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Gelis, Bili, Diary Literasi, and Prica: Programs to Strengthen Early Grade Reading and Writing Literacy

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to explore the implementation of the "Gelis," "Bili," "Diary Literasi," and Prica programs for strengthening reading and writing literacy in elementary school. These programs were implemented by undergraduate students participating in the Kampus Mengajar Batch-7 initiative in collaboration with elementary school teachers. The study employed a qualitative approach with an exploratory method. The research subjects were first-grade students at an elementary school located in Arjasari, Indonesia. The subjects were selected based on the schools assigned by the Kampus Mengajar Batch 7 program. The study was conducted over four months, from March to June 2024. Data were collected through documentation study, in-depth interviews, and participatory observation. Data analysis was conducted using open coding, categorization, axial coding, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate improvements in students' ability to read simple texts and write short paragraphs. Students also demonstrated increased interest in reading, developed habits of writing or drawing during their free time, and expressed enjoyment in storytelling activities or listening to stories. This collaborative literacy program facilitated teachers in implementing reading and writing instruction, particularly in early grade classrooms, as the programs, designed collaboratively by students, academic supervisors, and teachers, were practical, adaptable to various contexts, and easily integrated into intraclass learning activities.

INTRODUCTION

Gelis (Gerakan Literasi Siswa), Bili (Bioskop Literasi), Diary Literasi, and Prica (Privat Baca) are collaborative literacy programs developed by university students, academic supervisors, and elementary school teachers to strengthen reading and writing literacy at the primary school level, particularly in early grades. These programs are part of the mandatory components of the Kampus Mengajar (KM) Batch 7 initiative, organized by the Directorate General of Higher Education in Indonesia. One of the core goals of KM Batch 7 is to support the improvement of students' literacy skills in targeted schools and to assist teachers in literacy instruction. The target schools of this program are those with limited access to information and educational resources.

According to the World Bank, nearly half of children globally experience "learning poverty," which refers to the inability to read and understand a simple story by the age of ten (Smith et al., 2023). This global challenge is mirrored in Indonesia, where existing government efforts have not yet yielded substantial outcomes in improving literacy. Several studies report that the current practices of reading and writing literacy instruction in Indonesia remain ineffective (Kartika et al., 2023; Hildayanti et al., 2024; Hodsay & Pratama, 2024). This is evidenced by education report cards that still indicate low literacy achievement in many schools. Inconsistent programs and instructional



6 methods across schools contribute to unequal literacy experiences for students (Condie & Pomerantz, 2020). Furthermore, the socioeconomic status of families often leads to limited resources and fewer opportunities for rich literacy experiences (Heidlage et al., 2020; Zucker et al., 2021).

9 In the targeted schools, the lack of infrastructure for literacy support is evident. There is a shortage of appropriate learning media, the learning environment lacks rich-text elements, library books are not yet categorized according to reading level or theme, making it difficult for students to select appropriate books. Moreover, no specific literacy programs are being implemented beyond the government-initiated School Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Sekolah, GLS), which, although present, has not yet had a meaningful impact on students. This is reflected in students' limited ability to read simple texts, a small number of students who can write short paragraphs, low interest in reading books, the absence of writing or drawing habits during free time, and limited student engagement in storytelling or reading activities.

Given these issues, a more targeted and effective solution is needed. Thus, a specialized literacy program was designed for early grade students, particularly those in grades 1 and 2. This literacy program emphasizes social processes in literacy development. In the context of literacy, social interaction plays a crucial role in developing reading and writing skills. Vygotsky & Cole (1978) highlight the importance of collaboration within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), while constructivist theory emphasizes collaborative learning that enables students to learn from one another (Näykki et al., 2021; Ishimura & Fitzgibbons, 2023).

Teachers serve as scaffolds Rojas-Drummond et al. (2013), Kraatz et al. (2023) providing temporary support to students as needed. In line with constructivist principles, teachers are not merely information providers but facilitators who create an environment conducive to exploration and inquiry. In literacy instruction, teachers can support students in understanding complex texts by offering guiding questions and reading strategies. The instructional context is therefore critical in literacy education (Lee, 2022; Shan et al., 2023). It is also essential to involve schools and relevant stakeholders in collaborative efforts (Magnusson et al., 2023). Using contextual and relevant texts enhances the effectiveness of literacy instruction, particularly when the materials are closely connected to students' everyday lives. This emphasizes that learning is embedded in cultural contexts (Kelly et al., 2021). Literacy is also viewed as a gradual developmental process – beyond just reading and writing, it includes critical thinking. Within the ZPD, students progress from understanding simple texts to engaging with more complex materials, in line with constructivist views of learning as a cumulative process shaped by experience and interaction.

12 The literacy program was co-designed by university students, academic advisors, and mentor teachers, guided by the implementation manual of KM Batch 7 (Kemendikbud, 2020). Based on a learning needs analysis, four program activities were developed: Gelis focuses on building the habit of reading storybooks, Bili involves watching educational films, after which students write retellings of the stories they viewed, Diary Literasi guides students in writing simple journal entries after reading activities, Prica offers tailored support to students who are not yet proficient in reading and writing.

Based on the background, the following research questions were formulated:

- 1) What are the literacy-related needs identified in target schools?
- 2) How is the early grade literacy program designed?



- 3) What are the findings from observing the implementation of the literacy program in early grades?
- 4) How do teachers and students respond to the implementation of the literacy program?.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach Creswell & Creswell (2017), aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the implementation of a collaborative literacy instruction program in primary schools. This approach was chosen due to its focus on exploring meaning, experiences, and perspectives of teachers involved in the teaching and learning process using the Gelis, Bili, Diary Literasi, and Prica programs, as well as its impact on students' reading and writing literacy skills. A phenomenological study design was used to explore the phenomenon of reading and writing literacy learning in elementary schools through the implementation of this collaborative program. The phenomenological approach, with its focus on subjective meaning, is particularly relevant for understanding how educational practitioners perceive, interpret, and construct meaning from their lived experiences of literacy instruction. This design provides a rich and contextualized understanding of the actual impact of the Gelis, Bili, Diary Literasi, and Prica programs on early grade reading and writing development – not merely in terms of outcomes, but through the lens of participants' experiences and awareness throughout the implementation process.

Research Participants

The study involved a total of 80 students, consisting of 38 first-grade and 42 second-grade students, as well as two teachers from a primary school located in the Arjasari sub-district, Bandung Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia. The participants were selected based on their involvement in the school placement site of the Kampus Mengajar Batch 7 Program, initiated by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology.

Data Collection Techniques and Procedures

Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. The questionnaire was designed to gather responses from both teachers and students regarding the implementation of the reading and writing literacy program. It was completed by the two homeroom teachers of grades 1 and 2. For students, the questionnaire was administered with the assistance of both the teachers and Kampus Mengajar (KM) Batch 7 student-teachers, who helped students select the response category that best reflected their feelings.

Teacher interviews were conducted to explore the challenges and suggestions related to the implementation of the Gelis, Bili, Diary Literasi, and Prica programs in early grade classrooms. Observations of literacy instruction were conducted to obtain data on student learning outcomes related to reading and writing literacy. The literacy teaching and learning process took place over a period of four months, from January 21, 2024 to April 17, 2024.



Table 1. Teacher questionnaire blueprint for early grade literacy program.

Program	Indicator	Items	Scoring Rubric (1-5)
Gelis, Bili, Diary Literasi, Prica	Effectiveness of the program in improving literacy skills	1, 7, 13, 19	Likert scale
	Student engagement in literacy activities	2, 8, 14, 20	
	Teacher involvement	3, 9, 15, 21	
	Supporting facilities and infrastructure	4, 10, 16, 22	
	Student creativity	5, 11, 17, 23	
	Enjoyable learning experience	6, 12, 18, 24	

The observation instrument for literacy learning in early grades was developed based on four indicators: reading ability, writing ability, speaking ability, and attitude toward literacy. A Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 was used for assessment. Early reading ability is observed in the ability to read letters, words and simple sentences. Writing ability is observed through activities such as copying letters, words and simple sentences neatly. Speaking skills can be observed in class discussion activities, small presentations, or Q&A. Literacy attitude observations were conducted on students' interests and habits in literacy activities.

The research procedure consisted of the following steps: (1) University lecturers and KM Batch 7 student-teachers reported to the Bandung Regency Office of Education; (2) The lecturer accompanied student-teachers to their partner school located in Arjasari Sub-district; (3) The lecturers, student-teachers, and mentor teachers conducted a school observation and collaboratively developed a technology-integrated literacy enhancement program; (4) The implementation of the literacy programs Gelis, Bili, Diary Literasi, and Prica was carried out by the KM Batch 7 student-teachers under the guidance of first and second grade homeroom teachers. The detailed activities for each program are outlined in the following section.

Table 2. Description of the implementation of Gelis, Bili, Diary Literasi, and Prica Programs

No	Program Name	Activity Description
1	Gelis	<i>Gelis</i> is a habituation activity in which students read books, including storybooks and textbooks. This activity is conducted every Monday and Tuesday before regular classes begin.
2	Bili	<i>Bili</i> is an activity where students watch educational films about discrimination and bullying. Afterwards, students are required to answer related questions and rewrite the story they have watched. This activity was held during the Literacy and Numeracy Festival on May 4, 2024, and served as one of the competition categories of the event.
3	Diary	<i>Diary Literasi</i> is an activity conducted alongside <i>Gelis</i> . After reading a book, students are guided to write a summary or conclusion in their Literacy Diary. This activity also takes place every Monday and Tuesday before the start of the school day.
4	Literasi Prica	<i>PRICA</i> (Private Reading) is an activity designed to support students who have not yet acquired or mastered basic reading and writing skills. This



No	Program Name	Activity Description
		program runs daily from Monday to Saturday, from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. It is divided into two sessions: 7:00–8:00 a.m. for <i>Bacalah 1</i> students, and 8:00–9:00 a.m. for <i>Bacalah 2</i> students. The sessions alternate between Grade 1 and Grade 2: for instance, Grade 1 is taught on Mondays and Grade 2 on Tuesdays.

(5) Evaluation of the program implementation was conducted by the supervising lecturer and student-teachers through biweekly online meetings in the form of sharing sessions. In addition to these sessions, periodic evaluations and reflections were held through the School Communication and Coordination Forum (Forum Komunikasi dan Koordinasi Sekolah - FKKS), which convened three times over the four-month period. FKKS meetings were attended by school representatives, supervising lecturers, and student-teachers. During these meetings, student-teachers presented the collaborative programs that had been implemented in cooperation with classroom teachers. Key stakeholders involved in ensuring the quality of the program included the Bandung Regency Education Office, the West Java Center for Educational Quality Assurance (Balai Besar Penjaminan Mutu Pendidikan - BBPMP), and the university coordinators.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted through a coding process. The researchers organized and prepared data from teacher interviews regarding literacy issues, as well as responses to the questionnaires completed during and after program implementation. Interview transcripts and questionnaire responses were categorized based on the sources of information and the type of data required. For the purposes of this study, data were grouped into categories derived from teacher interviews, teacher questionnaire responses, and classroom observations. Observation field notes concerning the implementation of the literacy programs were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which involves the following steps:

Data analysis was conducted through a coding process. The researchers organized and prepared the data obtained from teacher interviews regarding literacy issues, as well as responses from the questionnaires completed during and after program implementation. Interview transcripts and questionnaire data were categorized according to sources of information and types of data needed for analysis.

In this study, the researchers categorized data from teacher interviews, teacher response questionnaires, and classroom observations. Field notes from observations of the literacy program implementation were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which includes the following stages: (1) data Reduction: To identify patterns related to the relevance, strengths, and weaknesses of the collaborative literacy programs; (2) data Display: To present organized data clearly; (3) Conclusion Drawing: To derive meaningful insights and interpretations from the data. To ensure data validity, triangulation was conducted by cross-checking data from various sources and using the evidence to build a coherent justification regarding the implementation of the early grade literacy program.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Initial Needs Analysis of the School

The initial observation conducted to analyze the needs related to early grade students' literacy learning revealed several key challenges faced by the school. One of the main issues is the lack of adequate facilities and infrastructure, particularly for reading and writing literacy activities. Although some storybooks are available in the school library, their number is limited and the organization of these books does not facilitate easy access for students to select reading materials based on their interests. Furthermore, the school does not have a designated library room, and the limited number of books specifically suited for early grade levels further hinders the promotion of reading interest among students.

While literacy habituation activities aligned with the Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (School Literacy Movement, or GLS) have been implemented, they have not yet been maximized. One limitation is the absence of student worksheets or journals that can support simple written reflections after reading activities. In addition, private reading sessions are not conducted regularly, and there is no dedicated literacy program to complement the GLS initiative. Another significant constraint is the high number of students in each class, which exceeds the recommended standard. This large class size makes classroom management during literacy activities challenging and ultimately reduces the effectiveness of the learning process. Moreover, the physical space of classrooms is not sufficient to accommodate the large number of students, falling short of standard classroom size requirements.

Program Design: Gelis, Bili, Diary Literasi, and Prica

The literacy program for early grade students – Gelis, Bili, Diary Literasi, and Prica – was designed based on students' needs and the actual conditions observed at the school. The program development was also aligned with the academic backgrounds and areas of expertise of the university students involved. In collaboration with the supervising lecturer and school stakeholders, the student-teachers co-designed a collaborative literacy program specifically tailored for early grade literacy improvement, as detailed below.

Table 3. Collaborative program design: Gelis, Bili, Diary Literasi, and Prica.

Program Name	Program Description	Objectives	Resources /Tools/ Materials	Person in Charge
Literacy GELIS (Student Literacy Movement)	A habituation activity where students read for 15 minutes before class on Mondays and Tuesdays. After reading, three students are selected to review the book they have read (on a rotating basis). Additionally, students who read the	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To increase students' interest in reading more books and other literacy materials. To build an engaging literacy environment for students. To support students in developing critical, analytical, and creative thinking skills. 	Storybooks	University Students (KM 7)



Program Name	Program Description	Objectives	Resources /Tools/ Materials	Person in Charge
	most books in one month receive a reward. Students also create a "GELIS Tree" as a creative expression.	4. To broaden students' horizons in gathering information. 5. To help students connect concepts, synthesize information, and draw conclusions.		
BILI (Literacy Cinema)	A literacy-based film screening activity where students are introduced to interesting stories or educational videos from online platforms such as YouTube. Students watch and listen to the videos, then identify key points and retell the story in writing.	1. To enhance students' literacy through audiovisual media. 2. To improve students' confidence in storytelling and reading aloud.	YouTube link to the film <i>Laskar Pelangi</i> , student worksheets, projector, and laptop.	
Diary Literasi	A habituation activity in which students write a summary or conclusion of the story they have read in their diary literasi.	1. To familiarize students with documenting what they have read or learned. 2. To encourage student enthusiasm in reading through the responsibility of maintaining a literacy diary.	Worksheets, notebooks, pencils	
PRICA (Private Reading)	A targeted reading activity for supporting students who are not yet fluent readers.	1. To improve students' reading comprehension. 2. To support the development of students' reading skills.	<i>Bacalah Books</i>	

Results of Teacher Questionnaire on Collaborative Literacy Program in Early Grades

The teacher response questionnaire regarding the implementation of the collaborative literacy program in early grade classrooms is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Teacher responses to the collaborative literacy program.

No	Indicator	Percentage (%)			
		GELIS	BILI	Diary Literasi	PRICA
1	Program effectiveness in improving students' reading/writing skills	85	87	90	90
2	Student engagement in literacy activities	85	90	90	90
3	Teacher involvement	100	100	100	100
4	Availability of facilities and infrastructure to support the program	85	80	85	85
5	Enjoyable learning experience	87	90	90	90



The results of the teacher questionnaire indicate a generally positive response toward the implementation of the collaborative literacy program. The average score for five key indicators is high. Specifically, the effectiveness of the program in enhancing students' reading and writing skills scored an average of 90,4%, with the highest effectiveness shown by the Diary Literasi and PRICA programs (91%) and the lowest by GELIS (88,4%).

Teacher interview results, challenges in implementing literacy programs in early grades are detailed below.

Table 5. Teacher-identified challenges in literacy program implementation.

Literacy Program	Challenges Faced
GELIS	Lack of student interest in reading, limited collection of engaging books, and limited time for implementation due to a packed curriculum.
BILI	Insufficient video screening equipment in some classrooms, difficulty finding content suitable for students' comprehension levels, and limited time for watching and discussing videos.
Diary Literasi	Students face difficulty expressing ideas in writing, lack of habit in reflective writing, and low motivation to consistently complete literacy journals.
PRICA	Not all students have independent reading habits, difficulty maintaining students' focus during independent reading, and a lack of level-appropriate reading materials.

These interview findings indicate that the main challenges in implementing the literacy programs are the lack early of adequate facilities and reading materials, variations in students' reading abilities, and low student motivation in both reading and writing activities.

Observations on literacy learning in grade classrooms (Grade 1 and Grade 2) were categorized into five indicators: reading ability, writing ability, speaking skills, attitudes toward literacy, and collaboration in literacy activities.

1. Observations of Students' Reading Ability in Early Grades

Reading ability observations were conducted during the implementation of the Gelis and Prica programs. The Gelis program involved all students in Grades 1 and 2, while Prica focused on students with emerging reading skills who were experiencing difficulties. In the Gelis program, students were observed on their fluency and accuracy in reading, text comprehension, and reading expression. The detailed findings presented in the table below:

Table 6. Observation results of students' reading ability in Gelis and Prica programs.

Observed Aspect	Skill Category	Percentage of Students
Fluency and Accuracy (Gelis)	Fluent and accurate	40%
	Hesitant but recognizes most words	35%
	Experiences difficulty in reading	25%
Text Comprehension (Gelis)	Understands content and answers questions well	45%
	Understands part of the content but struggles to answer questions	30%
	Does not fully understand the text	25%
Reading Expression (Gelis)	Good intonation and expression	30%



Observed Aspect	Skill Category	Percentage of Students
Letter and Syllable Recognition (Prica)	Flat tone while reading	40%
	Difficulty adjusting intonation	30%
	Able to recognize letters well	50%
	Difficulty connecting letters into syllables	30%
Simple Word Reading (Prica)	Difficulty recognizing letters	20%
	Able to read with assistance	40%
	Struggles to read even with guidance	35%
	Unable to read words properly	25%

The observations in Gelis revealed varied levels of fluency and accuracy in reading among Grade 1 and 2 students. Approximately 40% of students read fluently and accurately, while 35% were hesitant but could recognize most words. Meanwhile, 25% still struggled with reading.

2. Observations of Students' Writing Ability in Early Grades

The observations on writing ability focused on students' capacity to write clearly, demonstrate creativity in writing, and structure their text appropriately. These aspects were observed during the implementation of the Diary Literasi and Bili programs. The detailed results are presented in the table below.

Table 7. Observation results of students' writing ability in Diary Literasi and Bili programs.

Observed Aspect	Indicator	Percentage
Clarity in Writing	Writes clear and understandable sentences	80%
Creativity in Writing	Generates creative, imaginative, and varied ideas	75%
Text Structure	Produces well-structured texts (title, paragraph, content)	75%

The results indicate that most students were able to write sentences that were clear and easy to understand, demonstrating good legibility and letter formation, although minor punctuation errors were still present. Students also produced imaginative and creative writings, though some writings were limited in thematic exploration.

3. Observation Results on Speaking and Listening Skills of Early Grade Students

Observations on students' speaking and listening skills were conducted during the Gelis, Bili, Diary Literasi, and Prica programs. Speaking ability was assessed through students' capacity to clearly and coherently express opinions or stories. Listening skills focused on students' attentiveness and ability to respond appropriately to information heard. The interaction component observed students' participation in group discussions and their willingness to share thoughts or ideas. The detailed findings are presented in the following table.

Table 8. Observation results on speaking and listening skills in the Gelis, Bili, Diary Literasi, and Prica program.

Observed Aspect	Indicator	Percentage (%)
Speaking Ability	Clearly and confidently expresses opinions	65
	Uses appropriate vocabulary	58
	Constructs well-formed sentences	60



Observed Aspect	Indicator	Percentage (%)
Listening Ability	Understands stories or information heard	70
	Responds appropriately with questions or comments	55
Interaction in Discussion	Maintains focus while listening	62
	Actively participates in group discussions	68
	Willingly shares opinions or ideas	60
	Shows respect for others' opinions	75

The data show that the weakest aspects were the use of appropriate vocabulary in speaking (58%) and providing relevant responses while listening (55%). On the other hand, the strongest aspects were showing respect for peers' opinions during discussions (75%) and understanding the content of stories or information heard (70%).

4. Students' Attitudes Toward Literacy in Early Grades

Students' attitudes toward literacy encompass their feelings, interests, and tendencies regarding reading, writing, and engagement in literacy activities. These attitudes reflect how much students value, enjoy, and are motivated to develop reading and writing skills. Observations on students' literacy attitudes were categorized into three primary aspects: feelings, interest, and engagement, as detailed below.

Table 9. Observation results on students' attitudes toward literacy in early grades.

Observed Aspect	Indicator	Observation Findings
Feelings Toward Literacy	Students show a positive attitude when reading and writing	40% of students appeared enthusiastic when reading storybooks, although most were motivated only if the material aligned with their personal interests
	Students feel confident in reading and writing	55% were confident in reading aloud, while only 35% were confident in writing stories or reflections
Interest in Literacy	Students voluntarily choose and read books outside class	Only 30% independently borrowed books from the library without teacher guidance
Engagement in Literacy Activities	Students take initiative in writing without being assigned	20% enjoyed writing stories or personal notes, while most only wrote when instructed
	Students actively engage in discussions (e.g., retelling, sharing opinions)	50% actively participated in discussions, while the rest were passive or merely listened
	Students participate in school literacy programs	85% were active in shared reading activities, but only 50% regularly wrote in literacy journals

The findings suggest that students' reading interest remains limited, as most only read when directed by the teacher and tend to choose materials that match their preferences.

5. Observation Results on Collaboration Skills in Literacy Learning

Observations regarding students' collaboration skills focused on their ability to work together and share knowledge during literacy-related activities. Two key indicators were



assessed: collaboration in literacy projects and sharing of literacy knowledge, both using a 1–5 Likert scale.

Table 10. Distribution of collaboration scores in literacy projects.

Score	Category	Percentage (%)
1	Very difficult to collaborate	6%
2	Difficult to collaborate	16%
3	Fair ability to collaborate	40%
4	Easy to collaborate	28%
5	Very easy to collaborate	10%
Total		100%

The findings indicate that most students were at a moderate level in terms of collaboration, with 40% showing fair ability to work with others. A total of 28% demonstrated ease in collaborating, and only 10% found it very easy. On the other hand, 22% struggled to collaborate, highlighting the need to strengthen students' collaborative skills through regular practice and exposure to group work.

Table 11. Distribution of literacy knowledge sharing scores

Score	Category	Percentage (%)
1	Never shares knowledge	10%
2	Rarely shares knowledge	20%
3	Occasionally shares knowledge	42%
4	Frequently shares knowledge	20%
5	Very frequently shares knowledge	8%
Total		100%

Regarding literacy knowledge sharing, most students (42%) were categorized as occasional sharers, indicating that sharing literacy-related information was not yet a consistent habit. These findings suggest that both collaboration and knowledge-sharing practices are still at a moderate level, warranting the integration of collaborative learning strategies, such as cooperative learning and regular discussion forums, to better cultivate students' social literacy competencies.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the implementation of literacy programs in early primary classrooms. The Gelis, Bili, Diary Literasi, and Prica programs demonstrate strong potential in enhancing various aspects of students' literacy development, while also highlighting several challenges that must be addressed.

Overall, teachers responded positively to the effectiveness of these programs in improving students' reading and writing abilities. The Diary Literasi and Prica programs received the highest effectiveness ratings (90%), indicating that reflective writing activities and one-on-one reading guidance have a significant impact. However, it is important to note that student engagement varied across the programs. Bili, with its audiovisual approach, achieved the highest level of student engagement (90%), aligning with previous research suggesting that engaging and relevant media can enhance learning motivation (Katona et al., 2022). In contrast, Diary Literasi showed lower levels of student engagement (80%), suggesting the need for strategies to boost motivation in reflective writing tasks.

3

17



Teacher interviews revealed several key challenges in program implementation. The main obstacles in the Gelis program included students' low interest in reading, the limited availability of appealing reading materials, and time constraints due to a packed curriculum. These challenges underscore the importance of providing relevant and engaging reading materials and integrating literacy activities effectively into the curriculum (Erdem & Erişti, 2022; Vaughn et al., 2021). These results are consistent with teachers' statements:

"In the case of the Gelis program, the primary issue was students' low interest in reading. Some students became easily bored due to the limited variety of books available in the school library. Moreover, a tightly packed curriculum left little time for dedicated literacy activities."

Bili faced challenges related to limited facilities for video playback and difficulty sourcing materials appropriate to students' comprehension levels, highlighting the need for adequate infrastructure and careful curation of media content. Moreover, teachers said:

"Regarding the Bili program, teachers noted that it was generally engaging for students; however, in several classrooms, facilities such as projectors or screens were not consistently available. Additionally, it was challenging to find videos that matched students' levels of comprehension, especially when the content was too complex or lacked engaging elements."

Diary Literasi encountered issues with students' difficulty in expressing ideas in written form and low motivation to maintain literacy journals. This points to the necessity of a gradual, scaffolded approach to writing instruction and motivational strategies to encourage student reflection. Prica struggled with maintaining student focus during independent reading and a lack of level-appropriate reading materials, emphasizing the importance of effective individual mentoring and differentiated reading resources (Haelermans, 2022). For Diary Literasi, many students struggled to articulate their ideas in written form. They were not yet accustomed to reflective writing or narrating their personal experiences. As a result, many lacked the motivation to regularly complete their literacy journals.

Observations indicated significant variation in students' literacy abilities. In Gelis activities, while some students demonstrated strong reading skills, others faced difficulties with fluency, comprehension, and expression. These findings highlight the need for differentiated interventions to accommodate diverse learning needs. The Prica program showed improvements in students' early reading skills, but intensive support was still needed to improve letter, syllable, and simple word recognition, reinforcing the importance of individualized guidance to address literacy gaps. Students' writing abilities also varied: some students were able to compose clear and creative sentences, while others struggled with text structure and organizing ideas. This suggests the need for a gradual focus on writing development and the provision of constructive feedback (Parra & Calero, 2019). Speaking and listening skills revealed strengths in terms of participation in discussions and respecting peers' opinions, but weaknesses in appropriate vocabulary use and providing relevant responses. These findings highlight the need for strategies to enrich students' vocabulary and improve active listening skills.

Students' attitudes toward literacy showed enthusiasm for reading and writing activities; however, their intrinsic motivation and independent initiative remained limited. This emphasizes the need for strategies to foster sustained reading interest and



intrinsic motivation for literacy activities. Students' collaboration skills in literacy projects and knowledge-sharing practices showed potential for the development of social and cognitive skills through collaborative learning (Malazonia et al., 2023). Nevertheless, further efforts are required to enhance teamwork and consistent knowledge-sharing behavior. These findings carry important implications for literacy instruction in early grade classrooms. First, it is essential to provide a literacy-rich learning environment with access to a variety of engaging and relevant reading materials (Goodsett, 2020). Second, literacy programs must be designed with students' diverse learning needs in mind, offering differentiated interventions. Third, integrating literacy activities effectively into the curriculum and utilizing engaging media are crucial to boosting student motivation. Fourth, a strong focus on developing writing and speaking/listening skills should be maintained. Fifth, collaborative learning can be leveraged to foster students' social and cognitive development.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed. First, schools should improve access to engaging reading materials that match students' reading levels. Second, the use of simple technology in programs like Bili should be optimized. Third, a gradual writing strategy and individualized guidance should be implemented in programs like Diary Literasi and Prica. Fourth, a culture of independent literacy engagement should be encouraged through meaningful and relevant activities.

CONCLUSION

This study makes a significant contribution to understanding the effectiveness and challenges of implementing literacy programs in early grade classrooms. The findings highlight the importance of a holistic and evidence-based approach in designing and implementing effective literacy programs. By addressing the identified challenges and applying the recommended strategies, schools can enhance the quality of literacy instruction and support students in developing strong literacy skills. The main implication of these findings is the importance of integrated, contextual, and reflective literacy approaches in supporting foundational literacy development. Teachers must be supported not only in teaching the technical skills of reading and writing, but also in facilitating meaningful, enjoyable, and life-relevant literacy experiences. The results further emphasize the significance of reflection, emotional engagement, and personalized literacy strategies in early childhood education. However, this study has a limitation, such as ; First, as this study employed a phenomenological design, the findings are contextual and not intended for broad generalization. Second, data were collected from the experiences of a specific group of teachers and students in a particular setting, which may not represent the experiences of schools with different geographical, cultural, or infrastructural contexts. Third, because the focus was primarily on experiences and perceptions, this study did not directly measure quantitative learning outcomes, such as improvements in students' reading or writing proficiency scores.

Besides, Future studies may consider employing longitudinal designs to examine the long-term impacts of these programs on students' learning motivation, literacy habits, and academic achievement. Additionally, it is essential to explore how similar literacy initiatives can be adapted for inclusive school settings, remote communities, or digital learning environments, in order to broaden and sustain their impact.



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