

Implementation Of Adaptive Reading Learning Strategies For Slow Learner Students At Mahira Natural Elementary School, Bengkulu City

Meirita Sari¹, Wiga Santri Rohinia², Heny Friantary³, Hengki Satrisno⁴

¹²³⁴ Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, Indonesia; meiritasari@mail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id; wigasantri426@gmail.com; henyfriantary@mail.uinfasbengkulu.ac.id; hengkidalima@gmail.com

* WhatsApp Number

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies for slow learner students and identify supporting and inhibiting factors in their implementation at Alam Mahira Elementary School in Bengkulu City. This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation, while data analysis used the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies is carried out through individual mentoring, the use of visual media, repetition of material, simplification of material delivery, providing flexible learning time, and providing motivation and positive reinforcement according to the characteristics of slow learner students. Supporting factors in the implementation of this strategy include teacher commitment, the availability of learning media, an inclusive school environment, and collaboration between teachers, schools, and parents. Inhibiting factors include differences in reading ability among students, low student concentration and self-confidence, limited time for teachers to provide individual mentoring, and less than optimal parental involvement in accompanying learning activities at home. Thus, the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies can support the improvement of slow learner students' reading abilities while realizing a more inclusive, effective, and appropriate learning process for students' needs.

Keywords

Adaptive Reading Learning Strategy, Slow learner, Inclusive Elementary School, Reading Learning.



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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is an educational system that provides opportunities for all students to learn together without discrimination based on physical, intellectual, social, or emotional conditions. In its implementation, inclusive schools face challenges in providing appropriate educational services for children with special needs, including slow learners. (Kusumawati et

al., 2026) Slow learner is a term used to describe children with below-average cognitive abilities or learning delays. Slow learners generally experience challenges in physical, mental, intellectual, social, and emotional aspects, resulting in their academic achievement tending to be below that of students their age. Slow learners also take longer to grasp learning than their peers. (Indahsari et al., 2026)

Slow learners are generally identified through intelligence test results, with IQ scores ranging from 70 to 89. This indicates that they have slightly below-average intellectual potential, but are not classified as mentally retarded. Slow learners tend to be slow to grasp learning material, have poor memory, have difficulty concentrating, and experience difficulties in understanding abstract and symbolic concepts. Teachers, as the primary facilitators in the teaching and learning process, need to employ appropriate and effective learning strategies, especially for slow learners, so they can better follow lessons and achieve optimal development according to their abilities. (Sukma, 2021).

Slow learners are students with slightly lower intellectual capacities, requiring more time to comprehend learning than their peers. During classroom learning, slow learners often have difficulty understanding teacher instructions, are slow to complete assignments, have difficulty reading and comprehending reading material, and struggle to remember previously learned material. Furthermore, slow learners also tend to have difficulty concentrating, lack self-confidence, are easily influenced by their environment, and have low participation in learning activities. Therefore, slow learners require guidance and repetition of material to better understand the learning. (Indahsari et al., 2026)

Based on initial observations at Alam Mahira Elementary School in Bengkulu City, it was discovered that some slow learners still experience difficulties with reading skills. These difficulties are evident when students struggle to read words and sentences, understand the content of the reading, and require more time than their peers to complete reading activities. During the learning process, teachers have provided support and guidance to students, but the reading learning strategies implemented need to be adapted to the characteristics and learning needs of slow learners so that learning objectives can be optimally achieved. This situation indicates that the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies is important for further study in inclusive elementary schools.

The learning strategies implemented by teachers for slow learners play a crucial role in creating an inclusive and meaningful educational process. Children with these needs generally struggle to absorb lessons at the same pace as their peers. Therefore, they require more time, attention, and a tailored approach to effectively understand the material and still feel valued in the learning process (Annisa et al., 2023). Teachers are required to be more creative and sensitive in selecting appropriate learning methods, such as utilizing engaging visual media, presenting material in stages for easier comprehension, providing consistent repetition, and creating an interactive learning environment to actively engage students and feel included in the learning process. (Kurniasari et al., 2025)

Adaptive reading learning strategies for slow learners involve adjusting teaching methods that focus on an individualized approach, the use of visual or concrete media, and regular repetition of material. This aims to enable students with learning difficulties to comprehend reading more easily and comfortably, according to their cognitive abilities. (Gulindari and Suriani, 2025) Adaptive learning allows teachers to adjust the learning process based on the abilities, needs, and characteristics of students, so that slow learners can learn optimally alongside their peers. (Kusumawati, 2026)

Adaptive reading learning strategies also provide teachers with the opportunity to develop more flexible learning tailored to each student's reading ability. Teachers can adjust the difficulty level of reading materials, use engaging learning media, provide gradual reading practice, and repeat material according to student needs. Furthermore, adaptive reading learning emphasizes the importance of providing feedback, individual mentoring, and ongoing evaluation to optimally monitor students' reading progress. Through these strategies, slow learners are expected to improve their ability to recognize letters, read words and sentences more fluently, comprehend reading content, and develop greater motivation and confidence in participating in learning activities.

The implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies focuses not only on improving students' academic abilities but also on creating an inclusive, comfortable, and supportive learning environment for each individual's development. By providing learning services tailored to student characteristics, teachers can help slow learners gradually develop their potential without feeling pressured by the same learning demands as their peers. Therefore, adaptive reading learning strategies are a relevant approach to be implemented in inclusive elementary schools.

The slow developmental pace of slow learners can often be frustrating, not only for them but also for educators and parents. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the characteristics and special needs of slow learners is essential for designing development-focused coaching programs. In this article, we will explore various aspects of coaching, from teaching approaches to the use of technology as an aid, to create a learning environment that supports the growth of these children. (Ginting et al., 2023)

Based on this description, the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies for slow learners in inclusive elementary schools requires further study. This study aims to describe the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies implemented by teachers for slow learners at SD Alam Mahira in Bengkulu City. The results of this study are expected to provide an overview of the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies and become a reference for teachers and schools in developing learning that is more appropriate to the characteristics of slow learner students so that their reading abilities can develop optimally.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research that aims to describe the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies for slow learner students at SD Alam Mahira, Bengkulu City. The qualitative approach was chosen because it can provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomena occurring in the field and describe the process of implementing learning strategies based on real conditions experienced by teachers and students.¹ The research subjects consisted of the principal, class teachers, and slow learner students who were selected using a purposive sampling technique because they were considered to have information relevant to the research focus. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were used to directly observe the adaptive reading learning process in the classroom, interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth information about the strategies implemented by teachers and obstacles encountered during the learning process, while documentation was used as supporting data in the form of learning tools, student learning outcomes, and other documents related to the research. The data obtained were then analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. To ensure the validity of the data, this study used source triangulation and technical triangulation so that the data obtained had a good level of credibility..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Implementation of Adaptive Reading Learning Strategies for Slow Learners at Alam Mahira Elementary School, Bengkulu City

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation conducted at Alam Mahira Elementary School, Bengkulu City, the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies has been implemented as a form of learning service tailored to the characteristics and learning needs of slow learners. Teachers understand that each student has different reading abilities, so the learning process cannot be carried out using the same strategy for all students. Therefore, teachers make adjustments to the learning materials, methods used, learning media, and the time allotted for students to complete reading activities. These adjustments are made gradually, taking into account each student's initial abilities so they can participate in the learning process without feeling overwhelmed. Teachers also strive to create a comfortable learning environment so students become more confident in participating in reading activities with their peers in class.

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies is mostly carried out through an individual approach. Teachers pay special attention to slow learners by assisting them during reading activities, providing simple instructions, and repeating explanations if students do not understand the material. Furthermore, teachers do not force students to achieve the same reading targets as regular students, but instead provide them with the opportunity to learn at their own pace. Interviews revealed that an

individualized approach is more effective because it allows teachers to identify each student's difficulties and determine appropriate support for their needs.

Throughout the learning process, teachers implement step-by-step reading activities, from letter recognition, syllable reading, word reading, to simple sentences. Each stage is repeated to ensure students understand the material before moving on to the next. Teachers also provide slow-learners with additional time to complete reading activities so they don't feel rushed. Observations revealed that students appear calmer when given the opportunity to read at their own pace. Although some students still struggle with recognizing words or understanding the content of the reading, teachers continue to provide ongoing guidance until students demonstrate progress at their own pace.

Research findings also indicate that the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies focuses not only on improving reading skills but also on developing students' motivation and self-confidence. Teachers provide positive reinforcement in the form of praise, appreciation, and motivation each time a student successfully reads a letter, word, or sentence correctly. This form of reinforcement makes students more enthusiastic about participating in reading activities and less afraid of making mistakes when asked to read in front of the class. Furthermore, teachers consistently provide opportunities for students to try again if they still make mistakes, thus creating a more conducive, enjoyable learning environment that doesn't put pressure on slow learners. This demonstrates that adaptive learning strategies can create a more inclusive learning environment and provide each student with the opportunity to develop according to their potential.

The findings of this study align with the opinion of Sauqi and Harsiwi (2024), who stated that slow learners are children with below-average academic achievement abilities. These slow learners are not considered children with mental retardation. Slow learners are typically slower to absorb material presented by teachers than other students. This opinion is further supported by Nurfadhillah et al. (2021), who state that slow learners are children with slightly below-average intellectual potential, but are not considered children with intellectual disabilities. Academically, slow learners are typically identified based on intelligence test scores, with an IQ between 70 and 89, requiring longer learning times than their peers. Therefore, implementing adaptive reading learning strategies is an appropriate way to help slow learners develop reading skills tailored to their characteristics and learning needs.

B. Adaptive Reading Learning Strategies Implemented by Teachers

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, the adaptive reading learning strategies implemented by teachers at Alam Mahira Elementary School in Bengkulu City involve adapting various learning methods and media to suit the reading abilities of slow-learners. Teachers not only focus on delivering the material but also pay attention to how the material can be understood by students gradually. In implementing these strategies, teachers structure reading activities, starting with letter recognition, reading syllables, reading words, and reading simple sentences. Each stage is presented sequentially and adapted to the development of each student's abilities so that they can follow the learning process without

feeling stressed. Teachers also provide opportunities for students to repeat reading if they still experience difficulties before moving on to the next topic.

The results of the study indicate that the use of visual media is one of the most frequently used strategies in adaptive reading learning. Teachers utilize letter cards, word cards, pictures, picture books, and various other concrete media to help students recognize letter shapes, connect images with words, and understand the content of the reading. Based on observations, the use of visual media makes it easier for students to focus their attention during learning. Students appear more enthusiastic when teachers use pictures or flashcards compared to when learning is conducted solely through verbal explanations. Engaging media also helps students retain material longer, making the learning process more effective.

In addition to using visual media, teachers also implement a repeated reading strategy as a form of adaptive learning. Teachers first demonstrate correct reading, then ask students to imitate the reading slowly and repeatedly until they can read more fluently. If students continue to make mistakes, teachers provide direct guidance without blaming them, but rather provide direction in simple, easy-to-understand language. Based on interviews, teachers explained that the repetition strategy is very helpful for slow-learners because they take longer to memorize letters, words, and content than regular students.

Research findings also indicate that teachers provide positive reinforcement in every reading learning activity. This reinforcement takes the form of praise, motivation, applause, and simple rewards when students successfully read correctly or show progress, even if only slightly. Teachers also consistently encourage students to persevere when they encounter reading difficulties. Based on observations, providing positive reinforcement can increase students' self-confidence, making them more confident in reading in front of the class, more active in answering teacher questions, and no longer afraid of making mistakes during the learning process. This positive learning atmosphere creates a closer relationship between teacher and student, making learning more enjoyable.

These research findings align with Pertiwi and Harsiwi (2025), who stated that slow learners have specific characteristics that distinguish them from other students, including slow conceptual understanding, difficulty absorbing abstract information, and the need for repetition and visual support to understand material. They also exhibit difficulties with reading, arithmetic, remembering information, and social adaptation. Although their thinking skills are superior to those of children with intellectual disabilities, their learning progress is slower and requires different time and strategies. Therefore, the use of visual media, repetition of material, individual mentoring, and positive reinforcement are adaptive reading learning strategies that are appropriate to the characteristics of slow learners and can help them develop their reading skills gradually.

C. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Adaptive Reading Learning Strategies

Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies at Alam Mahira Elementary School in Bengkulu City is influenced

by several supporting factors that assist teachers in implementing learning for slow-learners. One of the most influential factors is the teachers' commitment and patience in providing guidance throughout the learning process. Teachers strive to understand the characteristics of each student so they can determine strategies that are appropriate to their learning needs. Furthermore, teachers consistently provide motivation, positive reinforcement, and opportunities for students to learn at their own pace without applying excessive pressure. This approach makes students feel more comfortable and less afraid to participate in reading activities in class.

The research also shows that the availability of learning media is a supporting factor in the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies. Teachers utilize various media such as letter cards, word cards, pictures, picture books, and objects found around the school environment as reading aids. The use of these media can increase students' attention and interest in learning, making it easier for them to understand the material presented. Furthermore, a school environment that implements inclusive education also provides opportunities for slow learners to learn alongside regular classmates in an environment that respects and supports their development.

Based on interviews, collaboration between teachers, principals, and parents is also a factor supporting the successful implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies. Teachers regularly report students' reading progress to parents so that reading practice can be continued at home. Effective communication helps teachers understand students' progress outside of school and provides parents with the opportunity to actively support their children's learning. This collaboration allows for continuity in learning at school with support provided at home.

In addition to supporting factors, the study also revealed several inhibiting factors in the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies. Teachers revealed that the reading abilities of slow learners vary widely, requiring different forms of support. This situation requires teachers to spend more time guiding each student, especially when learning takes place in regular classes, which must also consider the needs of other students. In addition, there are still students who easily lose concentration, lack self-confidence, are slow to respond to instructions, and require repeating the material many times before truly understanding the reading material being studied.

These findings align with Nurfadhillah's (2021) opinion, which states that slow learners differ from regular learners in classroom learning activities. Slow learners lack focus and attention, play alone, daydream, are unresponsive, inactive, and talk to themselves. During group discussions, slow learners cannot be encouraged to share ideas and only disrupt other students. Therefore, regular learners do not want to be grouped with slow learners. When answering questions posed by the teacher, their answers are unrelated to the question. Many factors contribute to slow learners.

In addition to student-initiated obstacles, this study also found that parental involvement in supporting learning activities at home is still suboptimal. Some parents do not

fully understand the characteristics of slow learners, so learning support is not provided regularly. As a result, reading exercises provided by teachers at school cannot always be continued at home, resulting in slower development of students' reading skills. The results of this study indicate that more intensive communication between teachers and parents is still needed to support the learning process at school through ongoing support within the family environment. These findings align with Nabila and Harsiwi's (2025) findings, which state that parental involvement is still minimal. Many parents are unaware of their child's condition and ignore potential specific learning barriers, often blaming failure on the child's internal factors. Poor communication and coordination between schools and families exacerbates delays in intervention, even though collaborative support is desperately needed. Without adequate support, slow learners are at risk of frustration, loss of motivation to learn, anxiety, and even potential school dropout. Therefore, collaboration between teachers, schools, and parents is a crucial aspect in supporting the successful implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies for slow learners in inclusive elementary schools.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies at Alam Mahira Elementary School in Bengkulu City has been carried out by adapting the learning process to the characteristics and needs of slow-learning students. Teachers implemented various forms of adjustment, ranging from simplifying material, using visual media, providing repetition, individual guidance, and providing more flexible learning times. These strategies provide opportunities for students to learn at their own pace, allowing them to participate in reading lessons more comfortably and not feel left behind compared to regular students. The implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies also creates a more inclusive learning environment because teachers focus not only on learning outcomes but also on each student's developmental process.

These research findings align with the opinion of Sauqi and Harsiwi (2024), who stated that slow learners are children with below-average academic achievement. Slow learners are not considered children with mental retardation. Slow learners are typically slower to absorb material presented by teachers compared to other students. This opinion is supported by Nurfadhillah et al. (2021) stated that slow learners are children whose intellectual potential is slightly below normal, but are not considered mentally retarded. Academically, slow learners are usually identified based on scores achieved on intelligence tests, with an IQ between 70 and 89. Slow learners experience difficulties or delays in thinking, responding to stimuli, and adapting, requiring longer learning times than their peers. Therefore, teachers need to implement learning strategies that adapt to students' learning needs so that their potential can develop optimally.

Based on research results, the most dominant forms of adaptive reading learning strategies used by teachers are individual mentoring, the use of visual media, gradual repetition of material, motivation, and positive reinforcement. Teachers provide direct guidance when students have difficulty reading, then review the material until the students

can understand the reading material. The use of letter cards, word cards, pictures, and picture books also makes it easier for students to recognize letters, read words, and understand the content of the reading. These strategies have been proven to increase students' attention, activeness, and courage in participating in reading lessons, making the learning process more effective.

The results of this study are consistent with the opinion of Pertiwi and Harsiwi (2025), who stated that slow learners have special characteristics that distinguish them from other students, including being slow in understanding concepts, having difficulty absorbing abstract information, and requiring repetition and visual support to understand the material. They also show difficulties in reading, arithmetic, remembering information, and in aspects of social adaptation. Although their thinking skills are higher than those of children with intellectual disabilities, their learning process is slow and requires different time and strategies. Thus, the use of visual media, repetition of material, and individual guidance implemented by teachers in this study are in accordance with the learning characteristics of slow learner students.

The research also shows that slow learners have different reading abilities than regular students. During the learning process, some students still require repetition of instructions, take longer to recognize words, lose concentration easily, and require continuous guidance to understand the reading content. Teachers also found that each student's reading development varies, so the type of service provided must be tailored to each student's abilities. These findings indicate that the success of adaptive reading instruction is influenced not only by the teaching method but also by the teacher's ability to understand each student's characteristics.

These findings align with the opinion of Supriyani et al. (2022), who stated that slow learners are students who learn at a slower pace than their peers due to their intellectual abilities being slightly below average, requiring a special time and approach to optimally understand the subject matter. Slow learners generally have low levels of attention and concentration, show slow responses to learning instructions, have difficulty understanding abstract material, and easily forget previously learned material. Furthermore, Darwanti et al. (2024) explained that slow learners also tend to lack self-confidence, experience challenges in critical thinking skills, and face difficulties in building social relationships with their surroundings. These characteristics were evident in several students in this study, requiring teachers to provide more patient, gradual, and sustainable learning services.

In addition to appropriate learning strategies, the research results indicate that teachers' ability to recognize student characteristics early on is also a determining factor in the successful implementation of adaptive reading instruction. Before providing instruction, teachers first observe each student's reading ability so that the form of support can be tailored to their needs. This step helps teachers determine the appropriate media, methods, and forms of evaluation, resulting in more effective learning. These findings align with the opinion of Jamiilah et al. (2025) who stated that early detection of slow learners is crucial to prevent delays in intervention. When student characteristics are identified early, teachers are more likely to

provide appropriate educational services, allowing the child's learning potential to develop optimally.

The research results also indicate that the successful implementation of adaptive reading instructional strategies is influenced by collaboration between teachers, schools, and parents. Teachers regularly provide information on students' reading progress so that reading practice can be continued at home. However, this study also found that some parents' involvement was still suboptimal, resulting in inconsistent home learning support. This resulted in some students' reading progress being slower than that of students who received regular support from their families.

These findings align with Nabila and Harsiwi (2025), who stated that parental involvement is still minimal because many parents are unaware of their child's condition and ignore potential specific learning barriers. Poor communication and coordination between schools and families can slow down the intervention process, even though collaborative support is essential for supporting the development of slow learners. Without adequate support, slow learners are at risk of frustration, loss of motivation to learn, anxiety, and even dropping out of school. Therefore, ongoing collaboration between teachers, schools, and parents is key to the successful implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies in inclusive elementary schools.

Overall, the study results indicate that the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies at SD Alam Mahira in Bengkulu City is able to help slow learner students follow the reading learning process according to their abilities. Adapting learning methods, using visual media, repeating material, individual mentoring, and collaboration between teachers and parents are important factors in supporting students' reading development. Therefore, adaptive reading learning strategies can be an effective alternative for improving the quality of educational services for slow learners in inclusive elementary schools.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the implementation of adaptive reading learning strategies for slow learner students at Alam Mahira Elementary School in Bengkulu City has been carried out through adjustments to the learning process according to the characteristics and needs of students, including through individual mentoring, the use of visual media, repetition of material, simplification of material delivery, providing more flexible learning time, and positive reinforcement to increase student motivation and self-confidence. The implementation of these strategies can help slow learner students follow reading lessons better, increase their activeness, and develop reading skills according to their potential. The successful implementation of this strategy is supported by teacher commitment, the availability of learning media, an inclusive school environment, and cooperation between teachers, schools, and parents, although there are still several obstacles such as differences in reading abilities of each student, low concentration and self-confidence of students, limited

time for teachers to provide individual mentoring, and the less than optimal involvement of some parents in accompanying learning activities at home. Thus, adaptive reading learning strategies can be an effective alternative in improving the reading abilities of slow learner students while supporting the realization of more inclusive, meaningful, and student-centered educational services in elementary schools.

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