



Improving Literacy Among Elementary School Students to Reduce Dyslexia in Pulo Panjang Village

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Abstract

This community service program aims to improve the literacy of elementary school students in Pulo Panjang Village to reduce the incidence of dyslexia, which is commonly found among children in the area. Literacy is a very important foundation in the learning process, which includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. In Pulo Panjang Village, low literacy skills are a major challenge, especially for students who are potentially dyslexic. Through a community service program focused on improving literacy, this activity involves teachers, students, and parents in comprehensive literacy interventions. The program also includes training teachers to identify symptoms of dyslexia and apply adaptive teaching methods. The results of this activity show an increase in students' literacy skills, which is reflected in phoneme recognition, vocabulary comprehension, and reading fluency. The use of the literacy tree as a symbol of students' literacy improvement also positively impacts the school's reading culture. This intervention is expected to reduce dyslexia symptoms among students, improve their reading skills, and prepare them to face future academic challenges.

Keywords: Literacy, Dyslexia, Community Service, Elementary School.

INTRODUCTION

One indicator of low literacy skills in Indonesia is reflected in the results of the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment, which ranked Indonesia 74th out of 79 countries, with an average reading score of 371, far below the global average (Lestari et al., 2020). These data show that students' literacy skills in Indonesia remain a serious concern, requiring comprehensive intervention to improve the quality of education (Hidayat et al., 2023; Siregar et al., 2021). Furthermore, the results of the 2022 Education Report Card and the National Assessment also indicate that Indonesia is facing a literacy emergency, with one in two students not achieving the minimum literacy competency (Imron et al., 2023). This condition is exacerbated by the low interest in reading among the public and the suboptimal implementation of literacy programs in schools, which has an impact on students' low reading and writing skills (Purab & Purwono, 2022). In addition, most elementary school students, especially those in first grade, still have poor reading skills, as evidenced by their inability to read texts fluently (Indrawati, 2020). This situation is in line with UNESCO data from 2018, which shows that the reading interest of Indonesians ranks 71st out of 78 countries, indicating that the formal education system has not been fully successful in achieving its goal of encouraging reading interest (Agustina et al., 2022). The phenomenon of low literacy in Indonesia, especially among elementary school students, is very concerning and requires serious attention (Farkhatun, 2020). This is evident from the 2018 PISA results, which show that Indonesian students rank 74th out of 79 countries in reading ability, confirming that they do not yet have the higher-order thinking skills that are crucial for text processing (Lestari, 2020). However, there was a significant improvement in Indonesia's ranking in the 2015 PISA reading literacy test compared to 2012. However, the improvement still did not show a substantial improvement, and statistically there was no significant change (Mr. et al., 2018) (Mirizon et al., 2021). Literacy is the main foundation in the learning process, which includes

the ability to read, write, speak, and listen effectively to understand and interpret information (Hidayat et al., 2023). Improving literacy skills in elementary school students plays a crucial role in shaping the holistic competencies needed to face future challenges (Prayoga et al., 2023). Strong literacy skills not only support academic achievement but are also essential in developing life skills and character building (Yohamintin et al., 2021). Especially in rural and coastal areas such as Pulo Panjang Village, Puloampel District, Serang Regency, literacy proficiency is vital given the limited access to formal and informal educational resources (Prayoga et al., 2023). This condition requires a structured, sustainable approach to improve literacy skills, especially for children who may be experiencing symptoms of dyslexia. Dyslexia, as a specific learning disorder that affects reading ability, is often undiagnosed or poorly treated in rural areas, significantly hindering students' academic progress. Therefore, serious efforts to improve literacy are essential to create an intelligent and character-building society, in which teachers, students, and parents play important roles (Meliyanti & Aryanto, 2022). This community service will help identify and reduce dyslexia symptoms through targeted literacy interventions among elementary school students in the region. This community service focuses on comprehensive literacy interventions tailored to the socio-cultural context of Pulo Panjang Village, integrating the roles of teachers, parents, and the local community to support children with dyslexia (Kisno et al., 2021).

METHOD

The main objective of this community service program is to identify and reduce the symptoms of dyslexia in elementary school students in Pulo Panjang Village through a series of planned and sustainable literacy improvement programs (Elitasari et al., 2023). The literacy activities in question are not only oriented towards improving reading and writing skills but also towards developing intelligent understanding and use of information (Wulandari & Hapsari, 2018). The importance of literacy is also emphasized through various programs such as the school literacy movement, which can foster students' interest in reading through 15 minutes of reading before class starts, as well as mandatory daily visits to the library to optimize the use of reading resources (Heryadi & Anriani, 2023). This community service activity was carried out using counseling or education methods related to improving reading literacy and efforts to prevent dyslexia in elementary school students in Pulo Panjang Village, through a systematic and sustainable approach. The participants consisted of teachers and elementary school students from Pulo Panjang Elementary School in Pulo Panjang Village. This community service activity will result in a literacy tree as a sign of their improved literacy skills and support the formation of an inclusive reading culture in the school environment. The program will also involve training for teachers in identifying the early signs of dyslexia and implementing adaptive teaching strategies for students with special needs (Ovavia, 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

This activity began with a preliminary analysis or needs analysis through a preliminary survey to identify the obstacles and problems faced by students and teachers in relation to literacy and dyslexia (Junadhi et al., 2023). The survey results showed that most students in Pulo Panjang Village had suboptimal reading skills, characterized by difficulties in recognizing letters, understanding simple sentences, and spelling basic words (Sukijan et al., 2024). This is in line with observations that conventional teaching methods are ineffective in addressing students' literacy problems, especially for those who show symptoms of dyslexia (Nisa, 2022). This situation is exacerbated by inadequate literacy resources at school and at home, limiting students' opportunities to practice reading consistently. The lack of school infrastructure and qualified human resources, especially professional village librarians, also contributes to low student literacy in the region (Suparya et al., 2022) (Hidayatullah & Munandar, 2019). This

condition highlights the urgency of comprehensive interventions, including strengthening teacher capacity, providing access to relevant reading materials, and implementing innovative teaching methods that are adaptive to the specific needs of students, including those with symptoms of dyslexia (Nuswantari & Manik, 2023) (Hakim & Sarif, 2023). Dyslexia often goes undiagnosed early on, especially in rural areas, resulting in ongoing learning difficulties for students (Jeni et al., 2022). This intervention is also in line with the government's initiative to improve literacy and numeracy in elementary schools through the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes the importance of an adaptive learning environment and adequate facility support (Warsidah et al., 2022). Therefore, mitigation strategies should include teacher training to improve their ability to detect and handle dyslexia, as well as the provision of adequate learning resources (Putri et al., 2024; Fajri & Jauhari, 2024). Reciprocal teaching strategies, which involve students in discussions and predictions, can be an effective method for improving student learning achievement and positive responses, especially in theoretical and discourse materials (Askianto & Kamhar, 2022). However, the lack of student responsibility for learning and the limited, monotonous availability of learning facilities and media are also significant challenges in efforts to improve literacy (Askianto & Kamhar, 2022).



Figure 1. Literacy Tree and Game Activities at Pulo Panjang Elementary School

This literacy tree shows an ornamental tree decorated with various posters or information hung on its branches. Each piece of information on the posters represents the literacy acquired during this community service activity, such as “Student Aspirations.” In the context of community service activities, this tree illustrates the students' efforts to understand the literacy provided by the presenters. Thus, this literacy tree symbolically represents the accumulation of knowledge and improvement in students' literacy skills during the community service period, visualizing their progress in applying written and printed information for self-development and understanding of the world (Wulandari & Hapsari, 2018).

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this community service activity is an improvement in the literacy skills of elementary school students in Pulo Panjang Village. This improvement is not limited to the technical aspects of reading and writing, but also includes an increase in comprehensive understanding, the ability to analyze information, and the application of literacy in the context of everyday life, which significantly contributes to reducing the symptoms of dyslexia. Through a series of structured interventions, students showed significant progress in phoneme recognition, vocabulary comprehension, and reading fluency, supported by positive changes in

reading habits and attitudes. Visual literacy, as a higher-level competency, was also introduced to enrich students' observation experiences, especially on the literacy tree. This improvement is supported by the development of students' confidence in writing their aspirations and posting them on the literacy tree.

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