

## UTILIZING READ-ALOUD ACTIVITIES TO DRIVE ADOLESCENT STRUGGLING READERS' ENTHUSIASM TO READING

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### ABSTRACT

The HIMABI (English Student Association) Mengajar program is aimed at address literacy issues in Cimahi and West Bandung Regency. This study, framed within the context of the program, attempted to investigate students' enthusiasm for reading through read-aloud activities. Adopted a case study approach and utilized observation and interviews for data collection. The study selected four adolescents from a elementary school in Padalarang, West Bandung, as participants. The concept of enthusiasm was pivotal in understanding students' engagement with reading. Indicators such as gestures, vocal delivery, facial expressions, eye contact, and overall energy were analyzed to assess their enthusiasm. Findings revealed that read-aloud activities allowed instructors to demonstrate proper reading intonation and expression, providing students with a model to emulate. This not only fostered listening skills but also built students' confidence in their reading abilities. Students displayed clear attentiveness, characterized by enthusiastic expressions and occasional nods while rereading passages. These positive indicators suggest that engaging in read-aloud sessions significantly enhances students' enthusiasm for reading. The study concludes that read-aloud activities can be an effective strategy for cultivating a love for reading among students, encouraging them to become more invested in their literacy development. Overall, the research supports the idea that structured reading activities can effectively raise students' interest and engagement.

**Keywords:** *Enthusiasm, literacy, reading-aloud.*

### INTRODUCTION

Literacy has recently become a crucial issue in education in Indonesia. It is found that there are still poor literacy rates in some places, particularly in distant locations. For this reason, some universities makes attempts to address literacy issues. "HIMABI (English Student Association) Mengajar" is a program designed as an out-of-class learning activity for college students aimed at offering solutions to two educational difficulties. They are a solution to the literacy and numeracy problems, as well as 'training' for students to prepare for their professions following graduation from college (Kemdikbud, 2015). One of the elementary schools in Padalarang, West Java, was selected for this program. The school is located in a suburban are with a significant proportion of low-income families. Many households in this neighborhood prevent their children from going to school. As a result, some students still have low reading levels (Butdisuwan, 2008). In response to the condition, the school has conducted a literacy program or Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (GLS) enabling students to maintain their enthusiasm for reading for 15 minutes. However, the program did not appear to be working properly because there were no teachers in charge of organizing it. As a consequence, some pupils still had rudimentary reading abilities. To address the issue, the college students who participated in

*HIMABI Mengajar* program in Padalarang organized an activity allowing students to learn to read.

The reading program focused on maintaining students' enthusiasm for reading. Sedita, (2023) and Khairunnisa et al., (2025) pointed out that there is strong evidence that students' motivation and interest in reading school-related texts declines after they move from elementary to middle school, and this is particularly true for students who have difficulty learning to read. Adolescent struggling readers frequently lack motivation to read in school due to increasingly challenging reading material and classroom conditions that deemphasize the need to cultivate drive to read. To help the adolescent struggling readers maintain their drive to read while also engaging them in reading, the in-charge student for the *HIMABI Mengajar* program in Padalarang employed Read- aloud strategy.

Read-aloud is an instructional activity in which teachers, parents, and caregivers read texts aloud to children (Morrison & Wheeler, 2009). The research on reading-aloud strategy show the benefits of read-aloud process. Starting from choosing the appropriate book (Hickman et al., 2004), to deciding the language and content to learn (Vardell et al., 2006). Familiarity with the selected books prior to doing interactive read-aloud helps teachers apply appropriate pauses, intonation, expression, and gestures, and model fluency during the interactive read-aloud (Lane & Wright, 2007). Advance preparation is necessary to determine stopping points for prediction, questioning and discussion. Stopping points throughout the text provide students with "think time" to process information presented in the reading (Iddings et al., 2009). Asking questions throughout the interactive read-aloud can promote active conversation about the book before and after reading (Fisher et al., 2004). Activating students' background knowledge is also critical element of conducting an interactive read-aloud. This can be done by inviting students for discussion in an engaging and non-threatening manner (Dong et al., 2020; Nurzaman, 2023; van Riesen et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2018). Finally, it's critical also to define the interactive read-aloud's goal (Fisher et al., 2004). Interactive read-aloud can be used for many different objectives, such as vocabulary development, linguistic awareness, and understanding.

Unlike, the previous research which mostly focused on the read- aloud process, this current research attempts to investigate adolescent struggle readers' behavior in this case their enthusiasm toward reading. It has been mentioned earlier that adolescent struggling readers mostly have less motivation for reading than those who can read fluently. They avoid reading attentively and tend to do something else while reading (Jefferson, 2024; Sedita, 2023). For that reason, the study tried to utilize reading-aloud activities as a tool to drive adolescent struggling readers' enthusiasm to read.

In contrast to anxiety that generates fear, enthusiasm elicits a positive emotional reaction that makes one feel satisfied and generally "feel good" about the message's sponsor (Nai & Maier, 2024). Applying the concept of enthusiasm from behavior perspective, enthusiasm can be manifested by verbal and non- verbal communication (Collins, 1978; Gabryś-Barker, 2014). In reading, enthusiasm can be identified from the students' interaction and engagement with the written text. Verbally, students show enthusiasm when they actively participate, answer questions, share ideas, and respond to the story. These actions show that they are interested and engaged with the reading activity (Acosta-Tello, 2019; Locher & Philipp, 2023) and from their non -verbal indicator, enthusiasm can be observed through students' physical expressions. For example, students may maintain eye contact with the text or the reader, show attentive posture, use gestures, and display facial expressions such as smiling or curiosity. They may also show higher energy levels, such as reacting to the story, leaning forward, and responding to their peers. Changes in voice, such as tone and expression, can also show their interest (Collins, 1978; Streeter, 1986). The following are enthusiasm indicators based on (Collins, 1978). These

indicators help teachers see whether students are engaged and interested in reading. This is especially important for struggling readers, as their enthusiasm can be seen not only from test results but also from their participation and responses during the activity.

Table 1. Enthusiasm indicators and their descriptions Based on Collins (1978)

Indicators	Description
Gesture	Frequent demonstrative movements of body, head, arms, hands and face, sweeping motions, clapping hands, head nodding rapidly
Vocal delivery	Great and sudden changes from rapid excited speech to a whisper, lilting, uplifting intonations, many changes in tone, pitch.
Facial expression,	Appears vibrant, demonstrative changes denoting surprise, sadness, joy, thoughtfulness, awe, and excitement.
Eyes	Dancing, snapping, lighting up, frequently opened wide, eyebrows raised, eye contact with total group
Movements	Large Body movement, swings around, changes pace, bends body
Word Selection	Word selection; highly descriptive, many adjectives, great variety
Acceptance of ideas and feeling	Accepts ideas and feelings quickly with vigor and animation, ready to accept, praise, encourage or clarify in a non-threatening manner, many variations in responding to pupils.
Overall energy	Explosive, exuberant, high degree of vitality, drive and spirit throughout lesson

The enthusiasm indicators from Collins (1978) were then transformed into a four-point rating scale with the options ranging from (1) not enthusiastic and (4) enthusiastic (Keller et al., 2013).

Table 2. Description for Measurement Levels of the Rating Scale for Enthusiastic Teaching (Based on Keller et al., 2013).

Measurement level	Description
1. Not enthusiastic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monotone voice without changes, no changes in intonation</li> <li>• Very reticent body language</li> <li>• Expressionless face</li> <li>• No gestures or movement of body /head</li> <li>• Does not react at all or dull when responding to comments, questions, seems bored</li> <li>• Static and passive, only moves when activities require it</li> <li>• Stiff, distanced and aloof posture</li> </ul>
2. A little enthusiastic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normal level and use of gestures; only slightly accentuating</li> <li>• Mostly monotone voice and speech, but small changes and variations in tone (differentiation to Level 3: more formal speech, less like talking between equals)</li> <li>• Eye contact not entirely present while talking, looks sometimes away when students talk (differentiation to Level 3: not so focused on students)</li> <li>• Somewhat stiff posture</li> <li>• Little movements of head or body while talking</li> <li>• Little, lazy and slow movements through classroom Differentiation criteria between Levels 1 and 2: Vocal delivery, gestures</li> </ul>
3. Somewhat enthusiastic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gestures not exuberant, but demonstrative and punctuating; used in selected instances</li> <li>• Casual style of speech, not like in a presentation but more like in a conversation</li> <li>• Not overly intonating; change in tone and pitch</li> <li>• Does not move fast and constantly through the room, but oftentimes</li> <li>• Often in the middle of classroom/students; when moving away from students, not always turning his/her back on them</li> <li>• Not exuberant, but interested, alert, lively</li> <li>• Looking for eye contact during talking with students</li> <li>• Attentive to worries and feelings of students</li> <li>• Seems casual and relaxed</li> <li>• Punctuating movements of head during talking</li> </ul> Differentiation criteria between Level 2 and 3: Relaxed posture, gestures; NOT: Vocal delivery
4. Enthusiastic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous, frequent changes in intonation and pitch</li> <li>• Sweeping, illustrating gestures, almost continuously</li> <li>• Casual style of speech as compared to Level 2, but with changes in intonation</li> </ul>

- Teacher moves continuously and much, also when not involved in activities; is lively in his/her movements
  - Laughs with students; makes jokes sometimes
  - Expressive facial expression
- Differentiation criteria between Levels 3 and 4: Vocal delivery, facial expression

This study takes the enthusiasm indicators from Collins, (1978) as a tool to examine the students' enthusiasm for reading. The indicators prescribed by Collins represent the enthusiasm generically, they are mostly used to describe teacher's enthusiasm though. This study then applies the concept from Collins to investigate the students' enthusiasm for reading and tries to identify the level of enthusiasm for reading by integrating it with the reading fluency scale. Further discussion on methodology will be discussed in the section to follow.

**METHOD**

**Research Design**

This study is qualitative research employing case study design. It intends to investigate the enthusiasm of adolescent struggle readers while doing read- aloud activities. Read- aloud activities were infused into Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (GLS) or School Literacy Movement existed in the school. The target school, located in Padalarang sub-district, West Bandung Regency, West Java, has been doing GLS on a regular basis, with the activity lasting 15 minutes each morning.

**Data and Data Sources**

After one week observation, it was found out that there were 4 (four) students with basic reading had difficulty in recognizing words. They are 5-6 graders students who then became the participants in the study. The following are the reading skills of those students.

Table 3. Reading categories of participants before joining this activity

Activity	Participants			
	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has difficulty in recognizing words,</li> <li>• lack of interest in reading</li> <li>• lack of attention when reading.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has low reading fluency,</li> <li>• has difficulty attention,</li> <li>• has difficulty in understanding words</li> <li>• lack of interest in reading.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has low reading fluency,</li> <li>• has difficulty attention,</li> <li>• has difficulty in understanding words</li> <li>• lack of interest in reading.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has low reading fluency,</li> <li>• has difficulty attention,</li> <li>• has difficulty in understanding words</li> <li>• lack of interest in reading.</li> </ul>

To help the students with reading, it was decided to separate them from the other students, and the four then learned to read together with the assistance of those who participated in *HIMABI Mengajar* Program including the researcher who acted as instructors. This treatment was conducted to lower the students' learning filter, reduce the cognitive load and create more conducive learning situation for them (Dong et al., 2020; van Riesen et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2018) so that the students can activate their prior knowledge.

**Data Collection Technique**

The study utilized observation and interviews as data collection techniques. Meetings were recorded, and the instructor casually asked students questions during these sessions. A total of

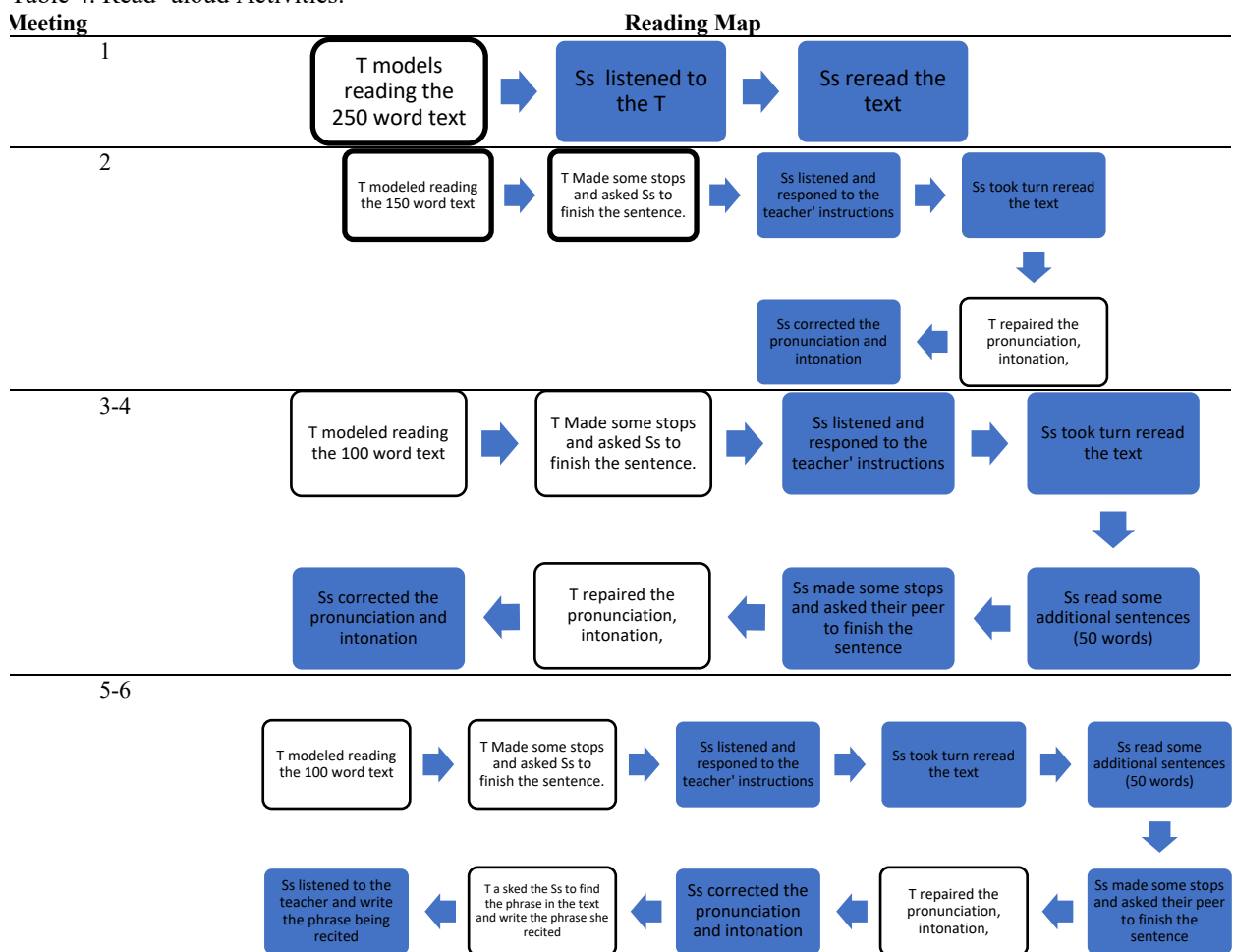
seven meetings were conducted to help the students learn to read. The instructors exclusively used books available at the school for teaching.

In the first reading activity, the instructor modeled a 250-word passage, and each student was asked to read it aloud from a children's storybook. In the second meeting, the instructor reduced the reading passage to 150 words, allowing time for interaction with the text and enhancing accessibility (Vardell et al., 2006). Interactions included pauses where the instructor corrected pronunciation and intonation, as well as asked the students questions about the text or the accompanying illustrations.

The third and fourth meetings followed a similar format to the second, introducing additional reading passages for the students.

The fifth, and sixth meetings, the instructor added some fun activities, including finding the words or sentences in texts and writing what was stated by the instructors. The last meeting or the seventh one was used to assess the students' achievements on reading by asking them to read 150-word passage and to answers to some questions given. The following are the details of read-aloud activities from meeting 1 to 7.

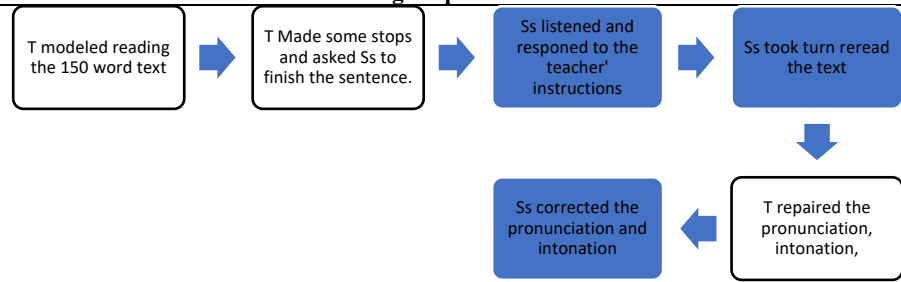
Table 4. Read- aloud Activities.



Meeting

7

Reading Map



Data Analysis

The enthusiasm of the students for reading was analyzed from the behavior perspective using the concepts from (Collins, 1978), Keller et al., (2013). The concepts were integrated into reading fluency rubric from (Rasinski, 2004). The modification can be seen in the table 4 below.

Table 4. The Reading Fluency Rubrics (modified from Keller et al., 2013; Rasinski, 2004)

Measurement level	Description
1. Not enthusiastic	Expressions and volume <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reads with little expressions in voice.</li> <li>• No movement of body/ head</li> <li>• Little sense of trying to make text sound like natural language</li> <li>• Tends to read in a quiet voice</li> <li>• Monotone voice without changes, no changes in intonation</li> <li>• Does not react at all or dull when responding to comments, questions, seems bored</li> </ul> Phrasing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monotonic with little sense of phrase boundaries, frequent word by word reading.</li> </ul> Smoothness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent extended pauses, hesitations, false starts, sound-outs, repetitions, and/or multiple attempts.</li> </ul> Pace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow and laborious</li> </ul>
2.A little enthusiastic	Expressions and volume <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normal level and use of expressions; only slightly accentuating</li> <li>• Begin to use voice to make text sound like natural language in some areas of the text nut no others.</li> <li>• Mostly monotone voice and speech, but small changes and variations in tone</li> <li>• Still reads in a quiet voice</li> </ul> Phrasing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent two-and three-word phrases giving the impression of choppy reading</li> <li>• Improper stress and intonation that fail to mark ends of sentences and clauses</li> </ul> Smoothness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several “ rough spots” in the text where extended pauses, hesitations, etc, are more frequent and disruptive</li> </ul> Pace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderately slow</li> </ul>
3.Somewhat enthusiastic	Expressions and volume <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sounds like natural language throughout the better part of the passage.</li> <li>• Not overly intonating; change in tone and pitch</li> <li>• Occasionally slip into expressionless reading</li> <li>• Voice volume is generally appropriate throughout the text</li> <li>• Seems casual and relaxed</li> <li>• Punctuating movements of head/ body during reading</li> </ul> Phrasing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixture of run-ons, mid-sentence pauses for breath and possibly some choppiness; reasonable stress and intonation.</li> </ul> Smoothness

Measurement level	Description
	Occasional breaks in smoothness caused by difficulties with specific words and/ or structures Pace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uneven mixture of fast and slow reading</li> </ul>
4. Enthusiastic	Expressions and volume <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reads with good expressions and enthusiasm throughout the text</li> <li>• Continuous, frequent changes in intonation and pitch</li> <li>• Sounds like natural language</li> <li>• The reader is able to vary expressions and volume to match his/ her interpretation of the passage</li> </ul> Phrasing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally well phrased, mostly in clause and sentence units, with adequate attention to expression</li> </ul> Smoothness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally smooth reading with some breaks, but words and structure difficulties are resolved quickly usually through self correction</li> </ul> Pace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently conversational</li> </ul>

Following the concept of Keller et al., (2013), the rubric was divided into 4 parts each part was segmented based on reading dimensions from (Rasinski, 2004). The rubric was used to scrutinize the students' enthusiasm for reading in the seven- session read-aloud activities. In addition, interviews were also used as another data collection method to validate the data from observation.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved seven sessions of read-aloud activities. Students' enthusiasm for reading was assessed using the rubric in Table 4. The summary of the observation results can be found in table 5 below.

Table 5. Result of observation

Aspect	Student A	Student B	Student C
<b>1. Expression and Volume</b>	Exhibited reticent body language; shifted body, scratched head; unresponsive.	Showed sour face; bored demeanour; monotonic voice.	Frequently looked happy but confused; often glanced at others.
<b>2. Phrasing</b>	Produced a shallow voice; tended to stutter while reading.	Read in a quiet voice; made little movements only.	Read by pointing to words; made tapping motions.
<b>3. Smoothness</b>	Made extended pauses and hesitations.	Choppy oral reading; failed to mark key sentences.	Occasionally smooth, read slowly.
<b>4. Pace</b>	Read slowly with a struggle.	Occasionally raised eyebrows while reading.	Read confidently at times but sometimes stuttered.
<b>5. Student Reactions</b>	Showed confusion and excitement when responding to the instructor.	Showed excitement and confusion, actively asked questions.	Looked happy and engaged in reading tasks.

With refer to table 5, it can be seen that after seven meetings, there are some changes in students' enthusiasm for reading. Most students showed no/ little interest in reading. Their faces were dull, and their voices were shallow. The result of interview revealed that S1 had no or only a little interest in reading because he had difficulty recognizing the words. He read the text very slowly, made extended pauses, hesitation, and repetition frequently. He said he was very tense and shy.

S1 : *“I was very nervous and shy, I thought I had read the text loudly but in fact, my teacher could not hear my voice”.*

S1 was able to lower his affective filter when he realized that other students also struggled with reading. He learned that the instructors were friendly and genuinely wanted to help him. The instructor modelled the reading and asked him to continue the sentence, which made him feel excited and encouraged him to listen attentively

S1 : *“My instructor was quite nice, and I'm not terrified of him anymore. I was initially worried when he called out my name to finish the phrase, but when it came to the games, I attempted to compete with my friend”.*

S1 seemed to learn a lot from model as he tried to imitate reading while listening to the instructor. So, in the seventh day he was able to read with tone and pitch which revealed his enthusiasm for reading.

S1: *“Yeah, I listened to the instructor and occasionally saw him, I tried to follow his reading”.*

Other two students, S2 and S4 had no interest in reading. They read the passage flat with no or little expression. Unlike S1, S2 and S3 recognized the words but their reading were choppy with improper stress and intonation. Both students started to feel excited when the instructor at random asked them to complete the sentences being read by the instructor. They moved their hands and body while listening to the model and reading the text, even they seemed to attempt to comprehend the text by asking about the meaning of the words being read.

S2 : *“I have to listen to the instructor reading, so I can answer the instructor' question. And moving my hand help me to focus.”*

Listening to the instructor, S2 and S4 could identify the stress and intonation that marking the ends of sentences or clauses. So, in the seventh meeting, they were able to read confidently with right stress and intonation. And the changes in their way of reading unveil their enthusiasm for reading.

S4: *“I want to be able to answer the instructor's questions and win the game, so I have to listen to the reading carefully. I just found out that reading should be like that.”*

S3 seemed to have motivation to learn to read at the very beginning. He had recognized the word, but the reading was still choppy. Since the first meeting, his excitement has been evident; he seemed content and loved moving his body while listening to the reading. Even he liked to ask some questions about the words's meaning which represented his curiosity. He was an eager learner who has strong desire to comprehend the text in addition to learning to read

S3: *“I really want to be able to read so I am glad that there are some teachers who want to help me”.*

The findings reveal that some adolescents still struggle with reading and exhibit little to no interest in it (Sedita, 2023). To address this, it is essential to lower their affective filter by providing a safe learning environment and accessible materials (Vardell et al., 2006).

Instructors should be friendly and patient, serving as role models by demonstrating appropriate pauses, intonation, expression, and gestures, while modeling fluency during interactive read-aloud sessions (Lane & Wright, 2007). Additionally, instructors should implement interactive and accessible read-aloud activities to increase students' enthusiasm for reading.

## CONCLUSION

A key component of learning to read is enthusiasm. It is important to motivate the adolescent struggling readers who lack of interest in reading to pick up the skills. The study concluded that read-aloud to struggling readers offers them approachable and friendly activities that improve their listening as well as their reading ability. From behavior viewpoint, read-aloud provides model that allows struggling readers to mimic and practice the model's emphasized voice, tone, and intonation. Furthermore, reading aloud enables the student to both decode and encode, allowing them to practice writing concurrently. To put it briefly, read-aloud exercises can be a useful technique for learning to read.

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