

## Implementation of Character Education Empowerment Thematically, with Literacy Movement, and with Counseling Guidance at Public Preliminary School

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### Abstract

In the 2013 curriculum in Indonesia, one of which is to instill character in students, so the school must make the right strategy. This research aims to describe the implementation of character education empowerment (CEE) thematically, with literacy movement and counseling guidance service. This research was carried out in a Public Primary School during the odd semester of the academic year 2020/2021. The subjects consisted of the principal, class teachers, and parents. The obtained data was from interview, documentation, and field observation. The applied data analysis consisted of data reduction, display, verification, and conclusion. The findings showed that CEE was done thematically by designing a specific plan. CEE with literacy movement invited learners to understand the learning materials and the surrounding environment. The CEE with counseling guidance was done with basic and responsive services and individual and preference plans. Every teacher invited learners to read, write, listen, and communicate carefully and accurately to the surrounding environment or during classroom learning. The hindrances occurred during the Coronavirus pandemic CEE with thematic used online learning.

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## INTRODUCTION

The implementation of Character Education Empowerment (CEE) at schools could be done with three approaches: classroom, school culture, and community-based approaches (Widyahening, 2016). These approaches cannot be separated and are integrated into a whole unit. Even so, it is important to observe the implementation of a character education empowerment training program that focuses on classroom-based character education empowerment. This approach puts us in a classroom teaching-learning interaction between teachers and learners intensively for a longer time. Therefore, to reach the objective of character education empowerment, it needed several strategies, such as character education empowerment thematically, with literacy movement and counseling guidance service.

A CEE implementation thematically is needed to succeed CEE activities. A character education empowerment through learning is an activity promoted by an educational unit by allocating specific time to teach certain values (Yatmiko, 2015). The theme containing main values of CEE should be taught in the form of classroom learning (Rohartati, 2020). It is expected to enrich CEE praxis at schools (Wuryani, 2018). Therefore, an educational unit designs its specific theme and what character educational value it emphasized on. An educational unit can assign specific teachers or empower the existing teachers to teach materials with certain values to empower character education (Zendarto, 2020).

The CEE with literacy movement is an activity to train the accessing, understanding, and processing skills to use information critically and intelligently based on reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities. It is to develop an individual's character to be tough, strong, and excellent (Ibda, 2018). Many activities could be done in a planned and programmed manner, both classroom, school, and community-based activities (Ika, 2019; Agung, 2017). Therefore, classroom-based character education

empowerment and literacy activities could be integrated in a learning activity and in the existing courses as stated in curriculum structure.

Every teacher may invite learners to read, write, listen, and communicate carefully, in detail, and accurately about a theme or topic from various sources, such as books, newspapers, social media, etc (Sabri, 2017). Thus, in CEE with literacy movement, sufficient source availability is needed, such as books, newspapers, and the Internet (Chumdari, 2018). Therefore, a reading corner, a school library, and the Internet connection are important to support learning promotion.

Ministerial Regulation of Education and Culture Ministry Number 23 (2015) considers teachers' creativity are the influential factors to present program and reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities brilliantly to allow learners to internalize the positive values of it. The habit of reading non-textbooks for fifteen minutes before beginning the class, as regulated by the Character Establishment, is an alternative to foster and initiate literacy movement at schools. Thus, a CEE with literacy movement at schools is needed to improve character education.

Character Education Empowerment could be integrated with learners' monitoring through guidance and counseling. The roles of guidance and counseling teachers do not only deal with learners' problems but deal with all learners to develop various potentials, such as academic, career, personality, and social aspects (Goodman-Scott, 2016). A school guidance and counseling can be done collaboratively with the course teachers, educational workers, parents, and other shareholders (Yuliawati, 2019). Besides that, the Ministerial Regulation of Education and Culture Minister Number 111 (2014) shows that the integrity of guidance and counseling service is realized in autonomous and development-oriented guidance and counseling philosophy. It covers (1) primary service, (2) responsive service, (3) individual plan and demand, and (4) system support. Thus, from the issued regulation by the Indonesian government,

there is a need for character education empowerment applied through guidance and counseling. On the other hand, for primary school, it is emphasized on principal implementation of guidance and counseling in an integrated learning with Character Education Empowerment (Darmayanti, 2014).

From the background, this research aims to describe how Public Primary School 2 Limbangan, Limbangan district, Kendal municipality applies character education empowerment thematically, with literacy movement and guidance counseling service.

## **METHOD**

This research applied a qualitative approach. This research described the character education empowerment implementation thematically with literacy movement and counseling guidance in Public Primary School 2 Limbangan in the academic year 2020/2021. The subjects consisted of the principal, classroom teachers, and parents.

The data was collected with observation, structured interview, and documentation. The purpose of observation is to know the customs that have always been carried out at school regarding character education. An interview was conducted to find out why character education is more in-depth. The documentation was to determine the development of character developments carried out in the previous year. The data validity technique of this research applied intensive observation and data triangulation. On the other hand, the data analysis techniques consisted of data reduction, display, verification, and conclusion.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the research and discussion are in the form of a description of the implementation of strengthening character education including thematically empowerment education, literacy movement, and counseling guidance with the stages of data that have been obtained with observation, structured interview, and documentation and then this research applied intensive observation and data triangulation to validity of the data

### **Thematic Learning CEE**

The findings of thematic-learning CEE in the school showed that the school applied its specific theme. The school prioritized on what characters to emphasize and assigned specific teachers or improved the existing teachers to teach materials with certain values to empower character education.

The examples of providing specific teachers (specialists) were martial art instructors to foster strong personality and awareness of the martial art essential value: to not be used recklessly. Before promoting the martial art training activity, the instructors asked the students to warm up, such as jogging around the school yard. It showed that warming up was a part of character inculcation, to keep the health and to stay chilly without being rushed into the main activity.

The thematic learning CEE results were also found based on interview with several schoolteachers. The interview results with a question of “How to apply CEE through thematic learning?” are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** the Interview Results about Thematic Learning CEE

Subject	The interview results with thematic learning CEE
Teacher 1	The theme was taken from an agreed value by school, such as about cooperation. The teachers could present an animated movie with cooperation or collaboration values in it. On Saturdays, all home-class teachers and course teachers got into the class to provide character-related lessons. The most popular character education values were honesty, leadership, and cooperation. However, the teacher seemed to focus on five CEE points. The reason was the score points were excellent to master by the learners while the others would be taken along with the broader-developed character education values. However, during this pandemic, the teacher could only share YouTube links.
Teacher 2	The teacher argued that his school had been programmed and realized the CEE values not only for instilling and completing the core competence objectives. The teacher said that most teachers at the school had joined CEE training. The teacher admitted that they, who already joined CEE training during KKG, and shared with each other. The administrative concept was done with a lesson plan. It consisted of cooperation/collaboration, integrity, nationalism, independence, and religiosity. They were then developed into honesty, leadership, and so on.
Teacher 3	On Saturdays, before the extracurricular was begun, a character education empowerment lesson was done. It had the purpose to allow learners to be aware of their extracurricular objective, what action to do during extracurricular activities, and what activities to do during classroom learning or other activities at home, school, and community. The design or concept, the developed extracurricular, contained and emphasized the developed character values for each promoted activity. Although implicitly, the extracurricular activity had promoted the character values, but they should be explicitly revealed, reflected, and re-emphasized at the end of the activity. Thus, learners would be aware and understand. However, during the pandemic, many activities cannot be conducted.

The teachers' explanations in Table 1 showed various ways to do, such as watching movies that contained character values, character-value integrated administration of the teachers, and learners' development through extracurricular.

During the pandemic, Teacher 1 explained that he kept promoting watching movie activity from YouTube. The movies contained character values. After being watched, learners were asked to explain what they learned. On the other hand, Teacher 2 kept planning the character by arranging the administration about what materials to be presented for learners when they returned to school normally. He did it even he had no ideas when it would be resumed.

The third teacher always reminded learners via WhatsApp to behave properly and do their achievement-supported hobbies, such as

exercising and interacting in the community. The third teacher knew that even if he asked learners to keep staying at home, they would still go around to play with their friends. The reason was - primary school learners liked playing with their friends. From the interview, the regular activities of thematic CEE existed and were carried out properly at the school. The schoolteachers kept promoting various thematic CEE even during this Corona pandemic.

In this curriculum, many schools applied thematic learning. This learning was effective and provided stimulus from many lessons in integrated manner (Amini, 2017). With this Character Education Empowerment, learners were expected to develop their characters. Promoting the character education empowerment program in integrated manner maximized character education as expected (Azahary, 2019).

Each lesson will have dominant CEE values to be applied and integrated in teaching-learning activities. For example, the instilled religious CEE trained learners to be good humans with excellent religious faith and taqwa as well as technology and information.

The implementation expected learners to understand each lesson promoted at school. They had to comprehend the given science at schools although they had different capabilities to do it. Thus, teachers had to explore the given theme so that classroom learning would not only be focused on a learning aspect only. In thematic learning, it could be discussed and empowered by CEE.

For example, first-grade learning, theme 3 - sub-theme 3, lesson 4, learners began learning by praying. After praying, teachers empowered them to pray submissively. By praying, humans interact and communicate with God the Almighty, the Creator. As humans, we can only ask Him to ease each of our business in the world and to save us in the days later. Thus, teachers could take proper countermeasures when learners did not pray submissively. For example, when the learners promoted college activity, the teacher found some learners lazily do it. Then, the teacher immediately acted based on religious aspects so that they would not be lazy to carry out the tasks. It could develop the learners' characters (Ambarini, 2017; Andriani, 2017).

The promoted cooperative learning could develop responsibility, cooperation, and competition among learners. It was due to the teacher providing reward for the best group during cooperative learning. Thus, cooperative learning could improve the character as found by Agustiani (2020) and Ariawan (2018). Team learning allowed learners to cooperate, socially interact, train their respect, and respect each other (Gunawan, 2020). It is in line with the thematic CEE learning implementation. The teachers had promoted five core characters, such as religiosity, nationalism, cooperation, independence, and thematic learning integrity. Therefore, these five targeted core characters of the school had been planned properly with the

arranged instruments by the teachers. This finding is in accordance with research by Wijanarti (2019), who created a learning instrument by writing five main characters to create a more directed CEE process.

### **CEE with Literacy Movement**

The findings of the CEE with literacy movement data were obtained from the school and classroom environments, and interviews with the principal or the teachers. The implementation showed that every teacher invited learners to read, write, listen, and communicate carefully and accurately during the learning process. Besides that, teachers always remind learners to wisely use smartphones. It was to anticipate the accessible negative sides of the Internet. Thus, in CEE, literacy movement required sufficient source availability, such as books, newspapers, and the Internet.

Then, teachers should always optimize the information from the school environment. Therefore, the roles and availabilities of reading corners, libraries, posters, appeals, and Internet connection were important to support the learning.

From the observation at school during this pandemic, the CEE with literacy movement was found training the learners to always put their masks, wash their hands, and keep their distances. Then, to prevent diarrhea at schools, many appeal signs to improve their character, such as keeping your environment clean, not using drugs, no smoking, discipline, etc.

During this pandemic, the principal asked the school community to obey the regulation, not only for the learners but also the teachers and staff. For him, health should be kept in the best condition. Besides that, the literacy movement about cleanliness was done in each school room. Based on the observation, each room would have a valve in front of it. Thus, the valves facilitated learners to wash their hands as the regulation of the government suggested.

The observation inside of several classes showed many wall magazines, reading corners, posters of the president, the vice president, and

Pancasila, the hero of Indonesia, cleaning tools, and dustbin. It showed that excellent classroom support could develop the learners' characters in respecting their heroes, improving their skills, and reading habits. It was in line with Teja (2020). He found that jargons in classrooms motivated learners. Each class could have its wall painted or attached by pictures. Each class also had class members, consisting of home class teachers and learners. Teachers had responsibilities in the classroom to provide information in the class.

One of the teachers admitted that learners had to replace the wall magazines once a month. Teachers also provided rewards for the best work. It was realized into a competition among learners in the classroom to get the best achievement although they were thinking of the rewards. Besides that, learners had to clean the classroom environment to keep it clean and healthy. On the other hand, the posters were useful to motivate them so they would not give up as suggested by the efforts of the heroes in fighting for independence.

However, during this pandemic, teachers could only remind learners to stay at home, wash their hands, and put their masks on while going outside. The warnings were done when learners came to the school even if it was only once a week. The teachers also provided the suggestion via smartphone. From the interview and observation, the school had promoted the CEE with literacy movement excellently although they were in the middle of a pandemic. Besides that, the teachers also provided models for the learners to wash their hands before getting inside the school area.

For the CEE with literacy movement, every teacher might invite learners to read, write, listen, and communicate carefully, in detail, and accurately about a theme or topic from various sources, such as books, newspapers, social media, etc. Thus, in CEE, literacy movement required sufficient source availability, such as books, newspapers, and the Internet. Therefore, a reading corner, a school library, and the Internet connection are important to support learning promotion.

Besides that, the posters seen by learners could make them curious about who they were. Then, teachers could follow it up by providing their fighting efforts so that learners could take their character values.

During this pandemic, banners about keeping health, such as washing hands, putting masks on, and keeping the distance were frequently found. It was done during the pandemic to prevent virus transmission so learners could obey the regulations rather than interacting with the transmitted learners due to the virus. The literacy movement at Public Primary School Limbangan 2 was modeled by the teachers in the first place. It has been since primary school learners imitated adult behaviors (Larsson, 2018; Pike, 2020; & Morrin, 2018).

During the pandemic, the CEE with literacy movement, based on Wahyuni (2020), showed that CEE with literacy movement could foster characters via online media. It could be done by allowing learners to comment the video content or the given texts. However, in Public Primary School 2 Limbangan, it had not been applied due to access limitation and learners still went to the school consecutively in the learning process. Thus, the learners' interaction with the teachers existed although the meeting was not daily promoted.

### **The CEE with Guidance and Counseling**

The findings of CEE with guidance and counseling were obtained from interview data with the principal and the schoolteachers. The principal admitted that the school had no guidance and counseling teachers. Thus, the home class teachers provided the guidance and counseling service. The principal believed these teachers could guide the learners because when they were still teacher colleges, they learned psychological education. Thus, the teachers could provide the service. The homeroom teachers (Class Advisor) always provided something that led to cause and effect. Therefore, the promoted service in classroom by the home class teachers made the service effective for learners. Moreover, learners would

feel their futures were also in the home class teachers' responsibilities (Gunawan, 2018).

The guidance and counseling implementation in this CEE aimed to develop long-term behaviors on five values: religiosity, cooperation, nationalism, independence, and integrity. The main values functioned as personal-individual values in developing potentials in learning, career, personality, and social. The practice showed that even when the teachers did not have specific skills to promote guidance and counseling, they kept promoting the service. It was done by (1) providing monitoring for all learners with structured experience activities, (2) providing responsive service for specific learners, both individually or collectively, that required assistance to develop themselves, (3) providing planned individual and preference service for learners to facilitate them developing their talents and preference.

The interview results with the fourth-grade teachers showed many problems experienced by learners. One of them was - lack of attention from their parents. It was indicated by the high frequency of asking questions to the teachers or teasing their peers. By motivating them continuously to be achieved would remind them not to easily feel satisfied. It could also be done by providing reward. The given motivation began from a smaller thing. It was to create a comfortable learning atmosphere. Then, it continued to create meaningful learning by connecting the materials with daily life and creating harmonious relationships with the learners. For violation, teachers asked learners to be honest, to admit, and to apologize. The teachers then condemned them by writing a statement to not do it anymore. However, when it dealt with severe violation, the teachers would report it to the principal. Then, the principal would make a decision related to the problems.

On the other hand, the fifth grader-home class teachers always asked what the learners wanted, dreamed, idealized, and hoped to foster their interest. Then, the teacher consulted with the learners' parents about what they preferred at home and at school. The teacher also reminded them not to easily give up. The

teachers reminded it so by suggesting and motivating them to learn diligently and with full of spirit. The given motivation for learners was done verbally and with action (models), such as providing rewards for the achieved learners. It was to motivate the other learners to be achieved learners. The taken stage for the learners in this case was by summoning them and their parents in a certain determined period. The teacher also visited the learners' houses and asked for proper cooperation from the parents (Zurqoni, 2018).

The CEE with guidance and counseling at Public Primary School 2 Limbangan, with no guidance and counseling teachers, was done by the room teachers. The activities of guidance and counseling teachers did not only focus on learners' problems but deal with all learners to develop various potentials, such as academic, career, personality, and social aspects. The school guidance and counseling were done collaboratively with the course teachers, educational workers, parents, and other shareholders.

From the results, the school had been properly promoting the CEE with guidance and counseling service. It was in line with Isnaini (2016). He found that the thematic guidance and counseling service was directed and systematic. It was a manifestation and accumulation of guidance and counseling service. Then, the proper guidance and counseling management provided procedure to carry out the service and to remove the impression of incidental and curative nature of counselors.

Putri (2020) found that guidance and counseling service promoted online could be done by phone, email, chat, instant messaging, social network, and video conference. During this pandemic, Public Primary School 2 Limbangan contacted the parents via messaging features of smartphones. Teachers asked the development of the learners daily, such as asking what the learners did at home. They also monitored the learning activity that could improve the characters.

## CONCLUSION

From the findings at the school, character education empowerment had been excellently carried out. The thematic character education empowerment designed a specific theme and what character educational value it emphasized on. For the character education empowerment with literacy movement, every teacher invited learners to read, write, listen, and communicate carefully and accurately to the surrounding environment or during classroom learning. The CEE with guidance and counseling service and empowerment, the character education promoted by the teachers were such as providing basic and responsive services, and individual and personal interest plans.

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