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## Challenges and creativities in encouraging students to read in English language lessons: In-depth interview with junior high school teachers

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### ABSTRACT

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#### Keywords:

*challenge; creativity;  
curriculum; emancipatory  
learning; reading*

This research investigates the challenges faced by English teachers in motivating junior high students to read within the context of implementing an emancipatory curriculum in Indonesia. Utilizing a semi-structured in-depth interview method, the study, conducted in four government schools in Pontianak in 2023, engaged four English teachers as respondents and one as an interviewer. Respondents were chosen based on their active involvement in daily professional activities. Following a predetermined interview protocol, the interviewer conducted one-on-one sessions, exploring teachers' experiences, opinions, and emotions regarding efforts to promote English reading in their schools. The collected data underwent coding and interpretation, revealing teachers as crucial facilitators creatively addressing challenges, particularly in student motivation. Their adaptability and innovative programs foster diverse reading engagement strategies. Schools implement enhancements such as differentiated learning and literacy programs, extending to character development and teacher professionalism. Those efforts were the teachers' creativity to elevate English teaching and learning in those four schools, particularly to promote reading activities during the early implementation of emancipatory curriculum. The findings emphasize the necessity for ongoing professional development, collaboration to address resource challenges, and the promotion of effective communication and collaboration among educators to enhance student engagement through innovative teaching.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The rate of reading literacy among Indonesian students has always been a concerning matter. While countries such as Singapore, Ireland, and Japan thrive on their students' rate of reading literacy, Indonesian students appear to be struggling. In the PISA 2022, the position of Indonesia was in the 71st rank out of 81 countries (OECD Education and Skills Today, 2023). Every five years, PISA assesses the reading performance, mathematics performance, and science performance of the participating countries. The situation of Indonesian students' reading performance naturally would affect their overall learning achievement. A comprehensive analysis, conducted by systematically reviewing available online literature, revealed that each school level encounters challenges in teaching reading, especially in large classes. These challenges are unique to each level, prompting the development of specific strategies (Istiqomah et al., 2023). In Jordan, a study on reading at schools found that the respondents suggested the necessity for a curriculum overhaul, incorporating extracurricular reading, supplying engaging reading materials, creating cozy reading spaces, and highlighting the pivotal role of parents in fostering their children's reading habits through exemplary behavior (Banihani & Abu-Ashour, 2015). Whereas, Channa et al. (2015) found the importance of involving metacognitive strategies

in improving reading comprehension skill and Sukhram & Hsu (2012) suggest a collaboration with parents.

As the answer to the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, the curriculum in Indonesia itself has passed through changes. Formerly, Kurikulum Darurat, transliterated as Emergency Curriculum, was implemented which refers to the 2013 Curriculum with simplified basic competencies. Afterward, the Indonesian government provides an additional choice of curriculum program, namely *Kurikulum Merdeka* or translated as 'emancipatory curriculum', for improving the learning outcomes which is at hand during the year 2022 to 2024 (Bangkara, Manullang, Pratiwi, Husen, & Sabtohadhi, 2022). Emancipatory curriculum is believed to shift from the monotonous classes to the opportunity for learners to have student-centered exploration and discussion (Pertiwi & Pusparini, 2021). This tends to be the positive seed to overcome the learning crisis being faced these past years. The crisis is obvious from the students' learning outcomes, particularly in terms of their reading literacy (Pratikno, Hermawan, & Arifin, 2022).

Encouraging learners to read is essential in education because they can learn many competencies through reading. Reading is one of the four basic language skills which tends to appear as an elaborate action. Reading can increase our insight and add useful information (Rohmana & Amalia). It lies on the reason that reading does not only emerge as a receptive skill but also requires individuals' productive skill, by now. The addressed term can be spotted when the individuals obtain and apprehend the reading content (receptive), and then provide their viewpoints or solutions towards the content they read (productive) (Okasha, 2020). The term renders the readers' brain sculpting into keenness. It is due to the new information obtained and mental representation from the text being well-integrated with owned prior understanding (Zulianti & Hastomo, 2022). In other words, reading is the skill that promotes individuals to be skilled in functioning their cognitive thinkers to receive inputs and produce outputs and so forth. More importantly, the latest PISA result reports that Indonesian learners' reading ability has decreased very sharply during the late ten years (OECD, 2023).

The ability to obtain information through reading can help individuals to gain many benefits. Referring to Tomlinson (2023), the materials that can be used to learn language skills, including reading, vary from printed to digital materials. In Indonesian context, Wijayanti (2020) suggests that reading literacy is important to influence the development of intelligence and emotion. It helps the students become more intelligent while shaping students emotions as well. If the students enjoyed and had enthusiasm in reading activity, they also showed the improvement of their reading skill (Rahmawati, 2021). Therefore, with the proper rate of reading literacy, the human resources of a country are set to only improve. The importance of reading also obvious in the vast growing of technology. The explosion of Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) has shaped the world into a more advanced environment (Malik, 2018). It was reported that global internet users had increased by 9.15% or 367 million users, in 2019 from the previous year (Wijayanti, 2020). Together with the increase of internet users, social media users and other platform users also increase. The downside is that the students get distracted more because of it. Although the development of ICT for education is a massive improvement, it also is not free from a downside.

Although several studies related to the topic of challenges faced by teachers in teaching English, Such as Salam et al. (2023) and Rochsantiningasih and Aniq (2023) who studied challenges in using technology, little to no number of them study the challenges specific to teaching or encouraging reading in the setting of the Indonesian emancipatory curriculum implementation (Indonesian term: "*Kurikulum Merdeka*"). With the newly implemented

curriculum, a thorough understanding of the matter is desperately needed. This study aims to analyze teachers' challenges in encouraging reading and its countermeasures in the setting of the emancipatory curriculum at the junior high school level. The main questions that drive this study are: "What are the challenges that the teachers experienced in their attempts to encourage reading among their students?" and "What are the creativities of the teachers in overcoming the challenges in their attempts to encourage reading among their students? The purposes of this study are to describe the challenges that the teachers experienced in their attempts to encourage reading among their students and to portray the teachers' creativity in overcoming the challenges in their attempts to encourage reading among their students.

## 2. METHOD

To achieve the aim, we used in-depth interview research method, particularly semi-structured interview (Knott et al., 2022). There were four respondents in this study that were chosen based on institutional and professional criteria. The institutional criterion that we used were the junior high schools that had been implementing the emancipated learning curriculum and the professional criterion was that the teacher had taught English for more than ten years. All of the respondents were English teachers at four different government/public junior high schools that had been implementing the curriculum in Pontianak city and had taught the English language subject for more than 13 years when the interviews were conducted. In addition, every respondent had an undergraduate degree in English Language Education and one of them held a master's degree in English language education.

The interviewer was an experienced English teacher who held a bachelor and master's degree in English language education. The interviewer knew the respondents very well. Beside she graduated from the same university and department as where the respondents studied, she also often met them in the local English teacher communities in Pontianak. The interviews were conducted by appointment in relax and friendly situations right after *Eid al Fithri* season.

Referring to an interview protocol that was prepared beforehand, an interviewer asked questions one-on-one about the teachers' experience, opinions, and feelings in relation to their attempts to promote reading English materials in their schools. The data obtained through the interviews, then, were coded and interpreted. The coding process consisted of initial coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding or interpretation.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 3.1 Results

#### 3.1.1 Reading not main focus, no school reading program: Teachers must motivate students to read through literacy hours

Based on the nature of the Emancipatory curriculum, it was clear that reading alone was not its focus. The emancipatory curriculum gave the equal portions toward all language skills. In other words, every skill was important in their own way. However, since this study only focused on the reading aspect, the teachers only elaborated on their experiences in teaching reading.

With the implementation of the emancipatory curriculum, the teachers began to be creative in their teaching reading. In regards to the techniques, they were similar to the techniques used in the previous curriculum. However, the focus and the way of teaching were different. In other words, the techniques were similar but the teachers used only the techniques that supported the emancipatory curriculum. Based on whether they supported the emancipatory curriculum, the teachers began to use techniques that they had never and/or rarely used before to encourage

students' interest in reading. Among them are methods, such as social-emotional learning, and project-based learning. As for technique, one of the teachers used a technique called the puzzle technique. According to the teacher, the puzzle technique received positive results from the students. The teacher explained when her puzzle technique's success was asked:

*"Most of them were successful to complete the puzzles. The students have to read over and over again."* (T4-19)

In terms of innovative programs to promote reading, one teacher suggested that the school had yet to have a program focused only on reading. They also had yet to have a proper appreciation for the students who were diligent in reading. On the other hand, one of the teachers had created a mini-program called "*Gerakan Literasi Menuju Tradisi*" (literacy movement toward reading tradition) as a means to encourage students to read during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the program, the students were asked to create videos of books' synopsis and posted the video on their social media. So the students could get and give likes and comments to other students. The teacher explained the details of the activity as follows.

*"I created this activity in the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic. So I wanted the student's reading routine to sustain even during the pandemic. Because they didn't come to school, I made this mini program to motivate children at home so that they can read."* (T1-20)

It could be concluded that the teachers used various ways of teaching reading. They attempted to be creative in the hope that the students would be encouraged to read. The use of various techniques, strategies, tools, and even a new program suggested that the teachers were innovative in their own ways.

When it came to teaching, learning, and reading, the schools had several ways to improve them. The efforts of improvement could be categorized into three. The first way was related to the strategies. The second way was resources. Meanwhile, the third was appreciation.

### **3.1.2 Differentiated instructions: Getting more prepared and better planning**

Schools took various strategies to improve teaching, learning, and reading activities. In teaching reading, these included implementing differentiated instructions. One of the teachers took students' interest as a consideration for the texts that would be used during reading. Regarding learning, the teachers suggested the students read before class at home or read during free time between classes. One of the teachers even gave the students an assignment to summarize their reading text, and later they would present their assignment at school. Focusing only on reading, the schools also implemented literacy programs. It was when the students had to read for several minutes before the first class began every school day, and the students were in complete control over the texts that they wanted to read. However, the teachers still hold the control, to some extent, in to monitor students' reading and made sure that it was appropriate for them. This was explained by Respondent C as she stated:

*"In the literacy hours, students were encouraged to explore various reading materials, including magazines, books, novels, dictionaries, storybooks, course books, comics, and other items of interest. However, the materials were selected based on the students' psychological ages to ensure appropriateness."* (T3-4)

To increase reading activities, schools provide facilities in the form of adequate internet networks, books, the reading corner, the library, computers, and projectors that can be used in teaching and learning activities. Not only that, but most of the schools also gave appreciation to the teachers who promoted reading. They showed their appreciation by providing full support toward the activities that the teachers carried out, facilities that were free to use, and increasing

the book collections at school. However, the data suggested that one of the schools had not openly given their appreciation for the teachers.

The data showed that generally teachers' involvement in reading activities included directing, modelling, monitoring, designing, and conducting evaluations or assessments. One of the schools even required teachers to carry out teacher's reflection. However, on an individual level, every teacher had different experiences when it came to reading.

Respondent A began the teaching and learning of reading by mapping the students based on their abilities and interests. The results of this mapping process helped the teacher to provide relevant reading texts. The use of relevant reading text resulted in the students being more enthusiastic. During the learning process, the teacher used methods, such as problem-based learning, and project-based learning. For example, in project-based learning, the teacher asked the students to make videos about their reading texts. Meanwhile, in problem-based learning, the teacher provided activities in the form of games, quizzes, or worksheets that suited their needs. She explained the importance:

*"I provided them with readings that suit their interests, and they accepted the text depending on the titles of the readings. They were encouraged."* (T1-10)

Respondent B adjusted his reading activities based on themes. For example, descriptive text for grade 7 students. The teacher explained that he usually asked the students to read several paragraphs in front of the class. After that, together they would discuss the composition of the text they had read. The teacher also gave questions related to the text. From this activity, the teacher found various reactions from the students. Some students were shy. Some students were already fluent, yet some others were still stuttering. He explained that teachers needed to be patient when it came to teach various kind of students.

Respondent C explained that many of the 7th-grade students at the school were new to English. So the teacher had to teach English from the very start. The teacher used media such as YouTube, PowerPoint, and short animations to help students learn English more easily. Usually, the teacher also modelled the reading texts themselves. After that, students practiced their reading in front of the class. The teacher claimed that there were students who could read straight away, but there were also those who still stammered. This was influenced by the comprehension power of each student. If many students were still lacking in reading, then the material would be repeated. The teacher explained that activities like this made students very enthusiastic about reading.

*"They were very enthusiastic and some of them even learned to read this from YouTube and Games. So they really enjoyed learning to say English words or learning new vocabulary in English."* (T3-10)

Respondent D explained that in the emancipatory curriculum, teachers gave students more freedom regarding their learning. So, during the teaching and learning of reading, the teacher usually started with an example of one title of reading to students. Later, the teacher and the students discussed the reading. Then, the teacher asked the students to search for another title that they wanted. After that, they would do brainstorming and mind-mapping. It can be figured out that despite some students were already good in reading, some were still lacking. So to help encourage students to read, the teachers used various means, such as credits, compliments, motivations, scaffolding, and rewards. In terms of rewards, one of the teachers usually gave simple rewards, such as a pen, chocolate, candy, or a dictionary. Not only that, but a teacher also used technological media such as Kekeru Application. Moreover, they also used techniques, for example quantum reading technique. It was still unclear whether every means of encouragement

was effective or not. However, one of the teachers suggested that the use of rewards worked effectively.

### 3.1.3. Coping with students' and schools' problems

The modifications in the emancipatory curriculum posed challenges that impacted the teaching and learning of reading. These challenges, particularly in the realm of language skills, stemmed from various factors, including environmental conditions, school dynamics, curriculum adjustments, and student-related issues. The emancipatory curriculum promoted the use of technology in the classroom. Apparently, the data suggested that the condition was rather complicated. Usually, the teacher would use phones as a learning medium. This use of technology devices possessed the risk of the devices being broken and/or lost. To avoid such a case, the teacher carefully stored and kept the devices when the devices were not used after naming or marking the devices.

The next challenge came from the schools, one of the teachers explained that the school was yet to support reading in the emancipatory curriculum. This was suggested by the lack of English course books. The condition was obviously a problem for the students in their learning process. To minimize the impact, the teacher relied on group activities. With group activities, students could learn together. Students who did not have books could join their friends who own one.

Another challenge came from the curriculum itself. The focus on differentiated learning required the teachers to be more creative, and to have different activities for students. In reading, this meant different texts with a wide range of themes or topics. This gave the teachers an important responsibility. Resulting in the teacher felt more tired than usual as stated by Respondent A:

*“In the past we designed one text for everyone in one class, but now they can get different texts in just one class. This is a challenge for teachers in preparing teaching materials for students, and this makes teachers very tired.” (T1-14)*

The teachers also mentioned the challenges that came from the students themselves. The data suggested that some students had no prior knowledge of English. They had never learned English before they got into junior high school. This became a difficulty for both the teacher and the students. To help ease the problem, the teacher spared some time to consult the students and suggested the students who were capable to join some kind of courses outside the school. Another finding also suggested that, in reading, challenges from the students were highly influenced by the students' behavior and motivation. Some students were low in motivation to read. To fix this problem, the teacher gave constant motivation to push students to read with strategies such as brainstorming and mind mapping.

### 3.1.4 Methodological challenges as opportunities for creativities

Through long and consistent development, Indonesia's education system has come up with a new curriculum known as the emancipatory curriculum. It is a curriculum that encourages the students' freedom to learn. Therefore, this curriculum had many changes compared to its predecessors. The data pointed out that, despite many changes, the fundamental distinction between the emancipatory curriculum and the previous curriculums in the use of differentiated learning. As stated by respondent B:

*“The change lies in the method or teaching approach because before teaching, we need to know the characteristics of the students. That's why in the emancipated curriculum, there is a learning system with differentiation.” (T2-7)*

Differentiated learning itself is an approach that focuses on students' capabilities and characteristics. As a result, the learning activities relied heavily on pre-diagnostic tests, students' comprehension ability, and various assessment processes. Another apparent distinction between the emancipatory curriculum and the previous one was the implementation of P5 activities. These P5 activities were a program that was used for the purpose of developing students' characteristics. In nature, the emancipatory curriculum is student-centered learning. The teachers suggested that the use of differentiated learning, which is strongly student-centered, brought freedom to the students and the teachers. Respondent A stated:

*"The emancipatory curriculum not only makes students independent learners but also empowers teachers to be independent in teaching. So, we are the ones who can determine the characteristics of our students." (T1-7)*

The amount of freedom increased students' motivation and the quality of their characters. If reading was to be concerned, students' reading interest seemed to increase as well. It can be concluded that the changes had gathered positive responses from the students. From the school and teachers' side, the emancipatory curriculum did not receive significant resistance. However, there were several minor issues among the teachers. Some teachers claimed that programs such as training were still lacking. It resulted in the teachers experiencing some confusion along the process.

They did their best to work based on what the government expected of them, including preparing, performing, assessing, and evaluating the teaching and learning process. They positioned themselves as the facilitator and mediator during the processes. They provided what was necessary for the school, students, and themselves based on the Curriculum. Respondent C's claim summarized the teachers' role as stated:

*"My role is that of a facilitator or mediator to convey messages or directives from the government regarding the implementation of the emancipatory curriculum to be delivered to the students. As a teacher, my role also involves assessing and reviewing the desired outcomes set by our government, which are obtained from the achievements of the students." (T3-2)*

Before actually teaching students in the classroom, teachers had to make necessary preparations. That included constructing the learning module, learning media, and learning material that suited the emancipatory curriculum. During the process of learning, teachers' jobs as facilitators and mediators include guiding and instructing the students. Only then they would be able to properly assess and evaluate the teaching and learning processes.

### **3.1.5. Assessment, improvement, and opportunities**

The teachers suggested that assessment was an important part of improvement. Group and individual assessments are used to clarify student abilities. The results of the assessment were later used by teachers to reconsider what they needed to improve. For example, early assessment was used to see the students' initial ability in reading. For students who were considered skilful, the teacher would suggest they help those who were not so skilful. The teacher also asked the students who were not skilful to do reading drills.

As for evaluation, it was similar to assessment but with deeper consideration. This was where the teachers discussed and reflected upon the results gathered assessment. The evaluation could be done through observation or several assessments, such as formative assessment, summative assessment, and project or work assessment. The results of those assessments would be recorded in students' reports and ANBK or the national assessment. In the evaluation, the results of the

assessments would be discussed, and the results would suggest what should be improved next. This was discussed by Respondent D as such:

*That (evaluation) was evident in the students' reports, especially in the ANBK; we knew the results. Subsequently, it was discussed by the teachers and in the meeting with the local government education service. All teachers were aware and sought solutions to address the problems, revealing that the literacy level of the children was still low. (T4-16)*

For the teachers, opportunities for improvement could emerge through government programs concerning the emancipatory curriculum such as PMM and BGP, and more. To develop human resources in schools, the teachers took part in activities that were able to improve themselves. The most famous activity that was normally participated in by many teachers was the MGMP. It was an activity that was usually held once a week. However, not all teachers participated in this activity, so teachers who do not take part in MGMP would take part in other training such as online training, socialization of IKM, or implementation of the emancipatory curriculum, and workshops. Some of the activities above are organized by the Education Department, some were also organized by the schools independently.

Through various means the schools and the teachers used for the sake of teaching, learning, and reading in the emancipatory curriculum, several improvements became apparent. This was suggested by the literacy program that ran efficiently and the emancipatory curriculum which was implemented without any significant disadvantage. One of the teachers also suggested that the real evidence of this improvement was marked by students' reactions which were enthusiastic and happy.

Nowadays opportunities for improvement could be seen emerging in schools. These improvements were related to the development of student characters, and the increase of literacy support. As the new curriculum kept being implemented, students began to show more positive trait such as bravery, confident, and courtesy to each other. Respondent A explained:

*"The development of competencies in terms of character... They became more confident. Those who were initially shy became courageous. In expressing their opinions, they learned to respect differences of opinion among their peers. Moreover, they gained knowledge and valuable values through the literacy activities they engaged in." (T1-21)*

Apart from that, other improvement programs had also begun to emerge in schools such as students' bulletin competition programs in schools to explore students' potential and support literacy.

## **3.2 Discussions**

### **3.2.1 Teachers support the changes but they need trainings or improvements**

One overarching theme emerging from the findings is the student-centered nature of the emancipatory curriculum. The teachers consistently reported that differentiated learning, which places students at the center of their teaching and learning implementation, empowers students and enhances their motivation and character development. Encouragingly, it was noted that students' interest in reading appeared to increase under this curriculum, further highlighting its positive impact.

Based on the perspective of schools and teachers, the data suggest that the emancipatory curriculum faced limited resistance during its implementation. However, some teachers expressed



concerns, particularly regarding the availability of training programs. This shortage of training resources occasionally led to confusion among teachers as they navigated the new curriculum.

Moreover, the curriculum's emphasis on differentiated learning places a substantial burden on teachers, demanding creativity and the development of diverse activities to cater to students' individual needs and abilities. This is in line with a study that was conducted by Salam (2023). This challenge can be mentally and physically taxing for teachers as they strive to provide varied reading materials and engage students effectively. The teacher's fatigue in managing these diverse demands highlights the demanding nature of the emancipatory curriculum and the need for ongoing professional development to equip teachers with the necessary skills and strategies to meet these challenges effectively.

### **3.2.2 Preparations and assessments are essentials**

In addition to this, the research participants believed that teachers are integral to the education process and play a pivotal role in the successful implementation of any curriculum. This role becomes even more pronounced in *sekolah penggerak* (lead schools), where the promotion and modeling of the emancipatory curriculum are central to their mission. They indicated a strong commitment to aligning their work with the government's expectations, encompassing preparation, execution, assessment, and evaluation of the teaching and learning processes. Besides, they also positioned themselves as facilitators and mediators during these processes, adapting their roles to ensure the curriculum's effective delivery. Their efforts were directed towards meeting the unique needs of the school, students, and themselves, all guided by the principles and goals of the emancipatory curriculum.

In practical terms, the study highlighted the significant preparation undertaken by teachers before entering the classroom. This included the development of learning modules, educational media, and materials following the requirements of the emancipatory curriculum. Regarding the various types of materials as suggested by Tomlinson (2023), the teachers were eased by the rich sources of reading. Once in the classroom, teachers assumed their roles as facilitators and mediators, guiding and instructing students in line with the curriculum's student-centered approach. This active involvement of teachers was recognized as essential for the proper assessment and evaluation of the teaching and learning processes.

### **3.2.3 Teachers communities can help**

It is an important attempt to provide valuable insights into how teachers engage with and learn the emancipatory curriculum. In further developing the human resources in schools, teachers actively participate in a range of activities aimed at self-improvement. As suggested by Ikhsanudin (2021) teachers need forum that consist of educators and experts where they can share problems, solutions, ideas, and information for their professional development.

Among these activities, the local English teachers' community (MGMP) regular gathering that many teachers attend. However, it is noteworthy that not all teachers participate in gathering, and those who do not engage in this specific activity often seek professional growth through alternative avenues such as online training, socialization of emancipatory curriculum implementation and workshops. These diverse opportunities for professional development, some organized by the local governments and others initiated independently by schools, underscore the teachers' commitment to continually enhance their teaching skills and adapt to the evolving educational landscape and curriculum. These activities at least can help narrow the gap between the teachers' perceptions on the importance of technology and the real actual integration as found in Rochsantiningsih & Aniq (2023).

### **3.2.4 Reading programs need multifaceted supports**

In their recent systematic review research, Istiqomah et al. (2023) found that junior and senior high school students needed to be engaged in enjoyable and meaningful group reading activities. The finding implies the necessity of a reading program that involves collaborative learning methods and enjoyable group reading activities. This can also be facilitated by leveraging technology and digital platforms to provide students with a more immersive reading experience in large classrooms.

One of the notable challenges relates to the integration of technology in the classroom, a feature promoted by the emancipatory curriculum. While technology can enhance learning experiences, the data revealed that its use presented complications. Teachers often utilized smartphones as learning tools, but this approach carried the risk of devices being damaged or lost. To mitigate this risk, teachers took precautionary measures, such as carefully storing and labeling devices when not in use. This challenge highlights the need for schools to provide adequate resources and support for the successful implementation of technology-driven learning, ensuring that it does not hinder the educational process. In addition, as suggested by Sukhram & Hsu (2015), a collaboration with parents can be initiated.

Another significant challenge comes from the schools themselves, particularly in terms of resource availability. One teacher noted a lack of English lesson books, which posed a barrier to students' learning experiences. In response, teachers resorted to group activities, fostering collaborative learning among students. This adaptive approach allowed students without access to books to participate in shared reading experiences. However, it also underscores the importance of adequate educational resources to support effective teaching and learning. So, because the emancipated curriculum is relatively new, it is not necessary to act as radical as what are suggested Banihani & Abu-Ashour (2015) that is reforming the curriculum. Involving metacognitive strategies is developing reading, as suggested by Channa et al (2015), can be a very good attempt.

### **3.2.5 On preparing the students to be readers**

The study on finding the teachers' challenges and creativity in encouraging students to read which is in the state of the emancipatory curriculum has been uncovered. The challenges were related to the environments, schools, curriculum, and students themselves. The lack of technology in the school environments made it hard to implement the emancipatory curriculum as its demand for technology use in the classroom. Moreover, the lack of English lesson books for reading is the second challenge. Other than that, the emphasis on differentiated learning demands that teachers be mentally and physically ready to create varied reading materials seems to be a burden on teachers. The challenge also refers to the students' reading motivation. Mostly, they were not involved with the reading habits, especially the English contents/texts.

Those gained challenges are thereabouts in line with several conducted studies. The former study by Songbatumis (2017) found the challenges of teaching English are mostly due to the shortage of teachers' training, language proficiency issues, limited mastery of teaching methods, unfamiliarity with IT (Information and Technology), and lack of professional development. Another than that, Hasanah and Utami (2019), in their study, found the challenges experienced by English teachers, as well. The findings suggested the lack of learning materials to cover students' needs, the big size classroom and school environment, and students' low motivation. In short, both previous studies show that the lack of training, media, and students' motivation are the great contributor to the challenges of teaching.

Regardless of that relevance, little to no number of them focus on studying and uncovering the challenges and the countermeasures reading in the setting of the emancipatory curriculum. Those mentioned studies as such analyzed the challenges in teaching English in a general context along with the solutions. On the other hand, this study is specialized to find out the challenges of encouraging reading in several particular aspects as well as the countermeasures for them in the setting of the emancipatory curriculum at the junior high school level.

#### 4.1. Conclusion

Teachers play a major role in the successful implementation of the emancipatory curriculum, serving as facilitators and mediators in the teaching and learning process. They have embraced their responsibilities with dedication and creativity, adapting teaching techniques and introducing innovative programs to promote reading. Their efforts to overcome challenges, such as student motivation and resource constraints, have resulted in diverse strategies and alternative ideas to engage students in reading.

While reading wasn't the central focus and lacked a structured school program, teachers played a pivotal role in motivating students through dedicated literacy hours. The implementation of differentiated instructions demanded increased preparedness and meticulous planning from teachers. Despite grappling with various student and school challenges, teachers exhibited resilience by employing strategies like understanding, motivation, brainstorming, and class mapping. The emphasis on assessment, continual improvement, and the provision of growth opportunities not only benefited students but also facilitated the professional development of teachers, fostering a collaborative and evolving learning environment.

#### 4.2. Suggestion

Based on the comprehensive study, several suggestions can be stated to further enhance the effectiveness of the emancipatory curriculum and address the challenges faced by teachers and schools. First, the education authorities need to prioritize ongoing professional development programs such as workshops or online training. These programs may focus on differentiated learning strategies, creative teaching techniques, effective use of technology in the classroom, and/or collaboration among teachers. Second, to mitigate resource-related challenges, schools should work in collaboration with education authorities to ensure adequate access to English language materials, textbooks, and technology devices. Third, student engagement and motivation are essential. Given the importance of student motivation and engagement in reading, teachers may continue to innovate in their teaching methods, reward students' efforts and achievements in reading, and/or consider implementing programs similar to *Gerakan Literasi Menuju Tradisi* to encourage student participation and create a sense of community around reading. Fourth, effective communication and collaboration among teachers, schools, and education authorities are crucial for sharing experiences, insights, and best practices. Establishing regular forums, such as MGMP or online discussion groups, can facilitate knowledge exchange and problem-solving among educators.

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