

MENTORING SECOND SEMESTER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' READING SKILLS AT UNIVERSITAS ISLAM TRIBAKTI LIRBOYO KEDIRI AND UNIVERSITAS NUSANTARA PGRI KEDIRI THROUGH EXTENSIVE READING

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Abstract:

This community service project aimed to enhance the reading skills of second-semester university students at Universitas Islam Tribakti Lirboyo Kediri and Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri through an extensive reading program. The program, conducted from April to July 2025, involved 59 students and included training sessions and seminars focused on extensive reading strategies. The objective was to improve students' vocabulary, reading comprehension, and overall reading interest. This study employed a service-learning approach that included four key stages: investigation, preparation, action, and reflection. During the investigation stage, a pre-test and observations were conducted to assess students' baseline reading abilities. The results of the program showed significant improvements in students' vocabulary, reading comprehension, and reading interest. The program not only helped students understand academic texts more effectively but also fostered a more positive attitude toward reading. These findings suggest that extensive reading can significantly contribute to the development of essential literacy skills in EFL students. The program's success highlights the potential of using extensive reading as a key strategy to enhance students' language proficiency and foster a lifelong reading habit.

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, university students majoring in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) often face challenges that impede their academic progress and language proficiency. One such challenge is the low reading comprehension ability among first- and second-year students. A critical component of language learning, reading, significantly contributes to the development of linguistic competence and academic success. However, studies have shown that the reading habits of Indonesian EFL students are still underdeveloped, particularly in the early stages of their university education (Poedjiastutie, 2018). This lack of reading proficiency is not merely a matter of understanding words and sentences; it extends to the broader skills necessary for language acquisition, such as vocabulary enrichment, comprehension, and the ability to critically engage with texts (Janah et al., 2021). Furthermore, the students' lack of engagement in extensive reading activities often results in limited exposure to new vocabulary, hindering their ability to use language effectively in both written and spoken forms.

Numerous studies highlight the importance of cultivating robust reading habits among

university students, especially in the context of EFL education. Research by Aisah et al. (2019) emphasizes that extensive reading can significantly enhance the vocabulary and comprehension skills of EFL learners. This method, which encourages students to read large amounts of material that aligns with their language proficiency, not only helps in acquiring new vocabulary but also fosters a more profound engagement with texts. Furthermore, extensive reading improves students' attitudes toward reading, helping them develop a more positive and enjoyable relationship with language acquisition (Journal et al., 2018). As English proficiency becomes increasingly essential for academic success and future employment opportunities, promoting reading practices is an effective strategy to bridge the gap in language skills among Indonesian EFL students.

Based on the result of observations in preliminary research at Universitas Islam Tribakti Lirboyo Kediri and Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri, many students struggled to maintain consistent reading habits due to a lack of familiarity with the required reading strategies and materials. Moreover, students often seemed overwhelmed by the volume of reading and had difficulty selecting appropriate texts that matched their language proficiency level. In group discussions, many students expressed frustration with understanding complex vocabulary and the slower pace of reading, which led to decreased motivation over time. Additionally, a lack of personal interest in reading materials, particularly academic texts, was noted as a significant barrier. However, it was also observed that students who engaged in peer discussions and group reading activities showed increased participation and more enthusiasm toward reading, suggesting that collaboration played a positive role in overcoming initial challenges.

Interviews with students in preliminary research further revealed the depth of the challenges they faced during the ER program. Several students highlighted their concerns about the difficulty in integrating extensive reading into their daily routines, with time management being a prominent issue. One student mentioned, "I often feel like I don't have enough time for reading outside of class, and the texts we are given seem too long or complicated for me to enjoy." Another recurring issue discussed in the interviews was the feeling of inadequacy when it came to understanding new vocabulary. Many students confessed they felt discouraged when encountering unknown words without sufficient contextual clues, which diminished their overall confidence. However, a few students noted that once they were able to establish a reading routine, they began to feel more confident in their ability to comprehend and retain new information. These interviews provided valuable insight into the students' struggles and highlighted the need for more personalized guidance and support to address the diverse challenges they face in adopting extensive reading practices.

However, it is crucial to recognize that merely encouraging reading does not suffice. There is a need to explore specific pedagogical strategies that can effectively address the challenges associated with reading comprehension among second-year EFL students. The current study focuses on the potential of extensive reading (ER) as a solution to the problem of inadequate reading skills in EFL students at the Universitas Islam Tribakti Lirboyo Kediri and Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri. As identified in the preliminary observations, students' vocabulary and comprehension abilities are notably low, particularly due to their limited exposure to extensive reading before entering university. This issue is exacerbated by a lack of effective reading strategies, leaving many students ill-prepared to cope with the rigorous demands of academic reading (Aisah et al., 2019). Therefore, addressing the deficiencies in reading habits and providing effective instructional support is essential for enhancing students' reading skills and overall language proficiency.

The importance of effective reading strategies cannot be overstated in the context of

Indonesian higher education. According to Hargreaves et al. (2022), while digital texts offer convenient access to information, traditional reading practices may still provide deeper comprehension and engagement. This challenge is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where the transition from secondary education to university often places students in an environment where reading skills are crucial for academic success. Studies also reveal that while the integration of digital reading formats presents unique opportunities, there is a need to balance traditional and digital reading practices to maximize learning outcomes (Poedjiastutie, 2018). As such, extensive reading, which integrates both printed and digital texts, can provide a comprehensive solution for enhancing students' reading abilities. By engaging students in substantial reading activities that align with their language proficiency, extensive reading helps build vocabulary, comprehension, and analytical thinking, all of which are necessary for academic achievement and linguistic development (Hargreaves et al., 2022).

Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of extensive reading in improving language proficiency among EFL students (Lindawati, 2021). For instance, studies show that students who engage in extensive reading programs experience improvements in vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and critical thinking skills (Widodo & Nugroho, 2024). These findings suggest that extensive reading not only fosters linguistic development but also encourages students to take responsibility for their learning by immersing themselves in a variety of texts. The benefits of this approach are well-documented in the literature, with numerous studies indicating that students exposed to a broad range of reading materials are more likely to develop the skills necessary for effective communication in English (Safei & Eka, 2023). Additionally, this practice supports the development of a positive reading attitude, further motivating students to continue improving their language skills.

To address the challenges faced by second-semester EFL students, the present study utilizes a service-learning approach to implement an extensive reading program at two universities in Kediri, Indonesia. By integrating reading into the students' curriculum through seminars and workshops, the program aims to improve reading comprehension, vocabulary, and students' overall attitude toward reading. The service-learning approach used in this study provides an interactive learning environment where students are actively engaged in the learning process, promoting greater ownership of their language development (Assiddiq & Sasmayunita, 2022). In this regard, the study intends to assess the efficacy of extensive reading as a tool for enhancing the reading skills of second-semester students at the Universitas Islam Tribakti Lirboyo Kediri and Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri.

METHOD

This study employs a service-learning approach to enhance the reading skills of second-semester students at Universitas Islam Tribakti Lirboyo Kediri and Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri in which the stages can be seen in figure. The service-learning approach, as defined by Kaye (2004), is an educational approach that integrates community service with academic learning. It involves students participating in service projects that benefit the community while simultaneously reinforcing their academic understanding through critical reflection and the practical application of theoretical concepts. The service-learning approach was chosen for this study due to its emphasis on experiential learning, which is particularly beneficial for fostering a deeper understanding of the material being taught. The study was conducted from April to July 2025 at the two participating universities, with a total of 59 second-semester students.

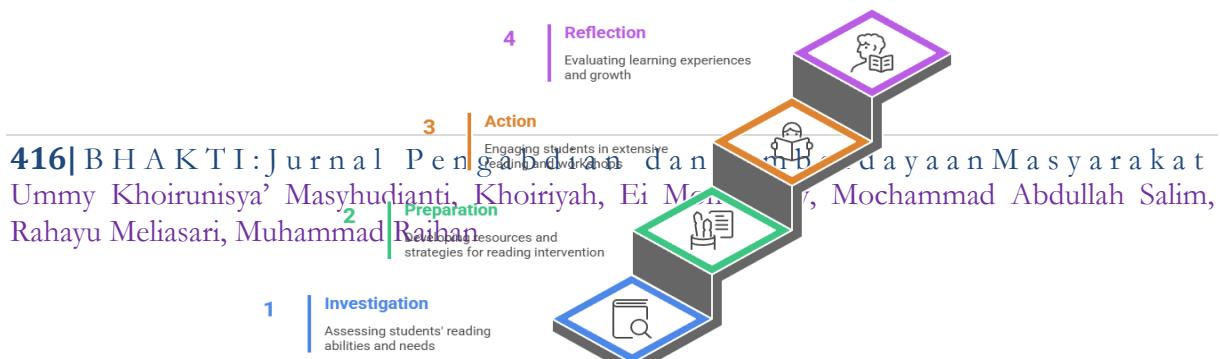


Figure The stages of Service Learning in Extensive Reading Classes

The service-learning approach employed in this study follows a structured process based on Kaye's theory consisting of four key stages: investigation, preparation, action, and reflection. The investigation involves assessing the students' existing reading abilities, identifying challenges, and understanding their learning needs. This stage serves as the foundation for the subsequent stages, as it provides insights into the specific areas where students require support. During the preparation stage, the program materials, including reading texts and training materials, are prepared based on the results of the investigation. This stage also includes planning seminars and workshops that will introduce students to extensive reading techniques and strategies. The action stage is the implementation stage, where students actively engage in the extensive reading program, participate in workshops, and begin reading a variety of texts. Throughout this stage, they are encouraged to track their progress and collaborate with peers. Finally, the reflection stage allows students to assess their learning experiences through reflective journaling and group discussions. This stage is integral to the service-learning approach, as it provides students with the opportunity to critically evaluate their growth, address any challenges, and connect their reading experiences to broader academic and personal goals. Each stage is interconnected, ensuring that the students' learning process is both comprehensive and experiential, fostering a deeper understanding of reading strategies and their application to real-world contexts.

RESULTS

The results of this study are based on the four stages of the service-learning approach: investigation, preparation, action, and reflection. Through these stages, the researchers observed a marked improvement in the students' reading abilities, vocabulary acquisition, and overall attitudes toward reading, supporting the potential of extensive reading in enhancing EFL students' language proficiency. The overall timeline can be seen in Table.

Stage	Date	Activities	Participants
Investigation	April 2025	Pre-test, student surveys, initial observations on reading habits	Research Team, 59 Students
Preparation	May 2025	Selection of reading materials, workshops on reading strategies	Research Team, Faculty, Teaching Assistants
Action	May - June 2025	Extensive reading activities, seminars, group discussions, reading logs	59 Students, Research Team
Reflection	July 2025	Post-test, student reflections, group feedback	59 Students, Research Team

Table Timeline of Mentoring Second-Semester University Students' Reading Skills at Universitas Islam Tribakti Lirboyo Kediri and Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri Through Extensive Reading

1. Investigation Stage

The investigation stage commenced in April 2025 with the administration of a pre-test to assess the students' initial reading comprehension and vocabulary levels. The results indicated that the second-semester students enrolled in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program exhibited low proficiency in both reading comprehension and vocabulary recall, with the mean score of 60. This finding was consistent across the cohort, with many students struggling to understand the main ideas of reading materials and recall specific vocabulary. These initial assessments provided critical baseline data that informed the subsequent design and focus of the extensive reading program.

During this stage, the research team also conducted surveys to gather information on students' reading habits and engagement with English texts. The surveys revealed that a large proportion of students had limited engagement with English reading materials outside of classroom requirements. This finding was corroborated by observations made during early class sessions, where students demonstrated little interest in independent reading. Consequently, the team recognized the need for an intervention that would increase students' exposure to English texts and improve their overall reading practices. The results from this stage highlighted the importance of addressing these gaps in student reading habits to facilitate better language acquisition.

In addition to the surveys, the research team conducted observational visits to class sessions, noting students' reactions to the assigned reading tasks. Observations revealed that many students lacked confidence in their reading abilities, particularly when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary. These challenges were compounded by the students' limited exposure to English-language texts prior to entering university, making it clear that the program needed to foster not only reading skills but also students' motivation and confidence in reading English texts. Based on these findings, the research team began developing a detailed mentoring plan for the extensive reading program. This plan included setting up personalized mentoring sessions for students, where they would receive direct guidance on reading strategies, vocabulary-building techniques, and goal-setting for their reading progress. Mentoring was also aimed at addressing individual challenges, such as unfamiliar vocabulary, and offering support in building students' confidence through regular one-on-one sessions and group discussions. This mentoring initiative was integral to the program's design, ensuring that each student had the necessary support to engage with extensive reading more effectively.

2. Preparation Stage

The preparation stage, conducted in May 2025, focused on the development of the reading program and the selection of appropriate materials. As part of the preparation, the research team organized workshops that introduced students to the principles and strategies of extensive reading. These workshops emphasized the importance of regular reading and provided students with the tools needed to set personal reading goals. The students were encouraged to develop an independent reading habit by selecting texts that matched their interests and proficiency levels. This stage also included the introduction of various reading materials and resources to support their extensive reading journey.

Students were guided in exploring newspapers and magazines, such as The Jakarta Post, to practice finding the gist of articles and current events. Additionally, the students

engaged with film reviews from sources like The Guardian Film Reviews, which helped them summarize and discuss the key ideas of films. The workshop also introduced students to short stories, utilizing resources like AmericanLiterature.com, which offered a wide selection of short stories for students to analyze and comprehend. This diverse selection of materials aimed to cater to students' varied interests while ensuring they were exposed to different genres and forms of text.

In addition to these texts, the team incorporated poems and song lyrics into the program, sourced from The Poetry Foundation, to encourage students to engage with literary forms in a creative and interpretative way. Students were also tasked with retelling poems and song lyrics, which helped them improve their comprehension and storytelling skills. Moreover, the team introduced travel diaries from Travel Diaries App, allowing students to practice finding the gist of personal travel experiences. These varied materials, from literary works to contemporary media, were designed to increase student engagement and foster a love for reading in various contexts.

3. Action Stage

The action stage took place from May to June 2025 and involved the active implementation of the extensive reading program. During this period, students were encouraged to engage with a variety of reading materials, both offline and online, and were given the autonomy to select texts based on their interests and proficiency levels. The focus was on the quantity of reading rather than the intensity, in line with the principles of extensive reading. To support this, the program introduced students to diverse materials, including newspapers and magazines, such as articles from The Jakarta Post, which helped students practice finding the gist of current events. Similarly, students were exposed to film reviews, including resources from The Guardian Film Reviews, where they practiced identifying key ideas and summarizing content. These texts provided students with an engaging and contemporary way to develop reading comprehension.

Additionally, students engaged with short stories by using resources like AmericanLiterature.com, where they read and discussed short story books. This was complemented by the retelling of poems and song lyrics, using materials from The Poetry Foundation. These exercises encouraged students to interpret literary texts creatively and reflect on their understanding. Travel diaries, accessed through Travel Diaries App, were also included as part of the program to help students practice finding the gist of personal stories and experiences. Throughout the action stage, students also worked on identifying the moral values in the stories they read and were tasked with predicting the themes of upcoming stories, which helped deepen their analytical skills. These activities allowed students to immerse themselves in various genres and styles, facilitating comprehensive language learning and encouraging them to apply reading strategies beyond traditional texts.

Throughout this stage, students participated in weekly seminars and group discussions where they shared insights from their readings and reflected on their experiences in which it can be seen in Figure 2. These discussions allowed students to deepen their understanding of the texts and engage in peer learning. The group setting also encouraged collaborative problem-solving, where students could help one another overcome reading difficulties. The research team facilitated these discussions by guiding students to focus on key vocabulary, main ideas, and reading comprehension strategies, reinforcing the skills acquired through independent reading. Observations indicated that students who participated actively in the discussions showed improved engagement and comprehension.



Figure Seminar and Workshop of Extensive Reading at Universitas Islam Tribakti Lirboyo and Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri

4. Reflection Stage

The reflection stage, held in July 2025, marked the conclusion of the extensive reading program. During this stage, students were asked to complete a final reflective journal that documented their experiences throughout the program. The journal entries revealed that most students felt more confident in their reading abilities, with many expressing a newfound interest in reading English texts independently. Several students mentioned that they now read for pleasure, rather than solely for academic requirements, indicating a positive shift in their attitudes toward reading.

Post-program assessments revealed significant improvements in students' reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition in which the students' mean score was 85. The mean score on the post-test (85) was notably higher than the pre-test (60), demonstrating the effectiveness of the extensive reading approach in enhancing students' reading skills. Students exhibited a better understanding of vocabulary, as evidenced by their ability to recall and use a broader range of words in context. The surveys conducted during the reflection phase also indicated that students had developed more positive attitudes toward reading in English, with many expressing that they would continue to engage with English texts independently after the program's conclusion.

In addition to the improved academic outcomes, the reflection phase highlighted the broader impact of the program on students' personal development. Many students reported that their reading habits had changed, and they now viewed reading as an enjoyable and valuable activity. This phase underscored the importance of reflection in the learning process, as it allowed students to assess their growth and solidify the skills acquired during the program. The final evaluations indicated that the extensive reading program had successfully fostered both academic and personal growth among the participants.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of an extensive reading (ER)

program in improving second-semester English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' vocabulary, reading comprehension, and attitudes toward reading at Universitas Islam Tribakti Lirboyo Kediri and Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri. The findings from this study demonstrate that the findings demonstrate that the ER program had a significant and positive impact on improving students' reading skills and shifting their attitudes toward reading. Through a series of pre- and post-tests, surveys, and reflective journaling, the results indicate that the program had a marked impact on students' vocabulary and comprehension, as well as on their motivation to engage with English texts.

The most significant finding of this study was the marked improvement in students' vocabulary and reading comprehension. The pre-test results showed that many students began the program with limited vocabulary and struggled to understand academic texts. However, by the end of the program, students demonstrated an average improvement of 41.75% in vocabulary and in reading comprehension in the post-tests. These results align with previous research that has consistently shown that extensive reading can improve language proficiency by enhancing vocabulary and comprehension skills (Illananingtyas, 2025; Masyhudianti et al., 2025; Rasyidah, 2025; Salim & Masyhudianti, 2024; Uswah, 2023; Lindawati, 2021; Safei & EkaSari, 2023). As students read a variety of texts over the course of the program, they encountered new words and language structures that helped them build a more robust vocabulary and better understand complex texts. This improvement supports the growing body of literature on the benefits of ER, particularly for EFL learners, as it provides a clear pathway for enhancing language skills.

Equally important was the shift in students' attitudes toward reading. At the beginning of the program, many students expressed a lack of interest in reading and reported feeling frustrated by the difficulty of English texts. However, by the end of the program, most students reported that they were more motivated to read and felt more confident in their ability to understand English texts. This positive shift in attitude is consistent with the findings of Journal et al. (2018) and Mikami (2016), who found that extensive reading can significantly improve students' attitudes toward reading by making the process more enjoyable and less intimidating. In this study, the variety of reading materials—ranging from short stories to academic articles—helped to engage students and reduce the anxiety they initially felt toward reading. As Poedjiastutie (2018) suggests, fostering positive attitudes toward reading is crucial for developing lifelong reading habits, which are essential for ongoing language development.

A notable feature of this study was the incorporation of both print and digital texts. Students had access to e-books, online articles, and other digital resources, which allowed them to engage with a wider range of materials. The integration of digital texts, such as newspapers, magazines, film reviews, short stories, poems, and song lyrics, provided students with a flexible and interactive way to track their progress and engage with texts at their own pace. This aspect of the program was highly appreciated by students, as it offered them immediate access to a diverse range of texts, making reading more accessible and enjoyable. This finding supports Hargreaves et al. (2022), who argued that digital reading enhances student engagement by offering a convenient way to access varied reading materials. By using these digital tools, students were able to take ownership of their learning, which contributed to their increased motivation and sense of accomplishment.

The program's integration of collaborative learning also played a crucial role in its success. Students were encouraged to participate in group discussions, where they shared their thoughts and insights into the texts they had read. This collaborative approach helped reinforce their comprehension and provided opportunities for peer feedback. The reflective journaling component further encouraged students to critically engage with the material and

reflect on their learning process. These collaborative and reflective practices are consistent with Assiddiq and Sasmayunita's (2022) research, which highlights the importance of peer interaction and reflection in enhancing students' understanding of texts. Through these activities, students were able to develop not only their reading skills but also their ability to analyze and discuss texts in a meaningful way.

While the study found significant improvements in vocabulary, comprehension, and attitudes toward reading, some unexpected challenges emerged. One of the main challenges that some students faced was reading anxiety. Despite the low-pressure environment created by the program, a small number of students reported feeling anxious when faced with unfamiliar vocabulary or complex texts (Salim and Masyhudiani, 2024). This is in line with Soomro et al. (2019), who found that high levels of reading anxiety can hinder students' ability to perform well in reading tasks. Although the program aimed to create an enjoyable and supportive reading experience, it was clear that reading anxiety remained a barrier for some students. This suggests that while extensive reading can improve reading skills, additional interventions may be necessary to address anxiety and other affective factors that can impede reading progress.

Another limitation of the study was the relatively short duration of the intervention. Although the program led to significant improvements in reading skills, some students expressed that they needed more time to fully integrate extensive reading practices into their daily routines. As Nakanishi (2014) pointed out, the duration of an extensive reading program can greatly influence its effectiveness, and the short timeframe of this study may have limited the long-term impact on students' reading habits. This suggests that future studies should consider longer-term interventions to assess whether sustained exposure to extensive reading can lead to more lasting improvements in students' reading proficiency.

Despite these limitations, the findings of this study have important implications for EFL education. The results suggest that extensive reading programs can be an effective way to improve students' reading skills and foster a more positive attitude toward reading. By integrating both print and digital texts, and incorporating collaborative learning and reflection, Masyhudiani & Luthfiah (2025) state that educators can create a rich and engaging learning environment that supports students' academic and personal growth. The findings also highlight the importance of addressing students' reading anxiety and providing sustained reading practice to ensure long-term improvements. These insights can be applied to other EFL contexts, both in Indonesia and beyond, to help students develop the reading skills necessary for academic success and lifelong learning.

When comparing these results to previous research, the study confirms the widespread belief that extensive reading has a positive impact on EFL learners' reading proficiency. However, the study also contributes to the ongoing conversation by emphasizing the need for a more nuanced approach to ER. As Nakanishi (2014) and Hughes (2016) have noted, the effectiveness of ER can vary depending on factors such as the duration of the program, the method of text delivery, and individual student characteristics. In this study, while ER led to significant improvements in most students, it also highlighted that some students may need additional support to overcome anxiety and fully benefit from the program. This underscores the importance of adapting extensive reading programs to meet the diverse needs of learners and combining ER with other reading strategies to ensure more consistent outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the impact of an extensive reading program on second-semester English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at two universities in Kediri, Indonesia. The results indicated that the program significantly improved students' vocabulary, reading

comprehension, and attitudes toward reading. By engaging in extensive reading, students demonstrated enhanced language proficiency and greater motivation to read in English. Additionally, the use of digital texts, coupled with collaborative learning, further contributed to their success. The findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge on extensive reading by demonstrating its effectiveness in an Indonesian university context. The study also highlights the importance of incorporating both print and digital texts to maximize engagement and accessibility for students. Moreover, it underscores the need to address potential challenges such as reading anxiety and to provide sustained reading practices for long-term benefits. The positive shift in student attitudes suggests that extensive reading can foster a lifelong reading habit, which is crucial for academic and personal growth. Future research could focus on exploring the long-term effects of extensive reading programs, particularly in terms of students' ability to maintain reading habits after the intervention ends. Additionally, further studies could investigate how to better support students with reading anxiety and tailor extensive reading programs to meet diverse student needs.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that future extensive reading (ER) programs incorporate a more diverse range of reading materials, such as newspapers, magazines, film reviews, short stories, poems, and song lyrics. For instance, students could engage with materials like The Jakarta Post and The Guardian Film Reviews to develop skills in finding the gist of current events and media. Additionally, resources like AmericanLiterature.com for short stories, and the Poetry Foundation for poems, can help students practice retelling and interpreting different genres. Including travel diaries from Travel Diaries App and story-based materials that focus on understanding moral values and narrative ideas would further enrich students' reading experience. By diversifying the types of reading materials, students will be exposed to varied contexts, making the reading experience more engaging and relevant to both their academic and personal interests. To support students' reading progress, it is essential to establish a continuous assessment system that incorporates quizzes, reading logs, and reflective journals to monitor their comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. Extending the program's duration will also provide students with more time to internalize reading strategies and engage deeply with a broader range of texts. Furthermore, mentoring sessions should be integrated to provide personalized feedback and support, particularly for students struggling with unfamiliar vocabulary or complex texts. To facilitate a more comprehensive approach, instructors should be provided with ongoing professional development to ensure they can effectively guide students through the diverse reading materials, helping them navigate through texts like short stories, poems, and media-based content. These recommendations aim to create a richer, more engaging ER program that promotes sustained student involvement and skill development.

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