Project-Based Learning with Book Creator:
Short Story and Picture Book in Educational Literature Course

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Abstract

The effective use of technology in education has changed the face of education and it has created more educational opportunities (Abbasi, 2020; Roy, 2019). Technology in the form of digital tools incorporated into writing instruction can help teachers, motivate, and engage the student (A, 2019; Saulsburry et al., 2015). Literature has been repeatedly recognized as an effective source of authentic materials in EFL classrooms (Seo & Kim, 2020). Book Creator enables a user to trial the app by creating one book for free and facilitates student in exploring their creative writing skills (Atherton, 2022). In this article, the authors take a look at the use of book creator and report the learning process of educational literature Project-Based Learning with Book Creator and explain the importance of collaboration between the lecturer and undergraduate English Education Department students for creating literary works (short story, poem, and picture books).

Keywords: *book creator, educational literature; project-based learning; creative writing*

Introduction

Over the pandemic years, along with the rapid growing information of ICT, modern technology has advanced tremendously, and its effects are unavoidable in our lives. In relation to language teaching and learning, digital multimedia technology has been mushrooming in the classroom. This paper focused on the learning process and explains the importance of collaboration between the lecturer and undergraduate English Education Department students for creating short story, poem and picture books. This study took place in one of the School of Teacher Training and Education Muhammadiyah Bogor conducting a course using book creator in the English Education Department, due to COVID-19 pandemic. The study participants were the students who enrolled Educational Literature course. To support the students' motivation during blended learning, book creator was implemented as project-based learning.

Educational Literature

The research on teaching and learning English literature has been lavishly conducted by scholars. Most of the prior research emphasize on a comprehensive overview of teaching English Literature from setting teaching goals and syllabus planning, through to a range of student assessment strategies and methods of course evaluation and improvement (Kalamees-Ruubel & Läänemets, 2012; Rath & Behera, 2017; Shaukat Ansari, 2013; Vohrysheva, 2021). A range of teaching methods are explored, from the traditional classroom, to newer collaborative work and uses of electronic technologies (Chambers & Gregory, 2006), flipped learning and problem based learning (Park, 2017), plotagon, a 3D animation-making software (Alwasilah, 2019), collaborative learning using padlet (Frison & Tino, 2019), project based learning (Almulla, 2020; Lu, 2021; Prachagool, 2021) and social media platform (Mehrpouyan & Zakeri, 2021).

Educational literature course provides students with the opportunity to explore the basic concepts of literature, the nature of educational literature, the function of learning educational literature, and the basic approaches to educational literature with emphasis laid on English literary production. To arrive at this objective, therefore, focuses on creative writing and analysis on the kinds of writing-literary and non-literary were given attention. Based on the topics to be covered in the whole semester, students were expected to write individual text (short story, poem, and picture books). Students' learning is assessed through project-based learning.

Conceptual research exploring the use of short stories has significantly increased. Short story oriented strategy (Essos) in EFL classes (Arjmandi & Aladini, 2020), creative collaborative short story (Dimililer et al., 2020), short story as media (Pratiwi et al., 2020). Literature use in English foreign language learning and teaching has regained great attention in the last decades, and among all literary genres, short stories are regarded the most effective to fuse in EFL classrooms (Pardede, 2021).

The use of poem in English language teaching can help the teacher improve the students' English language skills and knowledge about the culture of the nation of English. In a class, a teacher should be creative and give the opportunity for students to use English actively and understanding the poem content (Rahman, 2018; Widodo et al., 2016; 전재민 & 마지현, 2015).

Turnboy as cited in Wu (2021) takes picture books further and believes that they can provide opportunities 'to engage pupils in complex, critical thinking, and philosophical excursions', in line with scholarly views of picture books as valuable and unique classroom assets. Picture books belong to the genre of children's animalistic literature and our interpretation is based on contemporary research into narrative picture books as pieces of art within children's literature, in which the same narrative is told through an interplay between the verbal and visual discourse (Verdonik & Mlikota, 2019).

Project Based Learning
It has been explored in various contexts and in different phases of schooling, from primary to higher education. Project-based learning (PBL) is an active student-center form of instruction which is characterized by students' autonomy, constructive investigations, goal-setting, collaboration, communication and reflection within real-world practices (Kokotsaki et al., 2016). Project-based learning (PBL) emerges as a model that meets the needs of both teachers and learners in teaching and learning a foreign language effectively. Project-based learning developing multi-literacy skills (Hidayat & Susanto, 2020), enhancing learners' collaborative participation and dedication in completing the tasks in hand (Yunus et al., 2020), and engages learners into the learning process, motivates and develops learners' creativity (Pham, 2018).

Project-based learning is an increasingly popular pedagogical practice centered around students working collaboratively on projects while the teacher facilitates learning activities and progression (Hira & Anderson, 2021). Many education institutions from Kindergarten to Higher Education around the world equip their teachers with technology-based training (Graves et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2022). In particular, Technology Enhanced Language Learning (Chun, 2019; Thompson, 2017) has been mushrooming in English Language Teaching trends. To comply with this demand, Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Alaghbary, 2021; Brueck & Lenhart, 2015; Habibi et al., 2020; Mishra & Koehler, 2009; Swallow & Olofson, 2017; Wentworth et al., 2009; Zhou et

al., 2022) has been developed by Koehler & Mishra (Mishra & Koehler, 2009) to equip student teachers in English Department. This rapid development of technology integration has presented a better pattern to find the new teaching models. Consequently, it has a key role in learning and teaching language skills (Gilakjani, 2017).

Book Creator

Book Creator is a tool which enables users to create, read, and share digital books. Book Creator was developed in 2011 by parents who wanted to support reading development. Since then, 30 million e-books in over 90 countries have been written with *Book Creator* (The Story of Book Creator). Although *Book Creator* was initially created to enhance the reading ability of children whose first language was English, it can be useful for a range of users, from pre-K12 to higher education. It can also accommodate users with various proficiency levels. The working language in the tool is determined by the user's location. Nonetheless, users can type any language into the book as long as they have access to the language setting on their device (Atherton, 2022)

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Figure 1 Book Creator

In Book Creator, the modes that can be used to add content include adding texts or hypertexts with an embedded link, adding images, adding already-provided shapes, drawing with a pen of any size provided on the page or with a finger on iPad devices, recording of voice or video, importing and embedding of files such as Power Points or PDFs from computer or Google Drive, and adding music from the device. Video recording is a feature specific to Book Creator (Ezeh, 2020).

Methodology

The study was organized in the fifth semester of English Education Department. Qualitative method was employed in this study. The semi-structured interview and observational guide were included to have an in-depth understanding on students' experience in learning process provided in Educational Literature Course. 2 classes of 6 students with mixed proficiency levels were invited to be the participants in this study. Observational guide was used to guide the authors observing what really goes on in the process of project-based learning using the application of book creator in the classroom. The interview protocol was applied for interviewing the students how they perceive the project provided in the classroom.

The project was designed to develop students' ability to understand how technology can be integrated into literary works project and to design a technology-enabled instructional strategy to promote the course.

Book Creator Project Based Learning

Book Creator was applied in the learning process for some meetings at the classroom. The students were introduced the link of book creator given by the lecturer, and saw some examples provided. It is given after the students were equipped with some theoretical concepts of the nature of literature, the function of educational literature in English as foreign language, and the basic approaches to educational literature with emphasis laid on English literary production. After that, the students discussed in pair and selected one that interests them and their group the most. The students were given chance to choose the types of literary works, topic or theme of short story, the pictures or images, words and sentence structure, the plot and the features or template of book creator. The students worked individually or in pairs for two weeks until four weeks to do the project. Concerning the creative writing process, Morley (2007) as cited in (Abdalla Elhussien Mohammed, 2019), suggests seven methods of creative writing as follows: (1) the preparation, which includes active reading, imitation, research, play, and reflection, (2) brainstorming, (3) incubation that creates an incoming wave of the subconscious that washes over the pages you will write (4) beginning, begin rewriting some of these into sentences or lines of meaning and start the forward stagger into writing, (5), flowing, is to maintain a steady flow of work, even a mechanical word count, putting in the hours, and writing quickly and uninhibitedly, (6) the silence reservoir, is to give yourself the time to recover your eloquence through silence. You will find, as you do so, that the reservoir fills quickly, and words and phrases rise, and (7) breakthroughs and finish.
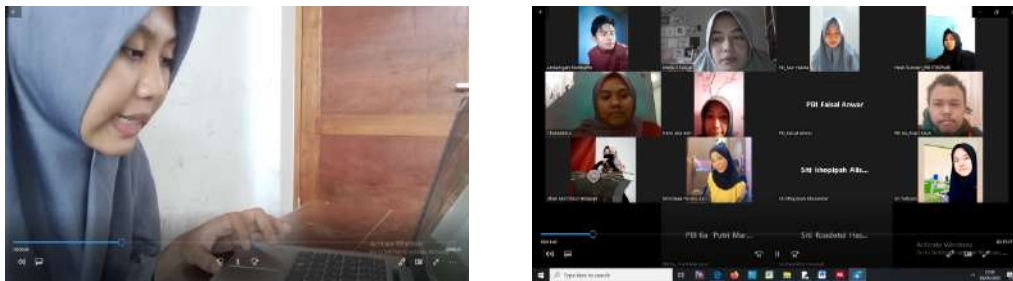

Figure 2 The Learning Process

The data gained from all of the observations were expectedly representative to the findings of this research. Some common technical problems appeared in the middle of learning process; the main problems were book creator only work on devices that can run the Chrome or Safari browser - so that includes Chromebooks, Windows laptops/PCs, Apple devices such as iPads, MacBook and iMacs, and other brands of handheld devices like Chrome tablets, Android tablets or Surface tablets. Some students do not have the devices. The students also have to pay more attention to the lecturer's feedback because of the unstable internet connection. There are some signal interference problems during virtual meeting. The problem was a poor signal and bad Internet connection. The last, writing literary work in English language produces additional challenges that cannot always be foreseen when implementing creative writing process for such a project. Some students have strong learning skills and have minimal problems in writing. Other student, however, need a lot of help in beginning step, flowing step, improvisation, grammar and structure. An awareness of their shortcomings in some cases may lead decrease their self-confident, low motivation in finishing the project. Thus, an appropriate way must be found between correcting and helping students improve their language skills and not demotivating them and decreasing their self-confidence. Observing students book creator project made it clear that through intense work and collaboration, the students were able to improve their language skills, especially in the area of writing skill, grammar mastery,

vocabulary knowledge and developing their receptive and productive skills. The student learned many words, new vocabulary, digital book and were able to expand their grasp of English foreign language (EFL).

Collaboration in Project Based Learning
The students were asked about their opinion on the project given during the course. Most of the students enthusiastically learnt to write their book creator project which was stimulated by some slides and examples the lecturer made in digital presentation also videos. There were some stories and poem shown to students, and then they discuss it, analyzed and elaborated types of literary works with their classmate. Some students enjoyed working collaboratively as they were highly engaged in discussion, especially during the writing stage. Project-based learning is an increasingly popular pedagogical practice centered on students working collaboratively on projects while the teacher facilitates learning activities and progression (Hira & Anderson, 2021). The goal of Book Creator project-based learning was to encourage students to support each other in terms of simple feedback. In this learning process, the lecturer asked the students to exchange their drafts in pairs and asked the students to read their friend's story. The lecturer asked the students to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their friend stories and their project.

Figure 3 Book Creator Project (Short Story)

Based on the observation and interviews, the authors point out that the students participated in creating their project using Book Creator. The students were adding content include adding texts or hypertexts with an embedded link, adding images, adding already-provided shapes, drawing with a pen of any size provided on the page or with a finger on iPad devices, recording of voice or video, importing and embedding of files such as PowerPoints or PDFs from computer or Google Drive, and adding music from the device. Video recording is a feature specific to Book Creator (Atherton, 2022). In this study, the lecturer was seen as a facilitator who assisted students and approved the content. Moreover, the lecturer assisted whenever the students could not reach a common decision or when the students needed help to discuss important issues.

Figure 4 Book Creator Project

By the end of the semester the students created a book of all their written work, complete with cover, and title. Facilitating the project, some links of app and platform were shared, such as facilitated by some applications such as www.canva.com, www.capcutforpc.com, www.zepeto.me, www.ibispaint.com, and www.youtube.com platform. The lecturer also supported and monitors the progress of students' work by organizing a weekly group discussion and conference. The students should report the progress of ongoing projects weekly.

Figure 5 Book Creator Project (Poem)

The students shared their views on Book Creator Project Based learning. They state that the lecturer could use book creator as an open-ended creation tool to teach Educational Literature course since it was very effective. The students could also explore their knowledge, creativity and competence to achieve their goals. Finally, the students had a responsibility to complete their project during blended learning.

Figure 6 Book Creator Project (Picture Book)

The process of creative writing enables individuals to express their thoughts freely and productively. In the writing process, students should use their knowledge as well as their skill. Therefore, the development of writing skill requires long-term and effective practices. It is possible to make writing that is usually perceived as a boring activity become interesting by using a set of activities and practices. The creative writing process makes the writing activities appealing to students (Kirmizi, 2015). Elliot (2020) states that without neglecting other foundations for the development of writing, creative writing thus becomes a vehicle for the reintegration of literary studies. Gilbert (2021) examines the deeper purposes behind the teaching of creative writing. In brief, it suggests that different creative writing teachers aim to: (1) facilitate their students' personal growth and healing Encourage the exploration of unknown topics, (2) help their students sell their writing, (3) connect them with significant texts and well-established creative writing processes and practices, (4) foster critique about the world through their writing, and (5) cultivate profound learning.

Conclusion

The findings show that Book Creator Project is an option to develop both thinking skills and creativity to support the learning process. Ultimately, various activities in technology-enhanced language learning should be developed to sharpen other global skills in 21st-century education (Bourn, 2020). The authors believe that the students are actively and productively involve in book creator project, the students feel free to demonstrate their creativity in creating their ideas; their project incorporated a range of media, applications and forms of expression (written work, publication, and collaboration). The majority of lecturers like their students to be motivated. When the students are motivated, it means something. The students would be actively engaged in the project (Guo et al., 2020). Therefore, the students' participation is something which is desirable by most lecturers. Based on what the participants directly experienced that learning educational literature through Book Creator project-based learning are motivating, raising their critical thinking, exploring their creativity and improving language skills in English. Another important point that students can get from the project is the power of collaboration (Lu, 2021).

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