INTEGRATING HUMANISTIC IN READING MATERIAL FOR EIGHT GRADERS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Theresia Rosalina Ritonga, Siti Drivoka Sulistyaningrum
Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia
rosalinanasrullah2013@gmail.com, drivoka@unj.ac.id

Abstract: Education should focus on fostering human development and personal growth, not just higher test scores. Emphasizing these aspects naturally enhances intellectual achievements and better prepares students to contribute to both global and local communities. Human beings have an innate goodness and a natural tendency to learn, grow, and reach their full potential. Therefore, aligning education with these natural tendencies will make it more effective. This article explores how integrating humanistic principles with reading materials can improve students' English language learning. Using library reaserch methodes, the study finds that humanistic approaches to reading can enhance student's skills and create a classroom environment that supports holistic learning and personal grouth.

Keywords**:** Humanistic Education, reading material, Eight Graders

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, educational approaches have increasingly favored methods that promote the comprehensive development of students. A key aspect of this shift is the incorporation of humanistic principles into educational practices, which aim to nurture both the intellectual and emotional aspects of learners. Humanistic education, based on the philosophies of thinkers like Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, focuses on the holistic development of individuals, emphasizing self-actualization, intrinsic motivation, and the cultivation of empathy and self-awareness (Rogers, 1961; Maslow, 1943).

Reading instruction is a vital part of the educational experience for eighth graders in Junior High School. However, traditional reading materials often fall short in fully engaging students and meeting their varied learning needs. Integrating humanistic principles into reading materials addresses this issue by providing content that is personally meaningful and relevant, thus enhancing students' motivation, engagement, and comprehension skills (Noddings, 2005).

Humanistic reading materials are designed to create a deeper connection between students and the texts they read. This approach promotes active participation, critical thinking, and reflective learning, which are crucial for the development of higher-order cognitive skills. Additionally, humanistic education aligns with students' natural tendencies to seek meaning and personal relevance in their learning experiences, making education more effective and satisfying (Eisner, 2002).

This study aims to explore how integrating humanistic principles into reading materials can benefit eighth graders in Junior High School. It will examine how this approach can enhance students' reading comprehension, motivation, and overall engagement. By addressing the specific

needs and preferences of students, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of humanistic reading strategies, this research intends to provide valuable insights and practical recommendations for educators. The ultimate goal is to develop a reading curriculum that not only improves academic performance but also supports the overall development of students. In achieving these goals, the study adds to the expanding body of literature on humanistic education and its implementation in modern classrooms. It demonstrates the potential of humanistic approaches to transform reading instruction, making it more attuned to the developmental needs and interests of students.

The integration of humanistic principles into reading materials is expected to positively impact the reading comprehension skills of eighth-grade students. By offering content that resonates personally with students, the study explores whether this personal relevance leads to better understanding and retention of the material. Humanistic reading materials may allow students to engage with texts on a deeper level, enhancing their cognitive processing and facilitating a stronger grasp of the content. Additionally, this study investigates the perceptions of students regarding these humanistic reading materials. Understanding how students feel about these materials will help assess their effectiveness in creating a more engaging and motivating learning experience. By examining their attitudes and experiences, this research seeks to uncover whether students find these materials more engaging and personally meaningful compared to traditional reading materials.

Furthermore, the use of humanistic reading materials is hypothesized to influence students' motivation and engagement in reading activities. Since motivation plays a central role in academic success, this study aims to explore whether students are more likely to engage with reading tasks when the material aligns with their personal interests and experiences. By fostering greater engagement and motivation, humanistic reading materials may encourage students to read more actively, both in and outside the classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Humanistic learning theory emphasizes personal development by taking into account students' self-concept, values, and emotions. It contributes positively to academic learning, intellectual growth, and the acquisition of fundamental skills. Humanistic education does not prioritize personal growth over academic achievement; instead, it recognizes that both are mutually beneficial. By establishing meaningful connections between students' lives, emotions, and experiences, humanistic education enriches the learning process. As a result, students are able to acquire knowledge and skills more effectively and at a deeper level. For humanistic educators, academic learning serves as a foundation for personal growth and for equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in the world.

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Furthermore, apart from acquiring knowledge and skills, students can also develop a deeper understanding of themselves, others, and the concept of being a human on Earth as they engage in building a personal connection with the subject matter and their peers. This personal connection significantly enhances the learning process, leading to a more comprehensive education. It can be argued that a strong bond between the content and the students results in a more effective and meaningful learning experience. Ultimately, a quality education is one that nurtures the human spirit.

Research has firmly established the significant impact of emotions on learning. Studies by Gazzaniga (1992), LeDoux (1994, 1996), Restak (1994), and Bar-On and Parker (2000) suggest that emotions strongly influence learning, often overpowering conscious thought. Emotions can serve as powerful motivators, even more influential than values and beliefs, and they play a critical role in shaping behaviour. Individuals often seek explanations for their emotions, and in the absence of clear causes, they construct reasons to justify how they feel. This highlights the idea that emotions, though learned, are central to all learning processes.

Sylwester (1994) emphasized the importance of acknowledging children's emotions in the classroom, noting that emotions significantly influence attention, memory, and behaviour. He argued that thinking and feeling are interconnected in the body-brain system, and disruptions to this system could hinder emotional well-being. Therefore, reducing stress-inducing experiences in educational settings can improve memory and relieve emotional burdens.

Students also need to develop awareness of their own knowledge in order to self-regulate effectively during learning. This requires a solid foundational understanding of the subject matter. With a strong grasp of the content, students can better understand their strengths and weaknesses and reflect on their learning strategies. Teachers play a critical role in assessing students' prior knowledge to help refine their understanding. As students evaluate the level of effort and planning involved in their learning, they become more capable of adjusting their approaches to reach their academic goals.

In relation to reading instruction, intensive reading is one method that supports deeper comprehension. It involves engagement with short texts where students pay close attention to meaning, vocabulary, and structure. Brown (2000) defines intensive reading as a classroom-based activity requiring careful attention to grammar, discourse markers, and text structure to understand not only the literal meaning but also implications and rhetorical relationships. Although the activities may be repetitive, Yin (2015) emphasized that intensive reading is fundamental, particularly for English majors, as it enhances both comprehension and overall literacy. Zhang (2020) further noted its contribution to developing students' reading habits and language proficiency.

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Intensive reading typically includes three phases: pre-reading, where students activate prior knowledge; while-reading, where they engage in silent reading to understand details and overall meaning; and post-reading, where student's complete follow-up tasks such as answering questions or summarizing the text (Widodo, 2009).

Teaching reading comprehension to students with learning difficulties presents unique challenges. While decoding and phonics are foundational, comprehension is considered the "essence of reading" (Beck & McKeown, 1998). Comprehension involves a complex interplay of processes, including vocabulary knowledge, fluency, background knowledge, and word recognition (Anderson et al., 1985; Jenkins et al., 1983; O'Shea et al., 1987).

Although decoding difficulties are a major obstacle for students with learning disabilities (Ball & Blachman, 1991; O'Connor & Jenkins, 1995), many still struggle with comprehension despite adequate decoding skills (Williams, 1998, 2000). To support these learners, explicit and structured instruction in both foundational and comprehension skills is crucial (Gersten & Carnine, 1986; Gersten et al., 2001). Durkin's (1978–1979) seminal study found that comprehension instruction often lacked engagement and effectiveness. Typically, teachers introduced a skill, provided practice through worksheets, and assessed mastery, but these steps did not necessarily result in meaningful comprehension.

Finally, understanding the behaviours of good and poor readers provides valuable insights into effective reading comprehension strategies. Research involving think-aloud protocols (Dole et al., 1991; Heilman et al., 1998; Jiménez et al., 1995, 1996) revealed that proficient readers employ strategic approaches before, during, and after reading. These include setting goals, recognizing text structure, monitoring understanding, summarizing, predicting content, and evaluating comprehension (Paris et al., 1991; Paris et al., 1983). Good readers demonstrate fluent decoding, use a variety of strategies, and adapt when they encounter confusion—behaviours often absent in poor readers. These findings suggest that teaching students to be more strategic and reflective readers can improve their comprehension and overall reading performance.

METHOD

This research employed a desk research method, specifically focusing on a literature review. The method involved examining and analysing various library materials without the need for fieldwork (Zed, 2008). The study began with a thorough review of existing research and theories related to humanistic education, reading comprehension, and the use of humanistic principles in reading materials. Relevant sources included academic journal articles, textbooks, and studies on humanistic education, student motivation, and effective reading instruction. The selected

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literature covered both classic theories and recent studies, ensuring the research was based on up-to-date and relevant information.

Through this review, the research aimed to gather insights on how integrating humanistic principles into reading materials can improve eighth-grade students' comprehension and engagement. The findings were analyzed to answer the research questions and provide a solid basis for applying humanistic education in English reading instruction. Based on these insights, the study concluded with recommendations for developing a reading curriculum that enhances both academic skills and personal growth for students.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

The Junior High School eighth graders' reading requirements varied. They want to improve their vocabulary, understand text structure, use proper grammar, and grasp the message of a document. Furthermore, students needed assistance in acquiring the linguistic characteristics and general structures of several text genres, such as narrative, recount, and descriptive texts. Furthermore, students faced difficulties with vocabulary acquisition, grammatical application, general text organization, and deciphering the content that texts were trying to express. They looked for other resources to support their learning because the reading materials that were given were insufficient. They also wanted to increase their vocabulary and use the language in their everyday lives.

In addition, the children enjoyed working in couples as well as individually. As a result, in addition to allowing students to work separately, the resources were made to facilitate pair work. The children also desired to learn to read by filling in the blanks, matching, rearranging jumbled pictures, and reading texts and responding to questions. When they encountered difficulties learning English, they tended to be proactive students and sought advice from friends and professors. In order to overcome their difficulties, they thus also read books, dictionaries, or other sources.

Discussion

Support for motivation and engagement is essential in helping children who are at risk of reading difficulties. These interventions are especially important for those who may have undiagnosed reading impairments or come from disadvantaged backgrounds. These students often face additional challenges that can hinder their learning.

However, it is important to note that some motivational strategies—such as allocating time for independent reading—might not be feasible outside the classroom. This is often due to

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factors such as parents working multiple jobs, which limits their availability to support their children's reading habits. Furthermore, these families may struggle to afford the necessary resources, such as books or quiet spaces, that would enable independent reading at home.

In the classroom, teachers can create structured environments that promote engagement, but external support is equally crucial for these strategies to be successful in the long term. Without support from both school and home, it becomes difficult for children to maintain consistent motivation and engagement with reading.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that eighth-grade students in Junior High School have divers reading needs, including enhancing their vocabulary, understanding text structures, applying proper grammar, and comprehending the messages conveyed in various text genres such as narrative, recount, and descriptive texts. Students encountered challenges with vocabulary acquisition, grammatical application, text organization, and interpreting content, prompting them to seek additional resources beyond the provided reading materials.

Students expressed a preference for both individual and pair work, leading to the development of resources that accommodate both learning styles. They also favoured interactive activities such as filling in the blanks, matching, rearranging jumbled pictures, and responding to questions based on texts. Proactive in their learning, students sought help from peers and teachers and utilized books, dictionaries, and other sources to overcome their difficulties.

Motivation and engagement emerged as crucial support mechanisms, particularly for students at risk of reading difficulties, including those with undiagnosed impairments or from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, the feasibility of certain motivational strategies, like independent reading time, may be limited outside the classroom due to socioeconomic factors, such as parents working multiple jobs and lacking the means to provide necessary resources.

Overall, the findings underscore the importance of tailored educational strategies that address the specific reading needs and preferences of students, promote interactive and collaborative learning, and provide additional support and resources to ensure all students can effectively improve their reading skills.
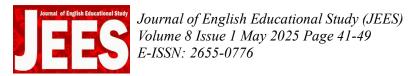
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