

## READING MATTERS: ENHANCING LITERACY IN THE CLASSROOM

*by:*

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Reading is the base of all learning. It is a skill that is important every day. A student who can read well understands information better and is more successful in school and life. Reading allows people to gather information, think clearly, communicate effectively, and take part in society. In the classroom, good reading skills help students learn in all subjects, such as English, Science, Mathematics, and Technology. This means that reading is something that teachers, parents, and the community all have a role in supporting.

Based on the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022, less than 25% of students have reached a basic level of reading proficiency.

This shows that there is a need for better reading support. However, many students have trouble reading because they are not exposed to enough books, especially in today's digital world. Other challenges include a lack of interest, learning gaps, or language difficulties, all of which can make reading harder for students. Tackling these issues requires teachers to be patient, consistent, and use thoughtful teaching methods. Building reading skills is not something that can be done once and done. It needs to be practiced regularly, starting from early childhood and continuing through adolescence.

Common challenges in reading include: (1) Recognizing and blending sounds; (2) Reading smoothly and confidently; (3) Understanding the material being read; (4) Keeping an interest in reading; and (5) Connecting the text to what the student already knows or experiences in real life. Identifying these challenges early can help teachers take action in a timely way.

According to Block and Israel (2005), teachers can support students in reading through various strategies: (1) Setting a purpose for reading by predicting what might happen; (2) Visualizing by creating mental images of what is read; (3) Making connections by linking the text to students' experiences and knowledge; (4) Summarizing by identifying the main idea of the text; (5) Questioning by encouraging students to think about the text before, during, and after reading; and (6) Inferring by having students make their own conclusions and understandings from the text.

Improving reading skills is a joint effort that involves teachers, parents, and students. By creating a supportive reading environment and using effective strategies, we can help students overcome reading challenges and develop a lasting interest in reading. Independent readers become confident learners, thoughtful thinkers, and responsible citizens. Literacy, therefore, is one of the most important tools in education.

#### *References:*

Block & Israel, (2005, April 7). Reading First and Beyond: The Complete Guide for Teachers and Literacy Coaches. Retrieved from <https://www.abebooks.com/9781412914970/Reading-First-Beyond-Complete-Guide-1412914973/pl>