

## GREEN LITERACY CORNER: A FORM OF STUDENT'S ACTIVE ROLE IN THE SCHOOL-BASED LITERACY INITIATIVE

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**Abstract:** Literacy, according to Kemdikbud (2016: 2), is "the ability to access, understand, and use something intelligently through various activities, including reading, observing, listening, writing and or speaking." The school plays a role as an educational institution where students promote the School-based Literacy Initiative (SLI). One of the strategies in building a literacy culture at school is to create a literacy-friendly environment. Sa'diyah (2015) said that creating reading corners accompanied by literacy supporting activities can increase students' reading interest and ability. This presentation discusses Green Literacy Corner's (GLC) establishment in a vocational high school in Malang. The material used in creating "Green Literacy Corner" is environmentally friendly and economical. For example, it includes used motorcycle tire waste, used monitor, CPU frame and keyboard waste, and used bottles and cardboard waste from several majors at the school. The GLC facilitates many literacy activities, including read-write literacy, numeracy literacy, digital literacy, cultural literacy, etc. Besides, it also showcases students' creations in Creative Products and Entrepreneurship activities. The GLC is equipped with free-Wi-Fi and QR codes to make it easier for students to obtain information using their smartphones. The GLC development is expected to provide benefits not only for schools but also for the students.

**Keywords:** *Green Literacy Corner, School-based Literacy Initiative, Literacy*

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### INTRODUCTION

The era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 requires vocational school students to be able to compete with the younger generations in other parts of the world. One way to improve this skill is by increasing literacy. This is in line with the spirit of the 2013 curriculum to build a golden generation of 2045. Indonesia's young age must be equipped with 21st-century skills consisting of quality character, basic literacy, and competencies (The Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016).

Literacy, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2016: 2), is "the ability to access, understand and use something intelligently through various activities, including reading, viewing, listening, writing and or speaking." UNESCO (2019) adds that literacy skills can empower and improve individuals, families, and communities. Because of its "multiple effects" or can affect a vast domain, literacy skills help eradicate poverty, reduce child mortality, increase population, and ensure sustainable development and the realization of peace. Illiteracy, however, is an obstacle to a better quality of life. It can be concluded that literacy is the ability to absorb information with various kinds of activities and improve the quality of life for a person and their environment.

The school plays a role as an educational institution where students promote the School-based Literacy Initiative. School-based Literacy Initiative is a comprehensive effort to make school a learning organization whose citizens are literate throughout life through public involvement (The Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016: 2). One of the strategies in building a Vocational High School literacy culture is to create a literacy-friendly physical environment. Therefore, the provision of a reading corner is the right and real step in realizing the School-based Literacy Initiative.

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The reading corner, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2016: 17), is a room equipped with a collection of books and acts as an extension of the function of the library. The reading corner needs to be beautifully laid out, attractive, and comfortable. State Vocational High School 12 Malang has a library room with an area of 168 m<sup>2</sup>. With 1300 students, the library room is not sufficient to accommodate all students who want to use the library space. This has an impact on students' low reading interest. Therefore, it is crucial to building reading corners in various places at school to increase students' interest in reading.

Several studies have been carried out related to increasing interest in reading through the construction of reading corners. Based on the results of research from Tantri (2017), Kiswati (2018), and Nugroho (2016) (Jayanti, 2018: 280 - 285), it is concluded that making an attractive reading corner can significantly increase students' reading interest and interest in visiting reading corners. Sa'diyah (2015) also said that reading corners accompanied by literacy support activities could improve students' reading interest and ability.

Based on the elaborated background above, Green Literacy Corner was established to provide a creative, unique, beautiful, and comfortable reading room for Vocational High School 12 Malang students.

This paper elaborates on the definition of Green Literacy Corner, the development of Green Literacy Corner, the literacy activities conducted in Green Literacy Corner, and the literacy activities during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Hopefully, this paper will benefit students, teachers, and school stakeholders who want to participate in the School-based Literacy Initiative. For the students, this paper will sharpen their awareness of promoting literacy at school. For the teachers, this paper will give visions of what literacy activities they can do and the students to encourage the School-based Literacy Initiative. This paper will enlighten their knowledge of how to design literacy acts that involve teachers, students, and other school members for school stakeholders.

## **THE DEFINITION OF GREEN LITERACY CORNER**

Green Literacy Corner consists of three meaningful words. Firstly, the term "Green" implies that the material for making this reading corner is environmentally friendly and economical. Secondly, the word "Literacy" means that we try to provide a forum for all literacy activities, such as read-write literacy, numeracy literacy, digital literacy, science literacy, financial literacy, and cultural and citizenship literacy. Thirdly, the word "Corner" implies that this literacy corner is not only a place to read or study but also as a place for students to express themselves both in the arts and literature. In other words, Green Literacy Corner means a unique and environmentally friendly place to explore literacy activities.

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREEN LITERACY CORNER**

The development of Green Literacy Corner involves three steps, namely planning and designing Green Literacy Corner, developing Green Literacy Corner, and promoting Green Literacy Corner.

### **Planning and Designing Green Literacy Corner**

A team consisted of teachers and students collaborated in planning and designing Green Literacy Corner. The students come from "Pejuang Literasi"—a student organization at school. The teachers and students discussed the material needed, the design, and the financial plan to develop Green Literacy Corner.

In the process of developing the Green Literacy Corner, the team applied several basic principles, including 1) Green Literacy Corner is made with an attractive and comfortable design; 2) The collections displayed at the Green Literacy Corner are diverse, from popular and science books, students' work, to student activity profiles; 3) The space used for Green Literacy Corner is well lit and air-ventilated; 4) The location of the bookshelves in Green Literacy Corner is easy to reach and not dangerous for students; 5) The collections on display at the Green Literacy Corner come from the school library and students' private collections which are regularly updated; 6) Green Literacy Corner provides a service process for the utilization of the Green Literacy Corner's group (the Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016: 17)

The team decided to use the waste from each department at school. The underlying reason was that it would be economical and environmentally friendly. For the development of reading corners, the team utilized motorcycle tire waste from the Department of Motorcycle Business and Engineering, used monitor waste and keyboard from the Department of Informatics Engineering. The team also utilized plastics bottle, plastics, and cloth waste from 'Waste Bank' at school (See Table 1).

**Table 1.** Waste Material Used in Developing Green Literacy Corner

NO	ITEMS	DEPARTMENT	QUANTITY
1	motorcycle tire waste	Motorcycle Business and Engineering	2 units
2	CPU frame	Informatics Engineering	12 units
3	monitor	Informatics Engineering	4 units
4	keyboard	Informatics Engineering	4 units
5	Small Plastics bottles	Waste Bank	100 pcs
6	Large plastic bottles	Waste Bank	50 pcs
6	Plastics and cloth	Waste Bank	5 sacks

Although most of the materials used in developing Green Literacy Corner came from waste and used materials, the team also bought several materials, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Material Needed in Developing Green Literacy Corner

NO	ITEMS	PRICE	QUANTITY
1	Cement	Rp. 18.000,-	1 Sack ( 5 Kg)
2	Thinner B	Rp. 23.000,-	1 tin
3	brush 1"	Rp. 3.500,-	2 pieces
4	paint Pycoulux 200 cc	Rp. 15.500,-	3 tins
5	Pylox 109	Rp. 26.000,-	2 tins
6	Gun Glue refill	Rp. 24.000,-	3 Pack
7	Castol Glue	Rp. 62.000,-	1 Kg
8	Asturo paper	Rp. 3.000,-	3 sheets
9	Double Tape large	Rp. 8.000,-	3 pieces

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10	Art paper	Rp. 6.000,-	5 Pack
11	Manila paper	Rp. 2.000,-	6 sheets

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### Developing Green Literacy Corner

There were three gazebos at school. From those three gazebos, the team chose one gazebo located next to the library. The gazebo is located above the sports warehouse. The size of gazebo was approximately 5 x 4 meters square. It was made of wood. The fence was made from iron, and the roof was made of roof tiles. Trees and a fish pool surrounded the gazebo. The gazebo was previously used as a place for students to hang out during the break.

It took almost a week to build the Green Literacy Corner. On the first day, students started cleaning the gazebo, collected waste materials from each department, and buy other materials needed.

On the second and third day, students made unique bookshelves from the waste of monitors and CPU frames. They decorated the bookshelves by painting them with colorful paint. Motorcycle tire waste was made into a unique table. Bottle, plastics, and cloth waste from 'Waste Bank' were made into Eco-bricks. Then, these eco-bricks were made into a tree, chairs, and a table. The other students designed wall-magazines and QR-code from students' artworks. The wall-magazines contained student's writings related to students' activities in literacy. The students also displayed their paintings, taken from the product of Creative Products and Entrepreneurship Subject. The products were lanterns made from newspaper, bags made from boxes and cloth, souvenirs made from keyboards, dresses made from plastic bags and instant noodle wrap, and many others. Those products were equipped with QR-code. By scanning the QR-code, the visitors will know the materials needed and procedures for making the products.

Finally, on the fourth day, the team set the layout of Green Literacy Corner. The bookshelves were arranged and loaded with books collection taken from the library. The students' artworks were arranged. The tables and chairs made of motorcycle tires and eco-bricks were also organized.

### Promoting Green Literacy Corner

After the Green Literacy Corner was established, the students from 'Pejuang Literasi' extracurricular promoted the reading corners by distributing brochures to other students at school, students of different schools nearby, and society around the school area. The students also announced the establishment of Green Literacy Corner using social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. The students of 'Pejuang Literasi' extracurricular often create Vlogs and posters related to their literacy activities and upload them on Instagram and YouTube.

Moreover, Green Literacy Corner collaborated with nearby schools to hold literacy activities and opened opportunities for the surrounding community to use Green Literacy Corner as a reading corner. Visitors are free to read all book collections provided at Green Literacy Corner. The visitors will be served and guided by 'Pejuang Literasi' extracurricular members. For the time being, students of SDN Balarjosari 2 regularly visit Green Literacy Corner. The students read the children's books provided in Green Literacy Corner and are taught how to tell stories and how to create artwork from waste.

### THE ACTIVITIES HELD IN GREEN LITERACY CORNER

There were several literacy activities done by students at Green Literacy Corner. Firstly, to promote

Read-write literacy, students read some novels or other books during the break or after school. Not only reading, but students also make reading reports that can be displayed on wall-magazines. Secondly, students and teachers can utilize Green Literacy Corner as an outdoor classroom to have a new learning experience.

Thirdly, to promote culture and citizenship literacy, students of 'Pejuang Literasi' extracurricular made storytelling performance with students from SDN Balarjosari 2. One of the students of the 'Pejuang Literasi' extracurricular, namely Rosa Ayu Dewanti, taught elementary school students how to tell a story either in Indonesian or in English. Her activity got attention from The Ministry of Education and Culture, and they made a short movie about her profile as 'Murid Penggerak' (student activator) in literacy. Fourthly, students from other extracurricular also used Green Literacy Corner as their meeting room. Fifthly, to promote numeracy literacy and financial literacy, students designed wall-magazines containing information related to those topics. Sixthly, to promote digital literacy and science literacy, students add more QR codes for the products displayed and the articles or news written on wall-magazines. Students can use their mobile phones to scan the QR-code to get more information about the said product.

Students of 'Pejuang Literasi' extracurricular hold literacy campaign as part of School-based Literacy Initiative activities every Sunday on Ijen Boulevard. They display a literacy poster and provide literacy games. Then, they invited some children on car-free day events to play using a game-board and introduce them to literacy. The students also opened for book donations. They made souvenirs from a used bottle for each book donated by the visitors.

The establishment of Green Literacy Corner has attracted some students to visit it and enjoy many activities. More students visited and became interested in reading. The book collections at Green Literacy Corner were frequently updated to fulfill students' needs and interests. The alumni students also donate their books to enrich the collection in Green Literacy Corner.

## THE LITERACY ACTIVITY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Covid-19 Pandemic that has spread since March 2020 brings profound impact on literacy activities in Green Literacy Corner. In the first two months, all literacy activities stopped. The students could not visit Green Literacy Corner since they stayed at home. The next month the school principal asked the teachers and students to create literacy activities that can be done at home. The activities that were usually done at Green Literacy Corner then moved at home.

Firstly, the teacher asked the students to read any kind of books at home. After reading the book, students made a reading report and submitted it to the teacher. However, this activity made the students feel bored.

Secondly, the teacher asked the students to watch a short movie on YouTube. After watching the movie, students wrote their comments about the film and posted their Instagram comments. The students' responses were positive. They were interested in watching a movie that was different from the other film.

Thirdly, the teacher asked the students to write their personal opinion from their experiences during School from Home agenda and uploaded it on their Instagram. The students' responses were positive. They were genuinely express their feelings, problems, and expectation during School from Home agenda. The students' responses became insights for the teachers to evaluate their way of teaching.

Fourthly, the teacher introduced Extensive Reading activity using the Moodle Learning Management System. The teacher provided several short stories in English taken from YouTube and asked them to write their feelings after watching the short stories. Most students said that

they disliked reading in English. Some students found it interesting because it made them learn English in a fun way.

Fifthly, the teacher introduced Book Podcast – a review of a book broadcasted through an online platform such as Spotify or YouTube. The students listened to one book Podcast and made a written review of the Book Podcaster. They wrote about their experience listening to a book podcast. The students' responses were positive. Most students said that it was their first experience to listen to a book podcast. It was attractive to them. It motivated them to create their book podcasts. Therefore, in the next activity, the students started their podcast and posted it on their Instagram.

Sixthly, the teacher asked the students to create a video blog about the covid-19 campaign and memorable day's commemoration such as Independence Day, Children's day, etc. The students' responses were positive. They were very creative in creating the video blog.

Seventhly, the teacher invited alumni to have an online conference using the Google Meet application. The students discussed current topics such as school from home, learning motivation, students' competition, etc. The students' responses were positive. They were enthusiastic about the discussion. The students also got many insights from the talks.

## CONCLUSIONS

As stated earlier, Indonesia's young generation must be equipped with 21st-century skills consisting of quality character, basic literacy, and competencies. Therefore, one of the strategies in building a literacy culture in Vocational High School is to create a literacy-friendly physical environment. Developing Green Literacy Corner as a reading corner is one way of promoting school-based literacy initiative. From the elaboration in this paper, it can be concluded that the development of a green literacy corner is affordable and beneficial for students, teachers, and school. For the students, Green Literacy Corner can be a means for students to sharpen their literacy skills. Green Literacy Corner can be an alternative literacy-based learning space that can facilitate the learning process for the teachers. For the school, Green Literacy Corner is a means of extending the school library to provide literacy facilities for students and teachers. Furthermore, Green Literacy Corner plays an essential role as an information center and a center for education, recreation, and creation.

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