

**EMPOWERING ENGLISH LITERACY THROUGH READING CORNERS
AND INSTITUTIONAL BRANDING: A CASE STUDY AT FAVOURITE
EDUCATION CENTRE SITUBONDO**

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Abstract

This community service program at Favourite Education Centre (FEC) Situbondo aimed to address two critical challenges commonly faced by non-formal educational institutions: the lack of English literacy resources and limited institutional visibility. The initiative focused on establishing a Reading Corner to promote independent reading habits and enhance students' English literacy, alongside developing and distributing promotional brochures to increase public awareness and institutional outreach. Guided by Social Literacy Theory and Constructivist Learning Theory, the program was implemented through a four-stage process: needs identification, program design, implementation, and evaluation. The results showed a significant increase in student engagement with English texts and positive community responses to the brochure. This integrated approach proves that strategic and context-based interventions can effectively support language learning and institutional development in non-formal education settings.

Keywords: english literacy, favourite education centre, reading corner

INTRODUCTION

English language proficiency has become an essential competency in facing the challenges of globalization, both in the context of education, the world of work, and cross-cultural social interaction. Among the four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), reading literacy in English plays a crucial role as a foundation for the development of the other skills (Supena, 2024). Literacy does not only involve the technical ability to read but also encompasses comprehension, interpretation, and the application of information obtained from English texts in various life contexts (UNESCO, 2025). Therefore, improving English literacy has become a strategic priority in various learning programs, including those in non-formal education institutions.

In Indonesia, English language course institutions play an important role in supporting alternative and supplementary education outside the formal system. However, non-formal institutions, particularly in rural areas, often face challenges such as limited supporting facilities, low access to authentic reading materials, and a lack of systematic literacy strategies (Nathania, 2024). One of the consequences of these limitations is the lack of motivation for independent reading among students, which in turn affects the slow development of their English language proficiency (Harlina & Yusuf, 2020).

Favourite Education Centre (FEC) Situbondo is one of the English course institutions serving children and teenagers in the Situbondo area, East Java. Although FEC has been actively conducting teaching and learning activities, initial observations indicate that there are no dedicated facilities to cultivate a culture of literacy within the institution. Facilities such as a reading corner that provides engaging and easily accessible English reading materials have not yet been optimally developed. The presence of such facilities is believed to encourage students to engage in independent, continuous, and enjoyable learning.

In addition to literacy issues, FEC also faces challenges in terms of institutional visibility. As a non-formal institution, effective promotional efforts are essential to ensure that information about the course programs reaches the broader community. This is supported by findings from Banowati & Sardanto, (2021), who state that weak promotional strategies also contribute to low community participation in course programs. The development of communicative and visually appealing promotional media, such as strategically designed brochures, can be an important tool in strengthening the institution's position and image within the local community.

Arising from these issues, this community service initiative is designed with two main focuses: (1) the establishment of a Reading Corner as an effort to enhance English literacy through the provision of relevant, engaging, and easily accessible reading materials for students; and (2) the creation and distribution of promotional brochures as a strategy to improve the institution's visibility and outreach. This initiative is expected not only to have a positive impact on students' language skills but also to support the long-term strengthening of the institution's capacity.

Several previous studies have shown that the Reading Corner program significantly contributes to improving literacy among students. Apriyani & Elizar (2024), in their research at the elementary school level, found that the presence of a Reading Corner noticeably increased students' reading frequency and interest, with independent reading participation rising from 20% to 98% after the program's implementation. This effectiveness was linked to the availability of engaging and interest-based reading materials, as well as a child-friendly reading space design. Similar findings were reported in a study by Latifah et al., (2024), at SMP Negeri 15 Bengkulu, which confirmed that classroom Reading Corners could foster a

positive literacy culture and significantly enhance students' text comprehension. Additionally Rosyidin et al., (2023), through a study in Kampung Literasi 26 Ilir, highlighted that integrating Reading Corners with guided discussion activities in English also improved children's analytical and reflective skills regarding foreign texts. These three studies strengthen the argument that establishing Reading Corners, whether in formal institutions or local communities, is a simple yet impactful strategy to foster literacy, including in the context of English language teaching.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

The problems faced by Favourite Education Centre (FEC) Situbondo reflect common challenges encountered by many non-formal educational institutions, particularly in strengthening English literacy and institutional visibility. Firstly, the limited availability of accessible English reading materials for students restricts opportunities for independent learning outside of formal classroom sessions. Secondly, the absence of dedicated facilities that encourage independent reading habits results in students being less accustomed to actively and continuously developing their literacy. Thirdly, in terms of institutional development, FEC's promotional efforts remain limited, both in printed media and in the systematic distribution of information to the wider community.

To address these issues, we have designed two main solutions that are both practical and sustainable. The first solution is the establishment of a Reading Corner as a means for independent learning, allowing students to freely access English reading materials. These materials will be arranged on simple shelves made from recycled cardboard, designed to be attractive and environmentally friendly. The second solution involves the creation and printing of promotional brochures with informative and communicative visual designs. These brochures will include key information about FEC, such as flagship programs, institutional strengths, and accessible contact details for the public. This strategy is expected not only to enhance students' literacy skills but also to broaden public awareness of the institution.

METHOD

The implementation method of this community service program is designed by integrating two main theoretical frameworks: Social Literacy Theory (Gee, 2008) and Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1970). Social Literacy Theory underpins the establishment of the "Reading Corner" as a literacy interaction space that allows students to share reading experiences and build shared understanding within the learning community context at the Favourite Education Centre (FEC). Meanwhile, the Constructivist Learning Theory is implemented through the provision of reading materials relevant to students' interests and their active

involvement in creating and distributing promotional brochures for the institution, making the learning process and institutional introduction a meaningful hands-on experience.

The implementation of this community service program was carried out through four interrelated stages. The first stage was needs identification, conducted through direct observation and in-depth discussions with the management of FEC Situbondo. The results indicated a need to enhance students' interest in English literature and to optimize the institution's promotional strategies through more appealing printed media.

The second stage, program design, led to the initiative of establishing a Reading Corner with a collection of English storybooks appropriate for the age and comprehension levels of elementary and secondary school students. The books were selected based on light narrative content, engaging visuals, and educational value. Additionally, during this stage, institutional data was collected to support the development of promotional brochures.

The third stage, program implementation, included setting up the Reading Corner in a strategic location within the FEC environment to ensure easy access for students. Visually attractive and informative promotional brochures were printed and distributed to students and parents. In-class reading assistance activities were also conducted to introduce the Reading Corner and encourage students to interact with the available book collection.

The final stage was a simple evaluation, carried out through observing student participation in reading activities at the Reading Corner and collecting feedback from FEC staff and students regarding the usefulness of the Reading Corner and promotional brochures. This evaluation aimed to measure the initial impact of the intervention on improving students' English literacy and expanding public awareness of FEC.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community service program implemented at Favourite Education Centre (FEC) Situbondo produced two main outcomes: the establishment of a Reading Corner as a means of improving students' English literacy, and the creation of a promotional brochure as a strategy to strengthen the institution's visibility within the community. These two outputs were designed to address real needs observed in the field, namely the lack of engaging English reading materials accessible to students and the suboptimal dissemination of information regarding the institution's flagship programs.

The Reading Corner was designed as an alternative learning space that encourages students to develop independent and sustainable reading habits. Bookshelves were constructed using aesthetically designed recycled cardboard, combining functionality with eco-friendly values to attract students' attention. The

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reading collection includes English storybooks ranging from low to moderate complexity, such as picture books, educational comics, and short narratives suitable for elementary and junior high school students. The selection of reading materials considered thematic relevance, illustrative visualization, and educational content to foster initial interest and sustain reading motivation.

Observational findings indicated a significant increase in student participation in reading activities. Students began to utilize their free time for independent reading, both before and after class sessions. Some students even took the initiative to borrow books and read them at home, signifying the emergence of sustainable literacy habits beyond the classroom environment. This phenomenon suggests that the presence of a Reading Corner serves as a bridge between formal and informal learning in the development of foreign language literacy. These findings are in line with Apriyani & Elizar (2024), who reported a notable increase in reading interest at the elementary school level following the implementation of a Reading Corner, as well as Latifah et al., (2024), who emphasized that classroom reading spaces foster a positive literacy culture. However, the uniqueness of this program lies in its application within a non-formal educational institution—a context that has not been widely explored in literacy studies. This demonstrates that with proper planning, literacy enhancement strategies can succeed not only in formal institutions but also in alternative community-based spaces such as learning centers.

In addition, the program also produced a visual product in the form of a promotional brochure, aimed at increasing the institution's visibility and competitiveness. The brochure was designed to be communicative and informative, including essential elements such as the institution's profile, program advantages, participant testimonials, and contact information. The brochure's visual design was tailored to the characteristics of the target audience, particularly parents and potential students from the general public. It was distributed directly to students and parents, and placed at several strategic locations such as local shops, partner schools, and places of worship around Situbondo. Community responses to the brochure were generally positive. Based on brief interviews and a simple questionnaire, most respondents stated that they only learned about FEC and its programs through the brochure, indicating that printed media remains relevant for promotional purposes in areas not yet fully digitized.

These findings reinforce the results of Banowati & Sardanto (2021) who revealed that weak promotional strategies directly affect low community participation in learning center programs. While previous studies focused on this issue during the pandemic emergency, the present study offers a new post-pandemic perspective by highlighting the importance of economical yet effective printed promotional media. The integration of literacy improvement and institutional

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promotion into a single program represents not only an innovative approach but also a strategic and sustainable one.

Therefore, compared to previous studies that focused separately on literacy or promotion aspects, this program offers an integrated approach that can be replicated in other non-formal education contexts. In addition to meeting the specific needs of the partner institution, this program also opens new avenues for developing community-based literacy practices, while making a tangible contribution to strengthening the image and sustainability of local non-formal educational institutions.



Figure 1. Establishment of a Reading Corner.



Figure 2. FEC Institutional Promotional Brochure.

CONCLUSIONS

The community service program carried out at Favourite Education Centre (FEC) Situbondo demonstrates that simple yet structured interventions, such as the establishment of a Reading Corner and the development of promotional brochures, can have a tangible impact in two key areas: enhancing English literacy and strengthening institutional capacity. The Reading Corner has proven effective in encouraging independent reading habits among students, increasing their engagement with English texts, and creating a fun and inclusive learning space.

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Meanwhile, the strategic distribution of promotional brochures has successfully broadened the reach of information about FEC's programs, increased the institution's visibility, and strengthened its relationship with the surrounding community.

Based on theoretical perspective, these findings support the Social Literacy Theory, which holds that literacy develops through social interaction and active participation in learning communities. Furthermore, the application of constructivist learning principles—through student involvement in the use of the Reading Corner and the introduction of institutional promotional media—has enabled the creation of meaningful and contextual learning experiences. The practical implications of this program indicate that improving the quality of non-formal education does not necessarily require advanced technology or large budgets but can begin with local initiatives that are relevant, applicable, and oriented toward actual needs on the ground.

As a form of program sustainability, it is recommended that FEC management regularly update the book collection in the Reading Corner, involve students in group reading activities, and document literacy-related activities to build an institutional portfolio. Additionally, the development of digital promotional media, such as social media platforms and short videos, can be considered to complement the existing print-based promotional strategies. For similar institutions in other areas, replicating this program is highly feasible by adapting it to local contexts and learner characteristics. Further research can also be conducted to measure the long-term impact of the Reading Corner on students' English language skills in a measurable and systematic way.

Thus, this program not only provides a solution to the challenges faced by FEC but also offers a model of academic-community collaboration that can serve as inspiration for developing inclusive, adaptive, and community-based non-formal education.

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