

## **OPTIMIZING READING SKILL OF FIRST GRADE STUDENTS BY ONLINE LEARNING**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to examine the efforts of teachers in optimizing the reading skill of first grade elementary school students during the pandemic, examine the responses of teachers and parents, and examine the difficulties experienced by teachers and parents in teaching students to read during the pandemic. The research method used is the case study method. The research instruments used were documentation, observation sheets and interviews. The results of this study are the first teacher's efforts in optimizing the reading skill of 1st grade elementary school students during the pandemic is to create a "reading motivation" group with the method of reading a book "read" one day one page that is shared every day in the group. Second, the response of parents is that they feel that the group is a solution to reading problems, motivates students to be more active in learning to read, and it can be facilitates students' to manage their time. Third, the difficulty experienced by teachers is Hard to communicate with students or hard to motivate students directly, parents who have work activities outside the home so that it is difficult to teach children. The difficulties experienced by parents were obtained using an interview instrument using the google form platform.

**Keywords :** First Grade Students, Online Learning, Reading Skill,

### **INTRODUCTION**

The COVID-19 pandemic for the past 2 years has had an impact on the world of education in Indonesia. The learning that was originally all face-to-face, turned into online learning. At first, all the people involved in the world of education, namely teachers, students, parents, and the community complained about the conditions of learning that had to be carried out online. But nevertheless, health is the most important thing that the government pays attention to to prevent the spread of covid-19 among teachers and students at schools who in fact carry out the learning process by gathering every day. Regardless of the existing complaints, teachers can take lessons from the existence of covid-19 where learning must be able to adapt to 21st century learning that uses more technology. One of these is learning that was originally conventional (face to face) replaced with online learning (Handarini and Wulandari, 2020).

Online learning is defined as a knowledge transfer experience using video, audio, images, text communication, software using the internet network (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). Online learning requires supporting facilities that make it easier for students to carry out the

learning process. In this digital era, various online media are now available that can be used to support online learning and can be accessed for free through various discussion rooms such as Google Classroom, Whatsapp , Smart Class, Zenius, Quipper and Microsoft (Abidah, 2020). Whatsapp features include Whatsapp Groups which can be used to send text messages, video images and files in various formats to all members. Discussion and transfer of knowledge face-to-face is like meeting through various video teleconference platforms that are widely available for free, such as Zoom, Google Meet, or WhatsApp video calls.

Online learning greatly facilitates the transfer of information in various situations and conditions. The various benefits of the ease of online learning are supported by various platforms ranging from discussions to virtual face-to-face. However, the various benefits obtained, of course, have obstacles that are felt by both teachers and students reading. For students who have not been able to read, they cannot understand the commands in the book and have difficulty understanding the lessons given by the teacher. Reading problems during the pandemic in first grade students occurred due to several factors, including when students attended Kindergarten (TK) education they studied online, lack of parental attention, the low skill of parents to teach their children to learn to read at home, and so. Rachim (Hapsari, 2019) suggesting that there are several factors that can affect a person's reading skill, namely from psychological factors, motivation, interest, and socioeconomic maturity, as well as self-adjustment. Therefore the role of the teacher is very important to be able to motivate students.

Thus, teachers must make efforts so that children can read. However, there are several stages that must be possessed by students in order to be able to read, including the initial reading stage. The initial reading stage is very important to teach because at the initial reading stage, students learn to acquire reading skills and techniques and capture the contents of the reading well. Therefore, teachers must be able to design online learning well in order to be able to cultivate reading habits as something fun. The purpose of this study was to obtain information about how teachers' efforts are in optimizing the reading skills of 1st grade elementary school students through online learning.

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Online learning is a modification of knowledge transfer through website forums (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020) and digital technology trends as a hallmark of the industrial revolution 4.0 to support learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Technology integration and a variety of innovations are characteristics of online learning (Banggur, 2018). In addition, the most important thing is the readiness of teachers and students to interact online. Furthermore, (Dewi, 2020) online learning is a learning process that utilizes the internet network. In this learning process, students can have flexibility in learning because it can be done anywhere. However, with the implementation of online learning from home, teachers are required to be more innovative, and creative in compiling the learning steps that will be carried out. This change in learning paradigm certainly makes teachers and students have to adapt from face-to-face learning in class to online learning (Mastuti et al, 2020).

Online learning is one of the 21st century learning that uses technology in learning. Online learning involves many platforms in its implementation. However, the success of online learning still has to be an in-depth study by policy makers and education implementers. This is because the online learning process requires the support of various mobile devices such as smartphones, laptops, tablets, and other items that can be used to access information anytime and anywhere in online learning (Suhendra et al. , 2020).

The amount of online learning platforms does not necessarily make it easier for teachers and students to carry coordinate to did online learning by using familiar platforms for students and parents. Because it takes a long time to learn various online learning platforms , especially with different parental backgrounds, it can certainly be an obstacle in implementing online learning. Therefore, teachers, students, and parents must coordinate to attend online learning with online learning platforms that are familiar to students and parents. If the students use easy online learning platforms then they will be able to attend the learning process with parental guidance. One of the platforms used by teachers is a social media whatsapp (Kasanah et al. , 2020). Whatsapp is an alternative for teachers and students in carrying out the online learning process. All learning platforms are good but it depends on the teacher's strategy in using the platform . So, teachers can combine the use of the WhatsApp platform with other online learning platforms in the online learning process to make it run well.

Reading is an activity carried out to gain knowledge and new experiences (Sunarti, 2018). Knowledge and new experience gained when doing reading activities. We understand that the skill to read is very important to be learned by students from elementary school age. The skill to read needs to be developed because it really supports the learning process carried out by students, so that students are able to learn the various subjects they are studying. Aminah and Yuliawati (2018) revealed that reading skill affects students' learning process abilities, because the learning process involves reading skills. Reading is an important factor for students to learn all subjects at school, because with good reading skills it really supports the student learning process so it is easier to understand what is conveyed by the teacher. Tarigan (Aisyah et al., 2020) Reading is one of the four language skills, namely: reading, writing, speaking, listening skills. Each of these skills is closely related to the other three skills in various ways. In acquiring language skills, we usually go through an orderly relationship: first, in childhood, we learn to read and write. Listening and speaking we learn from home, while reading and writing we learn from school.

Some people think that reading is very easy. In fact, that's an expression that needs to be questioned. The reading skill of each student is certainly very different, there are students who quickly learn both letters, syllables, words, and sentences just by providing reading lessons in a short time. However, there are also students who of course read slowly, even in class II and class III, they can only read fluently. There are even students whose reading skill is so low that only in grade IV, grade V, or grade VI can read fluently. The skill to read is not easily learned by students with different backgrounds and abilities. This is in line with what Havisa et al said. (2021) Reading skill is often a problem for teachers in carrying out learning, especially in grade I SD because the majority of students have low reading skills. Reading has a big effect on students' skill to receive subject matter, especially text-based learning, students who are not able to read well will have difficulty participating in learning activities for all subjects. The above is in line with the opinion of Sunarti (2018) that reading is a unique and complicated activity, so one cannot do it without learning it, especially elementary school-aged children who are new to letters or words.

Reading is one type of receptive written language skill, because by reading someone will gain new experiences, information, and knowledge. Everything that is obtained through reading will allow the person to be able to sharpen his views, broaden his horizons, and heighten the power of his mind (Irdawati, 2017). According to Solchan (Hapsari, 2019) early reading is an skill that prioritizes basic reading skills, namely literacy skills. The purpose of

literacy is that students can change and pronounce written sound symbols into meaningful sounds. The next skill is to improve reading skills at the discourse literacy stage. This stage is said to be the true skill stage because students can change written symbols into meaningful sounds accompanied by understanding. Various efforts have been made by the teacher so that students can understand signs or symbols in reading. Efforts towards understanding are related to the reading method used.

Iskandar (2021) said if the purpose of reading is to recognize language symbols or symbols, recognize words and sentences, find main ideas and key words, retell the contents of short readings. The purpose of reading according to the 2013 curriculum is reflected in basic competencies, learning outcomes, and indicators of reading and writing aspects for class I. The competency standards for reading aspects in elementary schools are students are able to read and understand short texts by reading fluently (voice) and read aloud a few simple sentences. In line with Abidin's opinion (Pratiwi, 2020) states, reading is an activity carried out to obtain information contained in a reading material. By reading will get an understanding of the contents of the reading.

Ayunia (2021) mentions the stages in forming good students' reading skills , namely sensory, perceptual, experience, thinking, and attitude. To support the reading skills of elementary school students from school, it is necessary to provide facilities and infrastructure in the form of student books, worksheets, and other story books that each student can take home. (Hapsari, 2019) Students are introduced to symbols and sound symbols. The next step is to present words whose meanings are recognized by students. Students then arrange the words into sentences. In connection with the explanation above, the reading activity that becomes the focus when children enter elementary school is early reading. Early reading atau beginning reading is the initial stage of students learning to read. Reading skill is part of 4 language skills which consist of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Syatauw, GR, Solehun, S., & Rumaf, N, (2020) said reading is the initial stage of children in the process of learning to read. Beginning reading as a basic reading skill for students and a tool for students to find out knowledge. In line with this,

Mustikawati (2015) also said that early reading is the initial stage of children in the process of learning to read for early grade elementary school students. Furthermore, Rahim (Badu and Saleh, 2018) said that early reading was taught in the early grades, namely in grades I, II and III. The emphasis on reading for grades I and II is the perceptual process, namely the introduction of a series of letters and sounds of simple language, while the process of

understanding a meaning of what is read (meaning) is carried out in advanced learning in high grade. Based on the explanation above, it can be seen the importance of reading skills as part of language skills as the initial capital for students to learn various subjects taught at school. The first thing that students must learn when entering elementary school is the skill to read beginning. Teachers should try their best to make the best efforts in learning to read beginning students in elementary schools by using various strategies, methods, and media that vary in order to make it easier for students to learn to read early as the basis for learning reading skills at a later stage at a higher grade level. .

## **METHOD**

This study used the case study method. According to Cresswell (1989) a case study is an exploration of a bounded system or a case/various cases over time through in-depth data collection and involving various sources of rich information in one context. This bound system is bound by time and place while cases can be studied from a program, event, activity or an individual. This study is a descriptive study that aims to describe the efforts made by teachers in improving the quality of reading skills in elementary school students in grade I through online learning.

Data collection in this study used research instruments in the form of documentation in the form of daily reading deposit reports, research results, archive records consisting of a list of names, personal records, and interview sheets for grade 1 teachers and students' parents, as well as observation sheets. The form of data analysis and its interpretation in this case study research, namely category collection, the researcher The researcher collected data to find a case that relevant with reading problems

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

This study aims to find out how the efforts of teachers, parents' responses, and the difficulties experienced by teachers and parents in optimizing reading skills in grade I elementary school during the pandemic. Research data obtained from observations and interviews. The data consists of data on teacher efforts, parental responses and difficulties experienced by teachers and parents. From the results of data analysis, it is known that the teacher's efforts in optimizing the reading skill of class I SDN Leuwigajah 5 during the

pandemic is to create a "one day one page" strategy with the media book "read" in the "reading motivation" group. The group was created with the aim of classifying and monitoring students who cannot read yet. To determine the students' reading skill, an observation stage was initially held using the WhatsApp video call media . Here is a document on the “one day one page” strategy and the “ready spirit” group.



Figure 1. Documentation of the “reading motivation” group selection stage



Figure 2. Documentation of daily reading deposit reports



**Figure 3.** WhatsApp groups as daily reading deposit media

The response of parents to the "reading motivation" group was obtained by using an interview instrument using the google form platform . Based on the analysis of the results of the interviews, it shows Based on interview, the parents felt if reading motivation group help students to gain their reading motivation. This group also helped students to train their time management in studying. Result of interview showed below.

Apakah dengan adanya grup "Semangat Membaca" dapat menjadi solusi dari kendala yang dialami?

Alhamdulillah ada solusi yang di dapat..karena membuat anak lebih semangat bahwa ada setoran baca kepada guru nya

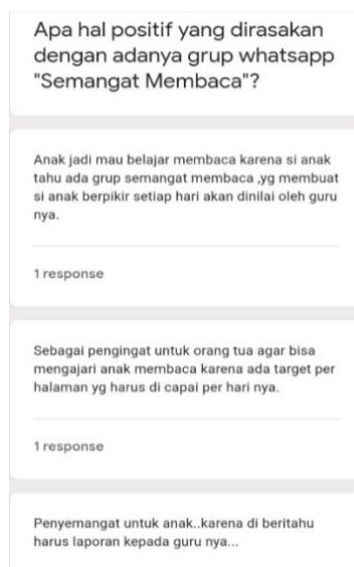
1 response

Bisa membantu anak untuk mau disiplin waktu belajar membaca setiap hari

1 response

**Figure 4.** Documentation of parental interviews regarding the "Reading motivation" group

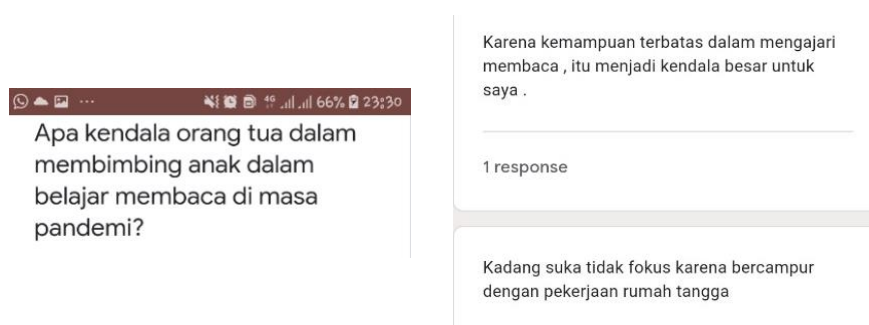




**Figure 5.** Documentation of the results of parental interviews regarding the positives of the “reading motivation” group

The difficulties experienced by the teacher were obtained using direct interview instruments. The teachers found online leaning difficulties to gain reading motivation is they can not teach reading directly to students’ whose parents were working. It makes a teacher to always make communication with parents.

The next finding of difficulties were the students can not manage their time to read because their parents does not control their activities. It makes the students can not did ‘reading motivation’ program. The difficulties experienced by teachers are parents who are busy outside the home, children who do not want to be disciplined in time to learn to read, limited skill of parents to teach their children to read, and parents who do not focus on teaching their children to read because of various kinds of busyness at home. .



**Figure 6.** The results of parent interviews regarding the obstacles in guiding children to learn to read during the pandemic

## Discussion

Based on the research results that have been described previously, it can be discussed that environmental factors are one of the factors that have a major influence on students' reading skills. For students who have low reading skills, most teachers overcome this by providing special guidance to these students. This special guidance is in the form of a one-page reading deposit per day through a special group. At each meeting to find out the extent of student activity in reading or studying. The teacher gives an evaluation according to the material discussed that day.

For the effectiveness of the learning process from home, the teacher works closely with parents in guiding and supervising student activities at home. Because teachers also need ongoing support regarding teaching reading comprehension (Ness, 2011). Parental involvement can be in the form of providing tutoring, always giving advice, providing motivation, meeting the needs of their children, and providing supervision. Parental involvement is included in the environmental factors that affect students' reading skills. In addition, good communication between teachers and parents is needed in the learning process of beginning reading. This is in accordance with what was expressed by Vinet & Zhedanov (Walimah, 2021) The role of teacher and parent communication has a strong enough influence on the early reading skill of elementary school students in grade 1. Teacher communication is an activity carried out in sharing information from one place, to another. people or groups. Communication between teachers and parents in learning to read beginning will be a bridge for students to be able to learn basic reading skills.

The efforts of teachers in teaching reading skills during the current pandemic are slightly different from the learning process before the pandemic hit. What distinguishes it is the method used by the teacher is more dominant in giving assignments to students. Because learning time with direct teacher guidance is very little. So to control students doing independent learning activities at home, teachers work around this by providing continuous assignments.

The results of this study can be concluded that the teacher's efforts in teaching elementary school students' reading skills during the pandemic are the teachers create a "reading motivation" group facility with the one-page one-day deposit method, provide motivation, praise, to students and parents, provide evaluations at every meeting, cultivate literacy at the beginning of learning, and provide facilities and infrastructure that support

students' reading skills . This is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Fauziah (2018), the teacher's efforts to develop reading skills, initial writing include providing additional tutoring, providing reading books, making good use of study time, dictating students, using spell-reading and fluent reading methods. , provide motivation, provide rewards, provide guidance and supervision, invite to the library, and provide an assessment.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the study and discussion in this qualitative study, it can be concluded that the teacher's effort in optimizing the reading skill of 1st grade elementary school students during the pandemic is to create a "ready spirit" group with the method of reading "read" books one page a day which is shared every day in the group. The response of parents to the "reading motivation" group was obtained by using an interview instrument using the google form platform . Based on the analysis of the results of the interviews, it shows that the parents' response is to feel that the group is a solution to reading problems, motivates students to be more active in learning to read, and can also be a means of discipline in learning time.

The difficulties experienced by teachers are the difficulty of communicating or teaching students to learn to read directly, parents who have activities working outside the home so that it is difficult to teach children. This makes teachers to further improve communication with parents. The difficulties experienced by parents were obtained using an interview instrument using the google form platform. The difficulties experienced by teachers are parents who are busy outside the home, children who do not want to be disciplined in time to learn to read, limited skill of parents to teach their children to read, and parents who do not focus on teaching their children to read because of various kinds of busyness at home.

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