

Integrating Extensive Reading into the Curriculum of English Student Teachers' Education

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Abstract

Teachers play a crucial role in developing students' reading ability. Therefore, teacher education programs need to foster positive reading attitudes among student teachers. This descriptive qualitative study examined the implementation of extensive reading (ER) in an English teacher education curriculum and student teachers' perceptions of the practice. Data were collected from course syllabus (RPS) and questionnaire data. The findings indicate that ER can be integrated into an existing EFL reading course and contributes to increased reading interest and the development of pedagogical skills, although improvements in English proficiency were limited. The study concludes that ER is feasible within the current EFL curriculum. However, a stand-alone ER course is recommended to maximize its benefits for student teachers.

Keywords: Extensive Reading, Curriculum, EFL



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Introduction

Literacy in the twenty-first century extends beyond basic abilities in reading, writing, and numeracy to include the capacity to access, evaluate, and use rapidly changing information from diverse sources (Ounissi et al., 2025). This expanded conception of literacy is essential not only for individual academic success but also for the social, economic, and technological development of nations (Wagner & Hedidar, 2023). As societies increasingly rely on information and knowledge-based systems, literacy has become a key indicator of national progress and sustainability.

From a national perspective, literacy functions as a foundational tool for maintaining social cohesion and continuity. It enables the transmission of knowledge, values, and skills across generations while supporting the development of specialized competencies required for a functioning modern state (Faizah et al., 2025). Moreover, high levels of literacy are closely linked to economic growth and technological advancement, as contemporary societies require highly qualified human resources capable of responding to rapid change. The development of specific literacies, such as digital, financial, and health literacy, further contributes to targeted national improvements and supports broader educational participation (Pekkolay, 2022).

Conversely, low levels of literacy determine serious challenges for students' future opportunities (Ramdan & Auliyaty, 2020). Limited reading proficiency restricts individuals' ability to participate actively in social life and often results in reduced quality of life. In educational contexts, reading literacy is fundamental to academic success, and insufficient literacy skills can burden students' achievement of educational goals and long-term career aspirations. In second-language learning contexts, a lack of reading practice negatively affects overall language competence, including writing, speaking, and listening skills (Wani & Hanim Ismail, 2024). Furthermore, low literacy delay the

development of life learning abilities, such as independent learning and problem-solving, which are essential in the information age (Pekkolay, 2022). Students with poor reading habits may also experience low self esteem and fail to develop a positive identity as readers, leading to decreased motivation to engage with academic texts (Wani & Hanim Ismail, 2024).

In some countries, including Indonesia, low reading literacy has become a national concern. Indonesia has consistently ranked low in international assessments of reading literacy, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022. In this assessment, Indonesia was ranked 69th out of 81 participating countries, placing it among the twelve countries with the lowest reading literacy performance. This persistent low ranking highlights the urgency of strengthening literacy development within the education system and ensuring that literacy initiatives produce lasting effects (Alimuddin, 2022).

One potential approach to addressing this issue is the integration of Extensive Reading (ER) into teacher education programs. ER emphasizes sustained exposure to large amounts of interesting, comprehensible, and easy-to-read texts, with the aim of developing both reading proficiency and positive attitudes toward reading (Lindawati, 2022). By encouraging teachers to engage in regular and enjoyable reading experiences, ER may help strengthen teachers' own reading habits and, in turn, enhance their capacity to model effective and motivating reading practices for students.

This study is grounded in the principles of Extensive Reading (ER) as proposed by Day and Bamford (1998). According to their framework, successful ER programs are characterized by ten key principles:

- 1) Reading material is easy
- 2) A wide variety of material on a wide variety of topics is available
- 3) Learners choose what they want to read
- 4) Learners read as much as possible
- 5) The purpose of reading is usually pleasure, information, and general understanding
- 6) Reading is its own reward
- 7) Reading speed is usually faster
- 8) Reading is individual and silent
- 9) Teachers orient and guide students
- 10) The teacher is a role model of a reader.

A reading course can be considered extensive reading (ER) when it applies some of the ER principles (Day et al., 1998). Although there is no single agreed definition of an ER program, it is generally characterized by fast and enjoyable reading with adequate comprehension, minimal use of dictionaries, and the application of ER principles. Day (2015) further classifies ER practices into four continuums: pure ER, which applies all ten principles; modified ER, which applies most principles; ER light, which applies only some principles; and fringe ER, which applies none. These variations allow ER to be implemented in different formats, including supervised, independent, and blended approaches. Supervised ER involves guidance from a mentor, independent ER is typically self-directed without supervision, and blended ER combines extensive reading with intensive reading instruction (Day, 2015).

Extensive reading is widely believed to have positive effects on language learning. Research has shown that ER contributes to the development of multiple language skills, including vocabulary, listening, speaking, writing, and overall language proficiency, as well as improved examination performance (Lindawati, 2022). As a result, ER has been increasingly implemented in both school and university contexts. In EFL settings, incorporating ER into the English curriculum is recommended to achieve both linguistic and non-linguistic benefits (Sumardi, 2025). Day and Bamford (1998) identify four ways of integrating ER into the curriculum: as a stand-alone course, as part of an existing reading course, as a non-credit component, or as an extracurricular activity. Previous studies argue that ER is most effective when it is fully integrated into the curriculum and implemented within classroom settings, where teachers can provide guidance, encourage sustained reading, and monitor students'

progress (Ann & Dirk, 2017). In contrast, ER implemented solely as an extracurricular activity often fails to fully apply ER principles and makes monitoring students' reading development more difficult.

Given the flexibility of extensive reading implementation and its documented benefits, further investigation into how ER is applied in specific educational contexts is needed (Rahmawati et al., 2023). In teacher education programs, student teachers are expected not only to improve their own language proficiency but also to model positive reading behaviors for their future students. However, research examining the integration of ER within English teacher education curricula and student teachers' learning experiences remains limited (Lestari, 2022). Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the implementation of extensive reading in an English teacher education program and explores student teachers' experiences with ER. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) How is extensive reading integrated into English teacher education programs? and (2) What do student teachers learn from practicing extensive reading? Accordingly, the objectives of this study are to examine how ER is implemented within the curriculum and to explore student teachers' learning experiences resulting from ER practice.

Methods

The methods This study employed a qualitative research approach, which is concerned with understanding meaning within an interpretive framework (Nechully & Pokhriyal, 2019). Specifically, a case study design was adopted to explore student teachers' experiences of participating in an extensive reading (ER) program integrated into an existing reading course. A case study was considered appropriate because it allows for an in-depth examination of a bounded system within its natural educational context. Guided by clearly defined research questions, the study aimed to explore student teachers' perceptions of extensive reading and to examine issues related to its implementation in the teacher education curriculum.

The study was conducted at University in Semarang during the academic year 2025/2026. The participants were one class (one *rombel*) of fifth-semester students from the English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education. All participants were enrolled in a reading course taught by the same lecturer to ensure instructional consistency. The students participated voluntarily, and ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining informed consent and ensuring anonymity through the use of pseudonyms.

Data were collected from multiple sources to enhance trustworthiness, including the course syllabus (RPS) and questionnaire data. The questionnaires offered initial insights into students' engagement with extensive reading and shaped the open-ended questions.

Data analysis was conducted manually using thematic analysis procedures (Lochmiller, 2021). The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and analyzed alongside the reflective journals and syllabus documents. The researcher repeatedly read the data to identify meaningful units, which were then coded. Similar codes were grouped into categories and developed into themes relevant to the research questions. Throughout the analysis process, themes were reviewed and refined to ensure consistency and alignment with the study's objectives.

Results and Discussions

This study examined the integration of extensive reading (ER) in an English teacher education program and explored what student teachers learn from practicing ER, using the course syllabus (RPS), questionnaire data, and Day and Bamford's (1998) ten principles as an analytical lens. The discussion highlights both alignment and tension between ER theory and curricular realities, while illustrating how ER contributes to student teachers' linguistic, academic, affective, and professional development.

1. Integration of Extensive Reading in the Teacher Education Program (Heading 2)

The findings show that Extensive Reading (ER) at this university is systematically integrated into the English teacher education program as a standalone compulsory course. Rather

than functioning as an optional or supplementary activity, ER is formally positioned as a 2-credit (SKS) course for students in the fifth semester. This placement indicates that ER is considered a core component in the development of student teachers' literacy competence.

The syllabus applies a 14-session structured model delivered through a hybrid learning approach that combines offline (luring), online (daring), and blended learning modes. This instructional design supports flexible learning while encouraging students to engage consistently in independent reading activities, which align with the principles of extensive reading. The syllabus below presents how extensive reading activities are incorporated into each class session over one semester.

Table 1.
Extensive Reading Course Syllabus

Session	Topic and Activities
1	Speed reading (Introduction)
2	Understanding current reading ability
3	Skimming
4	Increasing reading comprehension
5	Active Reading Strategies 1
6	Active Reading Strategies 2
7	Review on Speed Reading
8	Reading scientific journals
9	Reviewing scientific journals
10	Evaluating scientific journals
11	Preparing an Annotated Bibliography
12	Preparing an Unannotated Bibliography
13	Presenting journal review 1-2
14	Presenting journal review 1-2

Analysis of the RPS indicates that the Extensive Reading course at this University is deliberately positioned as a core component of teacher education rather than a supplementary reading activity. The course learning outcomes (CPMK) emphasize improving the quality and quantity of reading, transforming knowledge, and cultivating character virtues, which correspond closely with Day and Bamford's view of ER (Principles 5–6) as an approach that fosters not only language development but also positive attitudes toward reading (Nechully & Pokhriyal, 2019).

The syllabus structure reflects a scaffolded integration of ER, beginning with explicit instruction in reading strategies such as speed reading, skimming, and comprehension enhancement before progressing to more demanding academic reading tasks, including journal analysis and bibliography preparation. Questionnaire findings support this progression, as student teachers reported that early strategy-focused sessions helped them read more efficiently and confidently, enabling them to cope with larger volumes of text later in the course. This design aligns strongly with Principles 4 and 7, which emphasize reading a lot and reading faster, and demonstrates how ER can be adapted to prepare students for academic literacy demands (Iwata, 2022).

However, the curriculum also reveals tensions with classic ER principles. While the syllabus includes a range of text types—novels, editorials, articles, and scientific journals—it does not explicitly foreground easy materials or unrestricted learner choice (Principles 1–3). Questionnaire responses reflect this partial alignment: students perceived some autonomy in selecting texts, particularly within academic categories, but also noted that reading choices were shaped by assessment requirements. This suggests that ER in this context functions as a blended model,

balancing ER principles with institutional expectations for academic rigor and accountability (Fu & Wang, 2022).

The strong presence of assessment in the RPS such as book reports, article summaries, journal reviews, quizzes, and examinations, positions reading as both meaningful and academically important. Questionnaire results show that assessment encouraged students to read more consistently and stay committed, supporting the principle that reading is beneficial in itself (Principles 5–6). However, some students noted that graded tasks limited their chances to read purely for enjoyment, pointing to a tension between the ideals of extensive reading and the demands of a formal curriculum (Ounissi et al., 2025).

In terms of classroom organization, the combination of independent learning (KM), structured assignments (KPT), and interactive classroom activities (KPB) creates space for individual sustained reading (Principle 8) alongside guided discussion and collaborative work. Student teachers consistently identified lecturer guidance, encouragement, and feedback as central to their ER experience, reinforcing Principle 9, which emphasizes the teacher's role as a guide rather than a mere evaluator. Although the RPS does not explicitly define lecturers as reading role models (Principle 10), questionnaire data suggest that lecturers' facilitative roles implicitly model engaged and purposeful reading practices (Aisyiyah & Hakim, 2020).

2. Learning Outcomes for Student Teachers

The questionnaire findings indicate that practicing extensive reading (ER) provides multifaceted growth for student teachers, encompassing linguistic development, academic literacy, professional identity formation, socio-cultural awareness, and affective engagement. These outcomes reflect the dual role of ER in teacher education as both a language-learning practice and a pedagogical experience.

a. Linguistic and Fluency Development

Student teachers reported perceived improvements in reading fluency and vocabulary development as a result of sustained engagement with extensive reading. This growth is not immediate but cumulative, as repeated exposure to English texts reduces the cognitive effort required to understand meaning and allows learners to read with greater ease over time (Iwata, 2022).

ER is especially effective for vocabulary development because words are encountered repeatedly in meaningful contexts. Vocabulary growth occurs incidentally as a result of meaning-focused reading, helping student teachers understand how words are used rather than memorizing isolated forms (Kim, 2019). Through frequent exposure, learners develop a strong sight vocabulary of high-frequency words, which supports faster word recognition. Research consistently shows a positive relationship between reading volume and vocabulary size, as greater exposure increases opportunities for repetition and retention.

As vocabulary knowledge increases, student teachers experience improved reading fluency and automaticity. Lower-level processes such as word recognition require less effort, allowing readers to focus on higher-level comprehension. Reading easier texts reduces frustration and increases enjoyment, leading to faster reading speed and greater confidence (Ng et al., 2019). Over time, these gradual gains strengthen self-efficacy and reduce reading anxiety, reinforcing ER as an effective long-term approach to language development.

b. Academic and Research Literacy

Beyond linguistic development, the questionnaire findings underscore the role of ER in fostering academic and research literacy among student teachers. Participants reported gaining experience in reading, analyzing, and evaluating scientific journal articles, particularly through structured tasks such as journal reviews and bibliography preparation. These activities required students to move beyond surface comprehension toward identifying central arguments, evaluating evidence, and synthesizing information across multiple sources (Fu & Wang, 2022).

Students also perceived the preparation of annotated and unannotated bibliographies as valuable training for academic writing and research-oriented coursework. Such tasks support the development of critical reading skills and familiarity with academic conventions, which are essential for participation in scholarly communities (Fu & Wang, 2022). From a pedagogical perspective, these findings suggest that ER, when adapted to teacher education contexts, can function as a bridge between general reading development and advanced academic literacy, preparing student teachers for research engagement and lifelong professional learning (Lestari, 2022).

c. Identity as a Reading Role Model

A prominent outcome emerging from the questionnaire is the development of a “teacher-as-reader” identity. This development of a *teacher-as-reader* identity represents a meaningful shift in which student teachers move from passive receivers of information to active readers, knowledge seekers, and literacy mentors (Wang & Ho, 2019). This identity is important because teachers’ personal reading habits strongly influence both their English proficiency and their credibility as language educators. When student teachers experience extensive reading (ER) themselves, they begin to view reading not merely as an academic task but as a professional responsibility that supports effective teaching (Wijayanti et al., 2022).

This identity is largely shaped through modeling and socialization. Teachers influence students more through what they do than what they say; therefore, teachers who read regularly and show genuine interest in books are more likely to inspire positive reading attitudes in their students (Aisyiyah & Hakim, 2020). Through ER, student teachers recognize that their visible engagement with reading encourages observational learning, where students imitate behaviors they see consistently modeled (Castro & Serrano, 2022). ER also helps break the “vicious cycle” of unenthusiastic reading, in which teachers who do not enjoy reading struggle to motivate learners. By positioning themselves as fellow readers rather than distant authorities, student teachers develop intrinsic motivation for reading and overcome the tendency to avoid reading despite having the ability to do so.

Internalizing a teacher-as-reader identity also has a direct impact on instructional quality and professional growth (Puripunyavanich, 2025). Student teachers who value reading are more likely to adopt effective literacy practices, such as recommending books, reading aloud, and designing engaging activities like reading circles. ER builds confidence and self-efficacy, enabling teachers to implement reading programs more successfully. In addition, this identity supports the development of academic literacy and professional virtues, including critical thinking, creativity, honesty, and fairness. As research suggests that teachers’ academic literacy is a key condition for students’ literacy development, teachers who identify as readers are better prepared to guide learners toward meaningful and sustained engagement with texts.

d. Overcoming Affective Barriers to Reading

Extensive reading (ER) plays an important role in reducing affective barriers such as language anxiety and low confidence, which commonly affect student teachers’ reading in English (Ounissi et al., 2025). The questionnaire findings reveal that extensive reading played a significant role in addressing effective barriers to foreign language reading. Several student teachers reported initial anxiety or lack of confidence when reading English texts, particularly longer or more complex materials (Aisyiyah & Hakim, 2020). However, sustained engagement with ER especially when reading materials match learners’ proficiency levels creates a non-threatening environment that lowers pressure and makes reading more manageable.

Several affective benefits support this change. Audio-supported digital texts help reduce cognitive burden and make reading feel less intimidating (Ounissi et al., 2025). Completing multiple books also builds a sense of achievement, strengthening students’ self-efficacy and confidence as independent readers. Over time, student teachers report reduced frustration with unfamiliar words and a shift toward reading for enjoyment, moving from resistance to intrinsic motivation.

These positive emotional experiences contribute to the development of a teacher-as-reader identity. By overcoming their own reading anxiety, student teachers learn that enjoyment of reading is a powerful tool for motivating learners (Aisyiyah & Hakim, 2020). As a result, they are better prepared to model positive reading behaviors and design supportive, engaging reading activities for their future students.

Conclusion

This study examined the integration of extensive reading (ER) in an English teacher education program and explored what student teachers learn from practicing ER. The findings show that ER can be effectively incorporated into the curriculum as a credit-bearing course that supports reading fluency, academic literacy, and professional identity development. Implemented through a scaffolded design, ER enables student teachers to engage with large amounts of text while developing strategic and academic reading skills.

Although the course aligns with key extensive reading principles, some core features such as easy materials, strong learner choice, and pleasure-oriented reading are moderated by academic and assessment demands. Nevertheless, student teachers benefit linguistically, affectively, and professionally, particularly in developing positive reading attitudes and a “teacher-as-reader” identity. The study concludes that ER is a valuable component of English teacher education and recommends greater emphasis on autonomy and enjoyment to maximize its long-term impact.

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