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#### Journaling program development as an effort to improve student literacy skills

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The phenomenon of the low literacy level of elementary school students that occurs at UPTD SDN 3 Kerticala has an impact on students' common writing and reading skills. One alternative way that can be done to improve literacy skills in students, especially writing skills, is with a journaling training program. The type of research the author uses is qualitative research with descriptive methods. The subject of implementing this journaling program is class IV with 9 students. The procedure used in this study is the action class, which consists of 4 stages: (1) planning, (2) implementation of the action, (3) observance or observation, and (4) reflection. There were still deficiencies in the research conducted, as this research was not very indepth and only carried out once. Hence, the results could have been more optimal, and there were no significant results from implementing programs designed to improve students' literacy skills at UPTD SDN 3 Kerticala. This limitation is expected to be a reference for improvement and further program development.

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#### **ABSTRAK**

Fenomena rendahnya tingkat literasi siswa sekolah dasar yang terjadi di UPTD SDN 3 Kerticala berdampak pada kurangnya kemampuan menulis dan membaca pada siswa. Salah satu alternatif cara yang dapat dilakukan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan literasi pada siswa, terutama keterampilan menulis, yaitu dengan pembinaan program journaling. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan penulis adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Subjek penerapan program journaling ini, yaitu kelas IV dengan jumlah 9 siswa. Prosedur yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini, yaitu tindakan kelas yang terdiri dari 4 tahap, di antaranya (1) perencanaan, (2) pelaksanaan tindakan, (3) pengamatan atau observasi, dan (4) refleksi. Pada penelitian yang dilakukan masih terdapat kekurangan, seperti halnya penelitian ini belum terlalu mendalam dan hanya dilaksanakan sekali sehingga hasilnya tidak maksimal dan belum terlihat hasil yang signifikan dari penerapan program yang dibuat untuk peningkatan kemampuan literasi siswa di UPTD SDN 3 Kerticala. Adanya keterbatasan ini, diharapkan dapat menjadi acuan perbaikan dan pengembangan program selanjutnya.

Kata Kunci: Kemampuan literasi; keterampilan menulis; journaling

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#### INTRODUCTION

Literacy skills are essential in this 5.0 era. Along with rapid technological developments, there is also a need for strong encouragement in guiding students, especially in elementary schools, which form the foundation of tiered education, to equip them with competencies that will help them thrive in the future and achieve their dreams. The quality of education determines the quality of human life. The better the quality of education, the more competent the human resources will be (Missa et al., 2023). This can be achieved by optimizing literacy skills from an early age to support the development of students' potential. The development of information technology now encompasses all forms of technology used to create, store, modify, and utilize information in various formats, not just the use of computers or other communication tools (Khoerunnisa & Anwar, 2019). Therefore, literacy is a crucial skill in the learning process. Literacy is not merely defined as the ability to read and write but also encompasses how individuals communicate with others regarding knowledge, culture, and language (Rohim, 2023). Reading and writing skills are essential for benefiting all segments of society, especially in this digital age, where everything is conducted electronically. Digital technology users are not limited to adults or teenagers, but also include young children (Darmawansyah et al., 2023). Literacy is an individual's language ability (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) to communicate in different ways according to their purpose (Rachman & Verawati, 2022). Education is a means of acquiring literacy skills (Fahrianur et al., 2023). Education is not merely a medium for transferring knowledge but also a medium for developing critical thinking among students (Fitriana & Ridlwan, 2021). In schools, which are one of the educational institutions supporting literacy programs, many schools have implemented literacy activities or programs, although their implementation still faces numerous challenges.

According to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture (Permendikbud) Number 23 of 2015, the School Literacy Movement (GLS) begins before the teaching and learning process (KBM) starts, with the aim of improving the character of students through the habit of reading and writing. Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (GLS) is a collaborative social movement supported by various educational elements, involving school community members (students, teachers, school principals, parents) and the community (Ramandanu, 2019). This movement can help foster enthusiasm and interest in reading among students, thereby increasing their knowledge and insight, while also helping to shape their character (Sapri et al., 2022). Low literacy rates have led to increasingly intense efforts to improve literacy (Ninawati, 2019). One notable effort and breakthrough is the development of a culture of literacy. Therefore, reading and writing skills need to be mastered by students at the elementary school level, from the lower to the upper grades. Literacy skills are closely related to communication and are essential for everyone to possess, as they are invaluable in everyday life. If someone lacks literacy skills, they will struggle with writing, reading, speaking, listening, and ultimately communicating effectively with others (Kusuma et al., 2022). Communication in today's instant and easy era makes students more inclined to use social media and games than read books. This is not a problem when literacy levels are aligned; however, the facts suggest otherwise. In the future, reading and writing skills can support understanding and mastery of material in higher grades. GLS has a positive impact on developing a love for reading among students (Priasti & Suyatno, 2021; Salma & Mudzanatun, 2019). In their article studying SD Muhammadiyah 4 Kota Surabaya, Novarina et al. (2019) In their article studying SD Muhammadiyah 4 Kota Surabaya, Novarina et al. (2019) showed that GLS is not limited to reading activities alone. It also produces written works, such as pantun (traditional Malay poetry), poems, and short stories, which are published in the school magazine. Even a short story anthology book was published as a collection of short stories created by elementary school students.

express their thoughts, feelings, and information in the form of stories, instructions, and conversations. Literacy skills are beneficial for students to deepen their knowledge, expand their vocabulary, practice their verbal skills, facilitate their understanding of the material being studied, improve their brain function, and practice critical thinking (Harahap et al., 2022; Rohim & Rahmawati, 2020). However, many students are not accustomed to writing, which can hinder their learning process in the classroom. As a result, students

may become reluctant to take notes in class and struggle to review the material later. Additionally, in today's technological era, students' motivation to write has further declined.

Manage a country well. This is influenced by the level of intellectuality, which is undoubtedly a competency that is closely related to literacy (Neisya et al., 2022). In the phenomenon of low literacy levels among elementary school students, particularly regarding their motivation to write, one such case occurred at a school located in Indramayu Regency, namely UPTD SDN 3 Kerticala. Based on initial observations conducted by the student team at the school, it was found that the students had low literacy levels in both reading and writing skills. Students are unable to fully understand what they read or write, especially in monotonous learning processes or those without any feedback provided.

One alternative in coaching students to improve literacy skills, especially writing skills, is a journaling program. Journaling is a technique for expressing and understanding oneself, whether it involves feelings, thoughts, experiences, or knowledge, by writing them down in a diary-like manner (Fakhri et al., 2023; Turnip et al., 2023). Writing has numerous benefits for mental health (Paramita & Tjandrawibawa, 2021). According to Mustari et al. (2020), writing skills should consider several important factors, including the development and age of children, as well as enjoyable training methods. Reading can help children enrich their vocabulary, enabling them to express themselves more effectively. Journaling is generally distinct from keeping a diary of daily events. Journaling can be shared or published and read widely by others, while a diary is private and cannot be published, remaining only for the writer's use. Although journaling can be read widely, it has important personal value. Journaling is divided into two types based on the writing style: free and themed. Free journaling allows the writer to write about any topic that comes to mind. Themed journaling, on the other hand, involves the writer developing their writing based on a specific topic, but there are no specific rules regarding language; the writer records important thoughts related to the topic.

Several previous studies have discussed journaling as a means to improve literacy skills, such as the study by Windarto (2020), entitled "Kajian Keterampilan Menulis Menggunakan Media Jurnal Bergambar di Sekolah Dasar." In his study, it was stated that illustrated journals had a positive impact on the writing skills of elementary school students, and that when applied regularly, they could increase students' motivation to write. In addition, Masruroh et al. (2021) also applied the journaling technique to early childhood children in kindergarten to improve their writing skills in their article. The results showed an improvement in the writing skills of these children compared to their previous performance. Desysetyowati et al. (2023) also applied the journaling technique to early childhood children in kindergarten to improve their writing skills, as noted in their article. The results showed an improvement in the writing skills of these children compared to their previous performance. Dafit & Ramadan (2020) aimed to determine the implementation of GLS in two elementary schools. The study found that one of the activities was writing simple daily notes every Monday to encourage students to enjoy writing. This activity is also included in the journaling technique used to increase students' enthusiasm for writing.

This research is a form of community service that is one of the activities in the Teaching Campus program. Kampus Mengajar is a program under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (KemendikbudRistek) with the theme of "merdeka belajar" (free learning). Kampus Mengajar is part of the Kampus Merdeka program, which aims to provide students with opportunities to learn and develop themselves through activities outside the classroom (Wahyuni & Tranggono, 2023). Kampus Mengajar has provided a space for students to contribute as agents of change, enabling Kampus Mengajar activities to have a positive impact on all elements involved, especially school communities (Manihuruk & Hariyana, 2022). Based on the results of several studies presented and observations conducted regarding the phenomena encountered at the target school, the student team was interested in examining and implementing a journaling program to improve the literacy skills of students at UPTD SDN 3 Kerticala during the community service activities of the Campus Teaching program.

#### **METHODS**

The student team's method for implementing one of the Kampus Mengajar programs adopted the classroom action research approach. The student team directly participated in assisting students in journaling. The activity was conducted at UPTD SDN 3 Kerticala, Tukdana Sub-district, Indramayu Regency. It took place from February 20, 2023, to June 16, 2023, during the implementation of the fifth cohort of the Kampus Mengajar program. The subjects involved in this community service activity were fourth-grade students, comprising a total of nine participants. Regarding the procedures used to obtain an overview of the implementation results of the community service activity, the steps adopted were those of classroom action research, consisting of four stages: 1) planning, 2) implementation of actions, 3) observation, and 4) reflection.

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The activity consisted of four stages, namely 1) planning, 2) implementation, 3) observation, and 4) reflection. These stages were implemented as part of a journaling program designed to enhance students' literacy skills.

#### **Planning Stage**

Planning plays a role in determining and directing the goals to be achieved. Thus, work will be well-directed, thereby influencing the achievement of goals (Albab, 2021). At this stage, the student team conducted observations on February 20, 2023, by interviewing the principal and teachers at UPTD SDN 3 Kerticala regarding the literacy skills of fourth-grade students. In addition to interviews, the student team conducted direct observations during the learning process. The observations were conducted to assess whether the students could read and write. The results of the initial observation indicated that some students continued to struggle with reading and writing fluency.

Then, the student team from the Teaching Campus program discussed the programs that could be implemented. For students who were not fluent in reading and writing, a special tutoring program was implemented. Meanwhile, for students who could already read and write, a writing development program focused on journaling was created to enhance their literacy skills, particularly writing literacy. The necessary preparations for implementing the program included learning materials and teaching strategies, as well as preparing supporting tools for learning activities, such as markers, whiteboard erasers, and laptops, to supplement textbooks and support learning.

#### **Stage of Action Implementation**

Expressive writing can help individuals improve their self-understanding, enhance interpersonal and communication skills, express themselves more effectively, reduce stress, and increase their ability to adapt (Safarina et al., 2022). In implementing these activities, the steps for conducting the journaling program are as follows:

- In the preliminary activity, the student team asked one of the students to lead the prayer
- Then, after praying, the student team invited the students to do ice-breaking activities. "Up, Clap, Boom"
- The student team asked provocative questions as an introduction to the material to be discussed.



**Figure 1.** Asking Triggering Questions to Students Source:Service, 2023

- After that, the student team explained the material discussed with the title "Family"
- As an exercise, the student team asked the student to write a journal entry on a specified topic, namely "Family." Before the student wrote, the student team explained a little about journaling
- Students prepare a sheet of paper and a writing instrument, then begin writing



**Figure 2.** Writing Activity Journaling Source: Student's Team Documentation 2023

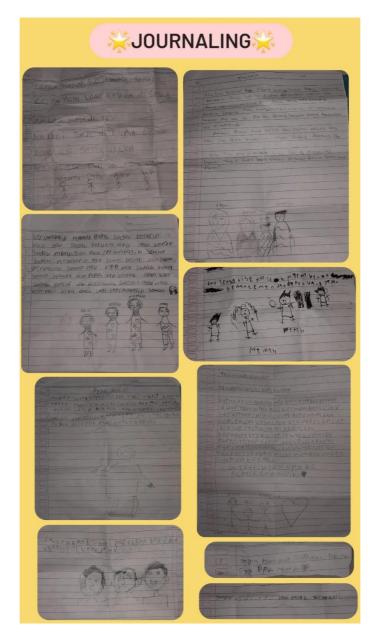
- The student team observed the student while they were writing
- After all students finished writing their journals, the student team asked them to collect their writing

#### **Observation Stage**

At this stage, the student team observed and recorded everything that happened during the activity in a notebook. The aim was to understand how the journaling program was implemented. Additionally, the student team observed the conformity between the plan and its implementation in the field. The students were allowed to carry out the journaling activities based on their understanding of the instructions given by the student team.

#### **Reflection Stage**

At this stage, the student team thoroughly reviews the actions that have been taken. Data and results from the students' journaling are reviewed to determine improvements for future coaching. This reflection aims to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program based on observations and documentation.



**Figure 3.** Writing Results of Journaling by Fourth Grade Students Writing Results of Journaling by Fourth Grade Students

Source: Student's Team Documentation 2023

Based on observations of students' journal entries, it was found that some students wrote less than one paragraph or only one sentence. Their notes were also not well organized.

#### **Discussion**

The implementation of the journaling program, carried out by the student team of the Teaching Campus program, is one of the efforts made to help improve students' literacy skills. During journaling, students are often directed to write down their thoughts and feelings regarding the theme presented by the student team, as a means of expressing their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and knowledge. Most students are interested in sharing their thoughts, but based on the journaling results obtained, some students still struggle to express themselves in sentences. This journaling activity should be conducted regularly to help improve students' writing skills and literacy, ultimately leading to improvements in their abilities. (Hensley & Munn, 2020).

Journaling, conducted by students at school under the guidance of the Kampus Mengajar program's student team, aims to improve students' writing skills. In general, students can follow the instructions provided by the student team, but consistency is needed to see improvement in their writing skills. Journaling can enhance Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) as it serves as one method to facilitate the learning process (Jarvis & Baloyi, 2020). Through journaling, students can improve their understanding, reduce the likelihood of errors due to misunderstanding, and provide opportunities for lifelong learning. Additionally, this journaling program also trains students in writing, serving as a platform for them to record language usage, experiment, and learn.

Teachers can also use the results of students' journaling as a form of reflection on the implementation of the learning process in the classroom. Examining the journal entries written by students based on the guidance of the Kampus Mengajar program student team reveals an opportunity to direct students to journal on themes related to the classroom learning process. The results of the journaling can help to initiate improvements in the learning process, so that the implementation of the learning process also considers the perspectives of the students (Zarestky, & Bigler, 2021).

#### CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of low literacy levels among elementary school students, such as students who cannot fully understand what they read or write, especially in monotonous learning processes or even without any feedback, has an impact on their writing and reading abilities. One alternative approach to improve literacy skills among students, particularly writing skills, is through the implementation of a journaling program. The primary function of journaling is as a form of reflection, enabling students to express their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and knowledge. Additionally, journaling serves as a practice platform for writing, a tool for recording language usage, experimentation, and learning.

The activities carried out as part of the Teaching Campus program still have shortcomings. Limitations in program implementation are one of the obstacles, as they result in activities not being carried out intensively enough, so that significant results from the implementation of activities designed to improve the literacy skills of students at UPTD SDN 3 Kerticala are not yet apparent. These limitations are expected to serve as a reference for the improvement and development of future programs. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to organize other literacy activities to enhance students' literacy skills, particularly in reading and writing.

#### **AUTHOR'S NOTE**

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest related to the publication of this article. The author confirms that the data and content of the article are free from plagiarism.

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