

Managing Indonesian language learning through digital applications to enhance storytelling skills in primary schools

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the management of Indonesian learning based on digital applications in improving the storytelling skills of elementary school students. The focus of the study is directed at the implementation of the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle which includes planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up of learning at SDN Palasari and SDN 2 Parungkuda. The research uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation, which are then analysed descriptively. The results of the study show that both schools have integrated digital applications in learning with distinct characteristics. Teachers at SDN Palasari emphasize digital differentiation and innovation using applications such as Canva, Pixton, and Kahoot, while teachers at SDN 2 Parungkuda emphasize flexibility in dealing with limited facilities, by utilizing simple devices. These differences illustrate the variation in the level of TPACK mastery and the stages of technology adoption. In general, the application of digital applications has been proven to support improving students' storytelling skills while instilling character values. These results are in line with the findings of previous research on the effectiveness of digital storytelling, but this study presents a new contribution by placing digital applications within a systematic and sustainable learning management framework. Thus, this study emphasizes that the integration of digital applications is not just the use of media, but a measurable, consistent, and oriented learning management strategy that is oriented towards continuous quality improvement in elementary schools.

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Introduction

The development of digital technology has significantly changed pedagogy in primary education. The implementation of ICT Literacy in Social Sciences (IPS) and Civic Education (PKn) learning emphasizes the importance of learning design that is in accordance with the demands of the times, placing students as the centre of learning (Junindra et al. 2021). Research shows that digital transformation improves teachers' learning management and strengthens their pedagogical competence through the effective use of technology (Nurdin, Marnita, and Ghani 2023). In addition, the importance of professional development to improve teachers' digital skills is now a critical reflection in implementing online and hybrid learning methods (Santi, Gorghiu, and Pribeanu 2020). When applying digital technology, teachers are

expected to be able to use various tools to create an interactive and engaging learning environment (Naila, Ridlwan, and Haq 2021). The results of research in various schools show that the integration of technology not only supports the teaching process but also increases students' motivation in learning (Farisia and Syafi'i 2024). Therefore, improving teachers' digital competencies is essential to prepare them to face educational challenges in this digital era (Fazis, Safrizal, and Yulia 2024; Sulasmi 2022).

Indonesian is a fundamental subject in elementary school that not only focuses on reading and writing skills, but also on oral language skills, especially storytelling skills. Rodhiah (2023) explained that the main goal of Indonesian education is to guide students to communicate effectively and appreciate language as a tool of unity. Innovative teaching methods, such as storytelling, have been proven to improve students' storytelling skills (Millah and Khoimatun 2024). In addition, there is a major influence on students' learning motivation when teaching is carried out with a creative approach, for example through games and communication practices (Amirullah et al. 2024; Sari and Rambe 2023). Indonesian language learning is expected to shape students' character and their emotional and social development (Ali 2020; Tarmini et al. 2022). With a comprehensive approach, students are expected to not only be able to master the technical aspects of language but also have a good communicative spirit. Research shows that the application of the right methods in Indonesian learning can improve students' overall learning outcomes and skills (Apriliana, Frayoga, and Zahra 2024; Qomariyah 2020).

Storytelling is a skill that goes far beyond just language, it serves as an important means to develop children's imagination, creativity, confidence, and interpersonal communication skills. Research shows that through storytelling, children not only practice speaking but also build better social relationships (Kim and Li 2020; Somadayo, Larasati, and Kurniawan 2022). The storytelling method can facilitate the development of children's social-emotional skills, supporting them in understanding and expressing emotions (Nair and Yunus 2022). Furthermore, storytelling helps children develop creativity and critical thinking skills. This is because storytelling activities invite children to explore imaginary worlds and express their ideas in a creative way (Dewi 2021). This activity also increases children's confidence when they tell stories in front of an audience, improving their oral communication skills (Sabari and Hashim 2023). Thus, storytelling plays a significant role in the formation of children's character and language skills from an early age, preparing them to face future social and academic challenges (Amrillah, Fatimah, and Afriandi 2023).

Students' storytelling skills in elementary school (SD) still show small numbers, evident through difficulties in composing ideas in sequence, lack of fluency in self-expression, and monotonous presentation of stories. Research by Lestari et al. indicates that low storytelling skills are related to the lack of creative and innovative learning methods in language teaching (Lestari, Mawardi, and Sunaryo 2023). This condition is exacerbated by the lack of support from teachers in guiding students to develop the quality of their narratives, which should be the focus of language learning (Safitri, Dewi, and Furnamasari 2021). In addition, traditional methods that are still dominant in teaching often do not encourage students to actively participate or be creative in storytelling, which contributes to the monotonous presentation of stories (Bestari et al. 2023). This situation also reflects the need to strengthen the role of teachers in adapting more interesting and interactive teaching methods, as well as providing space for students to practice effectively (Ma'sumah, Aini, and Oktaviana 2024; Sunaryati et al. 2023). Therefore, to improve students' storytelling skills, a more innovative and collaborative learning model is needed.

Weaknesses in storytelling skills in elementary school students have a significant impact on their communication development, creativity, and critical thinking skills. Inhibition

of storytelling skills can result in difficulties in organizing ideas, which in turn reduces the quality of Putri's children's social interactions (Putri 2023). This negatively impacts children's creativity potential and ability to express their ideas orally, which is important for effective learning (Huda 2023; Rambe, Sumadi, and Meilani 2021). Therefore, the emergence of academic anxiety has become a challenge for teachers in teaching Indonesian. Teachers are faced with the dilemma of finding effective teaching methods to improve students' speaking skills (Adminpintarharati 2023). Therefore, more innovative, and up-to-date approaches to learning, such as the use of engaging storytelling media, need to be introduced to support the development of these skills (Rambe et al. 2021; Supriatna et al. 2022). Thus, greater attention to storytelling learning methods can encourage students to be more confident and actively participate in the learning process (Anita, Hijriati, and Hasballah 2024).

The digital era provides great opportunities in the development of education, especially through interactive learning applications that can improve students' storytelling skills. Digital technology can serve as a tool that supports pedagogical innovation, but the challenge is how it is not just a medium, but also an integral part of an effective learning management strategy. Sembiring et al. note that thought innovations integrated with digital tools can improve speaking and writing skills, encouraging students to think creatively and analytically (Sembiring, Malau, and Harahap 2024). However, challenges remain. The application of technology in learning must be carried out systematically to support the development of students' communication skills properly. This requires teachers to adapt learning methods that are interactive and actively involve students, as discussed in research that emphasizes the importance of literacy programs to improve language skills (Rigianti and Situmorang 2024). By choosing the right digital tools and integrating them in the learning process, students can not only learn in a more engaging way but also acquire essential skills in the digital era (Lestari, Nurmalisa, and Mentari 2024). Therefore, it is important to emphasize that the use of technology must be planned and implemented as part of a broader learning strategy to have a positive impact on students' storytelling skills development.

Previous Research, Gap, and Novelty

Research on the use of digital applications in learning in elementary schools has been conducted, especially in the context of improving students' speaking and storytelling skills. Sundari et al. (2025) developed a digital storytelling video media assisted by hand puppets for grade IV elementary school students, which has been proven to be feasible, practical, and effective in improving storytelling skills as well as understanding moral values. In line with that, Kusumajati et al. (2023) through classroom action research showed that the application of the digital storytelling model to Indonesian cultural richness materials was able to significantly improve students' speaking skills from cycle to cycle.

In addition, the research of Putri, Haliza, and Wahyuningsih (2023) confirms the effectiveness of the digital storytelling method as a social studies learning medium in elementary school, where the results of the literature review conducted show that the integration of digital media can make the learning process more enjoyable while increasing student understanding. Cahyanti and Nuroh (2023) also found that the use of digital storytelling media can improve the speaking skills of elementary school students, including aspects of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and story content through pretest-post-test design. Furthermore, Purnama et al. (2022) through a systematic literature review noted a positive trend in the use of digital storytelling in early childhood education, which contributes to a communicative, dramatic, and enjoyable learning experience, although there are still methodological and practice gaps that need to be improved.

If examined critically, these studies tend to focus on the effectiveness of digital media in improving speaking and storytelling skills. However, most of them are still limited to the technical aspects of media use and have not in-depth examined how these digital media can be managed within the framework of systematic learning management. The aspects of planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up as an integral part of learning management have received little attention. Thus, the sustainability of learning innovations is often stalled at the application level alone, with no mechanism that ensures consistency of implementation in the long term.

Based on the identification of these gaps, the novelty of this research lies in the effort to integrate digital applications into the management of Indonesian learning in elementary schools through the framework of the Deming cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act). The contribution of this research can be seen in two dimensions. First, conceptually, this research enriches the study of technology-based learning management by offering an integrative perspective that combines digital media and sustainable quality management approaches. Second, this research presents a best practice model that can be adapted by teachers to improve students' storytelling skills in a systematic, measurable, and sustainable manner in the digital era.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. This design was chosen because it is in accordance with the research objectives which focus on gaining an in-depth understanding of the practice of Indonesian learning management based on digital applications in improving the storytelling skills of elementary school students. The qualitative approach is seen as appropriate because it allows researchers to explore phenomena naturally and contextually, as well as providing space to see the dynamics of learning interactions through direct involvement of researchers in the field (Creswell 2018). Meanwhile, the case study method was chosen because the research is directed at learning practices in certain schools that can be used as real representations to understand the reality of implementation in a more concrete way (Yin 2018).

The research subjects were determined through purposive sampling techniques with consideration of direct involvement in the learning that was the focus of the study. The research was carried out in two elementary schools, namely SDN Palasari and SDN 2 Parungkuda. The main participants included high-class Indonesian teachers (grades IV-VI) who used digital applications in storytelling learning, as well as several students who participated in the learning activities. Participant selection is carried out based on criteria of relevance to the research context, affordability of location, and willingness to actively participate in the research process.

Data collection is carried out through three main techniques. First, in-depth interviews with teachers to obtain information related to planning, implementation, and evaluation of digital application-based learning. Interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner to allow for flexible data exploration according to the dynamics of the conversation. Second, participatory observation is carried out to see firsthand the process of interaction between teaching and learning in the classroom, especially how digital applications are used to support students' storytelling skills. Observation was carried out by recording student behaviour, interaction, and responses during the activity. Third, documentation is used as complementary data, including learning tools, student works, photos of activities, and school administration records relevant to storytelling learning.

The research procedure is carried out through three stages. The first stage is preparation, which includes determining the location and subject of the research, preparing data collection instruments, and obtaining research permits from related schools. The second

stage is implementation, namely data collection activities in the field through interviews, observations, and documentation. The third stage is data analysis which is carried out simultaneously with the data collection process, using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) which consists of data reduction, data presentation, as well as drawing conclusions and verification. The analysis is carried out iteratively by comparing data between sources so that a complete understanding is obtained.

The validity of the data is strengthened by source triangulation techniques and triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is done by comparing information from teachers, students, and documents, while technical triangulation is done by combining interviews, observations, and documentation. In addition, the credibility of the research results is supported through member checks with participants and the preparation of a detailed trail audit so that the research process can be traced back. Thus, this research methodology is expected to be able to produce valid, reliable, and academically accountable findings..

Result

Planning

The planning of Indonesian learning at SDN Palasari and SDN 2 Parungkuda shows the integration of digital applications in learning tools prepared by teachers. Teachers prepare lesson plans, teaching materials, and learning media using the Canva and PowToon applications. Learning objectives are adjusted to basic competencies and are directed at developing students' storytelling skills. Interviews with teachers revealed that the use of digital applications in planning provides convenience in presenting material in a more attractive way, as well as helping students understand the storyline with more concrete visualizations. However, the interview data also shows obstacles in planning, especially the limited time of teachers to prepare varied digital media and differences in teachers' abilities in operating applications. One teacher stated, *"Canva is easy to use, but for PowToon it takes more time to learn because the features are more complex."* This emphasizes that although planning with digital applications supports creativity, it is still necessary to improve teachers' digital competence so that the results are optimal.

Implementation

At the implementation stage, the teacher acts as a facilitator, while students are actively involved in the learning process. At SDN Palasari, students were directed to create digital posters to retell a folklore using Canva. The activity was carried out in groups, and observations showed that around 80% of the students actively discussed in determining story ideas and choosing appropriate illustrations. However, some students still experience technical difficulties in operating the application, especially in adding text and setting up image layouts. Meanwhile, at SDN 2 Parungkuda, students were invited to make simple animations using PowToon. The implementation was more challenging because the application was complex, but the enthusiasm of the students was high. The results of the observation showed that the classroom atmosphere was more collaborative, students helped each other in compiling the script and visualizing it. Teachers play an intensive role in assisting students who are not familiar with the use of computers. This difference in implementation confirms that the school context affects the success rate of the implementation of digital application-based learning.

Evaluation

Evaluation is carried out by teachers not only through the assessment of students' digital works but also pays attention to the process of preparing stories. The assessment

instrument is in the form of rubrics that contain aspects of storytelling, language use, visual creativity, and student involvement. Documentation shows that rubrics are used consistently in both schools as objective references. The results of the evaluation show a variation in student achievement. Of the 20 students at SDN Palasari, as many as 15 students showed high creativity in poster design, but only 9 students were able to compose stories in sequence. At SDN 2 Parungkuda, 12 out of 18 students managed to create simple animations that were communicative, but some were still weak in the use of proper grammar. Teachers stated that the use of rubrics helps provide more targeted feedback. One of the teachers said, *"With rubrics, I can show the strengths and weaknesses of students' work more fairly."* This shows that rubric-based evaluation contributes to the transparency of assessment.

Follow-up

The follow-up stage is carried out through reflection on the learning process. Teachers engage students in discussions about the difficulties they face, such as limitations in operating an app or producing story ideas. The teacher then devises strategy improvements for the next meeting, such as providing a short tutorial before practice or providing examples of digital work from the previous class as inspiration. In addition, follow-up also involves personal reflection of teachers. Teachers at SDN Palasari plan to expand the use of other, simpler applications so that students with low technical abilities can still participate. Meanwhile, teachers at SDN 2 Parungkuda plan to strengthen group work by dividing more clear roles, such as scriptwriters, visual designers, and narrators. This reflection affirms the importance of follow-up as part of a continuous learning cycle.

General Findings

Based on the results of the study, the management of Indonesian learning based on digital applications in both schools showed a systematic pattern in accordance with the Deming cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act). In the planning stage, teachers succeeded in integrating digital applications into learning tools so that the goals were more contextual with the needs of the digital era. The implementation was interactive with students actively involved in compiling digital works. Evaluations are carried out with rubrics that emphasize the balance between process and product, while follow-up becomes a means of reflection for continuous improvement. The field findings also revealed challenges in the form of limited digital competence of some teachers and students, as well as limited time in preparing digital media. However, these challenges have led to the emergence of adaptive strategies, such as collaborative learning and the use of simpler applications. Thus, digital application-based learning management not only improves students' storytelling skills but also strengthens teachers' adaptability in dealing with educational dynamics in the digital era.

Discussion

The results of the study show that the management of Indonesian learning based on digital applications at SDN Palasari and SDN 2 Parungkuda is carried out through four main stages, namely planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up. Each of these stages features a variety of practices according to school conditions, but in general shows a systematic and continuous pattern in supporting students' storytelling skills.

At the planning stage, teachers in both schools have prepared contextual lesson plans by integrating digital applications as part of the learning tools. Teachers at SDN Palasari emphasize differentiation by giving students the freedom to choose apps that suit their interests, such as Canva, Pixton, or Kahoot. This shows the implementation of scaffolding as proposed by Vygotsky (1978), where teacher support allows students to move from dependence to independent learning. On the other hand, teachers at SDN 2 Parungkuda display

flexibility by preparing learning scenarios both online and offline, adjusting network conditions and facilities. This practice is in line with the principles of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes adaptation, creativity, and authentic evaluation.

The implementation stage shows a variety of practices influenced by the teacher's mastery of TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge). Teachers at SDN Palasari implement more structured learning: students are directed to create storyboards using Canva before presenting their stories. This shows a complete integration between the aspects of technology, pedagogy, and content. Meanwhile, the limited facilities at SDN 2 Parungkuda make the integration of digital applications still partial, although teachers still try to use simple devices such as smartphones to make story illustrations. This condition can be explained through the innovation diffusion theory of Rogers (2003), which emphasizes that technology adoption takes place gradually, starting from innovator teachers to the majority who are slower in adopting change.

In the evaluation stage, teachers at SDN Palasari used digital recordings of students' work to assess articulation, intonation, expression, and the collapse of the storyline. This process also allows students to reflect on their performance. On the other hand, the evaluation at SDN 2 Parungkuda is carried out through class discussions and simple assessments but still encourages active student involvement in providing feedback. These two approaches are in line with the principle of authentic assessment emphasized in the Independent Curriculum, which is to assess processes as well as products. In addition, this practice supports Bruner's (1961) theory of learning by discovery, where students learn through the exploration of their own and peer work.

The follow-up stage emphasizes the importance of the principle of continuous improvement. Teachers at SDN Palasari reflect together, keep digital portfolios, and provide additional guidance to students in need. At SDN 2 Parungkuda, follow-up is carried out through independent exercises, discussions, and simple group projects. This pattern shows the implementation of the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle, where the results of the evaluation become the basis for developing the next learning plan. Thus, digital application-based learning management is not only limited to the use of media but also reflects the systematic management of learning quality.

When compared to previous research, the results of this study show important similarities and differences. Sundari et al. (2023) show that digital storytelling media assisted by hand puppets is effective in improving students' storytelling skills while instilling moral values. Kusuma et al. (2023) also prove that the application of the digital storytelling model can significantly improve students' speaking skills from cycle to cycle. In line with that, Putri et al. (2023) through a literature review confirmed the effectiveness of the digital storytelling method in making the learning process more fun and meaningful, while Cahyanti and Nuroh (2023) found that digital storytelling media can improve aspects of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and story content for elementary school students. In fact, Purnama et al. (2022) through a systematic literature review noted a positive trend in the use of digital storytelling in early childhood education, although existing practices still require methodological improvement.

From this comparison, previous research tends to focus on the effectiveness of digital media in improving students' speaking and storytelling skills. However, most of the research is still limited to the technical aspects of media use, without elaborating on how such digital media is systematically managed within the framework of learning management. The aspects of planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up that are at the core of learning management are under-paid, so existing innovations often stop at the application level. Thus,

the novelty of this research lies in the integration of digital applications into Indonesian learning management through the PDCA cycle framework. The contribution of this research is in two dimensions. First, conceptually, this study enriches the study of technology-based learning management by combining the use of digital media and a sustainable quality management approach. Second, this research presents a model of best practices that can be adapted by teachers to improve students' storytelling skills in a systematic, measurable, and sustainable manner in the digital era.

Conclusion

This study shows that the management of Indonesian learning based on digital applications in elementary schools can run effectively if managed through the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle. The results at SDN Palasari and SDN 2 Parungkuda show that each stage of management from planning, implementation, evaluation, to follow-up can encourage students' storytelling skills while instilling character values. Teachers at SDN Palasari stand out for the implementation of digital innovation more fully, while teachers at SDN 2 Parungkuda emphasize flexibility in limited facilities. This difference illustrates the variation in the level of TPACK mastery and the stages of technology adoption in each school. However, both show that the integration of digital applications supports creative, reflective, and collaborative learning according to the direction of the Independent Curriculum. Compared to previous research that focused more on the effectiveness of digital media alone, this study presents a new contribution by placing digital applications in a systematic and sustainable learning management framework. This contribution not only enriches the conceptual study of technology-based learning but also offers real practices that teachers can adapt to improve the quality of Indonesian learning in elementary schools. Thus, it can be emphasized that the use of digital applications is not just as a medium, but as part of a learning management strategy that is measurable, consistent, and oriented towards continuous quality improvement.

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