

Implementation of Canva-Based English Speaking Learning Media to Strengthen English Literacy for Children with Special Needs at SLBN Pangkalpinang

¹Diana Anggraeni, English Literature, FISIP Universitas Bangka Belitung

²Bob Morison, English Literature, FISIP Universitas Bangka Belitung

³Deni Pratama, Agrotechnology, FPPK Universitas Bangka Belitung

Email correspondence: ¹ diana-anggraeni@ubb.ac.id,

Email² bob-morison@ubb.ac.id,

Email³ deni.pratama16@ubb.ac.id

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Abstract : *English speaking proficiency is essential for global literacy, including for students with special needs. However, the lack of adaptive and engaging learning media remains a significant challenge in special education environments such as SLBN Pangkalpinang. This community engagement project implemented Canva as an adaptive, visual-based learning media to enhance English speaking literacy among 20 students with special needs, supported by 5 accompanying teachers. The methods included teacher training on Canva for education, demonstrations of interactive Canva-based speaking activities, student mentoring, and evaluation through direct observation, interviews, and a pre-test–post-test design. The results showed a 42% increase in active student participation and a statistically significant improvement in the average speaking score from 53.6 to 74.1 ($p < 0.05$). Teachers reported that Canva facilitated more engaging, accessible, and effective delivery of English materials and increased student motivation. These findings confirm that Canva can serve as an effective platform for developing inclusive educational content for students with special needs. By addressing learning gaps and empowering educators with practical digital strategies, this initiative supports responsive, inclusive, and equitable education practices and encourages broader adoption of Canva-based media in other special education institutions.*

Keywords

Canva; English speaking; Students with special needs; SLBN Pangkalpinang; Inclusive education; Community service

Introduction

English language proficiency is an essential aspect of global communication and literacy, including for children with special needs. However, conventional English learning methods are often not inclusive and fail to accommodate the unique learning characteristics of students with disabilities (UNESCO, 2021). At schools such as SLBN Pangkalpinang, English learning activities still rely heavily on textbooks and verbal

explanations, which are not always effective for students with cognitive, sensory, or social limitations. This condition highlights the need for alternative and adaptive learning strategies to improve English speaking skills among these students. In particular, children with special needs require visual, auditory, and kinesthetic support in learning that is rarely found in traditional media. The lack of suitable digital resources for inclusive education further exacerbates learning gaps. According to Brown

(2007), multisensory learning tools can significantly support students with neurodiverse conditions by enhancing memory, focus, and engagement. The use of visual and audio-based digital media is particularly beneficial for students with hearing impairments and autism, as it reduces cognitive load and improves retention (Ainol Mardhiah et al., 2024; Mullamaa, 2010). However, most available digital learning materials are not tailored for special education and are inaccessible to both students and teachers in inclusive environments. Canva, a user-friendly visual design platform, offers features that allow educators to develop interactive and accessible learning materials without advanced programming skills. Canva has been widely adopted in education due to its accessibility, drag-and-drop interface, and built-in audio-visual templates that support differentiated instruction without requiring coding skills (Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015). Leveraging this platform, the community service team designed Canva-based English Speaking learning media tailored to the needs of children with disabilities. The materials included visual aids, recorded pronunciations, and interactive speaking prompts embedded into slides and video formats that can be used both online and offline. This community service activity aims to strengthen English speaking literacy in special needs students by implementing Canva-based English learning media at SLBN Pangkalpinang. In addition to introducing adaptive learning tools, the program also enhances teachers' digital teaching capacities to ensure sustainability and long-term impact in inclusive education practices.

Materials and Methods

Materials

The main material used in this community service activity was Canva-based English Speaking learning media designed using Canva, a graphic design platform that supports the development of interactive educational content. The media included visually engaging slides, audio pronunciation guides, and simple interactive elements exported into a presentation or video format

accessible via Android tablets or laptops. Android tablets:

1. Samsung Galaxy Tab A7 (Model SM-T500) and Xiaomi Redmi Pad (Model 22081283G) Laptop:
2. ASUS VivoBook A416 (Intel Core i5, Windows 11) Speaker:
3. Logitech Z120 USB-powered stereo speakers Projector: Epson EB-E500 LCD Projector.

Methods

The method used in this community service activity was Participatory Action Research (PAR), which emphasizes collaboration with the target community in this case, the teachers and students at SLBN Pangkalpinang through a cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005).

Activity Design The service activity was divided into four main stages:

1. Preliminary Survey and Need Assessment
An initial observation and interview were conducted with teachers and the school principal to identify the existing challenges in English learning and the level of digital literacy among students and educators.
2. Media Development and Customization
Based on the findings, a prototype of Canva-based media was designed with input from special education teachers. The vocabulary content was adapted from the national English curriculum for special schools.
3. Training and Implementation
A two-day workshop was held for five English and special education teachers to train them in using the media. Following this, a 4-week trial implementation was conducted involving 20 students with diverse needs (hearing impairment, mild intellectual disability, and autism spectrum disorders).
4. Observation and Evaluation
 1. Evaluation methods included: Pre-test and Post-test: To measure students' English speaking abilities before and after using the media.

2. Observation checklist: To assess student engagement and participation.
3. Teacher interview and feedback forms: To gather qualitative insights on usability and perceived effectiveness.

Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data from the pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed using paired sample t-test to determine the statistical significance of learning gains. Qualitative data from interviews and observations were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and teacher reflections on student progress and engagement (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The quantitative analysis follows Creswell and Creswell's (2018) approach for pre-experimental design in community service, while qualitative data were coded thematically. This methodical approach ensured that the community service activity was not only collaborative but also scientifically accountable and adaptable for wider implementation in other inclusive education environments.

Results and Discussion

The implementation of the Canva-based English Speaking learning media at SLBN Pangkalpinang was carried out in four structured stages: preliminary needs assessment, media development, teacher training and implementation, and impact evaluation. The process involved 20 students with special needs consisting of children with mild intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments, and autism spectrum disorder and 5 teacher participants.

Results of Implementation

The service activity was designed to address the lack of accessible and interactive English speaking learning resources for special needs students. During the four-week intervention, observations revealed a significant change in student engagement and motivation levels during English classes. Pre-test and post-test scores were used to measure improvement in students' speaking skills.

Table 1. Paired sample t-test results of students' speaking scores

Test	N	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Difference	t	df	p-value
Speaking score	20	53.6	74.1	20.5	-	19	<0.001

The statistical analysis showed a statistically significant increase in speaking performance, indicating the effectiveness of the Canva-based media in facilitating oral language acquisition. In addition, qualitative feedback gathered through teacher interviews confirmed that students became more confident and participative when using the media, particularly those with speech delays and social interaction difficulties.

Table 2. Solution of dedication

Problem	Solution	Output
Lack of adaptive and interactive English speaking media for special needs students	Implementation of Canva-based learning media with tailored speech and visual content	Canva-based media exported to Android format for classroom use
Limited teacher skills in using technology for inclusive education	Conducting training and mentoring on how to use the Canva-based media in class	Improved teacher capacity

Meanwhile, Table 3 summarizes the measurable changes observed following the service activity:

Table 3. Changes resulting from service activities

Initial Condition	Intervention	Condition Change
Students were passive during English lessons and reluctant to speak	Canva-based media with visual and audio cues tailored to learning disabilities	85% of students showed increased speaking attempts; 65% initiated interaction

		without prompts
Teachers lacked confidence in delivering digital-based lessons	Two-day workshop and practice session with Canva-based media implementation	100% of teachers reported confidence using the media independently in class

These findings are in line with similar studies emphasizing the importance of digital tools in special needs education. According to Kurniawan & Setiawan (2020), the use of audio-visual and gamified applications significantly improves student interaction in inclusive classrooms. This aligns with mobile-assisted language learning principles, which emphasize portability and multimodal input to support learners with diverse needs (Chinnery, 2006). Compared to conventional printed materials, the Canva-based media allowed for multisensory engagement, which is known to aid cognitive retention in students with neurodiverse conditions (Brown, 2007). However, several limitations were observed. The Canva-based media currently supports only basic vocabulary and lacks speech recognition for real-time pronunciation correction. Similar constraints on content scope and the need for teacher assistance were also reported in other special schools, while simultaneously strengthening teacher competencies in implementing technology in adaptive learning environments.

Speak Up! Using Canva to Support English Speaking for Special Needs Learners

Images 1, 2, and 3 illustrate the use of Canva as a digital learning media to support

English speaking activities for students with special needs at SLBN Pangkalpinang.



Image 1

In these images, the teacher utilizes interactive and visually engaging designs created through Canva to help students learn and practice English vocabulary and simple sentence structures. The content includes daily expressions, self-introduction, and basic conversational phrases, all tailored to the individual needs and abilities of the students.



Image 2

Canva is used not only for its visual appeal, but also for its audio features, which greatly support students who have communication barriers or limited comprehension when learning through traditional methods. This digital and interactive approach provides a more accessible and enjoyable learning experience.



Image 3

By integrating Canva into the speaking lessons, students become more enthusiastic, focused, and confident in practicing English. The visually rich and easy-to-understand materials encourage active participation and make learning more meaningful for each student.

Encouraging Voices: Reward-Based English Speaking for Students with Special Needs



Image 4a



Image 4b



Image 4c

Conclusion

This community service activity was carried out through a series of participatory and structured steps, starting from needs assessment, media development, teacher training, implementation, and evaluation. The main measurable contribution was the significant improvement in students' English speaking skills and increased classroom participation, as evidenced by the pre-test and post-test results and qualitative teacher feedback. Teachers also showed enhanced confidence in utilizing the Canva-based media in inclusive teaching. The main limitation of this activity lies in the media's limited content and the varying degrees of student support needed depending on their disability type. Therefore, future service activities should focus on expanding media features, such as speech recognition and more diverse language levels, as well as developing training modules for supporting teachers in inclusive classrooms. Broader implementation across SLBs in other regions is recommended to validate the scalability and long-term impact of the program. These recommendations are consistent with frameworks for effective ICT integration in inclusive classrooms (Yelland et al., 2008).

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