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## Optimization of Literacy Clinic Empowerment: An Efforts to Improve Teachers' Ability in Dealing with High Grade Students Who Have Difficulties in Reading

Asep Nurjamin<sup>1\*</sup>, Lina Siti Nurwahidah<sup>1</sup>, Fajar Nugraha<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Indonesian Institute of Education, Garut, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>University of Garut, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author: [asep5nurjamin@institutpendidikan.ac.id](mailto:asep5nurjamin@institutpendidikan.ac.id)

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### Abstract

One of the learning problems experienced by high school teachers is the difficulty of teaching students who have difficulty reading. This problem often makes teachers helpless. Therefore, a training program entitled "Optimizing the Empowerment of Literacy Clinics" was carried out for two days on June 4-5, 2024, which was attended by eighty-two fifth-grade high school teachers. The main objective of this training is to empower teachers in providing support and guidance to students who have difficulty reading through "literacy clinics", so that they are able to provide appropriate and sustainable interventions. The training materials are very necessary and effective in improving the reading skills of high school students who have difficulty reading. The success of the training can be seen from the high attendance of participants, good absorption of the material, and the preparation of logical and measurable follow-up plans by all participants. The results of the program evaluation showed significant achievement of objectives. Further recommendations include in-depth evaluation, further training, external collaboration, and dissemination of best practices to increase the impact of the program in the future.

**Keywords:** Teacher ability, Literacy training, Student empowerment, positive reactions, and students with reading difficulties

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### INTRODUCTION

Early reading difficulties in high school students are a problem that can have a negative impact on the learning process and student learning outcomes. Through reading, students can find new information and expand their knowledge. They can also learn about themselves and their culture, as well as recognize others, and they can investigate textual messages included in reading. (Ginanjari, Nugraha, and Nurhasanah 2022) .

This reality is truly very unpleasant (Mulyati and Hadiano 2022) . However, from various discussions with teachers who teach in grades four, five and six, bitter experiences for teachers have always been revealed. Almost every year they have to accept the bitter reality, namely students who cannot read. Their reactions vary. There are teachers who seriously think about and look for a way out to help their students get out of this difficulty. There are also those who don't think too much about it and let them catch up on their own. The latter is not a good attitude.

This challenge requires a comprehensive and sustainable approach to improving students' reading skills (Nurjamin, Eli, et al. 2023) . In this context, the community service program entitled "Optimizing the Empowerment of Literacy Clinics" aims to raise teachers' awareness of the importance of helping students out of their difficulties. Teachers must view this problem as part of their duties, not just blaming the teacher who taught in the previous class. Furthermore, through this training, it is hoped that teachers will become sensitive and can direct them to efforts to find effective solutions.

Considering the complexity of the problem of reading difficulties of high-grade students, it is important to empower teachers as the spearhead in supporting the solution of this problem (Sukovieff and Kruk 2021) . The training provided to teachers will not only equip them with the latest knowledge and skills in assisting students with reading difficulties, but also encourage them to become active

agents of change in designing inclusive learning strategies and providing individualized guidance to students.

Research on “literacy clinics” that has been conducted shows that this facility has given positive results (Yunita Anindya, Suneki, and Purnamasari 2019) . “The growth of writing, reading, and arithmetic skills that focus on literacy is a successful therapeutic approach because the learning environment is very thematic, contextual, and known by the learning community.” (Nurwahidah 2016)

By providing training to teachers to optimize the "literacy clinic" in their schools, as a vehicle to help students with reading difficulties, foster reading skills, and improve the reading skills of high-grade students (Nurjamin, Masita, et al. 2023) . This training is expected to provide a broader, sustainable, and beneficial impact in improving literacy and student learning achievement at the high-grade level .

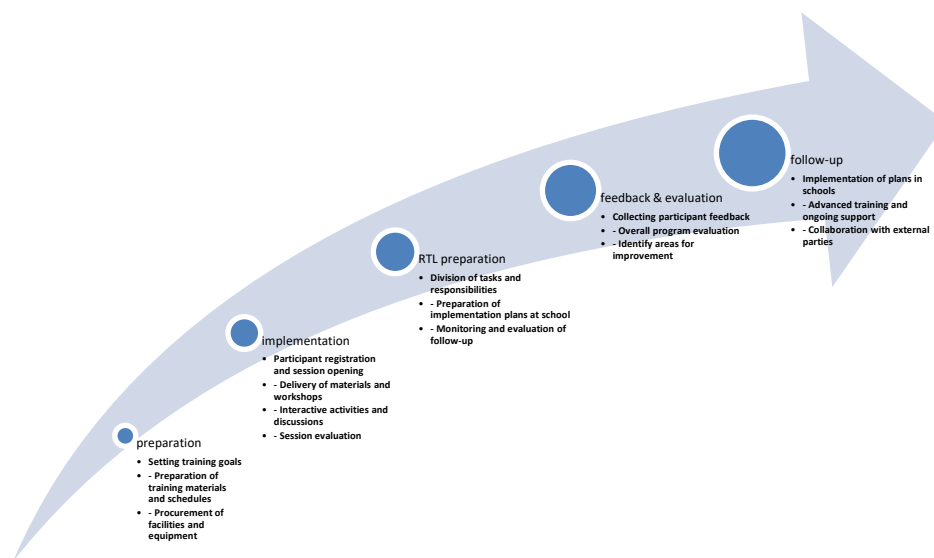
## METHODS

The objectives of the activity "Optimizing Literacy Clinic Empowerment: Efforts to Improve Early Reading Skills in High School Students with Reading Difficulties" are: first, to improve early reading skills in high school students who have reading difficulties through an effective literacy clinic approach. Second, to empower teachers in providing support and guidance to students who have reading difficulties, so that they are able to provide appropriate and sustainable interventions. Third, to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment in schools, so that students feel supported in overcoming reading difficulties. Fourth, to stimulate interest in reading in high school students through an interactive and interesting literacy clinic program. Fifth, to improve the learning achievement of high school students by improving their early reading skills through a targeted and sustainable literacy clinic empowerment program.

The main target of this training is fifth grade teachers in Garut Regency, who are involved in educating high grade students who have difficulty reading. By providing training to teachers, it is hoped that they can become agents of change who are able to provide effective guidance, intervention, and support to students who need help in improving their early reading skills. Teachers will be trained to implement learning methods and strategies that are appropriate to the needs of each student, so that they can help them overcome challenges in reading better.

In addition, through training for fifth grade teachers, this program also aims to expand their knowledge in the field of literacy, improve skills in identifying reading problems, and provide appropriate solutions according to the characteristics and conditions of students. Thus, the main target of this training is fifth grade teachers in Garut Regency who have a key role in supporting the progress of high-grade students who have difficulty reading through empowering literacy clinics.

This activity was held on June 4-5, 2024 at the Harmoni Hotel, Jalan Cipanas Baru Tarogong Kaler Garut.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The increasing ability of teachers in optimizing the empowerment of literacy clinics so that they will be ready to face high-class students who have difficulty reading is proof of the success of this training.

Positive reactions from the evaluation of the results of the activities indicate the success and effectiveness of the "Optimization of Literacy Clinic Empowerment" training program in achieving the goals that have been set. The following is a further analysis based on the positive evaluation.

First, the achievement of objectives. Evaluations that show the achievement of objectives confirm that the training program is able to provide the desired impact in improving teachers' abilities in optimizing literacy clinics in their respective schools. This achievement is expected to reduce the number of students with reading difficulties which will have an impact on the smoothness of learning programs in high classes that involve a lot of reading and writing skills.

Second, training materials are very necessary. The assessment that training materials are considered very necessary shows that the content delivered is relevant to the needs of the participants. This indicates that the selection of training materials is appropriate and in accordance with the problems faced.

Third, the implementation assessed by participants was very good. Positive assessments of the implementation of the training program indicate that the entire training process, from preparation to implementation, has been carried out well and professionally.

Fourth, high participant attendance. The very high attendance of participants on the first and second days reflects the high enthusiasm and seriousness of participants in participating in the training, thus increasing the effectiveness and interactivity of the program.

Fifth, the material absorption capacity is very high. The high level of material absorption capacity shows that participants are able to understand and apply the knowledge gained during the training into the context of their daily practices.

Sixth, the follow-up plans made by the participants are logical and measurable. The success of all participants in compiling logical and measurable follow-up plans indicates that they are able to apply the concepts and strategies learned in the training program into concrete and implementable follow-up plans.

With very positive evaluation results, it can be concluded that the "Optimization of Literacy Clinic Empowerment" training program has succeeded in providing significant benefits in improving the reading skills of high-class students who have difficulty reading through a comprehensive and innovative literacy approach.

Success and achievement of goals are important moments to celebrate the success of the implementation of activities and the achievement of goals that have been set. This activity has succeeded in achieving its initial goal of improving the reading skills of high-class students who have difficulty reading through an effective literacy clinic approach.

Considerations for future improvement. Although the activity went well, there is always room for improvement in the future. Reflection on the implementation process, participant responses, and the effectiveness of the training materials can provide valuable insights to improve the quality of the training program in future activities.

The participants of the activity gave their appreciation to the entire implementing team, speakers, participants, and related parties for their contribution and cooperation in the success of this training. Based on feedback from participants, it is known that this training activity has shown the success of the training materials provided and the extent to which the materials are useful for their learning practices at school.

Based on the benefits felt from this training, the participants considered it necessary and important to conduct further training or deepen certain materials to strengthen and maintain teachers' abilities in supporting the implementation of literacy programs in their schools. Thus, a plan and follow-up steps are needed to ensure that the knowledge and skills obtained in this training can be applied "literacy clinic" well in daily practice so that the benefits are truly felt.

By conducting in-depth reflection and listening to feedback from participants, activity implementers can continue to improve the quality of literacy training programs in the future and provide a greater impact in meeting the literacy needs of high-grade students who have difficulty reading.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the "Optimization of Literacy Clinic Empowerment" training program held on June 4-5, 2024 has provided very positive and satisfying results.

The training program successfully achieved its stated objectives, namely improving teachers' ability to deal with high-grade students who have difficulty reading through optimizing literacy clinics in helping students who have difficulty reading, fostering literacy skills, and improving the reading skills of high-grade students who have difficulty reading through a holistic and effective literacy approach. The training materials were also considered very necessary and relevant by the participating teachers, so that they were able to provide a deep understanding of literacy strategies and early reading skills.

In terms of implementation, this training program is considered very good and professional, showing commitment and dedication in organizing activities effectively. This is evident in the very high attendance of participants and the high absorption of materials reflecting the enthusiasm and sincerity of the participants in participating in the training program. In addition, all participants succeeded in compiling a logical and measurable follow-up plan, indicating that they are ready to implement the knowledge gained in daily practice.

Thus, this training program can be considered as a successful step in improving the quality of learning for high-grade students who have difficulty reading. Hopefully, the number of students who experience obstacles in reading will be reduced. The key to the success of this program is the collaboration between the presenters, organizers, and participants in creating an effective and supportive learning environment. It is hoped that the positive results of this program can be sustainable and have a wider positive impact on the world of literacy and education.

Some recommendations that can be submitted include the following. First, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the training program, including materials, learning methods, and quality of implementation to continue to improve and develop the program in the future. Second, provide regular follow-up training or workshops for participants so that they can continue to hone their skills and knowledge in implementing literacy strategies. Third, collaboration with external parties is needed (Nurjamin 2019). Cooperate with literacy institutions or education experts to bring new perspectives and updates to the training program. It is also necessary to facilitate an experience exchange forum by creating an *online or offline communication forum or discussion group* so that participants can continue to exchange experiences and support each other in implementing literacy programs in their respective schools.

By implementing these recommendations, it is hoped that literacy training programs can continue to develop, provide greater impact, and create a literate and inclusive learning environment for all students.

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