

DIGITAL STORYTELLING AS A COMMUNICATION COMPETENCY AND CREATIVE SKILL ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become the primary platform for high school students to interact, develop creativity, and enhance communication skills. One effective method that can be utilized is digital storytelling a form of storytelling that uses digital technology by combining text, images, sound, and video. Digital storytelling consists of three main elements: narrative, digital media, and audience engagement. In South Tangerang, the high usage of social media among students has not been matched by adequate understanding of how to create engaging content, apply effective storytelling techniques, or adhere to digital media ethics. The main problems include a lack of understanding of the digital storytelling concept, limited technical skills in content production, low awareness of digital ethics, and minimal guidance in content development. The urgency of this Community Service Program lies in the fact that social media has become an inseparable part of high school students' lives, serving as their primary means of interaction, expression, and creativity. However, the high consumption of digital media is not balanced by sufficient knowledge of digital storytelling techniques, compelling content creation, or ethical considerations in using social media. Students tend to be passive consumers or are exposed to less educational content, without possessing the skills to create persuasive and informative narratives. Therefore, an educational intervention is needed to equip students with digital storytelling skills, so they can produce engaging, meaningful, and responsible content. To address these challenges, a digital storytelling skills development program for high school students is essential. This program aims to equip them with storytelling techniques, foster creativity and communication, enhance digital literacy, and encourage productive use of social media. The proposed solutions include conceptual workshops, technical skills training, digital ethics education, optimizing social media for educational purposes, and mentoring in content production. The expected outcomes of this program are an increase in competitiveness and the application of science and technology in society, particularly among high school students in South Tangerang City. Through this program, students are expected to become more creative in communication and capable of producing valuable and responsible digital content, thus becoming wise and innovative content creators in the digital era.

Keywords: Digital Storytelling; Communication Competence; Social Media; Creativity; Content.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, social media has become an essential platform for communication and information dissemination. Among high school students, social media is not only used as a means of social interaction but also serves as a primary channel for developing creativity and communication skills. One effective way to express creativity and enhance communication abilities is through digital storytelling.

According to the *Indonesia Digital Report 2024* (wearesocial.com), the global population has reached 8.08 billion, with 5.04 billion active social media users an increase of 266 million or 5.6% compared to 2023. In Indonesia alone, with a total population of 276.4 million, there are 167 million active social media users, which constitutes 60.4% of the population. This indicates that more than half of Indonesians are now active social media users. Therefore, communication skills on social media have become an essential competency for its users.

Digital storytelling refers to narratives conveyed through digital technology and media. One key characteristic of digital storytelling is interactivity the continuous interaction between the audience and the content. This interactivity fosters an immersive experience that actively engages the audience with the story (Miller, 2020). Miller (2020) notes that while there are many definitions of digital storytelling, they commonly share three fundamental elements: it is narrative in nature, utilizes digital media, and is designed to be engaging. According to Robin (2008), there are three types of digital storytelling: personal narratives based on individual experiences, stories that document specific events, and stories created to inform the audience.

Digital storytelling is a method of narrative delivery that uses digital technology by combining text, images, audio, and video to convey a message or story. This concept enables students not only to sharpen their technical skills but also to stimulate creativity in crafting compelling and relevant narratives for their audiences. However, despite the vast potential of digital storytelling, many students still lack a comprehensive understanding of how to effectively utilize it on social media both in terms of technical execution and ethical communication.

A previous study titled "The Implementation of Digital Storytelling (DST) Strategy in Arabic Language Learning (A Case Study at SMP Arrifaie Gondanglegi Malang)", published in *Jurnal Kewarganegaraan* Vol. 6 No. 2 (Fahmi, 2022), explains that the application of DST in the classroom integrates multiple skill sets. These include writing skills, communication skills, presentation skills, and technological proficiency. Such skills collectively contribute to increasing student motivation and engagement.

In South Tangerang, this phenomenon becomes increasingly relevant due to the high penetration of social media among students. While many of them are already active on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, they often lack sufficient knowledge on how to deliver messages creatively and responsibly. Common issues include a limited understanding of how to create engaging content, ineffective storytelling techniques, and poor management of self-image on social media platforms.

South Tangerang is the youngest city in the province of Banten, officially separated from Tangerang Regency in 2008. Geographically, it is located between 6°39' - 6°47' South Latitude and 106°14' - 106°22' East Longitude, covering an area of 147.19 square kilometers, which is approximately 1.63% of Banten Province. Administratively, South Tangerang consists of 7 subdistricts (kecamatan) and 54 urban villages (kelurahan).

According to BPS South Tangerang in Figures 2024 (<https://tangselkota.bps.go.id/>), there are 100 senior high schools (SMA) with a total student population of 33,285 spread across the 7 subdistricts. This demographic forms the target audience for the proposed Community Service Program.

Based on this background, it is essential to implement a program that enhances the communication skills and creativity of senior high school students in South Tangerang through digital storytelling. The program is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how to develop engaging stories that align with the characteristics of social media audiences, while also equipping students with the skills needed to create responsible and ethical content.

Through this digital storytelling approach, students are expected to become more creative in communication, develop their potential in the digital world, and transform into more mindful and responsible consumers and producers of content on social media.

2. METHOD

This community service program employed a workshop method combined with interactive discussion techniques involving all participants. The workshop approach was used to deliver material on Digital Storytelling as a Communication Skill and Creative Expression on Social Media Platforms. To deepen understanding of the material, participants were given opportunities for discussion and Q&A sessions.

The activity was carried out with the support and collaboration of the Regional Education Office Branches for Tangerang City and South Tangerang City. As strategic partners, the regional education offices played a vital role in recruiting participants from among educators and students with an interest in developing digital communication skills. Furthermore, the partners contributed by providing valuable insights into policies and educational needs relevant to the implementation of digital storytelling in teaching and creative

development. The implementation of this community service program followed several key steps as outlined below:

1. Participants were provided with information on digital storytelling as a form of communication skill and creativity on social media platforms.
2. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions regarding any aspects of the material that were unclear.
3. Participants received training to develop competencies in digital storytelling as a communication and creative skill on social media platforms.

Through collaboration with partner institutions, this community service program is expected to generate a broader impact, particularly in enhancing digital communication competencies among students in the South Tangerang City area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Community Service Program entitled "Digital Storytelling as a Form of Communication Skill and Creativity on Social Media Platforms" was held at SMA Negeri 2 South Tangerang, with participants consisting of students from both senior and vocational high schools in the South Tangerang area. The program aimed to provide students with a basic understanding of digital storytelling and to enhance their ability to communicate messages creatively through social media platforms.

1. Program Implementation

The activity was conducted over the course of one full day in the multipurpose hall of SMA Negeri 2 South Tangerang, involving 53 student participants. The event proceeded in a conducive, communicative, and participatory atmosphere, where interaction between facilitators and participants was highly dynamic. The students demonstrated cooperative, enthusiastic, and open attitudes in receiving the material, and were actively engaged in each stage of the program. Facilitators also made efforts to create a warm environment and encouraged two-way collaboration, ensuring the sessions were not merely lecture-based, but dialogic and applicable. The activities were divided into three main sessions, namely:

A. Material Presentation Session (Theory and Context)

At an early stage, participants were given in-depth insights into the following topics:

- a. The basic concepts of storytelling and digital storytelling, including key narrative elements (character, plot, conflict, and resolution) as well as the principles of visual communication.
- b. The roles and functions of social media as a space for public communication, self-expression, and as a tool for promoting ideas, works, and products.
- c. The importance of building a digital identity and media literacy, enabling students to be more mindful, strategic, and creative in using social media.
- d. Inspiring examples of digital storytelling that demonstrate how simple narratives can be transformed into impactful content.

The material was delivered interactively through presentation slides, short inspirational videos, and open discussions to stimulate students' interest in the topic.

B. Practical Simulation Session

The practical simulation session was the core component of this community service activity, designed to provide students with hands-on experience in applying the materials presented earlier. This session served not only as technical training but also as a form of participatory learning that emphasized creative thinking, collaboration, and real-world problem-solving skills.

The objectives of this simulation session were to:

- a. Provide participants with the opportunity to apply the concept of digital storytelling in a practical manner.
- b. Train basic technical skills such as scriptwriting, photo/video shooting, and content editing.

- c. Build students' confidence in expressing ideas through digital media.
- d. Develop teamwork and interpersonal communication skills in the context of content production.

Benefits experienced by participants from this session included:

- a. Improved visual and digital communication skills in producing structured and meaningful content.
- b. Deeper understanding of the content production process—from planning and execution to message delivery to the audience.
- c. Increased self-confidence and courage to share ideas, especially when presenting their work in front of other groups.

Working in small groups, participants were challenged to create a piece of digital storytelling content with the following guidelines:

- a. Identify the main message and target audience.
- b. Develop a storyboard and brief script for a video with a maximum duration of one minute.
- c. Capture photos or videos using simple tools (smartphones).
- d. Present their content in front of other participants for review.

This simulation trained students to think creatively, work collaboratively in teams, and express their ideas in a structured and communicative digital media format.

The session demonstrated that practice-based learning approaches are highly effective in cultivating student skills, particularly in critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. It also highlighted the great potential of vocational high school (SMK) students to produce content that is not only engaging, but also educational and socially impactful through digital media.

C. Q&A, Feedback, and Reflection Session

After the group presentations, an open Q&A and reflection session was conducted. Participants were invited to share the challenges they encountered, ideas they wished to develop further, and to receive constructive feedback from facilitators. Key points that emerged from the discussion included:

- a. The importance of sharpening soft skills such as public speaking, critical thinking, and storytelling.
- b. Student's desire to learn more about the world of content creation and digital marketing.
- c. Awareness of the need to produce content that is not only entertaining but also educational and responsible.

2. Activity Evaluation

Overall, this community service activity ran smoothly and received highly positive responses from participants. Evaluation was conducted through direct observation during the sessions and a reflection discussion involving students and accompanying teachers at the end of the program.

Key aspects of the evaluation included:

- a. Understanding of the material: Participants demonstrated strong interest and good comprehension of digital storytelling concepts, both narrative and technical. This was evident from the questions asked, the quality of discussions, and their ability to apply the concepts during the simulation session.
- b. Active participation and student engagement: The students were actively involved in every stage of the program. They showed great enthusiasm in sharing ideas, developing narratives, and producing as well as presenting their final projects.
- c. Teamwork and collaboration: During the practical session, participants demonstrated effective teamwork skills. They divided roles, engaged in discussions, and supported one another in completing tasks creatively.
- d. Creativity and basic technical skills: The resulting projects were diverse and demonstrated strong creative potential. Despite limited time and resources, participants were able to utilize simple technologies to produce relevant and communicative digital content.
- e. Relevance to students' needs: The materials and practical exercises were considered highly relevant to the needs of vocational high school students (SMK), who are expected to face both workforce and digital landscape challenges. This activity served as a valuable foundation, especially in fostering communication skills, critical thinking, and productive use of social media.

Based on the evaluation process, it can be concluded that the program successfully achieved its objectives, namely improving students' awareness and basic skills in producing and delivering messages creatively through digital media.

The activity was also deemed relevant and has the potential to be further developed, either through follow-up training or collaborative programs between universities and schools.

3. CONCLUSION

The community service program on digital storytelling conducted at SMA Negeri 2 South Tangerang successfully provided students with an in-depth understanding of the concept and application of digital storytelling as a communication skill and form of creativity on social media. Through interactive workshops combining theory and hands-on practice, students were able to grasp the steps involved in creating communicative and engaging digital content for their audience.

The program demonstrated that digital storytelling is not only about mastering content production techniques, but also about cultivating essential soft skills such as critical thinking, effective communication, and teamwork. Participants actively engaged in every session, showing high enthusiasm and confidence when presenting their ideas and creative works in front of their group.

The practical simulation became a crucial part of the learning process, as students directly produced simple digital storytelling content using their own devices, such as smartphones. This did not only strengthen their technical capabilities, but also encouraged them to structure relevant narratives tailored to the characteristics of social media audiences.

Beyond enhancing technical and creative skills, the program also equipped students with an understanding of the importance of ethics and responsibility in producing content in the digital world. Awareness of self-image management and media literacy was also emphasized, so that students can grow into wise content consumers and producers.

Given the high level of social media penetration among students in South Tangerang, this program is highly relevant and strategic as an effort to strengthen the digital competencies of the younger generation. In the future, similar training programs should be expanded and made sustainable to further empower students in utilizing digital technology creatively and responsibly across various aspects of their lives.

4. REFERENCES

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