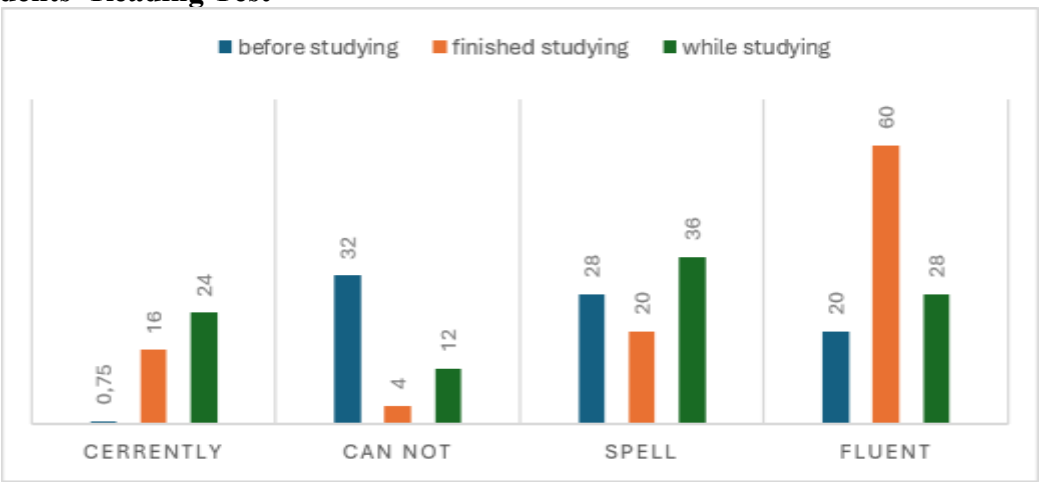
4.Reading Ability Test Results

Based on the reading ability test conducted with eight third-grade students at SD Inpres Pucuke, it was found that the students had varying levels of reading ability. Two students were able to read fluently, one student demonstrated an intermediate level of reading ability, three students were still spelling out words, one student was unable to read, and one student was still at the stage of recognizing the letter M. These results indicate that some students had developed good reading skills, while others still required guidance and repeated practice. Therefore, teachers need to provide assistance tailored to each student's abilities so that their reading skills can develop gradually.

5.Results of Learning Activity Documentation

Based on the documentation of learning activities in Grade III at SD Inpres Pucuke, it was observed that the teacher employed several teaching strategies to improve students' learning interest and reading ability. The teacher explained the learning materials using simple and easy-to-understand language, modeled correct reading, and asked students to read in turns. When students experienced reading difficulties, the teacher provided direct guidance, corrected pronunciation errors, and demonstrated the correct pronunciation of words. In addition, the teacher used question-and-answer methods to assess students' understanding of the learning materials. The teacher also provided motivation, praise, and appreciation to students who actively answered questions or completed assignments. The documentation indicates that the teacher employed teaching strategies that actively involved students and provided guidance according to their individual reading abilities. These efforts aimed to create an enjoyable learning environment and support improvements in students' learning interest and reading ability.

Students' Reading Test



Based on the table above, before learning began, 20% of students were not yet fluent in reading, 32% were at an intermediate level, 28% were still spelling, and only 20% were

already fluent. During the learning process, changes occurred: students who were not yet fluent decreased to 12%, and fluent students increased to 28%. After learning was completed, a significant improvement was observed: students who could read fluently rose to 60%, while students who were not yet fluent dropped to only 4%. This shows that the learning carried out by the teacher successfully improved students' reading ability gradually and effectively.

DISCUSSION

1. The Teacher's Role as Educator

Teachers hold the primary role as educators in helping students acquire knowledge and develop their abilities. In Grade III learning at SD Inpres Pucuke, the teacher adapted instruction to students' capabilities. To improve reading ability, the teacher demonstrated correct reading practices and then asked students to follow, while directly correcting reading errors. This is essential because third-grade students are still developing reading skills that require consistent practice and habituation. According to Sahida & Yuli (2025), teacher modeling of reading is an effective strategy that helps students understand proper reading techniques and builds daily reading habits. Through repeated reading activities, students gain opportunities to enhance their reading fluency and comprehension. This is supported by Lestari & Isnasywa (2026), who state that consistent 15-minute pre-lesson literacy habituation led by teachers significantly improves early reading proficiency among lower-grade elementary students.

2. The Teacher's Role as Guide

The research findings indicate that the teacher provided guidance according to students' individual needs. Students who experienced difficulties in reading received greater attention and additional assistance compared with students who were already able to read fluently. The guidance was provided through reading practice, error correction, and repeated reading activities.These findings indicate that differences in students' abilities require appropriate instructional responses. Duke and Cartwright (2021) explain that reading ability involves various processes and skills; therefore, instruction needs to take students' individual needs into consideration. In the context of this study, the direct guidance provided by the teacher served as a form of support for students who continued to experience difficulties in reading.

3. The Teacher's Role as Motivator in Fostering Learning Interest

Student learning interest is a major factor influencing engagement in the learning process. The teacher sought to boost interest through encouragement, praise, prompting questions, and invitations to participate actively. When students successfully answered questions or completed tasks, the teacher offered appreciation that built confidence and made them feel valued. Students who still faced difficulties were supported to persist. Sari & Dafit (2024) found that positive reinforcement and an enjoyable atmosphere significantly raise lower-grade students' enthusiasm for literacy activities. Lisrandy et al. (2025) confirm that interest develops when students feel safe, valued, and supported; equitable teacher attention to all learners—including those lagging behind—creates a classroom climate that encourages participation. This aligns with Amalia & Sukarno (2023), who note that consistent praise and simple rewards serve as powerful motivators for student engagement in reading.

4. The Teacher's Role as Facilitator

As a facilitator, the teacher provided opportunities for active student participation—taking turns reading, asking and answering questions, and completing assignments—so students were not merely passive recipients of information. In reading activities, round-robin reading allowed the teacher to assess each student's proficiency directly. that granting space for active participation fosters student responsibility for their own learning and builds

the confidence to perform publicly. Reinforcing Safitri & Dafit (2021), Sapri et al. (2022) found that teachers who facilitate reading corners, attractive reading materials, and varied literacy activities create an environment that supports independent reading interest growth. The teacher worked to ensure every student could progress at their own pace through equitable opportunities to practice.

5. Teaching Practices to Improve Reading Ability

Instructional approaches strongly influence student willingness to participate. The teacher used explanation, questioning, reading practice, assignments, and direct guidance—beginning with teacher modeling, followed by choral and individual reading, immediate correction of errors with correct examples, and comprehension questioning. Rahayu et al. (2023) report that shared reading followed by text-related questioning develops both fluency and information comprehension. Zahra et al. (2023) add that engaging learning media and varied methods such as read-aloud and storytelling prevent reading from feeling tedious and maintain student interest. Approaches that acknowledge individual learning characteristics prove effective in building both reading skills and sustained motivation.

6. The Relationship Between Learning Interest and Reading Ability

Findings confirm that learning interest and reading ability reinforce each other. Interested students tend to practice more frequently, whereas those with low interest require greater teacher encouragement and assistance. Yusron et al. (2024) emphasize that low interest correlates with reduced time spent reading, resulting in slower literacy development. Conversely, Fuad et al. (2021) and Yoon et al. (2026) establish that intrinsic motivation strongly predicts reading achievement and long-term habit formation. Therefore, teachers must provide appropriately leveled texts, ensure fair participation opportunities, offer recognition, and maintain an enjoyable atmosphere so both dimensions develop in tandem.

7. Challenges Faced by the Teacher

In practice, the teacher encountered wide disparities in reading proficiency—some students read fluently while others still require substantial guidance—demanding differentiated attention. Additionally, student interest fluctuated; some participated actively while others lost focus easily. Barlina & Suryani (2024) describe uneven literacy readiness among lower-grade students as a universal challenge requiring patience and differentiated instruction. Sapri et al. (2022) also note that digital device use and out-of-school influences affect concentration and reading motivation. Nonetheless, sustained guidance, encouragement, and varied activities remain essential strategies to overcome these obstacles

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the teacher plays an integrated and multifaceted role in enhancing the learning interest and reading ability of third-grade students at SD Inpres Pucuke, functioning simultaneously as educator, mentor, motivator, and facilitator. As an educator, the teacher modeled correct reading and adjusted instruction to students' abilities; as a mentor, the teacher provided individualized guidance for students experiencing reading difficulty; as a motivator, the teacher built students' confidence and enthusiasm through praise and encouragement; and as a facilitator, the teacher created opportunities for active student participation in reading and classroom discussion. Learning interest and reading ability were found to reinforce one another, so that improving one contributed to the development of the other. The main obstacles faced by the teacher were differences in reading ability among students and fluctuations in their learning interest, which required continuous, individualized attention and varied instructional strategies. These findings suggest that the success of literacy instruction in the early grades of elementary school

depends not only on the teaching method employed but also on the teacher's capacity to guide, motivate, and create a supportive learning environment. Future studies are recommended to examine the integration of structured school literacy programs with classroom-level teacher mentorship over a longer research period, in order to capture the developmental trajectory of students' reading ability more comprehensively.

6.SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research findings, teachers are expected to continue improving their role in fostering students' learning interest and reading ability through engaging literacy activities, individualized guidance, repeated reading practice, and the provision of motivation and appreciation. Students are expected to participate more actively in learning activities and develop regular reading habits both at school and at home. Furthermore, schools are encouraged to provide facilities and reading materials that support literacy activities. Future researchers are advised to conduct further studies involving a larger number of students and a longer observation period to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the teacher's role in improving elementary school students' learning interest and reading ability.

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