

## INCORPORATING EXTENSIVE READING INTO THE CURRICULUM OF ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** It is believed that teachers have a significant role in helping students improve their reading performance. Hence, it is crucial to develop a good reading attitude of student teachers because they will become teachers in the future. The teacher education program should prepare student teachers as role model readers. Therefore, the curriculum needs to ensure that the courses help the student teachers build their reading habits. One recommended way to improve reading performance is through extensive reading. This study employed descriptive qualitative research to know how extensive reading is implemented in the English teacher education curriculum and how student teachers view the extensive reading practice. The data resources were from the syllabus, the reflection journals, and the interviews. The study revealed that an extensive reading program could be introduced by integrating it into an existing EFL reading course. Although the English language proficiency did not improve significantly, the student teachers got their reading interest improved and learned new pedagogical skills from extensive reading sessions. It can be concluded that extensive reading can be incorporated into the existing EFL curriculum. However, for more beneficial implications for EFL student teachers, pure extensive reading is highly recommended.  
**Keywords:** *extensive reading, teacher education, EFL curriculum*

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## INTRODUCTION

Reading becomes one of the national issues of education in Indonesia. The score of the reading test in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) from 2000 to 2018, which was focused on reading, remains low. The average scores were below average placed Indonesia in the lowest rank among participating countries (Nugrahanto & Zuchdi, 2019). Whereas, in 2015 the World Economic Forum released the 21st skills including literacy, competence, and character. The latest PISA redefines literacy from basic skills of reading, writing, and counting to the ability to find, compare, contrast, and integrate information across multiple sources (Mo, 2019). Responding to this issue, the government of Indonesia through the Ministry of Education and Culture launched the School Literacy Movement, a literacy program for schools, in 2015 (Antoro, 2017). This program is not only to improve reading habits but also to build good character. Furthermore, the program was expanded into the National Literacy Movement, which involves families and the larger society. However, the program has some challenges. Furthermore, he identified that the main problem of the reading program at school is not the lack of books but the absence of teachers.

Teachers seem to be a key to a successful reading program. Teachers play a major role in encouraging the students to be good readers. Unfortunately, there are still issues of teachers' role in reading courses. A study conducted by Odo (2018) revealed that there are problems with low teacher self-efficacy. They are not confident readers and put less effort to motivate students to read. In addition, they found out that teachers, both pre-service and in-service, are not regular readers. Even, some of them are reluctant readers. A similar problem also exists concerning teachers in Indonesia. How could teachers help their students to build their reading habits if they are unable to help themselves?

Concern regarding teachers' reading habits can be explored from their reading experience when they were in university as student teachers. It might be about what and how they read during teacher training programs for about four years. A survey of the EFL students' reading habits in Indonesia by Iftanti (2012) showed that most of them read for doing an assignment. This habit, which relates to their motivation in reading, happened since they learned English in elementary school. The study conducted by Salikin et al. (2017) to explore the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of Indonesian EFL learners in reading found out that the teacher has such an important role to motivate learners extrinsically through creating interesting methods in teaching reading besides giving frequent assignments. Therefore, it is crucial to develop a good reading attitude of EFL student teachers, as they will become teachers in the future.

Given those facts and results of previous studies, extensive reading is believed to be powerful to build a reading habit, reading rate, reading fluency, and linguistic competence. However, the implementation of extensive reading in higher education especially for student teachers needs improvements. Besides the time constraints, score-oriented is found as the challenges of incorporating extensive in the program.

This study aims at exploring the EFL student teachers' experiences after completing the Extensive Reading course in an English Education department of a private university in Jakarta. It was intended to address research questions: How is extensive reading integrated into English teacher education programs? and What are the student teachers learn from the practice of extensive reading in the EFL curriculum?

This paper is written in the context of developing the reading curriculum for English as Foreign Language (EFL) student teachers to respond to the needs of improving the teachers' reading habits and competence. In this context, integrating extensive reading in the English teacher education curriculum contributes to preparing quality teachers as role models for their students in a reading program.

A brief definition of extensive reading is to read a lot of easy books quickly and enjoyably in their level. It is sometimes referred to as reading for pleasure (Day & Bamford, 1998). Day & Bamford (1998) proposed ten characteristics of a successful extensive reading program. Those characteristics are considered as the principles for teaching extensive reading, which includes:

1. The reading material is easy.
2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be available
3. Learners choose what they want to read
4. Learners read as much as possible
5. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information, and a general understanding
6. Reading is its own reward
7. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower
8. Reading is individual and silent

9. Teachers orient and guide their students
  10. The teacher is a role model of a reader.
- (Richard Day & Bamford, 2002)

A reading course is considered extensive reading when it uses some of those principles (Day, 2015). Although there is no agreement on what exactly an extensive reading program is, it can be called an extensive reading program when students read quickly and enjoyably with adequate comprehension so they do not need a dictionary (ER Foundation, 2019) and apply some of the ten principles of extensive reading.

There are options for implementing extensive reading. Day (2015) divided extensive reading practice into four continuums: (1) pure extensive reading (uses ten principles); (2) modified extensive reading (uses most of the principles); (3) extensive reading light (uses some of the principles and (4) fringe extensive reading (uses none of the principles). Hence, there are different directions in the practice of extensive reading: supervised, independent and blended. First, a supervised extensive reading needs a mentor but does not need to take place in a school or university. Second, independent extensive reading has no supervision, usually individual extensive reading. Third, the blended extensive and intensive readings focus on both teaching reading strategies and extensive reading.

There are beliefs that extensive reading has a beneficial impact on the learning of language (Macalister, 2008). It improves language proficiency on different language skills including listening, speaking, writing, and vocabulary (Ng et al., 2019). In addition, it helps students in examination performance. Having the vast benefits, extensive reading is now broadly implemented in educational institutions both schools and universities.

About the extensive reading program in the EFL context, Ng et al. (2019) suggested incorporating extensive reading into the English curriculum to get linguistic and non-linguistic benefits. According to Day & Bamford (1998), integrating extensive reading into a curriculum can be in four ways:

1. As a separate, stand-alone course
2. As part of an existing reading course
3. As a non-credit addition to an existing course, and
4. As an extra-curricular activity

Green (2005) argued that extensive reading should be fully incorporated in the language curriculum, with flexibility in approach, to help students improve both reading skills and critical thinking skills. In addition, a successful extensive reading program takes place in a class setting (Macalister, 2008) where teachers can ask students to read during the sessions (Renandya, 2017). Meanwhile, extensive reading as an extracurricular activity is considered to fail to apply the principles by Day and Bamford. It is also difficult to monitor the students' reading progress.

Several factors need to be considered to implement extensive reading effectively. Those factors include 'program planning, teacher involvement and student roles' (Day, 2018). Planning an extensive reading course is to set the reading target, formulate the grading system, decide the reading materials, and manage the place and time. Hence, to practice extensive

reading, teachers have to understand ‘what extensive reading is, what their roles are and what the roles of students are’ (Day, 2018). In the future direction, the practise of extensive reading in supervised, independent, and blended intensive and extensive reading programs might continue to exist and become greater with the support of internet extensive reading tools. It is important to notice that what makes extensive reading work is a good collaboration of students and teachers in the process of building the program.

Teachers are role models for their students. Teachers who practice extensive reading should demonstrate their good reading motivation. It is not only to be a good reader but also to be a guide during extensive reading class (Stoller, 2015). The important role for teachers is to keep track of students’ reading progress and to help them actively participate in the extensive reading process (Ewert, 2017). They are to interact quietly with the students to make sure that the students are reading, not struggling with the materials. They are to check that students understand what they read as students in extensive reading control themselves over what and when they read (Day, 2018).

Teachers need to provide or suggest varied reading materials, which might be suitable for students’ interests. They, as mentors, may recommend books to students and encourage them to step to a more difficult level (Stein, 2018). Furthermore, teachers should help students to see the value of extensive reading (Odo, 2018). Hence, teachers should have good knowledge and experience of the teaching approach in extensive reading.

Some studies found out that teachers have positive beliefs about the effectiveness of extensive reading to develop reading proficiency (Macalister, 2010), (Renandya, 2017). However, many teachers did not include extensive reading into their language class program. Some misinterpreted the nature of extensive reading (Macalister, 2010). Others encountered difficulties in implementing extensive reading concerned with the difficulty of monitoring the students (Renandya, 2017). Considering these issues, Macalister (2010) suggested serious and greater attention to extensive reading in a language teacher education, which emphasises preparing the teacher as the model of the language learner.

It seems challenging to define quality teachers accurately. In this study, quality teachers adopted the concept from the field of second-language teacher education that defines quality teachers as teachers who have excellent knowledge about what to teach, how to teach, and how to learn to teach (Syahril, 2019). Kennedy as cited by Syahril (2019) highlighted three areas of quality, which include personal resources, performance, and effectiveness. Referring to the quality teacher in the future, Syahril (2019) proposed an interdisciplinary manner of teachers to include in EFL/ESL teacher education program. Student teachers do not only master the English language but also comprehend disciplinary texts in English.

While many studies on the extensive reading practice had been conducted in higher education institutions, there is limited research on extensive reading in language teacher education to explore the student teachers’ awareness of its practice in foreign language contexts like Indonesia. Teachers as language learners are not often mentioned in the studies about teachers’ role in teaching language skills

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is conducted in an ‘interpretative frame in which the concern is with the production of meaning’ (Dowling & Brown, 2010). The qualitative approach used in this research was a case study. This design was to address and understand the students’ experiences of joining an extensive reading that was integrated into the existing reading course. The study was started with a purpose and specific research questions and was carried out in a natural environment. It was initiated by identifying specific cases, which can be a single case or a small number of related cases’ (Robson, 2011). This research was aimed to explore the student teachers’ perception of experiencing extensive reading and illustrate the issues of teacher education curriculum.

The study was conducted at a private university in Jakarta involving EFL students in the third semester in the academic year 2019/2020. The researcher got permission from the lecturer of the reading course before taking the data. The participants were student teachers from the English Education Department, the faculty of Teacher Training and Education. They were all 11 students consisting of ten females and one male, who took the reading course. The students voluntarily participated and care was taken to assure that their identities would be anonymous through pseudonyms.

The study adopted an interpretive paradigm; ‘the inquirer is typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants’ (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To collect the data, multiple resources were employed namely a syllabus and reflective journals, and interviews. The primary data were obtained from semi-structured interviews. To develop interview questions, an analysis of reflective journals was undertaken. Student teachers wrote their reading journals at the end of each session. These journals included reflective diaries about their practice of extensive reading both challenges and benefits. The diaries were collected to give preliminary information about the student teachers’ reflections on extensive reading sessions. Interviews were carried out subsequently during days off before the final examination.

To ensure consistency, the interview protocol was developed from the reflective journals to confirm and to explore the student teachers’ knowledge of extensive reading and their experience of extensive reading in classroom practice. After the interview guideline was developed and consent forms were obtained, the interviews were conducted. The participants had language preferences: Bahasa Indonesia or English for the interview. Five of them chose Bahasa Indonesia, two of them preferred English, and the rest used a mix of Indonesian and English languages. The interviews were carried out face-to-face after the last session of the program for about thirty to sixty minutes per participant. The interviews were recorded.

To answer the question of how the extensive reading was implemented in the teacher education program and what the student teachers learned from attending the extensive reading sessions integrated into the reading course, a hand analysis was conducted. It means that the researcher read again the data and mark the data manually and divide the data into parts (Creswell, 2012). After collecting the data, the method of thematic analysis was adopted. The interviews were transcribed and presented in a textual form. The basic themes were carefully determined concerning the research questions. Codes were assigned and accumulated. The similar codes were grouped into one theme or category. After that, the codes were compared to all themes identified. In this step, adjustments could be made.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings from this study confirm that extensive reading encourages students to build their reading habits, improve their language proficiency (Ng et al., 2019), and learn new knowledge and understanding of teaching reading (Macalister, 2010). Participants' experiences of extensive reading practice were consistent with the previous findings of the studies that extensive reading has positive effects on language skills (Ng et al., 2019).

In this section, the key themes as the results for interview questions are presented in two categories: the implementation of extensive reading in the EFL teacher education program and students' experiences of attending extensive reading practice in the EFL classroom setting. The discussion will focus on answering the research question of how extensive reading was incorporated into the EFL curriculum in a teacher education program and what the student teachers experienced from extensive reading sessions.

### Extensive Reading is a part of an existing reading course

The study found that extensive reading was not a course in a teacher education program. It was not fully implemented as a single program, but it was integrated into an existing reading course. The existing reading course was the Intermediate Reading course, which was aimed at developing reading skills. The course had three credits and was compulsory for students. It consisted of 14 sessions excluded midterm and final exams. Each session took 150 minutes.

When the extensive reading was incorporated into the reading course, students were to read their selected reading materials for one semester, both fiction and non-fiction. They were asked to select the reading based on their interest and level. However, most of them found it difficult to decide what to read and where to find the books. Some of them were helped by the lecturer. They were allowed to read outside the class. Then, during the session, they did the classroom activities using their reading materials. To monitor the progress, the students wrote the reading journal provided by the lecturer. Here are the integration of extensive reading activities of each session during one semester summarised from the syllabus:

Session	Topic and activities
1	Introduction to extensive reading
2	Strategies of reading faster; Timed reading
3	Introducing graded readers and self-selected reading
4	Silent reading and reviewing fiction book
5	Retelling a story of the students' reading
6	Predicting and writing a different ending of a story
7	Reading comprehension check; Book conference
8	Selecting non-fiction reading materials and checking the reading speed; Reading race
9	Skimming and scanning (Findings general and specific information)
10	Identifying facts and opinions and giving arguments
11	Interpreting the author's purpose and ideas
12	Being a reporter
13	Reading comprehension check
14	Creating a reading poster; reflection

Midterm	Presenting the reading progress: Book review
Final	Creating a wall magazine

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Table 1. The extensive reading activities

One of the options to conduct the extensive reading is to integrate it into the existing reading course. This practice refers to the options of integrating extensive reading into the curriculum proposed by Day & Bamford (1998). Incorporating extensive reading into the EFL curriculum introduces students to the other form of reading course through a blended extensive and intensive reading course (Day, 2015). To integrate extensive reading into the curriculum, teachers or lecturers might consider many aspects: form, time, reading materials, classroom activities, and assessment.

Teachers are to set the learning objectives following the curriculum of the program. They are to examine the objectives of the existing reading programs and adjust the objective of the extensive reading activities. Another option is to design various reading activities following the extensive reading principles. The study found out that only some of the principles of extensive reading integrated into the existing reading course were implemented. Therefore, this kind of extensive reading is a light extensive reading (Day, 2015). In this study, the principles of extensive reading were not fully implemented.

The successful extensive reading practice might also refer to the allocated time. Compared to high schools which follow the national curriculum, the practise of extensive reading in higher education might be easier because the curriculum and assessment are more flexible and lecturers are more independent. Therefore, there are many options for implementing extensive reading in university, as suggested by Day and Bamford (1998): stand-alone course, part of the existing reading course, additional course, or extracurricular activity. It means that lecturers might choose to have pure extensive reading or combine it with intensive reading.

Facilities might become another challenge for implementing extensive reading. The university library might not have complete collections of reading materials appropriate for all levels of readers. Some students might not have their reading materials at home. An alternative is online extensive reading which might be easier for those who have limited reading materials. However, it might be challenging for teachers who are not familiar with new technology to monitor the progress or for those who work with poor internet connections to access the sources.

Developing the extensive reading curriculum, teachers are to include interesting classroom activities for students. It is in line with the nature of extensive reading: read quickly and enjoyably. If the teachers are failed to design the extensive reading program, it is possible to fall into an intensive reading session. To successfully implement the extensive reading program, it is suggested to follow the principles.

## Student teachers' experience of extensive reading practice

### 1. Knowledge and Attitude on Extensive Reading Practice

Student teachers in this study perceived that extensive reading has opened their views about reading courses. Nine students did not know extensive reading before taking the course, while two students knew the term 'extensive reading' but did not know the practice. They shared their experiences of reading sessions were boring, had few interesting activities, reading comprehension, and reading aloud to pronounce English correctly. They had different views of reading class. Some of them were able to mention the extensive reading terms such as reading fast, reading a lot, reading enjoyably, and reading interesting content. A student, Flo, was confused about the reading and speaking session in the previous reading class. She thought it was like a speaking class because students had to know how to pronounce words correctly. She said the reading class was fun because she could read quickly without a dictionary.

All participants expressed positive attitudes to extensive reading. They enjoyed the reading sessions. Most of them read faster. In the interview, Mike mentioned that he often read books and articles after the extensive reading class. He enjoyed reading quickly. Extensive reading helps him read faster than before attending the class. Moreover, four of them expressed that they got their reading habit improved. One of them is Clara who mentioned that the class made her start to read novels again and she felt good about that. Compared to their experience of reading sessions in senior high schools, they found that extensive reading is more joyful yet challenging.

The positive feedback on the extensive reading course provided insights into the successful and effective extensive reading. In general, the student teachers feel the benefits of extensive reading to their linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge. Most of them confirmed that extensive reading improved their language proficiency but not significant. The improvement is the knowledge of vocabulary. Furthermore, their reading comprehension is improved. Extensive reading has brought their reading habit back.

### 2. English Vocabulary Improvement

During the interview, seven students expressed their vocabulary improvement. They learned new vocabulary from their reading. One of them, Elle, mentioned that she found many new words from the novels. Meanwhile, Kim mentioned that sometimes she found difficult words but she did not worry as long as she understood the story, she did not look up the dictionary. This made the reading faster. Although some of them were struggling to get the meaning of new words, they did not find difficulties in understanding the story. Ann expressed her opinion that she likes to read more novels although sometimes she did not understand the meaning. Most participants mentioned that they enjoyed reading fiction without looking up to the dictionary when they found difficult words. This process motivated them to finish their reading soon without giving up on the chapters.

The benefit of extensive reading on grammar and other English language skills was less frequently mentioned. However, five students mentioned that they had better reading comprehension. Stella expressed her better understanding of the story. She mentioned that from the extensive reading, she can read faster and got the new vocabulary.



From the findings above, extensive reading has helped them build vocabulary as part of linguistic knowledge improvement. Besides new vocabulary, finding meaning without a dictionary trains them to get the meaning in context. At least, students are not too dependent on an online dictionary and Google Translate web. Extensive reading reduced translating text word by word and trained them to understand words in context. Therefore, by omitting some words they read faster but still get the meaning. Finishing the text quickly motivated him or her to read another text or book. As a result, their reading performance is improved.

### 3. Various English Activities

Each participant mentioned different favorite activities in their journals. To confirm their choices, the interviews explored further their favorite activities during the extensive reading sessions. Here are their top three choices of reading activities from the most liked:

No	Name	Favorite ER activities
1.	Ann	Selecting reading materials; Timed reading; Creating a wall magazine
2.	Jasmine	Reading fiction; Retelling a story; Making a poster
3.	Elle	Selecting reading materials; Reading fiction; Creating a wall magazine
4.	Clara	Selecting reading materials; Timed Reading; Summarising
5.	Kim	Reading fiction; Timed Reading; Predicting different endings
6.	Flo	Selecting reading materials, Reading fiction; Predicting different ending
7.	Stella	Selecting reading materials; Summarizing; Book review
8.	Drina	Selecting reading materials, Reading fiction; Reading race
9.	Lee	Reading fiction, Timed Reading; Retelling a story
10.	Mike	Selecting reading materials, Reading fiction; Creating a wall magazine
11.	Jessica	Selecting reading materials; Reading race; Creating a wall magazine

Table 2. Students' favorite extensive reading activities

From the table above, it seems that most participants enjoyed the process of selecting reading materials and creating a wall magazine. Nevertheless, other activities were also mentioned as their favourite like predicting the different endings of a story, summarizing, timed reading, reading race, making a poster, retelling a story, summarizing, and book review.

Self-selecting reading materials seems to be a new experience for them. Almost all participants mentioned it as a favorite activity. It was also confirmed from the interview that the participants felt glad that they were able to choose the reading they like and one that was easy for them. Two participants admitted that it was not easy to choose the reading based on their level and interest. They changed their novel in the middle of the reading process into the easier one. One of them, Drina mentioned that she changed her novel because it was too difficult and thick. Another two participants were confused about choosing what to read. They needed help from the lecturer. However, half of them found difficulties in deciding their reading level and finding the reading sources both printed or electronic reading materials. From this interview, choosing the reading materials is challenging in the extensive reading practice. Therefore, teachers need to help them select the appropriate reading. To be able to recommend books to students, teachers need to have various references. It means that the role of a teacher in helping students choose the right reading is crucial in the extensive reading program.

For most participants, creating a wall magazine is also their first experience. They thought that reading is always about answering questions or translating texts, but in the extensive reading class, they were to create a wall magazine. Stella, one of the participants, expressed her first experience of making a wall magazine. She got many ideas after discussing the draft with the group members.

While the participants shared their experiences of having the extensive reading sessions with various classroom activities, they expressed their new understanding of teaching reading class.

Various class activities became a new experience for students. It changes their perception from monotonous reading activities into more dynamic activities. Completing novels, making posters, being a news anchor, or making a wall magazine has become an exciting reading project. It is expected that after extensive reading classes, students do not only have better English skills but also teaching skills, especially teaching reading skills.

It implies that besides vocabulary improvement, extensive reading has built the student teachers' teaching skills, especially how to teach the reading skill. It is important for those students who will become teachers in the future. Instead of reading comprehension by answering questions, they are encouraged to integrate reading to other English skills in various class activities. For example, in telling a story, students have to combine reading comprehension and speaking skills. Another example is making a wall magazine; the students integrate reading and writing skills.

#### **4. The Role of Teacher in Extensive Reading is examined**

The issue about the teacher's role in reading class was also addressed during the interview. In the extensive reading course, the students noticed that the lecturer explained the extensive reading clearly in the first session. All interviewees confirmed that the lecturer gave sufficient information about extensive reading sessions during one semester. The lecturer also helped them choose the fiction books and articles appropriate to students' level. It seems that the lecturer attempted to follow the extensive reading principles to let students select their reading.

During the sessions, the lecturer also ensured the students' reading track. Although the students set their own-targeted time, the lecturer kept controlling their progress. The students were to fill in the form, a reading log, to show how far they read. This activity indicates that teachers guide the students not only to choose an appropriate book but also to motivate students to finish their reading soon.

A teacher should be a model for their students. The role can be from introducing the extensive reading principles, helping students select the reading materials, giving guidance to students, monitoring the reading progress, planning, and organizing activities, and checking students' understanding (Xiaomei, 2020). Although the students mentioned that the lecturer was not always reading together with them in the classroom, they noticed that the lecturer keep walking around the class while the students were reading silently. During the sessions, the lecturer ensured the students' reading progress. It can be implied the students learn the role of a teacher in a reading class. However, the teachers' reflection after incorporating the program is not addressed here.

## CONCLUSION

The integration of extensive reading into the EFL curriculum introduces the student teachers to the other form of reading course. Their general knowledge about extensive reading is improved and they perceived positive feelings to extensive reading. Furthermore, they experienced new pedagogical knowledge that could be applied in their classes in the future when they become teachers.

After learning different types of reading, student teachers are expected to understand the role of a teacher in reading classes. It is about how teachers drive their students to read, become a model of a reader, and motivate students to read not only for score but also for competence.

The implementation of an extensive reading program in the EFL teacher education curriculum is useful for preparing quality teachers. However, the long-term benefits of extensive reading might not instantly be obtained. The extensive reading program needs to apply all principles of extensive reading to achieve a successful practice.

As this study was only focused on the students' perception, the teacher's reflection on the implementation of extensive reading needs to be explored in future research. It is also important to investigate how novice teachers who had extensive reading in their teacher education incorporate extensive reading in their classes. The recent urgent study might be the issue of the extensive reading program in online teaching and learning mode during and after the pandemic situation.

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