

Digital Storytelling Training for Senior High School English Teachers

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Abstract

This article reports on a community service program aimed at enhancing English teachers' creativity and digital literacy through the integration of digital storytelling. Conducted in collaboration with MGMP Sidoarjo, the program involved 51 senior high school English teachers who participated in a hands-on workshop using Canva to create digital storytelling materials aligned with their instructional goals. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining observation, surveys, and qualitative feedback to evaluate teacher engagement, product quality, and classroom implementation. Findings indicate a notable improvement in teachers' confidence and competence in utilizing digital tools, with all participants successfully producing at least one digital storytelling product. Although time constraints limited full implementation in some classrooms, student responses were overwhelmingly positive, citing increased motivation and engagement due to the visually rich content. Teachers also reflected positively on the training's impact, highlighting its practical value in modernizing English language instruction. The program underscores the importance of supporting teacher development through creative and technology-enhanced pedagogical strategies. It is recommended that schools foster a culture of innovation and that MGMP sustain the momentum through long-term mentoring and experimentation with varied digital learning media in response to evolving educational demands.

Pelatihan *Digital Storytelling* untuk Guru Bahasa Inggris Sekolah Menengah Atas

Kata kunci: digital storytelling;
integrasi teknologi; pengajaran
bahasa Inggris; pengembangan
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Abstrak

Artikel ini melaporkan sebuah program pengabdian kepada masyarakat yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kreativitas dan literasi digital guru bahasa Inggris melalui integrasi digital storytelling. Program ini dilaksanakan bekerja sama dengan MGMP Sidoarjo dan melibatkan 51 guru bahasa Inggris tingkat SMA yang mengikuti lokakarya praktik langsung menggunakan Canva untuk membuat materi digital storytelling yang selaras dengan tujuan pengajaran mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan mixed-methods, yang menggabungkan observasi, survei, dan umpan balik kualitatif untuk mengevaluasi keterlibatan guru, kualitas produk, dan implementasi di kelas. Temuan menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam kepercayaan diri dan kompetensi guru dalam menggunakan alat digital, dengan seluruh peserta berhasil memproduksi setidaknya satu produk digital storytelling. Meskipun keterbatasan waktu membatasi penerapan penuh di beberapa kelas, respons

siswa sangat positif, dengan peningkatan motivasi dan keterlibatan berkat konten yang kaya secara visual. Para guru juga memberikan refleksi positif terhadap dampak pelatihan, menyoroti nilai praktisnya dalam memodernisasi pengajaran bahasa Inggris. Program ini menekankan pentingnya mendukung pengembangan guru melalui strategi pedagogis yang kreatif dan berbasis teknologi. Disarankan agar sekolah menumbuhkan budaya inovasi dan MGMP mempertahankan momentum ini melalui pendampingan jangka panjang serta eksperimen dengan berbagai media pembelajaran digital untuk merespons tuntutan pendidikan yang terus berkembang.

1. INTRODUCTION

English language teaching in the digital era demands the integration of technology to create more interactive and relevant learning experiences for students (Dou et al., 2024; Hafidurrahman, 2024; Saud, 2024). However, a major challenge faced by many teachers is limited access to technology and a lack of adequate digital literacy (Agustina et al., 2024; Desniyanti, 2025). This situation exacerbates educational inequality and stands in contrast to the goals of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) (Adipat & Chotikapanich, 2022; Cassar, 2022; Zinchenko et al., 2021), which aims to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

In response to this challenge, digital storytelling emerges as an innovative approach (Harahap et al., 2024; Krishna, 2025; Wuthnow, 2023) that aligns with the objectives of SDG 4. By combining narrative with digital media, it fosters creative and meaningful learning experiences while simultaneously developing 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity (Lakshmi, 2025; Sinta et al., 2024; Wahab & Adawiyah, 2025).

The core community partner in this program is the high school English teachers grouped under the English MGMP (Teacher Working Group) in Sidoarjo Regency. Based on preliminary observations, although these teachers possess substantial teaching experience, limited digital competence and a lack of access to technology remain key barriers to implementing interactive and innovative learning practices. Moreover, students exhibit low motivation in learning English, especially in productive skills such as speaking, writing, and listening. These issues underscore the need for a new pedagogical approach that can bridge the gap in both teacher capability and student engagement. The primary problems addressed by this program are as follows:

1. Limited digital literacy among teachers: Many teachers are not yet accustomed to using technology in their classrooms, making it difficult to create engaging and relevant teaching materials.
2. Lack of creativity in learning methods: Teachers often rely on conventional methods that fail to capture students' interest, resulting in low learning motivation.
3. Scarcity of interactive learning media: Most teaching materials do not yet utilize the full potential of digital tools to enhance student engagement.

By tackling these challenges, the program aims to improve the quality of English education in Sidoarjo Regency. It empowers teachers not only to enhance their professional competencies but also to act as change agents who inspire students to learn in more creative and enjoyable ways. Ultimately, the program supports the broader goals of national education by reducing educational disparities and contributing to the realization of SDG 4.

This program contributes in several ways. First, it equips teachers with digital literacy, communication, collaboration, and creativity, which are the core competencies in 21st-century education. Second, it strengthens partnerships between higher education institutions and local communities to enhance the quality of education. Third, it fosters teacher professionalism in response to digital era demands.

Through a focused training on digital storytelling, this community service program enables teachers to develop engaging, relevant, and contextual teaching materials that enhance students' motivation to learn. Teachers will not only gain conceptual understanding but also practice and produce their digital storytelling projects ready for classroom use. The expected outcomes include improved digital competence and instructional creativity among teachers, increased student engagement and motivation, and a culture of innovation in English teaching that strengthens collaboration between teachers, students, and schools.

Although not directly linked to entrepreneurship, the digital storytelling skills developed through this program offer long-term potential for producing creative, marketable educational content. To tailor the training

effectively, an initial needs analysis is crucial to assess teachers' readiness and specific challenges in adopting digital storytelling. This data will inform the implementation strategy and ensure that the training aligns with the real conditions faced by the partner schools.

2. METHOD

2.1 Program Overview

This community service program was designed to address challenges faced by English teachers in the Sidoarjo MGMP (English Teacher Working Group), particularly related to limited digital literacy, low teaching creativity, and restricted access to educational technology. The intervention consisted of three core components: (1) digital literacy training, (2) a digital storytelling workshop, and (3) post-training mentoring and evaluation.

The digital literacy training focused on equipping teachers with essential skills in using at least two educational digital tools relevant to English instruction, particularly multimedia and presentation applications. Building on this, the digital storytelling (DST) workshop introduced participants to tools such as Canva and guided them through story development and production of DST content tailored to their lesson objectives. Instructional materials and templates were provided to support continued independent practice.

After the workshop, participants received structured support through online forums and one-on-one consultations, ensuring the implementation of DST in their teaching. The impact of the program was assessed through teacher reflection, student feedback, and monitoring of classroom application. A visual summary of the program design is presented in Figure 1.

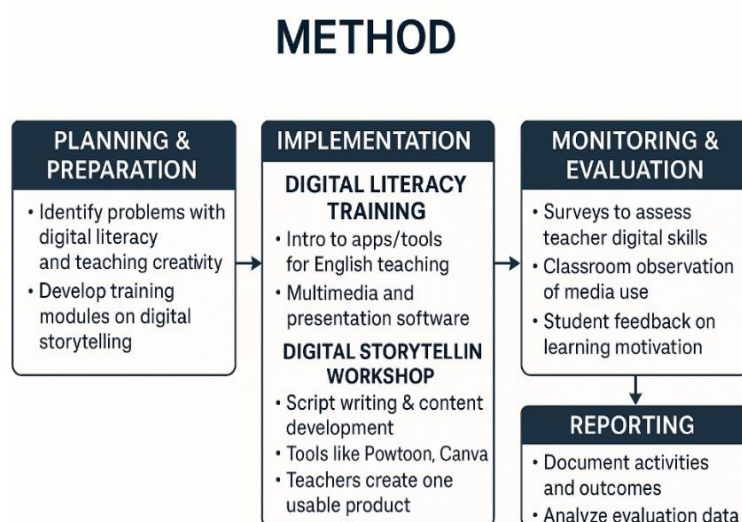


Figure 1. Flowchart of the Community Service Program Methodology

2.2 Participants and Setting

The participants of this program were 51 English teachers from senior high schools affiliated with MGMP Sidoarjo. The program was conducted at a designated training venue over several sessions, including synchronous workshops and asynchronous mentoring support. Most teachers had varying levels of familiarity with digital tools but limited experience integrating them into their English classrooms. The program was coordinated with partner schools and the local MGMP forum, which facilitated participant recruitment and ensured alignment with the needs of the local educational context.

2.3 Stages of Implementation

Planning and Preparation

This initial stage involved a needs analysis based on informal surveys and teacher interviews. The analysis revealed a lack of digital skills, limited creativity in content delivery, and minimal integration of technology in English instruction. Based on these findings, the service team designed specific training content centered on digital storytelling as an innovative teaching strategy.

Preparations included developing instructional modules, tutorial materials, and arranging technical infrastructure such as software access and internet connectivity. Coordination with MGMP and school administrators ensured smooth logistics for venue, scheduling, and resources.

Implementation

Training sessions were delivered interactively, combining theoretical overviews with hands-on practice. The content covered:

1. Introduction to digital storytelling: concepts, pedagogical benefits, and classroom applications.
2. Technical guidance on using Canva to create animated and multimedia-rich learning media.
3. Facilitated content development aligned with real English teaching materials.

Participants were guided step-by-step in producing DST products during the workshop. Simulated classroom use of the developed materials allowed for peer review, feedback, and collaborative reflection. After the main sessions, mentoring continued through online discussions and individual consultations to support classroom integration.

2.4 Instruments and Data Collection

To evaluate the effectiveness of the program and its impact on participants, several instruments were employed at different stages of the implementation:

Surveys and Questionnaires

Two types of surveys were administered: (1) a pre-training survey to assess participants' baseline digital literacy and familiarity with digital storytelling tools, and (2) a post-training survey to evaluate skill development, satisfaction, and intention to implement the training outcomes in classrooms. These instruments included a mix of closed-ended items (using Likert scales to rate confidence levels, tool mastery, and perceived usefulness) and open-ended questions (to capture reflections, suggestions, and insights about the training experience). The post-implementation surveys (conducted approximately two weeks after the workshop) gathered feedback on classroom application, student engagement, and challenges encountered.

Classroom Observation

Classroom implementation was monitored through non-participatory observation, focusing on how teachers used the digital storytelling products and engaged students. A structured observation checklist was used, addressing the use of digital tools, integration with lesson objectives, and student reactions.

Student Feedback

Student responses were collected via short surveys distributed by the participating teachers. These included closed-ended questions about interest and understanding, and one open-ended item asking students to describe their experience with digital storytelling media. Responses were used to triangulate teacher-reported outcomes with learner perspectives.

Instrument Validation and Pilot Testing

The survey instruments were reviewed by two academic experts in digital pedagogy and English language education to ensure content validity. A pilot test was conducted with five teachers not involved in the main program to refine question clarity and length. Minor adjustments were made based on pilot feedback, particularly in simplifying open-ended prompts and adjusting the scale format.

Data Analysis Methods

Quantitative data from closed-ended items were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and means) to identify general trends in teacher responses. Qualitative data from open-ended responses, reflection forms, and student feedback were analyzed using thematic analysis. Key themes such as perceived benefits, challenges, creative approaches, and implementation strategies were identified and coded manually to support narrative synthesis in the findings and discussion section.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Training and Workshop

The findings of this community service program reveal promising outcomes in terms of improving teachers' digital literacy, increasing creative teaching practices, and enhancing student engagement through digital storytelling. These outcomes align with the goals of educational innovation (Harahap et al., 2024; Krishna, 2025; Wuthnow, 2023) outlined in Indonesia's Merdeka Belajar initiative and reflect the core principles of the TPACK framework (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge), which emphasizes the synergy of content, pedagogy, and technology in effective teaching. The training and workshop process attended by high school English teachers can be seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Training and Workshop in Digital Storytelling for Teaching Media

During the training and workshop process shown in Figure 2 above, all participants successfully completed a digital storytelling workshop utilizing Canva as the central platform. Each teacher was able to produce at least one digital storytelling product tailored to their instructional content. This achievement reflects a significant improvement in the participants' digital literacy and their ability to incorporate digital tools into their teaching.

The teachers engaged in a hands-on process to produce their own digital storytelling content using Canva. This involved selecting a theme, writing a simple storyline (with some assisted by AI), breaking the story into segments, choosing templates, and enhancing the product with narration (manual or AI-generated), images, background music, and sound effects. Although time was limited, most teachers completed at least a prototype of their digital story.

Mentoring and Classroom Application

Following the workshop, many teachers implemented the products in their classrooms by showing their DST videos to students or assigning students to create their own. These activities encouraged more interactive and creative learning environments. Teachers reported that this method helped transform their role from sole knowledge deliverers to facilitators of student-centered and multimodal learning. The program also offered mentoring through WhatsApp to support ongoing implementation and address any technical or pedagogical challenges that arose.

While not all teachers were able to complete a full storyline or implement the product in the classroom immediately after the workshop, this limitation was largely due to time constraints, which is one of the most frequently reported challenges. Nevertheless, the training laid a strong foundation for digital tool integration, and most participants expressed increased confidence in their ability to use such tools going forward.

The participating teachers reported a wide range of experiences and stages in the creation and application of digital storytelling (DST), reflecting both enthusiasm and varying levels of digital competence. A common pattern emerged across their responses, revealing a sequential process typically involving story selection, content development, and product dissemination. Most teachers began by determining the story or theme, which served as the narrative foundation for the DST product. This was often followed by scriptwriting, sometimes aided by AI tools, and then dividing the script into slides for easier visualization and sequencing.

The next stage typically involved template selection within Canva, followed by the insertion of visual elements, such as images, icons, and animated graphics. Several teachers highlighted the importance of customizing elements and background designs to match the mood and storyline. Many noted their efforts in animating visuals, adding transitions, and making scenes more dynamic to attract student attention.

In terms of audio integration, a significant number of teachers inserted voice narration. Some use their own voices, and others rely on AI-based text-to-speech generators. This audio component was often complemented by background music or sound effects, enhancing the storytelling experience. Teachers also described technical tasks like synchronizing voice and animation, adjusting font and text size, and embedding interactive elements.

Following the creation phase, the final steps usually include rendering or downloading the video and sharing the DST product with students, either by direct classroom presentation or through messaging platforms like WhatsApp. Several teachers mentioned that after sharing their products, they guided students through creating their own DSTs, demonstrating a transfer of skills from teacher to learner. This peer modeling and mentoring element is a significant indication of teacher development and pedagogical integration. The use of digital storytelling products for learning media in the classroom is shown in Figure 3 below.



Figure 3. Classroom Use and Student Feedback on Digital Storytelling

The use of digital storytelling in classroom contexts, as shown in Figure 3, contributed positively to teaching creativity and classroom engagement. Teachers reported that developing visually compelling stories encouraged them to explore more interactive ways of delivering content. Students' responses, as conveyed through informal teacher interviews and post-activity feedback, were largely positive. They found the materials "interesting" and "easy to understand," indicating that the multimodal format successfully captured their attention. Furthermore, teachers observed increased student motivation, particularly in productive skills such as speaking and writing. These observations align with previous studies suggesting that digital storytelling can enhance student learning outcomes by providing contextually rich and visually appealing narratives.

Despite the success stories, some responses reflected beginner-level challenges, such as limited confidence, unfamiliarity with video editing, or a lack of time for comprehensive implementation. One teacher admitted that the work was "very far from good," acknowledging a steep learning curve. Others saw the experience as "extraordinary" and "innovative," highlighting a growing appreciation for technology-based creativity in language teaching.

In summary, after the classroom application, the teachers' responses indicate that they have undergone a relatively complete DST creation cycle, from story development, multimedia integration, to classroom application. Their reflections demonstrate both a commitment to professional growth and an increased awareness of how technology can be used to boost engagement and comprehension in English learning. These stages also underscore the potential for DST to serve as a sustainable innovation in language education, especially when combined with ongoing mentoring and collaborative reflection.

Evaluation of Outcomes and Impact

The impact of the program was assessed through multiple tools: pre- and post-activity questionnaires, teacher reflections, student feedback, and informal classroom observations. These evaluations revealed a noticeable increase in teacher confidence and competence in using digital tools for instruction. Participants shifted from minimal digital literacy to actively integrating multimedia into their lesson plans, with many successfully aligning their DST products with curriculum learning objectives.

Teacher reflections collected through qualitative surveys offered additional insights into their professional growth. Several participants described the training as empowering and inspiring. Comments such as "Very satisfied; it helped me upgrade my teaching process," and "Very helpful, and the product can be turned into a student assignment" indicate that many teachers not only appreciated the learning experience but also saw the potential for further application and adaptation in their classrooms. These reflections also suggested a desire to share the knowledge with peers, which points to the potential for wider dissemination and collaborative professional development.

Despite the enthusiasm, the implementation phase revealed challenges that warrant attention. Although all teachers successfully created digital storytelling products, only a few managed to fully implement them in their classrooms during the monitoring period. The primary barrier was limited time, especially for lesson preparation and integrating new media into existing curricula. This issue is not unique to this context; it is consistent with global findings on the barriers to digital integration in education. However, the mentoring component of the program, facilitated through online discussions and individual consultations, proved helpful in supporting teachers, resolving technical issues, and providing encouragement. These mentoring efforts served as an important step toward building a supportive community of practice.

Monitoring and evaluation of the program were conducted through various instruments, including pre- and post-activity surveys, classroom observations, student feedback, and teacher reflection forms. The results consistently showed a positive trajectory in teachers' digital competencies. Most participants reported increased confidence in using digital tools, and the majority of them produced media that was not only technically sound but also pedagogically aligned with their teaching objectives. Student feedback further corroborated these findings, with many students expressing greater interest in the lessons and improved comprehension of the materials. However, the recurring challenge of time management highlights the need for extended support and perhaps more flexible implementation schedules in future iterations of similar programs. The following Table 1 presents the synthesized findings, including representative feedback, which illustrate the overall impact and areas for improvement in the implementation of the digital storytelling training.

Table 1. Summary of Teachers' Reflections on Digital Storytelling Training

Theme	Description	Representative Feedback	Observation
Digital Literacy Improvement	Teachers gained confidence in using Canva to create learning materials.	"Very satisfied; it helped me upgrade my teaching process." – <i>Teacher reflection</i>	All 51 teachers created at least one product.
Creative Teaching Approaches	Teachers explored innovative ways to present content.	"The product can be turned into a student assignment." – <i>Teacher reflection</i>	Most teachers expressed interest in future integration.
Student Engagement	Students responded positively to visual storytelling materials.	"Interesting and easy to understand." (Student feedback) – <i>Student feedback via teacher-administered survey</i>	Observed an increase in motivation, especially in speaking/writing activities.
Time Management Constraints	Limited time prevented the full implementation of storylines.	"Difficult to complete the storyline due to limited time." – <i>Teacher reflection</i>	A common challenge during post-workshop implementation.
Sustainability and Mentoring	Continued support helped address post-workshop challenges.	"I hope I can share this with more colleagues in the future." – <i>Teacher reflection</i>	Online mentoring aided implementation and sharing.

Table 1 provides a clearer overview of the program's outcomes. It compiles a summary of key themes emerging from teacher reflections and observations. These themes reflect the teachers' experiences regarding digital literacy enhancement, pedagogical creativity, student engagement, time management challenges, and the role of ongoing mentoring support.

The majority of teachers expressed a strong sense of satisfaction with the digital storytelling (DST) products they developed during the training, highlighting both immediate positive impacts and areas for ongoing growth. Many participants reported being "very satisfied," appreciating the opportunity to explore creative digital tools, enhance teaching practices, and gain new technological competencies that could directly enrich the classroom experience. Several responses emphasized that DST was not only engaging but also had practical value for both teacher development and student learning, with some teachers already envisioning how they might implement it as an assignment or project for their students.

However, while satisfaction levels were high, a clear and recurring theme emerged, which is the need for further development and continued practice. Numerous teachers acknowledged that although they had made meaningful progress, their outputs were still not optimal due to limited training time, technical learning curves, or lack of familiarity with Canva's full range of features. Some noted that animation quality, sound integration, and storyline cohesion could be refined with additional guidance and more hands-on experience.

In terms of training reflection, many praised the session as "very useful" and "extraordinary," underscoring its role in equipping English teachers with digital-era pedagogical skills. Yet, a few expressed a desire for longer sessions or follow-up trainings, indicating that one-off workshops, while effective for initial exposure, may not suffice for deeper skill mastery. Importantly, some teachers contextualized their feedback based on educational

level, suggesting that DST using Canva is highly suitable for younger learners, while more advanced or realistic content might be necessary for senior high school students.

Furthermore, the presence of AI-assisted design and narration sparked additional interest and suggestions, with teachers recommending future development of DST beyond simple slide-based visuals, perhaps into animated or interactive media. This points to a broader enthusiasm not only for DST but also for keeping pace with evolving digital literacy, emphasizing the importance of innovation in educational settings.

Overall, the reflections reveal that while teachers are motivated and appreciative of the DST initiative, they also see the need for structured follow-up, continuous practice, and technical support to fully realize the potential of DST as a powerful instructional medium. The training succeeded in sparking creativity, increasing confidence, and laying a solid foundation for future integration of digital storytelling in diverse classroom contexts. Several Digital Storytelling products resulting from training that were successfully applied in English learning in the classroom are illustrated in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Products of Digital Storytelling Created by Teachers

Figure 4 above describes how the training products have succeeded in enhancing digital teaching competencies among English teachers in Sidoarjo while also contributing to improved student engagement. The experience suggests that integrating digital storytelling into classroom instruction is not only feasible but also beneficial when accompanied by proper training and sustained support. To ensure sustainability, future programs should consider follow-up training, peer-sharing platforms, and the establishment of professional learning communities to foster long-term pedagogical transformation. These initiatives could play a critical role in aligning teaching practices with national priorities and in preparing teachers for the demands of 21st-century education.

4. CONCLUSION

This community service program has demonstrated the significant potential of digital storytelling to enhance teaching creativity among English teachers. By integrating technology-based media, such as Canva, into their instructional practices, the 51 participating teachers were able to expand their pedagogical repertoire and begin shifting from conventional to more innovative, student-centered approaches. Although challenges, particularly time constraints, limited the full implementation of the developed materials, the teachers' increased digital literacy and willingness to explore new methods are promising indicators of professional growth.

The results suggest that professional development programs focusing on creative and practical applications of technology can be highly effective in promoting meaningful instructional change. It is therefore recommended that schools continue to support teacher innovation by encouraging participation in such training activities. Likewise, teacher organizations such as MGMP should prioritize long-term implementation and sustained mentoring to ensure the continuity and evolution of digital-based teaching practices. Rather than hesitating in the face of changing educational demands, teacher communities should be encouraged to embrace experimentation and variation in learning media aligned with the needs of today's learners.

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WRITERS' CONTRIBUTION

Program implementation: SA, FM, EZN, AZD, NPS; Article drafting: SA, FM; Impact analysis: SA, EZN; Results presentation: FM, EZN; Manuscript revision: SA, FM.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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