Novice English Teacher Challenges in Designing Reading Instruction

Irda Amalia; Jamilah

Magister of Education Indonesian Language and Literatur, Faculty of Languages, Arts, and Culture, Yogyakarta State University, Indonesia

Abstract

Lesson plan is a learning scenario that becomes a reference and pattern for implementing teaching programs for educators, and a systematic and effective learning experience for students. However, designing good learning is still a challenge for novice teachers. This study attempted to reveal the challenges faced by novice English teachers in designing reading instruction by analyzing how they determine objectives, select materials, media and methods, design activities, and develop assessments. This research was a phenomenological study with 5 participants of novice English teachers from state junior high schools in Yogyakarta. Data were collected through documents and interviews. Data were then analyzed by using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) model. The results showed that novice teachers struggle with formulating appropriate learning objectives, sourcing suitable teaching materials due to limited resources, and utilizing technology-based media effectively. They also face difficulties in implementing innovative methods, varying learning activities to accommodate individual learning styles, and developing assessments aligned with Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). Additionally, providing feedback on student learning outcomes remains a significant challenge, impacting the distribution of progress information. These findings emphasize the need for targeted support to enhance novice teachers' skills in module design and professional development.

Keywords: *Novice English Teacher; Lesson Plan; Reading Instruction*

Introduction

Nowdays English is used globally. Many important and recent information is conveyed using English, one of them in the form of text. To gain this understanding of text, mastery reading skill is needed. Reading is an important language skill whose main goal is comprehension (Wijaya et al., 2021). This is in line with Ambasari et al (in Wijaya et al., 2021) stated that in communication skills reading ability become important aspect that person must be mastered to succeed in life. Especially for students, that would be support them to success in academic field and their daily life. In line with the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, a new curriculum, namely the Merdeka Curriculum, is implemented, where English is one of the subjects taught from Grade 1 to Grade 12. Apart from listening, speaking, viewing, writing, and presenting various types of texts, reading skills, especially reading comprehension, are also prioritized and become the main focus in English language learning. In terms of reading skills, learners are hoped to have the ability to understand, use, and reflect on a text based on its aim to develop

their knowledge and potential (Aditomo in Lestari et al., 2022). Therefore, with the knowledge they gain, they are expected to be a good part of society who can do real-life action to solve specific problems (Lestari et al, 2022).

However, to meet the Indonesian demands is not an easy task, especially in a foreign language context where students only receive a little exposure to the targeted language (Sunggingwati & Nguyen, 2013). In fact, reading comprehension skills in Indonesia are low, as evidenced by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey in 2015. Furthermore, a survey conducted by PISA in 2019 stated Indonesia's reading literacy was at level 62 out of 70 countries (Sampe et al., 2023: 48). In Indonesia setting, many students still confront some difficulties in reading comprehension (Muhassin et al., 2021). Apparently, problems in reading comprehension among Indonesian students are difficulty understanding the meaning of words, understanding the long sentence, determining the main idea, understanding the grammar, and difficulty inferencing (Siahaan et al., 2022). Furthermore, Nurmalasari & Haryudin (2021) also strengthens that students were confused when reading the contents of the text and did not understand what the text was talking about. Students find it difficult to arrange words into sentences in a paragraph because they are confused about grammar and sentence structure, so when they want to translate each sentence, they find it difficult to construct the meaning of each word and get information from the sentence. Apart from that, students have a poor vocabulary, so they don't understand the meaning of the text as a whole. Concluding text is also difficult for students, they cannot get the main idea and then modify it into a complete conclusion. Plus, students lack motivation so they are less active when learning to read and consider English texts to be a boring subject. Then if the teacher gives assignments related to reading, they have difficulty answering. Because they don't know how to write the answer properly.

Many factors influence students' problems in reading. As said by Suggingwati & Nguyen (2013) that the barriers occur due to lack of exposure to English. Thus, results in less motivation for students to read and comprehend the English text (Lestari et al, 2022). Besides, Khasanah & Cahyani (2016) explained that this problem arises because interest in reading is still low. In addition, the teaching carried out by teachers in class does not support students to improve their reading skills. For example, teaching reading is rarely carried out to encourage students to have the fluency and strategy but is only intended for practical purposes, namely that students can answer questions. The impact is that students only have a low reading speed, followed by a low level of understanding. Besides that, students pay less attention to the teacher's explanations, which indicates that the learning is less interesting. Teachers also find it difficult to arouse students' interest in learning to read on their own because so far teachers have only modeled how to read texts. Besides, teachers have difficulty finding the right learning model to improve students' ability to read English texts (Wantu, (2018). Therefore, from the explanation above, we can understand that teaching reading in class is a very important factor because bad teaching causes problems that cause students to not be able to read well.

Achieving maximum learning outcomes is determined by a mature and effective planning process. An effective planning process is also determined by the ability and systemic thinking of a teacher which makes it possible to predict and determine important and strategic things that will be implemented in the teaching and learning process. Effective and meaningful planning of curriculum and learning materials is important in achieving maximum learning outcomes carried out by teachers who are qualified and have high professionalism. That is why people generally conclude that maximum learning outcomes are controlled by high-quality teachers (Gemnafle & Batlolona, 2021). Therefore, to become a quality teacher, you must master the teacher's basic competencies as regulated in Law No. 14 of 2005, concerning teachers and lecturers must have basic competencies including professional, pedagogical, social, and personality competencies.

In the context of learning, planning can be interpreted as the process of preparing lesson material, using teaching media, and using teaching approaches or methods in a time allocation that will be implemented in the next semester to achieve the specified goals. In short, teaching planning is a learning

scenario that becomes a reference and pattern for implementing teaching programs for educators, and a systematic and effective learning experience for students (Dolong, 2016). How the classroom is taught is closely related to how the teacher designs the lesson. Every teacher will go through this process, including novice teachers (Sugiyanto & Wulandari, 2023). Therefore, exploring the difficulties of novice teachers is essential to understand the challenges they face and how to respond to them constructively. In the first few years, novice teachers often face great difficulties in balancing theory and practice, especially in highly standardized school environments. This creates a mismatch between their expectations of teaching and the demands of the curriculum, which can undermine self-confidence and cause significant distress (Stewart & Jansky, 2022). In addition, examining the difficulties faced by novice teachers is very important to identify frequent deficiencies of novice teachers in basic skills such as pronunciation, lesson planning, and time management. In addition, novice teachers often do not have clear lesson plans or are not detailed enough in activities and learning objectives (Rashad Ali Bin-Hady, 2018). Therefore, this is important to research because novice teachers experience various difficulties in conducting teaching (Muthmainnah & Marsigit, 2018). To reveal the real challenges they face, it is important to understand the subjective experiences of novice teachers in designing lesson plans, especially in teaching reading. By understanding their perspectives, training and mentoring programs can be tailored to be more relevant and effective. Apart from that, the subjective experiences of novice teachers also provide insight into the difficulties in adapting new curricula, such as the Merdeka Curriculum, so that they can help in preparing more supportive guidelines or policies. This understanding also contributes to the professionalism of novice teachers, as they feel better understood and supported in making pedagogical decisions. Furthermore, by understanding their experiences, policymakers and educational institutions can evaluate and improve training systems and educational policies to better suit the needs of novice teachers in the field.

However, research that explores the novice teacher' challenges in designing reading instruction in Indonesia is still rarely conducted, even though their role is very important in the learning reading process in the classroom. Some studies related to designing reading instruction focused on unravel the challenges that Indonesian novice teachers of English have to cope with, in terms of lesson planning and implementation, classroom management, and professional development in general, not specifically any of the English skills (Widiati et al., 2018), revealing teachers' challenges in teaching reading and their strategies used to overcome those challenges (Novianti et al., 2021), to gain deeper understanding concerning English teacher's difficulties in designing lesson plan based on the 2013 Curriculum (Nurfitri et al., 2020), revealing pedagogical practices of experienced vocational English language teachers, focusing on their lesson planning as well as teaching and classroom management practices, and to understand why they act the way they do (Rido, 2020), and focus on find out English Teacher Problems in designing a good lesson plan in new normal era (Apriani et al., 2020). However, these studies have not explored the challenges faced by novice teachers in designing reading instruction. Regarding these problems, this research aims to identify novice teachers' challenges in designing reading instruction by analyzing how they determine objectives, select materials, media and methods, design activities, and develop assessments.

Method

This research carried out in qualitative approach using phenomenology research design. According to Smith, phenomenology is commonly described as the study of phenomena as they manifest in our experience, of the way we perceive and understand phenomena, and of the meaning phenomena have in our subjective experience (Neubauer et al., 2019). In other words, in phenomenology, researchers are required to understand the meaning of an event and the people who are in a particular event or situation. A purposive sampling method was used to select 5 novice English teachers from public junior high schools (SMPN) in Yogyakarta in Acdemic year 2024/2025. The researchers collected data through document study using the lesson plans designed by the novice teachers dan semi-structured interviews

lasting 45 to 60 minutes each. The interview guideline included thirty-five questions divided into several categories, such as learning objectives, materials, media, method, learning activity, and assessment. The interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) was used to analyze the data, identifying the challenges faced by novice teachers in designing reading instruction.

Finding

The research conducted by the researcher is related to the identification of challenges for novice English teachers in designing reading instruction based on the Merdeka curriculum in public junior high schools in Yogyakarta in academic year 2024/2025. Data presentation is based on the findings of document study and interviews that focus on determining learning objectives, selecting materials, media and methods, designing reading activities and assessment in reading instruction.

a. Challenges in formulating Learning Objective

In formulating learning objectives, teachers must consider competency aspects (attitude, knowledge, and skills) and content. Based on the results of document studies on teaching modules, it was found that several learning objectives formulated by teachers showed a misalignment between competency and content that should be by learning outcomes. For example, in the learning objective of teaching module 2 "students can conclude the objectives, structure and linguistic elements of narrative texts based on the quizzes that are carried out". Based on the learning outcomes of the reading-viewing elements, several mistakes were found in formulating these learning objectives. First, the "conclude" competency in learning outcome is included in the "inference" competency whose content is understanding implied information from reading texts. Second, "objective" is the content of the "identify" competency. Third, "structure and linguistic elements" are the content of the reading and responding competencies. If Teacher 2 wants to formulate learning objectives using the competency of "concluding", then based on the learning achievement, the right content to pair with the competency of "concluding" is understanding implicit information in the text. Another problem related to formulating learning objectives is that the learning objectives are not specific enough or too general. This can be seen from the learning objectives formulated by Teacher 3 in teaching module 3, namely "students are able to understand narrative texts correctly". The phrase "understand correctly" in this learning objective is not specific enough and does not provide the criteria for the success of understanding as expected because there are no elements of competence and content in it. The problem arose not without reason because it is reinforced by data from interviews with teachers, where there is a misunderstanding of teachers in formulating learning objectives. As conveyed by Teacher 3 below.

> *"Because in my head, the teaching module is like, what material do we want to provide, then what are the learning objectives, which of course the learning objectives are taken from ATP, ATP which follows the decline from CP".*

Then also supported by a statement from Teacher 5.

> *"Learning objectives, we adjust them to ATP. What are our learning achievements? What are our targets? Now we look at ATP first, then what are our learning achievements, then to the learning objectives".*

This statement shows that novice teachers do not understand how to formulate correct learning objectives in the Merdeka curriculum, namely starting with understanding learning outcomes (CP) which are competencies that students must achieve at the end of the phase. After that, the teacher determines more specific objectives (TP) based on CP. In the last step which is called the learning objectives flow (ATP), the specific objectives are sorted systematically from simple to complex.

b. Techers' Challenges in Selecting Material in Teaching Reading

Based on the document study, it is known that teachers use narrative text and recount text materials where the two types of text are by the learning achievements, needs, and ability levels of students in phase D. The content of the text given is also interesting for students where teachers use famous stories such as the Cinderella story for the narrative text type and stories about holidays for the recount text. However, it turns out that novice teachers still have challenges in choosing teaching materials that suit students' needs. This was conveyed by the teachers in the following statements.

"...Sometimes, the sources from the textbooks are not very complete. So, we have to look for it again."

From the teacher's statements, we know that there are still many challenges that teachers face in choosing teaching materials that are appropriate to the needs, ability levels and learning styles of students. According to teacher 2, printed books as a source of teaching materials that teachers can use are still incomplete and limited so that novice teachers must look for teaching materials from other sources to be more varied. Therefore, their creativity in choosing teaching materials that are appropriate for all students is very much needed. Although according to teacher 1 below, becoming a creative teacher is a challenge for them. Because they need a lot of time to get interesting and good teaching materials.

"The difficulty is that we have to be creative. Still getting good reading material also requires varied sources. So, we need time to find materials that are interesting, good, and appropriate to the language involved."

In addition, teacher 3 conveyed another challenge that novice teachers face is that sometimes they have difficulty getting materials from the internet.

"...Actually, there are many, but lately it's been a bit difficult like this. When we click on one, it turns out there are terms and conditions. For example, we have to pay. Or for example, we have to upload some of our works first. Some have to upload up to 5 before we can open the link and so on. Well, that's where it's a bit difficult. So, if there happens to be a link, it's safe. But if not, well, we take it from anywhere."

From the statement explained by teacher 3 above, it is difficult to get material from the internet when the website or source has to be paid for or requires uploading some work first before being able to get the teaching material they want. This is certainly burdensome for novice teachers so that they have to look for other sources that have easier access.

c. Tachers' Challenges in Selecting Media in Teaching Reading

Along with the development of the era, now there are many types of media that teachers can use in the learning process. There are media that are technology-based and technology. However, the selection of learning media must also be considered by teachers with several things, such as suitability with the material to be delivered, learning outcome dan objectives, the condition of the learning environment, the teacher's ability to use the media and so on. Based on the document study of the teaching module, it is known that novice teachers use learning media such as LCD, laptop, PPT, printed text, whiteboard, marker, picture, audio, speaker, worksheet, YouTube videos, and websites. While technology-based learning media such as applications are still very rarely used. Although according to novice teachers, they also want to apply technology-based and varied learning media. However, they are constrained by several things, as explained by teacher 2 below.

"Yes, sometimes students get bored if they do Quiz. While we can't provide everything at one time, for example, maybe we try something new. But it can't be applied to all classes. For example, this class has quite disciplined students. So, if asked to open this, they will definitely open this. Yes,

there must be, the difficulty is there. I'm afraid they'll get bored, right... Sometimes not all websites can be accessed... the difficulty is, I don't know now, for example, what the new application is for students. Sometimes if there is training, I try to use it but if there isn't, I have difficulty finding it myself".

From the statements made by the novice teachers above, they experience challenges in using many types of learning media according to the different needs of students in one learning process. This is also supported by the teacher's ability to control the class so that it runs conducively. In addition, novice teachers often experience obstacles in finding and learning new learning media independently. This aims to prevent students from getting bored quickly with the media that is often used, but these obstacles arise due to limited access, knowledge, or lack of clear guidance. The challenges of novice teachers in accessing technology-based learning media were also conveyed by teacher 3 below.

"...The difficulty is, for now it is because the world of children is the world of IT, gadgets with various applications. The difficulty is, my own ability as a teacher in mastering IT is not as complex as theirs. So, I choose mainly based on the abilities that I have. For example, about how to make a presentation using canva, the hope is that children are still not familiar But when we ask children to make a report or make a simple presentation in the form of canva Complete with photos or videos, it turns out that children are already very extraordinary. But when I go back, for example how to change the virtual background zoom, it turns out that many children are still confused about it ... So sometimes what we think is already in their heads turns out not to be. What we think they are new, it turns out they are much more. So, we just choose what is important according to the times. So that they can understand the text better."

These statement shows that the efforts of novice teachers to provide interesting learning media for students such as technology-based learning media in accordance with the development of the times and students are very high. This is done because as we know that students are currently called "digital natives" because they are a generation that is very close to technology even from childhood. So, using technology media is considered to be easier in attracting students' attention in the learning process. However, this is still a challenge for novice teachers, both in terms of ability and time.

d. Tecahers' Challenges in Choosing Method

Learning methods are the ways teachers use to deliver lesson materials in the learning process. There are many learning methods that teachers can use to deliver lessons in an interesting and targeted manner. In the merdeka curriculum, especially in English language learning. The recommended learning methods for teachers to apply in class are the Genre-Based Approach and Differentiated learning methods. However, based on the document study of the teaching module, it is known that the learning methods used by teachers are Project Based Learning, Scientific Approach, and Discovery Learning. Meanwhile, those who use the Genre-Based Approach are seen based on their learning activities, only teaching module 1. This is because selecting and implementing learning methods is still a challenge for novice teachers.

"...Usually, if it's not the PBL genre, I usually only use those two. I actually want to try something else, but I haven't really understood it yet. Will it work in my big class? This is in my class, will this work? So, I'm still scared, Is this true or not..."

Based on the interview results, it can be seen that the understanding of novice teachers towards learning methods is still limited. So according to Teacher 2, she sometimes hesitates when she is going to use a learning method that she has not mastered. Therefore, it is in line with what was conveyed by Teacher 5 below that they need to learn more about learning methods. Especially in learning methods that

require more complex planning such as the Project Based Learning method. Causing them to tend to use the same learning method repeatedly or choose learning methods that are easy or simple to implement.

> *"There are many methods, but we also have to learn a lot about what learning methods are... For PJBL, I still have difficulty, even though it can actually be done, but the results of PJBL are different from products. If it's just a product, the children write a presentation, that's also a product. But for PJBL, the planning of the steps is longer. That's a method that's still quite difficult to practice even though it can be done, but I prefer the simple ones, for example, direct PPP which at that time has a product even though the product is simple, PPT, poster, mind mapping, or whatever the children can make simple, then they can present it in front of the class..."*

The challenges faced by novice teachers in terms of learning methods also occur in how they can adjust the chosen learning methods to the diverse needs of students. For example, in implementing the differentiated method which is indeed recommended in the independent curriculum, it turns out that novice teachers still have difficulty in ensuring that all students' needs are accommodated. So that sometimes the expectations of novice teachers with the results obtained are not directly proportional. In addition, they also face challenges in creating fun and effective learning, as stated by teacher 3 below.

> *"...the difficulty is when there are students who may even have difficulty when they have to say it, then they have to collaborate or compete with friends who happen to have more abilities, so the difficulty is our expectations here, it will be like this, but when in the field they find it like that, the expectations will definitely change, maybe that's one of the reasons why we are directed to use the differentiation method, maybe like the one earlier"*

e. Teacher's Challenges in Designing Reading Activities in Teaching Reading

In the lesson plan, learning activities include a sequence of core activities that are described in steps. The steps of learning activities must be arranged according to the planned duration systematically, logically, and meaningfully so that learning takes place effectively and efficiently. Therefore, arranging reading learning activities is also a challenge for novice teachers. Based on the study documents of several teaching modules designed by novice teachers, it was found that several learning activities were too focused on group discussions. Although the learning activities were quite varied, most of them were still too focused on group discussions, so it was feared that these learning activities would not sufficiently accommodate students' individual learning preferences. In addition, teachers may have difficulty assessing the extent to which each student understands the material because assessments are often based on group results, not individual contributions. This is supported by the results of an interview with Teacher 2.

> *"...That will be a guideline, so sometimes it's difficult to determine how good this activity is. Even though there's a pre-test, sometimes we want our students not just stay in the same place, there's development, that's what might be a bit difficult."*

Teacher 5 further added that.

> *"...Our challenge is how to present a learning scenario that the children are happy with, but our goal is to achieve it, that's what must always be updated, sis, it's impossible to do it like this now, tomorrow's meeting is the same again, it's not fun, it's really boring..."*

From the interview results above, it is known that before compiling a reading lesson plan, teachers conduct an initial assessment to find out the needs of each student. However, novice teachers still face challenges in compiling interesting, enjoyable and effective reading lessons to support student development in accordance with the learning objectives to be achieved.

f. Teachers' Challenges in Designing Assessment in Teaching Reading

Assessment is one of the most important components that must be included in a lesson plan. Assessment will help teachers determine the level of understanding and achievement of students in reading skills. Then the results of the assessment will be used as evaluation material for teachers to determine students' abilities that are still lacking and what needs to be improved. Therefore, in designing a reading skills assessment, teachers need to pay attention to the HOTS aspect of the questions that will be used. However, knowing whether a question in the assessment is included is also not an easy thing, based on the document study of the teaching module, it is known that novice teachers use more LOTS-directed questions. For example, questions in teaching module 5 such as "mention the characters in the story" and "where and when did the story happen?". Where the two forms of questions are classified as cognitive level C1, namely remembering. This is supported by the statement made by Teacher 1 who explained that determining whether a question is classified as LOTS or HOTS is still a challenge for her as a novice teacher.

"...the difficulty in determining the level of hots is not the question, is it at L3 or is it at C6 or not"

Using LOST questions is certainly not a prohibition because, in Bloom's taxonomy, cognitive levels consist of six levels which are divided into LOTS and HOTS. However, in compiling questions to assess students' reading abilities, of course, you can't just use LOTS questions but also need to combine them with HOTS questions. So based on this statement, we can see that teachers need to know the criteria for LOTS and HOTS questions to formulate assessment questions properly. In addition, another challenge experienced by novice teachers is in determining the assessment technique to be used. Judging from the results of the study documents, novice teachers use more written test assessment techniques such as multiple choice, true or false, matching, fill in the blank, and short essays. This is because the teacher's knowledge of the various assessment techniques that can be used to assess student skills is limited. This was conveyed by Teacher 2 in the interview session.

"...sometimes we don't want it to be the same, I mean, not just like simple, not just multiple choice or essay, although sometimes, I once did it like oral, but right, is it just that, I mean I want other things too, the difficulty is determining the appropriate ones from, what are the variations, so that it's not the same anymore"

Then after compiling the assessment, the teacher also needs to plan how to provide improvements from the assessment results. However, this is also a challenge according to Teacher 5.

"The only difficulty is that, if I fix it, in class, I'm more proficient in formative, so person A has this deficiency, person B has this deficiency, if it's summative, I have difficulty, If the summative is large in number, it is impossible to do it one by one, something that is impossible, so I will take the ones that really need improvement, if the score is in accordance with expectations, at least a minimum of 80, if it is 80 and above, it is safe, it can be processed for the report card score, while the ones below this, can be calculated, it is impossible for the ones with really bad scores to be in the hundreds, it can be sorted out, right miss, which ones really need to be improved, well, we fix them"

According to Teacher 5, as a novice teacher, he still has difficulty in providing improvements, especially in summative assessments. Therefore, teachers are more selective in providing improvements only to students whose grades are still very low.

Discussion

Novice teachers typically begin by conducting initial assessments to identify student needs, using the results to design learning activities aligned with students' achievement levels. However, many novice

teachers misunderstand the correct sequence for formulating learning objectives and constructing a learning objective flow. For instance, Teachers 3 and 5 erroneously formulate objectives based on CP and ATP, while Teachers 2 and 4 focus on initial assessments without addressing CP, TP, and ATP. Only Teacher 1 follows the correct process by formulating objectives first and then compiling ATP. This confusion creates challenges in setting objectives that accommodate diverse student abilities, learning styles, and developmental levels, leading to uneven understanding among students. Research highlights the importance of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 2018), intensive training (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019), and mentoring models (O'Donnell et al., 2021) to support teachers in this process. Effective learning objectives should include competence and scope of material. Teachers can use Bloom's Taxonomy to frame cognitive objectives, progressing from basic (C1: remembering) to advanced (C6: creating) abilities.

Choosing appropriate teaching materials is a significant challenge for novice teachers due to the need to address students' diverse abilities, learning styles, and needs. Teacher 2 noted the inadequacy of printed books for diverse classes, requiring teachers to seek additional resources. Besiades, creativity in selecting materials demands considerable effort and time, as highlighted by Teacher 1. Teacher 3 pointed out issues like limited digital literacy, paid resources, and difficulty finding suitable materials online. Novice teachers must align materials with learning achievements and objectives (Siburian & Naibaho, 2023). Professional development, particularly digital-based training, is essential to equip teachers with the skills to utilize digital and traditional sources effectively. Research by Richards and Rodgers (2020) suggests digital materials can overcome printed limitations but require training, while Harmer (2019) supports combining traditional and modern resources for optimal learning outcomes.

Teaching media helps teachers convey material and students understand it more easily. However, novice teachers often face challenges in accessing and using technology-based media, which can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. According to interviews and document studies, technology use among teachers is limited, typically relying on LCD projectors and videos. Factors contributing to this include limited knowledge of technology, uneven access to government-provided information, difficulties in operating new tools independently, and challenges in managing students when using multiple media types. Additionally, students often have better technological skills than novice teachers. Research highlights that integrating technology-based media requires addressing these challenges through adequate infrastructure and teacher training. Studies by Hulu (2023), Ramadhani et al. (2024), and others emphasize the importance of training and support, while Wang & Hannafin (2020) underline the need for proper infrastructure and teacher-focused technology training to ensure effective integration.

Novice teachers face challenges in selecting learning methods due to limited knowledge. They often rely on familiar methods, fearing incorrect implementation or failure with new methods like Project-Based Learning (PJBL), which requires complex planning. Research supports PJBL's benefits for improving English skills and motivation but highlights the need for extensive preparation. Consequently, teachers prefer simpler methods like PPP (Presentation, Practice, and Production). Challenges also arise from limited understanding of method syntax, leading to mismatched lesson plans and classroom implementation. Teachers often adapt methods to available school facilities, which can limit options. Differentiated learning poses further difficulties, requiring adaptation to diverse student needs, yet results often fall short due to challenges like time management, teacher skill gaps, large classes, and student perceptions. To address these issues, ongoing training in differentiated methods and evidence-based approaches to method selection are essential, as suggested by Marzano (2018) and Ellis & Worthington (2020).

Teachers often feel confused when arranging learning activities that are fun but still focused on achieving learning objectives. Research by Nurhaliza (2019) shows that teachers struggle with understanding the syntax of methods and models, particularly in structuring core activities. This challenge is compounded by time constraints, limiting novice teachers' creativity. Robinson and Aronica (2018) highlight that creativity requires a school environment that fosters innovation, while Sternberg (2019)

emphasizes the need for training in designing engaging learning activities. Novice teachers also face difficulties due to a lack of preparation and long-term planning (Muthmainnah & Marsigit, 2018), leading them to avoid more complex methods. In designing learning activities, teachers must consider factors like students' interests, age, proficiency levels, time allotment, classroom situations, and even gender (Khikmah, 2019). Abidin (2013) outlines three stages in reading activities: pre-reading, reading, and post-reading. In pre-reading, teachers activate students' prior knowledge and generate predictions about the text. In the reading stage, a variety of strategies can be employed, such as identifying key ideas, quoting content, testing predictions, or conducting discussions. The post-reading stage aims to assess and reinforce reading skills, with activities such as summarizing, retelling, making story maps, or acting out the story (Rambe & Widiyarti, 2023).

Novice teachers face two main challenges in assessment design. First, they struggle to include Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) questions, as LOTS (Lower Order Thinking Skills) questions are more dominant. HOTS involves complex cognitive processes like problem-solving and analysis, while LOTS focuses on simpler recall. However, difficult questions are not always HOTS, and some teachers mistakenly categorize complex LOTS questions as HOTS. Teachers also often fail to distinguish between HOTS and LOTS, leading to the inclusion of non-HOTS questions in assessments. HOTS questions should involve analyzing, evaluating, and creating, and incorporate stimuli that motivate critical thinking. Teachers also face time constraints, relying on textbooks rather than creating contextual questions relevant to students' lives. The second challenge is the limited knowledge of various assessment techniques. Teachers commonly use multiple-choice, essay, and true-false questions, but lack diversity in assessment methods. The Independent Curriculum suggests several assessment techniques, including observation, performance, project-based tasks, written and oral tests, assignments, and portfolios. These methods provide a broader view of students' abilities. Novice teachers need further support and training in adapting these techniques to learning objectives. Research indicates that specific training in assessment design is essential to improve teachers' skills and enhance educational quality.

The first challenge faced by novice teachers in designing assessments is ensuring that the questions asked include HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) questions. Research by Prastikawati et al. (2021) found that LOTS (Lower Order Thinking Skills) questions tend to dominate over HOTS-based questions. HOTS involves higher cognitive processes such as problem-solving, analysis, and evaluation, whereas LOTS focuses more on recall. Teachers often confuse difficult questions with HOTS, when in fact difficult questions are not necessarily HOTS. For example, testing the understanding of rarely used words may be difficult but does not reflect high-level thinking skills (Hartono et al., 2022). Teachers have difficulty designing HOTS questions because they do not fully understand the difference between HOTS and LOTS. They often include contextual questions that are still categorized as LOTS, while HOTS questions should focus on analyzing, evaluating, and creating, with stimuli that motivate students to interpret and integrate information (Tasrif, 2022). Furthermore, teachers lack the time to develop contextual questions and often rely solely on textbooks (Hartono et al., 2022). The second challenge is the limited knowledge of assessment techniques. Teachers often rely on the same assessment methods, such as multiple choice, essay, and true-false questions. They require more variety in their assessment techniques, which can provide a more comprehensive picture of students' abilities (Brookhart, 2019). The Independent Curriculum recommends various assessment techniques, including observation, performance assessments, projects, written tests, oral tests, assignments, and portfolios. These methods allow for a more complete assessment of students' skills. However, novice teachers still need further support and training in adapting these techniques to learning objectives (Guskey, 2021). Research shows that providing training in assessment design is crucial to improving teaching quality and enhancing student learning (Arta, 2024).

Novice teachers face difficulties in providing effective feedback, especially for summative assessments. Teacher 5 shared that they are confused about offering improvements due to limited knowledge and time constraints (Arta, 2024). To address this, Teacher 5 groups students by their scores, offering feedback to those with lower scores while considering higher-scoring students "safe" from

further feedback. However, this practice could reinforce inequalities, as students with good grades also need feedback for continued improvement. Effective feedback is essential for learning, as it helps students identify their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement (Hattie & Timperley, 2020). Feedback should be clear, detailed, and tailored to the student's level of development, including both positive reinforcement and constructive suggestions (Sofyatiningrum et al., 2020). Furthermore, teachers should consider involving parents or guardians in supporting students' success (Maisyaroh et al., 2023). Several types of feedback include performance, motivational, attributional, and strategy feedback, all vital for guiding students (Sofyatiningrum et al., 2020). To improve feedback quality, novice teachers need additional support and training (Hattie & Timperley, 2020).

Conclusion

The study revealed several challenges faced by five novice English teachers in designing teaching modules for reading instruction. These include difficulties in formulating learning objectives, selecting appropriate materials due to limited resources, and using technology-based media. Teachers also struggle with applying new teaching methods, designing activities that accommodate individual learning styles, and creating assessments based on higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). Additionally, providing effective feedback on student learning outcomes is a challenge. These findings highlight the need for education policymakers and schools to support novice teachers through strategic training and resources, enabling their professional growth and improving instructional quality.

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