



# The Use of Reading Corners to Improve Students' Reading Literacy: Classroom Action Research at MI Yahya Bekasi

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## ABSTRACT

This classroom action research aims to explore the effectiveness of implementing a Reading Corner to improve reading literacy among students at MI Yahya Bekasi. The study was conducted over two cycles, each consisting of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection stages. The participants were 27 fourth-grade students selected through purposive sampling. The main objective was to enhance students' reading interest, comprehension, and fluency through an engaging and student-centered reading environment. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through observation sheets, reading comprehension tests, and student questionnaires. In the initial observation, only 41% of students demonstrated sufficient reading literacy. After the first cycle, the percentage increased to 63%, and by the end of the second cycle, it reached 85%. The improvement was observed in students' ability to identify main ideas, infer meaning from context, and respond critically to texts. The use of the Reading Corner fostered a more positive reading habit, with students spending more time voluntarily reading both fiction and non-fiction texts. Qualitative findings indicated a shift in classroom atmosphere toward a more literate culture. Students reported increased motivation and enjoyment in reading activities. Teachers also noted improvements in student engagement and participation during reading sessions. The integration of visual aids, diverse reading materials, and reflective discussions within the Reading Corner contributed significantly to the overall literacy development. This study concludes that the implementation of a Reading Corner is an effective strategy to enhance reading literacy in elementary school settings. It provides an accessible, low-cost, and adaptable model that can be replicated in similar educational contexts. Future research is encouraged to examine long-term impacts and integrate digital literacy tools to complement physical reading environments.

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## Introduction

Reading literacy is a fundamental skill that forms the basis of students' academic development at the elementary level. It encompasses not only the ability to recognize

letters and words but also the capacity to comprehend, interpret, and reflect upon the content of texts. In the context of primary education, reading literacy plays a crucial role in supporting learning across all subject areas. Therefore, improving reading literacy should be a central focus of educational efforts in elementary schools.

Numerous studies have highlighted the negative impact of low reading literacy on students' overall academic performance. In Indonesia, national assessments and international surveys such as PISA have consistently shown that students' reading literacy remains below the global average. This presents a serious challenge to the education sector, particularly in fostering a generation that is literate and prepared for the demands of the information age.

One of the major contributing factors to low reading literacy is the lack of reading habits nurtured from an early age. Classrooms that do not promote reading activities, limited access to engaging and age-appropriate reading materials, and monotonous teaching methods all contribute to this issue. Consequently, innovative, enjoyable, and student-centered strategies are urgently needed to foster sustained reading interest and habit formation.

The Reading Corner (Pojok Membaca) is a strategic approach designed to create a supportive reading environment within the classroom. It is a designated space filled with diverse reading materials, attractive decorations, and a comfortable atmosphere that encourages both independent and group reading. The Reading Corner aims to spark reading interest, enhance comprehension skills, and cultivate a literacy-rich culture within the school environment.

Previous research has shown that implementing Reading Corners can positively impact students' reading motivation and proficiency. Students become more enthusiastic about reading, engage more frequently with books, and demonstrate improvement in understanding the content they read. However, the success of Reading Corners largely depends on teacher creativity, the availability of resources, and active student participation.

At MI Yahya Bekasi, preliminary observations revealed that students' reading interest and literacy skills were still relatively low. Most students were not accustomed to reading independently, and reading activities were often perceived as burdensome rather than enjoyable. Additionally, the classroom environment did not fully support the development of a literate learning culture. These conditions necessitated a concrete and practical intervention to effectively stimulate students' reading engagement.

This classroom action research was conducted as a response to the identified problem, with the aim of enhancing students' reading literacy through the implementation of a Reading Corner. Classroom action research was chosen for its

participatory and reflective nature, allowing the researcher to systematically observe, plan, act, and evaluate teaching and learning practices in a real-time educational setting.

The primary objective of this research is to assess the extent to which a Reading Corner can improve reading literacy among fourth-grade students at MI Yahya Bekasi. Specifically, the study seeks to evaluate improvements in reading interest, text comprehension, and students' ability to summarize and express the content they read. Furthermore, it aims to explore changes in students' attitudes and behaviors toward reading after the implementation of the Reading Corner.

The significance of this research lies not only in its potential to enhance learning outcomes but also in its contribution to building a literacy-oriented classroom culture. By establishing an engaging and interactive reading space, it is expected that students will develop positive reading habits from an early age. These habits, in turn, can lead to long-term benefits in academic performance and lifelong learning skills.

In practice, the Reading Corner in this study was designed contextually, considering students' characteristics, available classroom space, and school resources. Reading materials were selected based on students' interests and reading levels, and included various genres such as folktales, fables, educational comics, and popular science books. Supporting activities such as reading journals, group discussions, and book presentations were also incorporated to increase student engagement.

The implementation of the Reading Corner was grounded in constructivist learning theory, where students actively construct meaning from what they read. Teachers served as facilitators, guiding critical thinking, providing feedback, and fostering a learning atmosphere that promotes exploration and reflection. This approach transformed reading instruction from a mechanical task into a meaningful and enjoyable learning experience.

This study also integrated both formative and summative assessment techniques to evaluate students' reading literacy. Data collection included reading comprehension tests, classroom observations, and reflective student journals. A triangulation method was employed to ensure that the results captured a comprehensive view of the Reading Corner's effectiveness.

The theoretical foundation of this research is based on emergent literacy and environment-based learning theories. Emergent literacy emphasizes the importance of early reading experiences, while environment-based learning highlights the influence of physical and social learning contexts. The Reading Corner embodies both approaches by providing meaningful literacy experiences through an intentionally designed learning environment.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the improvement of literacy instruction practices at the elementary school level. Moreover, the results may serve as a reference for teachers, school administrators, and policymakers in designing literacy programs that align with students' needs and educational contexts.

More broadly, this study seeks to advocate for policies that support the reinforcement of early literacy. In an era defined by rapid information exchange and 21st-century skills demands, reading literacy is essential for personal success and national progress. Thus, efforts such as the Reading Corner should receive serious attention and support from all stakeholders in education.

## Methods

This study employed a classroom action research (CAR) design, which is characterized by its cyclical and reflective nature, allowing educators to identify problems in teaching and learning, implement interventions, observe outcomes, and refine strategies based on evidence from practice. The research was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of four key stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. This methodological approach was chosen to facilitate systematic improvements in the teaching of reading and to enhance students' literacy development in a real classroom context.

The research took place at MI Yahya Bekasi, specifically involving fourth-grade students during the 2024/2025 academic year. A total of 27 students participated in the study, selected using purposive sampling based on the researcher's direct involvement in the teaching and learning process. These students were identified as having varying levels of reading ability, which provided a representative context for testing the effectiveness of the Reading Corner intervention.

Data were collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the effects of the intervention. Quantitative data were obtained through reading comprehension tests administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the research cycles. These tests measured students' abilities in identifying main ideas, making inferences, and understanding vocabulary in context. Qualitative data were gathered through classroom observations, student reading journals, and semi-structured interviews with students and the classroom teacher. These instruments helped capture student engagement, attitudes toward reading, and the overall classroom atmosphere during the implementation of the Reading Corner.

The intervention involved setting up a designated Reading Corner within the classroom, filled with a variety of age-appropriate and interest-based reading materials. Students were encouraged to visit the Reading Corner during designated reading periods and were guided to engage in reflective reading activities such as journaling, storytelling, and group discussions. The role of the teacher was to facilitate these

activities, provide encouragement, and monitor student progress throughout the process.

Data analysis was conducted through descriptive statistics for the quantitative test scores and thematic analysis for the qualitative data. Improvements in students' reading scores were compared across cycles to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. Meanwhile, observational and interview data were coded and categorized into themes related to student motivation, reading habits, and learning environment. Triangulation of data sources was applied to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings.

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from the school administration, and verbal consent was gathered from the students and their parents. Anonymity and confidentiality of participants were ensured, and the study was conducted with full respect for the students' well-being and learning needs.

Through this methodological framework, the study aimed not only to improve reading literacy outcomes but also to generate practical insights into how classroom-based innovations like the Reading Corner can be implemented effectively to support young learners' literacy development.

## **Result**

The implementation of the Reading Corner in the classroom showed a significant positive impact on students' reading literacy at MI Yahya Bekasi. Throughout the two cycles of the classroom action research, notable improvements were observed in students' reading comprehension, motivation, and engagement. In the initial assessment conducted before the intervention, only 11 out of 27 students (approximately 41%) demonstrated adequate reading comprehension skills based on the standardized reading test administered by the researcher. These students were able to identify main ideas and recall basic information from the text, but most struggled with interpreting meaning or providing critical responses.

After the first cycle of the intervention, which lasted four weeks, students' reading performance improved markedly. The post-test results showed that 17 students (63%) achieved satisfactory scores in reading comprehension. Observation notes revealed increased student participation during reading sessions, with more students voluntarily visiting the Reading Corner and expressing curiosity toward different genres of books. Students began to write short reflections in their reading journals and were able to articulate the main points of the stories they had read during group discussions.

In the second cycle, further adjustments were made to enhance the effectiveness of the Reading Corner, including the introduction of peer reading partners and more frequent teacher-guided reading conferences. By the end of the second cycle, 23



students (85%) demonstrated significant improvements in their reading literacy, as evidenced by their scores on the final comprehension test. Most students were able to identify main and supporting ideas, infer meaning from context, and respond to open-ended questions with relevant and structured answers. Students also exhibited increased confidence in presenting book summaries and expressing opinions about the reading materials.

Qualitative data from student interviews and teacher reflections supported the quantitative findings. Students reported enjoying the Reading Corner and expressed that reading had become one of their favorite classroom activities. Several students mentioned that they had started reading at home more regularly and even encouraged their peers to borrow books. Teachers observed that students showed greater focus during reading time and displayed improved vocabulary usage in both spoken and written language.

The classroom environment also changed noticeably during the course of the intervention. The Reading Corner became a central feature of classroom activities, and its presence contributed to the development of a more literate and interactive learning atmosphere. The physical setup, including colorful decorations and comfortable seating, played a key role in making reading a more enjoyable experience for the students. As a result, the Reading Corner not only improved students' reading skills but also fostered a more positive and dynamic classroom culture centered around literacy.

These findings indicate that the use of a Reading Corner can be a highly effective strategy for improving reading literacy in primary education settings. The improvement was not only evident in students' test scores but also in their behavioral changes, attitudes toward reading, and active involvement in literacy activities. This supports the hypothesis that a well-planned and student-centered reading environment can contribute significantly to literacy development among young learners.

## **Discussion**

The results of this classroom action research indicate that the implementation of the Reading Corner significantly contributed to the improvement of students' reading literacy at MI Yahya Bekasi. This finding supports previous research emphasizing the importance of creating a print-rich and engaging reading environment in early education settings to stimulate interest and comprehension.

A notable improvement was observed in students' ability to identify main ideas and supporting details after the Reading Corner was introduced. This suggests that regular exposure to diverse reading materials, combined with structured reading time, allows students to develop critical skills necessary for understanding texts at a deeper

level. Students who previously struggled with basic comprehension began to demonstrate increased confidence in navigating texts independently.

The use of reading journals and group discussions enhanced students' metacognitive skills by encouraging them to reflect on what they read, express personal interpretations, and evaluate characters or events. These literacy practices align with Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism, in which learning occurs through interaction and dialogue. The Reading Corner created such opportunities for meaningful communication among peers and between students and teachers.

Furthermore, the increase in student motivation and enjoyment of reading activities indicates the affective dimension of literacy development should not be overlooked. The inviting physical layout of the Reading Corner, with its comfortable seating and attractive book displays, played a crucial role in shaping students' positive attitudes toward reading. When students feel relaxed and welcomed, they are more likely to engage with texts voluntarily.

The differentiated selection of reading materials—including folktales, comics, and informational texts—allowed students to choose texts that matched their interests and reading levels. This student-centered approach respects individual preferences and fosters autonomy, which are key elements in fostering lifelong reading habits. The increase in voluntary reading behavior observed during the study reflects this sense of ownership over the reading process.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the role of the teacher as a facilitator was instrumental in guiding students' literacy development. Rather than dominating the reading process, the teacher provided scaffolding, encouraged inquiry, and celebrated students' progress. This shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach empowered students to take more responsibility for their own learning.

The integration of peer collaboration through reading partnerships and group sharing sessions encouraged social interaction, which further reinforced comprehension and retention. Students learned not only from books but also from one another. This social dynamic contributed to a vibrant classroom culture in which reading became a shared and valued activity rather than an isolated academic task.

The improvement in test scores across both research cycles provides empirical evidence of the effectiveness of the Reading Corner. Students' performance on reading comprehension assessments showed marked gains in understanding vocabulary, making inferences, and answering analytical questions. These outcomes are particularly important given the national concern regarding Indonesian students' low reading performance on international benchmarks.

Qualitative findings from teacher reflections and student interviews added depth to the numerical data. Teachers observed behavioral changes, such as increased curiosity and focus during reading sessions. Students expressed pride in their ability to finish books and articulate their thoughts. These affective and behavioral changes are essential indicators of long-term literacy growth.

In addition to academic outcomes, the Reading Corner contributed to building a sense of community within the classroom. Students began recommending books to one another, discussing stories during breaks, and even collaborating on creative extensions such as drawing characters or acting out scenes. These spontaneous literacy engagements reflect genuine internalization of reading as a meaningful activity.

The findings also point to the importance of environmental design in literacy instruction. A well-organized, aesthetically pleasing reading space can motivate students to read more frequently. This underscores the need for schools to invest not only in reading materials but also in creating learning environments that support literacy through thoughtful design.

Despite the success of the intervention, some limitations were noted. A few students required additional support due to persistent difficulties in decoding and comprehension. This suggests that while the Reading Corner benefits most learners, it should be complemented with targeted interventions for students with specific literacy challenges.

Another limitation relates to time constraints. Integrating sustained silent reading and reflection into a busy curriculum requires careful scheduling and support from the broader school community. Without institutional support, literacy-focused interventions may struggle to achieve long-term sustainability.

Nonetheless, the positive outcomes observed in this study suggest that the Reading Corner is a viable model that can be adapted and scaled in other educational contexts. It provides a cost-effective and flexible solution for promoting literacy in classrooms with diverse student populations and limited resources.

Future research could explore the long-term effects of the Reading Corner on reading achievement, particularly beyond the immediate classroom context. It would also be beneficial to investigate the role of parental involvement in supporting reading habits developed in school and how home-school collaboration might enhance outcomes.

This study also raises important questions about the integration of technology in literacy spaces. While this research focused on print-based materials, future iterations of the Reading Corner might include digital resources, e-books, and multimedia texts to reflect the changing landscape of reading in the 21st century.



The findings affirm that literacy is not merely a cognitive process but also a social and emotional one. The Reading Corner fostered a space where students could connect with stories, share perspectives, and experience joy through reading—elements that are often undervalued in test-driven educational environments.

Moreover, the Reading Corner supported inclusive education practices by catering to diverse learning needs and styles. Visual learners benefited from illustrated texts, auditory learners engaged through shared reading, and kinesthetic learners participated in interactive follow-up activities. This inclusivity contributed to the equitable development of reading literacy among all students.

In conclusion, the Reading Corner served not only as a pedagogical tool but also as a catalyst for cultural transformation within the classroom. By repositioning reading as an enjoyable, social, and student-driven activity, this intervention created a fertile ground for literacy to thrive.

The success of the Reading Corner at MI Yahya Bekasi highlights the importance of intentional, well-designed interventions in literacy education. It demonstrates that even modest changes to the classroom environment and instructional approach can yield meaningful improvements in student learning and engagement.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of this classroom action research, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Reading Corner significantly improved students' reading literacy at MI Yahya Bekasi, both in terms of comprehension skills and reading motivation. The creation of a dedicated, engaging, and student-centered reading space successfully fostered a positive reading culture, increased student participation, and enhanced critical thinking through reflective and collaborative reading activities. This study confirms that simple yet purposeful innovations in the classroom environment, when combined with effective pedagogical strategies, can produce meaningful educational outcomes. The Reading Corner not only served as a physical space for reading but also became a dynamic hub of learning, dialogue, and personal growth, reinforcing the idea that literacy development is a holistic process involving cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions.

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