

## From Readers to Educators: Shaping Literary Sensibility in Elementary Teachers Through a Structured Learning Model

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### Abstract

**Background:** This study is grounded in the need for a literary learning approach that can develop students' appreciation, aesthetic sensitivity, and critical understanding of literary works.

**Aims:** This study aims to develop and examine the effectiveness of the literary appreciation learning model applied to students in the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program (PGSD) at the Open University (UT), Jambi City.

**Methods:** The research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation.

**Results:** The results of the study show that the literary appreciation learning model, based on critical and collaborative reflection, is able to increase reading interest, analytical power, and interpretation ability of students' literary works. This model also can be used as an alternative approach to literary learning in higher education, particularly in the context of distance learning. The findings show that 90% of students accurately identified literary elements, 85% generated original creative responses, and 80% reported increased interest in literature.

**Conclusion:** it can be concluded that the literary appreciation learning model based on critical and collaborative reflection is effective in increasing the ability and interest of PGSD students at the Open University of Jambi City in understanding and appreciating literary works.

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## INTRODUCTION

Literary education plays a strategic role in shaping the personality, character, and aesthetic sensitivity of students (Calafato & Simmonds, 2022; Mej'la & Montoya, 2017; Ullah et al., 2024). Through literary appreciation activities, students are not only invited to understand the content and form of literary works, but also trained to appreciate the human, moral, and social values contained in them (Nisja, 2024; Prihatini, 2019; Ribeiro, 2025). In higher education environment, particularly in the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program (PGSD), strengthening literary appreciation skills is important to equip prospective teachers with holistic and transformative literacy competencies (Møller-skau & Lindstøl, 2022; Rachmadyanti et al., 2025; Wahyuni et al., 2024).

As a higher education institution implementing a distance learning system, the Open University as faces challenges in implementing literary appreciation learning (Cunha et al., 2020; Kibuku et al., 2020; Zuhairi, 2026). PGSD students at the Open University of Jambi City, as independent learners, require a learning model that can overcome limitations in direct interaction while still supporting the development of literary appreciation competencies (Mehrpuoyan, 2023; Rusyana & Prakoso, 2024; Silvano & Gallardo, 2024).

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Common challenges in learning literary appreciation in a distance education environment are the lack of emotional involvement of students with literary works, restricted interactive media, and the use of less affective instructional approaches (Dwinata, 2020; Fawa et al., 2023; Mardi et al., 2025). Therefore, there is a need for a literary appreciation learning model that is contextual, innovative, and align with the characteristics of distance learning (Awajan, 2022; Hu & Xiao, 2025; Koi-akrofi et al., 2020).

In teacher education, Literary learning plays important role in fostering appreciation for national language and culture (Albayrak, 2025; Calafato, 2024; Menna et al., 2020). PGSD students as prospective basic educators, need to be equipped with the ability to understand, interpret, and appreciate literary works in depth (Rusdi et al., 2025; Saka, 2018). However, the learning process of literary appreciation at the Open University of Jambi City faces its own challenges, particularly due to the distance learning system demands innovative strategies. Consequently, there is a need for a learning model that not only conveys literary theory, but also builds aesthetic experiences, emotional engagement, and critical interpretation.

This study aims to address the following questions: (1) How is the literary appreciation learning model applied for PGSD students at UT Jambi? (2) What is the impact of the model on increasing students' literary appreciation? This study introduces a contextualized literary appreciation learning model specifically designed for PGSD students at Universitas Terbuka (UT) Jambi, a demographic that has been underrepresented in previous literary pedagogy research. Unlike conventional models that often rely on passive reception of literary texts, this model integrates critical reflection and dialogical learning, encouraging students to actively engage with literature through discussion, interpretation, and personal connection. The novelty introduces a localized instructional model specifically designed for PGSD UT Jambi students, who face unique challenges as distance learners in a culturally distinct educational environment. Recognizing the limitations of conventional lecture-based approaches in literary appreciation, the model adopts a dialogical and reflective learning design. This approach encourages active student engagement through dialogue and introspection, fostering deeper understanding and personal connection with literary texts an aspect often overlooked in elementary teacher education.

The research is grounded in a systematic model development framework, encompassing a comprehensive needs analysis, reflective design, limited implementation, and iterative evaluation. This structured process ensures that the model is not only contextually relevant but also pedagogically sound. Furthermore, the study incorporates an empirical impact assessment, measuring the model's effectiveness in enhancing students' literary appreciation skills. The findings provide evidence-based insights that validate the model's educational value and offer a replicable framework for similar innovations in other distance learning contexts.

## METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with a case study method. The subject of the research is 32 PGSD students at UT Jambi City who were enrolled in literary appreciation course during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year.

Data were collected using following techniques:

- a. Participatory observation of both online and offline learning process.
- b. In-depth interviews with students and tutors.
- c. Documentation analysis, including student assignments, discussion forums, and literary works analyzed.

Procedure for Model Development: A Narrative

The development of a meaningful and effective learning model begins not with design, but with attentive listening.

### **1. Assessment of Educational Requirements**

The initial phase is a thorough exploration of the learners themselves. Educators, researchers, and instructional designers conducted their process by observing, interviewing, and surveying the intended audience. What challenges do learners encounter? What are their aspirations about knowledge or identity? This step goes beyond just data collection; it encompasses an empathetic understanding of learners' experience and expectations. The objective was to reveal the actual demands rather than merely the presumed ones. This analysis serves as the basis, guaranteeing that the model is pertinent, intentional, and focused on the learner.

### **2. Design Informed by Critical Reflection and Dialogical Methodology**

The design phase informed by insights and characterized by dialogue rather than isolation. Stakeholders, including educators, learners, and subject matter experts, participate in reflective dialogues. They interrogate assumptions, investigate alternatives, and collaboratively develop the model. This dialogical method guarantees that the model arises organically from mutual comprehension rather than being imposed externally. Critical reflection facilitates the identification of biases, deficiencies, and opportunities, thereby enhancing the inclusivity and robustness of the design.

### **3. Restricted Execution**

Upon completion of the model's design, it is not implemented on a large scale immediately. Instead, it has a restricted execution a pilot phase. A limited cohort of students observes the model in practice. This step is essential for evaluating the model's performance in real-world settings. Are students actively participating? Do the results correspond with the anticipated outcomes? This is a period for experimenting, during which feedback is diligently solicited and recorded.

### **4. Assessment and Modification**

Based on data obtained during the pilot phase, the model proceeds to an evaluation phase both qualitative and quantitative assessments. What was effective? What requires enhancement? The model is subsequently improved, enhanced, and fortified. This iterative method guarantees that the final version was both theoretically robust and practically applicable, resulting in a dynamic instructional model shaped by reflective evaluation and empirical evidence.

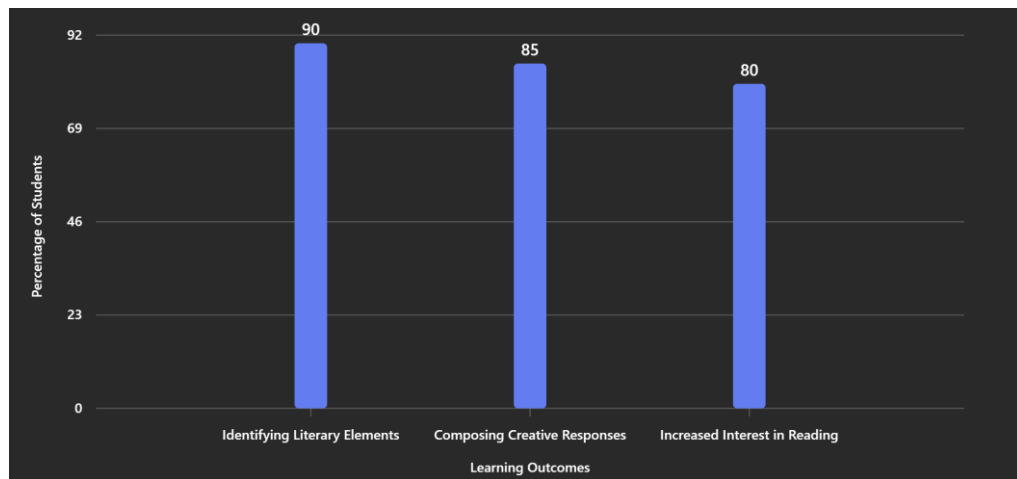
## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

The results of the study show that the implementation of the literary appreciation learning model based on critical and collaborative reflection has a significant impact on improving the quality of learning experience of 32 PGSD students at the Open University of Jambi City. The model was developed through three main stages:

#### **1. Exploration of Student Literary Works**

In the first stage, students were introduced to various literary genres including poetry, short stories, novels, and dramas, through online modules, learning videos, and joint readings in discussion forums. At this stage, students were asked to identify the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the work and relate them to the context of their lives.



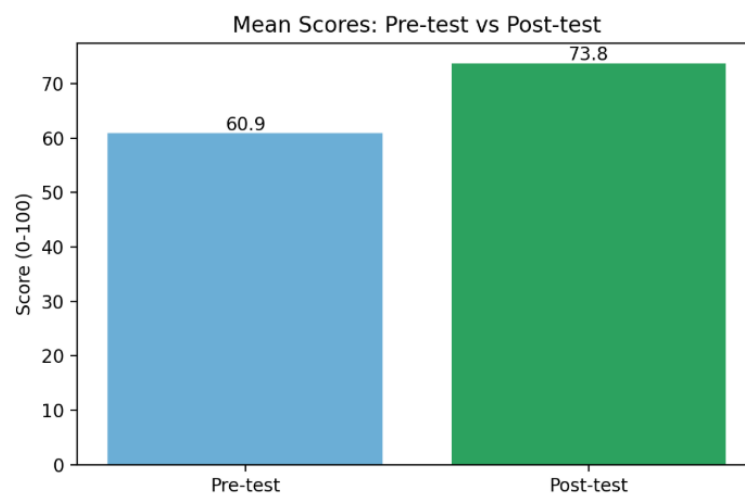
**Figure 1.** Learning Outcomes

## 2. Reflection and Group Discussion

After the exploration stage, students were directed to reflect on the meaning of the literary work through online group discussions. The discussion forums were active and interactive. Students convey personal interpretations of the works they read, discuss moral messages, cultural values, and emotional impressions caused. These discussions facilitated an exchange of viewpoints that enriched students' literary understanding.

## 3. Creative Response Writing

In the third stage, students were asked to produce new literary works inspired by reading, such as writing poems, short stories, reflective essays, and appreciation journals. The students' works were then published in a classroom online forum or personal e-portfolio that is assessed by tutors and peers. All 32 students participated actively in this stage of learning process.



**Figure 2.** Pre and Post Test

The results of this study show that the literary appreciation learning model developed is effective in improving the student learning experience in the context of distance learning. The effectiveness of this model can be explained through several important aspects:

### A. Application of Transactional Theory in Literature

This model is grounded in Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory, which views reading as a dynamic interaction between the reader and the text. In this approach, students are not passive recipients of meaning; instead, they construct meaning actively based on their personal experiences, cultural background, and emotional responses. Literature becomes a living dialogue, where each

student's interpretation is valid and meaningful. This fosters deeper engagement and renders literary texts more personally meaningful and emotionally resonant.

**Theory in Practice:** When reading "*Siti Nurbaya*" by Marah Rusli, students are encouraged to reflect on their own experiences with family expectations and societal norms. One student might relate the story to their personal struggle with arranged marriage traditions, while another might interpret it through the lens of gender roles in modern society. Example: A student writes a journal entry comparing Siti Nurbaya's dilemma with their own experience of choosing a career path against family wishes. This personal reflection shows how meaning is constructed through interaction between the text and the reader's live experience.

#### B. The Importance of Reflection in Aesthetic Learning

Reflection is central to aesthetic learning. Through structured reflection and guided discussion, students move beyond surface-level comprehension to critical engagement with literary works. They learn to interpret symbols, assess themes, and connect literary content to real-world social issues. This process cultivates critical thinking, empathy, and ethical awareness. It transforms literary learning into a humanistic experience, where students explore values, identity, and societal dynamics through literature.

**Theory in Practice:** After reading "*Aku*" by Chairil Anwar, students engage in a group discussion focusing on the poem's existential themes. They explore how the poem reflects the poet's rebellion and how that mirrors broader social struggles. For instance in a reflective essay, a student analyzes the line "*Aku ini binatang jalang*" and connects it to the feeling of alienation in today's youth culture, showing how literature can be a lens to understand contemporary identity crises.

#### C. Collaboration as a Distance Learning Reinforcement

In the context of open and distance education, collaboration is a key strategy to mitigate learner isolation. Online discussion forums and collaborative tasks create a virtual learning community where students can share interpretations, challenge each other's views, and co-construct understanding. This not only enhances comprehension but also builds social presence, motivation, and a sense of belonging essential elements for success in remote learning environments.

**Theory in Practice:** Students participate in an online forum where they discuss "*Robohnya Surau Kami*" by A.A. Navis. Each student posts their interpretation of the story's critique of religious hypocrisy and responds to peers' perspectives. Example: One student argues that the story critiques blind faith, while another sees it as a call for social responsibility. The exchange of ideas helps both deepen their understanding and feel connected despite studying remotely.

#### D. Creative Expression as Authentic Assessment

Creative responses such as writing poems, short stories, or reflective essays serve as authentic assessments that go beyond rote memorization. They allow students to express their understanding in original and imaginative ways, showcasing their ability to internalize and reinterpret literary themes. This approach values individual voice, creativity, and emotional intelligence, making assessment more holistic and meaningful. It also reveals the depth of students' literary appreciation and their capacity for creative thinking.

**Theory in Practice:** After studying "*Cerpen-cerpen Jambi*", students are asked to write their own short story inspired by local themes such as river life, folklore, or community traditions. Example: A student writes a story titled "*Sungai yang Berbisik*", blending magical realism with environmental concerns. The story reflects their understanding of literary techniques and their emotional connection to the local landscape.

#### E. Contextual Relevance and Local Culture

By incorporating local Jambi literary works, the learning model strengthens students' cultural identity and appreciation of local wisdom. Literature becomes a mirror of their own lives, making learning more relevant and emotionally engaging. This also supports the development of cultural literacy, encouraging students to value and preserve their heritage while engaging critically with it.

The integration of local texts ensures that literary learning is not only universal but also rooted in context.

Theory in Practice: Students analyze "*Legenda Putri Pinang Masak*", a Jambi folktale, and discuss its moral values and cultural significance. They reflect on how the story shapes local identity and values. Example, in a group presentation, students compare the folktale to modern issues of gender and leadership in Jambi, showing how traditional stories can inform contemporary discussions. This model transforms literary learning into a participatory and meaningful experience. Instead of memorizing literary terms or summarizing plots, students engage, reflect, create, and connect making literature a tool for personal growth, cultural understanding, and social awareness.

## Discussion

In a study involving 32 elementary teacher candidates, the implementation of a structured learning model aimed at enhancing literary sensibility yielded compelling results. The participants engaged in a series of guided literary experiences—ranging from read-aloud sessions and reflective journaling to thematic discussions and pedagogical applications. These activities were designed not only to deepen their understanding of children's literature but also to foster a personal connection with texts.

The results revealed a marked improvement in the participants' literary awareness. Many students began to view literature not merely as a classroom tool but as a medium for emotional and intellectual engagement. Their reflections indicated a growing appreciation for narrative depth, character development, and thematic resonance elements crucial for cultivating literary sensibility.

Moreover, the structured model contributed significantly to the formation of reader identities among the teacher candidates. They increasingly perceived themselves as "reading educators" individuals who model a love for literature and integrate it meaningfully into their teaching practices. This shift was accompanied by increased pedagogical confidence, as participants felt more equipped to select, analyze, and teach literary texts in ways that resonated with elementary schools students

When compared with similar research, such as Cremin et al.'s work on "Teachers as Readers," the findings align closely. Both studies emphasize the transformative power of personal literary engagement in shaping effective literacy instruction. Likewise, Green's research on empowering pre-service teachers through literature journals supports the notion that structured literary experiences can enhance both content knowledge and teaching efficacy.

## Implications

This study carries several important implications for literary education, teacher training, and curriculum development, particularly in the context of distance learning and elementary teacher education:

### 1. Pedagogical Innovation in Literary Education

The successful application of a dialogical and reflective literary appreciation model demonstrates that active engagement with literature through discussion, interpretation, and personal reflection can significantly enhance students' appreciation and understanding of literary texts. This suggests a shift from traditional, passive methods toward student-centered, interactive learning strategies.

### 2. Empowering Future Elementary School Teachers

As PGSD students are being prepared to become future elementary school teachers, the improvement in their literary appreciation skills has a multiplier effect. It equips them not only with content knowledge but also with pedagogical strategies they can apply in their future classrooms, fostering a love for literature among young learners.

### 3. Model Adaptability for Distance Learning

The study shows that even within the constraints of open and distance education, such as at Universitas Terbuka, innovative models can be effectively implemented. This opens the door for scalable and adaptable learning models that can be used in other remote or underserved educational contexts.

#### 4. Contribution to Curriculum Development

The model and its development process rooted in needs analysis, critical reflection, and iterative evaluation can serve as a framework for curriculum designers seeking to enhance literary education. It encourages the integration of local context, learner feedback, and reflective practice into curriculum planning.

#### 5. Research-Based Educational Practice

By providing empirical evidence of the model's impact, this study reinforces the importance of research-informed teaching practices. It encourages educators and institutions to base instructional decisions on data and reflective inquiry, rather than solely on tradition or convenience.

Based on the discussion, there are several findings:

- a. 90% of students experience an increase in the ability to identify literary elements such as themes, plots, characters, and language styles. Explanation: This high percentage indicates that the model successfully enhances students' analytical skills. Through guided reading, structured discussions, and reflective activities, students become more adept at recognizing key literary components. For example, when analyzing "*Robohnya Surau Kami*", students can clearly identify the theme of moral responsibility, the plot structure, and the character development of the old man and the angel. In addition, they begin to notice stylistic choices, such as irony and symbolism, which enrich their understanding of the text.
- b. 85% of students were able to compose creative responses that were original and closely connected to the work being analyzed. Explanation: This shows that the model encourages creative thinking and personal expression. Students are not just interpreting literature they're responding to it in imaginative ways. For instance, after reading "*Aku*" by Chairil Anwar, a student might write a poem titled "*Aku yang Baru*", reflecting their own journey of self-discovery. These creative responses demonstrate originality, emotional depth, and a strong connection to the themes and tone of the original work, proving that students are engaging with literature on a personal and creative level.
- c. 80% of students stated that this model makes them more interested in reading literary works than before.  
Explanation: This statistic reflects a positive shift in students' attitudes toward literature. By making literary learning more interactive, reflective, and relevant to their lives, the model transforms reading from a passive task into an engaging experience. For example, when students read local Jambi stories that reflect their own culture and environment, they feel a stronger emotional connection and curiosity. This increased interest can lead to lifelong reading habits and a deeper appreciation for literary works
- d. Students also reported increased empathy, social sensitivity, and self-expression.  
Explanation: Literature often explores complex human emotions and social issues. Through reflective and dialogical learning, students begin to see the world through others' eyes. For example, reading "*Siti Nurbaya*" may lead students to empathize with individuals experiencing societal pressure or injustice. Discussions around these themes help students develop social awareness, while creative responses give them a platform for self-expression. This emotional and ethical engagement reflects transformative learning, where literature becomes a tool for personal and social development.

#### Research contribution

This study offers numerous notable contributions to literary education, teacher training, and distance learning pedagogy, especially in the setting of open institutions and culturally varied student demographics:

##### 1. Creation of a Contextualized Literary Appreciation Framework

The study presents an innovative educational framework that incorporates transactional theory, reflective learning, collaborative involvement, and creative evaluation. This model is specifically designed to meet the requirements of PGSD students at Universitas Terbuka Jambi, providing a framework that is both pedagogically robust and culturally pertinent.

## 2. Empirical Evidence of Learning Outcomes

The study offers empirical evidence for the model's efficacy by showcasing quantitative enhancements: 90% of students accurately identifying literary elements, 85% generating original creative responses, and 80% expressing heightened interest in literature. These findings endorse the implementation of interactive and reflective methodologies in literary education, particularly within teacher preparation programs.

## 3. Progression of Literary Pedagogy in Remote Education

The research indicates that significant literary education can be attained in open and distance learning contexts via online collaboration and dialogical techniques. This enhances the expanding corpus of research on novel remote learning methodologies, providing pragmatic methods to mitigate isolation and disengagement.

## 4. Integration of Cultural Literacy and Indigenous Knowledge

The concept enhances cultural literacy and fortifies pupils' regional identity through the integration of native Jambi literary masterpieces. This contribution is especially significant in multicultural education, as literature can connect academic subjects with students' lived experiences.

## 5. Humanistic and Transformative Learning Paradigm

The paradigm promotes cognitive development alongside emotional and ethical growth, as demonstrated by enhanced empathy, social sensitivity, and self-expression among students. This frames literature as an instrument for transformative education, connecting with overarching objectives of character development and social consciousness in teacher preparation.

### **Limitations**

While this study provides valuable insights into the development and implementation of a literary appreciation learning model for PGSD UT Jambi students, several limitations should be acknowledged:

#### 1. Limited Sample Size and Scope

The study was conducted with a specific group of PGSD students at Universitas Terbuka Jambi. As such, the findings may not be fully generalizable to other regions, institutions, or student populations with different cultural, educational, or technological backgrounds.

#### 2. Short-Term Implementation

The model was applied over a limited time frame, which may not adequately capture the long-term effects on students' literary appreciation, reading habits, or teaching practices. A longitudinal study would be needed to assess sustained impact and behavioral changes over time.

#### 3. Self-Reported Data

Some of the results, such as increased interest in reading and perceived empathy, rely on self-reported feedback, which may be influenced by personal bias, social desirability, or limited reflection. The use of Objective measures or triangulation with other data sources could strengthen the validity of these findings.

#### 4. Technological Constraints in Distance Learning

Although the model incorporates online collaboration, some students may face technical limitations, such as poor internet access, limited digital literacy, or lack of appropriate devices. These factors could affect participation and the overall effectiveness of the model in a distance learning environment.

#### 5. Limited Diversity of Literary Texts

While the inclusion of local Jambi literature enhances cultural relevance, the range of texts used may not fully represent the diversity of literary genres, periods, and global perspectives. Expanding the selection of literary corpus could provide a more comprehensive appreciation of literature.

## Suggestions

Building on the promising results of this study, several suggestions emerge for future research and educational practice. First, the learning model should be tested with a broader and more diverse group of students to explore its adaptability across different regions and learning contexts. Expanding the scope would help validate its effectiveness beyond PGSD UT Jambi.

To understand the lasting impact of the model, longitudinal studies are recommended. These would track how students' literary appreciation and teaching approaches evolve over time, offering deeper insights into the model's transformative potential.

In addition, diversifying the literary texts used by incorporating global literature and contemporary genres could further enrich students' perspectives and foster intercultural understanding. At the same time, improving digital access and support is essential to ensure that all students can fully participate in collaborative online learning, especially in remote areas.

Assessment methods should also be refined. The development of flexible rubrics for creative responses will help educators evaluate originality and depth more consistently, while still honoring individual expression. Finally, integrating this model into the formal PGSD curriculum would ensure that future elementary school teachers are equipped with reflective, and humanistic approaches to literary education. Further exploration of emotional outcomes, such as empathy and social sensitivity, could also strengthen the case for literature as a tool for character development.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the literary appreciation learning model based on critical and collaborative reflection has proven to be effective in increasing the ability and interest of PGSD students of the Open University of Jambi City in understanding and appreciating literary works. This model was designed to address the challenges of distance learning that often separate students from humanistic, emotional, and reflective learning experiences.

Through three main stages exploration of literary works, reflection and group discussions, and writing creative responses students not only learn to understand the elements of literature technically, but also develop aesthetic sensitivity, empathy, and critical and creative thinking skills. Students' involvement in the learning process becomes more active and meaningful because they are given space to express opinions, interpret meanings, and express understanding through their own literary works.

In addition, this model has also succeeded in creating a conducive collaborative learning environment in online platforms. Discussions between students enrich the understanding of the meaning of the text and foster tolerance for differing views. This is very relevant in the context of Open University learning, which relies on independence and online communication between students.

Furthermore, this model also allows the integration of local values and regional culture, which has a positive impact on strengthening the identity and appreciation of Indonesian literary works, especially those from Jambi and its surroundings.

Thus, this literary appreciation learning model can be used as an alternative to innovative and contextual learning strategies in higher education, especially for PGSD study programs at Open University. It is hoped that this model can continue to be developed and adapted for other literacy learning, as well as used as part of a curriculum policy that encourages active, creative, and character-oriented learning and high-level thinking skills.

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### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

AG conducted the data gathering and also analysis the whole manuscript. YR, performed the data analysis procedure and AJ proofread and revised the manuscript.

### AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The author used ChatGPT during the preparation of this work for making the frameworks and ideas. After using the tool/service, the author thoroughly reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication.

### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors confirm the absence of any potential conflicts of interest—financial, institutional, or personal—that could influence the conduct of this study, the analysis of data, the preparation of the manuscript, or its publication.

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