

# Promoting Character Education Through Genre-Based Language Learning: A Digital Reading Box in the Spotlight

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**Abstract**—During the COVID-19 pandemic, the learning paradigm in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era began, requiring students and teachers to carry out an electronic-interneted learning process. Reading skills, as an entryway for learning language and other subjects, have become a strategic step that can increase learning 4.0 in terms of cognitive (literacy and numeracy) or non-cognitive (character) components. There have been teaching resources, particularly in the genre of language texts. However, it is still usually in the form of printed books or e-books that do not focus on character education. Consequently, the researchers developed "Literasiku 1", a Digital Reading Box that includes the AIR flow in tasks and activities that show different types of text genres: descriptive, procedural, fantasy, and inspirational stories mixed with fascinating pictures and video illustrations. The research findings can help teachers apply character education in language learning based on the six components of the Pancasila student profile. Furthermore, this product can provide students with information on digital literacy relevant to their needs, as evidenced by the development of texts close to the natural environment or tangible things.

**Index Terms**—character building, Digital Reading Box (DRB), genre-based texts, Pancasila student profile

## I. INTRODUCTION

Electronic-interneted learning can inspire students and teachers to support academic activities related to the 4.0 period or the Industrial Revolution, linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program improves graduate competencies (soft and hard skills) and confiscates challenges, and independence in finding knowledge through field dynamics (interaction, collaboration, self-management, and performance demands) (Lestari et al., 2022), and opportunities for creative development (Chacón-López & Maeso-Broncano, 2023) as well as student needs. This program is pertinent to the Tamansiswa teachings of Ki Hadjar Dewantara (KHD) regarding children's freedom of expression and creation. The impact of COVID-19 has been highly positive, paving the way for educational innovations: teachers and students are well aware of the need for digital information technology (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020) and new learning media. The necessity for our children to bring their lives closer to the lives of the people so that they have not only "knowledge" about their people's lives but also "experience" them personally and thus do not live far apart from their people (Dewantara, 2020; Zulfiati et al., 2021).

Concentrating on the MEA perspective is vital to developing students' language proficiency, which can serve as both a challenge and an opportunity for them to learn alongside their language teachers. Character education (Rochmiyati et al., 2020a) should not result in the detrimental consequences of digitalization, cyber-physical technology, or computing power. Even the damaging aspects of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Prasetyo & Sutopo, 2018) must be considered a challenge and an opportunity to implement regional-national-international regulations. The reading literacy (Robiasih et al., 2023) and literacy development (Tavakoli & Esmae'li, 2013) in schools have begun aligning with efforts to incorporate a touch of technology and character. Students tend to rely on their teachers and are passive in pandemic situation learning (Ariebowo & Puspitasari, 2022). Developing digital literacy intends to help students love reading (Kurniawan, 2020) while integrating character education in every reading comprehension activity.

This research developed a Digital Reading Box, potentially effective in developing students' language competence. In addition, it has learning guides as part of an effort to increase the fun and contextual online learning innovation in collaboration with the Manpower Education Institute of Teacher Training (LPTK), which aims to advance innovative and contextual language learning based primarily on school conditions and needs further improvements in Indonesia. Online learning is an educational innovation that integrates information technology in learning and can have an

unlimited number of participants through a web network and various technological media (Cui et al., 2023; Szymkowiak et al., 2021). One of the positive impacts of online learning (Xie et al., 2020) is an increase in student learning outcomes, typically lower than the minimum competency standard during face-to-face learning (Timotheou et al., 2023). On the other hand, the detrimental consequences of remote learning include inadequate networks through which students do not understand learning materials, limited facilities (expensive internet quotas), and students who are less enthusiastic about participating in online learning (Rasmitadila et al., 2020).

As part of the millennial generation, students prefer entirely digital and enjoyable learning to face-to-face meetings (Mpungose, 2020). This insight allows the teacher to manage knowledge regarding teaching materials, media, and learning strategies (Bridgstock, 2016; Zeri et al., 2023). In addition, digital texts of different genres help enrich teaching materials by selecting the appropriate text type based on learning outcomes. Learning tools in compliance with the 2013 Curriculum (Wulandari, 2020), curriculum evaluation (Supriyoko et al., 2022) and the Achievement of the Independent Curriculum at Dynamic Driving Schools must have a touch of technology and character to satisfy students' demands. One of the technological breakthroughs for the learning process is primarily concerned with the Preferred Modality Theory. Students can comprehend the material content by utilizing their combined sensory functions. The software chosen is multimedia to provide a dynamic and interactive learning environment, piquing student interest in the tasks and activities offered, typically in the form of games. Using interactive multimedia can improve early reading skills (Nurmahanani, 2021) and writing to uphold critical thinking skills (Sudirman et al., 2023).

Teaching materials aligned to generally accepted standards are replete with learning media (Puspitarini & Hanif, 2019) comprising content, material presentation, language and legibility, and graphics based on students' needs. In what follows, digital instructional materials (Rice & Ortiz, 2021) encapsulate four stages: define, design, develop, and distribute. A psychological touch is also required when producing teaching materials, such as fun, relevance to life, and educating students. The primary feature of effective teaching materials is that they must accommodate blended learning approach and individual differences (Sabah, 2020) and affective attitudes. Character education is a system of naming character values (Halimah et al., 2020; McGrath et al., 2022) that includes components of knowledge, awareness or willingness, behaviors, cultural concepts (Agus et al., 2021), local culture aspects (Agus et al., 2020) and locally rooted culture preservation (Rochmiyati et al., 2020b). It is critical to honor God Almighty, the environment, oneself, others, and nationality to implement these ideas. Character education (Nagashima & Gibbs, 2022) is more than just teaching what is right and wrong (morality; it is also about instilling good habits (habituations) in them so that they understand goodness and want to do good things. As the Ministry of National Education puts, character education includes 18 core values: religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity character qualities, national spirit, love for the homeland, respect for achievement, friendliness/communicativeness, love of peace, avidity to read, concern for the environment and society, and responsibility (Kuning, 2018). Meanwhile, the independence curriculum (Fauzan et al., 2023) includes vital principles such as trust, faith in God Almighty and Noble Morals, independence, cooperation, global benefit, critical reasoning, and creativity.

To foster a love for Indonesia, learning materials (genre texts) should include information about Indonesia's geographical condition and natural wealth, as well as national and regional documents [24]. This determinant factor supports digital character building, which can be read at any time and used in education and society. The Digital Reading Box will become a familiar educational tool, consisting of different boxes providing a collection of text with a short list of questions to develop children's language skills (Rochmiyati, 2017). The Digital Reading Box, also known as learning media, contains a text collection and a list of questions and answers. The teacher is generally in charge of the answer key. This reading box can help develop the teacher's teaching skills, the activities of the students, and the learning results for reading comprehension (Young et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2020). Its favorable qualities include the ability to capture students' attention to develop learning motivation (Puspitarini & Hanif, 2019), students participating in more group learning activities, and more diverse teaching approaches (Kámán et al., 2020). This Digital Reading Box is a development of the outcomes of research products generated by researchers in 2019 that were previously only available in the form of prints and data that could be accessible through a PC. The development of this product happened in 2022 to include digital discourse and illustrations Promoting Character Education through Genre-Based Language Learning: A Digital Reading Box in the Spotlight in collaboration with lecturers, teachers, and students (the new paradigm). Based on Pancasila student profiles, such values, and culture as seven factors (Sabon et al., 2022) and other product features, such as content, character collaboration, and game illustrations in tasks and activities (Tiasari, 2019) accessible through PC and Android phones.

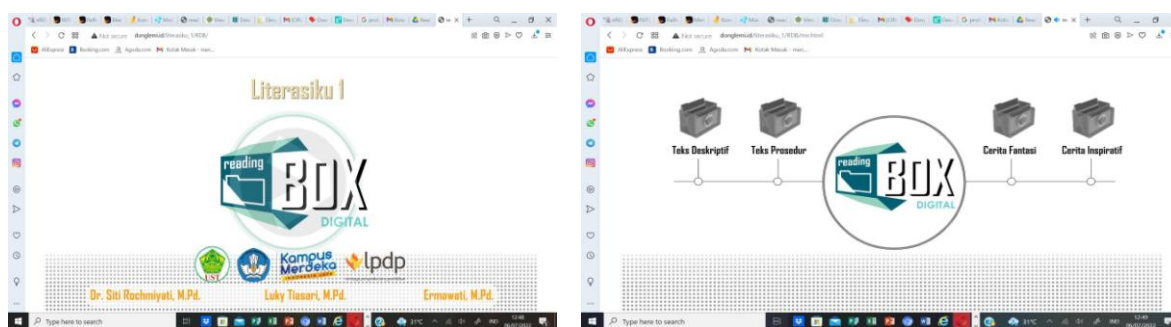
## II. RESEARCH METHOD

The researchers used R&D to modify the three models (Gall et al., 2003; Runco, 2023). First, the researchers conducted observations in the language teaching-learning process, particularly in studying genre-based texts, followed by interviews with students and teachers to determine learning needs and target needs, and last, documentation to acquire documentation information (Plomp, 2013). Second, utilizing AIR flow, they created a Digital Reading Box called "Literasiku 1" based on the six dimensions of Pancasila Student Profile and Genre-based Texts. The final stage is to test the Digital Reading Box product development process. These three steps are known as development, testing, and evaluation.

The data analysis technique was used qualitatively (Miles et al., 2014). As a follow-up to the MBKM program at UST, the model is implemented in cooperation between the Manpower Education Institute of Teacher Training (LPTK) and the partner schools (SMP Negeri 1 Cangkringan, SMP Negeri 3 Berbah, SMP Negeri 2 Ngemplak, SMP Negeri 4 Sleman, and SMP Negeri 4 Gamping). In the MBKM program, the lecturers partner with teachers to supervise students as they attend classes using LPTKs. The purpose of the lecturer-student-teacher collaboration is to create a character-based digital reading box for junior high school students to learn languages online. The following are the outcomes of developing a product called Digital Reading Box titled "Literasiku 1" in language learning for junior high school students based on the Pancasila Student Profile. Technology is a means of offering software operated through PCs and Android phones to adapt to the digital era 4.0 and 21st Century learning.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This article describes two research findings: the exploratory stage carried out in five partner schools through observation, interviews, and documentation. The following are the needs analysis findings: 1) It takes genre texts that incorporate character education, particularly those that refer to the reading profile of Pancasila students. 2) Learning media application elements that can assist teachers in implementing character education are part of lesson plans and in-classroom learning schemes. During the development stage, researchers created a **Digital Reading Box** product called "**Literasiku 1**" by working (using one of the Pancasila student profile dimensions) with instructors and students to promote the MBKM program. Product development comprises content, character collaboration, and game illustrations in several text versions so that the texts are enjoyable and easy to understand for students. The Digital Reading Box product "Literasiku 1" comprises four genres of texts whose languages have been adjusted based on the students' development. Figure 1 depicts a digital cover and the many genre texts available in this package.

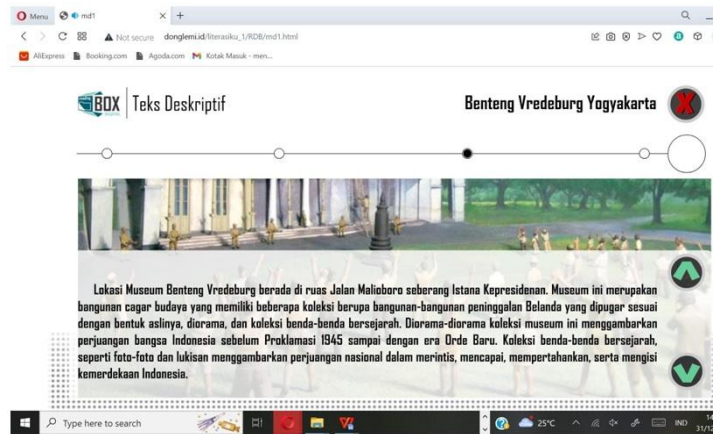


Picture 1. The Covers and Types of Genre-based Text

The development of the Indonesian version of the Digital Reading Box product "Literasiku 1" is based on the six dimensions of the Pancasila student profile [35] offered in each text genre as described below. This idea is evident from the suggested meaning in the text that the product presentation by illustrations in the form of images, videos, sounds, games, and the selection of fonts, colors, and graphics relevant to the students' needs. Therefore, in the product's development, three sections known as **AIR** include **A\_Story** (text type based on students' needs), **2) I\_Character** (character education content that appears in texts to improve non-cognitive abilities (characters), and **3) R\_Quiz** (multiple choice questions to improve cognitive abilities) (literacy and numeracy).

#### A. Descriptive Text

For semester one students in class VII, a story on the content of the descriptive text marks a well-developed design. The descriptive language provides a summary of the attributes of the described object. Readers seem to see, hear and feel the text presentation for themselves by using descriptive language. The descriptive sentence's qualities include describing something, involving sensory impressions, and making the reader or listener feel alone or experience it themselves. Meanwhile, the descriptive text's structure consists of a broad description (a general statement about the object and its report) and a description of the section (a part of the object's description).

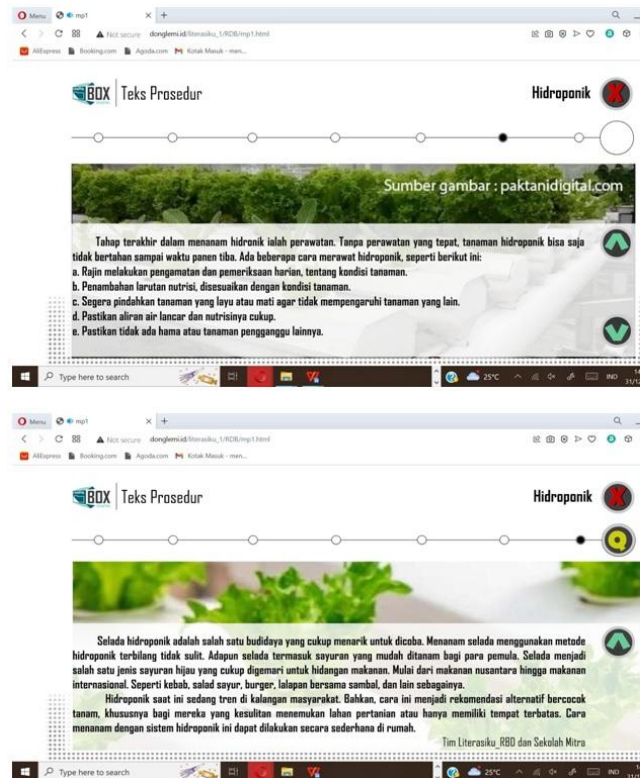


Picture 2. A Descriptive Story Text

Picture 2 depicts the character that appears on slide 3, and there is character education content that reflects the profile of Pancasila students, which lies in the **"Global Diversity"** dimension, particularly on the elements of knowing and appreciating culture, reflection, and responsibility for the experience of diversity, and intercultural communication skills in interacting with others. This argument is visible from the writing indicating that this museum is a cultural heritage building, the dioramas of this museum collection show the struggle of the Indonesian people, and images and paintings depict the national struggle in pioneering. Therefore, students can recognize, appreciate, and preserve Indonesian culture through the use of these texts.

### B. Procedural Text

The following type of text is a procedural text titled hydroponics. For semester one students in class VII, a story text in 7 slides is fascinating. The procedural text provides the steps or stages to doing something that is discussed coherently and sequentially in a concise and straightforward language style. This text is enough for readers to quickly grasp the text's meaning and put it into practice.



Picture 3. A Procedural Story Text

Picture 3 illustrates the characters of the procedural text slides, including character education displayed on slides 6 and 7. On this slide, there are two dimensions of the Pancasila student profiles, namely: **"Bergotong Royong"** (be in cooperation), particularly on the elements of "collaboration, caring, sharing," reflected in the fact that this method is an alternative recommendation for farming, especially for those who have difficulty finding agricultural land to caring



Hydroponics. **"Being creative"** is mainly in the element of "creating innovative ideas," reflected in "How to produce with this hydroponic system may be done simply at home". These texts allow students to collaborate and communicate their creative thoughts with the surrounding environment.

### C. Fantasy Story Text

Bimomartani Legend is a fantasy text story taught to class VII students in semester 1 using five slides with A\_Story content. A fantasy text is a piece of writing or an essay that describes recounts, or imagines a range of behaviors, occurrences, and situations in the form of wishful thinking, fantasy, or pure fiction. Some components of this text type include magic, mystery, and strangeness, open plot concepts, the use of imagination, a variety of settings (across time and space), and distinctive characters of fantasy literature with supernatural powers.

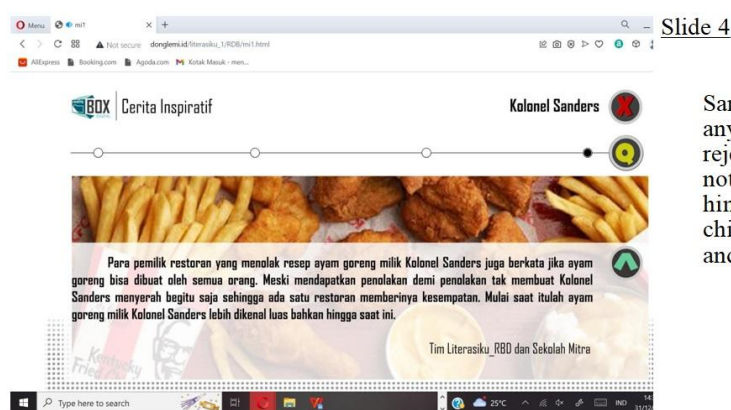


Picture 4. A Fantasy Story Text

Picture 4 depicts the characters from slide 1: the dimensions of the Pancasila student profile: **"Being faithful or believing in God Almighty and having Noble Morals"**, particularly on the elements of "morals to humans and morality to nature". This reality is relevant to the statement, "Residents who saw the imprints claim that the footsteps on the rock are those of the puppet character and the agricultural land is quite fertile." Through this text, students have a noble character toward humans and nature.

### D. Inspirational Story Text

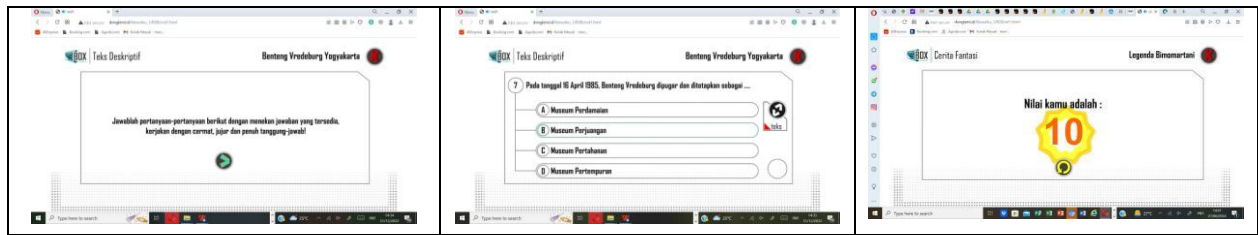
The inspirational story text called Colonel Sanders has content presented in four slides for class IX of semester two students. In the form of essays/text, inspirational story text is commonly used as a medium to obtain thoughts, concepts, or inspiration that can improve excitement in accomplishing the intended goals. Its function is to increase and inspire motivation, self-confidence, and enthusiasm to confront any challenges that may arise in reaching the targeted goals.



Picture 5. Inspirational Story Text

Picture 5 depicts the characters in slide 4, precisely the Pancasila "independent" student's profile dimension, particularly the element of **"self-awareness and the situation at hand"** portrayed in "Restaurant owners who refuse fried chicken recipes". In addition, the **"critical Reasoning"** message, namely "acquiring and analyzing information and ideas, reflecting on concepts and thought processes," is expressed in "Despite receiving rejection after rejection, Colonel Sanders did not give up". Students are encouraged to be independent and never give up on coping with existing challenges due to this text. The nature of critical reasoning is also required to improve students' ability to overcome issues in everyday life.

The AIR flow, particularly the R\_Quiz element in the Digital Reading Box product "Literasiku\_1," contains ten multiple-choice questions to strengthen cognitive abilities (literacy and numeracy). Here's an example of R\_Quiz in the descriptive text:



Picture 6. The R\_Quiz in a Descriptive Text

Figure 6 highlights three key points: 1) instructions that already include character education (non-cognitive), 2) question types that improve cognitive abilities, and 3) automatic scoring that occurs after students work on questions (digitally).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

A digital reading box called *Literasiku\_1* includes the AIR components, namely A\_Story (text types based on student needs), I\_Character (character education content found in texts to improve non-cognitive abilities (characters), and R\_Quiz (multiple-choice questions to enhance cognitive skills (literacy and numeracy) in tasks and activities. They represent various text genres such as descriptive, procedural, fantasy, and inspirational stories combined with illustrated images, videos, sounds, and exciting games. Based on the 6-dimensional profile of Pancasila students, this research product can help teachers implement character in language acquisition. Further, by developing texts close to the natural world, this product can help students learn about digital literacy following their needs. Therefore, this research reflects the digital world, including Community 5.0 and Industrial Revolution 4.0. Finally, the researchers would like to say thanks for LPDP and partner contribution.




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