

## IMPLEMENTING THE TEACHING AT THE RIGHT LEVEL (TARL) APPROACH TO IMPROVE ELEMENTARY STUDENTS' INITIAL READING SKILLS

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Article Info	Abstract
<b>Article History</b> Received: August 2023 Revised: September 2023 Published: October 2023	<p><i>This research was motivated by students' low initial reading skills in Class I MIN 1 Mataram City. Of the 130 students, 38 students could not read at the initial. This research aims to improve students' initial reading skills by implementing the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) Approach Assisted by Inovasi Materials. This type of research is classroom action research (CAR). The research setting is at MIN 1 Mataram City. The study aims to improve students' initial reading skills through the TaRL Approach. The research was carried out in two cycles, which included four stages: planning, implementing and observing, evaluating, and reflecting. The research instruments used were interviews, observations, tests, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out qualitatively and quantitatively. The success of this research is if student activity is at least in the active category and students' initial reading ability is at least 85% of students get a score of 70. The research results show that implementing the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach assisted by Inovasi Materials can improve students' initial reading ability in Class I MIN 1 City of Mataram. This can be seen from the evaluation results that can be seen from the average value of Cycle I, 66 to 81.36 in Cycle II. Then, the number of students who completed was seen from 20 students in Cycle I to 33 students in Cycle II, or it could be interpreted that the percentage in Cycle I was 52.63%, increasing to 86.84% in Cycle II.</i></p>
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### INTRODUCTION

In the initial stages of literacy acquisition, students are confronted with the foundational task of mastering letters or a series of phonetic units, thus transforming written symbols into spoken language sounds. This transformative process is often facilitated through the application of specific pedagogical techniques that underscore several critical aspects. Foremost among these is an unwavering emphasis on accuracy in voice production and writing. Students are encouraged to articulate sounds with precision, ensuring a faithful rendering of phonetic elements from written text to spoken words. This precision extends to the realm of proper pronunciation and intonation, as students are guided towards the correct enunciation of words and the appropriate modulation of their vocal inflections (Mustadi et al., 2022). Additionally, the pursuit of fluency is paramount, with the goal of nurturing students' capacity to read text with ease and fluidity.

In tandem with fluency, clarity of voice is prioritized to ensure that students' vocalization of text is not only fluent but also comprehensible. This rigorous focus on the mechanics of reading in the early stages serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it equips students with the foundational skills necessary to embark upon more advanced reading and comprehension tasks as they progress to higher grades. This preparatory phase is essential to instill

confidence in students and embolden them to tackle the challenges of higher-level reading tasks with greater proficiency and self-assuredness (Muammar, 2020). However, it is noteworthy that the expectations placed on students at the outset of their academic journey can, at times, diverge from these pedagogical ideals. For instance, on the very first day of Grade I, students are confronted with a rather modest task, involving the reading of a mere 4-5 words (Kasmawati, 2020). This juxtaposition between the pedagogical emphasis on mastering the intricacies of reading and the initial, relatively simple reading tasks in Grade I underscores the complex nature of literacy instruction in early education. It prompts a consideration of the alignment between theoretical frameworks of literacy development and the practical implementation of these concepts in the classroom setting.

On the inaugural day of school, a mere exposure to a mere handful of 4-5 words may not suffice to declare with certainty that every student has attained a level of complete mastery in this initial foray into reading. This assertion gains further complexity when one considers the diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds from which the students emanate. When these students are methodically categorized into groups, delineating the spectrum from lower, middle, to upper classes, their familial origins and, by extension, their parents' occupational roles become a salient point of contention (Kasmawati, 2020; Mustadi et al., 2022). This taxonomy reveals a kaleidoscope of parental vocations, ranging from the toils of laborers and daily laborers to the artistry of artisans, the rustic toil of farmers, the oversight of supervisors, the pedagogical acumen of teachers, the scholarly gravitas of lecturers, the medical expertise of doctors, and the managerial prowess of directors, among others. Indeed, from these intricate and multifaceted parental backgrounds, it becomes manifestly evident that the students' initial reading proficiencies are poised to diverge markedly. The interplay of nurture and environment, rooted in the socio-economic fabric of their families, is poised to impart a distinctive imprint on the cognitive development of each pupil, including their early reading capabilities. Consequently, the very premise that 100% of students will have achieved a uniform level of mastery in their nascent reading endeavors on the very first day of school must be approached with a tempered expectation, recognizing the manifold factors at play that shape their individual journeys in the realm of literacy (Tim Inovasi, 2020a).

In Class I MIN 1 Mataram City, students' initial reading abilities are still far from expectations. Of the four classes accepted, including IA, IB, IC, and ID, with 130 students, 75 men and 54 women, around 29% do not read fluently. For further clarity, the following is data on students' initial reading ability in Class I MIN 1 Mataram.

Table 1  
Students' Initial Reading Ability Class I MIN Mataram

Class	Current		Not Yet or/and Not Current		M	F	Total
	M	F	M	F			
IA	6	9	14	3	20	12	32
IB	17	14	1	0	18	14	32
IC	8	6	10	8	18	12	32
ID	18	14	1	1	19	15	34
Total	49	43	26	12	75	53	130
Percentage (%)	38	33	20	9	58	42	100
Total %	71		29		100		

Source: Teacher Documentation in Class I MIN 1 Mataram City

The low initial reading ability observed among students can be attributed to a multifaceted confluence of factors rooted in their diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. This condition underscores the critical importance of understanding the nuanced

interplay between these elements. One salient dimension is the state of the relationship between educators and parents, which has not yet solidified to an optimal level (Abrams, 2010). The efficacy of educational interventions often hinges on the degree of collaboration and support that parents extend to the school environment, and the variability in this aspect may, to some extent, influence students' initial reading proficiency. Furthermore, a cursory examination of students' attitudes towards reading reveals that their interest in this foundational skill tends to be somewhat superficial. This shallow engagement with reading can be a consequential aspect of their early educational experiences and home environments, which are marked by considerable diversity in terms of knowledge and exposure. Students' familial contexts vary widely, impacting the cognitive stimulation they receive outside of school. Thus, it becomes evident that in the crucial phase of initial reading acquisition, students require a structured guidance framework encompassing both teachers and peers (Abrams, 2010).

If left unchecked, the above conditions will hurt students' initial reading abilities in Class I MIN 1 Mataram City. This initial reading skill is the leading and essential thing that students must master. This is related to its continuity with material content that requires student understanding. If a student cannot read at first, the student will inevitably be mentally disabled in learning. Plus, the lessons are thematic. In other words, this initial reading must be mastered if you want to understand the various contents of the material. Initial reading ability greatly influences subsequent skills: reading comprehension (Muammar, 2020).

One alternative solution to the problem above is using the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) Approach Assisted by Inovasi Materials. This learning approach refers to the level of student ability (Banerji & Chavan, 2020). With this approach, students will acquire basic skills: beginning reading. Several countries have implemented this approach, including America, Zambia, Botswana, Ghana, Nigeria, Madagascar, Uganda, and India. This approach will also be complemented by material from Innovation. The material is divided into three groups: group 1, beginners and letters; group 2, words and paragraphs; and group 3, story readers. Of the three materials, group 1 material was used because it was by the problems above. In group 1, students build their self-confidence to have a solid foundation to continue to the next level. The aim is to introduce students to sounds and letters (Tim Inovasi, 2020a). Based on the description, this is an interesting and important thing to do research. The problem formulation answered in this research is how to improve students' initial reading skills through the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) Approach Assisted by Innovation Materials in Class I MIN 1 Mataram City.

## Literature Review

### Relevant Prior Studies

Researchers found several similar studies similar to the title of this research. Among the research results that researchers can track are. First is Syahratul Mubarakah's research titled "Challenges of Implementing the TaRL (*Teaching at The Right Level*) Approach in Inclusive Basic Literacy at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah East Lombok." The research results show that: (a) students are divided into three groups or levels whose students come from class I to class III. The first level is for beginners and letters. Level both words and sentences. The third level is the paragraph and story level. Literacy learning in East Lombok uses the TaRL approach and the ADaBta method. ADaBta is an acronym for the words Observe, Listen, Read, Tell; (b) the challenge, namely the teacher's lack of professionalism in carrying out assessments, is characterized by the presence of students who are placed at inappropriate levels, this causes learning according to the level not to be carried out effectively. When a student from class III, after the literacy assessment is carried out, is at the word level so that the student is in group 2, the student feels like he has been lowered in class; there are students'

parents who do not accept literacy learning based on the student's level of learning ability because the parents think that the child is disturbed. Psychology combined with different students (downgrade). Teachers cannot control students at levels where there are many students, such as at the beginner level; some teachers disagree if literacy is carried out every day because it will reduce other lesson hours (Mubarokah, 2022).

Second, research conducted by Leni Oktaviani, Siti Rohana Hariana Intiana, and Heri Setiawan with the title, "The Relationship between Literacy Level Groupings and the Reading Ability of Class II Students at SDN 1 Beleka for the 2021/2022 Academic Year." The research results show that the identification of literacy level groupings and the effects of students' reading abilities show that they are in the fair and reasonable categories, and the hypothesis test in this research uses the Product Moment formula. The results of data analysis show  $N=52$  at a significance of 5%; the results obtained are  $0.869$  ( $r$ -count)  $> 0.195$  ( $r$ -table), and the hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) proposed is accepted. So, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between literacy level groupings and the reading ability of class II students at SDN 1 Beleka for the 2021/2022 academic year (Oktaviani et al., 2022).

Third, research conducted by Muhammad Erfan, Muhammad Archi Mauliyda, Lalu Hamdian Affandi, Awal Nur Kholifatur Rosyidah, Itsna Oktaviyanti, and Iwan Hamdani with the title "Identification of Teachers' Basic Literacy Insights in Learning Based on Student Ability Level." The research showed that of the 30 teachers who took basic literacy test questions, only three teachers scored  $> 70$ . In addition, the schools studied with the lowest essential literacy insight were SDN Karang Sidemen and SDN Repuk Sintung Barat (Erfan et al., 2021).

From several previous studies that researchers have carried out, it is clear that the position of the research that will be carried out is to examine the use of the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) Approach Assisted by Inovasi Materials to improve students' initial reading abilities in Class I MIN 1 Mataram City. There are differences in this research from the subject and research object. The research subjects were class I MIN 1 Mataram City students. At the same time, the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) Approach with the Assistance of Inovasi Materials will improve students' beginning reading skills.

### **Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) Approach**

The TaRL learning approach does not refer to grade levels but to students' ability levels. This approach is the answer to the problem of understanding gaps that have often occurred. In its implementation, this approach focuses on students. The TaRL approach is considered especially suitable for children who are already in school but, for various reasons, have not acquired basic skills. The TaRL approach is also one of the most effective approaches to improving children's learning. Its use is widespread in India, and many countries use it (Banerji & Chavan, 2020). This approach has the objectives: (a) to strengthen students' initial reading abilities in elementary school; (b) to adopt the characteristics and needs of students in beginning reading in elementary school; (c) to accompany students intensively so that they make progress in beginning reading in elementary school (Banerji & Chavan, 2020).

The TaRL approach has three stages in its use, namely, conducting assessment, planning, and learning. The first stage is conducting an evaluation. The teacher assesses students' characteristics, potential, and needs at this stage. The second stage is planning. At this stage, the teacher prepares an appropriate learning process plan: teaching materials, learning media, and learning strategies. The third stage is learning. At this stage, the teacher conducts periodic assessments to determine the progress of student's initial reading skills so that continuous and sustainable learning is carried out (Kusuma Dayu & Setyaningsih, 2022).

## **Inovasi Material**

Inovasi material is an initial reading learning material designed according to the level of students' ability in beginning reading. The material has been divided into three groups, namely: (a) group 1 at beginner level and letters; (b) group 2 word and paragraph levels; and (c) groups of 3 story levels (Nuranjani et al., 2022). Here are the details of the material. First, group 1 beginner and letter level discussed material including (1) recognizing vowels; (2) recognizing the consonants b, d, g, and p; (3) consonants h, j, and k; (4) consonants l, m, n, r, s, t, and w; (5) elconine; (6) vowels and consonants; (7) rhyming words; (8) clap syllables; (9) forming words; (10) reading ny and ng; (11) reading familiar words 1; and (12) reading familiar words 2 (Tim Inovasi, 2020a).

Second, group 2 at the word and paragraph level discussed material including (1) completing incomplete sentences, (2) making sentences with the help of cards, (3) chain messages, (4) I can make sentences, (5) make sentences based on pictures; (6) create simple paragraphs; (7) arrange the sentences into paragraphs!; (8) I can read expressively; (9) reading together and practicing mind mapping; (10) Let's make a story; and (11) reading pictures (Tim Inovasi, 2020b). Third, the three story-level groups discussed material including (1) reading aloud, (2) finding meaningful information in the announcement, (3) rewriting the stories read, (4) finding the main story in comics, (5) describing the character you like; (6) predict events in the story; (7) create a different ending; (8) self-reflection based on a reading; (9) write down vacation experiences; and (10) imagining and drawing another side of the story in comics (Tim Inovasi, 2020c). Of the three Innovation materials above, group 1 material was used in this research. Group 1 material was used because it was the aim of this research, namely to improve students' initial reading abilities.

## **Initial Reading**

Initial reading is the initial stage of learning to read in lower grades. In beginning reading, students learn to recognize letters or a series of notes into language sounds by using specific techniques with emphasis on aspects of accuracy in voicing writing, proper pronunciation and intonation, fluency, and clarity of sound so that students are better prepared and braver to enter the advanced reading stage. or reading comprehension in high grades (Muammar, 2020). Initial reading aims to produce students who are fluent in reading. In other words, initial reading aims to provide students with the ability to understand and articulate writing with natural intonation as a basis for further reading (Muammar, 2022). The benefit of beginning reading is to prepare students for subsequent reading skills. Mastery of initial reading has a significant influence on the next task. Therefore, beginning reading must be mastered by grade I elementary school students so that they can follow the learning process smoothly on all material content.

There are several characteristics of this beginning reading, namely: (a) the process is constructive, (b) it must be smooth, (c) it must be done with the right strategy, (d) it requires motivation, and (e) skills must be developed on an ongoing basis. Thus, students can: (1) recognize lowercase and uppercase letters in the alphabet; (2) pronounce the sounds (not names) of letters, consisting of single consonants (b, d, h, k, ...), vowels (a, i, u, e, o), double consonants (kr, gr, tr, ...), and diphthongs (ai, au, oi); (3) combining sounds to form words (me, mother); (4) sound variations (/u/ in the word "beat,"/o/ in the words "shop" and "tree"); (5) guess the word using context; and (6) using structural analysis for word identification (rewords, compound words, affixes).

There are two stages of initial reading learning: pre-reading and reading. In this pre-reading, students are taught (a) good sitting posture, (b) how to put/place a book on the table, (c) how to hold a book, (d) how to turn the right page of a book, and (e) look/pay attention pictures or writing, while in reading, students are taught: (1) pronunciation and intonation of

simple words and sentences (imitating the teacher), (2) letters that are widely used in simple words and sentences that students are familiar with (letters are introduced gradually up to 14 letters). Indicators of early reading include (a) accuracy of voicing written words, (b) reasonableness of pronunciation, (c) reasonableness of intonation, (d) fluency, (e) clarity of voice, and (f) understanding of the content/meaning of reading. The initial reading assessment procedure using the TaRL approach can be seen in Figure 1 as follows.

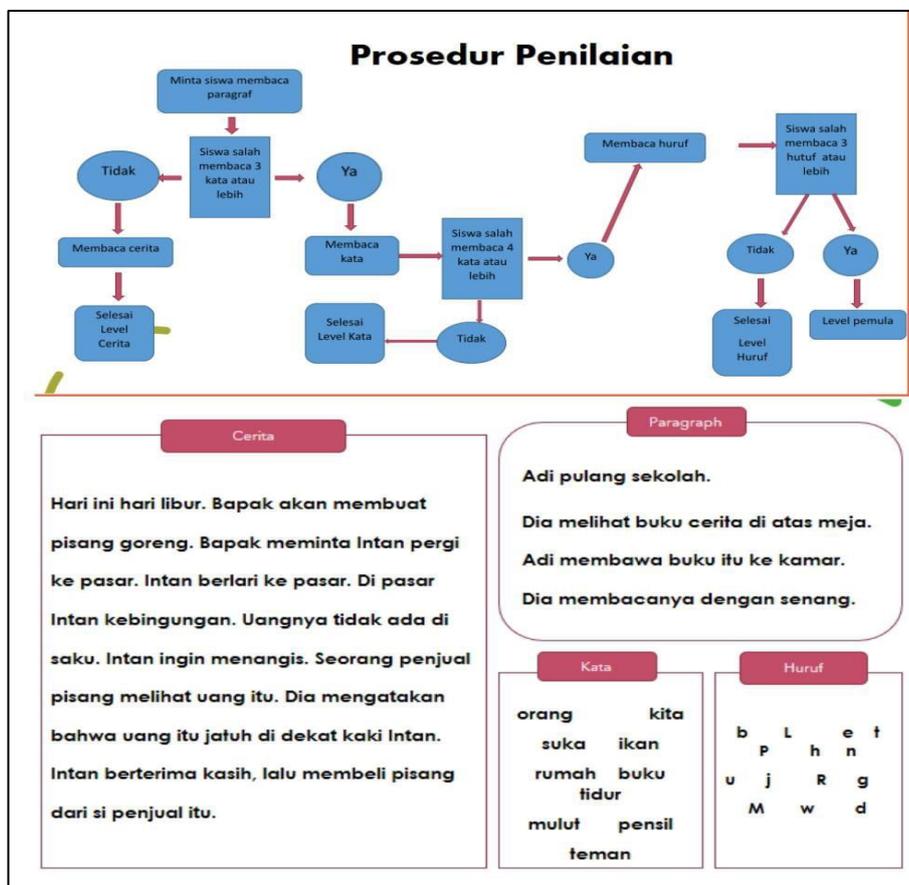


Figure 1. Assessment and Test Procedures Students Initial Reading Ability

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Types of Research

The research conducted in this context adheres to the principles of classroom action research (CAR), which constitutes a systematic and reflective approach to enhancing learning conditions within an educational setting. Specifically, the research is set in MIN 1 Mataram City, with the overarching objective of elevating students' initial reading proficiencies. To achieve this goal, the research endeavors to implement the TaRL (Teaching at the Right Level) Approach, which is designed to address and enhance students' foundational reading skills. Through the systematic application of CAR, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the TaRL Approach in fostering continuous improvements in the realm of early reading abilities among students within the specified educational context.

### Research Design

The research was conducted over the course of two cycles, each encompassing four distinct stages: planning, implementation and observation, evaluation, and reflection. This classroom action research cycle model follows a dynamic spiral or action work process,

transitioning seamlessly from one cycle to the next, as visually depicted in Figure 2. This cyclical approach is instrumental in ensuring that each phase informs and refines the subsequent one, facilitating a systematic and iterative exploration of the research objectives and the effectiveness of interventions. Such a methodological framework is designed to enhance the rigor and depth of the study, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic and the potential improvements in the targeted educational context.

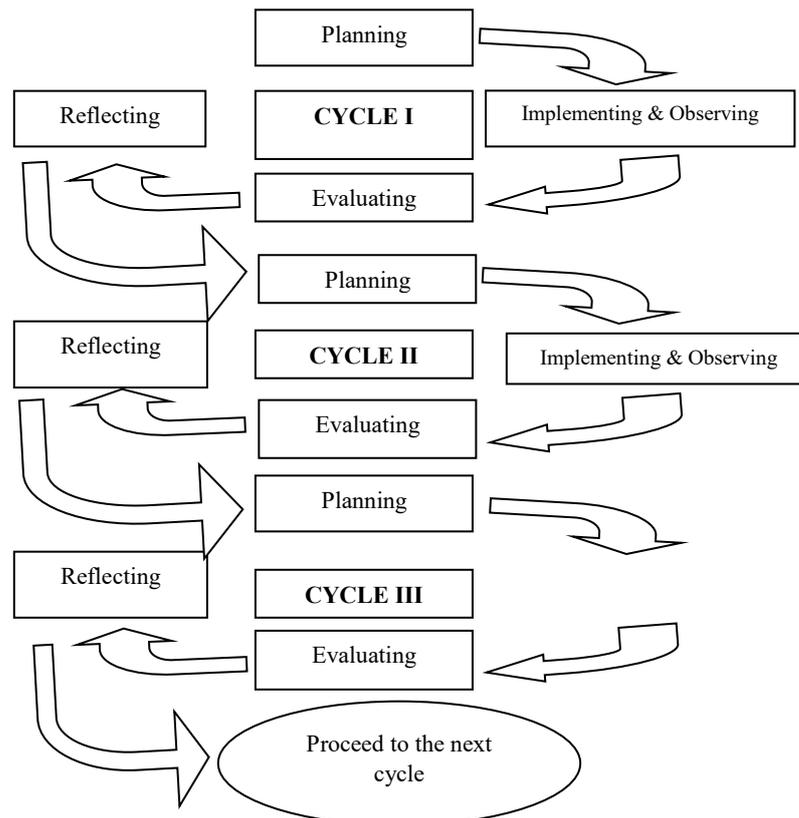


Figure 2. Classroom Action Research Cycle Model (CAR)

The cycle model above is a classroom action research design that was implemented. For more details, it is explained as follows.

### Planning Stage

During this particular stage of the research process, the researcher undertakes several essential tasks aimed at ensuring the effective execution of the study. Firstly, the researcher meticulously prepares a comprehensive learning scenario or plan, specifically designed to employ the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) approach, augmented by innovative instructional materials. This plan serves as a blueprint for guiding classroom activities and interventions. Additionally, the researcher creates observation sheets tailored to systematically monitor and document both teacher and student activities throughout the research cycles. Furthermore, the preparation of student worksheets is integral to the implementation phase, providing essential resources to facilitate learning. Lastly, a critical aspect of this stage involves the evaluation and development of a test format meticulously crafted to assess students' initial reading abilities. These strategic steps lay the groundwork for

the research, ensuring that all necessary tools, materials, and assessments are in place to facilitate a thorough investigation into the efficacy of the TaRL approach and its impact on students' reading proficiency.

#### Implementation and Observation Stage

In the progression of the research, the implementation stage represents a pivotal juncture where the meticulously prepared plans from the prior planning stage are put into active practice within the classroom setting. During this phase, the researcher orchestrates and executes a series of carefully structured actions, which directly influence and shape the learning environment. Moreover, the implementation phase includes the crucial element of ongoing observation. These observations are conducted in real-time, concurrently with the unfolding of the learning process. A designated observer is tasked with closely monitoring and documenting all facets of the learning activities as they transpire, aligning with the predetermined learning format outlined in the research plan. This comprehensive approach ensures that every discernible facet of both student and teacher engagement is systematically captured and recorded on the observation sheet, facilitating a thorough analysis of the classroom dynamics and the effectiveness of the research interventions.

#### Evaluation Stage

At the present stage of the educational process, researchers and educators are actively engaged in the ongoing assessment of students' initial reading capabilities. This evaluative procedure is conducted at the culmination of each instructional cycle, serving as a pivotal checkpoint in the teaching and learning process. The primary objective of this assessment is to gauge and analyze students' initial reading proficiency levels, a critical step in the implementation of the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach. To facilitate this assessment, educators administer a standardized reading test, which is specifically designed to ascertain the baseline reading abilities of students. This test is conducted with the valuable support of reading materials generated by the Inovasi Platform, an educational resource that contributes to the effective execution of the TaRL methodology. The collaborative effort between researchers, teachers, and the Inovasi Platform underscores the commitment to evidence-based education, ensuring that students' literacy skills are accurately assessed, and instruction is tailored to their individual needs. This rigorous evaluation process plays a pivotal role in optimizing the educational experience, enabling educators to make informed instructional decisions that promote literacy development among students.

#### Reflection Stage

Reflection is carried out after observations and evaluations are carried out and used as a reference. At this stage, the teacher and students review the results and provide action in the initial cycle. The results of this reflection are used as a basis for refining and improving the planning and implementation of actions at the next stage. The results of the reflection of data analysis in cycle I are used as a reference for planning cycle II, by correcting the weaknesses in cycle I. The implementation of cycle III is also in the same order as cycle II, and the actions taken in this cycle are based on the analysis in cycles I and II, etc.

#### Research Instrument

The research instruments used were interviews, observation, tests and documentation. Interviews were conducted to obtain information related to the problem under study. Interviews were conducted in-depth to obtain initial data on students' reading abilities. Observations were carried out using observation sheets to observe the implementation of the learning process, namely teacher and student activities. An observation sheet will be given to

an observer before the learning process takes place. Then, the observer fills in the observation sheet during the teaching and learning. Tests are used to collect data regarding the level of achievement of students' initial reading skills. The type of test used is a posttest, carried out after an action has been taken. Documentation is used to support and obtain continuous information with interviews, observation and test data. In this research, documentation data can be in the form of photographs, value files, letters and documents related to this research.

### **Data Analysis**

In this study, a comprehensive approach to data analysis was undertaken, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Qualitative data were extracted from a multifaceted collection of sources, including interviews, observations, and documentation. These diverse data sets provided a rich and nuanced perspective on the subject under investigation. The qualitative analysis delved into the intricate details of the experiences and perceptions of the participants, shedding light on the underlying factors influencing the research context. In parallel, the study also employed quantitative data analysis techniques, particularly focusing on the individual and classical processing of data derived from students' initial reading ability tests. This quantitative component of the research allowed for a systematic examination of the students' reading abilities, providing numerical insights into their performance. The utilization of quantitative methods facilitated the identification of trends, patterns, and statistical relationships within the data, contributing to a well-rounded understanding of the research phenomenon.

Furthermore, to ensure the comprehensiveness of the study, both teacher and student activities were subjected to direct observation by trained observers. These observations were documented using teacher and student activity observation sheets, employing a mixed-methods approach that encompassed both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. This dual-mode analysis allowed for a thorough assessment of the dynamics within the classroom setting, offering insights into the nature and quality of interactions between teachers and students. Ultimately, the success criteria for this research revolved around two key dimensions. Firstly, the study aimed to ascertain whether teacher and student activities met a predefined threshold, categorized as "active." This qualitative assessment was grounded in the premise that active engagement within the classroom environment is a critical factor in promoting effective learning experiences. Secondly, the study sought to determine whether students' initial reading abilities demonstrated significant improvement, with the benchmark being that at least 85% of students achieved a score of 70 or higher on the reading ability test. This quantitative criterion was essential in gauging the effectiveness of the pedagogical interventions under investigation.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Findings**

After students are accepted as new students at MIN 1 Mataram City, the school assesses the students by evaluating the student's initial reading abilities. This was done before the intensive class I teacher gave the lesson content determined in the curriculum. The test given is intended to be able to group students based on their level of reading ability. The story of reading ability is divided into five classes, namely: (1) beginners, (2) letters, (3) words, (4) paragraphs, and (5) stories. The five levels are in line with the research.

The beginner level is intended for students who are new to letters. The letter level is for students who can already read most notes. The word level is for students who can read familiar words. The paragraph level is for students who can already read words, especially

familiar ones, and can read simple, short sentences. The story level is intended for students reading simple stories fluently and understanding the content.

Of all the classes, which consist of 130 students and are divided into four classes, namely class IA, class IB, class IC, and class ID, the students are grouped based on their ability level. The students' ability levels are grouped into five, namely: (1) beginner level, (2) letter level, (3) word level, (4) paragraph level, and (5) story level. First, there are 38 students at this level, or 29% of students are grouped at the beginner level or students who are new to letters. Second, there are two students at letter level, or as many as 1% of students are grouped at letter level or students who can read most of the letters. Third, there are 28 students at the word level, or as many as 22% of students are grouped at the word level or students who can read familiar words. Fourth, there are 49 students at paragraph level, or as many as 38% of students grouped at paragraph level or students who can read words, especially those familiar with and can read simple short sentences. Fifth, there are 13 students at the story level, or 10% of students, who can read simple stories fluently and understand the story's content. For more details, see Figure 3 below.

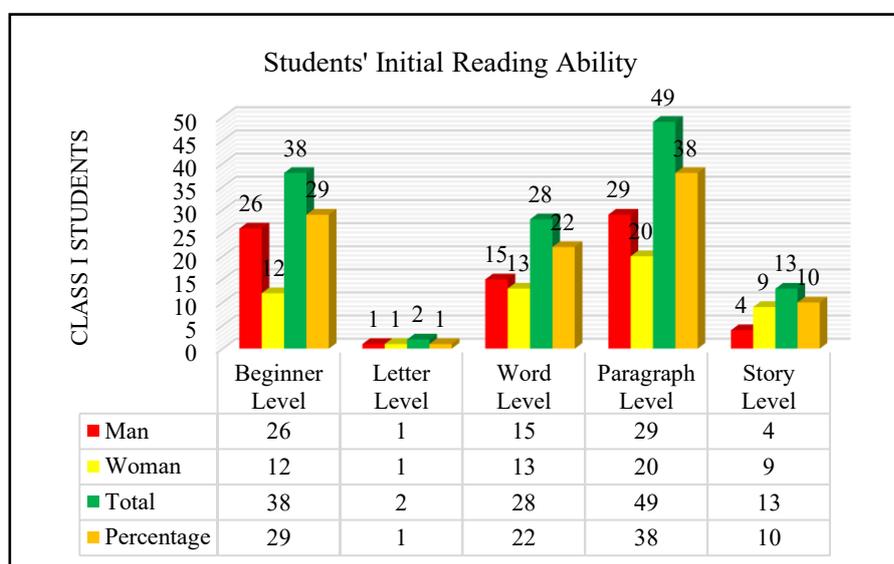


Figure 3. Students Initial Reading Ability in Class I MIN 1 Mataram City

**Cycle I**

*Planning*

At this planning stage, the researcher prepared a learning implementation plan using the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) Approach Assisted by Innovation Materials. This lesson plan has been discussed with researchers and class I teachers. This is a form of collaboration between researchers and teachers. Researchers also prepared observation sheets to observe teacher and student activities in learning. Then, student worksheets (LKS) are also prepared to train students in learning. Finally, students are evaluated to determine their initial reading abilities.

*Implementation and Observation*

At this implementation and observation stage, the researcher discussed with the class teacher that learning would be carried out in three meetings for this cycle. At the first meeting, learning was held on Monday, February 20 2023. As usual, learning included three activities, namely, initial activities, core activities, and closing activities. Learning was held

on Wednesday, February 22 2023, at the second meeting. As usual, learning included three activities, namely, initial activities, core activities, and closing activities. At the third meeting, learning was held on Thursday, February 23 2023. Teacher and student activities were observed at this stage, and students' initial reading abilities were assessed.

### *Evaluation*

From the results of research conducted in Cycle I, the results of student's initial reading abilities were obtained as shown in Table 2 as follows.

Table 2  
Excerpt from Assessment in Cycles I

Assessment Excerpt	Cycle I	
	Score	Value
Total	302	2519
Avarage	8	66
Highest Score and Value	11	92
Highest Score and Value	5	42
Number of Students Who Completed	20	20
Percentage (%)	52.63	52.63

From Table 2 above, it can be understood that classically, students' initial reading ability is 52.63%. In other words, the average student score is still 66. This means that students' initial reading ability has not yet reached 85% classical completion, or the average student score is 70. In Cycle I, there were around 18 students who had not yet completed. The lowest score is 42. If you look at the table above, around eight students got a score of 42. This lowest value requires intensive attention to achieve even better results. Of the four aspects of assessment, namely naturalness of pronunciation, fluency, clarity of voice, and naturalness of intonation, the average score obtained was one. Therefore, improvements and more attention need to be made to these eight students.

### *Reflection*

From the implementation and observations above, evaluation and reflection data were obtained. In this case, the teacher and two observers reflect. Teacher activities, student activities, and the results of assessing students' initial reading abilities are the basis for reflection. From the teacher's activities, it was noted that teachers need to present material in a relaxed and sequential manner. The sequences of activities are rehearsed before they are carried out in class. From student activities, it was noted that students were initially less than 50% attentive to the teacher's delivery. Then, the teacher changes his teaching style slightly so that students pay attention to learning. Students' attention was above 50% or quite active at the second meeting, while at the third meeting, 75% of students' activity was seen paying attention to the teacher's teaching. In other words, student activity is active. The active student category must be increased until student activity becomes active.

From the results of assessing students' initial reading abilities, teachers need to change their teaching style with more variations. Students are also trained repeatedly so they don't forget the letters they have learned. The tasks given to students must also be varied and innovative so that students can carry out normal pronunciation, fluency, clarity of voice and natural intonation fluently and fluently.

## ***Cycle II***

### *Planning*

At this planning stage, the researcher prepared a learning implementation plan (RPP) using the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) Approach Assisted by Innovation Materials. This lesson plan has been discussed with researchers and class I teachers based on the reflection results in Cycle I. This is a form of collaboration between researchers and teachers. Researchers also prepared observation sheets to observe teacher and student activities in learning. Then, student worksheets (LKS) are also prepared to train students in learning. Finally, students are evaluated to determine their initial reading abilities.

### *Implementation and Observation*

At this implementation and observation stage, the researcher discussed with the class teacher that learning would occur in two Cycle II meetings. Learning was held on Monday, February 27 2023, in this first meeting. As usual, learning includes three activities, namely, initial activities, core activities, and closing activities. The second meeting, learning, was held on Tuesday, February 28 2023. As usual, learning included three activities, namely, initial activities, core activities, and closing activities. Teacher and student activities are observed at this stage, and students' initial reading abilities are assessed.

### *Evaluation*

From the results of research conducted in Cycle II, the results of student's initial reading abilities were obtained as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3  
Excerpt from Assessment in Cycles II

Assessment Excerpt	Cycle II	
	Skor	Value
Total	370	3092
Avarage	9.7	81.36
Highest Score and Value	12	100
Highest Score and Value	6	50
Number of Students Who Completed	33	33
Percentage (%)	86.84	86.84

From Table 3 above, it can be understood that classically, students' initial reading ability is 86.84%. In other words, the average student score is still 81.36. This means that the student's initial reading ability has reached classical completion above 85% or the student's average score is above 70 or 81.36. In cycle II, there were around five students who had not finished. The lowest score is 50. If you look at the table above, around five students got a score in the range of 50-67. This lowest value requires more intensive attention. Of the four aspects of assessment, namely naturalness of pronunciation, fluency, clarity of voice, and naturalness of intonation, the average score obtained was fluency. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out intensive improvements and attention to these four students.

### *Reflection*

The data obtained from the implementation and observations above are evaluation and reflection. In this case, the teacher and two observers reflect. Teacher activities, student activities, and the results of assessing students' initial reading abilities are the basis for reflection. From the teacher's activities, a note was obtained that the teacher had carried out his duties in a very good category, from the initial activity to the final activity. Then, from

student activity, it was noted that student activity was categorized as very active because the percentage of student activity was above 75%.

From the assessment results of student's initial reading abilities, the teacher has maximally guided and trained students in initial reading. Intensive training carried out by teachers for students has increased students' initial reading completion from 18 students who have not completed it to. A comparison of the results of student's initial reading abilities in Cycle I and Cycle II can be seen in Table 4 as follows.

Table 4  
Excerpt from Assessment in Cycles I and II

Assessment Excerpt	Cycle I		Cycle II	
	Score	Value	Skor	Value
Total	302	2519	370	3092
Avarage	8	66	9.7	81.36
Highest Score and Value	11	92	12	100
Highest Score and Value	5	42	6	50
Number of Students Who Completed	20	20	33	33
Percentage (%)	52.63	52.63	86.84	86.84

From Table 2 above, it can be understood that students' initial reading ability in Class I MIN 1 Mataram City has increased from Cycle I to Cycle II. This increase can be seen from the average value of Cycle I, 66, to 81.36 in Cycle II. Then, the number of students who finished was seen from 20 students in Cycle I to 33 students in Cycle II, or it could be interpreted that the percentage in Cycle I was 52.63% to 86.84% in Cycle II. This proves that the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) Approach with the Assistance of Inovasi Materials can improve students' initial reading skills in Class I MIN 1 Mataram City.

## Discussion

Students' initial reading ability in Class I MIN 1 Mataram City has been improved with two cycles of classroom action research using the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) Approach Assisted by Innovation Materials. The approach used has been proven to improve students' initial reading abilities in Class I MIN 1 Mataram City, as it has also been implemented in several countries such as America, Zambia, Botswana, Ghana, Nigeria, Madagascar, Uganda, and India (Banerji & Chavan, 2020). What is unique about this research is that it uses Inovasi materials. The Inovasi material used is group 1 material; students build their self-confidence to have a solid foundation to continue to the next level. The aim is to introduce students to sounds and letters (Tim Inovasi, 2020a).

Combining the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) approach and material from Innovation has given a different color to the use of this approach. Using the TaRL Approach looks easier because the materials from Innovation are in line with the objectives of the TaRL Approach, namely: (1) to strengthen students' initial reading abilities in elementary schools; (2) to adapt the characteristics and needs of students in beginning reading in elementary school; (3) to accompany students intensively so that they gain progress in beginning reading in elementary schools (Banerji & Chavan, 2020).

The TaRL approach is also considered effective in overcoming students' initial reading abilities with a very short time target, namely 50 days, for students to master initial reading. The technical approach is to group students based on their reading ability initially. In India and several countries that use it, it is stated emphatically that the TaRL approach has been proven successful in teaching children to read in 50 days (Kementerian Pendidikan dan

Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2020). The teachers also considered that the TaRL Approach could be implemented in elementary school students' early reading learning. The TaRL approach is considered effective in grouping students according to their level so that actions can be given that are appropriate to the student's initial reading abilities. The effectiveness of the TaRL Approach is in line with research (Banerji & Chavan, 2020; Erfan et al., 2021; Muammar, 2022; Oktaviani et al., 2022).

In line with the innovative pedagogical approach under consideration, the utilization of tailored instructional materials constitutes a fundamental component of the educational strategy. These materials are thoughtfully crafted to align with the unique learning needs and abilities of students at the early stages of reading acquisition. This innovative material has been thoughtfully categorized into three distinct groups, each catering to specific levels of reading proficiency. The first group, designated as group 1, is specifically designed to address the needs of beginners at the letter level. Moving forward, group 2 is intended for students at the word and paragraph levels, while group 3 is designed to engage students at the story level, facilitating a gradual and progressive development of their reading skills (Nuranjani et al., 2022).

Moreover, the materials selected for use in this research encompass a comprehensive range of components aimed at enhancing students' foundational reading abilities. These components include activities such as recognizing vowels, consonant recognition with a focus on specific consonants like b, d, g, and p, as well as the recognition of consonants h, j, and k. Additionally, the materials extend to cover consonants l, m, n, r, s, t, and w, along with activities dedicated to the integrated understanding of vowels and consonants (Tim Inovasi, 2020a). Overall, these innovative materials serve as a multifaceted resource that not only caters to students at various stages of reading development but also encompasses a diverse array of exercises to foster a holistic enhancement of students' initial reading abilities. This comprehensive approach is integral to the research's aim of facilitating a robust foundation in reading for all students involved.

The observed increase in both teacher and student activity within the research context is indicative of the evolving dynamics and improvements within the instructional environment. These changes are particularly discernible when comparing the two cycles of the study. In Cycle I, there is notable progress in the quality of teacher activities, with observations indicating a commendable performance characterized by "good" and "excellent" levels of engagement. However, the corresponding student activity, while showing signs of improvement, still exhibits variations, encompassing a spectrum from "less active" to "quite active" and "active." Cycle II, on the other hand, marks a substantial enhancement in teacher activities, garnering an overall assessment of "excellent." This progress underscores the effective implementation of instructional strategies and underscores the researcher's commitment to refining their pedagogical approach. Importantly, this cycle also sees a pronounced advancement in student activity, with observations consistently reflecting heightened levels of engagement characterized as "very active" and "very active." This noteworthy transformation in student participation suggests an increasing enthusiasm for learning and a more proactive involvement in the educational process. In summary, the research illustrates a positive trajectory in both teacher and student activity levels, with Cycle II representing a marked improvement over Cycle I. The teacher's activities evolve from "good" and "excellent" to consistently "excellent," reflecting a refined and effective teaching approach. Simultaneously, student activity undergoes a significant transformation, shifting from a range of activity levels to predominantly "very active" and "very active," signifying a deeper and more robust engagement with the learning materials and methodologies. These findings underscore the positive impact of the research interventions on the classroom dynamics and the overall learning experience.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results above, it can be concluded that the Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) Approach with the Assistance of Inovasi Materials can improve students' initial reading skills in Class I MIN 1 Mataram City. This increase can be seen from the increase in teacher activity, student activity, and student initial reading ability. In cycle I, the teacher's activities looked good and excellent. Student activity looks less active, quite active, and active. Then, in terms of students' initial reading ability, it can be seen that classically, the percentage of students' initial reading ability is 52.63%. In other words, the average student score is still at 66. This means students' initial reading ability has not reached 85% classical completeness or an average student score of 70. Also, in Cycle I, students who have not completed are around 18. In Cycle II, the teacher's activities looked excellent. Student activity looks very active and very active. Then, in terms of students' initial reading ability, it can be seen that classically, the percentage of students' initial reading ability is 86.84%. In other words, the average student score is 81.36. This means that students' initial reading ability has achieved classical mastery above 85% or the average student score is above 70 or 81.36. In Cycle II, there were around five students who had not finished.

Several suggestions are proposed for madrasas, teachers, and future researchers based on the research results and conclusions. The Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) Approach with the Assistance of Inovasi Materials can be continued because it has improved early reading skills in elementary schools. Inovasi materials can also be used to develop students' initial reading skills. Apart from that, teachers in Class I elementary schools can also use the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach. This TaRL approach is an approach that is based on the student's level or ability. That is, the teacher needs to make a diagnosis first to determine the students' level of ability so that it can be handled according to the level or level of ability, in this case, related to initial reading ability. For further researchers, it is suggested to use this approach by using material from Inovasi to overcome problems of students' low beginning reading skills. Researchers can also develop materials developed by Innovation to make them more varied and innovative.

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