

STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS OF COLLABORATIVE READING IN UNDERSTANDING EXPLANATION TEXTS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY IN CLASS XI SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstrak

This study aims to investigate eleventh-grade students' perceptions of the application of collaborative reading in understanding explanation texts in English language learning. The background of the study is based on the importance of language competence, especially reading skills, as a basis for accessing academic information, analyzing scientific concepts, and completing text-based assignments at the secondary school level. Despite the importance of reading skills, many students still experience difficulties in understanding explanation texts individually due to linguistic, cognitive, and motivational factors. Collaborative reading is considered an effective approach because it emphasizes interaction between students, the construction of shared meaning, and guided understanding through group discussions. This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design and was conducted at a public high school in Pamekasan during the 2025/2026 academic year. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews with ten students selected using purposive sampling techniques, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles and Saldaña (2014), including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Research findings indicate that students perceive collaborative reading as beneficial in improving their comprehension of explanation texts, reducing individual reading difficulties, increasing motivation, and encouraging active participation in learning. Specifically, the findings show that group discussions and peer explanations help students clarify difficult concepts, collaborative summarizing strengthens their retention of information, and the overall process enhances both comprehension and engagement in reading activities. However, several challenges remain, such as uneven group participation and limited vocabulary. This study emphasizes the importance of more interactive and collaborative learning strategies to help students understand complex texts and provides insight into the role of student perceptions in enhancing the effectiveness of reading instruction.

Keywords: *collaborative reading, student perceptions, explanation texts, reading comprehension, qualitative study*

Article History

Received: Januari 2026

Reviewed: Januari 2026

Published: Januari 2026

Plagiarism Checker No 234

Copyright : Author

Publish by : Sindoro



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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental aspect of human development because through the educational process, individuals can develop thinking skills, broaden their horizons, and develop the character necessary to face the challenges of modern life. In today's era of globalization, the need for quality education is increasing, so schools, as formal institutions, are required to provide learning experiences that focus not only on mastering knowledge but also on developing critical thinking skills and the ability to comprehend information in depth. Therefore, innovation in the learning process is crucial so that students can gain maximum benefit from each learning activity they undertake. One of the most important aspects of education is language, as it serves as the primary tool for communication, conveying information, and understanding various academic concepts. Language is one of the most important aspects of education because it serves as the primary tool for communication, conveying information, and understanding various academic concepts. Furthermore, language also serves as a means for students to develop scientific thinking, reasoning skills, and construct understanding of the phenomena they study Fauzia, Octavia and Hamdani (2023).

Language is not only a means of interaction but also a medium that enables students to construct meaning and build understanding of the phenomena around them. Given its vital role, language proficiency is a fundamental requirement in the learning process, especially when students are confronted with academic texts that require in-depth and accurate comprehension. In the context of modern education, English holds a very strategic position because it is an international language widely used in education, technology, communication, and business. In high school, English learning is directed at helping students master various language competencies so they can communicate effectively in a variety of situations. Richards (2021) state that language is not only a means of communication but also a cognitive tool that helps students construct meaning, understand the phenomena around them, and develop higher-order thinking skills. In an educational context, language proficiency is a crucial foundation that enables students to understand academic texts deeply and accurately. Therefore, success in learning English is a crucial indicator of students' readiness to face academic and professional challenges globally.

English language learning encompasses four core skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four skills are interrelated and need to be developed in a balanced manner to enable students to communicate holistically. Al-Azzam and Al-Shboul (2024) emphasized that mastery of the four English language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—plays a crucial role in determining students' academic readiness. They found that learning that integrates interskills, such as reading to improve writing or listening to support speaking, can result in a more effective and comprehensive learning process. This integration enables students to develop comprehensive language skills in line with the demands of modern learning. Among these skills, reading is crucial because it serves as the foundation for students to access various information, understand new concepts, and expand their academic knowledge. Furthermore, good reading skills significantly impact students' success in completing text-based school assignments. Reading skills, particularly in English, pose unique challenges for many high school students. Reading requires not only the ability to recognize words but also to interpret meaning, find explicit and implicit information, and construct a comprehensive understanding of a text. The English curriculum encompasses various types of texts that students must understand, including explanation texts, which require analytical skills because they address scientific processes and natural phenomena. Unfortunately, many students still struggle to read independently, necessitating more collaborative and effective learning strategies and approaches. One strategy considered effective in improving reading comprehension is collaborative reading. Collaborative reading is a learning approach that emphasizes collaboration among students in understanding texts through discussion, role-playing, and

mutually explaining key ideas within the text. Wijaya and Arifin (2023) also showed that the implementation of collaborative reading significantly improved the reading comprehension skills of high school students in Indonesia because group discussion activities encouraged students to more actively analyze text content and exchange views with peers. By working collaboratively, students can help each other when facing difficult sections of the text, exchange perspectives, and build shared understanding. This approach is believed to create a more active, interactive learning environment and support students' critical thinking skills. Several previous studies have shown that collaborative reading has a positive impact on improving students' reading comprehension. These studies found that collaboration between students allows for interactions that enrich understanding, help overcome individual difficulties, and increase motivation to read English texts.

Although reading is a crucial skill in English learning, many eleventh-grade students still struggle with reading texts individually. They often lack a complete understanding of the text, fail to identify important information, and are confused when asked to re-explain information contained in the text. Their answers often stray from the context, particularly in explanation texts that have a causal structure and more complex scientific concepts. These issues indicate that individual reading instruction is ineffective and requires more collaborative strategies to support student comprehension. Several previous studies have explained the effectiveness of collaborative learning in improving reading comprehension. Zalukhu (2023) used a qualitative descriptive method and found that collaborative learning can improve the reading comprehension of 10th-grade students and strengthen social interactions in the classroom. Effendi and Wijirahayu (2024) used a quantitative survey approach to reveal that vocational high school students have a positive perception of collaborative reading learning because it helps them understand texts more deeply and increases active participation. Meanwhile, Ferdiyanto (2025) used a qualitative approach to find that the Three-Phase Technique—a form of collaborative reading learning—is considered effective by teachers and students because it can improve concentration and comprehension through activating prior knowledge, directed activities during reading, and reflection after reading.

However, these three studies have not specifically addressed collaborative reading in the context of understanding explanation texts for eleventh-grade high school students. Previous research has also focused on the general effectiveness of collaborative learning or specific techniques, rather than on students' perceptions of collaborative reading activities themselves in understanding complex texts. Thus, a significant research gap remains unanswered: how eleventh-grade students interpret their experiences participating in collaborative reading to understand explanation texts in everyday learning contexts. The urgency of this research arose from the need to find a learning approach that better helps students understand complex texts and overcome individual reading difficulties. Furthermore, the researcher was particularly interested in this topic due to firsthand observations of classroom problems, where students appeared passive, confused, and frequently misinterpreted texts. This situation prompted the research entitled "Students' Perceptions of Collaborative Reading in Understanding Explanation Texts: A Qualitative Study in Grade XI Senior High School." Based on the background presented, there are several key issues that require further research related to students' ability to understand explanation texts and the effectiveness of reading instruction used in grade 11.

Reading comprehension is a vital aspect of English learning because it enables students to access information, understand concepts, and complete academic tasks effectively. However, many students struggle to comprehend explanation texts when reading individually. This difficulty arises because explanation texts require not only vocabulary knowledge but also analytical skills to identify causal relationships and interpret scientific phenomena. Individual

reading often limits students' ability to clarify confusion and maintain engagement, leading to low comprehension levels.

To address these challenges, collaborative reading offers a promising alternative. Collaborative reading is not only a group activity but also a pedagogical approach grounded in social constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978), which emphasizes learning through social interaction. In this approach, students discuss texts together, explain meanings to one another, and construct shared understanding. This process provides immediate peer feedback, scaffolding, and motivation that are often absent in individual reading. Prior studies (e.g., Wijaya & Arifin, 2023; Effendi & Wijirahayu, 2024) demonstrate that collaborative reading enhances comprehension and encourages active participation, showing that cooperation among students fosters deeper understanding. Therefore, this study focuses on exploring students' perceptions of collaborative reading as a learning strategy to help overcome difficulties in understanding complex explanation texts and to promote a more interactive, engaging classroom environment.

To address these issues, this study formulated the following research questions:

1. What difficulties do eleventh-grade students experience in understanding explanation texts when reading individually?
2. Why do students experience difficulties in identifying important information and understanding the text's content during individual reading activities?
3. How can collaborative reading help students improve their comprehension of explanation texts?

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Reading Comprehension in English Learning

Reading comprehension is an important skill in English learning because it serves as the foundation for understanding information, academic concepts, and various types of texts studied in high school. Reading comprehension is a crucial skill in English language learning because it enables students to acquire information, build knowledge, and deeply understand academic concepts. However, various studies show that many EFL learners still experience difficulties in independently comprehending English texts. Setiyawan and Yunitaka (2020) stated that reading difficulties are often caused by limited vocabulary mastery, students' unfamiliarity with the reading topic, and the complexity of the concepts presented in the text. As a result, students often fail to grasp the meaning of the reading and tend to neglect reading activities when not supported by appropriate learning strategies. These findings confirm that reading comprehension is influenced not only by linguistic ability but also by the context of the material, students' background knowledge, and the presence of interactions that facilitate the process of constructing meaning. Therefore, a more interactive and contextual reading approach is needed to help students improve reading comprehension effectively. According to Grabe and Stoller (2011), reading is a complex process that involves word recognition, information processing, and integrating meaning to fully understand the text. At the high school level, the ability to understand English texts is crucial for student success, given that most teaching materials are presented in academic texts. Reading comprehension relies not only on basic linguistic abilities but also involves cognitive skills such as finding explicit information, identifying implicit meaning, recognizing relationships between ideas, and connecting reading content to prior knowledge (Anderson, 2014). Therefore, students with good reading skills tend to more easily comprehend other learning materials. However, many high school students, particularly those in grade 11, still experience difficulty reading individual texts. These

difficulties can be influenced by linguistic factors (vocabulary, sentence structure), cognitive factors (prior knowledge), and affective factors such as a lack of motivation and confidence in reading English texts. Karya 1, 2 dan 3

2.2 Explanation Text in the Senior High School Curriculum

In the high school English curriculum, explanation text is a type of text that students must master. Explanation text aims to explain the processes of natural, social, or scientific phenomena in a logical and systematic manner. According to Knapp and Watkins (2005), explanation text has a general structure consisting of a general statement and a sequenced explanation, which presents the cause-and-effect process or steps in the occurrence of a phenomenon. The characteristics of explanation text require students to understand causal relationships, scientific concepts, and more complex academic vocabulary. This is why many students find it difficult to read explanation texts individually, especially in:

- Understanding cause-and-effect processes,
- identifying important information,
- re-explaining the flow of phenomena,
- understanding unfamiliar scientific vocabulary.

This situation demands a more interactive learning approach so students can better understand the text.

2.3 Collaborative Reading as a Learning Strategy

Collaborative reading is a learning strategy that requires students to work together to understand texts through discussion, role-playing, question-and-answer sessions, and mutual explanation of important ideas. According to Johnson & Johnson (2017), collaborative learning is effective in improving comprehension because students engage in shared thinking, clarifying information, and constructing meaning socially. Some activities in collaborative reading include:

- reading in small groups,
- discussing main ideas and supporting details,
- asking questions to each other,
- compiling summaries together,
- re-explaining sections of the text in turn.

Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) supports this approach, where social interaction helps students achieve higher levels of understanding through peer assistance. Thus, collaborative reading can minimize individual difficulties in understanding complex texts such as explanations.

2.4 Students' Perceptions in Learning Activities

Students' perceptions play a crucial role in the success of the learning process. According to Robbins (2013), perception is the process by which individuals organize and interpret information to give meaning to the environment. In a learning context, students' perceptions reflect how they assess the effectiveness of the method, their enjoyment of learning, their level of motivation, and the usefulness of the strategies used by the teacher. Positive perceptions of certain learning strategies, including collaborative reading, can increase:

- motivation,
- active participation,
- self-confidence,
- perseverance in understanding the text.

Therefore, examining students' perceptions is crucial to determine the extent to which collaborative reading can help them understand explanation texts.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This qualitative approach was chosen because the aim of this research is to deeply understand students' perceptions of the use of collaborative reading in understanding explanation texts, not to test hypotheses or generate statistical figures. According to Cresswell (2012), a case study is a qualitative research design used to explore a bounded system or case in depth within a real-life context. In this research, the "case" referred to is the implementation of collaborative reading in grade 11 at a high school in Pamekasan. The case study design allows researchers to gain a comprehensive and contextual understanding of how students experience the collaborative reading process, how their perceptions are formed, what factors influence these perceptions, and the challenges they face during the learning process.

3.2 Research Setting and Participants

This research was conducted at a state senior high school 3 pamekasan, specifically among eleventh-grade students during the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. This school was selected because it implemented collaborative reading activities in English learning, particularly for explanation texts. The participants in this study were ten eleventh-grade students selected using a purposive sampling technique. According to Sugiyono (2022), purposive sampling is used to select subjects based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The participant criteria for this study were:

- Students who actively participated in collaborative reading activities in class.
- Students who had good communication skills to express their opinions.
- Students who were willing to participate in interviews and observations.

In addition to students, the English teacher in the class also served as a supporting informant to corroborate the data from the interviews and observations.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

In this study, the researcher used three main data collection techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. As suggested by Cresswell (2012), who stated that qualitative research should utilize multiple data sources to ensure more credible results.

a) Observation

Observations were conducted to directly observe the collaborative reading learning process in the classroom. The researcher recorded how students collaborated, discussed, and understood the content of the explanation text. Observations were conducted in a non-participatory manner, where the researcher simply observed without directly participating in the learning activities.

b) Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten selected students. This type of interview allowed the researcher to ask open-ended questions that could be developed based on the participants' responses. Interview questions covered students' perspectives on collaborative reading, perceived benefits, challenges encountered, and factors influencing their learning experiences.

c) Documentation

Documentation was conducted by collecting supporting data such as student worksheets, learning outcome notes, Lesson Plans (RPP), and photographic documentation of learning activities. This data is used to complement the results of observations and interviews to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis in this study used the interactive data analysis model from Miles and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

1. Data Reduction

At this stage, the researcher selected, focused, and simplified the data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Data relevant to students' perceptions of collaborative reading were selected, while data that did not align with the research focus was eliminated. In this stage, the researcher selected, focused, and simplified the data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Data relevant to students' perceptions of collaborative reading were retained, while data that did not align with the research focus was removed to ensure the accuracy of the analysis. In addition, the researcher conducted an initial coding process (open coding) to identify the main concepts or ideas from each participant's statement. The results of this coding were then grouped based on similarities in meaning, creating more focused data categories.

2. Data Display

This stage was carried out by organizing the reduced data into descriptive narratives and categorization tables. This presentation made it easier for researchers to see patterns, relationships, and trends emerging from the data. In this process, researchers applied thematic analysis to organize the data into main themes that align with the research focus, such as:

- students' perceptions of collaborative reading,
- perceived benefits,
- factors influencing perceptions, and
- challenges faced during the learning activities.

Furthermore, researchers used simple descriptive statistics, such as percentages or frequencies, to strengthen qualitative findings and provide a general overview of participant response trends.

3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

After the data was presented, the researcher drew tentative conclusions, which were then repeatedly verified to ensure their accuracy and consistency. The final conclusions describe students' perceptions, influencing factors, and challenges faced in implementing collaborative

reading. This final stage involves interpreting the meaning of the analyzed data to answer the research problem formulation. The conclusions drawn are tentative at first, and then repeatedly verified through cross-checking and triangulation to ensure accuracy and consistency. The final conclusions describe students' perceptions of the implementation of collaborative reading, the factors influencing these perceptions, and the challenges encountered during the learning process.

3.5 Data Triangulation

In qualitative research, triangulation is conducted to increase data validity. According to Sugiyono (2022), triangulation is a data validity checking technique that utilizes something other than the data itself for checking or comparing the data. Commonly used triangulations are source triangulation and technique triangulation. In this study, the researcher used the following two types of triangulation:

1. Source Triangulation

This triangulation was conducted by comparing and checking the consistency of data obtained from various sources, namely:

- students as primary participants,
- teachers as supporting informants,
- learning documents such as lesson plans, worksheets, and student learning outcomes.

Through this comparison, the researcher can ensure that the information obtained is truly consistent and reliable.

2. Technique Triangulation

This triangulation is conducted by comparing the same data obtained through different techniques, namely:

- observation,
- interviews, and
- documentation.

If the results of these three techniques show consistent information, the data is considered more valid and credible. By applying triangulation, according to Sugiyono, research results are expected to have a high level of accuracy and reliability because they have undergone a cross-checking process from various sources and data collection techniques.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

In this study, the researcher adhered to the principles of research ethics as stated by Creswell (2012), which emphasizes the need to protect participants, build trust, maintain research integrity, and prevent ethical violations. Therefore, the researcher implemented the following steps:

- Informed Consent

Before conducting the study, the researcher provided a clear explanation to all participants regarding the purpose of the study, the procedures to be carried out, and the expected form

of participation. Participants were only involved after they voluntarily provided their consent through an informed consent form.

- Confidentiality

The researcher guarantees that all personal data and information obtained from participants will be kept confidential. Participants' identities were replaced with codes or initials to protect their privacy, and the data will be used only for academic purposes.

- Voluntary Participation

Participants' participation in this study was voluntary and without any pressure from any party. Participants also have the full right to refuse or withdraw from the research at any time without any consequences.

By implementing these steps, it is hoped that this research will be conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of qualitative research, which uphold respect, honesty, and responsibility towards participants.

RESULT

The following table presents the qualitative coding results based on students' interview responses regarding the implementation of Collaborative Reading in teaching Explanation Texts.

NO.	Open Coding	Exial Coding	Selective Coding
1.	Lack of focus due to unconducive classroom environment	Learning environment disturbance	Barriers in reading learning
2.	Distracted by noisy classmates	Learning environment disturbance	Barriers in reading learning
3.	Collaborative reading is more enjoyable than individual learning	Preference for collaborative learning	Effectiveness of collaborative reading
4.	Able to ask friends directly when confused	Student interaction	Effectiveness of collaborative reading
5.	Explanations from peers are easier to understand	Peer-assisted understanding	Effectiveness of collaborative reading
6.	Able to share ideas and opinions	Collaboration in discussion	The role of discussion in text comprehension
7.	Gaining different perspectives	Diversity of understanding	The role of discussion in text comprehension
8.	Group discussion is the most effective activity	Core discussion activity	The role of discussion in text comprehension

The results of the analysis of student interview data conducted through *the stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding* show several main themes related to the application of Collaborative Reading in *Explanation Text learning*. First, it was found that there were obstacles in reading learning that came from a less conducive classroom environment. Noisy and unfocused classroom conditions interfere with students' concentration in understanding the text. This theme is classified as *Barriers in Reading Learning*. Second, the results of the study show that Collaborative Reading is considered effective by students. Collaborative learning is considered more fun than individual learning. Interaction between students, such as asking questions directly to friends, receiving explanations from peers, and sharing ideas and opinions, helps to improve understanding of the content of the text. These findings form the theme of *Effectiveness of Collaborative Reading*.

Third, group discussions are the main component in improving text comprehension. Through discussion, students can exchange understandings, gain different perspectives, and draw conclusions together. This collective reflection activity strengthens the process of interpreting the text and is categorized in the theme *The Role of Discussion in Text Comprehension*. Fourth, from the affective aspect, the application of Collaborative Reading has a positive impact on students' learning motivation. Students show increased motivation, feel more comfortable during the learning process, and are encouraged by social support between friends. These findings are summarized under the theme *Affective Impact of Collaborative Reading*. Finally, Collaborative Reading also contributes to improving students' reading skills. Students become more structured in reading, find important information faster, understand the structure of the text better, and have a deeper and more lasting understanding. This theme is classified as *Impact on Reading Ability*. Overall, the findings of this study show that Collaborative Reading is effective in improving the understanding of *Explanation Text*, both from cognitive and affective aspects, although there are still obstacles from learning environment factors.

Based on classroom observations, the implementation of collaborative reading

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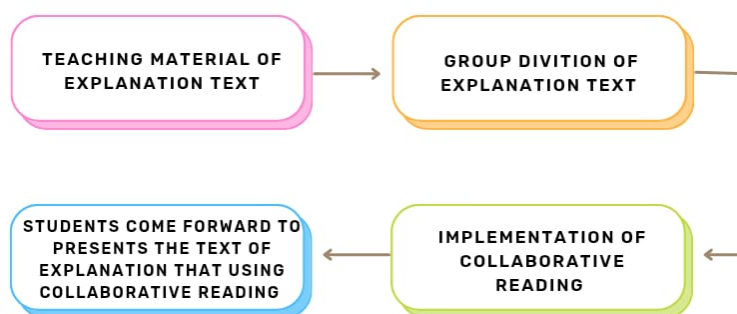


Figure: *stage of collaborative reading*

followed a specific instructional flow. The figure presents the stages of collaborative reading activities conducted in the classroom, starting from the delivery of teaching material to students' presentations.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that the application of Collaborative Reading makes a positive contribution to students' understanding in reading *Explanation Text*. These findings confirm that reading learning that involves social interaction is able to improve the quality of student understanding, although obstacles are still encountered in the form of a less conducive learning environment. Obstacles stemming from noisy and lack of focus classroom conditions are in line with Harmer's (2007) view that the learning environment has an important role in the success of language learning. However, the findings of this study show that the Collaborative Reading strategy is able to reduce the negative impact of the environment through the active involvement of students in the group, so that students' attention remains directed to the reading task.

The effectiveness of Collaborative Reading found in this study supports the theory of social constructivism put forward by Vygotsky (1978). According to this theory, learning takes place optimally when students build knowledge through social interaction. In the context of this study, students can ask questions, provide explanations, and help each other in understanding the text, which shows the existence of a *scaffolding* process between peers. This finding is also in line with the research of Slavin (2014) who affirms that cooperative learning can improve academic learning outcomes through cooperation and shared responsibility. The role of discussion as the core of Collaborative Reading in this study reinforces the findings of Palincsar and Brown (1984) who emphasized that collaborative discussions help students develop reading comprehension strategies, such as clarifying information, predicting the content of the text, and deducing main ideas. Through group discussions, students not only understand the text individually, but also gain various perspectives that enrich the meaning of the content of *the Explanation Text*.

From the affective aspect, the increase in motivation and learning comfort ositive impact on students' motivation and continuous learning engagement.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to determine eleventh-grade students' perceptions of the application of Collaborative Reading to understanding explanation texts in English language learning. Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, it can be concluded that Collaborative Reading is perceived positively by students and makes a significant contribution to improving reading comprehension, particularly for complex explanation texts. The results showed that students experienced various difficulties when reading explanation texts individually, such as limited vocabulary, difficulty identifying important information, understanding cause-and-effect relationships, and lack of concentration due to less conducive classroom conditions. These difficulties often led to poor student comprehension of the text. However, the implementation of Collaborative Reading was able to mitigate these obstacles through student interaction, group discussions, and the process of sharing and building understanding together. Students considered Collaborative Reading more effective and enjoyable than individual reading lessons. Through group discussions, peer explanations, and collaborative summaries, students were able to gain a deeper understanding of the text, gain multiple perspectives, and clarify difficult concepts. Furthermore, Collaborative Reading encourages student engagement, increases learning motivation, and creates a more comfortable and supportive learning environment.

Beyond its impact on cognitive aspects, this study also shows that Collaborative Reading contributes to improving students' reading skills, such as the ability to find important information, understand text structure, and maintain comprehension over a longer period of time. Although some obstacles remain, such as uneven group participation and disruptive

learning environments, overall, Collaborative Reading has proven to be an effective learning strategy in helping students understand explanatory texts at the high school level.

Thus, Collaborative Reading is not only effective in improving students' reading comprehension but also plays a crucial role in increasing student motivation and engagement in learning. Therefore, English teachers are advised to implement Collaborative Reading strategies in a more planned and innovative manner to help students understand complex texts and improve their overall reading skills.

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