

The Use of Digital Media to Teach English to Children

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Abstract

This community service project aims to enhance the competence of elementary school English teachers in utilizing digital media as an effective learning tool. Conducted at SD 1 Sikur in July 2023, the program employed a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach involving active collaboration between the project team and teachers. The training focused on practical skills in operating various digital platforms such as Canva, YouTube, and interactive quiz applications, tailored to the local context of primary education. The results indicated a significant improvement in teachers' confidence and ability to integrate digital media into their teaching practices, which in turn increased student engagement and motivation in learning English. The study highlights the importance of continuous professional development and institutional support to sustain the effective use of technology in classroom learning. Recommendations include ongoing training, infrastructure enhancement, and the establishment of a digital learning community among teachers.

Keywords: *Digital Media, Teach English to Children, Education English, SDN 1 Sikur Lombok Timur*

INTRODUCTION

English has now become an international language used in various aspects of life, from education, technology, communication, to tourism. Mastery of English from an early age is an important need for students to be able to compete in the era of globalization that continues to develop. Children as the next generation of the nation need to be equipped with basic English language skills in order to be able to establish cross-cultural communication and access global information which is mostly available in that language. Therefore, teaching English at the primary school level is a strategic first step in building a foundation of foreign language skills.

In the context of primary education, English teaching needs to be done in a fun, contextual, and adaptive method to the child's developmental needs. Elementary school-age children have unique cognitive and affective characteristics; They find it easier to understand learning through hands-on experiences, visualizations, and interactive media. Monotonous, teacher-centered conventional learning methods often make it difficult for children to understand the material and lose interest in learning. This requires innovation in the learning approach, one of which is by utilizing digital technology that is familiar to today's children's world.

Digital media provides a great opportunity in creating a more meaningful, interactive, and enjoyable learning experience. The use of educational videos, learning applications, language games, and other digital platforms can help teachers in delivering English material in a more interesting way. In addition, digital media also allows for more flexible learning and can be accessed at any time, thus supporting the concept of learning based on student needs. The use of technology in learning has been proven to increase learning motivation, concept understanding, and active participation of students in the classroom.

However, in practice, the use of digital media in English learning in elementary schools, especially in areas such as Sikur District, East Lombok, is still very limited. One of the main causes is the low digital literacy among educators. Many teachers do not have adequate skills in using digital media effectively in the learning process. In addition, there is still an assumption that the use of technology is only relevant for the secondary to upper education level, even though at the basic level technology can be a very important tool in building the basics of language competence.

SD 1 Sikur as one of the basic education institutions in the East Lombok region faces similar challenges to other elementary schools in rural areas. Although the enthusiasm of teachers in improving the quality of learning is quite high, the limitations of knowledge and experience in implementing educational technology are a real obstacle.

Teachers in these schools are more accustomed to using lecture or memorization methods in teaching English, without integrating digital learning resources such as interactive videos, mobile applications, or online-based educational games.

This has implications for the lack of variety in the delivery of material, which has an impact on low student involvement during the learning process. In fact, in the context of basic education, the success of learning depends heavily on the extent to which where teachers can create a fun and interactive classroom atmosphere. In addition, the results of the initial interviews show that most teachers find it difficult to choose and operate digital media because they have never received formal training on it. Against this background, strengthening the capacity of teachers in the field of educational technology is an urgent need that needs to be responded to immediately in a strategic and structured manner.

Looking at the conditions in the field, an intervention is needed that is not only theoretical, but also applicable and sustainable. Training on the use of digital media for SD 1 Sikur teachers is a practical solution to answer the challenges of English learning which has been less effective. This training is designed not only to transfer knowledge about learning technology, but also to equip teachers with operational technical skills such as the use of interactive applications (e.g. Quizizz, Kahoot, Duolingo), the creation of digital teaching materials based on PowerPoint or Canva, to strategies for using educational videos from platforms such as YouTube. Teachers are also trained to adapt material to local language and context to make it easier for students to understand. The training process is structured in the form of workshops that encourage hands-on practice and reflection on their own teaching experiences. Thus, this service activity not only provides new insights, but also builds teachers' confidence to integrate digital media into their learning routines.

This service activity is carried out using the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which is a collaborative approach that actively involves stakeholders in the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating programs.

In the context of this activity, the PAR approach allows teachers not only to be the object of the training recipients, but also to be the subjects who are actively involved in formulating training needs, determining what relevant media to use, and reflexively assessing the effectiveness of training. This approach also provides a space for dialogue between the implementation team and teachers, so that the training process can be adjusted to local needs and the characteristics of the participants. In addition, the PAR model also emphasizes the importance of sustainability of post-training activities, where teachers are expected to form a learning community that regularly shares good practices and continues to develop their digital skills. In this context, PAR is not just a training method, but also an empowerment strategy that places teachers as agents of change in improving the quality of education.

The main purpose of this service activity is to equip teachers with practical competence in operating and utilizing digital media to support English teaching in a creative and contextual manner. This goal is realized through a series of training and field practices that are tailored to the teacher's ability level and the availability of school facilities. Through this training, teachers are expected to be able to design learning activities that are fun, interactive, and in accordance with technological developments. This service activity also aims to internalize awareness of the importance of learning innovation as part of teacher professionalism. In addition to the technical aspect, this training instills collaborative values between teachers through group discussions and teaching simulations, so as to create a work climate that supports sustainable innovation. Thus, the impact of these activities is not only limited to improving the individual skills of teachers, but also forms a professional work culture that favors the quality of children's education.

More broadly, this service activity is expected to be the first step in building a technology-based learning ecosystem at SD 1 Sikur which is oriented towards developing character and skills in the 21st century. This activity is expected not to stop at one training, but to become a sustainable movement in encouraging teachers to continue to innovate and learn.

Therefore, the follow-up to this activity includes plans to establish a digital teacher forum, the preparation of learning modules based on local digital media, as well as cooperation with educational institutions and the private sector in content development. Furthermore, the results of this service are also expected to be a reference for other schools in the NTB region in implementing a similar training model. In the long term, increasing teachers' capacity to utilize digital media will have a positive impact on the quality of English learning at the primary school level, as well as expanding children's access to quality and relevant learning to their increasingly digital world.

RESEARCH METHODS

This community service activity uses the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, which is a method that emphasizes the active involvement of participants in every stage of the activity, from planning, implementation, to evaluation. This approach was chosen because it is relevant to the context of teacher capacity building which not only requires knowledge transfer, but also participatory involvement that empowers them as subjects of change in learning practices. In this context, teachers are not only the recipients of training, but as a strategic partner who also determines the direction and form of activities according to real needs in the field.

The stages of implementing this activity began with initial observation and coordination with the school, especially the principal and English teachers at SD 1 Sikur. Observations were carried out to map the existing conditions of English learning and the level of digital literacy of teachers. After that, the implementation team prepared a needs-based training design that included educational digital media introduction materials, technical training on the use of learning support applications and software, and simulations of the use of these media in the classroom context. The training materials are designed to be applicable and relevant to the conditions of elementary schools in rural areas, as well as encourage the use of easily accessible media such as videos, images, and simple mobile applications.

The implementation of activities was carried out in the form of an intensive workshop which was divided into several sessions, including: (1) Session introduction to the concept of English learning based on digital media; (2) Technical training sessions on the use of several digital platforms such as YouTube Edu, Canva, and Quizizz; (3) Practice sessions and teaching simulations using digital media; and (4) Reflection sessions and group discussions. Each session is designed with an andragogic and active-participatory approach, where teachers are engaged in discussions, hands-on practice, and evaluation of their own learning process. In its implementation, the service team also provides direct assistance to ensure that technical skills are truly mastered by the participants.

After the training activities are completed, formative and summative evaluations are carried out to measure the success rate of the training. Formative evaluation is carried out during the training process through observation and informal interviews, while summative evaluation is carried out by providing questionnaires and conducting in-depth interviews with participants about the benefits of the activity. In addition, teachers are also asked to prepare an English learning plan that integrates digital media as the final project of the training. This learning plan is used as an indicator of success in internalizing the skills acquired during training. All evaluation results are used as a basis for formulating recommendations and follow-up activities in the future.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Coordination and Collaboration

The initial stages of the service activity began with an intensive coordination process between the implementation team and SD 1 Sikur, especially the principal and class teachers. This coordination is not only administrative, but also strategic, as it determines the readiness of schools to receive and implement training. In the initial meeting, the implementation team explained the purpose, objectives, and benefits of the activity, including the urgency of mastering digital media in learning English for children. The warm welcome and enthusiasm from the school shows that there is a real need for more contextual and technology-based learning innovations.

In addition to the principal, teachers are actively involved in the process of planning training activities. The initial discussion resulted in a number of findings regarding the obstacles to teaching English at SD 1 Sikur, including limited access to digital learning resources, lack of technology training, and lack of insight into interactive learning strategies.

The implementation team then adapted the training curriculum to suit the school's local conditions. This approach shows the importance of participatory dialogue in community service, so that activities are not top-down, but relevant to actual needs on the ground. The service team also formed a small team of digital drivers in schools, consisting of teachers who showed more interest in learning technology. This team acts as a communication bridge, as well as an internal mentor who can accompany other teachers after training. This collaboration reinforces a sense of ownership of the training program, as each teacher feels involved not only as a participant, but also as a contributor to mutual success. This approach is important so that the results of service can last in the long term.

External coordination was also carried out with the Sikur District Education Office, which provided moral support for this activity as part of efforts to improve the quality of teachers. The implementation team also involves students from the English Education study program as facilitators and training assistants. The involvement of these students provides added value, both in the delivery of fresher material and in creating a more intimate group dynamic. This cross-element synergy shows that the success of service activities is greatly influenced by effective multi-stakeholder collaboration.

The overall process of coordination and collaboration in this activity shows that the active involvement of all elements of the school is the key to creating sustainable educational change. Service activities cannot run alone without the support and involvement of the partner environment. The participatory approach applied provides space for teachers to voice their needs, provide input on training designs, and feel valued as key actors in change. Thus, the implementation of this activity is able to build a strong foundation of cooperation for the development of similar programs in the future.

2. Post-Action

After the implementation of the training, various positive impacts began to be seen from the changes in learning practices carried out by teachers. Teachers who were previously not used to using technology began to show courage and creativity in operating simple digital media. They started using apps like Canva to create visual teaching materials, and used YouTube Kids to deliver age-appropriate English learning

videos. The use of digital media creates a more enjoyable learning atmosphere and makes students more enthusiastic about participating in lessons. The application of digital media in learning also encourages teachers to think more innovatively. They not only use the available materials, but also start creating their own content that is relevant to the local environment. For example, some teachers make videos introducing English vocabulary against the backdrop of traditional houses, Lombok objects, or the daily habits of children in the village. This activity demonstrates the teacher's ability to contextualize global material into students' local experiences, an important approach in meaningful learning.

Teachers' creativity also increases in developing visual and audio-based teaching strategies. They began designing more interactive learning activities, such as small-prize quizzes, app-based group games, or video-assisted English singing sessions. Teachers become more flexible and reflective in managing the classroom, paying attention to students' learning styles, and adjusting methods according to children's responses. This transformation shows that the training has internalized a new understanding in the way teachers view and carry out English teaching.

In addition, there is a change in the dynamics of the classroom. Students look more active, communicative, and motivated. Some students even showed increased courage in using English orally, even though it was still in the simple sentence form. Teachers report that children seem to remember English vocabulary and phrases more easily when conveyed through pictures, songs, or other digital activities. This strengthens the evidence that the use of digital media has great potential in improving the learning outcomes of elementary school students. This post-action activity also fosters the spirit of collaboration between teachers. They began to regularly discuss and exchange experiences through WhatsApp groups created during training.

Some teachers even independently create digital teaching materials and share them with peers. This mutually supportive culture strengthens the sustainability of the results of activities, while encouraging the formation of innovative teacher learning communities. In this context, the impact of service does not only occur individually, but extends to the collective dimension in the school ecosystem

3. Post-Activity Field Evaluation

Field evaluations are carried out systematically to measure the effectiveness of activities and understand the challenges that teachers are still facing. The evaluation method included classroom observation, in-depth interviews, and questionnaire dissemination. The results showed that most teachers found this training very helpful. They stated that they acquired new understandings and skills that could be immediately applied in the classroom. More than 90% of participants stated that they were ready to implement digital media in English teaching regularly and gradually.

Observations show that teachers who take part in the training are able to show increased confidence in managing digital media. They can explain the functions of the app, develop a logical learning flow, and use digital media to build positive interactions in the classroom. Students also look more active and enthusiastic, creating a more lively classroom atmosphere. This success is an indication that a practice-based and participatory training approach is very effective in the context of teacher capacity building in primary schools.

Teachers also provide feedback on the training design. They appreciate an approach that is not only theoretical, but based on hands-on practice. Most suggest that this activity be repeated periodically so that the skills acquired can be maintained and developed. In addition, they also hope for follow-up in the form of a digital teacher forum or advanced thematic training. This input shows the awareness and desire to continue to develop as educators who are adaptive to the changing times.

The principal as the holder of institutional authority also gave a positive response. He stated that this activity has had a real impact on schools, both in terms of improving the quality of teaching and in terms of the enthusiasm of teachers in innovating. As a form of support, the principal is committed to allocate specific time in the teacher's meeting agenda to share digital learning practices. In fact, the school has begun to prepare a plan to procure more complete technology support equipment in the future.

Overall, the evaluation showed that this service activity was not only successful in terms of implementation, but also had an impact on changing the learning culture at SD 1 Sikur. The results of this evaluation are an important basis for planning sustainability programs and developing similar training models in other schools. In addition, this evaluative practice also reflects the importance of a reflective approach in community service activities so that it can continue to develop and be adaptive to future challenges.

CONCLUSION

The community service activity entitled The Use of Digital Media to Teach English to Children at SD 1 Sikur significantly improved teachers' competence in utilizing digital media for English learning. Through the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, teachers actively participated in practical and contextual technology-based learning activities. The evaluation indicated improvements in teachers' technical skills, motivation, and creativity in using educational digital applications. The integration of digital media also transformed learning from monotonous activities into more interactive and enjoyable experiences, increasing students' interest and participation in English lessons. Collaboration among teachers and support from school leaders, the Education Office, and students further contributed to the success and sustainability of the program.

To sustain these improvements, continuous teacher training and mentoring are recommended to strengthen digital competencies and introduce new educational technologies. Schools should also provide adequate infrastructure, including computers, stable internet access, projectors, and speakers. Establishing a teacher learning community can further support the exchange of experiences, innovative materials, and solutions to classroom challenges. Collaboration with the Education Office, universities, and private sector is also important to provide updated resources and expertise. These efforts can strengthen digital-based English learning at SD 1 Sikur and potentially serve as a model for other elementary schools in East Lombok.

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