

## PERCEPTIONS, PRACTICES, AND ASSESSMENT LITERACY NEEDS OF EFL TEACHERS: ENHANCING READING LITERACY INSTRUCTION UNDER AKM POLICY

**Jihan Fakhira**

*English Language Education, Graduate School,  
Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. HAMKA, Jakarta, Indonesia*  
Email: [jihanjhnnn1611@gmail.com](mailto:jihanjhnnn1611@gmail.com)

**Siti Zulaiha\***

*English Language Education, Graduate School,  
Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. HAMKA, Jakarta, Indonesia*  
Email: [siti.zulaiha@uhamka.ac.id](mailto:siti.zulaiha@uhamka.ac.id)

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**Abstract:** Since discontinuing national examinations (UN) in 2020, the Indonesian Government introduced the Minimum Competency Assessment (Asesmen Kompetensi Minimum-AKM) to assess students' fundamental abilities. Consequently, teachers are pivotal in integrating AKM-based reading literacy questions to enhance students' reading skills. This study explores teachers' perceptions, practices, and literacy needs regarding teaching and assessing students' reading literacy based on AKM. Ten EFL junior high school teachers participated in interviews. Findings revealed varying perceptions among teachers regarding AKM. While some supported the policy for its positive impact on students and learning, others doubted its effectiveness for certain reasons. Regarding teaching and assessment practices, most teachers partially integrate the three components of AKM reading literacy into their classrooms. They also utilize various stimuli and question types similar to AKM, yet complex multiple-choice assessments still need to be used. Lastly, teachers expressed diverse literacy assessment needs, including strategies for teaching reading, designing critical reading questions, creating stimulus materials, gaining AKM knowledge, enhancing student interest in reading, and identifying intended learning outcomes to improve their teaching and evaluation of students' literacy. The findings emphasize the need for tailored support to address teachers' varying perceptions and diverse assessment literacy needs. Understanding and addressing concerns about AKM's effectiveness are crucial for optimizing student learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** *AKM; assessment literacy; EFL; reading literacy; teachers' perceptions.*

### INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education and Culture has introduced a new policy to improve education quality in Indonesia. This policy, called the Asesmen Kompetensi Minimum (AKM), replaces the National Examination and focuses on enhancing students' reasoning, language use (literacy), and mathematics skills (numeracy) (Zahrudin et al., 2021). Reading literacy and numeracy were prioritized because they are fundamental skills all students need, regardless of their future careers. The assessment results can help educational stakeholders identify learning gaps and improve education quality by ensuring students acquire essential skills, including reading literacy and numeracy (Kemendikbud, 2020; Rohimat, 2021; Zahrudin et al., 2021). The AKM policy aims to enhance students' reasoning and

logical thinking abilities by applying learned concepts to their surroundings (Suliyannah et al., 2021). Specifically, reading literacy within AKM evaluates students' reasoning skills using language (Yamtinah et al., 2022). Reading literacy entails reading text and comprehending concepts and information from the text. Therefore, teachers play a vital role in the implementation process, requiring knowledge and skills (assessment literacy) in teaching and assessment to foster students' reading literacy and achieve AKM goals (Rini & Solehah, 2021). Assessment literacy refers to teachers' knowledge and skills in conducting assessments, using appropriate tools, and interpreting test results to benefit students (Mohebbi & Coombe, 2020).

Previous studies show that teachers faced challenges in implementing AKM. For example,

teachers struggle to incorporate AKM questions (Aisyah et al., 2023; Fauziah, Sobari, & Robandi, 2021); lack of understanding about AKM (Auliya, 2022a; Ernawati et al., 2022); lack of infrastructure and facilities (Supramono & Retnawati, 2023; Yamtinah et al., 2022). Similarly, Perdana (2021) revealed that many students feel unprepared for AKM because they believe the questions must align with what they were taught in school. Additionally, PISA test results indicate that Indonesian students are less interested in reading literacy. Ineffective teaching methods contribute to poor reading literacy, lack of quality reading materials, underdeveloped reading habits, and absence of a supportive literacy environment (Purwati et al., 2021).

AKM, part of the National Assessment, evaluates reading literacy and numeracy in students (Kemendikbud, 2020). It aims to assess proficiency comprehensively, fostering active societal participation (Zahrudin et al., 2021). Reading literacy questions in AKM comprise content, cognitive process, and context (Kemendikbud, 2020). Content includes informational and fictional texts, while cognitive processes involve finding, interpreting, and evaluating information. Contextually, AKM addresses personal, sociocultural, and scientific situations (Sani, 2021). Thus, teachers' roles are crucial in fostering interpretation, evaluation, and real-life connection of content

AKM features diverse question types like multiple-choice, matching, true-false, and essays, enhancing result processing efficiency (Sani, 2021). Questions include stimuli from various contexts like writing, tables, graphs, and images, fostering text analysis skills. Contextual and motivating stimuli introduce new values to students, encouraged in classroom tasks for improved information evaluation. AKM prioritizes high-order thinking, evaluating critical and creative skills beyond information retrieval (Sani, 2021). Real-life grounded questions prompt problem-solving for daily challenges. Reading literacy questions vary in complexity, from uncovering implicit information to integrating and evaluating texts on personal or socio-cultural issues in AKM.

Teachers are pivotal in preparing students for AKM through tailored assignments and enhancing reading skills within AKM guidelines. Yet, more diverse resources and assessment tools are needed for AKM-aligned learning. Practical classroom assessments require teachers to possess language assessment literacy (LAL) skills, encompassing

assessment design, implementation, analysis, and reporting (Giraldo, 2021). Tsagari (2021) identifies competencies within LAL, including assessment selection, design, grading, score utilization, results communication, and ethical testing recognition. LAL signifies a teacher's understanding of assessment processes, which are crucial in aiding student academic and language growth. LAL comprises three components: assessment knowledge (linguistic concepts and theories), assessment skills (item writing, analysis), and assessment principles (ethical use of tests) (Giraldo, 2021). These principles underscore fairness, ethics, and professionalism in assessments.

Several studies have examined AKM from various perspectives, including policy analysis (Zahrudin et al., 2021), bibliometric mapping of AKM (Suliyannah et al., 2021), student readiness and challenges (Aunurrahman, 2020; Perdana, 2021), knowledge and perceptions of prospective mathematics teachers regarding AKM (Novita et al., 2021), teachers' readiness in arranging the literature and numeration tests (Rini, Cholifah, Nuraini, & Margetts, 2021), science teachers' perceptions of AKM challenges and opportunities (Yamtinah et al., 2022), efforts to increase numeracy (Hidayah et al., 2021), designing tasks based on AKM to help students' numeracy skills (Machromah et al., 2021), students' numeracy skill (Cahyanovianty & Wahidin, 2021), and developing e-modules as online training for AKM (Rini & Solehah, 2021). However, little research discusses the perceptions and practices of English teachers and their needs in assessment literacy for teaching and assessing students' reading literacy based on the AKM.

Based on the background of the study above, this study aims to answer the following research questions. (1) What are the English teachers' perceptions regarding teaching and assessing reading literacy based on AKM? (2) How do English teachers teach and assess students' reading literacy in the classroom? (3) What assessment literacy components do teachers need to improve their competence in teaching and assessing students' reading literacy in the classroom?

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach provides an understanding of the phenomenon under study by helping to understand the opinions, results, and motivations related to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007;

Dörnyei, 2007). Ten EFL junior high school teachers around Jakarta, i.e., Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi (Jabodetabek), consented to participate. The research uses convenience sampling, selecting participants based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. The researchers advised participants that they may withdraw from the study at any time and that all personal information will be kept confidential.

The researchers developed the interview questions from the characteristics of AKM as described by Sani (2021). The questions aimed to delve deeper into the teachers' perceptions, practices, and the assessment literacy components needed for teaching and assessing students' reading skills. Beforehand, the questions were piloted with two EFL teachers not involved in the study and adjusted accordingly. The interviews in Bahasa Indonesia encouraged teachers to express themselves fully, ensuring comprehensive data collection. Each interview, lasting approximately 20 minutes, was recorded, transcribed, and translated verbatim for further analysis using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The researcher meticulously examined the transcripts to grasp the participants' responses, then coded and categorized the data into themes. The participants also validated the interview findings to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *RQ 1: English teachers' perceptions of teaching and assessing reading literacy based on AKM*

The data analysis from interviews revealed that most teachers believe the AKM positively influences students. Nevertheless, a few teachers pointed out that the AKM's effectiveness could be improved, and the rushed implementation leads to less optimal results.

### *AKM helps teacher to evaluate the quality of teaching*

The first positive influence of AKM is that it helps teachers evaluate the quality of their teaching and determine the appropriate learning strategies to employ in their classrooms.

“It is very important. As I said earlier, it can evaluate the quality of my teaching and the student's learning process, so this is very important.” (T1)

“This AKM assessment also assists teachers in determining which strategies are appropriate for future learning based on the abilities of

children's thinking levels.” (T4)

### *AKM can lower students' anxiety level*

Two out of ten teachers surveyed mentioned that AKM could decrease students' anxiety levels. It is because AKM focuses on assessing school learning quality and isn't meant to decide if students graduate, unlike the National Examination. So, using AKM instead of the National Examination eases the pressure on students.

“I think AKM can help lower students' anxiety because of the National Examination. In the National Examination, questions are made by question developers and might not match students' abilities. With AKM, questions are simpler and fit all students' abilities and knowledge, so it's better for them.” (T4)

“I believe AKM offers less pressure than the National Examination. The AKM is more thorough, reflecting their two years of learning experience in junior high school. Students are not stressed or pressured so that they may enjoy it.” (T7)

### *AKM is a fair assessment*

One teacher also supported the idea that AKM is a better assessment than the National Examination. She welcomes this new assessment policy positively since it measures students' basic abilities (i.e., reading literacy and numeracy).

“I welcome this policy positively. It's fairer because AKM adjusts question difficulty based on students' abilities. Unlike the National Examination, where all students get the same questions at the same difficulty level.” (T10)

### *AKM is a good tool for measuring students' basic abilities*

Thus, a teacher also said that AKM is a good tool for measuring students' basic abilities needed in this Fourth Industrial Revolution era, i.e., reading literacy and helping the teacher determine their students' level of thinking.

“This assessment is intended to measure students' abilities related to reading literacy and numeracy. Thus, AKM is more helpful in knowing the overall level of students' thinking abilities.”

### *AKM can increase Indonesia's PISA rank*

Another interesting point is that because Indonesia's reading level in PISA is low (Zahrudin

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et al., 2021), one teacher thinks AKM can help improve Indonesia's PISA ranking. AKM tests important student competencies needed today, like reading. The reading passages in AKM can motivate students to read and use their reading skills to understand daily information.

“It's a good idea if this is best for our national education system, especially since our children struggle with reading. They need help understanding everyday reading materials, so it makes sense that our PISA ranking still lags behind our neighboring countries.” (T6)

#### *AKM does not represent the whole school's quality*

However, some teachers disagree with AKM because of how it's done in their schools. They think the new assessment should be fairer. It only picks a few students to represent the whole school, so it can't show how good the entire school is.

“I don't agree with only picking 40 students randomly to test the school's quality. There are over 300 students in the school, but only 40 are chosen. That's not enough to show how good the whole school is.” (T2)

#### *AKM is less effective due to some constraints*

Interestingly, one teacher disagreed with the new assessment policy because it wasn't very effective. In the interview, she said that AKM happened too suddenly, so the students weren't ready for it. She also said there should be a follow-up after the assessment.

“I don't think this assessment is very effective. The AKM was announced suddenly, and students weren't ready for it. Plus, they don't know their results. It's like taking a test without getting any feedback afterward.” (T3)

This assessment is seen as not working well because schools need to do a better job of using it. For example, one teacher in the study said the AKM didn't work well in their school. They think it needs better implementation because there must be more facilities and infrastructure.

“I've seen that AKM hasn't been done well, especially at my school, where students come in the afternoon. Some students might feel tired taking the test in the afternoon, and this needs to be considered. Also, sometimes, we lack resources like computers, the internet, and servers.” (T9)

Hence, one teacher suggested that the implementation of the AKM assessment must be optimized and well-prepared to reduce its ineffectiveness.

#### *RQ 2: Teachers' teaching and assessing practices in reading literacy based on AKM*

Researchers examined what English teachers did to help students with reading literacy using AKM. The research studied how teachers taught and tested students based on three components of reading literacy (content, context, and cognitive processes), the utilization of stimuli, and the use of various question types as used in AKM.

#### *The integration of three components of reading literacy*

Teachers have incorporated the three components of reading literacy tested in AKM—content, context, and cognitive process—into their teaching. Kemendikbud (2020) states that most English teachers have integrated these components into their classes. Regarding content, even though AKM uses both fiction and informational texts, teachers in this study mostly used fiction texts because they're seen as easier and more suitable for junior high school students' reading levels and the material taught. Two teachers said,

“...mostly about fictional texts.” (T4)

“So we're using and looking for a more fictional story so students don't get bored, worried, and say, “Oh, it's hard.” (T10)

In terms of context, most teachers use social or personal contexts in their teaching, while scientific contexts are less common. This matches the type of content used, which is fictional text. Teachers choose fictional texts because they teach about cultural values and personal development. It can be seen from several teachers' answers,

“Starting this semester, we're trying to be more specific. For instance, we're focusing on character development, so we're searching for stories like those about the Companions of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) or other stories that teach about character.” (T10)

Regarding cognitive processes, nearly all teachers ask students to find, explain, analyze, and judge the information they read. Teachers ask students to find information by searching for clear details in the text. Then, students think about what

values they see in the text. They connect what they read to other things outside the text to analyze and judge.

“The questions are about analyzing and judging, which means the answers aren't directly in the text. Instead, students must evaluate and analyze what they've read based on their understanding.....” (T4)

#### *The utilization of stimuli*

To help students with reading, teachers use different materials, such as AKM. These materials need real-life stuff that students can relate to (Sani, 2021). AKM uses other materials like text, pictures, charts, and tables. In interviews, teachers said they used similar stuff in class, like text, images, and tables. Even though the materials were shorter than what AKM uses, they were still relevant to students' lives and accessible for them to find in daily activities. For example, teachers used things like flight schedules and nutritional information tables. Some teachers asserted,

“In our lessons, we used shorter texts compared to AKM. We also included pictures. For instance, if the topic is "Congratulations," we show a picture of someone winning a competition and getting a trophy, wearing a volleyball shirt. Then, we ask how to congratulate them correctly. We also use tables, like flight schedules, to practice reading them.” (T2)

#### *The use of question types*

The final thing seen from the teacher's efforts in teaching and assessing reading literacy in the class is using the same types of questions as in the AKM test. Interviews show that teachers need to improve how they use these questions compared to the AKM test. Most teachers use questions like multiple-choice and short answers for daily activities and tests. In class, a few use more variation questions like complex MQ, matching, and true or false. Some teachers said,

“I've already used various types of questions, such as multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching, and true-or-false, in daily practice and quizzes. For summative assessments, we still stick to multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions because we've just started implementing the policy.” (T3)

#### *RQ 3: teachers' assessment literacy needs in teaching and assessing students' reading literacy*

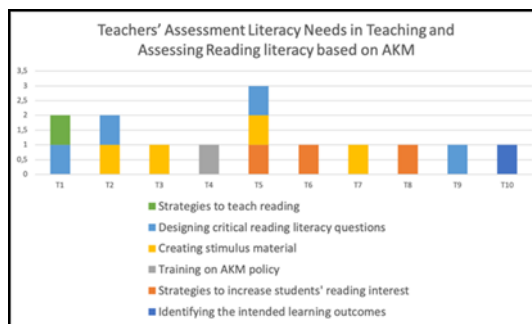


Figure 1. *Teachers' assessment of literacy needs*

The interview data revealed that ten respondents have various assessment literacy needs, such as the strategy in teaching reading, designing critical reading literacy questions, creating the stimulus material, training to gain insight on AKM, planning to increase students' reading interest, and identifying the intended learning outcomes.

#### *Strategies to teach reading literacy*

The findings revealed that teachers' assessment literacy needs included strategies for teaching reading literacy to students. One teacher mentioned that many students still struggle to read and understand text. Some even need to spell out words as they read. The two-year learning loss causes these difficulties due to COVID-19.

“The first thing I need to figure out is how to teach my students reading and writing. After that, I need to help them understand the text because some aren't good at reading. They're still at the point where they must spell words, even those in the first year of junior high school.” (T1)

#### *Designing critical reading literacy questions*

The analysis of the interviews shows that four out of ten teachers need more training in creating critical reading questions that match AKM standards. One teacher said,

“I need training to improve my question writing. Training ensures that my questions are good and meet the government standards expected. This way, I don't just makeup questions randomly.” (T2)

Another teacher said,

“I need to learn how to create HOTS questions and understand the new guidelines in the Merdeka Curriculum, which differs from the previous Kurikulum 2013. This means attending many workshops and training sessions to catch up.” (T1)

This means they need training to write questions that match what will be tested in AKM. This helps students get used to the types of questions they'll see on the exam later.

#### *Creating stimulus materials*

Another assessment literacy skill teachers need to enhance their teaching of reading is creating stimuli. Four out of ten teachers need training to make reading materials that interest students.

“I believe everything begins with a good stimulus. If the stimulus is effective, it sets the stage for good questions and other activities to follow. Perhaps what I need to work on is creating engaging stimuli for students. This will motivate them to learn and improve their literacy skills, especially in topics related to AKM.” (T7)

One teacher mentioned that teachers can use stimuli from the internet, but sometimes it's better to use something that matches the students' abilities. However, creating stimuli from scratch can take a lot of time.

“It's easy to find stimuli online, but making our own can be tough, right? That's why we need training on making stimuli. But if we don't use ones from the internet and make our own, it'll also take a lot of time.” (T2)

#### *Training on AKM policy*

During the interview, one teacher mentioned needing training on AKM to understand this new policy better. They said AKM training is important so teachers know what's being tested, understand the concept and parts of AKM reading, know how to prepare students, and understand what students will face during AKM. Typical commented,

“I need that training. Even though AKM has started, and students have been chosen for the test, teachers still don't understand it. How can students improve if their teachers haven't been trained on AKM? This is crucial for schools. Other teachers also wonder how to implement AKM and help students improve their reading skills if they don't understand it. Since we still don't get it, how can we use it in class? So, teachers need thorough training on AKM.” (T4)

Training and programs have been provided for a few teachers, including an Indonesian language teacher for reading literacy and a mathematics teacher for numeracy. In contrast, other subject

teachers seek information about AKM on their own. This was reinforced by some of the respondents who said,

“Only a few teachers are chosen by the school for training sessions on AKM, and these sessions happen only at specific times. So, other teachers must be ready to find information independently to understand AKM.” (T7)

#### *Strategies to increase students' reading interest*

Other teachers also need help with strategies to get students more interested in reading. Some students still need to be motivated to read and feel tired when passages are too long. One of a teacher said,

“I need a plan to make them more interested in reading. Nowadays, kids need to be more engaged and skilled in reading. So, if I give them a question sheet and they know they must read a lot, they'll immediately look unhappy.” (T5)

Because students are interested in something other than reading, teachers need to develop creative ways to teach reading skills. This way, they can use different methods that suit each student's personality during class.

#### *Identifying the intended learning outcomes*

Teachers must write clear learning goals for effective course planning and student assessment. With the new assessment policy, AKM, teachers need to align their learning outcomes with the objectives of this policy to ensure proper implementation. One of the teachers commented, “I've realized that I've mostly focused on the results until now. So, I still need to learn a lot about the assessment process and keeping track of student progress, especially with AKM. Also, students in one class have different abilities, so I need to adjust the learning to fit each student's level and meet the expectations AKM sets.”

This study shows that teachers have different opinions about AKM. Most teachers see it positively; some think AKM helps them assess their teaching quality and choose the right learning strategies for their classes. Recent research by Rokhim, Tyas, Rahayu, & Habidin (2022) supports this, indicating that AKM results can lead to a more effective teaching and learning process for teachers and students.

Other findings indicate that AKM is fairer and reduces student anxiety than the National Examination. This aligns with Auliya's research (2022), which suggests that AKM is less stressful and fairer than the National Examination for

evaluating education quality in Indonesia. Unlike the National Examination, AKM assesses essential skills like reading literacy, which all students need, rather than having questions that may not match students' abilities and knowledge in each school. National exams have a standardized difficulty level across the country, but schools in different regions have different objectives and students with varying skills. AKM questions measure essential competencies for all students, regardless of specialization, ensuring all students are tested on the same skills, unlike national exams focusing on specific subjects.

Thus, one teacher believes that AKM helps assess students' basic skills and understand their thinking levels. The reading passages in AKM encourage students to read and apply their skills to daily information. Another teacher thinks AKM could improve Indonesia's PISA ranking because it tests essential skills for this era.

However, some teachers disagree with AKM's implementation. They argue it's invalid because it only selects a few students to represent the school, so it can't accurately measure its overall quality. Additionally, AKM faces challenges like inadequate computer and internet resources in some schools. This echoes the findings by Yamtinah et al. (2022) that school infrastructure is a challenge. Therefore, AKM implementation needs careful planning to avoid potential issues.

To address the second research question, the researcher investigated how teachers support students with AKM by analyzing their teaching methods and evaluating reading literacy in class. This was based on three factors: the components of reading literacy tested in AKM, the use of stimuli, and the types of questions in the AKM exam.

The results revealed that most English teachers include the three components of reading literacy tested in AKM: content, context, and cognitive process. They mostly use fictional texts, incorporate socio-cultural or personal contexts, and engage students in finding, interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating information from reading activities. However, relatively few questions assess higher-order thinking skills compared to lower-order ones. Similar to the findings by Rini et al. (2021), this study suggests that improvements are needed in the content, context, and cognitive process aspects of reading literacy.

Secondly, regarding stimuli, the interviews showed that teachers use various classroom types to teach and assess students' reading skills.

However, the school stimuli are shorter and more complex than those in AKM. Text, pictures, and tables are the most commonly used stimuli, and they are contextual and relatable to students' daily lives. Unlike previous research by Rini et al. (2021), the current study found that teachers use stimuli effectively.

Lastly, regarding question types, the interviews showed that teachers need to improve how they use different question types compared to the AKM test. Most teachers mainly rely on simple multiple-choice questions, short answers, and essays for daily and summative assessments, with only a few using more complex multiple-choice, matching, and true or false questions in their classroom activities. This finding aligns with the observations of Rini et al. (2021), who noted that teachers' skills in developing questions, especially complex ones, need enhancement. This challenge arises because, at the end of the semester, students must take multiple-choice tests created by other stakeholders, not the teacher, to determine graduation. Consequently, teachers need to be more specific about using diverse question types and stick to simpler formats like multiple-choice questions and essays in their classes.

According to the data analysis, teachers need training in knowledge and skills to address the last research question. This aligns with findings from other studies, indicating that teachers have a high demand for training in test design (Nurdiana, 2020; Zulaiha & Mulyono, 2020) as part of their assessment literacy needs. Additionally, they require training to create stimulus materials to enhance their ability to teach and assess students' reading skills in class. Due to teachers' limited understanding of AKM, the reading questions and stimuli they create in class must fully meet the Ministry of Education and Culture standards for AKM questions. These findings are consistent with Nurjati, Rahayu, & Khabib (2022), which highlights the need for teachers to acquire knowledge and skills in designing AKM-based reading comprehension assessments. Therefore, training in these areas is essential to ensure that the questions teachers create in class align with AKM standards and effectively prepare students for the exam.

Another critical need in assessment literacy for teachers is developing strategies to enhance students' interest in reading. This is crucial because students often need help to stay engaged and may feel overwhelmed by lengthy passages. Due to students' lack of enthusiasm for reading activities, teachers must devise creative methods

to teach reading skills. By doing so, teachers can adapt the learning process to suit students' characteristics and maintain their engagement in the classroom.

The fourth aspect of assessment literacy that teachers require is a strategy for teaching reading effectively. It's surprising that many junior high school students still struggle with reading fluency and even need assistance with spelling. One teacher expressed the need for a method to teach reading comprehensively, helping students understand and evaluate the information presented in the text. Reading literacy encompasses reading, comprehending, applying, reflecting on, and thinking critically about information (Sani, 2021). Therefore, teachers must possess the skills to teach these aspects effectively, considering the unique conditions and challenges their students face.

The teacher interview highlighted the need for training and socialization on the AKM policy to enhance teachers' competence in teaching and assessing students' reading literacy. This training should cover understanding the test content, AKM's concept and components, student preparation strategies, and how to support students facing the AKM. Despite available training programs, only a few teachers have participated, although all teachers play a vital role in introducing AKM to students across subjects (Kemendikbud, 2020). These findings echo previous studies (e.g., Firoozi, Razavipour, & Ahmadi, 2019), emphasizing the importance of teachers' knowledge of new policies to deliver effective language assessments and support students' language proficiency growth (Giraldo, 2018).

The final assessment literacy needs is identifying the learning outcomes. Teachers must articulate clear intended learning outcomes, as they form the foundation for practical course and unit planning and assessment. Teachers must align their teaching practices with the learning objectives mandated by new policies to ensure successful implementation.

Hence, a thorough teacher training program is crucial to address the varied opinions among teachers regarding AKM. These programs should enhance teachers' understanding of AKM, align it with educational standards, and equip them with skills to develop AKM-appropriate reading materials and questions. Socialization efforts are also necessary to ensure all teachers are prepared for their roles in preparing students for the exam. Furthermore, future research could assess the effectiveness of such training programs in

improving educators' AKM-related knowledge and skills, along with longitudinal studies to understand AKM's long-term impact on student learning, teaching practices, and educational equity.

## **CONCLUSION**

In summary, implementing the new assessment policy, AKM, has elicited varied teacher perspectives. While some see it as a valuable tool for assessing education quality and a welcome replacement for the burdensome national exam, others have concerns about its effectiveness due to lack of follow-up on results, inadequate infrastructure, and student preparation. Teachers are actively preparing students for AKM, which is evident in their efforts to teach and assess reading literacy. They commonly use fiction texts, emphasizing socio-cultural contexts for teaching values. Regarding cognitive processes, teachers guide students in analyzing and evaluating information. Stimuli like text, pictures, and tables are used less extensively than in AKM. There's room for improvement in using diverse question types.

Additionally, teachers have identified needs such as strategies for teaching reading and designing questions. These findings underscore the importance of careful organization and optimization of AKM implementation to effectively evaluate students' abilities and enhance educational quality in Indonesia. Policymakers should address concerns about AKM's validity and ensure equitable access to resources, particularly in schools with inadequate infrastructure. Educators should align teaching practices with AKM components, emphasizing higher-order thinking skills and diversifying question types to prepare students effectively. Training programs should address teachers' assessment literacy needs, focusing on test design, creating stimuli, enhancing student interest in reading, teaching reading effectively, and identifying clear learning outcomes. Researchers should explore AKM's impact on teaching and learning outcomes, including student engagement and comprehension, and assess the effectiveness of training programs for teachers.

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