

Reimagining Traditional Stories into Fractured Stories through Digital Storytelling: Fostering Creativity and Digital Literacy

Sri Supiah Cahyati*

English Education Study Program, FPB, IKIP Siliwangi

*E-mail: srisupiahcahyati@ikipsiliwangi.ac.id (corresponding author)

Abstract: Digital storytelling (DST) has been widely recognized as an effective pedagogical approach in English language teaching. However, its integration with fractured narratives to promote creativity and digital literacy in pre-service teacher education remains underexplored. This best-practice study aims to describe the implementation of DST integrated with fractured traditional stories in an English teacher education program at IKIP Siliwangi and examine its pedagogical contributions. Employing a qualitative best-practice approach, the project was conducted in a fifth-semester instructional media course, where pre-service English teachers collaboratively transformed Indonesian traditional stories into fractured digital storybooks using digital publishing platforms. The findings indicate that the project enhanced students' creativity, digital literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and pedagogical competence while encouraging them to reinterpret local cultural heritage through contemporary perspectives. The resulting digital storybooks demonstrate how DST can serve as authentic multimodal learning media that integrate language learning with technology and cultural preservation. These findings suggest that combining fractured narratives with DST offers an innovative pedagogical model that supports the goals of *Kurikulum Merdeka* and prepares future English teachers to design creative, culturally responsive, and technology-enhanced learning experiences.

Keywords: Creativity; Digital Storytelling; Fractured Traditional Stories; *Kurikulum Merdeka*; Pre-service English Teachers

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed English language education by encouraging learner-centered pedagogies that foster creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and digital competence. Rather than relying solely on conventional text-based instruction, English language teachers are increasingly expected to design authentic learning experiences that enable students to communicate through multiple modes while developing the competencies required in the twenty-first century. In Indonesia, these expectations are reflected in *Kurikulum Merdeka*, which emphasizes project-based learning, learner autonomy, contextualized instruction, and the meaningful integration of digital technology into classroom practice (Kemendikdasmen, 2024; UNESCO, 2023). Consequently, pre-service English teachers need opportunities to develop both pedagogical competence and digital literacy through authentic learning experiences.

Among technology-enhanced pedagogies, DST has emerged as an effective instructional approach because it integrates written language with images, audio, animation, and digital

publishing tools to create meaningful multimodal narratives (Robin, 2008). Unlike conventional storytelling, DST positions learners as active creators of digital content, enabling them to develop language proficiency while enhancing creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy. Previous studies have demonstrated that DST improves writing performance, speaking skills, learner engagement, and multimodal communication in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context (Br Sembiring & Simajuntak, 2023; Dewi et al., 2023; Liang & Hwang, 2023; Nofitasari et al., 2024; Shen et al., 2023). These findings indicate that DST supports authentic language learning by integrating linguistic and digital competencies within meaningful learning tasks.

A complementary pedagogical approach is the use of fractured narratives. Fractured narratives creatively reinterpret well-known stories by modifying characters, settings, conflicts, perspectives, or endings while preserving recognizable elements of the original narrative. Rather than merely reproducing familiar tales, learners critically analyze existing narratives and reconstruct them from alternative perspectives, thereby fostering creativity, critical literacy, and higher-order thinking (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Drajati et al., 2023; Robin, 2008). When applied to traditional folklore, fractured narratives enable students to preserve local cultural heritage while connecting it to contemporary issues such as environmental sustainability, empathy, gender equality, resilience, and social responsibility. Such reinterpretations encourage learners to view traditional stories as dynamic cultural resources rather than fixed texts.

The integration of DST and fractured narratives provides a meaningful learning model that aligns with the theory of multiliteracies. According to Cope and Kalantzis (2015), communication in contemporary society extends beyond printed language to include visual, audio, spatial, and digital modes of meaning-making. Accordingly, learners should be equipped not only to interpret multimodal texts but also to create them. By transforming traditional stories into fractured digital storybooks, pre-service teachers simultaneously engage in reading, writing, visual design, collaboration, and digital publishing, thereby developing language proficiency alongside creativity and digital literacy. Such experiences also prepare future teachers to design innovative instructional media for technology-rich classrooms (Drajati et al., 2023; Roza & Shadiey, 2023).

Despite the growing body of research on DST, several important gaps remain. First, previous studies have primarily examined DST as an independent instructional strategy for improving specific language skills, particularly writing and speaking (Br Sembiring & Simajuntak, 2023; Shen et al., 2023). Second, fractured narratives have been discussed mainly in literary education, with limited attention to their pedagogical application in English teacher education. Third, empirical evidence on integrating DST with fractured traditional stories to develop creative, culturally responsive, and technology-enhanced learning media for Indonesian pre-service English teachers remains scarce. Addressing these gaps is particularly important in the context of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, which encourages innovative, project-based learning that integrates local culture with digital technology.

This paper presents a best-practice implementation conducted in the *Workshop Perangkat Pembelajaran* course at IKIP Siliwangi. In this project, fifth-semester pre-service English teachers collaboratively transformed Indonesian traditional stories into fractured digital storybooks using digital publishing platforms. The project required students to reinterpret familiar folktales from contemporary perspectives while integrating language,

visual communication, and digital technology into authentic learning products. Through this process, students developed instructional media that preserved local cultural values while responding to the educational needs of contemporary learners.

This study aims to (1) describe the implementation of digital storytelling (DST) integrated with fractured traditional stories in an English teacher education program, (2) examine its contributions to fostering creativity, digital literacy, collaboration, and pedagogical competence among pre-service English teachers, and (3) discuss its implications for designing culturally responsive and technology-enhanced English language learning. By documenting this best practice, the study contributes to the growing discourse on digital pedagogy. It demonstrates how traditional stories can be transformed into innovative multimodal learning resources that prepare future English teachers for the demands of twenty-first-century education.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative best-practice approach to document, analyze, and critically reflect on the implementation of an innovative instructional project that integrated DST and fractured narratives within an English teacher education program. Best-practice research seeks to identify, describe, and disseminate effective educational innovations that have demonstrated pedagogical value in authentic learning environments (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Rather than examining causal relationships through experimental procedures, this approach focuses on how instructional innovations are designed, implemented, and reflected upon to inform educational practice and promote continuous professional improvement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of the instructional process, students' learning experiences, and the pedagogical contributions of DST integrated with fractured narratives. The study emphasizes rich descriptions of classroom practice. It interprets the innovation through constructivist and multiliteracies perspectives, which recognize learning as an active process of meaning construction through collaboration, reflection, and authentic engagement (Vygotsky, 1978; Cope & Kalantzis, 2015).

Research Context and Participants

This project was conducted during the 2025/2026 academic year in the *Workshop Perangkat Pembelajaran* course offered by the English Education Study Program at IKIP Siliwangi, Indonesia. The course prepares fifth-semester pre-service English teachers to design innovative instructional media and learning resources aligned with the objectives of Kurikulum Merdeka.

Participants consisted of fifth-semester undergraduate students enrolled in the course. As part of the course requirements, students worked collaboratively in small groups to develop technology-enhanced English learning media suitable for Grade X senior high school students. Throughout the project, students were encouraged to integrate pedagogical knowledge, English language skills, creativity, digital technology, and local cultural values into authentic learning products. The lecturer acted as a facilitator by

providing theoretical guidance, continuous feedback, and formative consultation during each stage of the project.

Instructional Procedures

The instructional innovation was implemented using a Project-Based Learning (PjBL) framework, which is recommended in Kurikulum Merdeka to foster authentic learning, learner autonomy, collaboration, and problem-solving (Kemendikdasmen, 2024). The project also reflected constructivist principles, where students actively constructed knowledge through collaborative inquiry and experiential learning (Piaget, 1936; Vygotsky, 1978).

The project was conducted through three interconnected stages. In the preparation stage, students explored the characteristics of narrative texts and fractured narratives introduced in the Grade X English curriculum. They analyzed narrative structures, characterization, language features, moral values, and cultural contexts of selected Indonesian folktales to establish a conceptual understanding of traditional storytelling and its potential for creative reinterpretation.

In the development stage, students worked collaboratively in groups to transform a selected traditional story into a fractured narrative by modifying characters, perspectives, conflicts, or endings while preserving its cultural essence. Contemporary themes, such as environmental sustainability, social justice, equality, resilience, forgiveness, and community empowerment, were incorporated to encourage critical literacy and creative thinking. Each group then prepared storyboards, scripts, illustrations, and page layouts before producing interactive digital storybooks using *Book Creator* and *Canva*. Throughout this stage, peer discussion, instructor feedback, and iterative revisions were conducted to improve narrative coherence, language accuracy, visual communication, and instructional quality.

In the presentation and reflection stage, each group presented its digital storybook to classmates and received constructive feedback from peers and the lecturer. Reflection sessions were subsequently conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the digital learning media, identify challenges encountered during the design process, and discuss pedagogical implications for future English language teaching. Consistent with Schön's (1983) concept of reflective practice, these reflective activities enabled pre-service teachers to evaluate their instructional decisions and critically strengthen their pedagogical competence.

Learning Products

The project resulted in four illustrated digital storybooks that exemplified the integration of DST and fractured narratives:

- *"A Fractured Story: Malin Kundang"*
- *"Situ Bagendit: Another Version of the Story"*
- *"A Fractured Story of Sangkuriang"*
- *"Bread of Hope"*

Each story reconstructed the original narrative by presenting alternative perspectives and contemporary resolutions while maintaining the cultural significance of the source stories. The completed books were published digitally using *Book Creator* and assigned electronic Standard Book Numbers (e-ISBN), making them freely accessible as instructional resources for English language learning.

Data Sources

This best-practice study utilized multiple qualitative data sources to enhance the credibility of the findings through methodological triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The primary data consisted of: students' digital storybooks, lesson plans and instructional documents, classroom observations recorded during project implementation, students' presentations and reflective discussions, and the lecturer's field notes documenting instructional decisions, students' responses, and emerging learning outcomes. These complementary data sources enabled a comprehensive understanding of both the instructional process and the innovation's educational value.

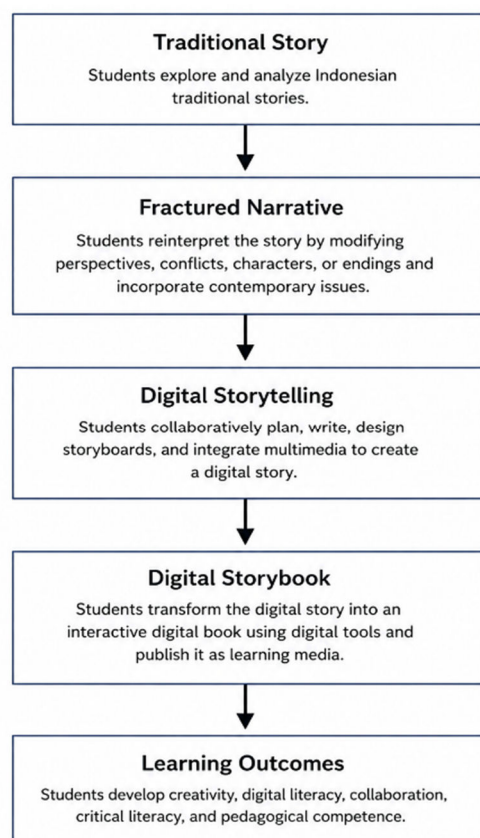
Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Thematic analysis following the procedures proposed by Braun and Clarke (2022). The analysis began with repeated reading of the instructional documents, classroom observations, reflective notes, and students' digital products to gain familiarity with the data. Meaningful units related to creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, digital literacy, language learning, and instructional media development were subsequently coded and organized into broader themes.

The emerging themes were then interpreted through the theoretical perspectives of constructivism (Piaget, 1936; Vygotsky, 1978), multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015), and DST (Robin, 2008). Finally, the findings were critically discussed in relation to recent studies on DST, multimodal learning, and English language teacher education to identify the pedagogical contributions of integrating fractured narratives into technology-enhanced language learning (Sulistianingsih & Taufiqulloh, 2025).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of DST integrated with fractured traditional stories resulted in four digital storybooks that demonstrated students' ability to combine language learning, creativity, cultural literacy, and digital technology into meaningful instructional media. Beyond producing digital artifacts, the project fostered collaborative inquiry, multimodal communication, and critical reflection among pre-service English teachers. The project workflow can be seen as follows:

Figure 1*The Project Workflow of Fractured Digital Storytelling*

Fostering Creativity through Fractured DST

One of the most significant findings was the development of students' creativity through the reconstruction of traditional narratives. Instead of reproducing familiar folktales, students critically reimagined storylines by introducing alternative conflicts, character development, and resolutions that addressed contemporary social issues. For example, "A Fractured Story: Malin Kundang" transformed the original ending from punishment into forgiveness and reconciliation, emphasizing empathy and personal transformation rather than irreversible condemnation. "Situ Bagendit: Another Version of the Story" shifted the focus from divine punishment to environmental stewardship and social responsibility. Similarly, "A Fractured Story of Sangkuriang" reinterpreted the traditional conflict through themes of equality and cooperation, while "Bread of Hope" presented a contemporary narrative of resilience and community empowerment.

These findings indicate that students moved beyond literal retelling toward creative reinterpretation, enabling them to preserve cultural heritage while making traditional stories more relevant to contemporary learners. The results support previous studies showing that DST encourages learners to become active creators of meaning and enhances creative thinking through authentic production tasks (Robin, 2008; Dewi et al., 2023).

Developing Digital Literacy through Multimodal Storytelling

The project also strengthened students' digital literacy by integrating multimodal

communication. Students used digital publishing platforms, primarily Book Creator and Canva, to combine written texts, illustrations, typography, page layouts, and visual storytelling techniques into coherent instructional media.

Rather than viewing technology as merely a presentation tool, participants employed digital media as an integral component of meaning-making. They carefully selected visual representations, color schemes, and page organization to complement narrative development and facilitate readers' comprehension. This process required students to consider how linguistic and visual elements interact to construct meaning.

These findings align with the multiliteracies framework, which emphasizes communication through multiple modes rather than written language alone (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). They also support previous research demonstrating that DST enhances multimodal literacy and learner engagement in EFL contexts (Liang & Hwang, 2023; Drajati et al., 2023).

Figure 2

The Four Digital Storybooks Were Produced during the Project



Promoting Collaboration and Communication

Another important finding concerns the enhancement of collaboration and communication skills. Throughout the project, students worked intensively in groups on story planning, scriptwriting, illustration design, editing, and digital publication. Group discussions encouraged participants to negotiate ideas, provide peer feedback, resolve differences of opinion, and collectively improve their products.

Students assumed different responsibilities according to their individual strengths, including writing, editing, graphic design, illustration, and digital publishing. This collaborative process mirrors authentic instructional design practices that future teachers are expected to perform in professional settings.

These findings are consistent with constructivist perspectives that view learning as a social process in which knowledge is constructed through interaction, negotiation, and shared problem-solving (Vygotsky, 1978). The project therefore contributed not only to language learning but also to the development of professional teamwork skills.

Enhancing Critical Literacy through Fractured Narratives

The project further promoted critical literacy by encouraging students to examine

cultural assumptions embedded within traditional folktales and evaluate their relevance to present-day society. Instead of preserving punitive endings without reflection, students introduced contemporary values such as forgiveness, environmental sustainability, gender equality, resilience, and community empowerment.

Through this process, students critically evaluated how stories communicate moral values and how alternative perspectives may better address contemporary educational goals. Importantly, the fractured narratives did not abandon traditional culture; rather, they preserved its cultural significance while presenting more inclusive and socially responsive interpretations.

This finding demonstrates that fractured storytelling can function as a form of critical literacy, enabling learners to question dominant narratives and construct alternative meanings while maintaining respect for local cultural heritage.

Developing Pedagogical Competence through Digital Storybook Design

The most significant outcome was the development of pedagogical competence through the production of authentic instructional media. The completed digital storybooks were not merely classroom assignments but fully developed educational resources published digitally and assigned electronic Standard Book Numbers (e-ISBN). Their accessibility enables wider educational use beyond the university classroom.

Each storybook integrates reading, vocabulary learning, discussion activities, creative writing, and moral reflection, allowing teachers to implement them across multiple English language skills. Consequently, students experienced the complete instructional design cycle—from curriculum analysis and material development to digital publication and classroom presentation.

These findings suggest that integrating fractured narratives with digital storytelling provides a practical model for preparing future English teachers to design creative, culturally responsive, and technology-enhanced learning media aligned with the goals of Kurikulum Merdeka.

Table 1

Summary of Findings

Theme	Evidence	Learning Outcome
Creativity	Reconstructing traditional stories	Creative thinking and innovation
Digital Literacy	Using Book Creator and Canva	Multimodal communication
Collaboration	Group-based story development	Teamwork and communication
Critical Literacy	Integrating contemporary issues	Critical thinking and cultural awareness
Pedagogical Competence	Designing digital storybooks as learning media	Technology-enhanced teaching competence

Table 1 demonstrates that combining DST with fractured traditional stories extends beyond language learning to foster creativity, digital literacy, collaboration, critical literacy, and pedagogical competence. The integration of these approaches creates authentic

multimodal learning experiences in which pre-service teachers become not only language users but also creative designers of culturally responsive digital learning media. This pedagogical model therefore offers a promising strategy for implementing Kurikulum Merdeka and preparing future English teachers for increasingly technology-rich educational environments.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that integrating DST with fractured traditional stories provides an innovative pedagogical approach for English teacher education. Through the collaborative development of digital storybooks, pre-service English teachers creatively reinterpreted Indonesian traditional narratives while producing authentic multimodal learning resources. The project not only promoted creativity but also strengthened digital literacy, collaboration, critical literacy, and pedagogical competence, enabling students to connect local cultural heritage with contemporary educational contexts.

The findings indicate that fractured DST extends beyond language learning by engaging pre-service teachers in authentic instructional design and reflective practice. By transforming traditional stories into digitally published learning media, students developed the knowledge and skills required to design culturally responsive, technology-enhanced, and learner-centered instruction. These outcomes demonstrate DST's potential to support the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* while preparing future English teachers for increasingly digital and multimodal classrooms.

This best practice offers practical implications for teacher education institutions seeking to integrate creativity, digital literacy, and local culture into English language teaching. DST projects can be incorporated into courses on instructional media, language skills, and teaching methodology to provide authentic opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop innovative teaching resources while preserving Indonesian cultural heritage. Future research is recommended to examine the effectiveness of fractured DST in different educational settings, educational levels, and language learning contexts. Comparative and longitudinal studies involving larger participant groups may further explore its impact on language proficiency, creative thinking, digital competence, and classroom implementation, thereby strengthening its contribution to English language teacher education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express her sincere gratitude to IKIP Siliwangi for supporting the implementation of this project. Appreciation is also extended to the pre-service English teachers of IKIP Siliwangi who enthusiastically participated in the DST project and contributed to the successful completion of this study.

REFERENCES

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide*. SAGE.
- Br Sembiring, D. L., & Simajuntak, D. C. (2023). Digital storytelling as an alternative teaching technique to develop vocabulary knowledge of EFL learners. *JOLLT Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 11(2), 211–224. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v11i2.7523>

- Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2015). *A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Learning by design*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B., & Osher, D. (2020). Implications for educational practice of the science of learning and development. *Applied Developmental Science*, 24(2), 97–140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2018.1537791>
- Dewi, D. S., Hartono, R., Saleh, M., & Wahyuni, S. (2023). Incorporating multiliteracy pedagogy elements into EFL speaking class through digital storytelling. *Issues in Language Studies*, 12(2), 79–97. <https://doi.org/10.33736/ils.5545.2023>
- Drajati, N. A., Tan, L., Tyarakanita, A., & Wijaya, S. A. (2023). Digital storytelling projects for developing Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers' metasemiotic awareness and professional competence. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13(2), 392–406. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v13i2.63084>
- Kemendikdasmen. (2024). *Panduan pembelajaran dan asesmen pada Kurikulum Merdeka*. Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Republik Indonesia.
- Liang, J.-C., & Hwang, G.-J. (2023). A robot-based digital storytelling approach to enhancing EFL learners' multimodal storytelling ability and narrative engagement. *Computers & Education*, 201, 104827. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2023.104827> (ScienceDirect)
- Munajah, R., Sumantri, M. S., & Yufiarti. (2023). Teachers' perceptions on the need to use digital storytelling based on local wisdom to improve writing skills. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 13(1), Article a1314. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v13i1.1314> (S. Afr. J. Childhood Ed.)
- Nofitasari, F. D., Nuroh, E. Z., & Megawati, F. (2024). Strengthening narrative writing skill through digital storytelling. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, 10(1), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.25134/ieflj.v10i1.9307>
- Piaget, J. (1936). *The origins of intelligence in children*. International Universities Press.
- Robin, B. R. (2008). Digital storytelling: A powerful technology tool for the 21st century classroom. *Theory Into Practice*, 47(3), 220–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405840802153916>
- Roza, Z., & Shadiev, R. (2023). Digital storytelling to facilitate academic public speaking skills: Case study in culturally diverse multilingual classroom. *Education and Information Technologies*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40692-023-00259-x>
- Shen, X., Shen, X., & Peng, J.-E. (2023). Digital storytelling: A literacy-building tool to promote willingness to communicate in a second language. *RELC Journal*, 55(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882231157461>
- Sulistianingsih, E., & Taufiqulloh. (2025). Exploring pre-service teachers' perceptions of digital storytelling in EFL classes using the TAM framework. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, 11(1), 79–90. <https://doi.org/10.25134/ieflj.v11i1.11431>
- UNESCO. (2023). *Global education monitoring report 2023: Technology in education—A tool on whose terms?* UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385723>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.