

## Lessons Learned from Implementing Tarl Learning to Enhance Students' Reading Proficiency for Indonesian Migrant Workers Serving as Instructors

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**ABSTRACT** The ability to read is one of the most important abilities that students must have, because the ability to read or literacy is the basic capital in studying other sciences. However, in reality, based on 2018 PISA data, Indonesia is ranked 72nd out of 78 countries in terms of student literacy data. Furthermore, innovation data from 2019 shows that only 1 in 3 early grade students in SD/MI understand what they read. These data show that students' literacy skills are still not optimal. The seminar aims to enhance literacy skills as educators among Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia through the application of Tarl Learning, fostering a collaborative platform for knowledge exchange, skill development, and the provision of achievement.

**Keywords:** Reading Ability, TaRL Learning, Elementary School Students

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is an important part of the elementary school curriculum to help students develop basic skills such as students making a summary of their reading results and as capital in studying other sciences. This reading ability is also important to help students become more confident in analyzing their reading results and articulating their thoughts clearly. According to the American Pediatrics Association, the faster students develop reading skills, the faster they will master other areas of science. In line with the opinion (Tangse, 2022) that reading skills are taught to children with the aim of being able to train children so they can enter a higher level of school. Most children's ability to read and write is a point of success for children during their time at school. Individuals with higher levels of reading and writing have a good chance of social and economic success. Therefore, children's reading and writing skills should be developed from an early age. According to (Chasanah et al., 2021) the most important basic ability that must be mastered in all subjects is the ability to read. Because reading is one aspect of language skills that must be mastered by students at all levels of education. Through this, it is hoped that students can obtain information according to their high reading ability. Children's language skills are important because with this language children can communicate with friends or people around them.

The American Pediatrics Association further stated that improving students' reading abilities is very important, because reading abilities can develop better critical and analytical skills. Reading can also promote Stronger Memory Skills. The American Pediatrics Association reports that reading at an early age can increase academic success in the future. This is in line with what was conveyed by Innovation 2023 that: 1) Children who are proficient in reading will easily experience improved academic abilities, 2) Children with low literacy skills tend to experience further difficulties, 3) In the future, these children will find it increasingly difficult to compete, 4) They can grow into adults who have low self-esteem, give up quickly, and are frustrated, which can cause social problems in society.

According to 2018 PISA data, Indonesia is ranked 72nd out of 78 countries in terms of student literacy data. Furthermore, innovation data from 2019 shows that only 1 in 3 students in the early grades in SD/MI understand what they read. These data show that students' literacy skills are still not optimal. Previous research results also found that students' reading abilities were still not optimal, such as research conducted by (Parawansa et al., 2022); (Afrom, 2013); (Hayati & Setiawan, 2022); (Hijjayati et al., 2022); (Fauziah & Hidayat, 2022); (Muliawanti et al., 2022); (Pratiwi, 2020); (Fatifa Sukamong Bolit, 2014). To help students bridge the gap in reading skills, well-trained and innovative elementary school teachers are needed because they will play an important role in the development of students' minds in this area of literacy.

To equip students with good reading skills, the School uses various strategies to teach reading skills. One of them is TARR learning. This is in line with the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory which states that a person can learn effectively if it is in accordance with their initial abilities and is supported to move to the next level of ability. According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), they found that the TaRL approach has proven to be very effective in improving basic literacy and numeracy skills. According to (Lakhsman: 2019) the TaRL approach has generated interest and curiosity among governments and organizations throughout the African continent. A new initiative co-led by Pratham Education Foundation and J-PAL focuses on adapting TaRL to this new context. Currently TaRL-inspired programming is active in twelve African countries

According to (Jamil & Saeed: 2000) that teaching using the TARR method has been widely tested and rigorously evaluated in India, Africa and others. Consistent with evidence from a series of rigorous randomized evaluations conducted externally by J-PAL of various other TaRL intervention models (Banerjee, Banerji, and Kannan 2015), the findings of this study suggest that the TaRL philosophy supports gains in learning, especially for high-achieving students low.

According to (Marzuki: 2023) that Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) is a learning approach that focuses on the level or ability of the learner. This chosen learning solution is not only for children in Indonesia, but can also be applied to children in Malaysia both through formal and non-formal education channels. Apart from that, immigrant workers can apply Tarl learning independently in the environment where they live.

## **2. METHOD**

This type of research is descriptive research where researchers emphasize humans and see directly the existing conditions without changing the events that occur in the field. descriptive, namely "A data that describes or describes the condition of a subject or object observed at the present time based on visible facts or as they are expressed in words or symbols" (Creswell, 2009: 293). The research period was carried out from February 2023 to July 2023. The research was conducted at SDN 21 Tolomundu for the 2022/2023 academic year. The subjects in this research were students at SDN 21 Tolomundu, consisting of 34 students. The data analysis technique in this research uses percentage techniques. The percentage formula is as follows:

$$P = (X/N) \times 100\%$$

Information:

P: percentage

X: number of students per level

N: total number of students

## **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

In the process of implementing TARK learning, researchers go through several stages in accordance with the TARK learning steps themselves. The following is a description of the results of the research that has been carried out

### **A. Initial Assessment Stage**

Before level-based learning is carried out. First, the researcher conducted an initial test to determine the student's ability level. The test results are as follows:

**Table 1.** Preliminary test results

<b>READING ABILITY LEVEL</b>				
<b>BEGINNER</b>	<b>LETTERS</b>	<b>WORD</b>	<b>P PARAGRAPH</b>	<b>STORY</b>
0 student	1 student	10 student	9 student	13 student
0%	3%	30%	27%	39%

The results of the initial assessment showed that students' reading ability was at beginner level 0, letter level 1 student, word level 10 students, paragraph level 9 students and story level 13 students

### **B. Grouping stage**

At this stage the researcher grouped students based on the level of their reading ability based on the results of the initial tests that had been carried out. The following is the grouping data:

**Table 2.** Grouping

<b>READING ABILITY LEVEL</b>		
Group A (BEGINNERS and LETTERS)	Group B (WORD and PARAGRAPH)	Group c (STORY)
1 student	19 student	13 student

### **C. Learning implementation stage**

At this stage the researcher carried out learning based on groups, namely group A which contained students at beginner and letter level, group B which contained students at word and paragraph level, group C contained students at story level. The following are the learning activities carried out.



**Figure 1.** Learning according to groups



Figure 2. Learning according to groups



Figure 3. Learning according to groups

From the learning activities carried out for approximately two months, the researchers carried out another test to determine the increase in students' reading ability levels. The results are as follows:

Table 3. Results of students' reading ability tests

READING ABILITY LEVEL				
BEGINNER	LETTERS	WORD	P PARAGRAPH	STORY
0	1 student	8 student	8 student	16 student
0%	3%	24%	24%	49%

From the table above, the letter level is 1 student, the word level is 8 students, the paragraph level is 8 students and the story level is 16 students. Based on the test results above, they can be regrouped as shown in the following table.

**Table 4.** Grouping

<b>READING ABILITY LEVEL</b>		
Group A (BEGINNERS and LETTERS)	Group B (WORD and PARAGRAPH)	Group C (STORY)
1 student	16 student	16 student

After grouping, then carry out learning based on these groups as shown in the following picture.



From the learning activities carried out for approximately one and a half months, the researchers carried out another test (3rd test) to determine the increase in students' reading ability levels. From the test results, it can be seen that there has been an increase in the level of students' reading abilities. Beginner and letter levels no longer exist. The following table shows the percentage of students' reading ability levels.

**Table 5.** Results of students' reading ability tests

<b>READING ABILITY LEVEL</b>				
BEGINNER	LETTERS	WORD	P PARAGRAPH	STORY
0	0 student	1 student	13 student	19 student
0%	0%	3%	39%	58%

There is one student at word level or 3%, 13 students at paragraph level or 39% and 19 at story level or 58. Based on the test results above, they can be grouped again as shown in the following table.

**Table 6.** Grouping

<b>READING ABILITY LEVEL</b>			
Group A (BEGINNERS and LETTERS)	Group B (WORD and PARAGRAPH)	Group C (STORY)	
0 student	14 student	19 student	

## Discussion

From the presentation of the research data above, it can be seen that the level of students' reading abilities has increased. The increase in reading level can be seen from the comparison of the results of the first test with the results of the third and third tests as shown in the following table:

**Table 6.** Comparison of students' reading levels

<b>Tes ke-</b>	<b>READING ABILITY LEVEL</b>				
	BEGINNER	LETTERS	WORD	P PARAGRAPH	STORY
3	0	0 student	1 student	13 student	19 student
	0%	0%	3%	39%	58%
2	0	1 student	8 student	8 student	16 student
	0%	3%	24%	24%	49%
1	0 student	1 student	10 student	9 student	13 student
	0%	3%	30%	27%	39%

From the data above, it can be seen that the letter level increased from 3% to 0% in the 3rd test. This indicates that children who were initially at letter level rose to word level and from 30% word level to 3% this indicates that students from the word level has increased to the story level. Likewise, for the paragraph level, the percentage from 27% to 39% initially indicates that many students from the paragraph level have moved up to the story level. At the story level, the initial test data which was only 39% rose to 58%.

From the results above, it appears that the role of teachers and parents in making children's reading skills successful can influence student success. For those who have decided to teach children at the elementary school level, the impact they make on students in this area of basic literacy can be felt for the rest of the student's life. Through the application of TARL learning, students find it easier to learn with groups who have the same ability level. Application of TARL learning This is the most powerful way that reading is important for student success. The results of this research are in line with research conducted by Banerjee et al (2016) that through TARL learning, children's reading abilities can be improved.

Children are organized into groups based on ability level and taught using appropriate levels. Learning objectives are simple and clear, and continuous measurement is used to assess progress. Previous research (Banerjee et al., 2010) shows that the application of Tarl learning significantly improves the reading ability of children who take part in the program. According to Lakhsman, S. (2019), TARL learning begins by preparing a simple assessment tool to be used individually with each child to understand where to start and children will be grouped based on their ability level. Similar assessments are used to track children's progress and restructure strategies.

This is what makes it easier later in the learning process so that it can provide maximum results. Second, learning objectives are clearly articulated so that children, teachers and parents know what they want to achieve. For example, in reading, the goal is to read simple short stories fluently. Third, for instruction, children are grouped according to their current learning level identified in the assessment tool, not by grade. As children make progress, they each move to the next level group. Group size is adjusted to instructor availability.

Fourth, pedagogy relies on the combination of various daily activities to maximize and stimulate different types of learning; for example, to build their knowledge of listening, speaking, performing, reading and writing. Children carry out activities in large groups, in small groups and also individually. Fifth, appropriate teaching materials are developed in both subjects and used in such a way that there are materials for each group and activity.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

It can be seen that the letter level increased from 3% to 0% in the 3rd test. This indicates that children who were initially at letter level rose to word level and from word level 30% to 3% this indicates that students from word level experienced an increase to the story level. Likewise, for the paragraph level, the percentage from 27% to 39% initially indicates that many students from the paragraph level have moved up to the story level. At the story level, the initial test data which was only 39% rose to 58%.

While implementing Tarl Learning to enhance students' reading proficiency proves to be a practical and effective approach for Indonesian migrant workers serving as instructors. Accordingly, it is highly recommended for immigrant workers working in the education sector to be able to apply Tarl learning in Indonesian schools in Malaysia. Apart from that, immigrant workers can apply this independently to equip children to improve their reading skills.

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