E-ISSN 3123-9226

BELANTARA

BELANTARA Jurnal Teori dan Praktek Pendidikan Dasar

Strategies for Improving Reading Literacy among Primary School Students

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ABSTRAK

Literasi membaca merupakan kemampuan dasar yang sangat penting bagi peserta didik sekolah dasar, namun pada praktiknya kemampuan membaca peserta didik masih belum berkembang secara optimal. Di SDN Wotangare 2 masih ditemukan peserta didik yang kurang lancar membaca, memiliki pemahaman bacaan rendah, serta minat membaca yang belum tumbuh secara konsisten. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan strategi guru dalam meningkatkan literasi membaca peserta didik di SDN Wotangare 2. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, sedangkan analisis data dilakukan melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi guru dalam meningkatkan literasi membaca meliputi pembiasaan membaca harian, membaca bersama dan membaca terbimbing, integrasi literasi dalam pembelajaran tematik, serta pemanfaatan media bacaan sederhana dan kontekstual. Strategi tersebut berdampak positif terhadap peningkatan minat membaca, kepercayaan diri, pemahaman bacaan, dan keterlibatan peserta didik. Implikasi penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa peningkatan literasi membaca memerlukan strategi yang konsisten, lingkungan belajar yang mendukung, serta keterlibatan aktif guru dan peserta didik secara berkelanjutan.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 28/12/2025
Revised 5/01/2026
Accepted 10/01/2026

Kata Kunci:
literasi membaca, strategi guru, integrasi pembelajaran tematik

ABSTRACT

Reading literacy is a fundamental skill for primary school students; however, in practice, students' reading abilities have not yet developed optimally. At SDN Wotangare 2, there are still students who experience difficulties in reading fluently, have low reading comprehension, and show inconsistent reading interest. This study aims to describe teachers' strategies in improving students' reading literacy at SDN Wotangare 2. The research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, while data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate that teachers' strategies for improving reading literacy include daily reading habituation, shared reading and guided reading activities, the integration of literacy into thematic learning, and the use of simple and contextual reading materials. These strategies have a positive impact on increasing students' reading interest, self-confidence, reading comprehension, and learning engagement. The implications of this study suggest that improving reading literacy requires consistent strategies, a supportive learning environment, and sustained active involvement of both teachers and students.

Keywords:
reading literacy, teacher strategies, thematic learning integration

INTRODUCTION

Reading literacy is a fundamental skill in primary education as it serves as the foundation for students' acquisition of knowledge and learning skills(Çak\iro\uglu, 2018; Faheem et al., 2025; Firdausi, 2025). Through strong reading skills, students are able to understand information, develop critical thinking, and improve academic achievement across various subjects. Reading literacy is not limited to the ability to recognize letters and words but also includes meaning comprehension, text interpretation, and reflection on the information read(Ehri, 2020; Nation, 2019). At the primary school level, reading literacy becomes a top priority because students are at an early stage of forming reading habits and interests. Primary education bears a significant responsibility in fostering a culture of literacy from an early age(Furbani, 2024; Lorenz et al., 2019; Shofa & Setyawan, 2018). A school environment that supports literacy will encourage students to enjoy reading and become independent learners. Therefore, improving reading literacy in primary schools is a strategic effort to enhance the overall quality of education.

Despite the crucial role of reading literacy, in practice, primary school students' reading literacy skills still face various challenges. Based on preliminary observations at SDN Wotangare 2, there are students who struggle with reading fluency, experience difficulties in understanding texts, and demonstrate low reading interest. This condition aligns with early literacy theory, which states that reading ability is influenced by learning environments, instructional strategies, and reading habits. Conventional, teacher-centered reading instruction tends to be less effective in fostering active student engagement. In addition, limited access to engaging reading materials is one of the factors contributing to students' low reading interest. Students often read due to task demands rather than personal interest or enjoyment. These issues indicate the need for more effective and innovative instructional strategies to improve reading literacy at SDN Wotangare 2.

Research conducted by Yan Jing and Cai Yuyang shows that teachers' instruction of reading strategies has a positive and significant effect on primary school students' reading literacy. The multilevel structural equation modelling results also indicate that the quality and consistency of reading strategy instruction at the classroom level play an important role in improving students' reading abilities(Yan & Cai, 2022). Research conducted by Käsper, Uibu, and Mikk shows that the teaching strategies used by teachers have a significant effect on primary school students' reading outcomes as well as their interest in reading. The study also highlights that the use of varied and student-centered teaching strategies can improve reading comprehension and foster students' interest in reading(Käsper et al., 2020).

Research conducted by Jamal and Dehraj indicates that primary school teachers perceive the use of diverse and well-planned reading strategies as effective in enhancing students' reading skills. The study emphasizes that teachers believe instructional approaches such as guided reading, phonics instruction, and continuous practice play an important role in improving

students' reading abilities(Jamal & Dehraj, 2018). Research conducted by Suwandi et al. shows that the utilization of literacy workshops effectively improves elementary school students' reading abilities. The study highlights that structured literacy activities and active student engagement in workshops contribute significantly to the development of students' reading skills(Suwandi et al., 2023).

Based on the review of previous studies, it can be concluded that there is still a research gap regarding strategies for improving reading literacy among primary school students. Most studies discuss reading literacy in general without linking it to the real conditions of specific educational settings. Research that specifically examines reading literacy improvement strategies at SDN Wotangare 2 is still very limited. Furthermore, few studies have systematically and contextually described literacy strategies that align with students' characteristics. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on examining reading literacy strategies implemented at SDN Wotangare 2. This study emphasizes an analysis of the strategies used by teachers in everyday classroom practices. Therefore, this research is expected to contribute new insights to the development of reading literacy practices in primary education.

Based on the background described above, this study aims to describe strategies for improving reading literacy among students at SDN Wotangare 2. This study also seeks to identify the types of instructional strategies used by teachers to enhance students' reading abilities. In addition, the study aims to analyze supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of reading literacy strategies in schools. The results are expected to provide a comprehensive overview of students' reading literacy conditions. This study is also expected to serve as reflective material for teachers in developing more effective reading instruction strategies. Furthermore, the findings may serve as a reference for schools in strengthening literacy culture. Thus, the objectives of this study are not only academic but also practical in improving the quality of primary education.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design, as it aims to gain an in-depth understanding of strategies for improving reading literacy among students at SDN Wotangare 2. The qualitative approach was chosen to explore the phenomenon in a naturalistic manner in accordance with real conditions in the field(Fitria Widiyani Roosinda, Ninik Sri Lestari, 2021). The case study design allows the researcher to focus intensively and deeply on a specific context. Through this design, the researcher is able to obtain a comprehensive understanding of reading instruction strategies implemented by teachers. This study emphasizes processes, meanings, and the experiences of the research participants. Therefore, the case study approach is considered appropriate for revealing contextual practices in improving reading literacy. The research site was SDN Wotangare 2, which served as the focal educational setting of the study.

The research participants consisted of classroom teachers and students at SDN Wotangare 2 who were directly involved in reading instruction activities. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement and relevance to the research focus. Teachers were chosen as key informants due to their strategic role in designing and implementing reading literacy strategies. Students were selected to gain insights into their responses, experiences, and reading abilities. In addition, the school principal served as a supporting informant to provide information related to school literacy policies. The data collected in this study were descriptive and in-depth in nature. This approach enabled the researcher to gain a holistic understanding of the literacy strategies implemented.

Data collection techniques in this study included observation, interviews, and documentation(Muhammad rizal pahleviannur, 2022). Observations were conducted to directly examine the reading instruction process and literacy strategies applied in the classroom. In-depth interviews were conducted with teachers and relevant stakeholders to explore planning, implementation, and challenges in improving reading literacy. Documentation was used to complement the data, including lesson plans, instructional materials, students' work, and school literacy program documents(Achjar et al., 2023; Majid, 2017). The use of multiple data collection techniques aimed to obtain more valid and comprehensive data. This approach also enabled data triangulation. Thus, data credibility was well maintained.

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively using an interactive analysis model. The analysis process involved data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing(Nurfajriani et al., 2024). The collected data were selected and focused according to the research objectives. Subsequently, the data were presented in descriptive narrative form to facilitate understanding. Conclusions were drawn gradually by identifying patterns and themes emerging from the data. Data trustworthiness was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The researcher also conducted member checking to confirm the accuracy of the information provided by informants. Therefore, the findings are expected to accurately portray strategies for improving reading literacy at SDN Wotangare 2.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

A. Student Reading Literacy Conditions

The research findings indicate that the reading literacy condition of students at SDN Wotangare 2 is still at a moderate level and requires continuous improvement. Some students are able to read fluently; however, their comprehension of reading texts remains relatively low. Students tend to read mechanically without being able to identify main ideas or implicit meanings in the text. This is evident when students are asked to answer questions based on reading materials, as many responses are still inaccurate. Students' interest in reading has also

not developed optimally. Reading activities are still perceived as merely academic tasks rather than personal needs or habits. This condition indicates that reading literacy has not yet fully become a learning culture within the school.

Classroom observations show that students are more interested in reading materials that contain illustrations and simple stories. Texts with longer passages and minimal visual support are less appealing to students. This affects both the duration and quality of students' reading activities. Students often become bored quickly and lose focus while reading. In addition, students' vocabulary mastery is still limited, which affects their ability to comprehend texts. Limited vocabulary causes difficulties in understanding the meanings of words and sentences. This condition reinforces the need for more contextual and engaging reading instruction strategies. Reading literacy should be developed gradually according to students' characteristics.

Observational data also reveal differences in reading ability among students within the same class. Some students are able to read with appropriate intonation and good comprehension, while others still read hesitantly. These differences require teachers to implement differentiated instructional strategies. However, in practice, reading instruction is still conducted in a classical manner. As a result, students' individual learning needs are not fully accommodated. Students with lower reading abilities tend to fall behind. This condition affects students' self-confidence in reading activities. Therefore, specific strategies are needed to bridge the gap in students' reading abilities.

The school has provided reading corners in classrooms; however, their utilization remains suboptimal. Reading corners are more frequently used during free time rather than being integrated into instructional activities. The available book collections are also limited and do not fully match students' interests. Some books are outdated and visually unattractive. This condition reduces students' motivation to read independently. A lack of variety in the literacy environment becomes one of the inhibiting factors in reading literacy development. Thus, the initial condition of reading literacy at SDN Wotangare 2 requires special attention.

Interview results with classroom teachers support these findings. Teachers reported that students' reading abilities vary and require consistent guidance. One teacher stated, "There are still students who can read, but they do not yet understand the content. When asked about the story, their answers are often inaccurate." This statement indicates that challenges in reading literacy involve not only technical reading skills but also comprehension. Teachers recognize the importance of improving reading literacy comprehensively. However, limited time and instructional media remain constraints in implementation. Therefore, teachers feel the need to apply more effective and well-planned strategies.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the reading literacy condition of students at SDN Wotangare 2 still requires improvement. The main challenges include low reading comprehension, insufficient reading interest, and limited literacy resources. These conditions form an important basis for implementing reading literacy improvement strategies. Efforts to enhance reading literacy must be carried out systematically and continuously. Teachers play a central role in guiding and supporting students. Therefore, reading literacy strategies should be designed according to students' actual conditions. This issue becomes the focus of discussion in the following subsection.

B. Teacher Strategies in Improving Students' Reading Literacy

The research findings indicate that teachers at SDN Wotangare 2 have implemented several strategies to improve students' reading literacy. One of the main strategies is reading habituation before lessons begin. Students are given approximately 10–15 minutes to read non-textbook materials. This activity aims to foster reading habits and interest among students. Teachers allow students to choose reading materials according to their interests. This strategy helps create a literacy-rich classroom atmosphere. However, its effectiveness still needs to be enhanced through more intensive guidance.

In addition to reading habituation, teachers also implement shared reading and guided reading strategies. Teachers read texts aloud, followed by students reading along and discussing the content. This strategy helps students understand intonation, pronunciation, and text meaning. Simple discussions are conducted to explore students' comprehension. Teachers provide guiding questions to develop students' critical thinking skills. These activities encourage students to become more actively involved in the reading process. Thus, reading activities are not only individual but also collaborative.

Teachers also integrate reading activities into thematic learning. Reading materials are aligned with the themes being studied. This helps students understand the relationship between the reading texts and learning content. Students are asked to read texts and relate them to their daily experiences. This strategy makes reading activities more contextual and meaningful. Students become more interested because the reading materials are relevant to their lives. This integration also helps improve overall conceptual understanding. Consequently, reading literacy becomes an integral part of the learning process.

The use of simple reading materials is another strategy applied by teachers. Teachers use illustrated storybooks and short texts appropriate to students' developmental levels. Visual media help students understand reading content more easily. In addition, teachers use students' work as reading materials. This increases students' sense of pride and motivation to read. Students are more interested in reading their peers' work. This strategy demonstrates

that reading literacy can be developed through creative approaches. Simple media can have a positive impact when used appropriately.

Interview results with teachers reveal that literacy strategies are implemented gradually. One teacher stated, "We encourage students to read every day, even for a short time. The most important thing is that they become accustomed to reading and are not afraid of it." This statement indicates that teachers emphasize consistency in literacy activities. Teachers understand that improving reading literacy requires a continuous process. Their primary focus is on fostering students' reading habits and self-confidence. Through this approach, teachers hope that students' reading abilities will develop gradually.

Figure 1. literacy

Based on the research findings, teachers' strategies in improving reading literacy include reading habituation, guided reading, thematic integration, and the use of reading materials. These strategies reflect teachers' efforts to create a literate learning environment. Despite existing limitations, the implemented strategies have had a positive impact on students. Teachers play a role as facilitators and motivators in literacy activities. The success of these strategies largely depends on consistent implementation. Therefore, literacy strategies need to be continuously developed and evaluated. This serves as the basis for

C. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Improving Reading Literacy

The research findings indicate that several supporting factors contribute to the improvement of reading literacy at SDN Wotangare 2. One of the main supporting factors is teachers' commitment to habituating reading activities. Teachers demonstrate strong awareness of the importance of reading literacy for students. Support from the school principal is also evident through the provision of reading corners in classrooms. The school environment is relatively conducive to literacy activities. Students are given opportunities to read outside regular lesson hours. These factors support the creation of a literate learning atmosphere.

Student support also serves as a significant contributing factor. Some students show enthusiasm for reading activities, particularly illustrated reading materials. Students feel happy when they are given the freedom to choose books according to their interests. Positive

interactions between teachers and students further support literacy activities. Teachers provide motivation and praise for students' efforts. This increases students' self-confidence in reading. A friendly classroom environment helps students feel comfortable. Thus, internal classroom factors play an important role in supporting reading literacy.

However, the study also identified several inhibiting factors. Limited availability of reading materials is a major obstacle. The number of books available is not proportional to the number of students. The lack of variety in reading materials also causes students to become easily bored. In addition, limited instructional time constrains the implementation of literacy activities. Teachers must adjust reading activities to curriculum demands. These conditions prevent literacy activities from being fully optimized. This issue requires serious attention from the school.

Another inhibiting factor is the variation in students' reading abilities. Students with lower reading skills require more intensive guidance. However, limited time and teacher resources make it difficult to provide individual assistance. Furthermore, parental support for literacy activities at home is uneven. Some parents have not yet developed reading habits at home. This condition affects students' literacy development. Thus, family-related factors also influence the success of reading literacy.

Interview results with teachers reinforce these findings. One teacher stated, "The main challenges are the limited number of reading materials and limited class time, so we cannot optimally assist all students." This statement indicates that teachers are aware of structural obstacles in literacy implementation. Nevertheless, teachers continue to make efforts to optimize existing literacy activities. Teachers expect greater support from schools and parents. Collaboration becomes a key factor in overcoming literacy barriers. With adequate support, reading literacy can be improved.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that improvements in reading literacy are influenced by both supporting and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors include teachers' commitment, the school environment, and students' enthusiasm. Inhibiting factors include limited reading resources, instructional time constraints, and insufficient family support. Understanding these factors is essential for designing effective literacy strategies. Teachers and schools need to optimize existing supporting factors. In addition, efforts to overcome inhibiting factors should be carried out collaboratively. This serves as the basis for discussing the implications of the research findings for instructional practice.

D. The Impact of Reading Literacy Strategies on Students

The research findings indicate that reading literacy improvement strategies have a positive impact on students. Students begin to show increased interest in reading activities. They become more enthusiastic when given time to read in class. Students also appear more

confident when asked to read aloud in front of the class. Their willingness to express opinions about reading materials has increased. This indicates a positive change in students' attitudes toward reading activities. Literacy strategies help students perceive reading as an enjoyable activity. Thus, the initial impact of literacy strategies has begun to emerge.

Improvements in reading ability are also evident among some students. Students read more fluently and are able to comprehend simple texts. Reading discussions help students recall and explain the content of the texts. Students also become more accustomed to answering questions based on reading materials. Vocabulary development among students shows noticeable progress. Students are better able to recognize new words. This indicates that literacy strategies have an impact on both technical reading skills and reading comprehension. Although the improvements are not yet evenly distributed, these developments show a positive trend.

Another observed impact is the improvement of students' social interaction. Shared reading activities and reading discussions encourage students to collaborate. Students learn to listen to their peers' opinions and express their own ideas. These interactions strengthen students' social skills. Students become more confident in communicating in the classroom. Literacy activities also foster mutual respect among students. Therefore, reading literacy has an impact not only on academic achievement but also on students' social-emotional development.

Literacy strategies also influence students' learning motivation. Students who were previously passive begin to show greater engagement in learning activities. Reading helps students better understand learning materials. Students become more prepared to participate in thematic learning. This indicates that reading literacy supports the overall learning process. Teachers observe positive changes in classroom atmosphere. The classroom becomes more active and conducive to learning. These impacts highlight the importance of reading literacy in the learning process.

Interview results with teachers reinforce these positive impacts. One teacher stated, "Students are now more confident in reading and are willing to ask questions about the content of the stories." This statement indicates increased student confidence. Teachers observe changes in students' attitudes and learning behaviors. Although improvements are not yet uniform, positive impacts have already begun to appear. Teachers believe that literacy strategies should be continued. With consistent guidance, the outcomes are expected to become more optimal. This demonstrates that literacy strategies have a tangible effect.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that reading literacy improvement strategies have a positive impact on students at SDN Wotangare 2. These impacts include increased reading interest, improved reading ability, enhanced social interaction, and greater

learning motivation. Literacy strategies help create a more active and enjoyable learning environment. Although some limitations remain, the findings indicate strong potential for literacy strategies. Therefore, reading literacy strategies should be implemented on a sustainable basis. Support from schools and parents is an important factor in sustaining these strategies. In this way, reading literacy can develop optimally in primary schools.

Discussion

The research findings indicate that the reading habituation strategy implemented by teachers at SDN Wotangare 2 is aligned with behaviorist theory, particularly the concept of habit formation, which states that behavior can be shaped through consistent repetition. Reading habituation for 10–15 minutes before lessons serves as a form of positive reinforcement aimed at fostering students' reading habits. This strategy is relevant to the School Literacy Movement, which emphasizes the importance of reading routines as the foundation of literacy. Through habituation, students gradually reduce fear and resistance toward reading activities. These findings reinforce the view that reading literacy does not develop instantly but rather through a continuous and sustained process. Teacher consistency in implementing reading habituation is a key factor in the success of this strategy. Thus, reading habituation serves as an effective initial strategy for building a literacy culture in primary schools.

The strategies of shared reading and guided reading implemented by teachers can be explained through Vygotsky's social constructivist theory. According to this theory, learning occurs through social interaction between students and more knowledgeable adults or peers. Teachers who read texts aloud and guide discussions act as scaffolding that helps students gradually understand texts. Reading discussions enable students to construct meaning socially rather than passively receiving information. This is consistent with the concept of the zone of proximal development, which emphasizes the importance of assistance in the learning process. The findings show that these strategies encourage students to be more active and confident in expressing their ideas. Therefore, guided reading not only improves reading skills but also enhances critical thinking and communication abilities.

The integration of reading activities into thematic learning is also consistent with Ausubel's meaningful learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of linking new knowledge with students' prior knowledge and experiences. When reading materials are aligned with learning themes, students find it easier to understand texts because they are relevant to their real-life contexts. This strategy positions reading not as an isolated activity but as an integral part of the learning process. The findings indicate that reading literacy becomes more effective when connected to students' real experiences. In addition, the thematic approach helps students view reading as a means of understanding the world rather than merely an academic task. Thus,

integrating literacy into thematic learning strengthens conceptual understanding and enhances learning motivation.

The use of simple reading materials, such as picture storybooks and students' own work, can be associated with visual learning and humanistic learning theories. Visual media help students comprehend texts through the combination of images and written language, which aligns with the cognitive developmental characteristics of primary school children. Furthermore, using students' work as reading materials supports humanistic theory, which emphasizes appreciation, self-confidence, and self-actualization. Students feel valued when their work is read by peers, thereby increasing their motivation to read. These findings demonstrate that reading literacy can be developed through creative and emotional approaches. Teachers function not only as instructors but also as motivators who build students' self-confidence. Therefore, simple media play a strategic role in supporting reading literacy development.

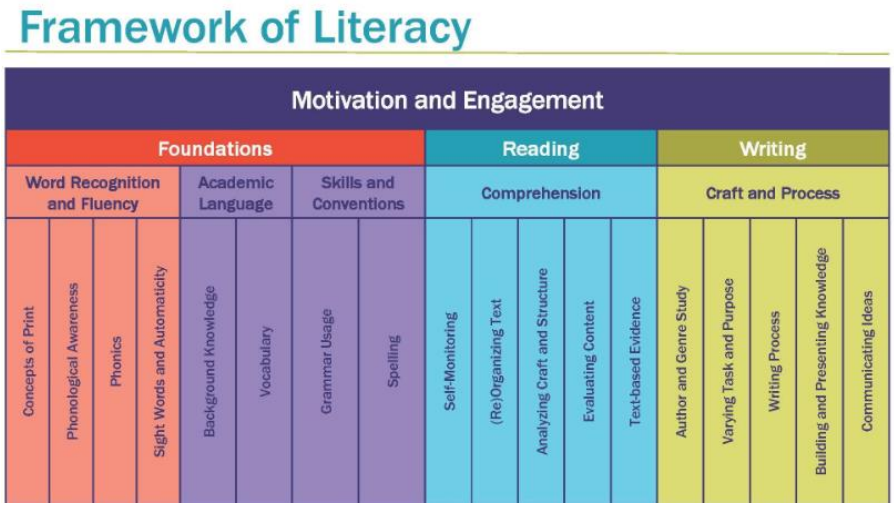

Figure 1. Framework of Literacy

Teachers' strategies in improving reading literacy at SDN Wotangare 2 reflect the integrated application of various learning theories. Reading habituation represents a behaviorist approach, guided reading aligns with social constructivism, thematic integration supports meaningful learning, and the use of learning media corresponds to a humanistic approach. These findings indicate that improving reading literacy requires diverse and complementary strategies. Teachers play a central role in managing these strategies consistently and reflectively. The success of literacy strategies is determined not only by the methods used but also by teachers' commitment and creativity. Therefore, the results of this study reinforce the importance of a holistic approach to developing reading literacy in primary schools.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that teachers' strategies play a crucial role in improving students' reading literacy at SDN Wotangare 2. The strategies implemented include reading habituation, shared reading and guided reading activities, the integration of literacy into thematic learning, and the use of simple and contextual reading materials. These strategies are able to create a literate learning environment and encourage active student engagement in reading activities. The results of the study indicate improvements in students' reading interest, self-confidence, reading comprehension, and social interaction. The success of reading literacy improvement is influenced by the synergy between teachers' strategies, a supportive classroom environment, and positive student responses. Therefore, improving reading literacy in primary schools should be carried out consistently, sustainably, and oriented toward students' needs and characteristics.

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