EMPOWERING NEWS WRITING SKILLS: DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND INTERACTIVE STORYTELLING IN ENGLISH BROADCASTING

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A B S T R A C T S

This study examines the impact of interactive storytelling on improving news writing skills among Communication Science students in an English broadcasting course. Integrating digital platforms with multimedia elements—including audio, video, and graphics—fosters narrative creativity and enhances students' engagement in English news broadcasting. The study involved seven Communication Science students as participants in a qualitative case study, with data collected through news script analysis and interviews. Analysis focused on narrative structure, creativity, and multimedia use, while interviews captured insights into students' experiences and challenges with digital platforms. Using Nvivo 12 software, data analysis revealed significant improvements in students' narrative creativity and multimedia integration. Interactive storytelling techniques improved news script quality and promoted student engagement, independence, and adaptability in learning. Students valued the flexibility and real-time feedback of digital platforms, which allowed experimentation with storytelling techniques and self-paced learning. Despite these benefits, some students encountered challenges related to technical skills and media adaptation. Findings emphasize the value of interactive storytelling in journalism education, with potential applications in professional training for broadcast media, journalism workshops, and multimedia content creation.

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INTRODUCTION

Creative writing has become an essential skill in the media landscape, particularly in English broadcasting and news, where broadcasters must deliver accurate information while engaging audiences with compelling narratives (Fisher et al., 2021). Audience expectations have shifted from merely receiving facts to desiring stories that create emotional and intellectual connections. In response, the ability to develop creative writing skills has become vital for communication students preparing for careers in English broadcasting. However, conventional teaching methods often emphasize linear writing structures, which may limit students' capacity to explore creativity with multimedia and interactive elements.

Research in media education suggests that traditional approaches, which focus primarily on static, text-based writing, may fall short in equipping students for the multidimensional storytelling now essential in broadcasting (Wu & Chen, 2020; Salem, 2022). As a result, communication students may find themselves unprepared for an industry increasingly driven

by innovative, interactive content. To address this gap, educational institutions must rethink how to integrate creative writing with digital storytelling practices that enable students to adapt their work to diverse media formats and engage audiences more dynamically (Eska, 2019; Moradi & Chen, 2019).

Technological advancements have introduced educational tools that support this shift, with digital platforms and interactive storytelling techniques now critical in enhancing the learning experience. Tools such as blogs, multimedia applications, and collaborative writing spaces enable students to explore writing creatively through real-time feedback, collaborative input, and exposure to multiple perspectives (Haseeb, 2019). These tools facilitate active learning and critical thinking, both essential for developing creativity in writing (Salem, 2022). In contrast to conventional writing practices, these digital platforms encourage students to experiment with a range of expressions, building the flexibility and adaptability required in contemporary media.

Digital platforms also allow students to incorporate multimedia elements—such as images, video, and audio—that enrich storytelling. In the context of English broadcasting, the integration of multimedia not only enhances narrative depth but also enables students to learn the practical skills of crafting immersive, multi-sensory content. Studies indicate that multimedia integration is critical in broadcast journalism, where audiences increasingly expect stories that are visually and audibly engaging (Wu & Chen, 2020). This hands-on experience prepares students for real-world broadcasting challenges, where storytelling transcends traditional written forms to include diverse media elements.

Interactive storytelling further supports the development of creative writing in broadcasting by allowing audiences to actively participate in story development, creating a more engaging, non-linear narrative experience. Unlike traditional narratives that follow a single path, interactive storytelling invites the audience to shape the story's progression by choosing different outcomes or engaging with multimedia elements within the story itself (Dowling & Miller, 2019). For Communication Science students, learning to create adaptable, flexible narratives fosters a skill set that is invaluable in today's media environment. Interactive storytelling, especially within digital platforms, prepares students to respond swiftly to news developments and audience feedback, enhancing both engagement and narrative depth.

Incorporating digital platforms and interactive storytelling techniques allows educators to guide students toward a more versatile approach to creative writing. For example, students can craft news stories that include clickable links, embedded videos, or interactive elements, making news content more accessible and memorable. The practice of integrating digital tools also enhances students' technical proficiency, preparing them for careers that increasingly require knowledge of multimedia and interactivity.

Despite these advancements, many educational approaches still rely on traditional methods for teaching writing. While these methods lay important foundations, they may overlook the unique opportunities presented by digital storytelling. Addressing this gap, this study explores how digital platforms and interactive storytelling can enhance students' creative writing skills, thereby aligning their preparation with the evolving demands of the media industry.

As news consumption shifts to digital and interactive formats, it is critical for Communication Science students to develop the skills necessary to write effectively for these platforms. This research aims to offer insights into how educators can leverage digital tools to enhance English broadcasting students' abilities in creative writing and storytelling, thereby preparing them to meet the dual demands of creativity and technological proficiency that are now central to media professions.

The study addresses two main questions: How do digital platforms influence the creative writing skills of Communication Science students, and how can interactive storytelling

techniques support students in writing more creatively for English broadcasting? By exploring these questions, this research seeks to contribute valuable insights into the integration of technology in creative writing education, ultimately supporting students in developing the narrative and technical skills essential for success in their future careers.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study aimed to evaluate how integrating digital platforms and multimedia elements could enhance creative writing skills in news broadcasting among Communication Science students. Specifically, it focused on three areas of improvement: structural creativity, thematic originality, and multimedia coherence.

Research Design

The research employed a qualitative approach, focusing on the exploration of students' experiences and perceptions regarding the use of digital platforms and interactive storytelling techniques in developing their creative writing skills for news broadcasting. A case study design was selected to deeply investigate the impact of these methods on a specific group of communication students. Through this design, the research sought to gather in-depth insights into how these students perceive and engage with creative writing activities when utilizing digital tools and interactive storytelling elements.

Subject

The study focused on communication science students at a IISIP YAPIS Biak Papua who are enrolled in courses of English broadcasting. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 7 participants. The selection criteria for these students included:
1. Active Involvement in English News Broadcasting
   The participants are students enrolled in an English broadcasting course in semester 5 who demonstrate consistent engagement in news writing and broadcasting activities, ensuring they have a baseline familiarity with news media content.
2. Limited Prior Experience with Digital Tools for Creative Writing
   Students with minimal experience using digital platforms for creative storytelling were chosen to assess the impact of introducing these tools within the course. This criterion helps to focus on students who are relatively new to interactive storytelling techniques, highlighting the effectiveness of digital learning interventions.

The puposive sampling technique thus ensured that participants were representative of students who would benefit most from interactive storytelling interventions in their English broadcasting curriculum. While the sample size is small, the specific selection criteria helped to identify students whose experiences would provide relevant insights for the study, though this approach also introduces limitations regarding generalizability.

Instruments

The primary instruments used in this research are an analysis of the students' news scripts and in-depth interviews with each participant. The criteria used to assess the improvement in creative writing skills include three main aspects:
1. Structural Creativity: Measures students' ability to cohesively and engagingly structure news, focusing on innovative narrative structures and smooth transitions.
2. Thematic Originality: Assesses the uniqueness and relevance of the topics covered, including creativity in presenting news differently from typical formats.
3. Multimedia Coherence: Measures the effectiveness of multimedia integration, such as videos, images, and audio, in supporting and enriching the news content. This criterion ensures that multimedia elements are not merely supplementary but an integral part of strengthening the news narrative.

Interviews were conducted to gather additional data about students' experiences using digital platforms, including challenges faced, perceptions of the effectiveness of interactive storytelling techniques, and reflections on their writing development after using these digital tools.

Data Analysis

For the document analysis, the students' written news scripts were examined for structural creativity, thematic originality, and multimedia coherence. The data were analyzed to assess how well students applied interactive storytelling techniques in their creative writing, particularly in the context of news broadcasting. The analysis aimed to identify key aspects of their writing that were enhanced by the use of digital tools. The percentage of students showing improvement in each criterion was calculated.

The data from interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, a widely used method for identifying patterns and themes in qualitative research. The interview transcripts were first transcribed, and then coded to identify recurring themes related to the use of digital platforms and storytelling techniques in creative writing. These themes were grouped into categories such as student engagement, writing process, and impact on creativity. All qualitative data were processed using NVivo 12 software for qualitative analysis, which helped in organizing, coding, and analyzing the data to ensure a systematic approach. The results of the thematic analysis provided insights into how students perceived the effectiveness of these teaching methods and how it influenced their creative writing skills for English broadcasting.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Research Findings

This section presents the findings of the research on the impact of utilizing digital platforms and interactive storytelling techniques on the creative writing skills of communication science students specializing in English broadcasting. The results are presented in a manner that aligns with the research methodology, including data derived from interviews and document analysis.

Students Engagement

The findings revealed that students engaged with digital platforms in a variety of ways, which contributed positively to their creative writing development in English broadcasting. The use of digital tools not only enhanced their writing processes but also allowed them to experiment with storytelling techniques that are essential in the media industry. Based on the result, the students reported enhanced cognitive engagement, particularly with multimedia platforms that allowed for the incorporation of visuals and sounds. The platforms used in this case was Canva in which by using it that students began to think critically about their audience and how best to structure their stories for impact. The platforms encouraged students to consider the audience's perspective and led them to make deliberate narrative choices. As one of students stated that:

> "Using Canva made me think about how visuals can guide the viewer's attention and add depth to the story, which isn't something I thought about much before."

The statement illustrates how Canva, a platform for creating visually rich presentations, helped Student D recognize the power of visuals in storytelling. Previously focused primarily on textual content, the student now began to consider how carefully chosen images, colors, and layouts can control the viewer's focus, guiding them to the most important parts of the narrative. This shift represents a significant development in cognitive engagement, as the student learns to design stories with audience perception in mind. Canva thus provided a practical lesson in multimedia coherence, encouraging students to see writing as a more

holistic, layered form of communication, where visuals play an equally vital role as text. Another students also stated that:

> "Multimedia tools made me realize the importance of choosing the right images and sounds to convey emotion without relying solely on words."

In the reflection, the student describes how multimedia tools allowed them to explore the emotional dimensions of storytelling through images and audio. The realization that visuals and sounds can evoke emotional responses led the student to see storytelling as more than just written words. This experience deepened the student's emotional engagement by expanding their expressive range. Choosing images and sounds thoughtfully became part of the creative process, allowing them to develop stories with a richer emotional impact. This approach is crucial in broadcasting, where multimedia elements are often used to captivate and resonate with audiences, underscoring the importance of a multidimensional approach to storytelling. Besides the cognitive engagement, there was also the behavioral engagemnet that found in which the flexibility and accessibility of digital platforms allowed students to engage with creative writing on a more regular and consistent basis. In this study, the students utilized Google Docs in writing the news scripts. This platform facilated ongoing collaboration, enabling students to brainstorm ideas, draft, and revise in real time, leading to more iterative, refined writing processes. As shared by one of the students:

> "With Google Docs, I could work on my story anytime and get comments from friends or teachers instantly. It made the whole process feel more collaborative and less intimidating."

This quote captures how Google Docs supported the student by making the writing process more accessible and interactive. The ability to work "anytime" on the story provided flexibility, encouraging autonomy and enabling the student to write at their own pace. Furthermore, receiving "instant comments from friends or teachers" added a level of real-time feedback that fostered collaboration. This immediate support allowed the student to refine their work continuously, addressing issues as they arose, which helped them feel more confident in their abilities. The student described how they actively used Google Docs for writing anytime, receiving comments, and collaborating with friends or teachers. These actions—frequent use, collaboration, responding to feedback, and integrating revisions—are indicators of behavioral engagement, as they show the student's commitment and involvement in the writing process.

Enhanced Creativity through Multimedia Integration

A recurring theme among the students was the way digital platforms helped them to move beyond traditional writing structures and incorporate multimedia elements, such as images, videos, and sound, into their creative projects. This ability to blend text with multimedia was especially useful in the context of news broadcasting, where stories often need to be dynamic and visually engaging. Students highlighted those platforms like Canva and Google Docs allowed them to visualize their ideas more effectively and convey complex information in more interactive ways. In this case, student projects were analyzed based on coded themes to understand the range of multimedia integration as follows:

1. Image integration emerged as the most common, with 80% of students incorporating images to enhance their stories. This high frequency suggests that images served as an accessible, effective entry point for students in learning to visually enhance narratives. Most students used images to illustrate specific points, clarify concepts, or break up text for easier reading. Some students opted to use sequential images, providing a step-by-step visual that added narrative depth and helped audiences follow complex story developments.
2. Video integration was also significant, used by 65% of students. Videos proved particularly valuable in assignments where students needed to capture dynamic moments or include firsthand accounts, such as interviews or on-the-ground footage. Students noted that video

clips added a sense of immediacy and authenticity, especially in news-oriented projects. For example, some students created short video segments introducing their topic, while others embedded video interviews within the narrative. The video format encouraged them to think critically about visual sequencing, pacing, and scene selection, essential skills in broadcast storytelling.

3. Audio clips, integrated by 40% of students, were the least frequently used but uniquely impactful. Audio elements, such as voiceovers, sound effects, and music, enabled students to create an immersive experience that text or images alone could not achieve. Those who used audio reported that it deepened the emotional tone of their stories. For instance, some students added background music to emphasize mood, while others included sound bites from sources or ambient sounds relevant to the setting. Students noted that working with audio required additional technical skills, which some found challenging, indicating a learning curve but also a rewarding outcome once successfully implemented.

Relating to the impact of multimedia on creativity levels, projects were analyzed using coded thematic approach. Each student's use of multimedia elements was categorized into three main creativity levels which are categorized as basic creativity, intermediate creativity and advanced creativity. These levels reflected the types of multimedia used and the degree of integration with their written content, specifically using Google Docs and Canva as the primary platforms.

Basic Creativity was observed in 50% of the students. These students utilized Canva to add static images, such as background visuals or simple illustrations, which supported their text. The multimedia elements were primarily visual enhancements rather than core components of the story. In addition to images, students experimented with Google Docs to adjust text formatting by changing font sizes, colors, and styles to emphasize key points. One student shared:

> "I added a background image to my story, which helped set the tone, but I didn't think about adding audio or video."

Another student mentioned:

> "I focused on using different fonts to highlight key points, but I didn't use video or audio in my project."

These students showed basic engagement with multimedia but did not fully integrate dynamic elements.

In the Intermediate Creativity level, 35% of the students began to incorporate both images and videos into their writing, with video clips used as supporting materials rather than central to the narrative. Students also started to experiment with audio elements such as sound bites or background music. These elements added a richer layer to the storytelling, making the writing more engaging. A student reflected:

> "I included a short video clip of the scene I was describing, but it didn't drive the main message; it was more of a complement."

Another noted:

> "Adding a background music track helped set the mood for my story, but I didn't think it needed full audio interviews."

These students demonstrated a clearer progression in blending text with multimedia to enhance their stories.

Finally, Advanced Creativity was evident in 15% of the students, who used Canva and Google Docs in conjunction with other tools to create more complex multimedia stories. These students combined interactive content, video interviews, sound bites, and even voiceovers to craft immersive narratives. One student explained:

> "I embedded an interview video with the local expert and added sound bites to emphasize key points. It made my story feel more real and personal."

Another shared:

> "For the environmental issue I was covering, I used before-and-after photos and added clickable links to more detailed information. It really helped illustrate the impact."

The ability to integrate interactive elements and multimedia storytelling marked a significant shift toward more dynamic and multidimensional content creation.

Thus, the integration of multimedia elements varied significantly across creativity levels, with Canva and Google Docs serving as essential tools at every stage. From basic text formatting and static images to the more complex use of video and interactive components, these platforms enabled students to experiment with and expand their storytelling skills, moving beyond traditional text-based approaches to create more engaging and multi-dimensional stories.

While the use of digital tools brought positive changes to students' creative writing, they also encountered challenges in effectively integrating multimedia elements. These challenges were categorized into technical difficulties, media selection issues, and creativity struggles.

Technical difficulties were a major hurdle for many students, as they faced challenges in mastering the technical aspects of multimedia tools. Some students struggled with uploading or syncing video files correctly in digital platforms like Google Docs and Canva. One student shared:

> "I had trouble syncing the audio with the video in my project. It was frustrating, but it taught me to be more precise with my timing."

This illustrates the technical learning curve students encountered while trying to integrate multimedia into their stories.

Media selection issues were another common challenge. Many students found it difficult to decide which multimedia elements—images, videos, or audio—would best support their narrative. One student noted:

> "I wasn't sure which type of video would add value to my story, so I ended up using a generic one that didn't really fit the tone I was going for."

This difficulty was especially pronounced among students in the Basic Creativity category, who primarily used static images and rarely incorporated video or audio. Their challenge lay in selecting the most appropriate media to complement their written content.

Creativity struggles also played a role in the difficulties students faced. Some students found it hard to think beyond traditional text-based storytelling and to balance text and multimedia elements in a way that would not overwhelm the audience. One student admitted:

> "I was so focused on adding media that I forgot to focus on the core message. It took me a while to realize that multimedia should enhance the story, not distract from it."

This struggle highlights the challenge of integrating multimedia without losing sight of the narrative's central theme.

Despite these challenges, overcoming them led to a deeper understanding of how to effectively combine text and multimedia elements. This process ultimately helped students develop more engaging and dynamic storytelling skills.

A deeper analysis of the impact of multimedia elements on creativity revealed that video and audio had a more significant effect on storytelling than images alone. Students who incorporated video clips shared how these elements made their stories more immersive. One student reflected:

> "Before this course, I never thought of using videos or sound bites in my writing. But now, I see how powerful these elements are. For example, in one of my assignments, I added a short video clip from an eyewitness, and it made the story come alive. It wasn't just words on a page anymore."

This feedback emphasizes that video integration not only enhanced storytelling but also added authenticity and depth, elements that text alone could not achieve.

Audio elements, such as sound bites, were similarly impactful, particularly in conveying emotions that would have been challenging to express through words alone. On the other hand, while images remained important, they primarily played a supportive role in clarifying or contextualizing the narrative rather than driving the story forward as effectively as video or audio. This distinction reveals that a combination of video and audio was more effective in creating dynamic, emotionally engaging stories compared to the use of images alone.

Real-Time Feedback and Collaboration

Digital platforms provided invaluable opportunities for collaboration and real-time feedback, significantly contributing to the development of students' creative writing skills. Tools like Google Docs facilitated a dynamic and interactive environment, where students could work together on writing projects, share ideas, and receive immediate feedback. This collaborative process not only allowed students to refine their writing but also helped them enhance their creativity. Real-time feedback, in particular, proved essential in guiding students through the various stages of their writing, from brainstorming to final edits. One student remarked:

> "Working on Google Docs allowed me to share my drafts with classmates, and their feedback really pushed me to think differently about my writing. I could see my mistakes instantly and make changes in real-time, which made the writing process faster and more efficient."

This statement highlights how real-time collaboration helped students become more adaptable, mimicking the fast-paced environment of news broadcasting, where journalists must adjust stories quickly under tight deadlines. The ability to see and correct mistakes in real-time improved students' writing processes, making them more confident and agile in their creative work.

While the feedback was helpful at all stages of the writing process, it was particularly beneficial during early brainstorming and final edits. Early feedback allowed students to brainstorm ideas collaboratively, guiding them toward more creative and focused approaches. One student explained:

> "Getting instant comments from both my classmates and the instructor was incredibly helpful. In traditional settings, you usually have to wait until your assignment is graded, but here I could make adjustments as I wrote. It really helped me see my mistakes in real time and fix them immediately."

This iterative process of refining ideas and concepts allowed students to strengthen their narratives, making their stories clearer and more engaging. During the final edit stage, real-time feedback provided critical insights into refining multimedia elements, ensuring the final product was polished and aligned with the intended message.

In addition to the immediate benefits, students developed collaborative writing strategies that emphasized different roles within the feedback process. Some students focused on content creation, while others took the lead in editing or providing constructive criticism. One student shared:

> "Collaborating with my peers helped me see different perspectives. We would give each other feedback on how well we used videos or images in our stories.

> Sometimes, I would miss a great idea or angle, but my friends would point it out, and it improved my work."

This kind of peer review allowed students to learn from one another, discover new ways to approach their writing, and improve their multimedia integration.

While peer feedback was beneficial, the reactions to feedback varied between peers and instructors. Many students reported that they valued peer feedback for its informality and immediacy, while instructor feedback often carried more weight in terms of guidance for refining the overall structure and content. One student noted:

> "When my classmates gave feedback, it felt more like a discussion, and I could try out their ideas right away. But when my instructor gave feedback, I felt like I had to really think deeply about what they were saying, which helped me improve the quality of my work."

This distinction shows that peer feedback was often seen as more accessible and quick to implement, whereas instructor feedback helped students think critically about the more complex aspects of their writing.

However, some challenges arose from over-reliance on peer input. A few students acknowledged that too much peer feedback could sometimes lead to confusion, especially when differing opinions on the same aspect of their work emerged. One student observed:

> "Sometimes, I felt overwhelmed by the feedback from my peers. Everyone had different opinions, and it was hard to know which one to follow."

This comment reveals that while peer collaboration is valuable, it is important to balance it with expert guidance to avoid conflicting ideas and maintain a clear direction in the creative process.

Moreover, the structured versus freeform nature of feedback also influenced its effectiveness. Some students appreciated the freedom to give spontaneous feedback, while others preferred more structured feedback that followed specific guidelines or rubrics. One student said:

> "I like how my peers could freely suggest ideas, but sometimes I needed more structured feedback, like specific suggestions on improving grammar or multimedia use."

This insight suggests that while flexibility in feedback allows for creativity, a structured approach could be more helpful in addressing specific areas of improvement.

In sum, the real-time collaborative features of platforms like Google Docs provided students with the tools to enhance their creativity through continuous feedback. Although feedback was useful at various stages of the writing process, its impact was most evident in the early brainstorming and final editing stages. The collaborative nature of these platforms allowed students to experiment with different writing strategies, integrate multimedia effectively, and refine their work quickly. However, a balanced approach to feedback, combining peer input with instructor guidance, ensured that students maintained clarity and direction in their creative writing.

Flexibility and Independence in Writing

One of the most notable advantages of engaging with digital platforms was the flexibility and independence they provided to students. Many reported that these tools allowed them to work at their own pace, in their own space, and revisit their work as needed. Unlike traditional classroom-based writing exercises, digital platforms offered a personalized learning experience where students could control their own creative process. This flexibility allowed students to engage more deeply with their writing, providing them the freedom to experiment with different ideas without feeling pressured by time constraints.

> One student shared:

> "Using digital platforms meant that I could work on my writing whenever
> inspiration struck, whether at home or on the go. I didn't feel constrained by
> class schedules and could refine my ideas before submitting them."

This quote underscores how the freedom to write at one's own pace encouraged more creative engagement and allowed students to be more thoughtful in their writing process. Many students reported feeling more motivated to write creatively, experimenting with diverse narrative styles and multimedia elements that they might have skipped in a more structured, time-bound setting.

This independence also allowed students to explore topics more thoroughly and refine their work to a degree not typically possible under the constraints of traditional classroom settings. Without the pressure of strict deadlines or the limitation of class time, students had the freedom to revise and polish their pieces until they were fully satisfied. One student mentioned how this freedom encouraged a more proactive approach to writing:

> "I had more time to think through my stories and make sure they were exactly
> how I wanted them to be. It also motivated me to research more and look for
> creative ways to present my ideas."

This ability to refine work iteratively resulted in more thoughtful, developed pieces and encouraged a deeper connection to the creative process.

However, the independence that digital platforms offered also presented challenges in self-management and accountability. Some students found it difficult to maintain self-discipline without the external structure of classroom deadlines and supervision. In these cases, balancing personal pace with the need to meet deadlines became an issue. Many students had to develop strategies for time management to ensure they did not procrastinate or become overwhelmed by the freedom they were given. Some students mentioned that they adopted strategies such as time-blocking or setting personal milestones to stay on track. One student explained:

> "I had to set myself specific deadlines, like finishing the draft by Thursday and
> the revision by Sunday. Otherwise, I would have kept tweaking it endlessly."

Comparing this experience with more traditional writing settings, many students observed that the flexibility of digital platforms allowed for more refined work cycles, where they could work on a piece over an extended period, refining ideas and receiving feedback in real-time. In contrast, traditional settings, with their fixed deadlines and limited time for feedback, often led to more rushed or less polished work. However, the lack of a strict classroom setting sometimes led to challenges in maintaining focus, and some students admitted that they needed help staying on track without the structured environment provided by instructors.

Furthermore, students' performance and output appeared to vary depending on whether they were working independently or collaboratively. While students enjoyed the creative autonomy of independent work, many found that working with peers brought new perspectives and ideas they might not have considered on their own. In fact, real-time feedback and collaboration on platforms like Google Docs helped them identify blind spots and improve their work. One student remarked:

> "Working with my classmates helped me see different angles I hadn't thought
> of. When I was writing alone, I would get stuck in one way of thinking, but
> collaborating pushed me to explore new ideas."

This contrast highlights how students balanced independence with the accountability that collaboration brought, resulting in a more dynamic writing process.

In conclusion, the use of digital platforms not only enhanced students' writing skills but also instilled a sense of ownership and independence over their creative work. While the flexibility of managing their writing process allowed students to work at their own pace, it also required them to develop self-management skills such as time-blocking and setting milestones.

This flexibility was a double-edged sword; it empowered students to produce high-quality work but also required them to be proactive in managing their time and avoiding procrastination. By giving students the freedom to control their creative process, digital tools helped them become more confident, self-motivated writers—an experience that aligns with the evolving demands of the media industry, where journalists and broadcasters must balance creativity and deadlines while working independently.

Challenges in Using Digital Platforms

While students widely recognized the benefits of using digital platforms, they also encountered several significant challenges, particularly during the initial stages of learning to use these tools. The main challenges were technical difficulties, adjusting to new formats, and balancing multimedia elements with traditional writing.

Technical Barriers

A common issue was the lack of familiarity with the technical aspects of digital platforms. One student expressed frustration with the steep learning curve:

"At first, I found it overwhelming to figure out how to use all the tools. Embedding videos, images, and links into my story was confusing. I spent a lot of time just trying to understand the platform rather than focusing on my writing."

This sentiment echoed throughout the student feedback, with many students stating that the technical barriers slowed down their creative process. These issues often involved learning how to use the software's advanced features, such as embedding multimedia, navigating formatting tools, or collaborating on shared documents.

While most students eventually became more comfortable with the platforms, the initial phase of mastering the tools detracted from their ability to focus on writing creatively. Software issues were often cited as a barrier to productivity, with students noting that they spent a considerable amount of time troubleshooting or figuring out how to resolve technical glitches. One student described:

"Sometimes, my internet connection would cut out while I was working, and I'd lose a lot of progress. It was frustrating to keep redoing parts of my story because of these issues."

Such disruptions not only delayed project completion but also undermined students' motivation and ability to focus on the creative aspects of their assignments.

In terms of practical solutions, many students found that seeking additional resources helped them overcome these challenges. For instance, some turned to tutorial videos or online guides to better understand how to use the digital tools effectively. Others attended extra training sessions offered by their instructors. This proactive approach helped students become more comfortable with the platforms and alleviated some of the technical frustrations they initially faced.

Table 1
Technical Challenges and Solutions for Digital Writing Platforms

Technical Challenges	Potential Solutions
Difficulty navigating the platform	Online tutorials, extra training sessions, peer support
Internet connectivity issues	Saving work frequently, using offline features
Trouble embedding multimedia elements	Step-by-step guides, trial-and-error practice
Software glitches	Rebooting platforms, using alternate devices

Adjusting to New Formats

Another challenge students faced was adjusting to the new formats required for digital storytelling. Many students were more accustomed to writing text-based content and struggled with integrating multimedia elements like videos and audio clips. One student reflected:

> "I'm used to just writing text, so when I had to think about how to integrate videos or audio clips, it was a bit confusing at first. I wasn't sure how much multimedia to use or how to balance it with the text."

This challenge required students to rethink their approach to storytelling, as they had to strike a balance between text and multimedia, ensuring that each element contributed meaningfully to the narrative.

Instructors played a critical role in guiding students through this adjustment. Many students appreciated additional classroom discussions focused on how to use multimedia effectively without overwhelming their story. For example, instructors explained the purpose of using video or sound clips—such as to enhance emotional impact or clarify a narrative—which helped students understand when and how to incorporate these elements. Despite these efforts, the difficulty in finding the right balance remained a challenge, especially for students with less experience in multimedia writing.

Balancing Multimedia Elements with Traditional Writing

As students became more familiar with digital tools, they still struggled with how much multimedia to incorporate and which types of elements would most effectively support their narratives. Some students expressed uncertainty about which multimedia components would add value to their stories and which might detract from the clarity or flow of the writing. One student noted, "I wasn't sure how much multimedia to use or how to balance it with the text." This challenge of integrating multimedia elements was particularly pronounced in early assignments, where students had to develop an understanding of digital storytelling alongside their traditional writing skills.

Lack of In-Person Interaction

In addition to these technical and creative challenges, some students felt that the lack of in-person interaction when using digital platforms created difficulties in processing and acting on feedback. As one student explained:

> "I miss the immediate, in-person feedback we used to get in class discussions. Sometimes, it's hard to interpret written feedback from classmates or instructors, and you lose the chance to ask questions right away."

The detachment from physical interaction made it harder for some students to fully engage with the feedback process. Despite the availability of real-time comments and collaborative features, the absence of face-to-face discussions hindered the students' ability to seek clarification or discuss feedback in depth.

Overcoming Challenges

Despite these challenges, many students acknowledged that once they became familiar with the tools, the long-term benefits outweighed the initial struggles. The learning process helped students develop digital literacy and problem-solving skills, which were essential for their future careers in digital journalism and broadcasting. As one student concluded:

> "At first, it was frustrating, but as I got more comfortable, I realized how these tools could help me be more creative and efficient."

In conclusion, the challenges students faced when using digital platforms were not insurmountable but required time, patience, and additional support from instructors. Overcoming the technical barriers, adjusting to new formats, and learning to balance

multimedia with traditional writing ultimately contributed to the students' development of important skills for modern media production.

Improvement in Creative Writing

For the document analysis, students' written news scripts were closely examined, focusing on three main aspects: creative elements, narrative structure, and multimedia integration. The goal was to assess how well students applied interactive storytelling techniques in their creative writing, particularly in the context of English news broadcasting. NVivo 12 software was used to analyze the qualitative data, systematically coding the scripts to identify both improvements and ongoing challenges related to the use of digital platforms and interactive storytelling techniques.

1. Creative Elements in News Scripts

The survey of the students' post-intervention work showed that 86% (6 out of 7 students) demonstrated an increase in creativity across the three criteria: structural creativity, thematic originality, and multimedia coherence. This improvement was particularly notable in their ability to develop more complex, engaging narratives that were enhanced through multimedia elements, such as the integration of visuals and audio. Students were able to experiment more freely with different storytelling formats, contributing to the dynamic nature of their work.

Specifically, 5 out of 7 students (approximately 71%) showed improvement in thematic originality, with a noticeable shift from surface-level reporting to more in-depth thematic exploration. Students demonstrated significant improvement in their ability to address more complex and thought-provoking themes in their work. For example, a student writing about Biak's marine conservation efforts did not just report on the issue but framed it within the broader theme of environmental sustainability, tying the local situation to global challenges. This thematic depth was less prevalent in their pre-intervention work, which tended to focus on basic reporting of events or facts. One of the most noticeable improvements in the post-intervention scripts was the increased complexity and innovation in the structure of students' news reports. Prior to the intervention, many students produced reports with a straightforward, linear structure that focused on delivering facts with minimal creative effort. However, post-intervention work demonstrated a shift toward more dynamic and engaging structures, incorporating multimedia elements to enrich the narrative. For example, one student covering the restoration of Biak's historical sites—a significant project for the local community—did not simply list facts about the restoration process. Instead, the student structured the report with sections dedicated to different perspectives: the government's efforts, local community involvement, and cultural significance. The report was enhanced by videos showing local workers restoring a war memorial, interviews with residents sharing memories of the site, and an interactive map illustrating the restoration progress across Biak. This approach allowed the audience to interact with the content, exploring different facets of the story at their own pace.In contrast, a pre-intervention script about Biak's tourism initiatives took a more traditional approach, outlining the tourism plans and key statistics without delving into personal stories or the emotional impact on the community. Multimedia integration was minimal and lacked interactive elements.

6 out of 7 students (approximately 86%) improved their structural creativity, with many students experimenting with non-linear storytelling and incorporating multiple narrative perspectives. The digital tools allowed students to experiment with different narrative structures. Prior to the intervention, most students adhered to a traditional, linear approach in their writing. After using digital platforms, however, many began employing more creative structures, such as non-linear storytelling. For example, in a piece about the preservation of Biak's traditional arts, one student structured the narrative around a series of interviews, each

providing a unique perspective, which allowed the story to unfold in an engaging and dynamic way. This shift was particularly evident in 6 students, who found that using multimedia tools gave them the flexibility to reimagine their storytelling approach. Post-intervention scripts showcased much greater thematic originality, with students exploring local issues and unique aspects of Biak's culture and community. Rather than following conventional news formats or focusing on more typical news topics, students chose themes that were locally significant and under-explored in mainstream media. For example, one student wrote a feature on Biak's traditional Papuan dance, focusing not only on the art form itself but also on the community's efforts to preserve the tradition in the face of globalization and cultural change. The story was enriched with audio clips of the music associated with the dances, video interviews with local dancers, and an infographic outlining the history of the dance and its role in Biak's cultural identity. This multimedia-rich story gave the audience a deeper understanding of the dance's significance, offering them an engaging, interactive experience beyond a typical news report. In contrast, a pre-intervention script covering Biak's annual cultural festival was primarily a factual report about the event's schedule and performers, with little focus on the deeper meaning of the festival or its cultural impact. The post-intervention piece, however, provided a more original narrative about the cultural preservation efforts tied to the festival, using multimedia to showcase the performers' rehearsals and the community's enthusiasm, resulting in a richer and more engaging experience for the audience.

5 out of 7 students (approximately 71%) demonstrated better multimedia coherence, effectively integrating visuals, audio, and interactive elements without overwhelming the narrative. Students' use of multimedia elements became more cohesive and purposeful. A student writing about Biak's community health initiatives integrated an interactive map showing vaccination rates, which allowed the audience to explore the data at their own pace. This multimedia element not only enriched the factual content but also contributed to a deeper engagement with the audience, as the visuals were used to enhance understanding rather than distract from the narrative. 5 students effectively integrated multimedia elements in a way that complemented their stories, maintaining a balance between visual appeal and textual clarity. The post-intervention work demonstrated a significant improvement in students' ability to integrate multimedia elements coherently into their stories. In pre-intervention scripts, multimedia often appeared as an afterthought, with elements like photos or videos added without a clear connection to the narrative. Post-intervention scripts, however, displayed a more thoughtful and purposeful use of multimedia. For instance, in a post-intervention script about Biak's fisheries and local economy, a student used an interactive graphic to show the decline in fish stocks over time, paired with video interviews of local fishermen discussing the challenges they faced. The interactive graphic allowed the audience to explore the data in more detail, while the video added an emotional layer to the story, providing personal context to the otherwise factual report. The integration of these multimedia elements was seamless, enhancing understanding and engagement. Another example involved a post-intervention report on Biak's role in World War II history. The student used a series of interactive maps to illustrate key locations where significant battles occurred, accompanied by historical photographs and short video clips from local elders sharing their personal stories about the war's impact on the community. This multimedia approach helped bring the historical topic to life, offering not only an informative account but also an immersive, emotionally resonant experience for the audience. In contrast, a pre-intervention script on the same topic was more basic, featuring a few photos of memorials and limited factual information, with little attempt to weave the multimedia into the narrative. While informative, the presentation lacked the immersive quality seen in the post-intervention work.

2. Comparative Analysis: Pre- and Post-Study Creative Work

The comparison of pre- and post-study scripts highlights several significant improvements in the students' creative work, particularly in the areas of narrative complexity, multimedia integration, and thematic development.

In terms of narrative complexity, the post-intervention scripts demonstrated a marked shift toward more intricate and dynamic storytelling. Pre-intervention, many students adhered to a straightforward, linear structure, primarily focused on presenting information in a clear, factual manner. These reports were often basic, simply outlining events or presenting statistics with little attention to storytelling techniques. However, in the post-intervention work, students displayed increased creativity in structuring their stories. Many employed non-linear narrative structures, using multimedia elements to enhance the narrative. For example, students began experimenting with segmenting stories into different perspectives, such as presenting various viewpoints on a local issue through a series of interviews, videos, or interactive components. This approach allowed the audience to engage with the content on a deeper level, exploring the story from multiple angles and making the overall narrative more engaging.

The integration of multimedia also saw a significant improvement. In pre-intervention scripts, the use of multimedia was either minimal or added without clear intention. Often, students included images, videos, or audio clips simply as supplementary elements, without thinking about how they fit into the narrative or enhance the message. In contrast, the post-intervention work reflected a much more thoughtful and deliberate integration of multimedia. Students made clearer decisions on what types of media would best serve their stories and how to blend them seamlessly with the written content. For example, in stories about Biak's cultural heritage or environmental conservation, students used interactive maps, video interviews, and infographics not just as visual aids, but as integral components of the story, allowing the audience to explore the topic in a more engaging way. This shift from peripheral media use to purposeful integration helped make the stories more immersive and comprehensive.

Finally, the thematic development in post-intervention scripts showed a substantial shift toward more original and complex themes. Pre-intervention work often focused on basic reporting of events or simple factual accounts, without much exploration of deeper themes or broader implications. However, in the post-intervention scripts, students demonstrated a greater ability to choose more thought-provoking and unique topics, particularly those relevant to the local community in Biak, and to develop them more fully. The use of multimedia tools enabled students to illustrate and expand upon these themes in ways that traditional text alone could not. For example, students writing about local environmental issues or cultural traditions often used multimedia to highlight personal stories, historical context, or statistical data, creating a more rounded and compelling narrative. This shift in thematic depth not only enhanced the quality of the storytelling but also allowed students to convey more complex, nuanced messages to their audience.

Based on the result, the post-intervention work showed significant improvements in all three areas—narrative complexity, multimedia integration, and thematic development. Students were able to create more engaging, multi-layered stories that effectively used multimedia to enhance and deepen the narrative. The work became less about simply delivering facts and more about creating an immersive experience for the audience, driven by creativity, originality, and coherence.

Discussion

This study's findings indicate substantial enhancements in students' creative writing skills, especially within the realm of English news broadcasting, following the introduction of

digital platforms and interactive storytelling techniques. This discussion explores the primary insights derived from the research, placing them within the broader landscape of media education and examining both the challenges and learning opportunities encountered throughout the study.

Comparative Analysis of Pre- and Post-Study Creative Work, Enriched by Educational Theories and Broader Media Implications

This study revealed substantial improvements in students' creative writing skills, particularly through narrative complexity, multimedia integration, and thematic development, achieved by incorporating digital platforms and interactive storytelling techniques in English news broadcasting courses. These findings align closely with Budiman's (2020) work on ICT in foreign language learning, which highlights how digital tools enhance creativity, engagement, and flexible learning environments. However, situating these findings within constructivist learning theory adds depth by recognizing that students actively build knowledge through hands-on interaction with digital tools, forming skills organically rather than passively receiving information.

Constructivist learning theory emphasizes that students learn best when they are active participants in their own education, engaging directly with tools and resources. Through the integration of multimedia, students moved beyond traditional linear formats, experimenting with audio, video, and infographics to enrich storytelling. This aligns with constructivist ideas where learners actively construct knowledge through real-world application, a crucial aspect of digital literacy. By combining text with multimedia, students not only improved their writing but also cultivated digital competencies relevant across various media fields.

Building on the framework of constructivist learning theory, this study's approach to enhancing creative writing in English news broadcasting through digital tools and interactive storytelling aligns with broader educational and media literacy theories. The integration of multimedia allowed students to explore narrative techniques that transcend traditional text, fostering skills not only in writing but in a comprehensive set of digital literacy competencies.

Studies like those Nirwanto (2023) further support this approach, demonstrating that digital storytelling not only enhances linguistic creativity but also promotes a deeper engagement with language. The study explored EFL teachers' perceptions of digital storytelling in language learning, revealing that teachers view it as a highly engaging and creative tool that allows students to express themselves in meaningful ways. Teachers noted that digital storytelling not only aids language acquisition but also fosters cultural understanding, aligning with constructivist learning theory. This theory emphasizes that students learn best when they actively construct knowledge, which digital storytelling facilitates by allowing for personal expression and multimedia integration. However, the study also highlighted challenges, such as resource limitations and technical issues. Educators are encouraged to consider these factors when planning to incorporate digital storytelling, as constructivist theory suggests that addressing real-world obstacles can itself enhance student learning.

Broad Implications for Media Fields and Professional Versatility

The findings extend beyond broadcast journalism, demonstrating the value of these skills in fields such as public relations, advertising, and multimedia journalism. In these industries, where audience engagement and persuasive storytelling are key, the ability to integrate multimedia into narratives is an invaluable asset. For example, in public relations, multimedia storytelling can create compelling brand narratives that resonate emotionally with audiences. Similarly, in advertising, the creative combination of text, visuals, and audio elements is essential for impactful campaigns. As such, students trained in interactive storytelling are likely to excel in creating content that is both informative and engaging, which is increasingly in demand across media fields.

Panagiotidis et al. (2023) underscore this by highlighting how technology offers dynamic, interactive experiences that deepen learner engagement. In advertising, for instance, students with skills in digital storytelling can produce more nuanced campaigns that leverage visual and auditory storytelling, a critical competency in an industry where multimedia content is the norm. Meanwhile, in multimedia journalism, digital literacy and adaptability to multimedia tools are key for journalists working in an era where audience retention hinges on visual storytelling. By fostering these skills, the study's findings suggest a versatile application across various media professions, equipping students with the adaptability necessary for today's diverse media landscape.

Educational Recommendations and Curriculum Changes

Recent research has underscored the growing importance of integrating digital storytelling into media communication curricula, particularly within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning contexts (Hava, 2021; Yang et al, 2022; Belda-Media & Goddard, 2024). Digital storytelling, known for its ability to engage students, foster creativity, and enhance communication skills (Hava, 2021), presents a promising approach for improving learning outcomes in EFL and media communication settings. Recognizing these benefits, educational programs in these fields could more systematically integrate digital storytelling elements into their curricula.

A key recommendation is to incorporate digital literacy modules that are grounded in constructivist principles, focusing on active, hands-on learning through experimentation and real-world application (Mohammed & Kınyo, 2020). These modules could guide students through critical phases of active learning, providing them with the technical and creative skills to develop engaging digital narratives. Topics covered might include video editing, multimedia design, digital publishing, and other essential areas that prepare students to create and share compelling digital stories. By engaging in digital storytelling projects that require them to build multimedia portfolios incorporating text, audio, video, and interactive infographics, students are encouraged to apply their storytelling skills in ways that align with industry standards (Wu, 2023; Tyrou, 2022). Digital portfolios not only foster creativity but also enable students to demonstrate their skills and readiness for media and communication careers.

However, effective digital storytelling requires more than creativity; it also demands proficiency with digital tools. Addressing the technical competencies needed for digital storytelling is crucial to ensuring students feel confident using these tools (Gürsoy, 2021). The technical training, such as workshops on video editing, audio integration, and collaborative platforms like Google Docs, helps students overcome technological barriers and view digital tools as valuable assets rather than obstacles

Moreover, incorporating time management training is vital, as multimedia projects often require students to manage creative and technical tasks under tight deadlines (Landrum, 2020). Suharsono (2021), who emphasized that proper time management is critical for balancing creativity with technical tasks in educational settings. This is particularly relevant to news writing in English broadcasting, where journalists must often work under tight deadlines while managing both the written script and its multimedia elements. Structured time management strategies, such as task-planning exercises specific to multimedia projects, can improve students' abilities to prioritize tasks, allocate resources, and meet deadlines—skills essential for successful digital storytelling initiatives in fast-paced media environments. Embedding these skills within the curriculum ensures that students are not only equipped technically but also adept at managing the creative and logistical demands of media production.

In conclusion, integrating digital storytelling within media communication curricula, with a focus on digital literacy, technical training, and time management, provides students with a robust foundation to excel in technology-driven, dynamic media professions. These skills are

essential in the current digital landscape, where effective storytelling requires a balance of creativity, technical knowledge, and efficient project management.

Enhancing Student Engagement Through Constructivist Learning and Real-World Simulations

This This study's constructivist approach positioned students as active creators, not passive recipients, which fostered higher engagement and a stronger sense of ownership. Interactive storytelling demanded that students think critically about how to integrate different media components effectively. For example, the choice of specific sound bites or visual elements required consideration of timing, audience impact, and overall cohesiveness—a simulation of real-world broadcast journalism. By working in an environment that encouraged them to experiment, receive real-time feedback, and revise their work, students gained practical experience that mirrored industry practices. The research revealed valuable learning opportunities. Once students overcame initial technical hurdles, they were able to experiment with more complex storytelling techniques, incorporating multimedia elements to enhance their news writing. This finding is consistent with Ariyanti and Santoso (2021), who reported that students using digital storytelling in writing tasks showed increased creativity and engagement by integrating visual and audio media with written content. This is particularly important in English broadcasting, where multimedia storytelling is a vital skill for delivering clear, engaging, and well-structured news segments. As noted by Rahmawati and Kurniawan (2022), news writing in broadcasting requires not only clarity and conciseness but also the ability to incorporate multimedia elements, such as videos and images, to enhance viewer engagement.

Furthermore, interactive digital platforms enhance learning outcomes by fostering autonomy and self-directed learning, two principles central to constructivist learning. By providing students the flexibility to draft, revise, and integrate multimedia at their own pace, digital platforms empower them to take control of their creative processes. This adaptability is key for media professionals, who often work with fast-paced deadlines and varying project demands. This is supported by Iskandar et al. (2023), who found that integrating digital tools into news writing enhances students' abilities to work in dynamic and fast-paced environments like English broadcasting.

Challenges as Learning Opportunities and Development of Critical Digital Literacy

Although some students faced technical and time management difficulties, these challenges provided learning opportunities that equipped them with critical problem-solving skills. This is consistent with Hidayat et al. (2020), who stress the importance of offering technical training and support in using digital tools effectively. In addressing these challenges, students gained digital literacy skills that extend beyond writing; they developed resilience, technical proficiency, and the ability to work under real-world constraints—competencies that align with media industry demands.

By emphasizing critical thinking and digital literacy, educators can enhance students' adaptability across professional fields. Time management training, such as task allocation workshops for multimedia projects, would further prepare students to meet the technical and creative demands of professional media work

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that digital platforms and interactive storytelling techniques significantly enhance Communication Science students' creative writing skills, particularly in English news broadcasting. By encouraging multimedia integration and fostering active engagement, these tools transform conventional journalism pedagogy, aligning with constructivist theories that promote hands-on, student-centered learning. For educators,

incorporating digital storytelling into the curriculum can provide students with real-world media skills, equipping them to meet the demands of evolving fields like public relations, multimedia journalism, and digital content creation. As media landscapes continue to shift towards immersive, interactive formats, digital storytelling is poised to play a crucial role, preparing students for dynamic, future-facing careers in the industry.

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