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Multisensory Literacy Assistance for Children Who Read Late to Improve Reading Ability

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ABSTRACT

Reading difficulties among elementary school children can restrict their access to learning and hinder the development of foundational literacy skills. Children who struggle with letter recognition, syllable decoding, word reading, sentence reading, and fluency require structured assistance that addresses their individual learning needs. This community service program aimed to improve the basic reading abilities of children experiencing reading delays through integrated multisensory literacy assistance. The program involved 26 children from SDN 2 Sukonatar, SDN 3 Sukonatar, and MI Al-Hikmah Sukonatar in Banyuwangi, Indonesia. A participatory, community-based approach was implemented over four weeks through 16 sessions, comprising initial reading assessment, collaborative planning, multisensory instruction, individualized assistance, monitoring, and final evaluation. Learning activities integrated visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile modalities, repeated reading practice, and limited use of Wayground as a supplementary learning medium. The findings indicated improvements across all five reading indicators. The average proportion of children experiencing reading difficulties decreased from 20.00% before the intervention to 6.92% afterward. Children also demonstrated greater participation and confidence in reading activities. This program contributes a community-based literacy assistance model that integrates multisensory instruction, individualized support, and repeated reading practice within a structured intervention. The findings suggest that combining these strategies can provide responsive support for children experiencing reading delays while encouraging family and community involvement in literacy developments.

INTRODUCTION

Reading ability is a fundamental skill that enables elementary school children to access information, understand learning materials, and participate effectively in educational activities. At the early stages of literacy development, children are expected to acquire several interconnected skills, including letter recognition, letter-sound correspondence, syllable decoding, word recognition, sentence reading, and reading fluency. Difficulties in mastering these foundational skills can restrict children's learning opportunities and affect their academic participation, motivation, and confidence. Such difficulties require appropriate educational support because children develop reading skills at different rates and may encounter specific barriers at different stages of literacy acquisition (Villa, 2026). Therefore, reading assistance should provide explicit, systematic, and developmentally appropriate instruction that responds to children's individual abilities and learning needs (Henry, 2020). Previous service activities have also shown that targeted interventions supported by learning tools and early-to-end evaluation can address elementary school students' literacy needs (Aprillia Sinda Dinningrum & Laili Arin Ramadhani, 2024).

Reading delay cannot be seen solely as a problem of children's individual abilities, because reading development is influenced by the interaction among children's abilities, learning quality, practice opportunities, family support, and the learning environment. Limited practice and guidance, inconsistent family support, and experiences of failure in

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reading can strengthen reading difficulties and have an impact on children's involvement in the learning process (Villa, 2026). This suggests that efforts to improve reading ability should focus on support that responds to children's individual needs while considering the social environment in which they learn. Similar problems were also found in elementary school-age children in Sukonatar Village, Srono District, Banyuwangi Regency. An initial assessment of 26 children from 3 elementary schools in Sukonatar Village found variation in several components of basic reading skills, including letter recognition, reading syllables, reading words, reading sentences, and reading fluency. The initial assessment aimed to provide an objective picture of children's reading ability and to inform the determination of appropriate assistance needs.

These challenges were also identified among elementary school children in Sukonatar Village, Srono District, Banyuwangi Regency, Indonesia. An initial reading assessment involving 26 children from three elementary schools, namely SDN 2 Sukonatar, SDN 3 Sukonatar, and MI Al-Hikmah Sukonatar, revealed difficulties across five foundational reading indicators. Specifically, five children (19.23%) could not recognize all letters correctly, six children (23.08%) experienced difficulties reading syllables, three children (11.54%) could not independently read words, five children (19.23%) struggled to read simple sentences, and seven children (26.92%) demonstrated low reading fluency. These findings indicate that reading difficulties among the participating children occurred at different levels, from basic letter recognition to the ability to read connected text fluently. This variation highlights the importance of conducting initial assessments to identify specific learning needs and establish an appropriate foundation for designing literacy assistance programs.

Differences in children's reading abilities require differentiated and systematic instructional support rather than uniform learning activities. Children who have not mastered letter recognition need explicit instruction connecting written symbols with their corresponding sounds, whereas children who can recognize letters but struggle with syllables and words require guided decoding practice. Similarly, children who can read individual words but experience difficulties reading sentences need opportunities to develop accuracy, continuity, and fluency through structured practice. Previous research has emphasized the importance of identifying specific reading difficulties and providing targeted interventions that address children's particular literacy needs (Fatonah et al., 2025). Al Otaiba et al. (2023) also highlight the importance of explicit and systematic literacy interventions for elementary school students experiencing reading difficulties. Accordingly, individualized assistance provides a relevant instructional foundation for helping children progress from their existing reading abilities toward more advanced literacy skills.

One approach that can support this process is multisensory literacy instruction, which integrates visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile activities into reading practice. Through this approach, children engage with written symbols by observing letter shapes, listening to sounds, pronouncing letters, arranging syllable cards, tracing symbols, and manipulating learning materials. These activities provide multiple opportunities to establish connections between letter forms, speech sounds, and word recognition. Henry (2020) demonstrated the potential of systematic multisensory phonics intervention to improve word-reading accuracy and confidence among older struggling readers. Similarly, Kilat and Apas (2025) reported that multisensory learning can support

phonemic awareness and early literacy development, while Mitak et al. (2023) highlighted its relevance in addressing elementary school students' reading difficulties. These findings provide a rationale for applying multisensory activities in community-based literacy assistance, particularly when combined with differentiated instruction and repeated opportunities to practice reading.

Despite the relevance of these instructional strategies, supporting children with reading difficulties also requires attention to the learning environments in which reading development takes place. Reading practice does not occur exclusively during formal instruction; it also depends on opportunities for children to engage with written materials at home and in their surrounding communities. Parental involvement can provide additional opportunities for guided reading practice and reinforce the learning activities introduced during mentoring sessions (Betonio & Lomarda, 2025; Jar U. Abolais et al., 2025). However, the practical challenge lies in organizing these forms of support into a structured program that connects children's individual reading needs with appropriate instructional activities and continued practice. This community service program addresses that practical need by integrating multisensory instruction, individualized assistance, and repeated reading practice within a participatory, community-based literacy intervention. Its distinctive contribution lies in implementing these complementary strategies as a coordinated program while involving parents, schools, and community members in supporting children's literacy development.

Based on the initial assessment and the identified literacy needs, this community service program aimed to improve the basic reading abilities of 26 elementary school children experiencing reading delays in Sukonatar Village, Banyuwangi Regency. The program employed a participatory, community-based approach and was implemented over four weeks through 16 mentoring sessions. Its instructional activities focused on improving letter recognition, letter-sound correspondence, syllable decoding, word reading, sentence reading, and reading fluency through visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile experiences, supported by individualized guidance and repeated reading practice. The program also used Wayground on a limited basis as supplementary learning media to provide variations in reading activities without replacing direct interaction between mentors and children. Program outcomes were examined by comparing initial and final reading assessments using the same indicators and considering observed changes in children's participation and confidence, thereby providing practical insights into the implementation of integrated multisensory literacy assistance in community settings.

METHOD

Approach and Design of Activities

This community service program employed a participatory, community-based approach to support elementary school children experiencing difficulties in developing basic reading skills. The approach involved children, parents, school representatives, mentors, and community members in activities related to identifying literacy needs, planning assistance, implementing reading activities, monitoring progress, and evaluating outcomes. The program was designed to address differences in children's reading abilities by combining multisensory instruction, individualized assistance, and repeated reading practice. These strategies provided opportunities for children to engage with letters, sounds, syllables, words, and sentences through visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and

tactile activities. Direct interaction between mentors and children served as the main instructional component, while Wayground was used on a limited basis as supplementary learning media. The program consisted of five stages: initial identification and assessment, collaborative planning, implementation of multisensory literacy assistance, monitoring and reflection, and final evaluation.

Participants and Program Location

The program was conducted in Sukonatar Village, Srono District, Banyuwangi Regency, Indonesia, involving 26 elementary school children from three educational institutions. The participants comprised four children from SDN 2 Sukonatar, six children from SDN 3 Sukonatar, and 16 children from MI Al-Hikmah Sukonatar. Participants were selected based on their identified difficulties in one or more foundational reading indicators, including letter recognition, syllable decoding, independent word reading, sentence reading, and reading fluency. The initial assessment was used to identify children's reading difficulties and determine their respective assistance needs. The program therefore focused on children who required additional support in developing basic reading skills rather than treating all participants as having the same level of reading difficulty. In addition to the children, parents, school representatives, mentors, and community members were included as supporting stakeholders to facilitate program implementation and strengthen the literacy environment beyond the mentoring sessions.

Initial Identification and Reading Assessment

The initial identification and assessment stage aimed to establish a baseline description of each child's reading ability and identify specific areas requiring instructional support. The assessment covered five indicators: (1) accuracy in recognizing letters, (2) ability to read simple syllables, (3) ability to read words independently, (4) ability to read simple sentences, and (5) reading fluency. These indicators represented different levels of foundational reading development, allowing the mentoring team to distinguish between children who experienced difficulties with basic letter recognition and those who had progressed to word or sentence reading but still lacked fluency. The assessment results showed that five children (19.23%) had difficulties recognizing all letters correctly, six children (23.08%) experienced difficulties reading syllables, three children (11.54%) could not read words independently, five children (19.23%) struggled with simple sentences, and seven children (26.92%) demonstrated low reading fluency. These findings provided the basis for grouping instructional priorities and adjusting the content and intensity of assistance according to individual reading needs.

Time and Duration of the Program

The literacy assistance program was implemented over four consecutive weeks, with four mentoring sessions per week, resulting in a total of 16 sessions. This schedule provided regular opportunities for children to practice reading and allowed mentors to observe their progress throughout the intervention. Each session focused on reading activities appropriate to the children's demonstrated abilities and learning needs. Children who had not mastered letter recognition received additional instruction in identifying letters and connecting them with their corresponding sounds. Those who had developed basic letter recognition practiced syllable formation and word decoding, while children who

could read individual words received further guidance in reading sentences and improving fluency. The sequence of activities was adjusted throughout the program in response to children's learning progress and observed difficulties.

Stages of Program Implementation

The program consisted of five interconnected stages. The first stage involved identifying children experiencing reading difficulties and assessing their foundational reading skills. The second stage involved collaborative planning to determine the learning priorities, mentoring arrangements, schedules, and forms of support required during the program. The third stage consisted of direct multisensory literacy assistance through activities integrating visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile modalities. The fourth stage involved continuous monitoring and reflection to identify children's progress, participation, difficulties, and additional learning needs. The fifth stage involved a final reading assessment to examine changes in the same five indicators used during the initial assessment. These stages established a structured implementation process connecting initial literacy needs with instructional activities and outcome evaluation.



Figure 1. Identification of Children's Reading Difficulties

During the first stage, the mentoring team conducted an initial assessment of 26 children from the three participating schools. The assessment focused on letter recognition, syllable reading, independent word reading, simple sentence reading, and reading fluency. The results were used to identify specific difficulties and establish appropriate instructional priorities for each child. During the second stage, the program team coordinated the mentoring arrangements and discussed the forms of support required with parents and community stakeholders. Children participated by undertaking the reading activities and responding to the learning tasks provided during mentoring. Mentors were responsible for delivering instructional activities, observing children's responses, providing corrective feedback, and adjusting the difficulty of reading materials. School representatives and community members supported the implementation through their involvement in the program coordination process, with their specific responsibilities determined by the actual arrangements made during the activity.

The third stage involved the implementation of multisensory literacy assistance through direct interaction between mentors and children. Visual activities included observing letters, pictures, and written words, while auditory activities involved listening to and pronouncing letter sounds and syllables. Kinesthetic activities encouraged children to arrange and move letter or syllable cards, whereas tactile activities involved tracing letter shapes and handling learning materials. Children practiced combining letters into syllables, syllables into words, and words into simple sentences. Repeated reading practice was incorporated to reinforce recognition accuracy and provide opportunities to develop reading fluency. Individualized assistance ensured that children received activities appropriate to their current reading abilities, while Wayground was used on a limited and scheduled basis to provide additional variations in learning activities without replacing direct mentoring.

The fourth stage involved monitoring and reflection throughout the 16 sessions. Mentors observed children's participation, reading responses, difficulties, and progress during the learning activities. These observations informed adjustments to instructional materials and the level of assistance provided in subsequent sessions. Children were encouraged to participate in reading activities, pronounce sounds, attempt unfamiliar words, and repeat reading exercises according to their abilities. Parents and community stakeholders were positioned as supporting partners in maintaining a learning environment that encouraged continued reading practice beyond the scheduled mentoring activities. The fifth stage involved a final assessment of children's reading abilities using the same five indicators applied during the initial assessment. The results were compared descriptively to identify changes in the number and proportion of children experiencing difficulties in each reading indicator.

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Program Evaluation

Program evaluation focused on changes in children's foundational reading abilities before and after the four-week intervention. The evaluation covered the same five indicators used during the initial assessment: letter recognition, syllable reading, independent word reading, simple sentence reading, and reading fluency. The number and percentage of children experiencing difficulties in each indicator were compared between the initial and final assessments. The percentage of children experiencing difficulties was calculated by dividing the number of children with difficulties in a particular indicator by the total number of participants (26) and multiplying the result by

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100. The evaluation also considered observed changes in children's participation and confidence during reading activities. The findings were presented descriptively to provide an overview of changes associated with the implementation of the community-based multisensory literacy assistance program.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results show that multisensory literacy assistance can be an appropriate approach for helping children with reading delays. Changes are mainly seen in the basic skills that are the foundation of reading, namely letter recognition, letter-sound relationships, syllable formation, word reading, and reading fluency. These findings align with research showing that multisensory approaches can improve phonemic awareness and reading ability and increase children's involvement in literacy activities (Kilat & Apas, 2025). Other research also shows that systematic, multisensory phonics interventions can improve word-reading accuracy and the confidence of children with reading difficulties (Henry, 2020).

Early Conditions of Children's Reading Ability

The initial assessment involved 26 elementary school children from three schools in Sukonatar Village, Srono District, Banyuwangi Regency. The participants consisted of four children from SDN 2 Sukonatar, six children from SDN 3 Sukonatar, and sixteen children from MI Al-Hikmah Sukonatar. The assessment examined five indicators of basic reading ability: letter recognition, syllable reading, independent word reading, simple sentence reading, and reading fluency. The results revealed different levels of difficulty across these indicators. This variation indicates that the children required different forms of reading assistance rather than a uniform instructional approach.

Table 1. Initial Profile of Children's Reading Difficulties

Indicators of Reading Difficulties	Number of Children	Percentage
Inability to recognize all letters correctly	5	19,23%
Difficulty reading syllables	6	23,08%
Inability to read words independently	3	11,54%
Difficulty reading simple sentences	5	19,23%
Low reading fluency	7	26,92%

Table 1 shows that reading fluency was the most frequently recorded difficulty, affecting seven children (26.92%). Difficulty reading syllables ranked second, involving six children (23.08%). Five children (19.23%) had difficulty recognizing all letters correctly, and the same number struggled to read simple sentences. Independent word reading presented the lowest recorded frequency, involving three children (11.54%). These results demonstrate that reading difficulties occurred at several stages of basic literacy development. In particular, the relatively high number of children with low reading fluency suggests that recognizing letters and words does not necessarily mean that children can read connected text smoothly. The initial assessment therefore provided a basis for determining the instructional focus and level of assistance required by each child.

The variation in these results also highlights the importance of identifying specific reading difficulties before implementing an intervention. Children who have not mastered letter recognition require different learning activities from those who can recognize letters but still struggle to combine syllables or read sentences. Similarly, children who can read words may need more opportunities to develop accuracy and fluency. This finding is consistent with Al Otaiba et al. (2023), who emphasize the importance of explicit and systematic literacy interventions that respond to the reading needs of struggling learners. Fatonah et al. (2025) also describe reading difficulties across several foundational literacy components. Accordingly, the initial assessment in this program served as a practical basis for organizing differentiated reading assistance.

Implementation of Multisensory Literacy Assistance

The literacy assistance program was conducted over four weeks, with four meetings per week, resulting in 16 sessions. The activities combined visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile experiences to help children develop basic reading skills through different forms of engagement. During the initial activities, children observed letter shapes, identified letters, listened to their corresponding sounds, and pronounced them aloud. Letter and syllable cards allowed children to see, arrange, move, and touch written symbols while connecting them with spoken sounds. The activities then progressed to combining sounds into syllables, reading simple words, reading sentences, and practicing short texts. This sequence enabled the mentors to provide learning experiences that corresponded to the children's initial reading abilities.

The mentors also adjusted the learning materials and difficulty levels according to individual progress. Children who had not mastered letter recognition received further practice with letters and their sounds. Those who had developed basic letter recognition practiced combining syllables and reading words. Children who could already read words were guided toward sentence reading and fluency exercises. Repeated reading formed part of these activities, allowing children to practice difficult sounds, syllables, and words more than once. Mentors provided examples and immediate guidance when children encountered difficulties. Wayground was used on a limited and scheduled basis to introduce variations in learning activities and maintain children's engagement. However, direct interaction between mentors and children remained the main component of the assistance program.

Changes in Reading Ability After Mentoring

The final assessment examined the same five reading indicators used during the initial assessment. The comparison showed a lower number of children experiencing difficulties in every indicator after the mentoring program. Difficulties in letter recognition decreased from five children to one child. The number of children struggling to read syllables declined from six to two, while difficulties in independent word reading decreased from three children to one. Similarly, the number of children experiencing difficulty reading simple sentences declined from five to two. Low reading fluency decreased from seven children to three. These changes indicate an improvement across all five assessed reading indicators during the program.

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Table 2. Comparison of Children's Reading Difficulties Before and After Mentoring

Reading difficulty indicators	Before mentoring, n (%)	After mentoring, n (%)	Decrease (percentage points)	Relative reduction
Inability to recognize all letters correctly	5 (19.23%)	1 (3.85%)	15.38	80%
Difficulty reading syllables	6 (23.08%)	2 (7.69%)	15.39	66.67%
Inability to read words independently	3 (11.54%)	1 (3.85%)	7.69	66.67%
Difficulty reading simple sentences	5 (19.23%)	2 (7.69%)	11.54	60%
Low reading fluency	7 (26.92%)	3 (11.54%)	15.38	57.14%
Mean across five indicators	20%	6.92%	13.08	65.40%

Table 2 indicates that the largest relative reduction occurred in letter recognition, which declined by 80.00%. Difficulties in syllable reading and independent word reading each decreased by 66.67%. Sentence-reading difficulties declined by 60.00%, while low reading fluency showed a relative reduction of 57.14%. Although reading fluency remained the indicator with the highest number of children experiencing difficulties after the intervention, its recorded frequency decreased from seven to three children. This pattern suggests that progress occurred across the assessed reading components, although the extent of change varied by indicator. The remaining difficulties also indicate that some children still required further support, particularly in developing fluent reading.

The arithmetic mean of the five indicator-level percentages decreased from 20.00% before mentoring to 6.92% afterward, representing a reduction of 13.08 percentage points or 65.40% relative to the initial mean. This figure summarizes the average change across the five indicators. It should not be interpreted as a 65.40% reduction in the number of unique children experiencing reading difficulties because the same child may have experienced difficulties in more than one indicator. The results are descriptive and show differences between the initial and final assessments. They do not establish that the intervention alone caused the observed changes.

Changes in Children's Responses and Participation

In addition to changes in reading performance, the program records describe improvements in children's participation during learning activities. At the beginning of the program, some children tended to remain passive, lose focus, or hesitate when mentors asked them to read aloud. As the sessions progressed, children showed greater willingness to pronounce letter sounds, attempt syllable reading, and repeat words that they had previously found difficult. The use of pictures, letter cards, spoken sounds, movement, and simple games provided varied opportunities for participation. The limited use of Wayground also introduced additional learning activities. These observations suggest that the learning environment became more engaging for some children during the mentoring process.

The changes in participation are relevant because reading assistance requires children to engage actively with written symbols and spoken language. When children hesitate to

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read aloud, mentors may have fewer opportunities to identify specific difficulties and provide immediate guidance. Activities that invite children to observe, listen, pronounce, arrange, and touch learning materials can create several ways to engage with the same reading content. However, the available program records describe these changes qualitatively and do not provide a standardized measure of motivation, confidence, or participation. Therefore, the observed responses should be understood as descriptive evidence of engagement during the activities rather than as quantified improvements in psychological outcomes.



Figure 2 Children's Response and Participation During Mentoring

Multisensory Activities and the Development of Basic Reading Skills

The changes recorded across the five reading indicators suggest that multisensory activities provided children with varied opportunities to connect written symbols with spoken sounds. Children observed letter forms, listened to their sounds, pronounced them, and manipulated letter and syllable cards during learning activities. These experiences allowed children to approach reading through visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile engagement. For children who struggled with letter recognition or syllable formation, the activities provided concrete opportunities to practice the relationship between written symbols and their corresponding sounds. The gradual sequence from letters to syllables, words, sentences, and fluency also helped organize the learning process around foundational reading skills. This interpretation is consistent with Henry (2020), who reports the potential of systematic multisensory phonics intervention to support word-reading accuracy and confidence among struggling readers.

The findings also correspond with Kilat and Apas (2025), who discuss the contribution of multisensory learning to phonemic awareness and early literacy development. Mitak et al. (2023) similarly describe the use of multisensory activities to address reading difficulties among elementary school students. The present program applies these principles in a community-based setting through structured mentoring sessions. Its practical contribution lies in combining several sensory modalities within a sequence of reading activities that responds to children's initial abilities. Nevertheless, the descriptive results do not establish which sensory modality contributed most to the observed

changes. The program also did not isolate multisensory instruction from the other components of assistance. Therefore, the findings support the practical relevance of the integrated approach rather than demonstrating the independent effect of each modality.

Individualized Assistance and Differentiated Reading Practice

The initial assessment revealed that children entered the program with different reading abilities. Some had difficulty recognizing letters, while others had progressed to syllable, word, or sentence reading but had not developed adequate fluency. In response, the mentors adjusted learning materials and practice activities according to the difficulties identified for each child. Children who struggled with letter recognition received additional reinforcement, whereas those who had mastered basic skills practiced more advanced reading tasks. This arrangement avoided assigning identical reading activities to all participants. It also allowed mentors to revisit previously introduced material when children continued to experience difficulties.

Direct interaction between mentors and children provided opportunities to identify reading errors and respond to them during the sessions. Mentors could demonstrate correct pronunciation, provide additional examples, repeat difficult material, and adjust the level of practice. These activities reflect the principles of explicit and systematic literacy intervention discussed by Al Otaiba et al. (2023). Individualized assistance was particularly relevant because the initial assessment showed that reading difficulties occurred at different levels. The program therefore illustrates how a community-based intervention can translate initial assessment findings into differentiated learning activities. However, the article does not report individual progress trajectories, so it cannot determine which specific instructional adjustments were most effective for particular children.

Regular guidance also provided continuity across the 16 sessions. Children had repeated opportunities to practice reading materials and receive feedback from mentors. Mahsusi et al. (2023) discuss the relevance of regular guidance in supporting children's learning development, although their study focuses on writing activities. In the present program, the principle of continuous guidance was applied to reading through repeated practice, demonstration, and adjustment of learning activities. The observed decline in the number of children experiencing difficulties across all five indicators is consistent with the value of providing structured support over multiple sessions. Further research with more detailed individual records would help explain how the intensity and type of assistance relate to each child's progress.

Repeated Reading Practice and Reading Fluency

Reading fluency remained the most frequently recorded difficulty after the mentoring program, affecting three children (11.54%). This finding is important because progress in letter recognition, syllable reading, and word recognition does not automatically result in fluent reading. Children need opportunities to read connected words and sentences with increasing accuracy and continuity. During the program, mentors incorporated repeated practice with syllables, words, and simple sentences. Children could listen to examples, pronounce the material, repeat difficult words, and receive feedback during the activity. These practices were intended to strengthen the accuracy and continuity of children's reading.

The use of repeated reading is consistent with Holder (2017), who discusses its potential to improve reading fluency among struggling readers. Xin and Yunus (2020) also examine assisted repeated reading as a strategy for improving oral reading fluency among elementary school learners. These studies provide a relevant basis for understanding why repeated practice formed part of the present intervention. In this program, repetition was combined with multisensory activities and individualized guidance rather than delivered as an isolated exercise. Mentors could identify recurring errors and provide further practice according to children's responses. The remaining fluency difficulties indicate that four weeks of assistance may not have provided sufficient time for all children to develop fluent reading. Continued practice and follow-up assessment are therefore necessary to examine whether the observed progress can be maintained.

Contribution and Implications of the Integrated Program

The practical contribution of this community service program lies in integrating multisensory instruction, individualized assistance, and repeated reading practice within a structured community-based intervention. Each component addressed a different aspect of the learning process. Multisensory activities provided varied ways to connect written symbols and spoken sounds. Individualized assistance helped align learning materials with children's initial reading abilities. Repeated reading provided opportunities to strengthen accuracy and fluency through practice and feedback. The program organized these components across 16 sessions and used the initial assessment to guide the assistance provided. The results show descriptive improvements across all five reading indicators during the implementation period.

The community-based setting also provides an opportunity to connect reading assistance with support beyond formal learning sessions. The program involved parents and the local community in collaborative planning and positioned them as supporting partners in creating a conducive learning environment. Such involvement is relevant because children need opportunities to practice reading outside scheduled mentoring activities. Betonio and Lomarda (2025) discuss the relationship between parental involvement and children's reading development, while Jar U. Abolais et al. (2025) describe parent-supported tutoring for struggling readers. These studies provide a basis for considering family involvement as a supporting condition for literacy development. However, the present article does not provide separate measurements of parental participation or its contribution to children's reading progress. The program's findings should therefore be interpreted primarily in relation to the observed reading changes during the mentoring activities.

The findings also need to be considered in light of the program's evaluation design. The assessment compared children's reading difficulties before and after the intervention, but the article does not report a comparison group or standardized reading test. The program also involved only 26 children from three schools in one village and lasted four weeks. External factors, including classroom instruction, home practice, and other learning experiences, may have influenced children's progress during the same period. Consequently, the observed changes cannot be attributed exclusively to the intervention or generalized to all children with reading difficulties. Future community literacy programs should use more standardized assessment instruments, document

individual progress, extend the intervention period, and conduct follow-up assessments. These steps would provide stronger evidence about the sustainability of reading development and the contribution of each component of the integrated program.

CONCLUSION

This community-based literacy assistance program demonstrated positive changes in the basic reading abilities of 26 elementary school children from three schools in Sukonatar Village, Banyuwangi. The initial assessment identified difficulties in letter recognition, syllable reading, independent word reading, simple sentence reading, and reading fluency. Following four weeks of assistance comprising 16 sessions, the number of children experiencing difficulties decreased across all five indicators. The mean percentage across the five indicators declined from 20.00% before the program to 6.92% afterward, representing a reduction of 13.08 percentage points. The program also recorded more active participation and greater willingness among children to engage in reading activities. These findings suggest that integrating multisensory activities, individualized assistance, and repeated reading practice offers a practical approach to supporting children who experience difficulties in developing basic reading skills.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. The program involved a relatively small group of 26 children from three schools in one village and lasted only four weeks. The absence of a comparison group also limits the ability to attribute the observed changes exclusively to the intervention, while classroom instruction, home practice, and other learning experiences may have influenced children's progress. In addition, the evaluation relied on activity-based assessments and descriptive observations rather than standardized reading instruments, and the program did not provide long-term follow-up data. Future literacy assistance programs should extend the intervention period, use more standardized and clearly documented assessment procedures, record individual reading progress, and conduct follow-up evaluations after the program ends. Stronger coordination among mentors, schools, parents, and community members is also needed to support regular reading practice beyond the intervention period.

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