Assistance in implementing the learning stage of school literacy movement at YBPK Christian Elementary School Malang

Pendampingan tahap pembelajaran gerakan literasi sekolah di Sekolah Dasar Kristen YBPK Malang

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ABSTRACT

YBPK Christian Elementary School in Ngaglik, Sukun, Malang has applied the School Literacy Movement (SLM) at the stages of habituation and development with the support from the Community Service Team, Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas Brawijaya. The community service in 2021 was specifically aimed at assisting the school in implementing the SLM learning stage. At this stage, literacy activities were carried out in the pre-reading, whilst-reading, and post-reading activities. The post-reading activities resulted in several products, including mind maps, drawings, posters, and poems. The teachers observed that the students felt comfortable with the selected SLM activities. This also suggests that teachers are required to be resourceful in designing literacy activities. The programme evaluation reveals that some students were uninterested in the pre-reading activities because the teachers simply explained the vocabulary used in the reading. Nevertheless, the school is committed to keeping the SLM programme to help achieve the school goals of producing excellent graduates and creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere for the teachers and students.


1. INTRODUCTION

A lot of attention is given to reading as a language skill. Reading habits are related to reading interest and skills (Harianto, 2020). Developing reading habits takes time. Therefore, it should start as early as possible, such as in elementary school.

YBPK Christian Elementary School in Ngaglik, Sukun, Malang is a private school established on August 1, 1955, under the management of Yayasan Badan Pendidikan Kristen (Christian Education Agency Foundation). Based on Data Pokok Pendidikan (the Basic Education Data) of the Ministry of Education and
Culture in 2021, this school had twelve students. It had five permanent teachers and two administrative staff. The school facilities included six classrooms, two library rooms, two bathrooms, and an outdoor field. This school was accredited “C” in 2017 and has implemented the 2013 curriculum (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2021). Observations suggested that most students did not have reading materials other than the school textbooks at home. This was one of the reasons for organising the community service to assist the school in implementing the School Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Sekolah).

2021 was the third year of community service at the YBPK Christian Elementary School. In 2019, the programme focused on assisting the School Literacy Movement (SLM) at the Habituation Stage (Tahap Pembiasaan). The teachers were assisted in carrying out the stage in which the students were taught to read for 15 minutes every day before the lesson started. The teacher recorded the activities in a journal that contained a description of the activity and student responses. In the final evaluation of the programme, it was found that students welcomed the reading activity as they could read various stories other than the school textbooks, which ultimately improved their reading interest (Harendika et al., 2019). In 2020, the community service programme concentrated on the Development Stage (Tahap Pengembangan), where the teachers were trained to use several reading methods, including group reading and guided reading. The main achievement of the literacy activity in the development stage was fostering student interest in reading, especially increasing the ability to write sentences, understand words, and understand storylines in low-grade students and improving the ability to use sentence contexts to interpret new words and understand stories to the high-grade students. Following up on the 15-minute-per-day reading, the students were given nongraded assignment to write or draw pictures about the books they had read. The teachers also reported the students’ enthusiasm and interest in the literacy activities (Maharsi et al., 2021).

According to the Master Design of the School Literacy Movement (Desain Induk Gerakan Literasi Sekolah), in the third stage of the implementation of the SLM, namely the Learning Stage (Tahap Pembelajaran), students are expected to be able to improve their ability to understand texts and relate them to personal experiences, critical thinking, and communication skills while reading (non)textbooks (Faizah et al., 2016). In this stage, the students are required to complete graded assessments. The reading activities at this stage aim to support the implementation of the 2013 curriculum, which requires students to read books about general knowledge, hobbies, and special interests that can be related to specific school subjects (Novarina et al., 2019). The Learning Stage continues to apply the fifteen-minute reading daily with techniques such as reading aloud, group reading, and guided reading. The difference between the Development and Learning Stages is that in the latter the students are given graded and nongraded tasks, which are appropriate to the 2013 Curriculum. The reading materials also vary in the form of printed, visual, auditory and digital books (Faizah et al., 2016; Wiedarti et al., 2016).

In the Learning Stage, the objectives of reading activities for grade 1-3 students are to develop their empathy; identify facts and fiction, and use technology with the help or assistance from adults. Students in grades 4 to 6 are expected to present stories effectively and identify the types of texts and their purposes (Faizah et al., 2016). The reading tasks must be adjusted to their age and made periodically and gradually to improve reading comprehension. Low-grade students are assigned vocabulary-building activities, writing simple sentences, and reading simple texts. Meanwhile, students of the higher grades are expected to be able to understand texts of various genres (Slavin et al., 2009). Suggested readings for the lower graders are picture books or simple texts (fiction or nonfiction). Older students should read illustrated books with longer texts, novels, or digital books, among others (Laksono et al., 2016; Wiedarti et al., 2016).
This community service aimed to introduce the SLM Learning Stage at the YBPK Christian Elementary School, Ngaglik, Sukun, Malang and provide assistance for the teachers and students in implementing this stage to support the realisation of the SLM programme designed by the Ministry of Education and Culture and foster the students’ reading habits. Supporting and mentoring teachers is essential in this community service because teachers have a crucial role in raising student interest in literacy activities (Hastuti & Lestari, 2018). In addition, reading activities are essential for elementary school students because by mastering reading activities from an early age, the students will be able to understand reading materials more efficiently, both academic and non-academic contexts, which will be useful in real life (Slavin et al., 2009).

The assistance in the SLM Learning Stage at the YBPK Elementary School is expected to provide the teachers with insights and practice in implementing SLM. The teachers are expected to be able to continuously create an environment that promotes reading to all stages and levels of students. While improving the students’ reading interest and knowledge, such an environment will help in the students’ character building. These outcomes are essential for the parents and families who send their children to this school. This programme is also relevant for university lecturers and students to apply their knowledge and skills and make an actual contribution to the community.

2. METHODS

The community service programmes of 2019 and 2020 were the foundation for the programme in 2021. Implementing SLM designed by the Ministry of Education and Culture has become a challenge, especially for smaller schools (Maharsi et al., 2021; Widodo, 2020). YBPK Elementary School needed external support, one of which was Universitas Brawijaya, through community service. In 2021, the teachers joined workshops (tutorials and peer-teaching practice) before working with the students. Figure 1 outlines SLM at YBPK Elementary School, Ngaglik, Malang.

The method of implementing the Learning Stage in this community service was as follows: (1) Observation. Preliminary observations were conducted to gather information on the school, teachers, students, and the school literacy activities; (2) Workshop. The next stage was a workshop where the teachers brainstormed for activities that may be carried out in the SLM Learning Stage. The community service team presented the SLM manual from the Ministry of Education and Culture in this workshop. The team also provided reading materials that the teacher could use in class; (3) Sharing session. In this session, each teacher presented and discussed their reading lesson plan to get input from their peers; (4) Classroom implementation of SLM Learning Stage. After planning the reading activities in the
workshop and sharing session, the teachers now carried out the activities with their students. During the reading activities, the teachers made observations and recorded them in the logbook provided by the community service team; (5) Teacher Reflection. The teachers and the community service team met to discuss the teachers’ experience and findings. Guided by the community service team, the teachers gave evaluations and suggestions to their peers.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Observation

At this stage, the community service team held a meeting with the school Principal and discussed the evaluation of community service programmes that had been carried out in 2019 and 2020. The two previous programmes ran well; the teachers carried out the Habituation and Development phases in class. The community service team provided books, stationery, literacy posters, and literacy boards to the school.

Workshop

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the workshop was held online. The headmaster, teachers and staff participated in this session. The community service team presented (1) evaluations on the previous community service programmes, (2) LSM Learning Phase, and (3) writing workshops. Details related to SLM Learning Stage, including learning resources, teaching materials, learning strategies, and reading activities (pre-reading, whilst-reading, post-reading). At the end of the meeting, the teachers were asked to select one reading text suitable for their class and then plan the reading stages and assignment.

Sharing Session

In the online sharing session, the participants presented and discussed their reading plans (Figure 3). This session aimed to give support to the teachers to continue to carry out learning optimally amidst the pandemic. The teachers generally planned three stages of school literacy activities: pre-reading, whilst-reading, and post-reading. The teaching materials included student worksheets and thematic textbooks from the class the teachers were teaching. During the discussion, the teachers clarified and revised their reading plans, especially the task rules and requirements. For example, one of the teachers planned to assign their students to make pantun nasihat (a four-line “advice” poem), so it was necessary to explain the steps to make that type of poem before the assignment was given. On this occasion, the headmaster reiterated that the school fully supported the student literacy activities. For example, in making posters, the teacher could ask the school administrative staff to display student posters in the school area. This would demonstrate the school’s appreciation for the students and encourage them to stay active in the SLM.

Classroom Implementation

The implementation of the SLM Learning Stage was carried out in at least one cycle. During each process, the teacher instructed reading activities with graded assignments in the form of written projects, pictures, and other works produced by students.
Pre-reading

The pre-reading activities included: (1) Students sharing their personal experiences regarding the topics to be read; and (2) The teacher identifying the lesson topic, asking several brainstorming questions, previewing several key terms, and giving some background to the topic. To make the activities more interactive, a variety of relevant activities were involved, such as Q & A sessions, watching videos, and outdoor observation. All activities carried out by teachers and students at this stage were aimed at conveying the meaning and context of the texts as interestingly as possible so that students were more motivated to read (Herlina, 2019).

Whilst-reading

At the whilst-reading stage, the teacher and students read the text, both guided and independently. In addition, students also responded to questions given by the teacher during the interactive reading. The questions were a form of stimulation for the students to comprehend the reading given (Widyastuti, 2018). The reading materials’ themes were simple, daily topics, including Loving Plants and Animals, Unity in Diversity, Humans and the Environment, and the Benefits of Nature.

Post-reading

At the post-reading stage, the teacher checked whether students understood the reading given in several ways, namely: (1) Asking WH questions (what, where, when, who, why, and how) to the students; (2) Asking the students to make “advice” poems based on the texts they had read; (3) Inviting the students to conduct interviews; and (4) Assigning the students to make mind maps or drawings based on reading material. At this stage, looking at the students’ works, the teacher reflected on the level of the students’ understanding of the texts (Sulistyo, 2017). If students were able to produce a work that was relevant to the reading text and met the assignment, it could be concluded that they could understand the reading text properly.

Collecting the Students’ Works

Student works from the SLM Learning Stage are shown in Figure 4. These are sample works the students created in the post-reading activities. The works are (from left to right) an environment poster, a four-line poem about celebrating the country’s Independence Day, a mind map, and a drawing. The teacher assessed the students’ understanding of the reading. Understanding, in this case, is a bridge between the new knowledge obtained from reading material and the student’s prior knowledge (Subadiyono, 2014). In making posters, for example, students made connections between reading about
earth protection and their background knowledge and skills, like how to visualise the earth’s shape, write short messages, and select appropriate colouring.

**Teacher Reflection**

The teacher reflection was conducted in two ways: (1) The teacher recorded the implementation of the SLM Learning Stage in a logbook (Figure 5); and (2) The teacher discussed it with fellow teachers and the community service team. The logbook contains general information related to reading materials, an explanation of the reading activities and reflections on the activities. The discussion aimed to evaluate the reading activities carried out by each teacher in their classes. Based on the observation notes and the discussion, most teachers reported that one reading cycle was carried out for more than 15 minutes. (Fifteen minutes is the minimum reading time set by the Ministry of Education and Culture for the SLM.) The activities took more time because they were quite long and varied, starting from the pre-reading, whilst-reading, and post-reading. Various activities were applied so students could understand the reading properly and produce the expected outputs. In addition, the ability of each student to read was quite diverse; some read at a slow or fast tempo. Therefore, according to the teachers, full-stage Learning Phase activities were difficult to carry out because it was quite time-consuming, especially within distance learning. The teachers were concerned they would be unable to complete delivering the targeted materials for other subjects if they had to do more full cycles SLM Learning Stage. However, the teacher recognised the benefit of implementing the SLM Learning Stage for the students.

In addition to time restrictions and distance learning, implementing the Learning Stage was challenging because some students had issues using the Indonesian language and lack of interest in the reading material provided. However, teachers still felt motivated to find reading materials that interested
the students and select various activities to engage them in the reading process. The teachers also observed that this SLM activity helped them identify new activities to improve students’ reading habits and showed the teachers to be more creative and renew their teaching methods. The SLM program launched by the government has also inspired teachers to spend more time in literacy activities. Therefore, the teachers hoped this literacy activity would improve students’ knowledge.

Discussion

The SLM Learning Stage Assistance carried out in this community service confirms that the main objectives of learning reading in schools are comprehension (Harianto, 2020) and teaching literacy as a process (Novarina et al., 2019). With assistance in the three SLM stages – Habituation Phase (2019), Development Phase (2020), and Learning Phase (2021), it is expected that YBPK Christian Elementary School would be able to create a literate community and environment.

One factor that supports reading interest and ability is time to read (Novarina et al., 2019). In each reading cycle, the teacher divided it into the pre-reading, whilst-reading, and post-reading stages with a minimum time allocation of 15 minutes, which met the minimum time required in the SLM programme of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Widodo, 2020).

The results of the assistance programme at the YBPK schools suggest that reading is a complex skill, which includes a series of skills for recognising letters, punctuation, and meaning (Arminatingtyas & Ruhaena, 2018). Therefore, various obstacles that hinder a student’s reading ability should be overcome before they enter the reading stage. This is what the teachers have done at the pre-reading stage. In this stage, the teachers relate the students’ background knowledge to the current topic. This step helps students relate the material to a more personal experience. Special terms and new vocabulary are also identified so that students can clearly understand what they will read (Sulistyo, 2017). Various simple and interactive activities are presented in this stage to keep the students interested in entering the next step, the whilst-reading.

In the whilst-reading stage, to make it easier for the students to understand the reading material, they are allowed to read with the teacher or read in small groups. Asking students to retell the text can also show whether the students have a good understanding of the material they read. Teachers can also check students’ reading comprehension by asking them to look for specific information in the text (Sulistyo, 2017). This is one of the activities that attract the attention of the students of the YBPK School because the students are involved in active reading guided by the teacher. On the other hand, this activity is quite challenging for the teachers because they must be prepared to answer various questions such as new vocabulary or topics discovered by students, which often are not explicit in the text. Therefore, the teachers need to equip themselves with more knowledge. One teacher stated that students frequently asked questions about difficult words during the whilst-reading stage. Students asking questions at this stage is a good sign because it indicates that students are curious about their reading and want to read more. At the whilst-reading stage, students also learn to connect texts with new ideas (Herlina, 2019). Therefore, this stage is vital in increasing students’ reading speed and accuracy. The assistance provided in this community service motivates teachers to develop students’ curiosity through creative and exciting reading activities.

In the post-reading stage, students are asked to do an assignment, such as colouring, drawing, writing poems, and making mind maps. Writing in the post-reading stage is no less critical than the pre-reading and whilst-reading stages because it will measure the students’ reading ability. The better a person’s reading ability, the better his writing ability (Novarina et al., 2019). When students are equipped
with knowledge from pre-reading activities and reading materials in whilst-reading activities, then they can creatively express their comprehension by making posters, poems, or drawings. In short, in this post-reading stage, students are expected to be able to conclude, interpret, and describe what they have learned (Novarina et al., 2019), not only in written form but also in a visual form.

Reading is a process of sharing general knowledge, improving skills, and fostering communication (Novarina et al., 2019). From the various activities carried out in this SLM Learning Stage, teachers must better equip themselves with enough knowledge before teaching it to students. Meanwhile, reading requires students to open their minds to new ideas. The pre-reading, whilst-reading, and post-reading stages are a communicative process, both between teachers and students, between fellow students, between teachers, and between teachers and the school. The teachers have the most crucial role in the success of the reading programme, i.e., in shaping students’ reading habits, supervising each reading stage, and selecting reading materials, methods, and activities used in class. In addition, a teacher must also determine what students do, when they speak, and what form of language should be used. In short, teachers act as directors, facilitators, and sources (Subadiyono, 2014).

Although the assistance programme has left a good impression, it has found some limitations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers must adapt their teaching methods, and creative, interactive ways are not always applicable. Although the complete reading cycle cannot be implemented perfectly, the SLM programme is hoped to be maintained, especially when the teaching and learning process is back to normal. The teachers conveyed that completing the post-reading assignment takes a long time, so they expect reading activities to be carried out more regularly to familiarise the students with reading. The project should relate to what the students are learning in class. In addition, family support is also needed to instil students’ reading habits because parents and other family members can be role models in reading (Hilaliyah, 2016). The YBPK Christian School, therefore, needs to involve parents and continuously encourage them to cultivate a literate environment that can improve the children’s reading interests and habits.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The assistance in implementing the SLM Learning Stage at the YBPK school was a follow-up programme to the Habituation and Development Stages in 2019 and 2020. The programmes have received positive teacher responses. For the teachers, SLM is one of the character-building activities, especially in cultivating reading habits, which benefits the students academically. The assistance programme supports the government’s SLM policy. Although distance learning during the pandemic is not ideal for learning, the teachers try their best to carry out teaching and learning activities by existing health protocols and regulations.

To implement the School Literacy Movement successfully, several suggestions are as follows. Technical assistance is essential, especially for small schools struggling to get new students and prepare the teaching and learning system. A small private school usually deals with very few students from lower-income families who cannot give more attention to their children’s literacy activities. Support from the government will encourage the teachers and students in teaching and learning and literacy activities. It is necessary to involve parents in the SLM programmes so that reading is carried out at school and home, and students’ knowledge can expand. The school can introduce the parents to creating a reading environment at home. It is also expected that the school can sustain the reading programme after the completion of this community service project.
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