

Cultivating Students' Creativity and Reading Encouragement by Integrating Ecopedagogy Extensive Reading and Digital Project

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Abstract

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The beneficial impacts of both extensive reading and digital project have been proved by some scholars to improve the students' competencies. Besides, the environmental crisis in today's era also needs to be executed. This research explains how ecopedagogy extensive reading and digital storytelling project stimulates students' creativity and enhances reading encouragement as well as environmental awareness during the learning process. Thirty-six senior high school students were involved in this study. The data were obtained from students' writing artifacts, classroom observations, and interviews. Employing qualitative case study, the results reveal that ecopedagogy extensive reading help senior high school students discover, express, and compose idea as well as cultivate their creativity in writing narratives. Specifically, the ecopedagogy approach used help students be aware of environmental problem and express the solution in their writing. This study recommends that using both extensive reading activities and digital writing projects is influential in enhancing students reading motivation, writing ability, and creativity.

Keywords: extensive reading, digital writing project, storytelling, creativity, ecopedagogy

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INTRODUCTION

Some scholars have proved that extensive reading has impacted students' linguistics competence, covering reading fluency (Huffman, 2014; McLean & Rouault, 2017), vocabulary improvement and acquisition (Webb & Chang, 2015), and enhancing writing skills (Duong & Trang, 2021; Mermelstein, 2015; Lee & Hsu, 2009). Prior to the complexity of writing skills (Xing, 2014), extensive reading activities are incorporated into the teacher's class to support the students' writing process in digital narrative writing projects. The extensive reading intervention used ecopedagogy approach. Employing ecopedagogy in the teaching and learning process encourages students' critical views on environmental issues emerging in today's living. Misiaszek (2015) states that ecopedagogy in education involves a critical approach to the relationship between social and environmental problems in classroom instruction.

The digital narrative writing project was designed to facilitate students' digital literacy enhancement (Mardiana, 2022) and creativity. The prominence of digital learning offers beneficial influence consisting of classroom participation and motivation (Suhardi, 2019; Mardiana, 2020), learners' autonomy (Hsieh & Hsieh, 2019), and creativity (Ozdas & Batdi (2017). Therefore, utilizing technology or digital media in teaching and learning is expected to create an energizing and fruitful classroom atmosphere which could impact students' performances.

Some researchers have investigated the influence of and the relationship between extensive reading and students' writing ability such as Duong & Trang (2021), Mermelstein (2015), Aida & Widiyati (2020), and Lee & Hsu (2009). Most of these studies used experimental design but rarely explored the implementation of the integrated extensive reading to digital writing in the classroom. Lyutaya's (2011) study explained the steps in implementing extensive reading with writing task, however; the writing task is limited to the reading story carried out in extensive reading. In this regard, little is known about the learning process of the procedures or steps in applying ecopedagogy extensive reading to digital narrative writing projects. This current study aims to fill this gap. This study investigates how the integration of extensive reading promotes students' learning process and how students respond to the activities given.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a case study design since the researcher investigated the students' experiences during the implementation of extensive reading in digital narrative writing projects (Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018; Yin, 2018). This study was conducted in one of the state senior high schools in Mojokerto, Indonesia. The researcher obtained informed consent from the participants. Thirty-six students participated in this study. They were expected not only to understand the rhetorical moves and grammatical features and be able to write but also to teach it and how to enable students' creativity in today's digital era. Topics learned were narrative, descriptive, and exposition paragraphs. The digital narrative writing project focused on narrative paragraphs. Students freely determined the stories under the topic of environmental issues. The project utilized Canva to illustrate the stories visually. The incorporated extensive reading was expected to encourage students' reading habits and vocabulary and discover ideas in writing stories. The extensive reading activities were captured in the Reading Journal and students' oral reports.

Students' participation and interaction were obtained through observation. One of the researchers was the lecturer of the Writing Paragraph class, therefore; she could access the classroom activities. Observation was also used to analyze the lesson and students' reading journals. The observation took five weeks during the implementation of the extensive reading to digital narrative writing project.

Students' work (Digital Narratives Writing) was also observed. Their digital narrative writing was used to identify student's ability to create stories and multimodal aspects. Besides, students' responses toward the integration of extensive reading into a digital narrative writing project were collected through interviews. All participants were asked to sign the consent form. All of the

participant's names mentioned in the discussion were pseudonyms. The researchers were also permitted to use their product for analysis. All of the data were transcribed and analyzed qualitatively using content analysis techniques (Ary *et al.*, 2010).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following section discussed the review related to the integration of ecopedagogy extensive reading and digital narrative writing project.

The Implementation of the Integration of Ecopedagogy Extensive Reading to Digital Narrative Writing Project

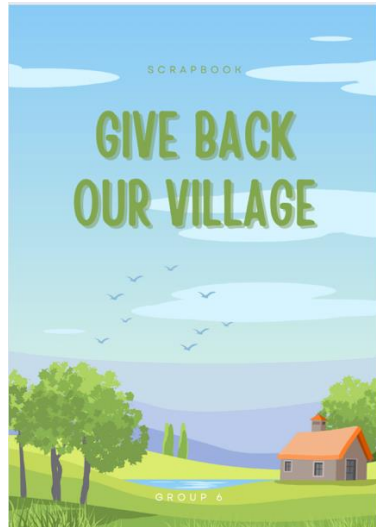
Extensive reading activities were carried out by students in an out-of-class and monitored by using a Reading journal. The extensive reading was intervened by the teacher with specifically used the concept ecopedagogy. It means that students read fiction or non-fiction books related to environmental issues. Reading Journal was adapted from Lyutaya's (2011) Reading Log used to record the students' reactions toward what they are learning. In this study, a reading journal was applied to record students' analysis of the character, plot, events, new vocabulary, and students' comments on the story. Students freely selected any stories to read that helped them to write a narrative project since self-selection of reading materials is the key point to extensive reading (Harmer, 2007). Students reported their extensive reading orally in pre-teaching activities in each meeting.

The first step was explaining the concept of extensive reading and digital narrative projects. After that, students and the teacher discussed the concept of writing a narrative text and did the exercises. In the second meeting, students started reporting their reading journal for five minutes followed by a ten-minute discussion. The teacher explained how to use Canva for their digital narrative writing project. Further, they discussed multimodal aspects of creating a digital narrative writing project. The multimodal aspects from Mardiana and Afkar (2023) are as follows

1. The digital writing includes texts/pictures/videos/audios/websites (resources)
2. The pictures/videos/audios/websites (resources) are relevant to the stories/narrative texts

The second steps were determining the title of the story and drafting the story. In these stages, students were asked to write an outline of the writing text further given feedback by the lecturer. Then, the students developed the outline into a text followed up by the teacher to provide feedback and students did revision in some grammatical aspects. The following steps were transferring the narrative writing and the illustration of the story to Canva. The following figures are examples of the student's work

A. The examples of the title and the visualization



B. The examples of the narratives



From the students' process of creating the narratives above, students' creativity can be seen from the ideas generation and work presentation (multimodal aspects). They revised their writing based on the feedback and their idea was unique or new idea. The visualization of their illustration is also relevant to their stories and the topic.

The Students' Responses toward Digital Narrative Writing Project

The following is the student's response

"My experience in using Canva for digital narrative writing project was tempting because I could design my own story easily

*using Canva, then, I could share my story to my family and friends. Writing is **hard and boring** but **experiencing Canva give me space to create and be creative** and it was **very fruitful**. **My teacher's feedback** was also helpful in that my writing was getting better in grammatical aspects.” (Rara, Interview Data)*

The data above shows that students' belief was also changed in writing by utilizing technology. They enjoyed the freedom to determine and create their own stories. This stimulates their creativity. This means that technology-based projects fostered students' learning autonomy. In this regard, students' attitudes and values in using technology influence the learning process improvement (Beetham & Sharpe's, 2011; Martin & Grudziecki, 2006). This study also proved that students need feedback to improve their writing. Teachers' feedback assists in enhancing students' writing quality and skills (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Hence, feedback is also an inextricable and important part of writing.

The Students' Responses Toward Ecopedagogy Extensive Reading Activities to Digital Writing Project

The students' responses reveal students' challenges and positive impacts.

*“Doing extensive reading **was hard at first time** because I wasn't used to reading, I mean it's not my hobby. However, through extensive reading, I **now like to read novels**. **I'm thrilled to read more and more**. I become so curious about new stories. **This activity also helps me find ideas or inspirations in creating stories**” (Rara, Interview Data)*

*“The reading activities in writing class were **challenging** because I never read stories such as short stories or novels. I prefer watching movies. **However, I found it's very interesting** when I could understand the contents. **Many new vocabularies I never knew** before. Reading **pushed** me to think and be curious about the stories. It **helped me** determine what stories and develop my stories into storytelling”. (Ali, Interview Data)*

*“Using a specific topic such as environmental topic helps me understand the issues in today's environmental crisis. I used to ignore our environment. By reading environmental stories, I become **more aware** of how to protect our earth and I want to be involved in such movement”. (Ana, Interview Data)*

The student's answers above prove that extensive reading activities promoted students' reading habits. This study posits that extensive reading does not merely enhance vocabulary, writing ability, reading fluency, (Duong & Trang, 2021., Mermelstein, 2015., Aida & Widiyati, 2020., Lee & Hsu, 2009., and Lyutaya's, 2011) but it also brings encouragement and motivation to the students in reading. They also believe that extensive reading activities assist them in formulating ideas in writing narratives. Moreover, the intervention topic, i.e. environmental issues engage students in environmental awareness and protecting the environment.

Integrating extensive reading in teaching writing with utilizing technology for students' projects offers some value. First, it cultivates students' reading motivation or reading habits and autonomous learning because it offers flexibility and freedom in learning English. Second, extensive reading and digital writing projects foster students' enjoyment, creativity, and innovation in creating storytelling because it brings different nuance from the paper writing they used to learn English and digital narrative writing involves multimodal elements. Third, the integration of ecopedagogy reading encourages students to be aware of and eager to protect the environment. Lastly, it can also be an alternative for teachers to promote extensive reading, technology, and project-based learning in their writing class.

This study spotlights the teacher's role in facilitating students' writing process. Well-organized instructions assist students' comprehension of the whole process in writing activities. Besides, the teacher's feedback cannot also be extricated. It helps improve students writing quality in terms of organization, coherence, and grammar. Furthermore, both extensive reading and technology are used to trigger and cultivate students' encouragement in reading and writing.

CONCLUSION

The aims of this study are to explain students' learning process and how students respond to the activities given. There are some steps in integrating ecopedagogy extensive reading and digital narrative writing projects, i.e., planning, discussion, and execution of the project. The results of the students' responses also reveal that ecopedagogy extensive reading and digital narrative projects have a beneficial impact on the student's competence in writing as well as their creativity which is needed in the 21st century.

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