



## ESCALATING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' INTERACTIVITY USING THE DST APPROACH

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**Abstract:**

An active and healthy classroom offline and online should run simultaneously two ways of communication to counterbalance the communication between the lecturer and the students inside. In running the communication of a lesson, a lecturer has a responsibility to anticipate the emptiness or the lack of a communicative environment during the teaching-learning process. Digital Story Telling is an approach that can be used by lecturers in teaching to escalate the students' interactivity because they will be challenged to speak up individually, can be randomly speaking, and everybody will get an opportunity to share their story about a certain topic. In this research, the researcher would like to observe how can DST approach escalates international students' interactivity. The research method used by the researcher is a narrative inquiry to record the objects' activities and experiences of an individual or a small group concerned with stories shared by the research objects. There are some important things underlying this research; they are by implementing the DST approach, the international students felt challenged by the lecturer to speak up and it stimulated the international students to emerge their initiative to share their experiences digitally.

**Keywords:** digital, escalating, interactivity, speak, story.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is undergoing a transformational shift in today's rapid and interconnected global society. With an increasing migration of international students into a variety of academic settings, there is an urgent need to investigate creative techniques that not only bridge cultural gaps but also increase involvement within the learning environment. This essay goes into the world of educational technology, focusing on the Digital Storytelling (DST) method as a potent tool for increasing involvement among international students. We hope to uncover the potential of DST in generating a more engaging and inclusive educational experience for students from all around the world through the lens of narrative and technology.

To fully appreciate why using a digital storytelling technique is important, one must be aware of the history of the problem at hand. Foreign students bring distinct cultural perspectives and learning styles to the classroom, making it difficult for traditional educational models to accommodate their varied needs. Educators are compelled to look for new techniques that align with the changing dynamics of global education as the shortcomings of traditional teaching methods in fostering cross-cultural understanding and collaboration become clear (Martin-Beltrán et al., 2023). With the ability to use technology to create meaningful relationships and interactive learning experiences among a culturally diverse student body, digital storytelling stands out as an appealing solution in this setting.

Beyond the traditional boundaries of textbooks and lectures, digital storytelling provides students with a dynamic platform that allows them to express themselves, share their stories, and interact with the material in a way that is unique to them. This method's foundation is its capacity to incorporate many media—including pictures, videos, and audio—into a coherent story. Through the utilization of digital storytelling, educators may effectively engage international students from a varied range of cultural backgrounds, resulting in emotionally charged and instructive learning experiences (Çetin, 2021; Cheung, 2021). This essay examines the development of digital storytelling in education and how it might change how foreign students interact with their schoolwork by promoting cross-border collaboration and a sense of belonging.

Active communication is an essential thing to have in every section of the teaching-learning process. Waking up the students' motivation to pay attention to the lesson and understand the material's content is truly the responsibility of a lecturer while teaching in the face-to-face and online classroom (Pan et al., 2023). A lecturer must be familiar and excellent with how to make a class 100% active without missing a minute or there a blank space inside of her/his teaching activities. Mastering various techniques during teaching time is the job of a lecturer.

The lecturer is in charge of bringing life and interactivity to the learning process by using techniques that grab students' interest and keep it throughout the lesson (Kulakaç & Çilingir, 2023). It is essential to remove any dead time from the educational activities, whether they take place in a real classroom or an online one. To ensure that no minute is lost and no space within the instructional period is left unused, the lecturer must possess a certain level of expertise and originality in navigating through a variety of teaching strategies.

UNESCO (2000) defined an international student as an individual who is enrolled for credit at an accredited higher education institution in the U.S. on a temporary visa, and who is not an immigrant, undocumented immigrant, or refugee. Having an international student in a university can raise the level of the university especially when it is accredited (Crew & Märtins, 2023). This opportunity of having an international student in a university will challenge the lecturer to teach better and master the materials well. Another benefit of having an international student in a university is maintaining a very good relationship between Indonesia and other countries. Their

presence adds diversity to the student body and encourages a wide range of experiences, viewpoints, and cultures. This diversity enhances the learning environment and gives local students a great chance to interact with perspectives from around the world, preparing them for a globalized world.

Mechant & Looy (2014) mentioned that the term "interactivity" refers to the quality of being interactive as a result of an activity involving interaction. The interactivity between the lecturer and the students in a lesson is the responsibility of the lecturer in leading the class into very active learning. With the development of new communication channels like the internet, the use of interaction as a variable in empirical studies has rapidly expanded. In a classroom context, interactivity is intentional and aims to promote student participation, engagement, and debate rather than just a passive exchange. In order to create an atmosphere where students actively participate in class discussions, ask questions, and work together with their peers, lecturers need to use teaching strategies that go beyond conventional techniques. The learning process is improved by this active participation, which makes it more engaging, inclusive, and productive.

Robin (2008) stated that over the past several years, digital storytelling has evolved into a dynamic teaching and learning tool that engages both teachers and their students. One of the essential educational resources for the teaching and learning process is digital storytelling (DST). Digital storytelling is used by the lecturer in teaching international students and is used to uncover the students' knowledge and experience of a certain topic discussed by the lecturer. Robin in Kent (2010) explained there are some types of digital storytelling, those are personal narrative, historical themes & events, and stories that inform or instruct.

Murray (2009) explained that narrative inquiry is usually used in language education to investigate motivation, identity, multilingualism, learning strategies, learner autonomy, and a variety of topics. Narrative inquiry is about letting the participants' voices be heard. Language education academics use narrative inquiry to try and capture the richness and complexity of people's experiences in the context of language learning. It recognizes that acquiring a language is a highly individualized and sociocultural undertaking rather than just a cognitive activity. Through the experiences of those who are directly involved in the language learning process, motivations, challenges, victories, and the construction of identity within the multilingual landscape are addressed.

Brown in Safari & Fitriati (2016) that speaking has five elements, those are grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and pronunciation. Speaking abilities are the capabilities that enable efficient communication. They enable us to communicate verbally and in a way that is understandable to the listener. Speaking involves sharing knowledge with the listener, who may then take action if necessary. To successfully communicate, acquiring both speaking and listening abilities is crucial. There are four elements in speaking, those are vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. Speaking is an essential part of human communication since it allows us to interact with people in different situations, share ideas, and impart knowledge. When someone speaks, they are communicating with another person. The efficacy of this communication is based on the speaker's ability to express ideas clearly and the listener's ability to understand what is being said. Thus, the development of speaking and listening skills is essential for effective communication.

Mattew, et al. (2018) stated that Education that is delivered online is referred to as online teaching and learning. An internet-based learning environment known as "online learning" connects students from various backgrounds and viewpoints. A learning management system, or LMS, is used by higher education institutions to support online learning. This type of learning can

be either synchronous (where students must be online at the same time) or asynchronous (where students can use discussion boards and emails to complete courses). Online teaching and learning, also known as e-learning, is the process of delivering education over the Internet and digital platforms. Within this learning paradigm, students work together virtually with classmates, connect with instructors, and engage with course materials. The phrase "online learning" encompasses the wide range of experiences that students with different backgrounds and viewpoints have, all of which are linked by the shared element of online learning.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this research, the researcher uses narrative inquiry to collect the needed data from the participants. Murray (2009) states that narrative inquiry is an interdisciplinary field that is concerned with the stories we share in our everyday lives. The idea of narrative inquiry is that stories are collected to understand experience as lived and told through both research and literature. With the help of field texts, such as stories, autobiographies, journals, field notes, letters, conversations, interviews, family stories, photos (and other artifacts), and life experiences, narrative inquiry can study and comprehend how individuals construct the narratives that represent their lives.

In this study, the researcher employed narrative inquiry, drawing upon four guiding principles outlined by Hollway and Jefferson as articulated in Maggi and Lana's work (2007). Firstly, the approach embraced the utilization of open-ended questions, allowing for rich and nuanced responses from participants. Secondly, the methodology aimed to elicit narratives, fostering a deeper exploration of personal experiences and perspectives. Thirdly, the avoidance of 'why' questions was emphasized, ensuring the focus remained on the participants' stories rather than potentially leading inquiries. Lastly, follow-up interactions were conducted in alignment with respondents' own ordering and phrasing, thereby respecting their narratives' integrity and coherence.. From the theory above, the researcher formulates some questions for this research, they are:

1. How is the concept of Digital storytelling running in the teaching-learning activity?
2. What does the lecturer do inside of DST?
3. What is the benefit of Digital storytelling to the students?
4. What is the disadvantage of Digital storytelling to the students?

The object of this research is fifth-semester international students of Diponegoro University, who come from many countries and are interested in the logistics sector. The students are coming from the Philippines, Malaysia, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Afghanistan. Besides, the lecturer is coming from Indonesia. In this research, the researcher wants to understand the implementation of DST to make the class more interesting and awaken the students' motivation to share their experiences from their own countries.

Data sources in narrative inquiry include field notes of shared experiences, journal records of participants, interviews (usually unstructured), storytelling, letter writing, and autobiographical and biographical writing. In this research, the researcher uses storytelling from the students, an interview section with the lecturer, and sharing experiences from the lecturer in using DST Approach in teaching. The researcher also used open questionnaires, observation, and library research to gain the needed data for this research.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Digital Story Telling is used in teaching an international class because it has an important main purpose that is inside of DST activities, the lecturer will invite the students to share their experiences and insight from their own countries, so the activities inside of the class will be more insightful, fruitful, and full of discussion. Students participate actively in the learning process rather than only receiving knowledge in the context of DST activities. They are urged to use digital resources to create and distribute narratives that honour their cultural heritage. Through this approach, students are encouraged to take responsibility for their education and develop a sense of pride in their cultural background.

In delivering the Digital storytelling, the lecturer used SSO (Single Sign On) from Diponegoro University. The registered lecturer and the lecturer who has UNDIP's email will be able to access the class and meet with the students digitally (through the Learning Management System or LMS). The lecturer makes sure that the delivery of digital storytelling is safe, effective, and integrated by using SSO and UNDIP's email system. This expedited access improves the entire digital learning experience for instructors and students alike, while also streamlining the operations of remote instruction. It supports effective online instruction by highlighting the significance of user-friendly, secure, and networked systems, which is by current practices in educational technology.

When the researcher did an observation, the topic of the discussion was talking about the logistics activities in different countries. The lecturer opened the discussion by explaining the material then the lecturer invited the students to share their ideas. When the students tell their understanding and their knowledge, the lecturer writes down their story to conclude. The observed teaching approach shows how to successfully combine student participation with didactic information. The classroom is transformed into a dynamic learning environment where collective knowledge is generated and rewarded by the lecturer's facilitative attitude and the documenting of student contributions. In addition to encouraging students to take an active role in their education, this pedagogical approach emphasizes the lecturer's function as an advisor and partner in the learning process.

The interview and questionnaire done by the researcher yielded comprehensive answers from the research's subject, which are explicated in the following explanation. Answering the first question delivered by the researcher to the subject of the research, the following is the table presenting the activities inside of the Digital Story Telling Approach.

**Table 1. Step Overview in Digital Story Telling Approach**

<b>Step</b>	<b>Activity</b>
1	The lecturer introduces the students to a material
2	The lecturer explains the material
3	The students listen to the lecturer's explanation
4	The lecturer opens the discussion by giving an opening question
5	The lecturer lets the students explain one by one their understanding of a certain material given by the lecturer
6	One by one student tells their own story based on their experience, insight, and memory about their own country
7	The lecturer gives them feedback one by one and checks the completeness of the students' responses
8	The lecturer concludes the first discussion

9	The lecturer explains the next material in the same topic area
10	The lecturer invites the students to explain their understanding of the mentioned material.

The outlined steps encapsulate the structured process of the Digital Storytelling Approach employed within the research context. Initially, the lecturer acquaints students with relevant materials, followed by a comprehensive explanation to facilitate understanding. Subsequently, students engage by actively listening to the lecturer's discourse and are encouraged to participate through open-ended discussions. Integral to this approach is the opportunity for students to share their personal narratives, drawing from their individual experiences, insights, and memories related to the topic at hand. The lecturer then provides constructive feedback, ensuring the completeness of student responses and fostering a supportive learning environment. Each discussion session is thoughtfully concluded, paving the way for the exploration of subsequent materials within the same thematic realm. This structured approach not only encourages active engagement but also promotes a deeper understanding and appreciation of the subject matter through the lens of personal storytelling.

The second question of this research is about the activities of the lecturer inside Digital Story Telling. Below is the table showing the activities done by the lecturer before, while, and after the teaching and learning process.

**Table 2. The Activities of the Lecturer inside Digital**

Stages	Activities
<b>Before</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare material and create PowerPoint Presentation</li> <li>• Divide activities into stages:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opening section: Warm up student motivation and understanding</li> <li>2. Complete materials</li> <li>3. Create an interesting and understandable conclusion</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>During</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain materials</li> <li>• Facilitate discussions at different stages:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invite students to share knowledge of their country's wisdom on logistics activities</li> <li>2. Write down each student's story about logistics activities from their own country</li> <li>3. Summarize stories into general understanding framing by the lecturer</li> <li>4. Provide complete explanation</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>After</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite students to ask questions and provide comments on the material presented</li> <li>• Conclude and summarize discussion points</li> </ul>

The lecturer meticulously prepares for the class by organizing the material into a PowerPoint Presentation, outlining distinct stages of activities aimed at engaging students effectively. This includes an opening section designed to stimulate student motivation and comprehension, along with the development of materials and the crafting of a compelling conclusion. During the teaching-learning activities, the lecturer goes beyond mere explanation, facilitating structured discussions at various stages. Each stage prompts students to share insights from their own countries, particularly relating to logistics activities, fostering two-way communication and enriching the class dynamics. The lecturer meticulously records each student's narrative, recognizing the diversity of experiences in logistics and distribution management. These

narratives are then synthesized into a cohesive understanding by the lecturer, followed by a comprehensive explanation. Post-discussion, students are encouraged to pose questions and offer comments, allowing for further engagement. The lecturer then summarizes key points derived from the discussion, ensuring a comprehensive recap of the session's insights.

The table encapsulates the meticulous approach undertaken by the lecturer within the Digital Storytelling Approach, delineating their actions before, during, and after the teaching and learning process. Prior to class commencement, the lecturer diligently prepares materials and structures them into a PowerPoint Presentation, incorporating distinct stages aimed at engaging students effectively. Throughout the session, the lecturer not only imparts knowledge but also orchestrates dynamic discussions, inviting students to share their unique insights on logistics activities from their respective countries. This interactive exchange fosters a two-way communication flow, enriching the learning experience. During discussions, the lecturer meticulously documents each student's narrative, reflecting the diverse perspectives within the class. Post-discussion, the lecturer encourages further engagement by soliciting questions and comments from students, thus facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the material. In conclusion, this structured approach ensures a vibrant and participatory learning environment conducive to knowledge dissemination and exchange.

Moving to the third research question, which asks about the benefits of Digital Storytelling for students. There are several advantages. Firstly, it encourages students to share their ideas, memories, and knowledge on discussed topics, fostering collaboration with peers and the lecturer. Secondly, it makes learning easier by presenting material in a practical way. Thirdly, it guides students through discussions, helping them understand the subject better. Lastly, Digital Storytelling gives students more chances to improve their speaking skills by sharing their ideas with the class.

**Table 3. Digital Story Telling Benefits**

Benefits	Description
<b>Invitation to Share Ideas, Memories, and Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are encouraged to share their ideas, memories, and knowledge on a specific topic discussed by the lecturer.</li> <li>• Brainstorming sessions are facilitated among students and with the lecturer, fostering collaborative idea generation.</li> </ul>
<b>Increased Practicality and Understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital storytelling enhances the practicality of the class, leading to a clearer understanding of the material for students.</li> </ul>
<b>Guided Comprehensible Discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of Digital Storytelling provides guidance for students, leading to more understandable and structured discussions.</li> </ul>
<b>Improved Speaking Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students have more opportunities to speak up and articulate their ideas, contributing to the enhancement of their speaking skills.</li> <li>• Each stage prepared by the lecturer offers a platform for students to deliver their ideas, thereby honing their speaking abilities.</li> </ul>

The table succinctly outlines the multifaceted benefits that Digital Storytelling brings to students within the research context. Firstly, it serves as a platform for students to actively engage with the material by sharing their ideas, memories, and knowledge on the discussed topics, fostering collaborative brainstorming sessions with both peers and the lecturer. Secondly, Digital Storytelling enhances the practicality of learning, making the material more accessible and easily comprehensible to students. Thirdly, it guides students through structured discussions, ensuring a clear and understandable exploration of the subject matter. Lastly, Digital Storytelling provides ample opportunities for students to improve their speaking skills, as they are encouraged to articulate their ideas at various stages prepared by the lecturer, ultimately nurturing their confidence and proficiency in verbal communication.

The last question was about the disadvantages of implementing Digital Story Telling. Every method/approach we use to teach will bring its own advantages and disadvantage. As we know the word 'digital' raised in the term Digital Story Telling goes beyond the traditional way of telling a story. It needs comprehensive knowledge from all the students about a certain material opened by the lecturer. If the students do not have comprehensive knowledge, they will have difficulty responding to the discussion. Students who have a low level of thinking will be ashamed of others during the learning process. This narrative research was designed to meet the requirement of Digital Story Telling. It is because when we implement Digital storytelling, we need to record the story narratively. Also, it is based on the form that needs to be observed which is 'story'. This research hopefully can contribute to science as an additional point of view about the implementation of Digital storytelling to International students using a narrative approach in conducting the research.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study shed light on the effectiveness of Digital Storytelling (DST) as an approach to enhance interactivity and engagement among international students. The integration of DST into the teaching-learning process offers several advantages, aligning with previous research in educational technology and pedagogy. Firstly, the utilization of DST encourages active participation and collaboration among students, as they are prompted to share their ideas, memories, and knowledge on discussed topics (Rahimi & Fathi, 2022). This collaborative learning approach resonates with the constructivist theory, which posits that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through interaction with their environment and peers. Secondly, DST enhances the practicality and comprehension of learning materials, aligning with Mayer's cognitive theory of multimedia learning, which suggests that the integration of visual and auditory information can lead to deeper understanding and retention of content (Lee et al., 2021). By incorporating various media elements into storytelling, DST provides a multisensory learning experience that caters to diverse learning styles and preferences.

Moreover, DST facilitates guided and comprehensible discussions, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter. This finding resonates with the social constructivist perspective, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in knowledge construction (Lehtinen et al., 2023). By engaging students in meaningful discussions and narrative sharing, DST creates opportunities for collaborative sense-making and knowledge co-construction within the classroom environment. Additionally, DST contributes to the development of students' speaking skills, providing them with opportunities to articulate their ideas and perspectives (Çetin, 2021). This finding aligns with previous research on language learning, which highlights the importance of active participation and oral communication in language acquisition.



However, it is essential to acknowledge potential challenges associated with the implementation of DST. One potential limitation identified in this study is the prerequisite of comprehensive knowledge among students to effectively participate in discussions (Wang et al., 2024). This finding resonates with previous research on collaborative learning, which suggests that students may experience difficulties in contributing meaningfully to discussions if they lack foundational knowledge on the topic. Additionally, students with lower levels of critical thinking may feel intimidated or marginalized during the learning process, highlighting the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment (Malebese & Tlali, 2020). The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the implementation of DST as a pedagogical approach to enhance interactivity and engagement among international students. While DST offers numerous benefits, including active participation, practicality, and skill development, it is essential to address potential challenges, such as knowledge gaps and student apprehension. By leveraging the strengths of DST while addressing its limitations, educators can create dynamic and inclusive learning experiences that cater to the diverse needs of international students.

## CONCLUSION

The researcher can conclude that the implementation of Digital storytelling brings many benefits to the students which can awaken the students' motivation to join the class, awaken the students' motivation in having the speaking class, and improve the interactivity between the students and the lecturer. Digital storytelling has a special power to stimulate students' curiosity and spark their imagination. Through the incorporation of multimedia components like music, video, and imagery into the educational process, DST produces a more dynamic and captivating atmosphere. Students' innate desire to tell stories is satiated by the narrative component of storytelling, which makes the educational process both personally and educationally meaningful. Students are then inspired to participate fully in class as a result of this acting as a motivating catalyst.

Speaking activities specifically benefit from the motivational impact. Gaining confidence and getting over the anxiety of speaking a foreign language are two things that language learners frequently struggle with. DST's immersive and interactive elements offer pupils a safe space to freely express themselves verbally. Students gain a sense of success and improve their speaking abilities by creating and delivering their digital stories, which increases their desire to engage in speaking-focused classroom activities. Furthermore, the use of DST significantly enhances the interaction between the professor and the students. The multimedia and narrative components establish a common area for conversation and storytelling. By encouraging students to share their viewpoints, experiences, and insights, a more participatory and collaborative learning environment is created. This enhanced interaction makes learning more inclusive and participatory by strengthening the bond between students and teachers and deepening the debates in the classroom.

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