

Implementation of Islamic Story Literacy-Based Learning (PBL-CERIS) to Improve Students' Literacy at SMKN 1 Kras

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Abstract: The low literacy level in Indonesia, particularly at SMKN 1 Kras, has encouraged Islamic Education and Character Education teachers to take part in motivating students to be more actively engaged in literacy activities, especially those related to the subject. This study aims to foster students' literacy without eliminating the use of gadgets, particularly in Islamic Education and Character Education learning. The creation of Islamic Stories (CERIS) is one of the effective and innovative literacy approaches in Islamic Education and Character Education learning that still utilizes gadgets. This approach is considered effective because it integrates gadget use into classroom learning activities, and innovative because it offers a new, more engaging, and less monotonous method for students. Through the implementation of Literacy-Based Islamic Story Learning (CERIS), students are able to write about events they have experienced or observed in their surroundings, particularly in Islamic Education and Character Education learning. In addition, teachers can identify students' talents and interests in writing, guide them, and produce individual Islamic storybooks with ISBNs as well as anthologies. Furthermore, students have achieved accomplishments by winning second place at the Kediri Regency level in Islamic story writing competitions in 2021 and 2022.

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main pillars in shaping a truly intelligent, well-characterized, and competitive generation (Ahadi, 2025). In the increasingly complex context of globalization, the challenges of education lie not only in the mastery of science and technology but also in character formation based on moral and ethical values. One effective and efficient approach to achieving this goal is through literacy (Knight, B. A., & Galletly, S, 2017).

In a broad sense, literacy is not only limited to the ability to read and write, but also includes the ability to understand, interpret, evaluate, and use information critically and creatively. The low literacy level among students in Indonesia, particularly at the vocational school (SMK) level, has become a major concern in the field of education. Based on the results of the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) study, the reading literacy skills of Indonesian students are still below

the international average. According to data from the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, UNESCO reported that Indonesia ranks second from the bottom (60th out of 61 countries) in terms of global literacy, indicating very low reading interest. UNESCO also noted that Indonesians' reading interest is extremely alarming, with only 0.001% of the population considered avid readers. This means that out of 1,000 Indonesians, only 1 person regularly reads (Maimon, 2020). This condition is strongly reflected at SMKN 1 Kras, where students' interest and ability in comprehending reading materials—especially those containing moral and Islamic values—still need improvement.

Islamic Story Literacy-Based Learning (CERIS) emerges as an innovation in Islamic Education and Character Education. This innovation takes several forms: first, as a means of honing students' literacy skills through narrative texts; second, as a new approach that is more engaging, enjoyable, and not monotonous for students; third, as a medium for internalizing Islamic values relevant to students' character formation. Islamic stories contain moral messages, exemplary figures, and wisdom that can be applied in everyday life. This approach provides a fresh alternative in Islamic Education and Character Education, making learning more engaging and less tedious. Writing Islamic stories does not require innate talent but rather interest and strong determination. Through this activity, students are trained to analyze, draw conclusions, and relate the stories to real-life contexts. It is expected that students will not only enhance their literacy skills but also internalize Islamic values in a pleasant and contextual manner. Furthermore, this approach is effective as it incorporates the use of gadgets and is implemented during classroom learning activities.

At SMKN 1 Kras, the implementation of Islamic Story Literacy-Based Learning (CERIS) is particularly interesting to study, as the school integrates Islamic Education and Character Education with a creative literacy approach. Based on preliminary observations, teachers of Islamic Education and Character Education at this school have utilized Islamic stories to foster students' reading interest, develop their writing skills, and instill Islamic moral values. In addition, this approach has helped students achieve notable accomplishments, such as producing

single-author and anthology books, and even winning awards in Islamic story writing competitions at the Kediri Regency level. Therefore, this study is significant in comprehensively describing how the implementation of Islamic Story Literacy-Based Learning at SMKN 1 Kras is carried out, including students' responses, supporting factors, teacher perspectives, and its impact on literacy development at school as well as character building.

The theoretical benefit of this study is expected to contribute to the development of literacy-based learning theory, particularly in integrating Islamic values through storytelling media. Meanwhile, the practical benefits include:

1. **For teachers:** serving as a reference for creative literacy-based learning approaches through Islamic stories.
2. **For students:** increasing interest and literacy skills, strengthening Islamic character, and enhancing student achievements, especially in the field of literacy.
3. **For schools:** enriching learning approaches that support the School Literacy Movement (GLS) and adding new reading materials to the school library derived from students' works.

a. Islamic Story Literacy-Based Learning (PBL Ceris)

Islamic Story Literacy-Based Learning (PBL Ceris) was first introduced in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic by Mr. Maimon, S.Pd., M.Ag., who at that time served as the Head of the Islamic Education Division at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, East Java Province. He introduced PBL Ceris during an online training for Islamic Education teachers across East Java. The purpose was to motivate all teachers so that, even though learning was conducted online, it could still be engaging and productive in generating creative works.

The PBL Ceris approach is carried out through assignments without maximizing explanations about concepts or theories from the curriculum. In this learning model, students are not required to memorize or take notes on the material, but rather to focus on writing stories. However, before beginning to write, students are expected to first read learning materials as the main source for determining the theme. This

is intended to help them generate ideas, build understanding, and develop imagination in creating stories. In addition, students are encouraged to reflect on phenomena, events, or experiences from themselves or others.

Practically, the steps of PBL Ceris learning can be described as follows (Maimon, 2020):

1. Teachers prepare learning materials according to the proper procedures, such as preparing syllabi, annual programs, semester programs, lesson plans, and so forth.
2. Teachers study the Core Competencies (KI) and Basic Competencies (KD) or the subject matter to be taught. They then select which topics will be delivered using the PBL Ceris approach.
3. Teachers determine the theme that will be used as the basis for assigning students to write short stories.
4. Teachers explain the rules and requirements for writing.
5. Teachers set the deadline agreed upon for completing the short stories.

b. Literacy

1. Definition of Literacy

Etymologically, literacy comes from the Latin word *litteratus*, which means “a learned person” or “lettered.” Initially, literacy was understood as the ability to read and write. However, the development of knowledge has broadened its meaning to encompass not only technical skills but also the ability to comprehend, interpret, and use information across various contexts of life.

In Indonesia, literacy is understood as a set of individual abilities and skills in reading, writing, speaking, calculating, and problem-solving at a certain level of expertise needed in daily life. In Latin, the term *litteratus* means “a person who learns.” The National Institute for Literacy explains that literacy is an individual’s ability to read, write, speak, calculate, and solve problems at the level of expertise required in work, family, and community life (H. Darmani, 2019).

According to UNESCO (2006), literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and calculate using printed and written materials

associated with various contexts. This shows that literacy is not merely about reading and writing, but also about life skills that enable an individual to actively participate in society.

In Indonesia, the Ministry of Education and Culture (2017) defines literacy as the ability to access, understand, and use information intelligently through various activities of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and critical thinking (Herlina 2024).

Literacy-based learning strategies have eight distinctive characteristics:

1. Monitoring text comprehension by recording students' understanding at three stages of reading (before, during, and after reading);
2. The use of multiple modes during learning, also known as multimodal literacy;
3. Clear and explicit instruction;
4. The use of supporting tools such as graphic organizers and checklists;
5. Responses to various types of questions;
6. The ability to create questions;
7. Text analysis, synthesis, and evaluation;
8. Summarizing the text content.

Meanwhile, literacy indicators in learning can be categorized into three processes: activities before reading, activities during reading, and activities after reading (Jauharoti Alfin, 2018).

The implementation of literacy culture in schools can improve critical thinking skills through the role of teachers as facilitators, the availability of literacy materials, and problem-solving activities during the learning process. Based on the 2013 curriculum, students are positioned as subjects of learning rather than objects, while teachers act as facilitators. Teachers' roles as facilitators in implementing literacy culture in schools are demonstrated through designing literacy-based learning strategies, analyzing students' interests and talents, providing reading materials that suit students' interests and abilities (through donations or school-facilitated book purchases), and evaluating students' literacy activities (Abdul Rahman, 2022).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design by analyzing the implementation of the Islamic Story Literacy-Based Learning (PBL Ceris) approach at SMKN 1 Kras. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation.

According to Moleong, qualitative research is a scientific inquiry aimed at understanding a phenomenon in its natural social context by emphasizing an in-depth interactive communication process between the researcher and the phenomenon under study (Salsabila Nanda, 2025).

In this research, the researcher directly interacted with the participants, namely the students of SMKN 1 Kras. The data collected were descriptive in nature, not in the form of numbers or statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Implementation of Islamic Story Literacy-Based Learning (PBL Ceris)

Beginning in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic, when learning had to be conducted online, the researcher applied a literacy-based learning approach. The specific approach implemented was short story writing linked to the Basic Competencies (KD) being studied, referred to as PBL Ceris.

In the twelfth-grade Islamic Education subject (KD 3.1: Evaluating the meaning of Q.S. Ali Imran: 190–191 and Q.S. Ali Imran: 159, as well as hadiths on critical thinking and democracy), the researcher encouraged students to think critically about the Covid-19 pandemic through short stories based on their experiences with their families. The researcher strongly believed that by applying this approach, students would be able to create narratives from their personal lives. Short stories were considered easier because they are not strictly tied to literature references, and students could freely write about their everyday experiences. Importantly, they could continue using their gadgets while still producing meaningful works.

With an agreed deadline of four days to complete a short story of at least one page, the students showed remarkable enthusiasm, with many producing more than one page. Their works were submitted via the researcher's email.

After reviewing the students' work, the researcher identified those who had produced stories of more than two pages. These students were then given special guidance and the option to either continue with the same theme or choose a new one. Ultimately, they decided to develop new themes while still maintaining Islamic values. Alhamdulillah, five students successfully completed Islamic stories of at least 80 pages. Notably, one of them won second place in the Kediri Regency Islamic Story Writing Competition for senior high/vocational school level in 2021. Furthermore, some of these works have been successfully published as Islamic storybooks with ISBNs. To date, three books have been published, while others are still in the publishing process.



In 2022, when learning was conducted offline, the researcher continued to apply the same approach. Alhamdulillah, in that year one of the students achieved second place in the Islamic Story Writing (Ceris) competition at the senior high school/vocational school level in Kediri Regency.



In offline learning, this approach could also be implemented at SMKN 1 Kras. The syntax of its implementation is as follows:

First, the researcher selected the Basic Competencies (Kurikulum 2013) or Learning Outcomes (Kurikulum Merdeka) that were relevant and appropriate for applying this approach, and then determined the theme. For example, the KD/CP 3.1 *Evaluating the meaning of Q.S. Ali Imran: 190–191 and Q.S. Ali Imran: 159 as well as hadiths on critical thinking and democracy* was considered highly suitable for this approach. The chosen theme was the Covid-19 pandemic, where students were encouraged to think critically about the pandemic and express their reflections through Islamic short stories based on their real-life experiences during the pandemic.

Second, the researcher explained to students how to carry out literacy-based learning. After that, the researcher provided insights about the Covid-19 pandemic. Students were given the freedom to narrate their personal experiences during the pandemic, written in the form of an Islamic short story that included dialogues yet remained grounded in Islamic values. Prior to writing, however, students were guided to develop an outline to make the writing process easier. They were also motivated to write at least one page of a short story, but those who could produce more than 20 pages were encouraged to develop their work into an Islamic novel that could be published as an individual book.

Third, the researcher allotted time for students to individually compose their Islamic short stories. Students were allowed to use their own gadgets to complete the task. If students required more time, additional opportunities were granted based on mutual agreement.

Fourth, students were instructed to submit their work via the researcher's email. The implementation of literacy-based learning through Islamic story writing proved highly beneficial for both students and teachers. The advantages of the PBL Ceris approach include:

1. **Active Participation.** This approach encouraged students to actively engage in classroom learning. Students not only thought critically but also

conducted small-scale research, enabling them to play an active role in the learning process.

2. **Effectiveness.** During the learning process, students could effectively use their gadgets to write their stories, or alternatively, write on paper if they did not have access to gadgets. Thus, this approach was considered effective to be applied in class.
3. **Independence.** In writing Islamic stories, students were motivated to work independently, guided by their imagination and personal life experiences. Although they still required teacher guidance, this approach fostered greater independence.

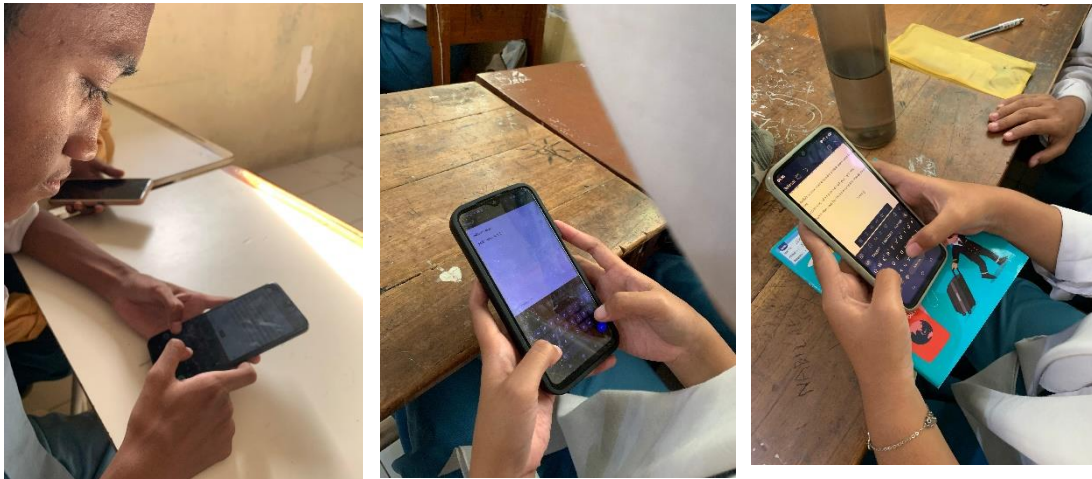
In addition to cultivating reading and writing habits, the PBL Ceris approach also enabled students to produce creative works, as evidenced by the outcomes of this study.



Guidance and Explanation on How to Write Ceris



Assistance for Students in the Process of Writing Ceris



The Process of Writing Ceris Using Gadgets in the Classroom

b. Improvement of Students' Literacy at SMKN 1 Kras

The implementation of Literacy-Based Islamic Story Learning (PBL Ceris) in Islamic Education and Character Education at SMKN 1 Kras has been carried out since 2020. The application of this approach has shown an increase in students' literacy at SMKN 1 Kras. This is evidenced by the students' works, both individual and anthology publications, which also support the School Literacy Movement (GLS) and enrich the collection of reading materials in the school library.

The implementation of the Literacy-Based Islamic Story Learning (PBL Ceris) approach has been very beneficial, especially for students. Direct observations

revealed that the majority of students responded positively to this approach. Some of their statements are as follows:

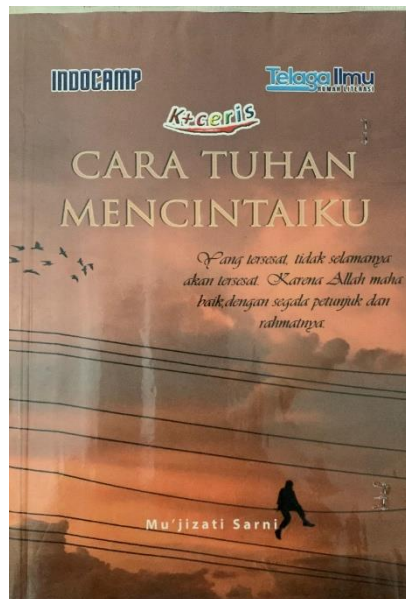
- *“According to Valent, Grade XII Culinary 3, by writing Islamic stories, I can be creative, express ideas and imagination, while also learning Islamic values through the stories I write.”*
- *“According to Nabila Putri Alodia, Grade XII Culinary 1, writing Islamic stories makes it easier to understand Islamic Education materials because they are connected with daily life.”*
- *“According to Siti Nur Suciyanti Fatimah, Grade XII Culinary 2, writing Islamic stories makes Islamic Education more engaging, not only by listening and memorizing but also by writing, which makes learning more active.”*
- *“According to Mu’jizati Sarni, Grade XII TKJ 3, at first it was difficult because I was not used to writing stories, but after being guided by the teacher, I became more accustomed to organizing storylines and more confident in writing.”*

From 2021 to 2023, there have been nine works published by teachers and students, although five of the books are still in the process of publication, awaiting ISBN registration.

Table 1. Records of CERIS Publications by Teachers and Students

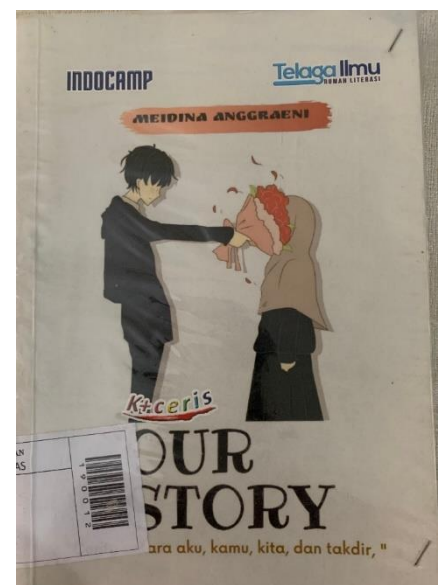
NO	NAME	Title of CERIS	Notes
1.	Lu’luatul Mabruroh	Indahnya Pandemi Covid-19	Teacher/Published
2.	Mu’jizati Sarni	Cara Tuhan Mencintaiku	Student/Published
3.	Meidina Anggraini	Our Story (Antara aku, kamu, kita dan takdir)	Student/Published
4.	Ferdika Andika Pradana Arria Putra	Jejak Santri Menggapai Mimpi	Student/Published
5.	Meisya Putri Lestari	Indahnya Pacaran dalam Ikatan Sah Pernikahan	Student/In Process
6.	Dias Bagus Satrio	Super Star	Student/In Process
7.	Nabila Putri Alodia	Assalamualaiku, Gus Agam	Student/In Process
8.	Nabila Putri Alodia	Hi, Gus Galak	Student/In Process
9.	Siti Nur Suciyanti Fatimah	Hitam Putih takdir	Student/In Process
10.	Antologi	Berfikir Positif	Student/Published
11.	Antologi	Hikmah Pandemi dalam Bingkai Kasih	Student/Published

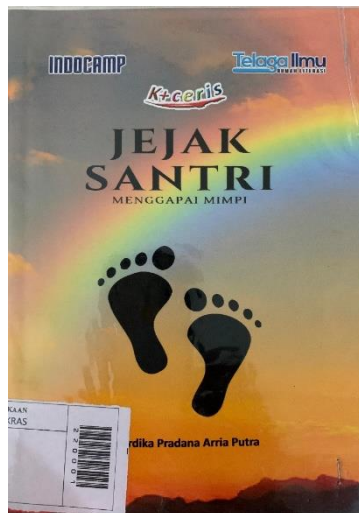
Literary Works of Students at SMKN 1 Kras



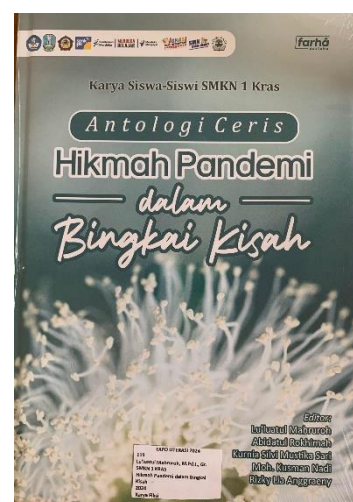
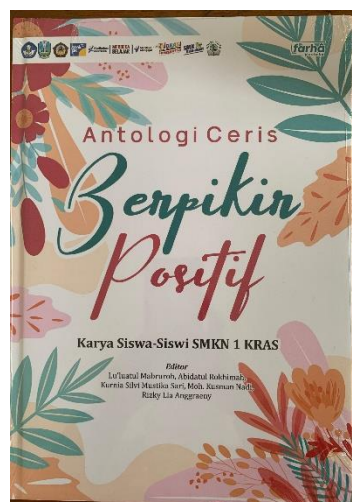
Book Title : Cara Tuhan MencintaiKu
Author : Mu'jizati Sarni
Class : XII TKJ 3

Book Title : Our Story
(Antara aku, kamu, kita dan takdir)
Author : Meidina Anggraeni
Class : XII TKJ 1





Book Title : Jejak Santri
Menggapai Mimpi
Author : Ferdika Andika Pradana
Arria Putra
Class : XII TKR 2



Students' Ceris Anthology

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Literacy-Based Learning Approach in the form of writing Islamic stories, or PBL Ceris, is an effective and innovative learning method. It serves as a medium to channel students' talents and interests in writing, while also training them to read and write more by utilizing gadgets. This approach is considered effective because students can implement it within the limited time of classroom learning activities (KBM) using gadgets. However, if students do not have access

to gadgets, they can first write on paper. It is also innovative because this is a new approach in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) that is more engaging and less monotonous for students. Writing Islamic stories does not require specific writing talent, but rather interest and strong determination, since the stories are not bound by academic literature and allow students to freely narrate their own life experiences.

In addition, this approach also serves as a medium for producing works for both teachers and students. By being given extended time outside of KBM, students can produce a book with a minimum of 80 pages. This has been proven through the implementation of the PBL Ceris approach at SMKN 1 Kras since 2020, where both teachers and students have successfully produced Islamic storybooks with ISBNs. Since 2020, there have already been three student books and one teacher's PAI book published with ISBNs, while four more are still in the publishing process.

Teachers are required to be creative and innovative—educators who can create and design new teaching models. A teacher must be able to foster and develop students' creativity, so as to produce students who excel academically and uphold noble character (*akhlaqul karimah*).

In applying any learning approach or method, teachers must understand the characteristics and abilities of their students so they can select and apply it more effectively. In addition, the available facilities and resources accessible to students are also among the key factors determining the success of the method used.

According to the researcher, the PBL Ceris approach is very suitable to be implemented anywhere. Even when students do not have gadgets, they can still begin by writing on paper. Thus, this approach is highly practical and innovative, making it applicable for anyone, anywhere, as a means to produce creative works.

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