**Strengthening the Students’ Literacy in SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang**

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**Abstract**

Most of the students of Elementary School of Christian Education Foundation (SD YBPK) Ngaglik Sukun Malang are from underprivileged low-/middle-class families. This school has already had a good quantity of learning resources and facilities in schools. The students, however, do not perform very well in the literacy. Ideally, the students of elementary school should be in the stage of basic literacy. They, however, are still in the stage of early literacy. Therefore, a team from Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya did a community service at this school. By doing the observation, focus group discussion, and workshop, the team found that this school needed to create an activity to build a reading habit. This school needs also support from the students’ parents and the society to create a literacy habit. The community service team, therefore, asked the teacher to do the fifteen-minute reading activity each day. After three weeks doing this activity, there were students who showed an interest in this reading activities shown by (1) asking questions in accordance with reading material, and (2) commenting according to reading material. However, there were also some students who did not care about these activities. Positively, through this activity, the teachers are motivated to link contextual content of learning material to daily activities, local wisdom, and literacy activities in learning practices. In conclusion, a fifteen-minute reading activity can be carried out consistently to support teaching and learning activities of SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang as well as to build students’ reading habit.

Keywords: academic environment, learning, literacy, reading

1. **Introduction**

The field observations and discussions with the school principal and elementary school teachers at Christian Education Foundation Elementary School (SD YBPK) Ngaglik Sukun Malang YBPK resulted in several findings including: 1) most students came from underprivileged low-/middle-class families and 2) most teachers were new teachers on duty and have academic qualifications other than Elementary School education. This gave the first impression that the teachers are not well-qualified to teach elementary school’s students and it might not be easy to teach the students because they are not well-facilitated at home.

Most of the students in SD TBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang communicated in regional language/ mother tongue in interacting with others, including in their learning activities. The use of mother tongue in teaching and learning process is debatable. Although mother tongue is seen as on of the effective communication media especially in teaching and learning process (Abbas & Shehzad, 2017), it is still believed that students may have to master national language, in this case is Indonesian, especially to master basic literacy.

According to Clay and Ferguson (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017), in the early literacy phase, a person has the ability to listen and understand spoken language and communicate with his social environment using his native language. Active parties to foster early literacy are parents and family, teachers, and caregivers. In basic literacy, a person has the ability to listen, speak, read, write, count, analyze, communicate, and describe information based on his/ her personal understanding. This basic literacy is carried out in the formal education, including elementary schools such as SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang. Even so, the situation of literacy of students in this school is still at the level of early literacy. Therefore, the community service activity by a team from the Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas Brawijaya aims to assist and support this school to create a literacy school environment, both physical and academic.

Literacy is the key to successful learning in the information age (Andayani, n.d.). People who are literate will be able to manage the knowledge they have as a basis for making decisions that underlie their steps. Through the activities carried out by the Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas Brawijaya Community Service Team, SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang is expected to grow into a literacy school for its students, who are part of future generations. In addition, the results of this activity provide a description of the school literacy development strategy.

1. **Literature Review**

Indonesia is listed as one of the countries that has succeeded in reducing illiteracy rates. UNDP data in 2014 noted that the literacy rate of the Indonesians reached 92.8% for the adult group and 98.8% for the youth category (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017). This achievement actually shows that Indonesia has passed the stage of literacy crisis. Nevertheless, the challenge that is currently faced is the lack of interest in reading. In addition to the inadequate availability of books throughout Indonesia, the government also faces low motivation to read among students. This condition causes government’s concern because reading skills are the basis for the acquisition of knowledge and the formation of students’ attitudes. This problem confirms that the government needs a special strategy so that students’ reading skills can be improved by integrating school programs with activities in the family and community (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017).

Literacy activities have been synonymous with reading and writing activities. However, literacy also includes how a person communicates with the community. The School Literacy Movement is a participatory effort by involving schools under the coordination of the Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Antoro, Indonesia, & Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2018). One of the efforts is through a fifteen-minute reading activity to support the students in mastering literacy components according to the Main Design of School Literacy Movement (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017), they are (1) early literacy in which a person has the ability to listen, understand spoken language and communicate through images formed by his or her experience of interacting with his social environment at home; (2) basic literacy in which a person is able to listen, speak, read, write and count. This phase is related to the ability to calculate, perceive information, communicate, and describe information based on personal understanding and inference; (3) library literacy which provides understanding on how to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction reading, utilizing reference collections, understanding the use of catalogs in understanding information when completing a paper, research, work, or solving a problem; (4) media literacy in which a person has the ability to know different forms of media and understand the intended use; (5) technology literacy in which a person has the ability to understand technology, as well as etiquette in utilizing technology; (3) visual literacy in which a person has the ability to understand media literacy and technology literacy that develops learning abilities.

* 1. ***Literate School Ecosystem***

The strategy to build a school literacy culture according to the School Literacy Movement (Antoro et al., 2018; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017) can be through the formation of a literate school ecosystem which can be described as follows:

* + 1. ***Physical Environment***

To trigger students to love reading, the physical environment of a school should engage students’ motivation to read (Puteh, Noh, Ahmad, & Adnan, 2015). Students’ works, therefore, should be displayed at the school and should be rotated regularly to provide equal opportunities to all students. Moreover, books and other reading materials should be available in the reading corners in all classrooms and in the office other than the classroom (Antoro et al., 2018; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017).The headmaster’s office, furthermore, should display students’ work and books for children and the school principal is expected to have a willingness to have a dialogue with the school community.

* + 1. ***Social Environment***

In the social environment, appreciation for students’ achievement should be given on a regular basis (Howells, n.d.). The principal, moreover, should actively be involved in the development of literacy. To motivate students’ reading habit, it is advised that the schools celebrate national days with literacy activities, such as celebrating Kartini day by reading her letters. There should be a culture of collaboration between teachers and staff, acknowledging their expertise. It is also advised to provide sufficient time for the staff to collaborate in carrying out the literacy program and matters relating to its implementation (Antoro et al., 2018). School staff, furthermore, should be involved in the decision-making process, especially in carrying out literacy programs

***2.1.3 Academic Environment***

To support the literacy movement, it is advised for the school to hold the assessment and planning. Moreover, sufficient time should be provided for learning and literacy habituation. Time of literacy activities, furthermore, should be maintained so as not to be sacrificed for other purposes. To do so, a period of time should be agreed by the teacher and staff to discuss the implementation of literacy movement (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017). A lot of fiction and nonfiction books should be available at school. Moreover, there should be professional development opportunities provided to staff. In brief, all school members should be enthusiastic to run a literacy program.

***2.2 School Literacy Stages***

Broadly speaking, based on the Master Design of School Literacy Movement (Antoro et al., 2018; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017), the focus of activities in the stages of school literacy can be divided into three stages as follows:

***2.2.1 Habituation Stage***

In this stage, it is advised to have fifteen minutes of reading every day before class through the activity of reading a book aloud or silently (Assistant, 2008). At this stage, it is also suggested to build a literacy-rich physical environment, such as (1) providing school libraries and reading corners, (2) developing other facilities and (3) providing a collection of printed, visual, digital and multimodal texts that are easily accessed by all school members (Antoro et al., 2018).

***2.2.2 Development Stage***

In this stage, it is advisable to do a fifteen-minute reading every day before class to make sure that the students embrace the reading habit. There are several possible activities in the fifteen-minute reading activity such as reading aloud, reading silently, reading together, and or guided reading (Antoro et al., 2018; Assistant, 2008). To develop the literacy environment, moreover, there should be rewards for students’ positive achievement and enthusiasm in learning. Also, other academic activities should be maintained to support the literacy in schools. At this stage, students are expected to respond to the text through several simple activities such as drawing, making concept maps, discussing, and talking about the books (Gehsmann, 2012).

***2.2.3 Learning Stage***

As the other stages, in this stage, the school teachers and staff are also advised to do a fifteen-minute reading every day before class through reading aloud, reading silently, reading together, and or guided reading followed by other non-academic and academic activities. It is also expected that the teachers use physical, social and academic environments with a variety of literacy-rich readings outside textbooks to enrich students’ knowledge (Andayani, n.d.; Gehsmann, 2012). What differs this stage from the previous stage is the activities after this stage. In this stage, the students are asked to do non-academic or academic activities to make sure that they learn new knowledge after reading.

1. **Methodology**

Understanding the importance of literacy for elementary school children, the Community Service Team from Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas Brawijaya provided assistance for both teachers and students of SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang that leads to the basic literacy initiation scheme. The mentoring activities had been carried out through (1) observation by meeting the principal and teachers of SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang. This step was carried out to observe and explore as much detail as possible related to the literacy movement in this school; (2) a workshop was also done as an effort to support literacy movements and to solve problem in teaching and guiding children in obtaining basic literacy. In this workshop, the teachers got a briefing on how to teach basic literacy and to implement literacy development strategies; (3) assistance are given by the community service team for teachers with the aim of mapping literacy materials for students. The literacy material is determined based on the needs of the teacher as the driving agent of school literacy and of students as the recipient of the school literacy strategy. The assistance program to strengthen the basic literacy at SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang is in a multi-year road map referring to the master design of school literacy movement as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1 School Literacy Movement Road Map**

The previous activities were evaluated through observations monitored by a logbook on the implementation of literacy activities in the classroom. In addition, the evaluation was conducted by interviewing the principal and teachers. The results of the observations and interviews would determine the follow-up steps in the literacy strategy for the next stage.

1. **Results and Discussion**

From the assessment rubric on the elementary school literacy movement based on the observations and the reading journal, the following results are obtained:

* 1. ***Initial Assessment and School Literacy Movement Socialization***

At the initial assessment, it was found that actually, SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang had a good quantity of learning resources, facilities and infrastructure such as textbooks, worksheets, audio visuals, computers, internet networks, projectors, props, libraries, school yard, parks and reading corner. On the other hand, the society had not supported the literacy movements in SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang. This school, therefore, needed support from community and religious leaders, government agencies, universities, and other schools. In addition, there were not enough sources (fundraising) for the development of literacy movement. Thus, this school relied only on School Operational Assistance from the government.

SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang had conducted socializations on the school literacy movement to the stakeholders including teachers, students, and school committees. This socialization, however, did not reach students’ parents and other communities. Therefore, students of SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang stated the lack of parents’ support in the literacy habituation.

* 1. ***The Design and Development of School Literacy Movement***

SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang had a team focusing on the school literacy movement. The role and mechanism of each person in the team, however, were unclear. Also, the organizational structure was not stated in the school decree. Even so, SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang had implemented regulations that support the implementation of school literacy movement, especially after the program initiated by the Community Service Team from the Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas Brawijaya. Inspired by the initiation, SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang made a fifteen-minute reading as the obligatory activity every day after the morning prayer. If it was not possible to do this activity in the morning, the activity might be carried out at other times of the day according to class conditions.

Unfortunately, not all of six types of literacy were done in SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang. This school focused only on two of the six types of literacy. The activities were early literacy and basic literacy activities where the school develops the ability to listen, speak and read only. On the other hand, SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang has utilized the potential of the physical environment inside and outside the school as a resource of learning.

Teachers at SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang, unfortunately, have not explicitly integrated literacy activities in the learning plans yet. Even so, teachers at SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang have linked the content of learning material contextually with aspects of daily activities, local wisdom, and literacy activities in learning practices but not in all teaching processes, classroom management, and curriculum. Also, teachers at SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang have used relevant and interesting learning methods. This is a good point from this school seeing that although the teachers did not have the specific knowledge in teaching elementary school students, they were able to practice teaching well.

Unfortunately, SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang did not have a specific literacy community or group. Even so, students, teachers, education staff and school principal reflected the literacy exemplary through the fifteen-minute reading activity initiated by the community service team from the Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas Brawijaya. In addition, teachers had shown exemplary attitudes in financial literacy, culture and citizenship, as well as digital, one of which is by integrating devices and the internet in teaching and learning with various topics, one of which was about the story of the archipelago expected to arouse the local wisdom of students of SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang. This fact showed the teachers had a willingness in boosting students’ literacy by initiating those activities.

SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang, however, had not yet formed a community group, forum, or parenting class. On the other hand, the school teachers was quite active in seeking the external support. One external support was obtained from the involvement of tertiary institutions, in this case was the community service team from the Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas Brawijaya Malang, particularly in strengthening the school literacy movement. In supporting the teaching and learning process, SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang also got donations from church members which were really helpful in supporting the school maintenance, for example to provide books for students to trigger students’ literacy motivation.

* 1. ***The Evaluation of School Literacy Movement***

In evaluating the implementation of the school literacy movement, there were two instruments to measure the success of the program. Those instruments were (1) reading journal as the instrument of observation and (2) interview by the community service team from the Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas Brawijaya. To make sure that the evaluation ran well, the principal and teachers were involved in the supervision activities routinely and continuously. The school, however, did not involve the school committee and parents. The result of the evaluation, therefore, is not complete because the school evaluated what was seen from the fifteen-minute reading but not on the improvement of reading habit at home (by involving parents in the evaluation). Therefore, it is advisable that this school was able to conduct the evaluation in the future by asking the parents’ comment on the students’ literacy progress because parents’ involvements are also necessary to get the students love to read (Andayani, n.d.; Antoro et al., 2018; Gehsmann, 2012).

In the reading habituation program, the teacher records the daily activities in the reading journal which was recorded in the journal from Friday, August 16, 2019 to Monday, September 9, 2019 in grades 1, 3-6 elementary school. The activity was not carried out in grade 2 because the school did not have students in the class. The reading journal was to evaluate the effectiveness of the students’ literacy improvement activity by the fifteen-minute reading (Fakhruddin, 2018). In this activity, students were to read books of various themes including health, character building, healthy food, spiritual stories and folklore. The reading time is before the lesson started (between 07.40 - 08.30); before school ended (between 13:20 - 14:45); and before the Scout class (between 10.35 - 10:45 on Friday).

The reading methods used by the teachers were various, including (1) the teacher read a book, students listened while looking at a picture; (2) one of the students read to his/her friends; (3) before students read, the teacher gave an explanation of the title and gives students the opportunity to provide responses; (4) each student read aloud; (5) the teacher told stories and the students retold; (6) teachers and students read together; (7) students guessed the story through the picture; and (8) reading alternately between teacher and students. These various reading activities are important because reading is a receptive skill in which the students (or the readers) are expected to get the general or detail information from the text. By implementing various techniques in reading, students are able to learn and understand more successfully (Assistant, 2008; Fisher, 2016). Overall, the reading activities can be divided into the bottom-up model in which the readers read all the words before understanding it; top-down model in which the teachers implemented game so that the readers applied their previous knowledge to relate with a text and to connect these to new information found in the text in order to understand it; and the interactive model in which the teachers should find reading instructions according to this model to boost readers’ skill (Assistant, 2008; Fisher, 2016; Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016).

In the implementation of the fifteen-minute reading activity, there were two aspects observed by the teachers and recorded in the reading journals, including:

* + 1. ***Verbal Observation***

From the verbal observations, it was found that there were students who expressed an interest in the reading activities evidenced by (1) asking questions in accordance with reading material; and (2) commenting according to reading material. The teacher’s observations are in line with the interview results to the students stating that most of the students were interested in the fifteen-minute reading activity.However, there were also students who showed less interest and did activities that were not related to the reading activities, evidenced by (1) students talked to themselves, (2) students kept very quiet, and (3) students did some chats with friends. This condition was challenging for the teachers because the teachers had to find ways to attract students’ attention on the reading activities because reading is the core activity to lead students for further comprehension on other subjects. In other words, the students who were not interested in reading activity might also countered difficulties in comprehending other subjects (Endah, Thahar, & Asri, 2018; Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Therefore, the result of the verbal observation should motivate teachers to let the students know that their interest in reading activity might be helpful in comprehending other materials.

* + 1. ***Non-Verbal Observation***

While from the nonverbal observations, it was seen that there were students who were interested and uninterested in reading activities. The students who were interested were enthusiastic in listening to the texts read by the teacher or other students. However, there were also students who were less cooperative, evidenced by (1) students were doing other tasks, (2) students were listening to their friends, (3) students were reading other books, and (4) students were busy with themselves. Interestingly, from the observations through the reading journal, upper class students (grades 5 and 6) showed less interest in the reading activities, while students in the lower grades (grades 1-4) were more interested in the reading activities. It was possible because upper class students were not accustomed to reading from the early age so it required a relatively longer time to get them used to reading books.

1. **Conclusion**

In general, SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang had already had appropriate potential, infrastructure, and internal resources. This school had enough spaces for the students to learn both inside and outside the classroom seen from the wide schoolyard and classrooms in the school. Despite lack of students (there were only ten total students from grade 1 – 6), this school had prominent facilities, one of which was the internet connection that was useful for the teaching and learning process. Also, this school implemented technology in the teaching and learning process, one of the examples was using the laptop and the LCD projector to watch the visual aids in the teaching and learning process.

This school, however, did not have proper quality of human resources because most of the teachers were new and did not have educational background in teaching. Also, SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang faced some obstacles such as lack of involvement of parties outside the school including school committees, parents, school supervisors, local education offices, and other communities. Another obstacle was the lack of up-to-date reading books in SD YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang. There were many books in the classroom and in the library. Those books, however, were out of date. Therefore, this school needed support, especially financial ones to provide appropriate updated books for the students.

After the program held by the community service team from the Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas Brawijaya Malang, the teachers of SDK YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang were more motivated to do the fifteen- minute reading activity every day and link contextual content of learning material to aspects of daily activities, local wisdom, and literacy activities in learning practices. In brief, the fifteen-minute reading activity became the flagship reading tradition of SDK YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang which resulted the students, teachers, education staff and principals improve the attitudes that reflect the model of literacy. The school literacy movement carried out by the community service team from Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas Brawijaya Malang received positive responses. The teacher conveyed that the material given by this team was very clear and easy to follow, was relevant to the objectivity of the training. The facilitators, moreover, were very good at the material delivery and clarity. Furthermore, the facilitators’ ability to answer questions was very good. The teachers of SDK YBPK Ngaglik Sukun Malang also expressed their gratitude because the program that was held was very helpful to support school literacy. They hoped that there would be more programs to help and support the school.

In brief, such community support is really needed, especially by schools that are not popular in the community. The role of the Ministry of Education and Culture is also needed in socializing educational programs - especially those related to the literacy movement. Local government support is also needed in the provision of adequate educational facilities, especially media literacy for elementary schools.

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**APPENDIX**