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Transformation of Literacy Corners in the Development of Deep Learning–Based Inspirational Classrooms in Elementary Schools

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Abstract

Low student interest in reading and the suboptimal integration of literacy corners into learning remain issues in elementary schools, where literacy corners generally serve only as book storage areas. This community service activity aims to transform literacy corners into part of the development of inspiring deep learning based classrooms to support a culture of literacy in schools. The program was implemented over three months, involving 10 teachers and 100 students from Ngenep 1 and Bumiayu 01 Elementary School, Malang Regency, through a participatory and contextual approach that emphasized the active involvement of teachers and students in each stage of the activity. Program evaluation was conducted using structured observation, reading interest questionnaires, analysis of literacy corner visit frequency, and semi-structured interviews with teachers and students. The evaluation results showed a 75% increase in visits to the literacy corner in three months, from an average of 2.5 times per week before the program to 4.4 times per week after the program, accompanied by a threefold increase in book borrowing in one semester. Qualitatively, students showed more active involvement in reading discussions, learning reflections, and various literacy activities. This indicates that the integration of deep learning-based literacy corners is effective in strengthening literacy culture and creating a meaningful learning environment in elementary schools, thus having the potential to become a model for managing corners.
Keywords:
Literacy Corner, Inspirational Classroom, Deep Learning, Reading Interest, Literacy Culture.

Abstrak

Transformasi Pojok Literasi dalam Pengembangan Kelas Inspiratif dan Inovatif Berbasis Deep Learning di Sekolah Dasar. *Rendahnya minat baca siswa serta pemanfaatan pojok literasi yang belum terintegrasi secara optimal dalam pembelajaran masih menjadi persoalan di sekolah dasar, di mana pojok literasi umumnya hanya berfungsi sebagai tempat penyimpanan buku. Kegiatan pengabdian ini bertujuan mentransformasi pojok literasi menjadi bagian dari pengembangan kelas inspiratif berbasis deep learning untuk mendukung budaya literasi sekolah. Program dilaksanakan selama tiga bulan dengan melibatkan 10 guru dan 100 siswa SD Mitra melalui pendekatan partisipatif dan kontekstual yang menekankan keterlibatan aktif guru dan siswa dalam setiap tahapan kegiatan. Evaluasi program dilakukan menggunakan observasi terstruktur, angket minat baca, analisis frekuensi kunjungan pojok literasi, serta wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan guru dan siswa. Hasil evaluasi menunjukkan peningkatan kunjungan pojok literasi sebesar 75% dalam tiga bulan, dari rata-rata 2,5 kali per minggu sebelum program menjadi 4,4 kali per minggu setelah program, disertai peningkatan peminjaman buku hingga tiga kali lipat dalam satu semester. Secara kualitatif, siswa menunjukkan keterlibatan yang lebih aktif dalam diskusi bacaan, refleksi pembelajaran, dan berbagai aktivitas literasi. Hal ini mengindikasikan bahwa integrasi pojok literasi berbasis deep learning efektif dalam memperkuat budaya literasi serta menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang bermakna di sekolah dasar, sehingga berpotensi menjadi model pengelolaan pojok literasi yang berkelanjutan.*
Kata Kata Kunci:
Pojok Literasi; Kelas Inspiratif; Deep Learning; Minat Baca; Budaya Literasi.

Introduction

The development of education in the era of the Industrial Revolution 5.0 demands literacy as the basis for 2nd century learning (Kahar, 2021; Nisrina, 2025; Parisu, Saputra, Lasisi, & Education, 2025; Wulandari, 2025). Literacy is no longer understood simply as the ability to read and write, but rather as a competency for developing in-depth understanding, critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. However, various studies and field practices indicate that the implementation of literacy in elementary schools still tends to be basic (Ananda, 2025; Priasti, 2021). Reading rooms or literacy corners generally serve as physical complements, yet to be optimally utilized and integrated into the daily learning process. The deep learning approach offers a relevant pedagogical framework to address these challenges. Deep learning emphasizes students' active involvement in constructing knowledge through exploration, dialogue, reflection, and contextual problem-solving (A. C. Dewi, 2025; A. R. M. Dewi, 2025; Dwidana, 2025; Saadah, 2025; Santiani, 2025). In the context of elementary school literacy, this approach focuses not only on improving reading skills but also on fostering meaningful understanding of texts, critical thinking skills, argumentation skills, and collaborative learning. However, previous studies have largely viewed reading corners as a physical means of fostering reading interest, without systematic integration with deep learning approaches and without participatory stakeholder engagement.

This gap underpins this community service program. This community service involves teachers, students, and parents as a unified, interacting and supportive literacy ecosystem. The literacy corner is no longer positioned as a passive reading space, but rather as an inspiring learning space that encourages active student engagement in meaningful and sustainable literacy activities. This situation is clearly found at partner schools. Initial observations and discussions with the school indicate that students' literacy culture remains relatively low. This is reflected in the minimal independent reading habits, low intensity of reading corner utilization, and inconsistent literacy activities in daily learning. The existing literacy corner has not been sustainably managed due to time constraints, high teacher workloads, and limited resource support. In terms of content, the reading collection tends to be monotonous and does not align with students' interests, needs, and developmental stages. There is also low involvement of parents and the surrounding community in supporting a culture of literacy at the school.

Based on the situation analysis, partner schools was selected as the subject of the community service program because it required comprehensive assistance in the management and utilization of its literacy corner. This program focuses on transforming reading spaces through the development of literacy corners as a strategy for building inspiring, deep learning-based classrooms. The assistance is aimed at helping teachers revitalize conventional reading corners into engaging, interactive, and integrated literacy spaces, actively involving students and parents. The social changes expected from this program include increased reading interest and sustained student literacy engagement, the creation of inspiring classrooms that support deep learning, and the formation of a collaborative literacy ecosystem at the school and community levels. Thus, this program is expected to strengthen the literacy foundation of elementary school students as a basis for developing intellectual, character, and 21st-century

skills, while also serving as a model of good practice that can be replicated by other elementary schools in optimizing deep learning-based learning through literacy activities.

Method

This community service program employed a participatory, collaborative, and educational approach that positioned teachers, students, and school stakeholders as both subjects and active partners throughout all stages of the activity. The partner institutions were SDN Ngenep 01 Elementary School and Bumiayu 01 Elementary School. The program focused on transforming school reading rooms into participatory literacy corners to strengthen literacy culture and promote deep learning–based innovative instruction. Activities were organized into planning, implementation, and evaluation phases. The planning phase involved initial coordination with schools to determine objectives, roles, and implementation mechanisms, followed by field observations, group discussions, and needs analysis to examine students' literacy culture, reading corner utilization, teacher readiness, and availability of supporting facilities. These findings informed the design of training strategies, mentoring materials, and literacy corner transformation models suited to school contexts. The implementation phase consisted of participatory training and workshops to enhance teachers' capacity to manage deep learning–oriented literacy instruction, covering literacy activity design, simple media and reading material development, and the arrangement of interactive, student-friendly classrooms and literacy corners. This phase also included practice-based mentoring (learning by doing), inspirational class competitions, and collaboration with parents and the community in providing reading materials and supporting literacy environments. The evaluation phase was conducted continuously through observation, interviews, documentation, and reflective discussions with teachers and school leaders, focusing on literacy corner utilization, student engagement, and school readiness for program sustainability.

Results and Discussion

The results of this community service program indicate a positive transformation in the school literacy environment following the implementation of participatory literacy corner development. Initial coordination, observations, and needs mapping revealed that students' engagement with the reading corner was still limited, with an average visit frequency of only two to three times per week and minimal book borrowing activity. After the literacy corner transformation and teacher training on deep learning–based literacy instruction, visible changes occurred in the physical arrangement and pedagogical use of the reading spaces. Classrooms and reading corners became more interactive, visually engaging, and student-friendly, incorporating student work displays, thematic reading materials, and simple learning media developed during workshops. Teachers demonstrated improved competence in designing literacy-integrated learning activities, applying discussion-based, reflective, and exploratory strategies that encouraged students to read not only for assignment completion but also for inquiry and personal interest.

Furthermore, student participation in literacy activities showed a marked increase. Observation and documentation during the mentoring phase indicated more frequent use of

the literacy corners, higher student enthusiasm during reading sessions, and more active involvement in class discussions linked to reading materials. The inspirational class competition also fostered collaboration, creativity, and a sense of ownership among teachers and students in maintaining attractive literacy spaces. Support from parents and the school community, particularly in providing reading materials and decorating literacy corners, strengthened the collaborative ecosystem around the program. Evaluation findings suggest that the schools are increasingly prepared to sustain the initiative independently, as reflected in teachers' commitment to continuing literacy-based classroom practices and integrating literacy corners into routine learning activities, contributing to the development of a more meaningful and enjoyable literacy culture.

Figure 1. The Team Conducts Initial Coordination

The subsequent stage involved the implementation of literacy training and workshops aimed at strengthening teachers' competencies in managing creative and meaningful literacy activities. This phase engaged teachers, students, parents, and school administrators of SDN Ngenep 01 in a series of structured and participatory activities, including classroom layout design, the creation of bookshelves from recycled materials, the arrangement of literacy corners, and the execution of creative literacy programs such as Morning Literacy, Joint Reading Day, and the Inspirational Class Competition. These activities not only improved the physical quality of classroom literacy spaces but also encouraged collaborative engagement among members of the school community. The participatory model fostered a shared sense of responsibility, where students and parents contributed to decorating literacy corners and providing reading materials, thereby transforming the literacy space into a collective learning environment rather than merely a facility.

Evaluation of the training demonstrated a notable increase in teachers' understanding of deep learning concepts and contextual literacy practices. This improvement was reflected in the growing variety, creativity, and instructional integration of literacy activities within classroom learning. Literacy practices shifted from routine reading tasks toward more reflective, discussion-based, and student-centered learning experiences that supported critical thinking and active engagement. Furthermore, the influence of the program extended to SDN Bumiayu 01 as a partner school, where similar literacy corner development and deep learning–based literacy activities began to be adopted. This indicates that the program not only improved

teacher capacity but also stimulated institutional change toward a more sustainable and meaningful school literacy culture.

Figure 2. Literacy training and workshops and deep learning approaches

The impact of the program's implementation is clearly visible in Figure 3, which shows the reading corner functioning as a reading garden or active mini-library within the classroom. The presence of this reading corner has driven an increase in average student visits, as shown in Figure 1.
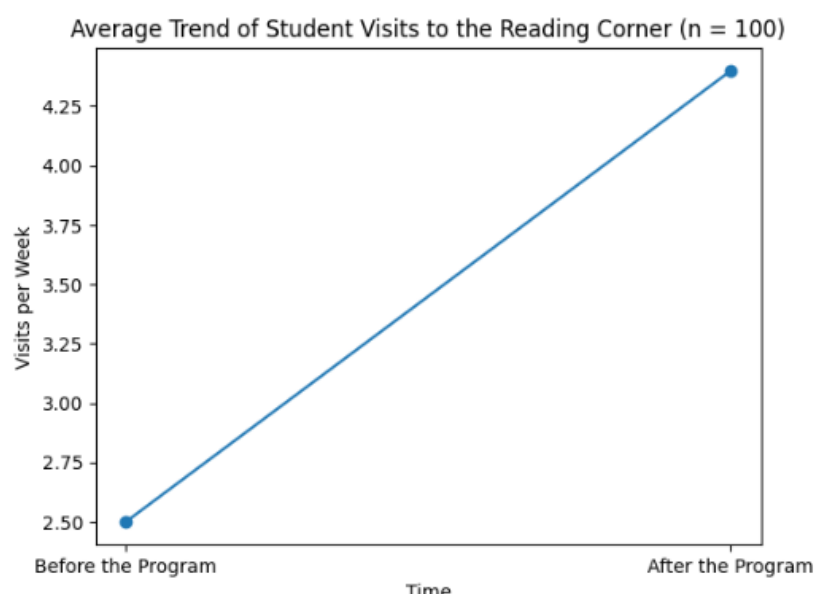
Graph 1. Student Visits to the Reading Corner

Chart 1 shows an increasing trend in average student visits to the reading corner from 2.5 times per week before the program to 4.4 times per week after the program, or an increase of 75% within three months. Quantitatively, the implementation of the literacy corner transformation program also had a positive impact on student literacy behavior, as indicated by an increase in reading interest from two times to an average of four to five times per week and a threefold increase in the frequency of borrowing books in one semester. These findings indicate that the integration of deep learning and participatory design approaches not only improves the physical function of the reading corner as an inspiring literacy space but also encourages real and sustainable student engagement and changes in literacy behavior. These

quantitative findings are reinforced by an interview excerpt, in which one teacher stated, "Students now read more often without being asked, even in their free time they go straight to the reading corner." Parents also confirmed the change in student behavior at home, stating, "Children are more interested in bringing and reading books than before."
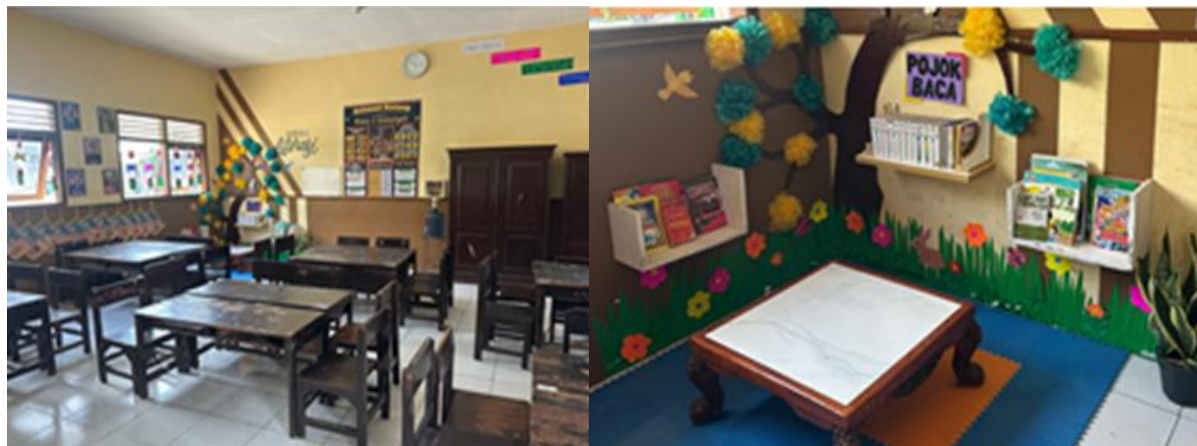
Figure 3. Reading corner

As a follow-up to the program, after all classes had reading corners, an Inspirational Class Competition was held, as shown in Figure 4. This activity involved collaboration between teachers, parents, and students in creating a creative, comfortable, and meaningful learning environment. Observations and reflections showed that this competition not only improved classroom aesthetics but also strengthened literacy habits. Students were more active in discussions, reading together, and expressing understanding through creative works. Thus, learning became more enjoyable, contextual, and centered on the student's learning experience. This demonstrates that the transformation of reading corners based on deep learning has a real and measurable impact on the school's literacy culture.

Figure 4. Inspirational Class Champion

The transformation of the reading corner in this program demonstrates that the literacy space no longer functions as a reading support facility but has evolved into an interactive learning space through the application of a deep learning approach. From a social constructivist perspective, learning is understood as a process of knowledge construction that occurs through social interaction, dialogue, and shared reflection. The findings of this study demonstrate that reading activities integrated with group discussions, questions and answers, and reflection can encourage students to develop critical, analytical, and reflective thinking skills (A. C. Dewi, 2025; Herlina, 2025; Khadillah, 2025; Swanto, 2025). These results are in line with previous studies which confirmed that active management of reading corners contributes to reading comprehension and increased student learning engagement (Fujiaturrahman, 2025; Janawati, 2024; Lestari, 2025; Maulida & 2022; Susanti, 2025).

The implementation of deep learning in the context of literacy is reflected in changes in classroom learning practices. Students not only read texts but are also trained to ask critical questions, connect reading content to various subjects, and express their understanding through creative iterations such as story maps, short plays, and reflective journals. These practices demonstrate that literacy evolves from a receptive activity to a meaningful knowledge construction process, in accordance with the principles of deep learning that emphasize exploration, elaboration, and reflection. The increase in the frequency of visits to the reading corner over a three-month period serves as a quantitative indicator that these changes have a direct impact on students' literacy behavior.

The success of this program is also inseparable from the implementation of participatory design, where teachers, students, and parents are actively involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the literacy corner. This approach strengthens the reading corner's function as a social interaction space that encourages empathy, communication, and active student participation. Parental involvement, although not evenly distributed, has been shown to positively contribute to students' motivation and consistency in reading habits, both at school and at home (Rosyadi, 2024; Rudini, 2025; Simamora, 2025). However, this program still faces several limitations and implementation challenges. In the initial stages, the limited collection of diverse reading materials relevant to students' interests was a major obstacle, resulting in a less than optimal variety of literacy activities. Furthermore, parental participation is still influenced by time and literacy awareness, requiring continued support strategies. Another challenge is the sustainability of deep learning practices amidst the high administrative burden and curriculum demands on teachers. This suggests that the transformation of reading corners requires the support of school policies and ongoing teacher capacity building.

Overall, the transformation of reading spaces supported by participatory management can foster a dynamic culture of literacy. Reading corners serve not only as providers of reading materials but also as agents of change in students' learning attitudes, transforming them from mandatory activities to meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences (Identa, 2025; Nuraini, 2024). Therefore, reading collections, strengthening parent collaboration, and ongoing teacher training are recommended as key strategies to maintain the sustainability of the program and strengthen deep learning-based literacy practices in elementary schools.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the planning, implementation, and evaluation of community service activities, it can be concluded that mentoring and providing reading corners with inspiring classroom designs rich in literacy have proven relevant and effective in increasing students' interest in reading and strengthening the school's literacy culture. The transformation of classrooms through reading corners and reading gardens enriched with literacy posters, displays of student work, and structured reading and discussion activities has created an engaging, meaningful learning environment that supports in-depth learning, allowing students not only to read but also to discuss, reflect, and build shared understanding. The sustainability and expansion of the program's impact require participatory literacy corner management involving teachers, students, and parents. In addition, continued service with a long-term approach that focuses on strengthening the school ecosystem, digital literacy, and comprehensive impact evaluation has the potential to develop this program into an independent, adaptive, and sustainable school literacy system.

Acknowledgements

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