

**STRENGTHENING CREATIVE, CRITICAL, AND SYNTOPIC READING
SKILLS OF INDONESIAN LANGUAGE EDUCATION STUDENTS,
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF PALEMBANG**

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Abstract: The Strengthening Creative, Critical, and Syntopic Reading Skills Training for Indonesian Language Education students, Muhammadiyah University of Palembang aims to improve essential academic literacy skills in understanding and processing information in depth. This training integrates critical reading techniques to analyze texts systematically, creative reading to develop new ideas, and synthetic reading that trains students to compare and synthesize ideas from various sources. The training method uses an interactive approach and teaching materials that have been specifically developed to support the improvement of these skills. The results of the training showed a significant increase in students' ability to read and process information critically and creatively, as well as the ability to compile syntheses from various readings, which supports their academic and professional readiness. Thus, this training is effective in strengthening essential reading skills for Indonesian Language Education students, Muhammadiyah University of Palembang.

Keywords: Reading, creative, critical, synthetic, students

INTRODUCTION

Reading skills are very important for students because they play a major role in supporting academic success and overall self-development. The importance of this ability is because it allows students to obtain new information and expand their knowledge in various fields of study, thereby enriching their understanding of lecture materials and the world in general. (Brawijaya, 2025); (Azis, 2022); (SDGS, 2025); (Fitri Diah Novita Sari, 2024); (Veron, 2019).

Reading skills can enable someone to generate various ideas and arguments that stimulate critical thinking, analysis, and evaluation skills. These skills are very important in constructing logical arguments and facing complex academic tasks. Some forms of reading skills that can be used as a basis for improving a person's abilities are creative, critical, and synthetic reading.

Creative reading involves actively arranging facts, concepts, and principles in new ways, which demonstrate originality and new perspectives. Creative reading emphasizes fluency and originality, and encourages readers to see or do things differently based on their engagement with the text. This type of reading supports interpretive reading and

discussion, which fosters creativity through new insights gained from the material. (Sari, 2020).

Critical reading is a more analytical and evaluative process. Readers are required to engage deeply with a text by applying processes, models, and questions to enhance clarity and understanding. Critical readers look beyond a superficial understanding to examine the consistency, tone, organization, and logical structure of arguments. This process often involves multiple readings: reviewing for main ideas, annotating and analyzing evidence, reviewing to resolve questions, and responding through writing or discussion. Critical reading requires an open mind, careful attention to vocabulary, and active note-taking to fully understand and evaluate the author's message. [(Revlina Octavia Artrisdianti, 2023); (Sultan, 2019); (Ayu, 2020)]

Syntopic reading, also known as comparative reading, is the most complex and challenging level of reading. Syntopic reading involves reading multiple books on the same subject and comparing their ideas to build a new, comprehensive understanding that may not exist in a single book. (Doren, 1972). This approach requires systematic analysis, extensive note-taking, and the ability to synthesize multiple viewpoints. The process involves examining the material to select relevant passages, assimilating terminology, articulating key questions, and analyzing discussions to identify consensus, controversies, and emerging directions in the field. Syntopic reading is highly active and effortful, representing the highest level of reading skill. [(Mooney, 2019); (Beckford, 2023); (Basmo, 2025)].

The description above further strengthens the importance of reading skill strengthening activities for students. For this reason, training is carried out related to creative, critical, and synthetic reading. Some of the important points include:

1. Improving Critical and Creative Thinking Skills
This training helps students develop critical and creative thinking skills that are very much needed to face the challenges of the modern world. By reading critically and creatively, students can broaden their horizons and knowledge and are able to produce original and valuable works.
2. Improving Interest and Motivation to Learn
Effective reading and creative writing training programs can increase students' interest and motivation to learn, so that they are more active in receiving information and developing language skills as a whole.
3. Developing Language and Literacy Skills
Through this training, students are not only able to understand the contents of the reading in depth, but are also able to apply the ideas obtained to creative writing. This has an impact on improving better language skills and increasing writing productivity.
4. Improving Information Analysis and Synthesis Skills
Syntopic reading, which involves comparing and combining ideas from various sources, trains students' analytical and synthesis skills. This is very important for building a comprehensive and original understanding of a topic.

5. Forming a Generation Capable of Conveying Information Well
This training is expected to produce a generation that is able to convey information or messages effectively and creatively, so that it can contribute positively to society and the academic world.
6. Improving Quality of Life Through Reading Application
Creative and critical reading does not stop at understanding, but also encourages readers to apply knowledge and ideas from reading in everyday life, thereby improving their quality of life.

METHOD

The method used in this community service activity is the concept of counseling and training on Creative, Critical, and Syntopic Reading. Because of the importance of literacy related to reading, the team targets students, especially those in the Indonesian language education study program.

The benefits that will be obtained are:

1. Developing Creativity in Writing and Thinking
This training helps students express ideas or concepts innovatively and originally, especially in interpreting literary works. Creativity that is honed through critical, creative, and synthetic reading allows students to produce interesting and high-value written works because they are supported by imagination and emotional intelligence.
2. Increasing Emotional and Cognitive Intelligence
The reading process that involves emotional intelligence and critical thinking strengthens students' ability to associate elements of the text with personal experiences and social contexts, resulting in deep and meaningful understanding.
3. Improving Critical and Analytical Thinking Skills
Through critical reading training, students are trained not to easily accept information raw, but to be able to assess, test sources, compare ideas, and relate the contents of the reading to social contexts and current issues. This forms a critical attitude that is essential in the academic world and professional life.
4. Sharpening Syntopic Reading Skills for Scientific Synthesis
Syntopic reading trains students to read multiple sources at once, compare, and integrate ideas from various readings to build a comprehensive understanding. This ability is very important in writing scientific papers, such as theses, which require synthesis of theories and data from various references.
5. Improving Academic Writing Skills
With good reading skills, students can process information effectively to write systematic and weighty reviews, criticisms, and scientific papers. This training also helps in the technique of writing citations and compiling correct bibliographies, important aspects in academics.

6. Encouraging Active Participation in Learning

This reading training increases student participation in discussions, text reviews, and other learning activities that require active cognitive, affective, and psychomotor involvement.

This training is expected to be an important foundation for producing graduates who are not only able to understand and criticize texts, but also able to contribute creatively and scientifically in the field of Indonesian language education [(Sitti Rachmi Masie, 2018); (Sultan, 2019); (Safira Nur Rahma, 2024)].

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Based on the results of Community Service activities, the following data were obtained:

Table 1. Distribution of Participants (n: 22)

Participant Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Female	19	86,4%
Male	3	13,6%
Total	22	100%

The number of participants was 22 students from the Indonesian Language Education Study Program, FKIP, Muhammadiyah University of Palembang. The materials presented and practiced in this activity include:

1. Reading Techniques and Strategies
Includes various reading techniques such as speed reading, reading aloud, reading silently, and scanning to obtain information effectively and efficiently.
2. Text Comprehension and Analysis
Focuses on the ability to understand the contents of the reading in depth, identify main ideas, arguments, and analyze and evaluate the contents of the text critically.
3. Developing Creativity in Reading
Training participants to not only understand the text, but also develop new, creative ideas and concepts based on the results of the reading, including the ability to connect the reading with personal experiences.
4. Syntopic Reading and Information Synthesis
Training the skills of comparing various reading sources, identifying similarities and differences, and compiling synthetic conclusions or opinions from various information.
5. Implementation and Practice of Interactive and Independent Reading
Includes activities of reading together, guided reading, and independent reading with good classroom management, as well as direct practice in choosing appropriate books and using effective reading strategies.

After the activity, a test was given to see the participants' understanding of the training that had been carried out. The test results showed that the average score obtained by participants was 75.1. This means that participants have a good understanding of the material presented and trained.

Table 2: Participant Response Questionnaire Data on Ongoing Activities					
Question	Response				
	Disagree	Less Agree	Quite Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Creative reading training can improve the ability to generate new ideas	0%	0%	5,9%	76,5%	17,6%
Critical reading skills are important for analyzing information received in today's digital era.	0%	0%	11,8%	58,8%	29,4%
Syntopic reading helps understand various perspectives on a topic or issue.	0%	0%	41,2%	47,1%	11,7%
Participants feel the need to take creative, critical, and synthetic reading training to improve their academic skills	0%	0%	5,9%	29,4%	64,7%
This training will help participants in their future professional careers.	0%	0%	0%	82,4%	17,6%
Participants already have adequate creative, critical, and synthetic reading skills before taking this training.	0%	0%	70,6%	23,5%	5,9%
Average			22,6%	52,9%	24,5%

From the results of the distributed questionnaire, it can be explained that the participants who responded the most to the question item on creative reading training can improve the ability to generate new ideas, were in the AGREE category (76.5%). This result shows that the optimal achievement in the STRONGLY AGREE category was not achieved (only 17.6%). Improvement and proof are needed regarding the instillation of the benefits of the training carried out. Furthermore, for the questionnaire question that critical reading skills are important for analyzing information received in the digital era, the most participants answered AGREE (58.8%). This percentage of answers can be understood considering that participants have not seen in depth the importance of critical reading skills in real life. The next questionnaire is a question about the benefits of synthetic reading skills in helping to understand various perspectives on a topic or issue. The highest percentage of participant answers is AGREE (47.1%). In fact, this number is less than satisfactory. This shows that participants do not properly understand the concept of synthetic reading and its benefits.

The next questionnaire question concerns the level of need/needlessness of someone to take part in creative, critical, and syntopic reading training. The highest achievement of results is in the STRONGLY AGREE category (64.7%). This result is somewhat inconsistent with the participants' answers to the previous questionnaire

questions which seemed to view this training as not a truly useful activity. In relation to professionalism when working later, the questionnaire results showed that the highest participant responses were in the AGREE category (82.4%). Finally, regarding the background of the participants' mastery of the material before the training activity took place, the highest results were obtained which showed that 70.6% of participants' knowledge was in the ADEQUATE category. This result shows that in the future, this reading training activity needs to be carried out better and with optimal preparation so that the results are also optimal.

In this training, an open questionnaire was also given to participants to reflect on the ongoing activities. What are your expectations for the creative, critical, and synthetic reading training?

The participants' answers in general were that there was an increase in insight in reading activities. The participants' responses also targeted an increase in critical thinking skills and were able to develop creativity in understanding texts. This shows that participants responded positively to the activities carried out. The response stating that there was a development of creativity in understanding texts is the most important positive side of this activity. Participants are expected to be able to see more comprehensively the importance of reading skills.

Mention the challenges you face in developing this reading skill! Answering this question, participants expressed various opinions, including: Requires discipline, patience and commitment to continue learning. Another opinion states that the lack of understanding is due to the habit of reading only to seek information rather than understanding the contents of the reading. It is illustrated here that reading strategies and goals are still not in accordance with the existing level of education. Low interest in reading is a factor in the weak desire to read and understand reading well. Do you have any suggestions for improving reading training in your institution? This last questionnaire question is to see future expectations for the activities carried out. Participant responses include the importance of providing reading assignments related to real life or everyday life or practice in creative, critical and syntopic reading by analyzing experiences that have been passed. This response shows that participants actually have a strong desire to understand various reading strategies. For this reason, real-life exploration needs to be used as initial material to stimulate interest in reading and try to dig deeper into what is being read. Below are some slides and photos of the activities that have been carried out.



Figure 1. Activity Presentation Slide (Source: Personal Documentation, 2024)



Figure 2. Activity Presentation Slide (Source: Personal Documentation, 2024)

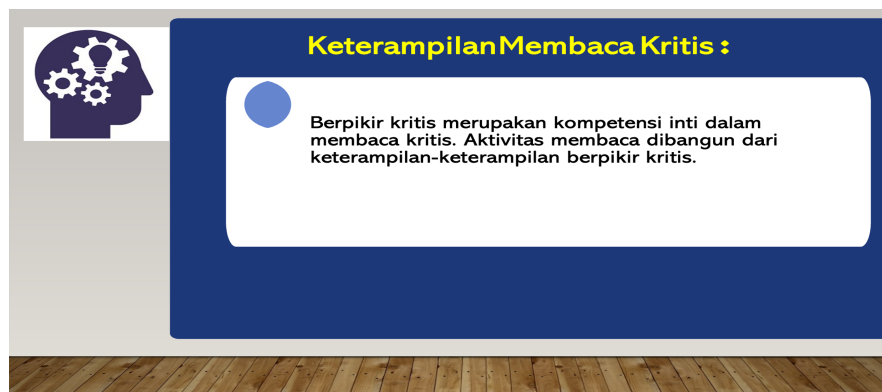


Figure 3. Activity Presentation Slide (Source: Personal Documentation, 2024)

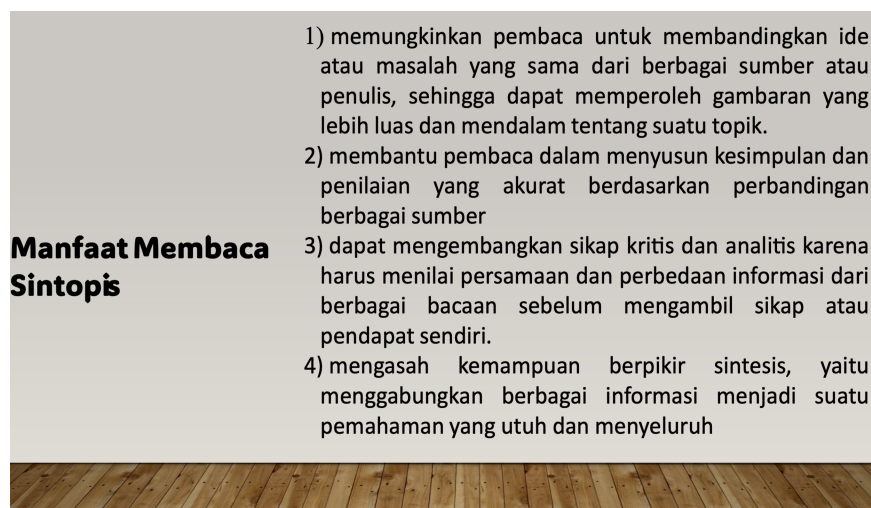


Figure 4. Activity Presentation Slide (Source: Personal Documentation, 2024)



(Source: Personal Documentation, 2024)

CONCLUSION

Creative, critical, and synthetic reading training is very useful for Indonesian Language Education students because it can 1) help develop creativity and emotional intelligence in interpreting literary texts; 2) Improve critical and analytical thinking skills that are essential in academics; 3) Train synthetic reading skills to integrate various reading sources; 4) Strengthen systematic and valid academic writing skills; 5) Encourage active involvement in the learning process. This training is an important foundation for producing graduates who are not only able to understand and criticize texts but also able to contribute creatively and scientifically in the field of Indonesian language education.

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