

## Utilizing School Library to Improve Basic Literacy Skills for Islamic Primary School Students

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**Abstract:** This study aims to describe the use of the school library in facilitating the development of the student's reading culture, the student's writing skills, and the students' speaking skills at MIT AL-ISLAH Integrated Islamic Primary School in Gorontalo City. This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of case study research. Data collection techniques were done through observation, interviews, and document studies. The main informant of this research data was the school principal, while the supporting informants were the teacher in charge of the library and the students. The process of data analysis using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The examination of data validity using data credibility through triangulation of sources and methods. The results showed that developing the reading culture of students through the school's library was conducted by instilling a reading culture from an early age, not only reading books but also reading the Holy Quran and schedule distribution in the library as well. The use of libraries in developing writing skills was conducted by poetry writing programs, rewriting content read, making stories, reading, writing, arithmetic programs, and mentoring methods in terms of learning. The use of libraries in developing speaking skills was conducted by providing an expression corner to practice speaking, having an outdoor space in the library, and participating in several programs made by the library.

**Keywords:** utilization, library, basic literacy

### INTRODUCTION

A library is a place that functions as a facility and infrastructure that can support the ongoing learning process and becomes a reference and useful source of information in teaching and learning activities in schools. The important role of a library is to broaden students' horizons through knowledge and information effectively and efficiently and to become a source of information for teachers and students through reading activities.

This is following the current state of Indonesia which is in the information age so that it is identical to the literacy era, an era where people have the ability to interact, communicate, and actualize themselves orally and in writing. In Merriam-Webster Dictionary, literacy is the quality or state of being literate ("Literacy"). Therefore, it can be said that people who have literacy skills are people who can read and write.

Good literacy skills affect the success of the younger generation because these skills help in understanding information orally and in writing and are very important in supporting their competencies. Thus, literate young people have the ability to sort out information that can support their success in life.

In Wikipedia, a library is defined as an effort to maintain and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the teaching and learning process ("Perpustakaan"). The teaching and learning process in schools will run well if there is a library that is well organized and systematic and because the library is the heart

of the world of education itself. This is because the progress of education cannot be separated from the problem of providing educational facilities and infrastructure, including the availability of libraries and improving teaching and learning methods.

Reading is an attempt to understand, imagine, observe, and remember the information presented where these efforts occur in a complex manner and positively affect one's creativity (Soedarso, 2004). The reading contains ideas and creativity that the author wants to convey to his readers (Hernowo, 2003).

Reading literacy is an effort to understand, use, and reflect on what is read in both manual and digital texts to develop one's knowledge and potential and contribute to society. It was further explained that this literacy emphasizes the active, directed, and functional aspects of reading in various situations and for various purposes. There are three main dimensions that form the basis for assessing reading literacy, namely the type and purpose of the material read; a cognitive approach that explains how readers engage with a text; and the broad range of contexts or purposes in which the reading takes place (Perkins, 2012).

Reading is a way to be skilled in writing. Marahimin (2009) states that reading creates energy from within (inner) which is indispensable in writing and can only be obtained by those who are accustomed to reading.

The definition of writing is a form of communication that is conveyed in writing as a tool or medium. Writing activities have four elements, namely: the author as a messenger, the message or content of the writing, the channel or media in the form of writing, and the reader as the recipient of the message. Writing is a psycholinguistic process starting from the formation of ideas through semantic rules to recording with syntactic rules and then poured in writing sequentially so that it can be said that writing is an indirect communication skill, without the need to meet face-to-face with other people but still expressive and productive (Tarigan, 2008; Susanto, 2013).

Speaking is a way to communicate where a person is able to pronounce articulation sounds with the aim of expressing, stating, or conveying thoughts, ideas, and feelings to the recipient of the message (Tarigan, 1983; Hariyadi & Zamzami, 1996). Improving speaking skills can be done in many ways, one of which is through learning a foreign language. This effort is seen as the result of the process of interaction between students and language users, and the creation of meaning, interaction, and negotiation of meaning when the learner and the interlocutor. By learning language, students pay attention to the feedback they get when communicating, pay attention to the language they hear, and try to include responding in a creative way according to their new abilities and experimenting with different ways of saying things. In addition, it motivates them to conclude the meaning of a text or comment on it, and give their point of view (Molinet, 2013).

Therefore, the existence of a library that is rich with books and literature in Indonesian or foreign languages will greatly assist students in improving their reading, writing, and speaking skills as much as possible so that the ideals of education create students who have broad knowledge and contribute positively to the wider community can be realized.

The government has always supported the development of the school literacy movement through the launching of the School Literacy Movement by the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia in August 2015. This school literacy movement is regulated in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 21 of 2015 with the aim of fostering student reading habits, motivating students, and fostering student character through a culture of reading books. Here students are not only required to read but also write by summarizing, retelling, or developing stories that will increase their creativity.

The ability to develop stories or storytelling has many benefits including helping to shape students' personal, moral, ethical, and socialization because it is very effective in influencing ways of thinking and behaving, being a medium for channeling students' imaginations, stimulating students' verbal abilities and linguistic intelligence because students will love to tell stories, talk and learn to dialogue and narrate in stories, and reading also can provoke the sense of the language of students so that they directly have better skills to speak, read, write, listen, and understand ideas (Musfiroh, 2005).

Based on the explanation above, this study aims to describe: (1) the use of the school library in

facilitating the development of reading culture among students, (2) the use of the school library in facilitating the development of student’s writing skills, and (3) the use of the school library to facilitate the development of students’ speaking skills at MIT AL–ISLAH Integrated Islamic Primary School in Gorontalo City.

## METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach and the type of research is a case study. The presence of researchers at the research site was a key instrument that will observe student programs related to activities in the library. Sources of data comprised; (1) the principal as the key informant, (2) the teacher in charge of the library as a supporting informant, and (3) students as supporting informants. The methods used for this data collection process include (1) interviews, (2) observations, and (3) document studies. The data analysis process was carried out through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. Test the validity of the data was done through the credibility of the data by triangulating sources and methods.

## RESULTS

### Utilizing School Library in Facilitating the Development of Students’ Reading Culture

The use of the library in instilling a reading culture in students was carried out in several ways. First, the distribution of entering the library schedules in each class. It was intended for students to read comfortably and regularly. Second, the school not only instilled a culture of reading books but also a culture of reading the Holy Quran; this program has been set at the school considering that the school is an Islamic school that is required its students to read the Holy Quran after completing education at the school. Moreover, the number of students who visit proved that there were complete books, adequate services, and facilities for students to stay longer in the library.

The principal and the library manager always motivate students in improving the reading skills possessed by students. As a result, the students could instill a reading culture in themselves. By instilling a reading culture, the students’ character and behavior will be getting better. The research findings were depicted in the context diagram as indicated in Figure 1.

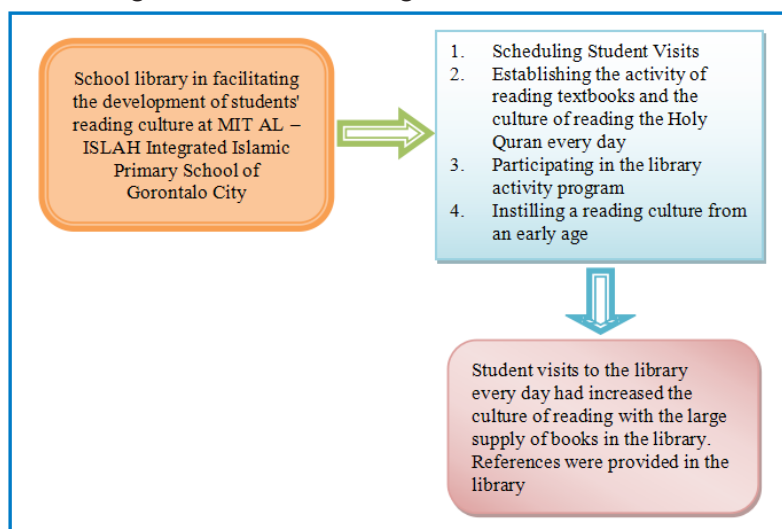


Figure 1. Context Diagram of School Library in Facilitating Students’ Reading Development

### Utilizing School Library in Facilitating the Development of Students’ Writing Skills

The school and library managers utilized the library in facilitating the students’ writing skills development by providing books that are needed by students as material for writing. Besides, the school

library had a poetry writing program to motivate students to write as with the creativity possessed by students, they can write beautiful poems that attract the attention of other students. Moreover, the writing competition aimed to make students creative in thinking and put it in written form.

In addition, one special program provided by the school was a program of reading, writing, and arithmetic. This program is most effectively carried out by the school, especially the teachers who accompany students. Such a method will allow the teacher to pay attention to the students' writing results based on good and correct writing rules. The mentoring method was held within 1 hour after school hours. The research findings were depicted in the context diagram as indicated in Figure 2.

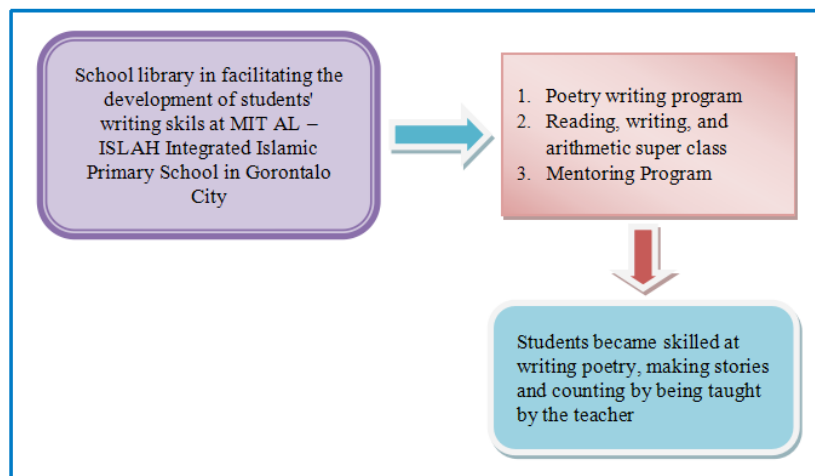


Figure 2. Context Diagram of School Library in Facilitating Students' Writing Skills Development

### Utilizing School Library in Facilitating the Development of Students' Speaking Skills

The school library was utilized as much as possible to facilitate the development of students' speaking skills. The facilities provided were pojok ekspresi and an open reading room which can be used by students to improve speaking skills through reading poetry well as reading poetry is part of learning to speak. Pojok ekspresi is a space provided for students to improve their ability to read, write, and speak. The space was neatly arranged in the library so that students will be comfortable there. The space can be used for reading as well as a place for art performances by students. Art performances in the form of reading poetry, singing, and activities can be carried out in outdoor spaces.

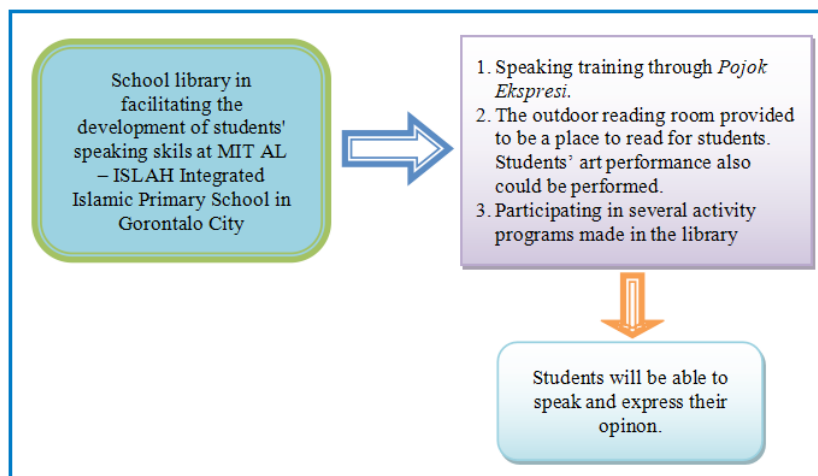


Figure 3. Context Diagram of School Library in Facilitating Students' Speaking Skills Development

Training the ability of students had taken a lot of time to be able to improve these abilities. Although the capacity building could be carried out properly, yet there were some obstacles faced by students at the aforementioned school. With those obstacles, the school had to work hard to maximize the time to

work on improving students' abilities. The research findings were depicted in the context diagram as indicated in Figure 3.

Based on the findings from the context diagrams above, it can be concluded that the use of the library for the development of reading culture in the MIT AL – ISLAH Integrated Islamic Primary School in Gorontalo City consisted of several ways. First, there will always be an arrangement of library visits scheduled for all students to maximize services in the library. Second, the school improved students' reading skills by familiarizing each student with reading books every day. It was applied to help students' characters. Not only improving the ability to read books, the school also determined to read the Holy Quran every day so that students always read one surah before entering class. There were three uses of the library in facilitating the development of writing skills, namely rewriting stories, making stories and poems, and Reading, Writing, and arithmetic programs. The overall context diagram of library utilization at the school was described as indicated in Figure 4.

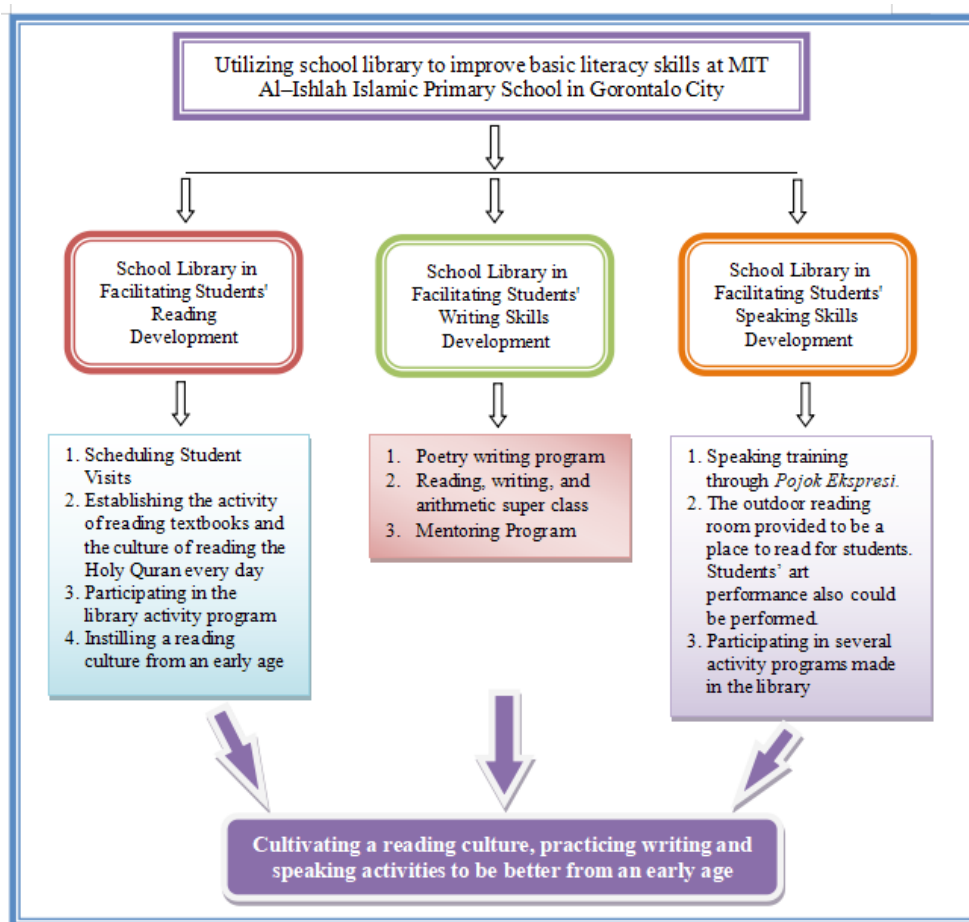


Figure 4. Overall Context Diagram of School Library Utilization at the MIT AL – ISLAH Integrated Islamic Primary School in Gorontalo City

## DISCUSSION

### Utilizing School Library in Facilitating the Development of Students' Reading Culture

The school library facilitated the development of students' reading culture by establishing a schedule for library visits and instilling a reading culture from an early age in students. The reading culture was not only implemented for reading books but also for reading the Holy Quran. The students implemented a reading program by conveying and re-telling the content of the books every morning before the teaching and learning activities started. Other than that, the Holy Quran reading program was applied to fourth-grade, fifth-grade, and sixth-grade students at the MIT Al - Ishlah Integrated Islamic

Primary School.

The principal also maximized the performance of the school library. The library can be used by all students at the MIT Al - Ishlah Integrated Islamic Primary School by providing a schedule for each class to take turns in using the library every day. This was done since there were quite a lot of students who cannot be accommodated in one library room at the same time. With such a division, it can increase students' tendency to use the library as a place to study when there are no class hours in progress.

Moreover, improving literacy without being tied to access to the school library had done well. The implementation process was given freedom in learning in the library for students who want to read and write. It was all done with the literacy program carried out by the school coupled with the existence of the reading the Holy Quran program and other programs that had been made by the school, principals, and teachers. Thus, the students could easily access the program. In addition, other efforts are needed by the principal and the school in increasing students' reading interest. Support from parents is very important to help realize literacy education from an early age.

Literacy at the development stage aims to maintain interest in reading and reading activities, as well as to improve students' reading fluency and comprehension. The principles of activities at the development stage include: (1) the books are other than textbooks, (2) the books are books of interest to students; students are allowed to read books brought from home, (3) reading books at this stage can be followed by drawing, writing, crafting, movement arts and roles to respond to reading, which is adjusted to the level and ability of students, (4) non-academic assessment is implemented to students' responses and focuses on students' attitudes in activities. The input and comments of educators on the work of students motivate them, and (5) reading books take place in a pleasant atmosphere (Mas et al., 2019).

This finding is in line with the research conducted by Gormley (2014) that was carried out to build a literacy culture at home to improve students' literacy skills at school by providing material for families which was an extension of what students learn in class in the form of a bag containing selected books according to the preferences of students. These books were brought home by students every week. The finding showed this method was effective for students because students made full use of books at home without assistance. The recordings were also prepared by the schools to help students interact with the material independently for the books they read that had a different language from their own. Overall, it shows that literacy has a positive impact on reading skills and helps build strong school-to-home relationships in the long term.

### **Utilizing School Library in Facilitating the Development of Students' Writing Skills**

The results showed that in facilitating the development of student's writing skills, the library had established a poetry writing program to improve writing skills. Further, the reading, writing, and arithmetic program that had been taken from the time after learning hours was called a superclass. The mentoring method was purposed to make students motivated in writing so that their writing skills will be improved. The school library provided books that are needed by students as material for writing. Each new book will be displayed on the board for four days by the library manager. After that, the book can be used by students.

A person's ability to write is determined by the accuracy in using the elements of language, the organization of discourse in the form of essays, the accuracy in using language, and the choice of words used to write. The ability to write or compose can also be said that the ability to use language patterns in a written display to express ideas or messages. The ability to write includes various abilities, such as the ability to master the ideas presented, the ability to use elements of language, the ability to use style, and the ability to use spelling and punctuation. Thus, it can be simplified that writing skills are forms of speaking skills that are expressed through writing. It can be read and understood by other people who read the results as a form of learning to be able to write down the developed idea into an interesting writing to read.

The availability of the material in the library was a form of support for the improvement of students writing. Providing for the students' needs will motivate the students to write because, with the amount

of available material needed, the library can guarantee an increase in students' writing skills. The role of the library was also part of the program carried out by the school to support the work program carried out by the school.

Every teacher in charge of the library or the manager of the library had made use of the library to improve the ability of students in writing. Therefore, the role of the school library can run well to achieve one of the school programs where to improve writing skills for students. The improvement was carried out using mentoring methods carried out for the first-grade and second-grade because these classes included a special concern, in which the class was able to make students good at reading, counting, especially in writing skills.

Mentoring and proper strategies applied by teachers of MIT AL – ISLAH Integrated Islamic Primary School in Gorontalo City are effectively improving the literacy skills of the students. This is in line with the research conducted by Gerada (2017) where students conveyed that the strategies that the teacher applied to them in reading books made them see reading books as fun and helped them understand difficult words. Students become more enthusiastic and daring to participate in group discussions and feel comfortable sharing their ideas with their classmates. Some students even find the discussion to be a stress reliever and make reading assignments easier. Students become happy to share and listen to their classmates, respond, and be creative in language using their imagination.

This is also in line with a study conducted by Febriani (2018) to see how students' English skills through literary literacy can be improved using a language-based approach. The approach, which includes pre-reading activities, while-reading activities, and post-reading activities, applies the Lazar Procedure and is carried out to stimulate students' interest in stories. Through this approach, the teacher's role in improving literacy skills becomes very important where the teacher provides a summary of the story, provides clues about some of the characters involved in the story, the cultural background of the story, as well as a little description of the author of the work before students start reading it. With this approach, students can start reading stories when students have gained their reading interest. The teacher can assign students to find some new vocabulary as they read. The teacher's role during while-reading is to help students understand difficult plots, characters, and vocabulary, and to help students with style and language. The teacher directs students to find the author's purpose in writing his work by directing questions. The teacher's role in post-reading is to help students make interpretations of the text, understand the narrative point of view, then rewrite the summary or message of the story, and follow up fluency exercises. The teacher directs students to answer several questions about the text being discussed and encourages them to respond and think critically about literary works. The teacher also asks students to evaluate and analyze the text and relate the story to the student's real life.

This is also in line with research conducted by Philip (2010) who applied the KWL (Know, Want To Learn, Learned) technique to improve students' literacy skills and the role of the teacher in the success of the technique. The results showed that the KWL technique was an effective teaching method applied to students to make it easier for them to learn new material and to do it independently. The role of the teacher is very important because here, the teacher directs students to know the general description of the material read to foster their interest in reading, how to read effectively, and take the essence of the message conveyed by the author through the reading.

### **Utilizing School Library in Facilitating the Development of Students' Speaking Skills**

The results of this study showed the use of the school library in facilitating the development of students' speaking skills, namely the use of an expression corner to train students to speak by reading poetry. The outdoor reading room is a place to read, if the children want an art performance, the students have limited time to go to the library during break time. One of the school programs is to improve the speaking ability of students, by providing supporting facilities for students to be able to learn to speak, the facilities provided are in the form of an expression corner and an open reading room which can be used by students to improve speaking skills through reading poetry well, because reading poetry is part of learning to speak.

The MIT Al - Ishlah School always encourages students to take part in the competition. The

competition that is always followed by the school is a poetry reading competition where the fifth graders participate in the competition because this class is a class that is already able to speak in public or perform in public other than that class. five is a class that has not been categorized as a national exam class that will not interfere with the learning activities of students, involving students in competitions is part of a school program that aims to improve students' reading skills as well as speaking skills.

What makes this school different from other schools is the facilities owned by this school, namely the facilities provided are a place for students to study, especially to improve students' speaking skills, where the school has prepared an open reading room that is used by students to learning to speak through learning to read poetry which is trained so that students do not feel nervous in participating in poetry reading competitions, reading poetry requires good speaking techniques with an accuracy of speech intonation so that speaking skills are always improved, even though facilities have been provided by the school and library managers. will experience obstacles in dealing with students to improve their speaking skills.

Effective learning strategies and facilities can support a fun learning process, especially if the teacher prepares interesting teaching materials that can arouse students' curiosity because this can affect the development of student knowledge (Oktrifianty et al., 2021). This is in line with the finding of (Timothy, et al., 2016) who conducted research to improve literacy skills of students in primary schools in Nigeria. The results show that if children are consistently exposed to meaningful literacy activities then they will learn to read regardless of whether it is their mother tongue or a foreign language. This finding is particularly significant and reassuring given the situation in Nigeria where learning to read is problematic for many children. The teacher's role in terms of knowledge about what to do and how to do it also greatly influences success in building student literacy skills.

The ability to speak is a skill to convey messages through spoken language as an activity to convey ideas that are compiled and developed according to the needs of the listener. This understanding explains that speaking is not just saying words, but emphasizes the delivery of ideas that are compiled and developed according to the needs of listeners or recipients of information or ideas. The ability to speak is also said to convey ideas, thoughts, and opinions and as a tool to find out whether the speaker is well prepared in conveying the material of conversation in front of the listeners. So someone will be said to be able to speak if he has the courage and ability to convey his ideas, thoughts, and opinions, and can be understood by listeners or listeners. Speaking is the most important skill to be developed and enhanced as means of effective communication (Mei & Masoumeh, 2017).

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusion

Utilization of school libraries in facilitating the development of students' reading culture is carried out through (1) scheduling student visits, (2) reading movements are not only centered on reading books but are always interspersed with reading the Holy Quran, (3) students always follow several programs that made by the library, and (4) support from various parties such as parents and the government who help realize literacy education from an early age.

The use of the school library in facilitating the development of student's writing skills, namely

(1)providing various kinds of books so that students think creatively in writing poetry and stories, (2) reading, writing, and arithmetic programs also make it easier to implement writing programs properly and correctly, (3) the companion or mentoring method provided in the school can support writing ability activities.

Utilization of the library to facilitate the development of speaking skills is carried out by (1) good and correct speaking training in public areas, through the existing exhibition corner in the library,

(2)providing an open reading room as a strategic medium to practice good and correct speaking, (3) involving students in various competitions to help students not be nervous about speaking in public.

## Suggestion

School principals can put forward ideas that make the library the most comfortable place to find knowledge from the books they read. It is also hoped that students will instill in their minds the importance of libraries by getting used to reading.

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