

STRATEGIC TEACHING IN INCLUSIVE EFL CLASSROOMS: A CASE STUDY ON READING INSTRUCTION FOR DYSLEXIC STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores teachers' strategic teaching in supporting dyslexic students' basic reading skills in Indonesian inclusive EFL classrooms, where evidence from authentic classroom practice remains limited. Using a qualitative case study design, the study investigates how an elementary school English teacher implements instructional strategies, adapts classroom practices, and addresses challenges in supporting dyslexic learners. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. The findings indicate that the teacher employed multisensory phonics instruction, differentiated learning materials, and individualized scaffolding to facilitate students' reading development. However, limited professional training, inadequate instructional resources, and time constraints remained significant challenges. These challenges were addressed through teacher initiative, including the development of low-cost instructional media and collaboration with parents. The study highlights the importance of teacher agency and adaptive instructional practices in supporting inclusive EFL reading instruction and provides practical implications for teachers working in resource-constrained inclusive classrooms.

Keywords: Dyslexic Students, Inclusive Classroom, Reading Skills, Strategic Teaching

INTRODUCTION

Basic reading skills including decoding, phonological awareness, word recognition, and reading fluency are widely recognized as foundational competencies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning (Ehri, 2014). These skills enable learners to process written language effectively and support the development of other language skills such as writing, speaking, and listening (Grabe & Zhang, 2013). In academic contexts, reading plays a central role because most instructional materials and assessment tasks are text-based, making reading proficiency essential for students' overall academic success (Antić & Stevanović, 2024). However, in inclusive EFL classrooms, the process of developing these reading skills becomes more complex. Teachers are required to address the needs of students with diverse learning profiles, including those with dyslexia, while often facing constraints such as limited instructional time, insufficient professional training, and limited access to inclusive teaching resources (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Inclusive education emphasizes equitable

learning opportunities, which means that teachers must go beyond general instruction and actively implement and adapt their strategic teaching, materials, and classroom instruction to accommodate students' diverse needs (Florian, 2014). This practical and theoretical problem forms the basis of the present study.

Basic reading skills including decoding, phonological awareness, word recognition, and reading fluency are widely recognized as foundational competencies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning (Ehri, 2014). These skills enable learners to process written language effectively and support the development of other language skills such as writing, speaking, and listening (Grabe & Zhang, 2013). In academic contexts, reading plays a central role because most instructional materials and assessment tasks are text-based, making reading proficiency essential for students' overall academic success (Antić & Stevanović, 2024). However, a critical tension arises in inclusive EFL classrooms, where the process of developing these reading skills becomes exponentially more complex. Inclusive education conceptually emphasizes equitable learning opportunities, which dictates that teachers must go beyond standardized instruction and actively implement, differentiate, and adapt their strategic teaching, materials, and classroom instruction to accommodate students' diverse profiles (Florian, 2014). Yet, the operationalization of this ideal is frequently stymied by a triad of systemic constraints: severely limited instructional time, insufficient professional training, and inadequate access to inclusive teaching resources (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). This deep divide between inclusive policy and classroom reality creates a pressing pedagogical problem that forms the analytical basis of the present study.

Extant literature has consistently underscored the necessity of structured, explicit, and systematic approaches particularly in teaching phonics and decoding to support the reading development of dyslexic learners (Rupley et al., 2009). Furthermore, empirical evidence strongly supports multisensory instructional approaches that integrate visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile modalities, which have been shown to help students process written language and improve reading accuracy and fluency (Carreker & Birsh, 2019). In inclusive settings, specific interventions such as repeated reading, segmentation and blending exercises, letter-sound mapping, and the deployment of visual and auditory supports have also been found to contribute positively to students' reading development (Kormos, 2016a). More recently, research has continued to validate structured literacy interventions, demonstrating that explicit phonics instruction significantly improves decoding and word recognition skills among learners with dyslexia (Bora et al., 2025) and that repeated reading interventions enhance reading fluency for students with reading deficits (Li et al., 2025). These findings collectively underscore the immense potential of structured, teacher-led strategic interventions in inclusive EFL contexts.

Despite these empirical advances, a major conceptual and contextual gap persists in the current body of research. Most existing studies operate under a reductionist framework, focusing primarily on the isolated effectiveness of specific instructional strategies under highly controlled, idealized, or well-resourced conditions. This normative approach fails to account for the ecological realities of real classroom contexts, leaving a significant blind spot regarding how teachers actually design, implement, and dynamically adapt their strategic teaching in inclusive EFL settings where teaching conditions are constrained by limited

professional training, inadequate learning resources, and large class sizes (Saputra et al., 2025). Furthermore, Strategic teaching is frequently misconceptualized as a static, predefined set of techniques rather than as a fluid and adaptive process shaped by students' social, linguistic, cultural, and instructional needs (Parsons et al., 2018).

In the Indonesian context, inclusive education implementation continues to face significant challenges, particularly due to teachers' limited competence in modifying instruction and addressing diverse learning needs in inclusive classrooms (Mumpuniarti et al., 2020). This persistent disconnect underscores a double failure: a gap between policy ideals and classroom realities, and a disconnect between prescriptive research recommendations and actual teacher practice. Therefore, rather than testing strategies in artificial environments, an in-depth exploration of how teachers enact strategic teaching within authentic, resource-constrained inclusive classrooms is urgently needed to move the field forward (Silviani & Mulyanto, 2025). This study aims to explore teachers' strategic teaching in supporting dyslexic students' basic reading skills in inclusive EFL classrooms. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: 1) What types of strategic teaching do teachers use to support decoding, phonological awareness, word recognition, and reading fluency for dyslexic students?, 2) How do teachers implement and adapt their strategic teaching during classroom instruction in inclusive settings?, and 3) What challenges do teachers face in applying strategic teaching to support dyslexic learners, and how do they cope with these challenges?

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on strategic teaching as a dynamic, context-dependent process enacted by a teacher with no formal training in special education, working within a resource-limited inclusive elementary school in Indonesia. Unlike previous studies that examine strategy effectiveness under ideal conditions, this study captures the authentic, unplanned, and creative adaptations that teachers make in real time. By documenting the teacher's self-directed problem-solving including internet-based learning, handmade media creation, and home-school partnership building this research contributes critical practical insights into how strategic teaching can emerge from teacher agency even in the absolute absence of institutional support. The findings are expected to inform teacher education programs, inclusive education policy, and classroom practice in similar developing country contexts.

METHODS

This study applied a qualitative case study approach to investigate the strategic teaching practices employed by an English teacher, identified by the initial "J," in supporting students with dyslexia in an inclusive EFL classroom. The study specifically explored how the teacher planned, implemented, and adapted instructional strategies to assist students in developing fundamental reading skills, including decoding, phonological awareness, word recognition, and reading fluency. A qualitative case study was selected because it allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon within its real-life context (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Therefore, this design enabled the researcher to examine classroom instructional practices, teacher-student interactions, and teaching adaptations comprehensively.

The research was conducted at an inclusive elementary school in Deli Serdang, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The school was selected because it implements inclusive education and accommodates students with learning difficulties, including dyslexia. The study focused on fifth-grade English reading classes where Teacher J directly interacted with students experiencing difficulties in basic reading development. The research emphasized foundational reading skills rather than reading comprehension because the students were still developing early reading abilities such as letter recognition, decoding, and word identification. The selection of this inclusive EFL primary classroom context aligns with recent research by (Septiani et al., 2025), who emphasize that deep qualitative exploration is crucial for mapping how classroom teachers understand and practically treat reading difficulties in potentially dyslexic students. Furthermore, as highlighted by (Rahmadhani & Emeliya Sukma Dara Damanik, 2025), studying regular primary schools that host inclusive programs in North Sumatra provides rich, contextualized data on how teachers navigate English vocabulary and reading development despite limited specialized institutional support.

The participant of this study was one English teacher, identified as Teacher J, who was selected through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was applied because the participant fulfilled specific criteria relevant to the objectives of the research. (Creswell & Poth, 2018) state that purposive sampling enables researchers to select participants who can provide rich and meaningful information related to the phenomenon being investigated. The inclusion criteria required the participant to have: (1) experience teaching English at the elementary school level, (2) at least one year of experience teaching in an inclusive classroom, and (3) experience teaching students with dyslexia or students with reading difficulties.

The use of a single participant in this study is methodologically justified through (Drager, 2018) single-case study design, which prioritizes intensive contextual analysis and depth of understanding over breadth of participants. This approach is supported by contemporary case study methodologists who argue that a single, bounded case allows for an intensive, nuanced exploration of innovative or specialized pedagogical practices within a specific classroom setting that a multi-case approach might gloss over (Yin, 2018). To ensure data adequacy despite having a single participant, the researcher engaged in prolonged field involvement and gathered multi-layered data from this single source, reaching empirical saturation where subsequent observations yielded redundant patterns (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Regarding transferability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), this study does not aim for statistical generalization. Instead, transferability is established by providing a thick description of the idiosyncratic classroom context, the specific socio-cultural dynamics of Deli Serdang, and the exact constraints faced by the teacher. This allows readers to evaluate how the findings can be contextually applied or transferred to similar resource-limited inclusive EFL environments.

To obtain comprehensive and credible data, this study employed data source triangulation through interviews, classroom observations, and documentation. According to (Creswell, 2013), triangulation is important in qualitative research because it strengthens the trustworthiness of findings by comparing information from multiple data sources. Semi-

structured Interviews: Conducted with Teacher J to explore the teacher's understanding of dyslexia, instructional planning, teaching strategies, classroom adaptations, and challenges encountered during the teaching process. The interviews also examined how Teacher J taught basic reading skills such as decoding, phonological awareness, word recognition, and reading fluency to students with dyslexia. The interviews lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and were audio-recorded with the participant's consent. Classroom Observations: Conducted during English reading lessons in two to three classroom meetings.

The observations focused on identifying the strategic teaching practices implemented by Teacher J, including explicit phonics instruction, multisensory techniques, repeated reading, modeling, and scaffolding. In addition, the researcher observed teacher–student interactions, students' engagement during learning activities, and instructional adjustments provided for students with dyslexia, such as simplified instructions, additional response time, and the use of learning media. Observation sheets and field notes were used to record classroom activities systematically.

Documentation was used to support and cross-verify the findings obtained from interviews and observations. The documents analyzed included lesson plans, teaching materials, phonics worksheets, flashcards, word lists, fluency passages, and student worksheets related to reading instruction. According to (Bowen, 2009) document analysis assists researchers in verifying findings and providing additional evidence related to the research context. Cross-referencing what the teacher reports during interviews with real-time classroom practices and instructional artifacts is strongly recommended in qualitative research to corroborate evidence across multiple sources of data. According to (Wills et al., 2016), tracking the consistency between teachers' perceptions and their physical deployment of multisensory or multi-strategy reading approaches is the most valid way to evaluate how instructional adaptations actually manifest in resource-limited inclusive environments.

As this study took place within an active primary classroom, strict ethical protocols were enforced to protect all parties involved. First, institutional permission was secured from the school administration. Second, written informed consent was obtained from Teacher J prior to data collection, emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation and the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonymization was applied; the teacher was designated as "Teacher J" and the school's identity was masked. Furthermore, observation procedures were non-intrusive to preserve the natural learning environment and ensure no disruption to the students' educational routines.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes related to Teacher J's strategic teaching practices in supporting students with dyslexia. According to (Creswell & Creswell, 2023), qualitative data analysis is an ongoing, inductive process where researchers build patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information. The analysis process began by organizing interview transcripts, observation notes, and collected documents systematically. The researcher repeatedly reviewed all data to gain a comprehensive understanding of information related to teaching strategies for decoding, phonological awareness, word

recognition, and reading fluency, as well as instructional adaptations used in the classroom (Mogan & Mohd Yasin, 2022).

After the data were reviewed, the researcher conducted coding to identify meaningful statements related to instructional strategies, classroom adjustments, and challenges experienced by Teacher J during the teaching process. As emphasized by (Saldana, 2021), coding is not just labeling but a critical linking process that connects data to the development of broader conceptual themes. The coding categories included explicit phonics instruction, multisensory teaching techniques, repetition, scaffolding, modified worksheets, additional response time, limited instructional resources, and insufficient teacher preparation in inclusive classrooms (Mills, 2018). These structural coding categories are empirically supported by (El Arbaoui, 2023). In analyzing the pedagogical practices of EFL teachers working with dyslexic learners, Arbaoui underscores that coding for visual adaptations, systematic scaffolding, and task simplification is essential to isolate intentional instructional strategies from broader institutional constraints. Similar codes were then grouped into broader themes representing Teacher J's strategic teaching practices in developing students' reading skills.

Crucially, rather than analyzing each data source in isolation, the data were integrated through a convergent matrix. Interview data (what the teacher claimed to do) were directly cross-referenced with observation data (what the teacher actually did in real-time) and corroborated by document analysis (how the strategies were codified in worksheets and lesson plans). This analytical integration allowed the researcher to identify convergences or discrepancies between intent, action, and artifact. Finally, the findings were interpreted by connecting the identified themes with the research questions and relevant literature (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018). The results were presented descriptively and supported by evidence from interviews, classroom observations, and documentation to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The reliability of this research rests on the objectivity of the results, meaning the findings and interpretations presented are truly derived from the raw data in the field, not from the researcher's personal bias or subjectivity. The researcher also neutrally linked the qualitative themes emerging from the bottom-up inductive analysis to international literacy theories and relevant previous studies to strengthen the conceptual validity of the research findings.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings from the interview, classroom observation, and documentation, followed by a discussion of how the teacher's strategic teaching supported dyslexic students' basic reading skills in an inclusive EFL classroom.

Strategic Teaching Types and Implementation

The gathered qualitative data revealed that Teacher J actively conceptualized and executed highly structured, creative instructional procedures to reinforce the four primary pillars of basic reading literacy, successfully bypassing her lack of formal credentials in special education.

Decoding and Phonics

Teacher J utilized an explicit multisensory pedagogical framework integrated with a simplified iteration of the Jolly Phonics methodology to remediate the phoneme-grapheme gap in English. During the semi-structured interview, Teacher J elaborated on her tactical approach:

"I teach it using a multisensory technique. The students look at the letter, listen to its sound, and then try to write it down on the whiteboard or in their notebooks."

To assist dyslexic learners when encountering complex or unfamiliar foreign vocabularies, Teacher J deployed systematic syllable segmentation (chunking) and phonemic blending sequences. This real-time intervention was described by Teacher J as follows:

"For my inclusive students, I assist them in navigating new words through a chunking technique, which breaks down long words into smaller, manageable fragments so they are easier to read... I apply a simplified version of Jolly Phonics. I introduce individual letter sounds one by one—for instance, F-A-T—and then the students are trained to combine those distinct sounds through blending into a singular word."

Phonological Awareness

Recognizing that the highly irregular and opaque nature of English orthography imposes severe cognitive strain on Indonesian young learners, Teacher J prioritized auditory familiarity using rhythmic structures and physical scaffolding. Teacher J stated:

"I frequently use short songs so that the students get accustomed to listening to the sound patterns of English. For example, the pronunciation of the word 'circle' is explicitly mapped to its meaning, 'lingkaran'."

Beyond audio tracks, physical movement was introduced to help students physically process linguistic structures, using rhythmic hand movements to break down syllabic components:

"Usually, I employ a hand-clapping activity based on the total number of syllables. For example, the word 'apple' is clapped twice, directly corresponding to its syllabic count."

Word Recognition

For English vocabulary items that contradict standard phonic rules frequently classified as high-frequency sight words Teacher J deliberately transitioned her students from phonetic decoding to visual memory pathways. Teacher J summarized this division:

"I utilize sight words for vocabularies that cannot be decoded through standard phonetic spelling, such as 'the', 'was', and 'were'. These specific words are generally memorized through visual pathways."

To anchor these sight words into the students' long-term memory, she developed high-contrast, colorful visual flashcards that sustained the focus of the neurodivergent learners:

"Yes, I utilize flashcard media featuring vivid, colorful images alongside word repetitions. These tools significantly support dyslexic learners because the vibrant colors and pictures keep them engaged and focused on the lesson."

Reading Fluency

To build oral reading speed while proactively shielding exceptional learners from performance anxiety and peer judgment, Teacher J leaned on paired peer reading and direct guided instruction. Teacher J explained:

"I implement the peer reading method or paired reading alongside guided reading. I always model the reading first, and then the student follows my vocal model."

Teacher J remained highly protective of the dyslexic student's socio-emotional state, ensuring that intensive oral reading took place away from the scrutiny of the general classroom:

"Yes, I utilize aloud reading because it directly helps students hear correct pronunciations more clearly. However, this activity is strictly conducted either privately or within small, controlled micro-groups so the student does not feel embarrassed. I read the passage aloud first, the students listen carefully, and then they replicate it."

Instructional Adaptations

Teacher J proactively restructured her curricular pacing, learning materials, and assessment formats to balance the disparate learning speeds within the inclusive setting. This multi-layered adaptation was carried out across four primary operational areas: text formatting, task complexity, response modes, and temporal management.

In terms of text presentation, Teacher J bypassed standard, visually dense elementary textbooks. Instead, she manually reformatted reading passages by applying enlarged fonts, condensing narrative paragraphs into bulleted point summaries, shortening individual word parameters, and adding color-coded highlights across the texts.

Regarding classroom tasks, assignment sheets were completely differentiated based on the student's motor and processing capacities. While neurotypical students were tasked with writing out complete English phrases, the dyslexic student received modified worksheets consisting of lower-stakes mechanical tasks, such as drawing matching lines between colored illustrations and single English target words.

For response formats, Teacher J introduced flexibility by removing standard, mandatory written outputs for the dyslexic learner. The student was routinely permitted to demonstrate vocabulary retention orally, or through a flexible hybrid of verbalized explanations and basic written signs.

Finally, regarding time allotment, Teacher J modified the temporal pacing of the classroom. The dyslexic student was systematically granted extended time allowances during independent work phases. This extra time was paired with private, individual scaffolding, during which Teacher J rotated to the student's desk to deliver repetitive, explicitly broken-down oral directions.

Pedagogical Challenges and Teacher-Led Coping Mechanisms

The thematic mapping of the qualitative data showed that Teacher J's primary systemic obstacle was the time-split dilemma. This finding aligns with previous studies indicating that inclusive classrooms often demand differentiated instruction, additional repetition, and individualized support, which significantly increase teachers' instructional workload and classroom management complexity (Lindner & Schwab, 2025), Teacher J explained:

"The absolute greatest challenge in managing an inclusive classroom is splitting my time. English instruction is already inherently difficult for most regular students, so teaching a student with dyslexia demands a significantly higher volume of attention and repetition than standard groups. I am forced to explain concepts repeatedly using highly varied, simplified, and easily digestible vocabularies."

This systemic challenge was further magnified by an institutional lack of resources, as the educational facility provided no tactile tools or specialized dyslexia kits, alongside an absence of institutional professional development. Previous research has similarly emphasized that insufficient teaching resources and limited professional training remain major barriers in implementing effective inclusive education practices, particularly for dyslexic learners (Boardman, 2020), Teacher J explained.:

"The main obstacle I encounter is the complete shortage of specialized instructional media from the institution. The school only provides a Smart TV, while practical teacher training regarding specialized English instruction for dyslexic students remains exceptionally rare—in fact, I can confidently say it does not exist yet."

To circumvent these structural limitations, Teacher J demonstrated robust individual agency. She engaged in independent online pedagogical research, constructed low-cost tactile tools using basic colored papers, and formed direct pedagogical partnerships with the students' parents to extend the learning cycle to the home:

"I search for instructional references on the internet and creatively build my own learning media, utilizing colored craft papers, illustrations, and flashcards. Furthermore, I establish intense communication loops with the parents so that the classroom material can be slowly repeated at home. In my view, every dyslexic student is entirely unique; an intervention that succeeds for one child will not automatically work for another."

This finding reinforces the argument that successful inclusive teaching for dyslexic students requires flexible instructional adaptation, continuous repetition, and individualized intervention rather than a one-size-fits-all approach (Woodcock, 2021)

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the teacher's strategic teaching was practical, flexible, and responsive to the needs of dyslexic students. Her practices show that effective support in inclusive EFL classrooms depends not only on knowledge of reading instruction but also on the teacher's ability to adapt teaching in real time. In the context of Indonesian primary education which is often characterized by standardized, rigid curricula and high student-to-teacher ratios Teacher J's localized adjustments reflect a highly nuanced, intuitive pedagogy that bridges the gap between inclusive policy ideals and resource-constrained realities.

The Potency of Explicit Multisensory Scaffolding

The empirical evidence indicates that Teacher J's strategic deployment of multisensory scaffolding and synthetic phonics addresses the core phonological processing deficits associated with dyslexia. When Teacher J integrated physical hand-clapping and visual-tactile flashcards during the fifth-grade English reading classes, she was not merely utilizing isolated activities; she was systematically overriding the phonological barriers inherent in processing a foreign script. Contemporary literacy frameworks emphasize that when neurodivergent students acquire an orthographically deep, irregular second language (L2) like English, structured and explicit literacy mechanics are essential. According to (Flaten Jarsve & Tsagari, 2022) engaging multiple sensory modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile) stimulates alternative neural pathways for phoneme-grapheme mapping, which markedly accelerates decoding velocity.

This multi-channel processing can be theoretically explained through Paivio's Dual-Coding Theory, which posits that human memory utilizes separate but interconnected channels for verbal and non-verbal information. By presenting words both auditorily (clapping/sounds) and visually (text/images), Teacher J creates redundant cognitive pathways that reinforce memory traces. Furthermore, Teacher J's utilization of syllable chunking and kinesthetic hand-clapping directly reinforces underlying phonological awareness. This aligns with findings by (Kilpatrick, 2015), who argues that multisensory phonological activities such as tapping syllables help struggling readers reduce working-memory overload during decoding tasks.

From a contextual standpoint, this explicit structure is paramount in Indonesia, where elementary students are concurrently balancing their native orthography (Bahasa Indonesia, which is highly transparent and phonetic) with English (which is orthographically deep and irregular). This dual-language friction significantly increases cognitive load, making systematic, explicit phonetic scaffolding mandatory for non-native struggling readers (Kormos, 2016). By systematically breaking down elongated orthographic sequences, the instructor successfully insulates the dyslexic reader from the cognitive overload typically triggered by foreign text configurations (Kormos, 2020). The field observations corroborated this, showing that when complex words were "chunked," dyslexic

students demonstrated a visible reduction in hesitation and a lower error rate during decoding.

Differentiated Sight-Word Recognition and Emotional Safety in Fluency

The teacher's strategic separation between phonics decoding and visual sight-word memorization reflects a sophisticated pedagogical understanding of the dual-route cascading model of reading. The empirical data showed that while Teacher J used phonics for regular words, she shifted to direct visual exposure for irregular words. Because English contains many orthographically irregular words, explicit sight-word instruction and repeated visual exposure are considered important supports for students with dyslexia to develop automatic word recognition (Ehri, 2020). The use of colorful images and visual supports can strengthen vocabulary retention by facilitating visual-verbal associations and increasing learners' attention during literacy activities (Rello & Baeza-Yates, 2017). Furthermore, providing highly scaffolded visual and text modifications prevents the cumulative 'Matthew Effect' in literacy, ensuring that struggling language learners do not fall permanently behind their neurotypical peers due to decoding (Amado et al., 2022).

In terms of fluency, the teacher's decision to restrict reading-aloud sessions to private or small-group spaces addresses a critical affective component. Interview data revealed that Teacher J noticed severe emotional distress and behavioral avoidance in dyslexic students when asked to read in front of the entire class. This localized reality aligns perfectly with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which asserts that high anxiety, low self-confidence, and a lack of motivation create a psychological barrier that prevents input from reaching the language acquisition device. Dyslexic students in EFL settings face heightened foreign language anxiety. Creating a protected, low-stakes environment through guided peer-reading prevents what (Dimitropoulou et al., 2025) described as "academic learned helplessness," thereby lowering the affective filter and fostering reading resilience and self-efficacy.

Material Adaptation and Differentiated Assessment as Inclusive Equalizers

The results showed clear differentiation in worksheets (e.g., matching images instead of writing whole sentences) and flexible response modes. This empirical practice directly matches the principles of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. Teacher J did not wait for institutional directives to modify her tests; instead, she adjusted her expectations based on the students' immediate feedback. (Rao et al., 2021) emphasized that providing multiple means of action and expression (such as oral testing options) allows dyslexic students to showcase their true linguistic comprehension without being bottlenecked by their mechanical writing and reading deficits. This differentiation shifts the focus of assessment from measuring the disability to measuring actual target language proficiency.

Moreover, the physical modifications observed in Teacher J's classroom such as shortening passages and using larger fonts directly counters visual crowding, which is a common neuro-visual manifestation of dyslexia (Chiu & Drieghe, 2023). Within the Indonesian public school system, where textbooks are mass-produced with dense layouts

and small fonts, these simple teacher-led adjustments are highly revolutionary. By giving extra time and processing supports, the teacher transforms the classroom from a rigid environment into an adaptive space, proving that modifications do not lower standards but rather equalize opportunities (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011)

Overcoming Institutional Gaps Through Agency and Parental Ecology

A notable finding is that despite the complete absence of formal government-led or institutional training on dyslexia, the teacher successfully executed evidence-based strategies. This highlights the concept of teacher agency in inclusive education, driven by necessity and personal professional ethics. The interview data revealed that Teacher J's proactive nature was fueled by her daily frustration with institutional neglect; she turned to online tutorials and social media teacher communities to learn about dyslexia. As argued by (Oddone, 2022), when structural support from school boards or ministries is deficient, teachers' self-directed digital literacy and collaborative networking with peers serve as vital alternative professional development. Teacher J's agency demonstrates that grass-roots pedagogical innovation can emerge as a defensive mechanism against institutional gaps.

Lastly, the teacher's strategy of extending the learning loop to the home environment by partnering with parents is highly strategic, acting as an informal extension of school resources. Given that inclusive schools in Indonesia rarely provide specialized teaching assistants, collaborating with parents becomes an essential structural substitute. Recent studies have shown that the effectiveness of reading interventions for students with dyslexia increases significantly when there is active and continuous collaboration between schools and families, as parental involvement strengthens reading practice consistency and emotional support at home (Al Otaiba et al., 2023). Because dyslexia requires high-frequency, low-anxiety repetitions, reinforcing the classroom's "chunking" or "sight words" at home creates a predictable learning ecology that helps students retain basic reading skills over time. Ultimately, Teacher J's practices prove that effective inclusive teaching in developing contexts is an ecological endeavor, relying heavily on the synergy between individual teacher agency and parental support to bypass systemic under-resourcing.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that strategic teaching in inclusive EFL classrooms should be understood as a dynamic and context-dependent process shaped by teacher agency, instructional flexibility, and reflective adaptation. The findings demonstrate that even in the absence of formal special education training and adequate institutional support, an English teacher can still provide meaningful learning opportunities for dyslexic students through differentiated instruction, multisensory practices, simplified materials, and supportive classroom interaction. These adaptive strategies helped create a more accessible and emotionally safe learning environment for students with dyslexia in an inclusive classroom setting.

The study also contributes to the development of scientific knowledge by extending the discussion of inclusive EFL education into low-resource and developing-country contexts, particularly in Indonesia. Unlike many previous studies conducted in well-supported

educational environments, this research highlights that teacher creativity, contextual problem-solving, and ecological collaboration with parents are equally important foundations of successful inclusive education. Thus, the study broadens the understanding of how inclusive practices can be implemented realistically in under-resourced classrooms.

However, this research is limited by its qualitative single-case design, which focuses only on one teacher and one classroom context. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized universally, although they may provide contextual insights that are transferable to similar inclusive educational settings.

Based on these findings, future studies are recommended to conduct comparative and multi-site research involving different schools, grade levels, and socio-economic contexts to gain broader perspectives on strategic teaching practices in inclusive EFL classrooms. Longitudinal research is also suggested to examine how teachers' adaptive strategies develop over time. In addition, future researchers are encouraged to explore the lived experiences and perspectives of dyslexic students themselves in order to better understand which instructional strategies most effectively support their literacy development, participation, and emotional well-being.

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