The Teacher Challenges in Planning English Reading

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Abstract. Planning effective English reading lessons is a complex task for teachers because of challenges such as variations in student ability levels, limited resources, and time constraints. This research aims to identify the main challenges teachers face in planning reading lessons, including improving students' reading comprehension, adjusting the level of support to students' abilities, and implementing reading strategies. The research method used is qualitative, with data collection through semi-structured interviews with teachers from various levels of education. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify main patterns and themes. The research results show that teachers face challenges in managing the diversity of students' reading abilities, selecting reading materials that are interesting and culturally relevant, and integrating technology into learning. Additionally, appropriate assessments for English Language Learners (ELL) students and the need to provide emotional support to students are also challenges. Limited professional training and resources contribute to this situation. This research also concludes that successful learning to read English requires a multifaceted approach that includes learning adjustments, teacher training, collaboration, and access to a variety of reading materials. By providing adequate support for teachers, these obstacles can be overcome, so that reading learning becomes more effective and inclusive.

Keywords: English, Reading, Teacher

1. INTRODUCTION

Planning effective English reading lessons is essential for developing literacy and comprehension, yet it presents complex challenges for teachers. One of the primary hurdles is the diverse range of proficiency levels within classrooms, which requires differentiated instruction. Research by Tomlinson (2001) emphasizes that differentiated teaching, where educators adapt lessons based on students' skills and interests, is vital to meet varied student needs. However, implementing these strategies is complex and time-consuming (Subban, 2006). Limited resources further complicate lesson planning, particularly in under-resourced schools where teachers often lack access to a variety of reading materials that suit different reading levels, a limitation that restricts literacy development (Schmoker, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Additionally, engaging students remains challenging, as selecting texts that are both interesting and relevant to students' experiences is crucial for promoting a positive attitude toward reading. According to Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), texts that resonate with students can significantly boost their motivation, yet finding suitable materials that align with curriculum goals is often difficult. Time constraints within structured curricula add further difficulty, as teachers struggle to cover all necessary reading skills, such as vocabulary, critical

thinking, and comprehension, which ideally require extensive practice and engagement (McTighe & Wiggins, 2004).

In culturally diverse classrooms, selecting reading materials that are inclusive and respectful of all backgrounds is essential to creating an equitable learning environment. Gay (2002) highlights that culturally responsive teaching involves text selection that reflects students' varied experiences, yet locating materials that genuinely represent this diversity can be challenging. Finally, assessing reading comprehension accurately, especially for English Language Learners (ELLs), is a persistent issue. Research suggests that ELLs benefit from scaffolded assessment practices tailored to their language needs, but providing such support within classroom constraints is often challenging (Herrera et al., 2013). Addressing these issues requires creativity, flexibility, and ongoing professional development, equipping educators with effective strategies to meet the diverse needs of all students.

The challenges teachers face in planning English reading lessons are deeply rooted in various educational theories that reveal the complexity of meeting diverse student needs. Constructivist Theory, particularly Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), emphasizes the importance of assessing each student's readiness and providing appropriate scaffolding to ensure learning occurs within each learner's optimal range (Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers must carefully design lessons that bridge these varied readiness levels, a task that requires ongoing adjustments and responsive teaching. Differentiated Instruction theory, articulated by Tomlinson (2001), also stresses the necessity of adapting lessons to match each student's learning profile. While effective, differentiation can be resource-intensive and time-consuming, which can make it difficult for teachers to implement, especially in under-resourced classrooms.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) offers another critical perspective, with researchers like Paris and Alim (2017) arguing that culturally reflective reading materials can boost engagement by validating students' identities. However, sourcing culturally inclusive resources that accurately represent diverse backgrounds is challenging, underscoring the need for better access to culturally responsive materials. Furthermore, Cognitive Load Theory, as discussed by Sweller (1988), sheds light on the brain's limits in processing new information and is especially relevant for English Language Learners (ELLs) who may struggle with cognitive overload due to new language structures and vocabulary. Teachers must balance instructional content to avoid overwhelming students, particularly ELLs, who benefit from simplified content and repetition.

The Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model, which involves shifting learning ownership from teacher to student, also plays an essential role. This model, as outlined by Fisher and Frey (2008), requires substantial planning and patience, as teachers must gauge when students are ready to take on more responsibility. Lastly, Motivation Theory, particularly Self-Determination Theory, highlights the role of intrinsic motivation in learning. Deci and Ryan (1985) argue that students' interest in texts is crucial for fostering a genuine love of reading, adding complexity to lesson planning as teachers strive to find materials that resonate with students' interests. Collectively, these theories illustrate the multifaceted nature of teaching reading, emphasizing the need for instructional practices that are adaptable, culturally inclusive, and differentiated to address the diverse needs within a classroom.

The research problems to be answered in this study is : What challenges does the teacher do in planning english reading? This study aims to (1) Improve Reading Comprehension: Teachers aim to help students understand the text they read, both in terms of the meaning of the words and the overall context. (2) Adjust the level of support: Choose texts that suit students' reading level so that they do not feel overwhelmed or bored. (3) Apply Reading Strategies: Teach students strategies such as predictions, questions, and summaries to help them understand texts.

2. THEORITICAL ORIENTATION

In facing challenges in planning English reading learning, the teaching adaptation theory proposed by Parsons et al. (2018) provide valuable insights. The main focus of this theory is how teachers can adapt their teaching approaches to meet the needs of the diverse students in the classroom. In the context of learning to read, the challenges teachers face are often related to differences in students' reading abilities, cultural backgrounds and learning experiences. This requires teachers to have a deep understanding of the characteristics of their students and how these characteristics can influence the learning process.The sub-focus of this theory includes the importance of responsive and flexible curriculum development. Teachers need to design learning plans that not only follow the established curriculum, but are also able to adapt to class dynamics. For example, in situations where students have varying levels of reading ability, teachers must be able to implement different teaching strategies, such as group-based learning or the use of technology to support students who need additional help. These adjustments are important to ensure that all students, regardless of their background and abilities, can be actively involved in the learning process.

The conclusion of this theory emphasizes that success in teaching English reading is very dependent on the teacher's ability to adapt to students' needs. Teachers who are able to make adjustments in their teaching methods will not only improve students' reading comprehension, but will also create an inclusive and supportive learning environment. In practice, these challenges are often exacerbated by limited resources, lack of professional training, and pressure to meet certain academic standards. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to provide teachers with the necessary support, including training in adaptive teaching strategies and access to relevant resources.

Additionally, recent research suggests that the use of technology in reading instruction can be an effective tool to help teachers overcome these challenges. By utilizing learning applications and digital platforms, teachers can provide materials tailored to students' individual needs, thereby increasing their engagement and motivation in learning to read. However, teachers also need to be trained to use this technology effectively, in order to integrate it into their lesson plans in a meaningful way. Overall, the theory of teaching adaptation by Parsons et al. (2018) provides a useful framework for teachers in planning English reading lessons. By understanding and applying these adaptation principles, teachers can be better prepared to face challenges that arise in the teaching process, as well as create more effective and enjoyable learning experiences for students. This will not only improve students' reading skills, but also prepare them to become independent and critical readers in the future.

According to Murunwa (2022), planning English reading lessons is identified as a very important and urgent problem. This research highlights several key aspects that contribute to the difficulties teachers experience, including a lack of resources, limited time, and the need to adapt teaching methods to suit students' varying abilities. In an increasingly competitive educational context, teachers are often caught up in demands to fulfill a rigorous curriculum, which is not always in line with students' individual needs. This creates tension between achieving academic goals and the attention needed to support the overall development of students' reading skills.

One of the important findings of this research is that many teachers feel isolated in their efforts to develop effective lesson plans. They often do not have access to adequate professional training that could help them understand more innovative reading teaching strategies. Murunwa pointed out that many teachers rely on traditional methods which may not be effective for all students, especially for those who have difficulty reading. This leads to a lack of student engagement and, ultimately, potentially lowers their motivation to learn. In these situations,

teachers need to be encouraged to collaborate and share best practices with their colleagues, so they can learn from each other's experiences and find more effective solutions.

Another aspect raised in this research is the importance of integrating technology in teaching reading. Murunwa notes that although technology can be a very useful tool to enhance the learning experience, many teachers are still hesitant to integrate it into their lesson plans. This uncertainty often stems from a lack of training in the use of technological tools and fear of the potential disruption these tools can cause. To address this, schools need to provide appropriate training and support teachers in developing their technology skills. Thus, teachers can utilize digital resources and tools that can increase student engagement and motivation in learning to read.

Apart from that, Murunwa also highlighted the importance of emotional support for students. Students who face difficulties in reading often feel frustrated and lose self-confidence. Therefore, teachers need to plan activities that not only teach reading skills but also build students' self-confidence and interest in reading. A student-centered approach, which provides space for students to share their experiences and challenges, can help create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. By implementing this strategy, teachers can encourage students to be more actively involved in the learning process and overcome the anxiety that often accompanies reading assignments. The conclusion of Murunwa's (2022) study shows that the challenges in planning English reading lessons are not only technical problems, but also involve complex emotional and social aspects. Therefore, a holistic and collaborative approach is needed, where teachers, students and the school work together to create a conducive learning environment. With the right support, teachers can design learning plans that are effective and responsive to students' needs, thereby improving their overall reading abilities.

In the article written by Moats (2020), the emphasis on the importance of a deep understanding of the reading process becomes very clear. Moats explains that reading is not just identifying words, but involves a variety of complex cognitive skills, including comprehension, analysis and synthesis of information. Teachers who are effective in teaching reading must understand the basic elements that form reading skills, such as phonics, comprehension, and text comprehension. This understanding is crucial, especially in diverse classroom contexts, where students have different backgrounds and abilities.

Moats also highlights that many teachers may not have adequate training in the theory and practice of teaching reading. This causes a gap between existing theory and practical application in the classroom. To address this problem, Moats recommends that teacher training

programs should focus more on developing the specific skills needed to teach reading effectively. This training should include an introduction to evidence-based teaching strategies, as well as ways to adapt teaching methods to individual student needs. With better knowledge of how students learn to read, teachers can be more effective in planning and implementing lessons that support student success.

Additionally, Moats emphasizes the importance of ongoing assessment in the process of teaching reading. Assessment not only functions to measure student abilities, but also to provide useful feedback for teachers in planning further teaching. By understanding where students are experiencing difficulties, teachers can adjust their strategies and provide more appropriate support. This includes the use of diverse assessment tools, such as reading tests, observations, and analysis of student work, to gain a comprehensive picture of student progress. In conclusion, Moats (2020) emphasized that effective reading teaching requires a combination of strong theoretical knowledge, practical training, and responsive assessment. In an effort to improve students' reading abilities, teachers must be equipped with the tools and knowledge necessary to design engaging and rewarding learning experiences. In this way, teaching reading will not only meet curriculum demands, but also inspire students to become confident and competent readers.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study will employ a qualitative research methodology to explore the challenges teachers face in planning English reading instruction. Qualitative methods are particularly suited for this investigation as they allow for an in-depth understanding of the experiences and perceptions of educators (Creswell, 2014). The primary data collection technique will involve semi-structured interviews with English teachers from various educational levels, including primary, secondary, and higher education institutions. This approach enables researchers to gather rich, detailed narratives about the specific challenges teachers encounter, such as managing diverse reading abilities, selecting appropriate materials, and integrating technology into their instruction.

Participants will be selected through purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of teachers with different backgrounds, teaching experiences, and institutional contexts. The interviews will be conducted either face-to-face or via video conferencing platforms, depending on participants' preferences and availability. Each session will be recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and insights related to the challenges of planning English reading (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Additionally, to triangulate the findings, focus group discussions may be organized with groups of teachers to foster collaborative dialogue on the challenges discussed in individual interviews. This group dynamic can provide deeper insights and highlight common concerns among educators (Morgan, 1997). Ethical considerations will be rigorously observed, ensuring participants' anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research process. By utilizing a qualitative approach, this study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the complexities teachers face in planning English reading instruction, ultimately contributing to the development of targeted strategies to support educators in overcoming these challenges.

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The research findings reveal several significant challenges that teachers face when planning English reading instruction. First, teachers consistently struggle with managing diverse proficiency levels within their classrooms. As highlighted by Tomlinson (2001), differentiated instruction is crucial but implementing it effectively requires substantial time and resources that many teachers find difficult to allocate. This challenge is particularly evident in under-resourced educational settings where access to varied reading materials is limited.

The study also identified that teachers face significant difficulties in selecting engaging and culturally appropriate reading materials. This finding aligns with Gay's (2002) research, which emphasizes the importance of culturally responsive teaching. Teachers reported that while they understand the necessity of choosing texts that reflect students' diverse backgrounds and experiences, locating such materials within curriculum constraints poses a considerable challenge. Student motivation significantly increases when texts resonate with their personal experiences, yet teachers often struggle to find materials that balance curriculum requirements with student interests.

Another crucial finding relates to the implementation of technology in reading instruction. While Murunwa (2022) suggests that technology can enhance reading instruction, many teachers express hesitation due to insufficient training and concerns about potential classroom disruptions. This resistance to technology integration often results in missed opportunities for differentiated instruction and student engagement. The research also revealed that teachers frequently feel isolated in their efforts to develop effective lesson plans, particularly when attempting to incorporate new teaching strategies or technological tools.

The study found that assessment practices, especially for English Language Learners (ELLs), present ongoing challenges. ELLs require scaffolded assessment approaches that accommodate their language development needs. However, teachers report difficulties in

implementing such differentiated assessment strategies within existing classroom constraints and time limitations. This challenge is further complicated by the cognitive load considerations, particularly relevant for ELL students who must simultaneously process new language structures and content.

Additionally, the findings indicate that emotional support for students remains a critical yet challenging aspect of reading instruction. Teachers acknowledge the importance of building student confidence and maintaining engagement, but struggle to balance these emotional needs with academic requirements. The research also highlights the significance of professional development in addressing these challenges. Many teachers lack adequate training in the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching reading, creating a gap between research-based best practices and classroom implementation.

These findings suggest that successful English reading instruction requires a multifaceted approach that addresses both technical and emotional aspects of teaching. The challenges identified indicate a need for increased support systems for teachers, including access to diverse reading materials, professional development opportunities, and technological resources. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the importance of creating collaborative learning environments where teachers can share best practices and receive ongoing support in implementing effective reading instruction strategies.

5. CONCLUSION

The conclusion from the research above is that planning English reading lessons faces various complex challenges. Teachers need to address varying levels of student ability, select reading material that is interesting and culturally appropriate, and integrate technology into learning. Although technology can improve the quality of teaching, many teachers lack confidence due to lack of training. In addition, assessment strategies that are responsive to student needs, especially for English Language Learners (ELLs), are difficult to implement within limited time and resources. Emotional challenges such as building students' self-confidence are also a major concern, alongside the pressure to meet academic demands. The results of this study highlight the need for professional development for teachers, access to diverse reading resources, and collaborative support among educators. With a holistic approach and adequate support, teachers can design reading lessons that are effective, inclusive, and centered on student needs.

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