

# The Role of Digital Storytelling in Primary School Reading Literacy Development: A Systematic Review

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## Keywords

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## Abstract

Digital storytelling is an innovative method that combines the power of narrative with digital technology to enhance students' learning experience. This article aims to systematically review the literature that addresses the role of digital storytelling in the development of reading literacy in primary schools. Using a literature review approach, this article identifies the benefits, challenges and implementation strategies of digital storytelling in the context of literacy learning. The review shows that digital storytelling can improve students' motivation, comprehension and critical thinking skills in reading, but its implementation requires careful planning and adequate teacher training. These findings are important for developing technology-based learning strategies at primary school level. This review examines 10 articles from 2013–2024 using a systematic literature review approach.

## 1. Introduction

The author Reading literacy is a basic skill that plays an important role in the success of education at the primary school level. Good reading literacy skills will help students in understanding various information, both in academic and daily life. However, various national assessment results and international studies show that students' reading literacy in Indonesia is still at an alarming level. Based on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) report, Indonesian students' reading literacy scores tend to be low compared to other countries (Naimah, Muhammad Fauzan Muttaqin and Meilina, 2024). This indicates a challenge in improving reading culture among elementary school students. Along with the development of technology, the world of education is experiencing significant changes in learning methods. The utilization of digital technology is increasingly being used to increase students' interest and reading skills. One of the innovations in technology-based education is digital storytelling. Digital storytelling combines visual, audio, and text elements in the form of an interesting digital narrative, so that it can be an effective learning media for elementary school students (Anwar & Ramadani, 2021).

Digital storytelling is a technology-based learning method that allows students to develop reading skills through engaging and interactive digital narratives. This method has been proven effective in improving students' reading comprehension and interest in reading. Research conducted by (Safitri Yosita Ratri, 2018) shows that the use of digital storytelling can increase students' engagement in learning and improve their ability to understand reading texts. In addition, digital storytelling can also provide a more contextualized and enjoyable learning experience for elementary school students. Although many studies have addressed digital storytelling in learning, there are few systematic studies that specifically evaluate the effectiveness of this method in developing reading literacy of primary school students. Therefore, a thorough literature review is needed to summarize previous research findings and provide new insights into the role of digital storytelling in reading literacy at the elementary level. This review will serve as a basis for educators, curriculum developers and policy makers in optimizing the use of technology in literacy learning. Based on the above background, the problem formulation in this study is: What is the role of digital storytelling in developing reading literacy in primary schools based on previous research results?

This study aims to systematically review the role of digital storytelling in developing reading literacy in primary schools based on research that has been conducted. In addition, this study aims to identify the benefits, challenges and recommendations for using digital storytelling in reading

literacy learning in primary schools. This research is expected to contribute to the literature review on digital storytelling in primary education and provide insight for primary school teachers in implementing digital storytelling to improve students' reading literacy. In addition, the results of this study can provide input for curriculum developers and policy makers in integrating technology in literacy learning. This research used a systematic literature review approach. The data sources used include journal articles and previous research related to digital storytelling and reading literacy in elementary schools. This method is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of digital storytelling in improving reading literacy of primary school students. With this study, it is hoped that a clearer determination of the role of digital storytelling in reading literacy education in primary schools can be obtained, as well as strategies that can be applied to optimize this method in learning.

## **2. Method**

This research used a systematic literature review method. Data sources were obtained from relevant national and international journal articles published between 2013 and 2024. The search process was conducted through databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and ERIC, with the keywords "digital storytelling", "reading literacy", and "primary school". Articles were selected that directly addressed the implementation and impact of digital storytelling on primary school students' reading literacy. The analysis was done thematically to identify patterns of key findings. A total of 10 articles were selected for analysis in this study.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **3.1. Impact of Digital storytelling**

The literature review shows that digital storytelling has a positive impact on the development of reading literacy in primary schools. Some of the key findings are as follows:

1. **Increase Student Motivation and Engagement**  
Digital storytelling is proven to be able to increase students' motivation to read because the media used is interesting and in accordance with the world of children. The use of images, music, and sound makes students more interested in following the storyline and understanding the meaning of the text read (Safitri Yosita Ratri, 2018).
2. **Improving Reading Comprehension**  
Digital storytelling provides a visual and audio context that supports students' understanding of the text. Studies show that students who learn through digital stories show improvements in content comprehension, story structure, and vocabulary (Barua, 2023; Anwar & Ramadani, 2021).
3. **Encouraging Critical Thinking Skills and Creativity**  
Digital storytelling activities give students the opportunity to analyze, evaluate and create their own narratives. This process encourages students to think critically, organize logical storylines, and express their ideas creatively. It also helps improve oral and written communication skills (Ferdiansyah, 2023).
4. **Improving Multimodal and Digital Literacy**  
Digital storytelling not only supports reading literacy in the context of written text, but also introduces students to multimodal literacy, which is the ability to understand and create meaning from various media such as images, videos, and sounds. Students learn how to combine these elements to produce a cohesive message (Reyes-Torres and Raga, 2020).
5. **Improve Collaboration and Social Skills**  
The creation of digital storytelling projects is usually done in groups, which encourages students to work together, share ideas, and solve problems together. These activities strengthen collaboration skills and build confidence in expressing opinions (Waddington, 2020).

**Table 1. Summary of Research Findings Related to Digital Storytelling**

No.	Author and Year	Research focus	Key findings	Research context
1.	Ratri (2018)	Digital storytelling in social studies learning	Increase engagement and reading comprehension	Elementary school in Indonesia
2.	Ferdiansyah (2023)	Collaboration in storytelling	Improve student cooperation and creativity	Elementary school in Indonesia (EFL)
3.	Barua (2023)	Learning outcomes and student engagement	Improve motivation and learning outcomes	International study
4.	Anwar & Ramadani (2021)	Student digital literacy	Improves text and narrative comprehension	SD Indonesia
5.	Reyes-Torres & Portalés Raga (2020)	Multimodal storytelling	Encourages crisis thinking and creative expression	European Context
6.	Waddington (2020)	School digital story project	Increase participation and interest in reading	English elementary school

### 3.2. Impact of Digital storytelling

To successfully implement digital storytelling, the right strategy is needed, among others:

- 1) Teacher training on the use of digital tools and narration,
- 2) Integrating storytelling into the thematic curriculum,
- 3) Provision of adequate technology infrastructure,
- 4) Establishment of collaborative group projects.

This strategy has been shown to be effective in improving student participation and learning outcomes. Research by Brunsmeyer & Kolb (2017) (Reyes-Torres and Raga,2020) emphasizes the importance of integrating digital narratives in image- and visual-based teaching, which is well suited to the learning needs of primary school-aged children. In addition, (Novak, 2013) also underlines that meaningful learning through narrative projects promotes higher engagement and retention of information in students.

### 3.3. Impact of Digital storytelling

Some of the challenges in implementing digital storytelling in primary schools include limited technology infrastructure, lack of teacher training and limited time. To overcome this, professional training, development of appropriate materials and school policies that support the integration of technology in learning are needed. According to Huh (2016), teachers need a clear pedagogical model and technological support to facilitate the implementation of critical literacy through digital media. In addition, (Cope and Kalantzis, 2016) suggests a multiliteracy framework that is adaptive to the development of new media so that digital literacy can develop thoroughly in the school environment.

### 3.4. Conclusion

Digital storytelling has great potential in supporting elementary school students' reading literacy development. With the right approach, this method can improve students' motivation, comprehension and critical thinking skills. For this reason, adequate technological infrastructure Support and teacher training are needed so that implementation can be effective and sustainable.

In addition to the benefits in students' cognitive and affective aspects, digital storytelling also has educational values that can shape students' character and social values. When students engage in digital narratives, they learn to understand other people's perspectives, express empathy and

develop logical argumentation skills. This is important in creating a generation of learners who are not only literate but also have insights into diversity and human values.

From the teacher's perspective, the use of digital storytelling encourages innovation in learning strategies. Teachers are challenged to act as creative facilitators who can design meaningful learning activities. Therefore, increasing teacher competence in digital literacy is an important prerequisite so that this method can be implemented optimally in various schools conditions.

In the future, digital storytelling has the potential to be developed as part of project-based learning and authentic assessment. By combining elements of narrative, technology and critical reflection, this method can enrich the competency-based learning model that is being encouraged in the Merdeka Curriculum.

Further research is needed to evaluate the long-term impact of using digital storytelling in reading learning, particularly in the local Indonesian context. In addition, an experimental study comparing learning outcomes between conventional and digital storytelling approaches would strengthen the empirical evidence on the effectiveness of this method. Further studies are needed in various other local contexts.

### Author Contributions

Winda Isra Septiarini: Conceptualization, Literature review, Writing – original draft, Analysis, Editing.

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