

## **Character Education Learning Strategies in Developing Students' Literacy Skills**

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### **Abstract**

The research aimed to describe character education learning strategies in developing students' literacy skills. The method used in this research was descriptive qualitative, where most of the data came from literature studies. The lack of interest in reading books (literacy) and critical thinking skills among students is one of the obstacles in Indonesia's education world nowadays. It is based on the fact that some students who lack interest in reading cannot think critically in processing and obtaining reliable and actionable information. Therefore, efforts, strategies, and methods used in learning are needed to foster students' ability and interest in reading so that students can have the ability to think critically in processing the information obtained in the hope of creating a golden generation that can compete in this era.

**Keywords: Literacy Skills; Learning Strategies; Character Education**

### **Introduction**

In the current globalization era, education plays an important role, is needed in life, and is considered a necessity for everyone. With education, all can learn, gain knowledge, and change a person's perspective or way of thinking. Currently, education in Indonesia is inferior compared to other countries. There are several causes of low education in Indonesia. One of them is the lack of literacy or reading interest of today's young generation both among students (elementary, junior high, high school) and among students, which is the cause of the low ability to think critically. Reading (Literacy) is a source of knowledge because a person can learn various things they want or do not know by reading (Literacy). The ability and desire to read affect someone's knowledge and skills. The more people read, the more they will learn new things and have many abilities. It means that the more things people know, the more they will be able to help them do various things they do not know and have not mastered. Therefore, someone with a high interest in reading will have more quality than someone with a low interest in reading (Benson, 2004; Hornberger, 2009).

It should be noted that literacy is an essential skill that every student needs to have in the field of learning. In simple terms, literacy is understood as reading and writing skills. Then, the definition of literacy developed into the abilities and skills individuals possess in language, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking, at a certain level of ability needed in life. Students need literacy skills to understand many subjects. One of the many subjects is character education learning. Character education is the process of planting and learning about the values of life. Character education is an education that serves to shape and develop a strong personality for students. Literacy in character learning emphasizes the skill of receiving information that focuses on several activities, such as reducing, presenting, and verifying information (Faguet & Sanchez, 2008). In this regard, several methods and strategies are used to develop students' literacy skills in the character education learning process.

## **Methods**

The research used descriptive and qualitative methods. This research aimed to describe learning strategies in developing character education literacy. Descriptive qualitative research was intended to explain symptoms or conditions during the research. Qualitative research aims to describe and reduce phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, cognitions, and thoughts of individuals and groups. Qualitative research methods are often called naturalistic research methods because the research is conducted in natural conditions (natural environment) and is said to be an ethnographic method. The data collection method used was a literature study.

## **Result and Discussions**

### **1. Factors Causing Low Literacy Interest**

Technology is developing rapidly and has become the needs of every individual today, especially internet technology. The development of internet technology has created many types of social media. It is also supported by the development of mobile phone technology (Smartphones/gadgets), which provides facilities for current social media users. Social media usage makes it easier to communicate with friends and family who cannot meet due to long distances. As it can be observed nowadays, social media is used as a medium to provoke others. In addition, social media also has a negative impact on society.

Providing false information or news (Hoax) and others. Social media can be said to be a razor blade that can be used for good things and vice versa; it can be a means of killing and destroying someone.

Social media usage can change people's character and behavior. The emergence and growing development of social media nowadays impact children's behavior at various levels, such as society being less normal and interacting and communicating with the community because they are too busy with their smartphones and do not care about their surroundings. Social media also usually causes children to become unruly because they do not want to learn and spend their time playing with their devices. The emergence of a 'top' technology called the smartphone is one of the causes of low interest in literacy or willingness to read books because the features offered are more interesting, such as Twitter, Friendster, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, various games, and others that can seize the attention of most people from reading books. The impact of technology and knowledge development is extensive in using teaching materials in schools (Medina-Jerez, Middleton, & Orihuela-Rabaza, 2011). In the learning implementation, most students pay less attention to the material, do not understand it, and only expect grades.

### **2. Lack of Literacy Impacts**

- a. Lack of ability to understand, master, communicate, and use knowledge and technology to produce high-quality products and develop the country.
- b. Lack of insight and limited knowledge can reduce thinking and easily overwhelm one with negative notions and forces.
- c. Lack of literacy skills will make someone's creativity not develop. Creative thinking can be realized when stakeholders can develop their thinking and react quickly to the environment, which can be trained in literacy activities. The innovative ideas that occur can cause a person to be more productive and beneficial for themselves and those around them.
- d. Difficulty in improving someone's quality due to lack of up-to-date information.

- e. Ignorance leads to indifference as they are reluctant to expand their knowledge and update themselves with the latest information. It gradually causes the affected person to shut down, become absorbed in their world, and ignore their surroundings. Lack of broad insight tends to cause difficulties in social life, lacking the ability to interact and communicate because they have less input than their friends around them who have broad insight because of the amount of knowledge gained through literacy.
- f. This reluctance of the younger generation is a loss to the nation that has lost the possession of a qualified and productive giver of ideas for the country's progress.

### **3. Implementation of Character Education Literacy**

Character education learning greatly affects values, norms, and personality formation, especially among students, because they are the nation's next generation (Regalsky & Laurie, 2007). Character education is essential for building a humane personality for the younger generation. Furthermore, the generation is invited to read carefully (literacy) and think of statements that can motivate them to deepen their desire to deepen religious teachings (Lopes Cardozo, 2012).

Based on these descriptions, the definition of literacy in character learning emphasizes news comprehension skills that focus on some activities, such as reducing information, displaying information, and verifying information. One way to develop students' reading and writing skills at school is by implementing or cultivating literacy and through habituation in the classroom learning process in each subject. The implementation of character education literacy can be seen as follows:

#### **a. Implementation**

The implementation of character education literacy in the learning process, where teachers use the curriculum application with a scientific approach through five stages of activities, which are covered in four core competencies, namely as follows:

- 1) Observing, in which the process emphasizes the meaning that occurs in learning.
- 2) Questioning, carried out by the teacher, includes the strength dimension (Strength) (a) inspiring students to improve and develop a strong belief in their potential, (b) having a fighting spirit and not giving up easily when faced with obstacles in the learning process in terms of attitudes, knowledge, and skills.
- 3) Exploring, the stages of thinking rationally and systematically from observable empirical facts to gain knowledge through reasoning. Associating, this stage is used so that students can use the scientific method and behavior to get answers to problems faced in everyday life.
- 4) Communicating, networking or collaborative learning defines cooperation as a structure of interactions systematically organized to facilitate the achievement of a common goal.

#### **b. Methods of Character Education Literacy Implementation**

##### **1) Habituation Method**

The method used in implementing character education literacy at school is the habituation method. By implementing and familiarizing themselves with literacy, students will have broad insight or knowledge that affects their character, especially in thinking, acting according to religious teachings, and doing good. Hornberger & Johnson (2007) states that instilling values or character teachings, such as moral ethics coaching, can overcome student behavior deviations. Thinking, saying, and doing good and right are inseparable and can be used to build human character.

Good behavior can be achieved by controlling behavior with the ability to read and have extensive knowledge related to phenomena, events, and issues owned or obtained through literacy. Students can control themselves in their actions and know what they can and cannot do. With high literacy skills, especially literacy in character, the actions that will be carried out will be based on the teachings of truth

## 2) Learning Assignment Method

The assignment method can encourage students to be more active in learning and understand mysteries and student learning outcomes (Luykx, 1996). Implementing the assignment method to character learning activities encourages students to actively participate and engage in learning activities presented in class and other representative locations. Student assignments are done in various formats, such as a survey on a particular subject, a discussion sequence, or another textbook description.

## 3) Discussion Method

The discussion method is a learning method related to problem-solving learning. The discussion method is a presentation method. In the learning process, students are faced with a problem that will be solved together in the form of a group and can conclude their discussion results. Discussion is an exchange of ideas between several individuals to have a common view of the perceived problem (Klaiber, 2009). Discussion is about having several group members exchange ideas intertwined with problematic questions, generate ideas, and review ideas and opinions to solve problems. The ability to have responsive scientific skills (Aalborg, Sullivan, Cortes, Basagoitia, Illanes, & Green, 2016).

The discussion method referred to in developing students' literacy skills is by providing a problem with the aim that students can exchange opinions to get answers, truths, and solutions to the obstacles faced. The discussion method used in learning activities will be able to stimulate students to think systematically, logically, critically, and innovatively in developing their way of thinking in solving a problem.

Developing literacy skills in the learning process can develop students' critical attitude, especially in answering various kinds of phenomena in society related to character. A critical attitude in students is necessary to foster sensitivity regarding everything that happens, especially in the surrounding environment. Thus, students must accept and filter the information obtained through literacy.

## 4. Learning Strategy

Strategy is a plan, step, and sequence in achieving a goal. Strategy is used as a reference in placing the activity process through well-structured and planned steps. Strategy describes the direction of action in achieving a targeted goal (Frisancho, & Reátegui, 2009).

### a. Inquiry Strategy

Inquiry Learning Strategy is a series of learning activities emphasizing a perspective and analytical way to get out of the intended problem (Hornberger, 1990). Inquiry strategy emphasizes students' activities in searching and finding. Inquiry strategy aims to foster expertise in thinking systematically, logically, and critically in developing students' thinking skills through implementing reading and writing skills as part of the mental formation process or intellectual skills development. To develop literacy skills through the inquiry strategy, students need to learn how to rely on the material provided and how to use and develop their potential. Developing literacy skills can help students develop their ability to think optimally, solve problems, provide solutions to issues faced, and easily master learning materials.

## **b. Discovery Learning Strategy**

Discovery learning is a learning process where students solve problems to develop their knowledge and skills (Gurven, et al., 2013). The discovery learning model was chosen to foster literacy skills in character education learning because it provides opportunities for students to think, discover, discuss, and collaborate through scientific learning activities to practice and improve critical thinking skills and find solutions, as well as gain knowledge about ideas that affect the improvement of learning outcomes. Implementing a discovery learning strategy requires students to be more active in reading, searching for information, and knowledge to solve problems given by the teacher. It aims for students to have more profound knowledge, memory, vocabulary, and understanding of the material studied longer than students who only get information from the teacher.

The learning implementation stage using the discovery learning strategy on character education is when the teacher provides an issue or a problem related to the material to be discussed with the Brainstorming method (collecting ideas or students' initial knowledge related to the material to be conveyed). Furthermore, students will search and collect data about the material and problems given (exploring) through literacy or reading books. After obtaining data or solutions related to the given issues, students will discuss or present the results obtained (communicating). After the discussion, the teacher will invite students to reflect or conclude together the results of the discussion and the material that has been obtained.

## **Conclusions**

Literacy skills are essential abilities that every student should have. In reality, there was currently a lack of interest in literacy from students. Therefore, character education learning strategies were necessary to foster and improve students' literacy interests. Several factors caused the low interest in reading. One of them was the rapid development of technology that produced various types of social media and offers various interesting features compared to reading books. Several methods were used to develop students' literacy skills, such as the habituation method, the learning assignment method, and the discussion method. In addition, the Inquiry Strategy and the Discovery Learning Strategy were used to develop students' literacy skills.

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