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## Analyzing Reading Activities of Montessori-Based Instruction Method for Primary Students in Singaraja Montessori School

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### Abstract

*Reading is a crucial foundational skill that all students acquire, as it is necessary for all learning activities. Reading is a basic skill that students must acquire in education, especially early learners. This study aims to analyze what reading activities use the Montessori method at Singaraja Montessori School and how the teacher carries out these activities. A qualitative descriptive method was used, and data collection was carried out through documentation, class observations, and interviews. Data were analyzed using the Thematic analysis model by Braun and Clarke (2006), which involves six steps: familiarizing data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and producing the report. The findings show five reading activities using the Montessori method: phonic knowledge, syllable knowledge, picture cards, reading comprehension, and reading in the corner. Activities are carried out in three stages: pre-activity, whilst-activity, and post-activity. In implementation, personalized and self-directed learning are used as strategies to adapt to students' needs. This study concludes that reading activities implemented using Montessori-based instruction are designed to gradually support children's reading development in accordance with the principles of Montessori education, which emphasize independent learning and exploration.*

**Keywords: Early Learner; Montessori Method; Reading.**

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## INTRODUCTION

Literacy is a crucial thing in the world of education. It can increase people's ability to understand things, gain insight about the world, and gain knowledge as a human. According to UNESCO (2017), Literacy is closely related to language, which is a basic language skill such as writing and reading. That is one of the skills that must be mastered by all students, from an early age and adult learner. Reading competence is required of all students; it can determine the success or failure of the teaching and learning process (Faradina, 2017). According to

Friantary (2018), reading is the process of pronouncing writing to understand its content. In education, reading is a basic ability that students and lower-grade students must possess. Therefore, teachers must be able to apply appropriate teaching methods to build interest and good reading skills in students. This is especially important for lower-class students, such as elementary school students.

Kemendikbud (2016), also said that literacy culture greatly influences students' success. However, technological developments and times have greatly influenced the decline in students' interest in reading. Students are more interested in gadgets than reading (Permatasari, 2015). According to the most recent PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) data for 2022, Indonesia's reading literacy score has decreased. In 2022, Indonesia's reading literacy score will reach 359 points, down 12 points from 2018's 371 points According to Azkia and Rohman (2020), Teachers must present creative and innovative activities to encourage, develop, and grow students' reading skills. It is hoped that through these creative and innovative activities, students will develop strong reading skills and pass on a reading culture to future generations.

The Montessori method is one approach that can be used to teach young learners to read. The Montessori method of teaching reading consists of various methods and activities designed to support children's natural development in language and reading comprehension. In the Montessori method of learning to read, the teacher guides the child's learning initiative, letting the students read gradually (Bennett, 2022). The observation of researcher Singaraja Montessori School has used Montessori-based instruction as a learning method in the classroom and have implemented various reading activities in the classroom to increase student literacy. Several media are provided in the class to teach reading. The researcher examines reading activities because reading is crucial in education. After all, it helps students develop their academic and intellectual skills. Reading is the foundation of knowledge and skills taught at the beginning of school because the ability to read helps students develop other abilities.

From the investigation from preliminary and literature study prove that Montessori reading method improve the quality of students' reading and facilitate students well and help the process of teaching reading to young learners. From that research, researchers have implemented and investigated whether using the Montessori method can help students start reading. Additionally, it is important to examine what examples of reading activities and what instructional media are used in teaching reading using the Montessori-based instruction method

to young learners, and how this method is carried out with students. In connection with this, researchers are interested in analyzing students' reading activities using the Montessori Based Instruction method at Singaraja Montessori School. Based on interview and observation Singaraja Montessori School has used Montessori-based instruction as a learning methods in the classroom and have implemented various reading activities in the classroom to increase student literacy. Several media provided in the class to teaching reading. This research aims to describe examples of reading activities and instructional media that are carried out in teaching reading using the Montessori-based instruction method at Singaraja Montessori Primary School. Researchers hope that this research is beneficial for readers and will inspire them to develop reading methods for early learners.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative research design. A descriptive research design is one that is used to learn as much as possible about an object and interpret the condition as it is (Syah, 2010). It means that a descriptive research design describes and interprets an object's situation as it is without manipulating or treating the object (Agustianti et al, 2022). Through this method, researcher gain a deeper understanding of how the use of the Montessori-based instruction method in reading activities and how the activities are carried out by the teacher in elementary school students at Singaraja Montessori School will be observed by researchers through observations, documentation, and interviews with teachers. The subject of this study are two teachers who handle Octopus class in Singaraja Montessori School. Researcher use purposive sampling as defined by Sugiyono (2015), is a technique for selecting samples based on specific criteria. The researcher chose two teachers to participate in this study based on the researcher individual judgment and criteria. The data collected from interviews and observations are analyzed using thematic analysis, which is a method of data analysis that intends to identify patterns or themes in data collected by researchers (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It organizes and describes that data set in rich detail in 6 step: data familiarisation, generating initial codes, search for themes, review of themes, theme definition and labeling, and report writing.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Based on the data that has been collected and data analysis carried out using Thematic analysis the results are presented in figure.

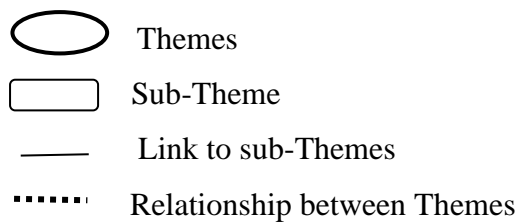
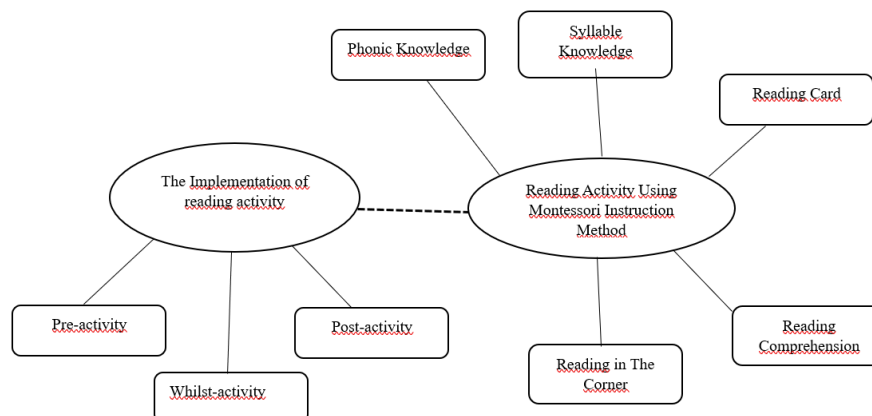


Figure 1 Thematic map demonstrating two themes

The thematic map in Figure 4.1 shows that there are two main themes. The reading activity has five sub-themes: phonic knowledge, syllable knowledge, reading card, reading comprehension, and reading in the corner. The implementation of each activity has three sub-themes such as pre-activity, whilst-activity, and post-activity. Each theme will be described as follows.



### 1. Phonic Knowledge

The early reading activity taught to students in the octopus class is phonic knowledge, students; in this stage, the child is introduced to letters and taught how they sound. The media used to support students in doing this activity is letter cards. Based on observations and interviews, by using letter cards students are taught sounds and combine letters into one combined sound. Combining sounds can be two or more letters consisting of vowels and consonants. If the student is able then proceed to three letters consisting of consonant, vocal, and consonant. In the beginning, students are taught the sound of the letter; for example, the letter A sounds /eɪ/ or in Indonesian, it sounds /a/, the letter C sounds /si:/, and for Indonesian, /ce/ and others. In learning this sound, students are taught to focus more on the sound of the letter rather than the name of the letter. For example, show the letter A and explain that the

sound is “ah” as in the word “apel”. Letter B sounds "beh" as in the word bola, or in English, letter C can be "cat" and can also be "cell". So that students know the visual of the letters and the sounds they make. It makes students understand the combined sounds that are combined into one blended sound. When students learn this activity, they usually start with the first group of letter sounds S, A, T, P, I, N. The letter sounds are adapted from Jolly Phonic. These letters become the basis that the teacher teaches the students in teaching the letters and their sounds.

## 2. Syllable Knowledge

In the Montessori method, this method is not actually used, but because this school is also a bilingual school where students are also taught to read Indonesian, teachers also use the syllable method to teach students to read, especially in Indonesian. Indonesian language reading activities are taught to students using the syllable method. Teachers teach students starting from two syllables, three syllables, and more. In this method, students are taught to recognize letters and their sounds phonetically and then combine them into simple syllables. This stage is taught after students understand the sound of letters. Based on observations of beginning reading activities using the syllable method, it is evident that this method is very effective in assisting children in identifying and comprehending word structures. Students begin by learning simple syllables like "ba", "bi", "bu", "be", and "bo" and progressively combine these syllables to form words with more meaning. During the observation session, a teacher was observed asking students to repeat syllable sounds. Students are asked to imitate the sound "ba" when the teacher says it. This activity enhances their syllable knowledge and helps them connect sounds with visual meaning, enhancing their learning experience.

## 3. Reading Cards

In reading card activities, two types of media are used, namely nomenclature cards and word cards. Nomenclature cards are cards with pictures and labels, while word cards are only word-label cards in cursive form. The media used for the reading learning activity is nomenclature cards. From the results of interviews and observations of teachers using nomenclature cards, students learn to read the words or labels on the cards. Nomenclature cards consist of a picture of an object and a label (the name of the object from the picture). The label is located at the bottom of the picture; in this school, there are two types of nomenclature cards, namely Indonesian nomenclature cards and English nomenclature cards. Based on the interview results, reading using nomenclature cards provides students with an easier and more

interesting way of reading. Reading using this card makes students understand the visual form of the word they read, so they are not confused about what it looks like; for example, they read a card that says “cow”; with this card, students also know what “cow” looks like. In addition, word labels under the picture in cursive also help students to know how to write it; after reading, student will write the word in the book. In one meeting students usually learn, and read the same initial sound labeled in English or Indonesian or both, depending on the student's ability.

Another media used in reading card activities is word cards. Based on the results of observations and interviews, word cards are reading media taught to students; in word cards, there are no pictures, only cards with cursive writing, which students read only by looking at the words on the card without any pictures. In terms of appearance, word cards have similarities with nomenclature cards, but the only difference is the picture and size of the card. Both look different because the word card has no picture, while the nomenclature card has a picture above the word label. Word cards are also available in English and Indonesian; in word cards, there are also many vocabularies based on the initial letter sound of each card. For example, in the letter D in Indonesian word cards, all the words in the card use the initial /D/, for example (duku, dawet, dompet). Then, for English word cards, it is also the same; for example, for box D word cards (English), all the words on the card use the initial letter /d/, for example (Dove, door, deck, et al) the use of this card can help students learn to read word by word.

#### 4. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a more advanced reading activity or reading activity that students will carry out. If they have started to understand reading from word to word, then students are given a reading comprehension package starting from the initial level to the next level. Using colorful graphics, interactive questions, and immediate feedback helps students stay interested and motivated. Reading activities are accompanied by structured comprehension exercises that aim to improve comprehension and analytical skills. These exercises include multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank activities, true or false statements, sequence of events, matching terms, and short answer questions. The varied activities cater to various learning styles and allow students to practice different aspects of reading comprehension. Using K5 Learning as a media for reading comprehension training to elementary students enhances their reading skills through a structured, interactive, and fun approach. K5 Learning offers a variety of reading materials that adapt to the student's abilities, allowing them to learn at their own pace and needs. This reading comprehension activity is

carried out independently by each student, and the role of the teacher is only to provide feedback to students after doing the exercise or when students are confused while doing the exercise. Students can also ask friends if they have difficulty doing exercises or reading texts.

### 5. Reading in The Corner

Reading in the corner is one of the reading activities implemented according to the Montessori instructional method. Octopus class are equipped with a comfortable environment. This area is set up with cushions, carpets, comfortable chairs, and adequate lighting to create a pleasant and conducive environment. Based on findings from researchers' observations and interviews. The books cover various genres, including stories, nonfiction, biographies, and others. These books are placed on shelves where children can easily select and return them. Reading in the corner activities are typically flexible depending on conditions, with some taking place 15 minutes before students begin class. In other cases, when students are bored with their studies, they can go to the reading corner to read a book or browse various interesting books. Students are allowed to read or explore books in the reading corner if they are bored with studying or have completed the worksheet given by the teacher. Usually, during study time, they are given half an hour in the reading corner before students are ready to return to the next lesson. Students are free to read in a corner while still being directed and guided by the teacher.

## DISCUSSION

The first activity is Phonic Knowledge. This activity is one of the learn-to-read teaching activities taught to young learners. Students are taught to understand letter sounds and combine them into one blended sound. According to Ehri (2022), phonic method teaches students about grapheme-phoneme relationships and how to use them to spell and decode words. Decoding is converting graphemes into phonemes and combining them to create word pronunciations. This method is crucial in early literacy education because it lays the stage for reading and writing abilities. Learning the relationships between letters (graphemes) and sounds (phonemes) allows students to decode unfamiliar words, making reading easier and less difficult. As Westhisi (2019) described, Phonics is a reading system based on the alphabetic principle. It focuses on teaching correspondences between letters and pronunciations. In this context, phonics aims to teach students that there is a correlation between the letters and the sounds they produce. Singajara Montessori School adopted the first group of letters in Jolly phonic (s, a, t, p, i, n) to

be introduced to students in learning phonics. So the teacher did not introduce the letters in alphabetical order, such as A, B, C, D, for the other group letters is arranged randomly by the teacher. They also learn to introduce vowels (a, i, u, e, o). They learn to combine two or more letters into one blended sound from these letter groups. Jolly Phonics is a reading method that begins in the early grades and emphasizes learning letter sounds and a multisensory approach through activities that students enjoy (Llyond, 2007). This method lays a solid foundation for students to develop reading skills by identifying phonetic patterns in written language.

Then, the next stage of reading activity after phonic knowledge is syllable knowledge, in which students learn to read syllables. According to Dewi and Suwatra (2017), beginning reading is the first phase in a child's reading development. Beginning reading involves recognizing letters and words and arranging them into sounds (Kumullah et al., 2019). Students learn to recognize each letter's shape and sound at this stage before combining them to form meaningful words. This process serves as the foundation for all more complex reading skills by teaching children how written language works and how symbols on paper can be changed into understandable sounds. The syllable method can help children with reading delays or difficulties because it allows them to learn the connection between written letter combinations and their sounds and quickly recognize words (Wolf et al., 2000). The syllable method instructs children to separate words into smaller sound units or syllables, enabling them to identify and say words more quickly and accurately. Children can improve their ability to predict and comprehend words by understanding their basic structure. Based on that explanation, the syllable method helps students better understand the structure and logic of word formation. Students do not just memorize words but also know how they are composed of smaller syllables. Students who understand how to pronounce syllables correctly can better identify sound patterns in the words they read

The next stage of reading activities is reading cards. This activity is an initial reading lesson taught to students using card media. A reading card contains images or words related to the study material. According to Safitri and Mukhlishina's (2022) research, implementing learning using picture media or picture cards with syllable spelling will make reading easier for students. Using different colors and visually appealing displays can also attract students' attention and interest in learning to read. Hasriani and Syawaluddin (2022) also stated that reading card media helps children develop reading skills by showing pictures alongside words that explain the pictures' names. This allows them to identify the arrangement of letters and react verbally or in writing. Zhao et al. (2014) also state in their research that early reading



learning for children is more effective when using visual media with alphabet symbols, facilitating children's learning to read letters and symbols more easily. It means using reading cards, such as nomenclature cards, helps students learn to read because they can recognize the shapes of letters and symbols presented visually. Akubailo et al. (2015) also stated that using media such as word cards may impact interest and enhance children's reading readiness. Letter symbols make it easier for the child to understand and compose a sentence. Using word cards allows children to understand letter symbols better and construct sentences faster.

The higher reading activity carried out in the octopus class is reading comprehension. Based on observations, reading comprehension is an activity carried out when students start to become fluent in reading, so the teacher provides reading comprehension exercises. Laily (2014) explains that reading comprehension involves actively engaging readers' existing abilities and understanding of the content of the reading. Frans and Wijaya (2023), explain that reading comprehension is advanced so these abilities need to be trained and developed early in elementary school. Similar to Singaraja Montessori School, reading comprehension activities are advanced reading activities carried out as early as possible according to the speed of the student's abilities. According to Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016), some effective ways to enhance reading comprehension include activating and using background, generating and asking questions, predicting, summarizing, visualizing, and monitoring. All the aspects mentioned are also adopted by teachers in the Octopus class, which provides interesting activities of asking and answering, summarizing, attractive visual reading displays, and monitoring from the teacher in each exercise. All these aspects are covered in the learning media the teacher provides, namely in reading comprehension exercises, which include multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank activities, true or false statements, sequence of events, matching terms, and short answer questions. These various activities enable students to do many interesting activities, and of course, they will not be boring.

Another reading activity carried out in Montessori classes is reading in the corner. Reading in the corner of the classroom is a good way to increase learners' interest and literacy skills. Students have a comfortable and interesting place to involve themselves in the world of books when a special area such as a "Reading Corner" is provided. According to Mantu (2021), The existence of a reading corner in the classroom can be an idea for teachers to create reading activities in the classroom. In Singaraja Montessori School, in the Octopus class, teachers also use the reading corner to carry out literacy activities. The reading corner is a place for students to read books and an area for various literacy activities. By having a reading corner

in this class, the school also facilitates a variety of books. Essentially, elementary school students are still in the stage where they get bored easily (Setiawan & Dewayani, 2019). Following the reading session, a post-activity stage is intended to help students understand and reflect on their reading. The teacher invites students to sit in a circle and discuss their thoughts on the story they have read. Students who want to share can provide a brief summary or storytelling of which part they liked best. According to Setyarini (2015), Storytelling is a creative communication approach that encourages both active listening and participation. It means that students who listen also pay attention to what other students are reading. This activity also helps students increase their vocabulary and learn how to pronounce a word or sentence with good and true through telling stories.

Based on the findings regarding reading activities implemented using Montessori-based instruction, each activity is designed to support children's reading development gradually, in accordance with the principles of Montessori education, which emphasizes independent learning and exploration.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show that the Octopus Class at Singaraja Montessori School implements various reading activities that use media instructional support designed to support children's literacy development through an interactive approach. Through Phonic and syllable knowledge activities as well as reading cards which help develop their vocabulary and phonetic skills. children learn to recognize frequently occurring words and build reading comprehension. Reading comprehension helps children understand sentence structure and understand sentences. While the book corner offers a cozy reading environment that promotes their enthusiasm for reading. Each of these activities is specifically developed to offer independent, enjoyable, and suitable learning experiences in relation to the needs of each students.

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