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Enhancing Environmental Awareness through Digital Poster Creation in Elementary School Students

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Abstract: This best practice describes an innovative learning activity that integrates digital literacy, environmental awareness, and moral responsibility through the creation of educational posters. Conducted with 17 sixth-grade students of SD Negeri 1 Curugsewu in the 2023/2024 academic year. This study aimed to develop students' skills in using digital tools while deepening their understanding of environmental ethics. The learning process involved observing environmental issues, gathering data, designing digital posters, and presenting them to peers. The assessment covered three aspects: digital skills, environmental awareness, and moral responsibility toward nature. The results indicated that most students achieved 'good' to 'excellent' levels across all aspects, with reflective statements showing that students became more aware of the importance of preserving nature. This practice demonstrates that digital-based creative projects can effectively foster students' cognitive, emotional, and moral engagement with environmental education.

Keywords: digital literacy, environmental education, moral responsibility, elementary school learning.

Introduction

In the digital era, educational approaches must blend technical skills with ethical values. The rise of creative digital tools offers opportunities for students to express ideas visually, yet without guidance, these tools risk being used superficially or without deeper purpose. In elementary education, combining digital literacy with moral reflection may help students develop both capability and conscience.

Recent research demonstrates that digital platforms like Canva can foster engagement, creativity, and concept communication in students (Nisyaa et al., 2025; Anggrayni et al., 2025). However, these tools should not stand alone; they must be anchored in moral and environmental contexts, especially at a young age (Kurnia et al., 2025). In particular, creative tasks such as poster-making have shown promise in bridging technical skills with moral and ecological awareness (Suhardiman et al., 2024).

Situated in SD Negeri 1 Curugsewu, a rural setting with rivers, fields, and natural surroundings, this project leveraged the local environment as learning context. The purpose of this study is to document and analyze a classroom-based best practice that aimed to integrate digital literacy and moral values through environmental poster creation using Canva. The specific objectives are: (1) to facilitate students' mastery of Canva as a digital tool for creative expression; (2) to nurture students' environmental awareness via design of meaningful posters; and (3) to cultivate moral responsibility toward nature through reflective discussion and value-laden visuals.

Materials And Methods

Study area

SD Negeri 1 Curugsewu is located in Patean subdistrict of Kendal, Central Java, Indonesia. The school is surrounded by rice fields, rivers, and

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diverse plant life, providing a vivid environmental backdrop for students to engage with local ecological themes.

Procedures

Stage 1: Orientation and Theme Discussion

The teacher introduced environmental challenges (e.g., habitat loss, species decline) and guided students to share observations of local flora and fauna. This set the conceptual foundation for the poster themes.

Stage 2: Digital Tool Exploration

Students were led step-by-step to download and register on Canva, select templates, and manipulate images, texts, and layout. The teacher modeled basic functions, then encouraged students to explore and experiment in pairs or small groups.

Stage 3: Poster Creation, Presentation, and Reflection

Each student produced a poster with a conservation message about animals and plants. After completion, they presented their designs, explained their message choices, and engaged in moral reflection facilitated by guiding questions (e.g., "Why must we care for living things?").

Data collection and analysis

Observation sheet recorded student engagement, tool usage independence, collaboration, and technical difficulties. Assessment rubric evaluated each student on three aspects: (1) digital skills (operation, layout, creativity); (2) environmental awareness (clarity, accuracy, relevance of message); and (3) moral responsibility (ethical message, empathy, sincerity). Each dimension was rated 1 to 4 (1 = Need Improvement, 4 = Excellent).

Reflection journal / sheet captured students' own insights and moral-ethical learning. Scores were converted to percentages. Qualitative data (observations and reflections) were analyzed thematically, seeking patterns of moral reasoning, creativity, and environmental understanding.

Results And Discussion

The implementation of the poster project showed a positive transformation in students' engagement and awareness. Most students quickly adapted to Canva, expressing creativity and environmental care in their design.

Table 1. Educational poster project implementation results

Aspect	Excellent	Good	Fair	Need Improvement	Average (%)	Student Reflection Highlights
Digital skills	8	7	2	0	88 %	"I never thought making posters could be this easy and fun using Canva."
Environmental	7	8	2	0	85 %	"Now I know why we must protect animals and plants—they keep our world balanced."
Moral responsibility	6	9	2	0	84 %	"After making my poster, I feel responsible to care for tress near my house."

The data show that the majority of students reached the good to excellent level in all three aspects, with an average performance of 85,6 %. Students not only improved their digital fluency but also deepened their emphaty and moral reasoning toward nature. The reflections revealed intrinsic motivation to take small real-life actions such as planting trees or reducing plastic waste.

Figure 1. Educational posters created by students

These finding align with Yuliana & Saputra (2024), who emphasize that integrating digital tools in character education strengthens environmental ethics and self-awareness. Similarly, Tan et al. (2025) found that project-based digital learning enhances both cognitive and affective domains in environmental literacy.

Discussion

Students began with curiosity and mild hesitation but rapidly grew confident in using Canva's features, template selection, layering, color adjustment, and text-image integration. Many posters included statements like "Protect our forest for future life" and "Save the animals, save ourselves". These expressions reflect not only environmental understanding but also moral interpretation of humans' role in nature.

The coupling of digital creation with moral reflection facilitated deeper internalization of values. As some students reflected, "I feel sad for animals losing habitat", the emotional dimension of learning became evident. This aligns with Maharromiyati et al. (2024) who argued that visual-articulation tasks foster empathy and reflection. Similarly, Kurnia et al. (2025) noted that value-based digital learning enhances both technical and ethical growth.

Integrating these dimensions also nurtured the 21st century competencies: creativity in design, critical thinking in selecting messages, collaboration in peer feedback, and communication through visual media. The teacher's role in guiding moral questions proved essential to transform digital activity into character-focused learning.

Some limitations included uneven device availability and occasional network issues. To mitigate, students worked in pairs, and offline templates were utilized. These adaptations highlight that value-rich digital learning can proceed effectively even in resource-limited settings.

Conclusions

This classroom-based best practice demonstrates that creating environmental posters via Canva can successfully integrate digital literacy and moral values in elementary education. Students not only improved their design skills and environmental understanding but also reflected morally on humanity's responsibility to nature. The synergy between skill, knowledge, and character confirms the potential of value-laden digital projects to support holistic education.

For future practice, teachers may scale this model to other school settings, expand collaboration with environmental organizations, or track long-term behavioral impacts.

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