



## The Role of Teachers in Increasing Reading Interest of Primary Schools Through Literation in The Pandemic Time Covid-19

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**Abstract.** The implementation of education in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic has experienced several visible changes. The health crisis caused by the COVID-19 outbreak has spearheaded online learning concurrently. In this case, the role of the teacher is to guide and to help students in solving the problems which they face regarding their knowledge. Reading is a language skill that is very important in our life. Reading has an important role in giving birth to an intelligent, creative, and critical next generations. By reading, someone can get knowledge and information from all over the world. Reading is a must for individuals who instill themselves as an intellectual. The purpose of this study is to determine the role of teachers in creating literacy in Indonesian subjects. This study uses interview techniques and based on the results of the research that has been done, an effort to build reading literacy for children is through the role of the teacher. The role of the teacher to improve reading literacy is by giving rules, giving orders, giving rewards, facilitating, modeling, guiding, motivating, giving affection, and let the students free to choose their reading sources and materials.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, teacher's role, literacy, literation

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### INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is an epidemic that can cause infectious diseases in the form of infection in the human respiratory tract caused by the virus. The COVID-19 outbreak has hit the world and Indonesia became one of the countries affected by the COVID-19 outbreak on March 2, 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic that has hit the world, one of which is that Indonesia has had a visible impact in various fields, including economic, social, tourism, and education. The implementation of education in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic has experienced several visible changes. The health crisis brought about by the COVID-19 outbreak has spearheaded online learning concurrently. Online learning tsunami has occurred worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic (Goldschmidt & Msn, 2020).

Education is hampered due to this outbreak, the teaching and learning activities that are usually implemented directly every day in the school's classroom has to be stopped to prevent the spread of the virus. But the learning process should not just stop

because students must continue to study every day for the sake of educating the nation's children and future generations. Therefore, the learning process is the key to the success of education. To get a qualified learning process requires good quality service.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has established an education learning process with online and offline (direct) methods. The infrastructure supports free online learning through various online discussion rooms such as Google Classroom, WhatsApp, Smart Class, Zenius, Quipper, and Microsoft (Abidah et al., 2020). WhatsApp features include WhatsApp Group which can be used to send text messages and pictures. Google Classroom also allows educators and teachers to develop creative learning.

The Indonesian government has issued an online learning policy to prevent the spread of the transmission of the COVID-19 virus in schools, especially in classrooms. Therefore, this policy creates social restrictions and the exclusion of face-to-face learning systems



and will temporarily be replaced by online learning through several digital platforms that have been selected by the teacher and each school. In carrying out this policy which certainly brings a new face to Indonesian education, of course, there are still many obstacles in its implementation, because not all schools have ever implemented this online learning system, it's don't matter then if the teachers, students and parents/guardians of students face some obstacles in this new system. Based on the things above, writing this article is very important so that we can find out how technology, teachers, and parents play as well as the readiness of students to do an online learning system.

Online learning demands the role of the teacher to evaluate the effectiveness and adapt it to learning needs. It's important to do this to fulfill aspects of learning such as the process of knowledge, morals, skills, intelligence, and aesthetics (Dai & Lin, 2020; Zhu & Liu, 2020). Considering that changes to online learning indirectly affect the ability of students to understand (Dewi, 2020). It's important to pay attention to the communication between parents and educators to realize the learning independence of students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The teacher's role is very important to achieve the goals by what has been set. The teacher is not only in charge to teach the lesson material for their students. However, teachers also have a role to guide and train their students. The teacher as a guide has the role to help students in solving the problems they face regarding their knowledge. Reading is a language skill that is very important in our life. Reading has an important role in giving birth to an intelligent, creative, and critical next generations. By reading, someone can get knowledge and information from all over the world. Reading is a must for individuals who instill themselves as an intellectual.

The teacher rarely applies reading activities as a framework for learning. Therefore, students don't find or aren't facilitated in their literacy development so that the

literacy culture that has been dreaming of a literate generation will be very difficult to achieve. Besides the ability to read, we also cannot deny that the writing ability of the Indonesian people is still low. The Ministry of National Education (Gipayana, 2004, p. 60) revealed several survey data from (IEA) regarding the literacy of Indonesian children that around 50% of grade VI primary school students in the six provinces of the Primary Education Quality Improvement Project (PEQIP) couldn't be wrong. One of the reasons for the low reading ability of elementary school students in Indonesia is that so far students have received more memorization lessons than practice lessons, including writing.

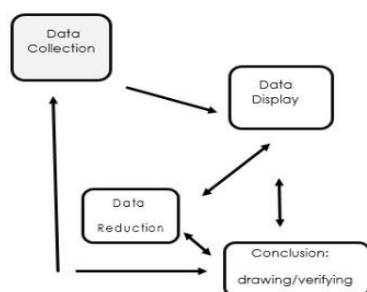
When in fact, literacy is very important in learning, this is in line with Mulyadi (Harras, 2011). Literacy awareness is important to be developed because it can make our students smart in figuring the problems out in their lives. Smart students will make our nation developed. However, when the development of their literacy skills is not supported by ideal literacy practices and environments, these students will face difficulties in improving their literacy skills. Hanggi (2016) states that reading literacy can be a tool for students to recognize, understand, and apply the knowledge they gained in school. Basic literacy, including reading literacy, should be instilled in basic education (Ristanto, Zubaidah, Amin & Rochman, 2017). This is necessary so that students can improve their abilities to access information or knowledge. Literacy will lead students to understand a message (Hernowo, 2003). The importance of literacy is also expressed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2016) that the literacy culture embedded in students affects the level of success and the ability of students to understand information analytically, critically, and reflectively.

Referring to the statement that has been described above states that the role of literacy is very influential on the intelligence of students, especially when the COVID-19 outbreak is currently hitting the world, there is a lot of important information that students must know, whether it's news through the news on TV, newspapers,

internet, social media, and many more. It must be embedded in students to have a high reading interest to find out a lot of very useful information. Starting from having a high reading interest then being interested in reading and knowing the contents of the reading until finally being able to read and understand the meaning of the reading content, then the literacy process is ongoing until finally making students broad with the insights and information they have obtained through reading which they have read and understood. Based on the background described above, the researcher intended to do a study entitled "The role of teachers in increasing reading interest in elementary school students through literacy during the COVID-19 pandemic."

## METHODS

This study is using qualitative research. The method used is the case study method. The participants of this study were 5 pairs of parents in Majalaya Village, Majalaya District, and Bandung Regency. The data collection techniques used were observation and interviews. The research instruments used were interview guidelines, observation guidelines, WhatsApp. The analysis technique used in this study is the data analysis technique of Miles and Huberman. The stages were data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion: drawing / verifying. These stages are depicted in the image below.



**Figure 1.** Data Analysis method adapted from Miles and Huberman, Saldana (2014)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before the COVID-19 pandemic entered Indonesia, the online learning system had been implemented and promoted by the government in several schools, especially schools in the capital city have been implemented an online-based learning system. However, when the pandemic entered Indonesia, the government was forced to adopt a policy that all schools are required to carry out teaching and learning activities online and non-face-to-face. This policy was decided by the government as an effort to prevent the increasing number of positive cases of COVID-19 massively which of course disturbed the Indonesian people (Syaharuddin, 2020). Reflecting on this policy, of course, the inequality of the quality of Indonesian education is the main obstacle to the implementation of this policy, because the readiness of students who go to school in urban areas is very different from students who go to school in rural areas and depends on the economic background of students.

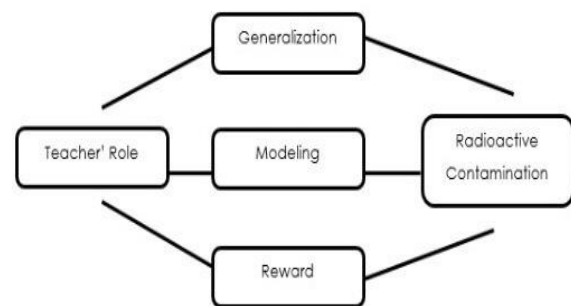
Technology is the most important thing in the online learning method, these technologies can include smartphones, laptops, and other supporting objects. Smartphones/gadgets are the most commonly used by students than laptops because they are more practical and have many advanced features (Subiyakto, B., Susanto, H., & Akmal, H., 2019). Online learning that is held by most teachers and students also uses several interesting digital platforms and of course, it is very helpful to increase the learning effectiveness of students during this pandemic. Some of these digital platforms are Google Class Room, E-Learning, Edmodo, Zoom, and Google Meet. The most famous ones are Google Class Room and Google Meet because they are known to be easy to access, their simple appearance, and of course, the uses of internet data are more economical than other discussion and video conferencing applications. The use of technology as a source of information, learning resources, systems, and service quality has had a positive impact during this pandemic, and most are beneficial for the online learning process (Abbas, EW, 2019). But still, we can't

close our eyes that there are still many students who have middle to lower economic backgrounds and don't have supporting technology devices such as laptops/smartphones. Also, the fate of students who live in rural areas is must be worried, because of course the inadequate network facilities and the level of understanding of students in rural areas are still low about the use of online learning applications. Besides using typical applications for learning activities, teachers and students also usually use the WhatsApp application because it's considered easier than the others. Of the list of applications that have been mentioned, the WhatsApp application is the one that can be used more easily in rural villages, as long as there is an internet network, this application does not require slow loading and doesn't take up a lot of internet data.

The role of the teachers in teaching and learning activities is very influential, the teachers must think about how the learning went well even just with distance learning that has been set by the government. DE or distance learning can be implemented anywhere and anytime. The role of the teachers is a complete entity. It's just that sometimes tasks and functions are aligned as a description of roles. The teacher's roles are as an educator, instructor, guide, director, trainer, assessor, and evaluator of students. The teacher's roles are very important to achieve the goals by what has been set. The teacher is not only in charge to teach the lesson material for their students. However, teachers also have a role to guide and train their students. The teacher as a guide has the role to help students in solving the problems they face regarding their knowledge. Reading is a language skill that is very important in our life. Reading has an important role in giving birth to an intelligent, creative, and critical next generations. By reading, someone can get knowledge and information from all over the world. Reading is a must for individuals who instill themselves as an intellectual.

The purpose of this study was to determine the role of teachers in creating literacy in Indonesian lessons. This study uses

interview techniques and based on the results of the research that has been done, that efforts to build reading literacy in children are through the role of the teacher. The role of the teacher to improve reading literacy is by giving rules, giving orders, giving rewards, facilitating, modeling, guiding, motivating, giving affection, and let the students free to choose their reading sources and materials. In the pandemic era, the way teachers give assignments is via WhatsApp application, in groups chat that has been created for each class. Every day students must be sure to learn at home by being given assignments. Based on the research results, the teacher's schemes in increasing reading interest in elementary school students through literacy during the COVID-19 pandemic are as follows:



**Figure 1.** Scheme of the teacher's role in improving students reading literacy. Based on the picture above, an interview was done to find out the student's perspective regarding activities to increase student interest in reading through literacy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The teacher's role in building student's reading literacy awareness is through habituation, modeling, and reward. These three elements are essential things that teachers must do, especially for improving children's reading literacy. It's true if it will be difficult to implement and to control student's learning in this pandemic era, but teachers must be able to ensure that students are doing their best effort at home, but most students at home usually find it hard to study with their parents, so the teachers must always remind and motivate



the students so that the learning process every day always went well.

Before students practice learning at home, of course, students must have a sense of interest in learning, and the first key or the beginning of learning is reading because by reading students become aware, increase the knowledge, and also be able to understand the content of the reading they read. Student's reading interest can be built through literacy activities that are often implemented as for the definition of literacy based on Abidin (2017), literacy is the ability to use language and images in rich and diverse forms for reading, writing, listening, speaking, seeing, presenting, and thinking critically about ideas. According to Saleh (2017), literacy information is the ability to know when there's a need for information, to identify, find, evaluate, and effectively use the information for the issue or existing problem, and according to the American Library Association (ALA), literacy information is a set of abilities a person needs to realize when information is needed and the ability to place, evaluate & use the needed information effectively. This is the same with Sari (2017) Mastery of literacy by Indonesia's young generation is the main capital to build the nation. By reading books, student's knowledge will be increased, smarter, and good in communication. Both, verbal or written. However, along with the development of digital technology, literacy culture can't only be done by reading from books, it can also read from online books in PDF form. Based on the results of an interview with one of the teachers, he has implemented literacy which is done online where the learning process is proceeded by sharing the reading material to students in the WhatsApp group than when they read the reading material they must have to send a video when they're reading and give their opinion about what is the main content of the reading is, in that way the teacher can always control student literacy activities even though the learning process is done online. The same thing was also said by Akbar (2017) who argued that literacy programs need to be cultivated and developed in all elementary schools so that students can get used to finding information that is related to

the learning. This program activates students in learning from their surroundings actively so that learning becomes meaningful. This literacy program can also foster student motivation to learn and develop student character such as being brave, critical, creative, honest, and increasing student's sensitivity to the surrounding environment.

In general, when students are at home or not in the school environment, it will be more difficult for students if teachers not given orders to learn or there are no tasks to do, students will only learn when there is something to be done, therefore there must be a child's reason for learning. From the results of the interviews, the answers show that the teacher must be the student's reason for learning because some parents say students will always follow the teacher's orders even though they are not facing to face but always obey what the teacher says and do the assignments given every day. But the learning process will not be good if students don't know the source of the reading. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic like this, their learning resources became more limited, students had to learn independently to find out something. So, the teacher must always give useful reading sources for children so that they can increase their knowledge and insight even at home.

The habit of reading is also applied by teachers during this pandemic because books are the source of knowledge, so students must have a high interest in reading. Therefore, literacy activities must become one of the habits that are implemented in schools continuously which is usually the literacy done in schools' school and now can be done at each home with the supervision of each class teacher with the help of supervision from parents at home. Especially for low-grade students who still need supervision. By being accustomed to reading students, there will be a lot of knowledge that they get which previously they don't know. They also can increase their knowledge, focus, and concentration on learning, also find new words, and train their skills to think and analyze something



Reading activities that were implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic can be done by online literacy, students read every day with the materials that have been prepared by their class teachers for a predetermined period or with reading targets that students must understand the contents of what they reading about. To be able to control the literacy activities that are done by students, the teacher can ask for videos of students while doing the literacy and it may be done by Zoom, Google Meet, or others supporting social media platform. However, to remember that children of primary school age generally don't have supporting technology learning tools such as laptops there may also share with people in their home alternating with their brothers, sisters, or even their parents. Most elementary school students might not in their enough age to have a mobile phone moreover for lower age students, it will be more effective if only sending videos via WhatsApp containing conclusions from the contents of the reading, so that the teacher can find out that students have implemented literacy and can also assess how the student's point of view is in response or capture the main content of the reading that has been determined.

To get the students to be more enthusiastic, of course, there must be a motivation to read so that it does not feel bored, there is nothing wrong with the teacher giving rewards or prizes to students who are considered to have done the best literacy activities so that students will be more interested and also enthusiastic in doing literacy activities, not only to get prizes but the students certainly had a benefit from the literacy activity itself. Rewards given to students can be in the form of online achievement boards made by the teacher to collect star points, so who gets the most stars from the teacher when the final result will be given a set of learning tools or other prizes that prepared by the teacher which can later be given when the COVID-19 outbreaks are gone and when the country stated safe from the virus, so the learning process can be done face-to-face and normal learning as usual.

## CONCLUSION

The teacher has a big role in advancing the world of education because the teacher is one of the sources of student learning. During this COVID-19 pandemic, teachers must be able to adapt to the learning programs set by the government during the COVID-19 pandemic. In that way, teachers are required to be able to plan and design online learning through social media such as WhatsApp, zoom, google meet, and others. By utilizing the internet network and applying online learning methods (in the network) the learning can be continued even though it is not implemented as usual when people meet face-to-face at school every day. Of course, learning activities will also feel very different from usual, therefore the teacher must be able to create a learning atmosphere that can motivate students to always do their best effort at home to study even though learning activities are done in their own home, also the teacher must be able to increase student's reading interest in the reading books or books sources because the knowledge of learning certainly comes from these reading books and reading sources beside from teachers who can't directly share the sciences with students when the COVID-19 pandemic spreads in Indonesia. Reading activities through literacy that are always held in schools must still be done even though students are learning from their home because with literacy students will always get new knowledge from the reading sources that they read every day. And hopefully, literacy activities can help students to improve the quality of learning even though they don't get the knowledge directly from their teachers.

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