

## OPTIMIZING DIGITAL LEARNING RESOURCES IN ENHANCING EFL TEACHERS' TEACHING PRACTICE

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**Abstract :** Teachers as educators are required not only to convey subject matter to students but also to be able to choose the right learning strategies and media. Many English teachers, including in the city of South Tangerang, still lack understanding of how to integrate technology into their teaching practice to optimize student learning outcomes. The purpose of this community service activity is to provide teachers with knowledge, skills and awareness of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) about digital learning resources that can be utilized optimally to improve their learning outcomes and integrate technology into lesson plans. The method of implementing these activities is mainly through lectures, exercises, and giving assignments. The results showed that the participants experienced an increase in knowledge, skills and awareness in using digital learning resources with a creative common license. Results also indicated that EFL teachers' understanding of integrating technology into their lesson plans improved.

**Keywords:** EFL teacher; general creative license; study plans; technology integration

**Abstrak:** Guru sebagai pendidik dituntut tidak hanya menyampaikan materi pelajaran kepada siswa tetapi juga harus mampu memilih strategi dan media pembelajaran yang tepat. Banyak guru bahasa Inggris, termasuk di kota Tangerang Selatan, masih kurang memahami bagaimana mengintegrasikan teknologi ke dalam praktik mengajar mereka untuk mengoptimalkan hasil belajar siswa. Tujuan dari kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat ini adalah untuk memberikan pengetahuan, keterampilan, dan kesadaran kepada guru Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL) tentang sumber belajar digital yang dapat dimanfaatkan secara optimal untuk meningkatkan hasil belajar mereka serta mengintegrasikan teknologi ke dalam RPP. Metode pelaksanaan kegiatan tersebut terutama melalui ceramah, latihan, dan pemberian tugas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa peserta mengalami peningkatan pengetahuan, keterampilan, dan kesadaran dalam menggunakan sumber belajar digital dengan creative common license. Hasil juga menunjukkan bahwa pemahaman guru EFL tentang mengintegrasikan teknologi ke dalam rencana pelajaran mereka meningkat.

**Kata kunci :** guru EFL; lisensi kreatif umum; rencana belajar; integrasi teknologi



## INTRODUCTION

Education is the right of every citizen in Indonesia which is expected to be obtained either through formal education or other activities, such as training, workshops and courses. Education is one of the learning processes that enables students to actively develop their potential in the aspects of religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state (Sela et al., 2022; Syahida et al., 2022).

Lecturers have strategic functions, roles and positions in national development, especially in the field of education. Lecturers are professional educators and scientists whose main task is to transform, develop and disseminate science, technology and art through education, research and community service (Ahmad, 2016; Kusnan, 2018). In the implementation of education, one aspect that needs to be done first is to plan the learning process. Therefore, lecturers must carry out careful planning. In accordance with SNPT number 44 of 2015, a standard learning process is required which is outlined in the form of a Semester Learning Plan (RPS) (Susanti et al., 2021). In the era of the industrial revolution 4.0, improving the quality of education is one of the main issues of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Bai et al., 2020; Beier et al., 2021; Berawi, 2019; Mondejar et al., 2021).

Based on preliminary observations and interviews with teacher supervisors and two teachers who participated in community service, there are several challenges that EFL teachers face when integrating technology into their teaching. These challenges include: (1) Lack of training and support. These EFL

teachers indicated that they did not receive adequate training in the use of technology and lacked the support they needed to integrate technology effectively into their teaching; (2) Time constraints. These teachers often have limited time to learn new technologies and incorporate them into their teaching, which has been a significant barrier to technology integration; (3) Fear of failure or making mistakes. Some teachers may hesitate to use technology in their teaching for fear of making mistakes or not knowing how to use technology effectively; (4) Balancing technology with traditional teaching methods. These teachers need to find a balance between the use of technology and traditional teaching methods to ensure that students receive a well-rounded education; and (5) Lack of understanding and awareness of the importance of using learning resources that can be accessed, used, modified, and/or shared for learning purposes. By addressing these challenges and providing teachers with the necessary support and resources, community service activities can help teachers integrate technology effectively into their teaching and improve student learning outcomes.

The Open University (UT) Indonesia, like other tertiary institutions in Indonesia, carries out the obligatory duties of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education which includes education and teaching activities, research, and community service. Kartasasmita (2017) put forward three aspects of community empowerment, namely: (1) creating an atmosphere that enables the community to develop (enabling aspect); (2) strengthen the potential or power possessed by the community (empowerment aspect); and (3) empowering can also be interpreted as protecting. The 2022 Open University Teaching and Education Faculty of Eng-

lish Language Education Postgraduate Program implements KKN in accordance with the University's Vision and Mission. The topic of the activity is "Optimizing Digital Learning Resources in Improving Technology Competence and Teaching Practice of EFL Teachers".

The selection of community service topics mentioned above was chosen to increase the professionalism of English teachers in terms of using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching. This is because teachers as educators are required not only to convey subject matter to students but also to be able to choose the right learning strategies and media. Therefore, in choosing learning strategies, teachers should pay attention to the situation or condition of students (learning context), learning materials, and existing learning resources. This is done to ensure that the use of learning strategies can be applied effectively in supporting student learning success. The development of increasingly advanced information technology, including in the world of education, will always be directly proportional to human innovation thinking ability (Rahmawati, 2023; Sunubi & Bachtiar, 2022). Advances in technology that are increasingly rapid must be used wisely to get the best results in accordance with the goals that have been targeted. In this context, the use of technology that is the work of other people must also be a concern in the sense of respecting the copyrights of others by paying attention to the legality of using existing learning resources.

Based on the above considerations, the Postgraduate Program in English Language Education at the Open University is holding 'KKN' activities in 2022 which will be carried out offline and online. This activity has been able to facilitate junior high school English

teachers in South Tangerang City in increasing knowledge, skills, and awareness about technology and learning in a wiser way to improve student learning outcomes.

In general, Community Service activities aim to provide knowledge, skills and awareness to participants with digital learning resources that can be utilized optimally to improve their learning outcomes. More specifically, the objectives of this community service activity are as follows:

- To increase the knowledge and skills of EFL teachers about digital learning resources.
- To increase the knowledge and awareness of EFL teachers about learning resources that can be accessed, used, modified, and/or shared for learning purposes.
- Increase the knowledge and skills of EFL teachers in making digital-based lesson plans.

## METHOD

Several steps have been taken in the implementation of community service activities as described in the following figure (Figure 1).

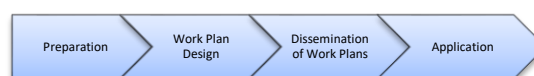


Figure 1. Workflow of the Community Service Activity

Community service activities are carried out 5 times (5 sessions) from May 2022 to October 2022. The implementation approach is a combination of *offline* (face to face) and *online mode* via zoom. Participants in this community service activity were 15 junior high school English teachers in South Tangerang City.

The resource persons and facilitators were lecturers from the Teaching and Education Faculty, including from the Postgraduate Program in English Language Education, Indonesia's Open University (UT).

Three main methods are carried out in this community service activity, namely: lectures, exercises, and giving assignments. The selection of the three methods is based on the intended purpose of this community service activity in order to have an optimal impact on the target group (Bachtiar, 2022). The reasons for selecting the three methods are as follows.

- The lecture method is used to provide participants with an understanding of the material presented.
- The training method is carried out to determine the level of understanding of the participants on the material that has been given.
- The final method is assigning tasks. The assignment was implemented to give participants an opportunity to prove their level of understanding and at the same time an opportunity to share knowledge and understanding among them through group presentations and discussions.

## DISCUSSION

PKM activities are carried out face-to-face and online according to the design of the implementation of PKM activities. There are 5 (five) activity sessions. Sessions 1 and 5 are conducted face-to-face, while Sessions 2, Session 3 and Session 4 are conducted online (virtual). Implementation details are discussed by topic in each session as follows.

### *Session 1: Current Issues in Teaching and Using Digital Learning Resources to Improve Teacher Teaching Practices*

Session 1 was conducted offline (face to face) at SMP Negeri 11 South Tangerang on June 24 2022. This session discussed current trends in education and teaching, including teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It explores aspects that teachers as educators need to keep in mind. The role of the teacher in the 21st century is also discussed. It is emphasized that the role of the teacher has now shifted from being the main source of information and knowledge in the classroom to being a facilitator in the learning process. The key points support what has been found in previous studies (Berawi, 2019; Mondejar et al., 2021) that school needs to be treated more like a career than a skill. Teachers no longer play the same central role in student development today as they once did. Today's classrooms do not operate like the "show and tell" classrooms of the past. Ercana (2020) also believes that, instead of having students sit in rows of desks and listening to teachers babble while they take notes, modern educational methods provide each student with a personalized, stimulating, and highly effective educational environment. Learning doesn't just happen in schools but also in homes, neighborhoods, and countries around the world. Books are no longer the primary storehouse of knowledge, as knowledge is distributed in bits and bytes.

Another aspect discussed is the importance of using digital learning resources in helping teachers improve their teaching practice. This topic equips participants with several appropriate learning resources to integrate into learning. Teaching today is not enough without integrating technology into the process.

Kao et al., (2014) informed that due to advances in technology, educators are now able to continue education regardless of location or schedule. Affinity spaces are created when educators use technology to enhance their practice, and these settings are unique from the norm. There is no denying that technology has had a huge impact on teaching, including how English is taught in schools today. One of the many ways in which technology improves education is by making it more interesting and dynamic. Students are more likely to engage and learn in ways that are meaningful to them when they use technology. The current state of English education is generally recognized as having this problem. The audiovisual passion of students is fulfilled by modern technology (Rusnak & Vasylyk, 2021; Widarni, 2023). Considering how pervasive technology is in everyday life (Aghaei et al., 2020), schools should rethink their approach to incorporating it into the curriculum and concentrate instead on how it can be used to enhance the teaching and learning process.



Figure 2. Resource persons explaining topics in Session 1

### *Session 2: Optimizing Digital Learning Resources with Creative Commons Licenses*

Session 2 was conducted virtually (online mode) using Zoom on July 1, 2022. This session not only discussed the

importance of integrating technology into teaching practice but also increased participants' awareness to value information sources. The resource person explained the importance of using sources with a Creative Commons license. Images, videos, audio recordings and written works are the exclusive property of their creators. Copyright legally belongs to the person who originally produced the work. The creator reserves the right to control the reproduction, modification and distribution of his work. It is illegal to copy other people's work without their consent. Creators may use Creative Commons to allow others to freely distribute, copy, modify and use their work without prior written permission. To provide more or less freedom, Creative Commons licenses may cover many levels.



Figure 3. Resource persons discussing topics with participants

The source also emphasized that the creative commons license is a free form of copyright license that allows original creators to choose how their work can be used by others. There are six different types of licenses available to creators, ranging from the most permissive to the least. The most open license and the license generally recommended for open educational resources (OER), is Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY).

CC BY means that anyone can distribute, remix, tweak, and reproduce the creator's work, even commercially, as long as they give credit. All CC licenses require attribution; In addition to attribution, authors can choose to add a combination of three other terms, which results in the rest of the license you see here. For example, if a creator wants to prohibit commercial use, they'll add a Non-Commercial provision. When an author wants to require downstream users to also re-share their adaptation with the same conditions, they'll add a Share Alike condition. If they wanted the work redistributed unchanged, they would add a No Derivatives condition.

Several researchers have told us about the importance of using legal digital learning resources (Fitriayu, 2018; Jane P., 2016; Tello et al., 2021). They point to CC licenses as legal tools that can help teachers find, share, mix, and build educational resources, which makes them Open Educational Resources (OER). In a sense, CC licenses are the underlying road infrastructure of the OER ecosystem to enable reuse and sharing. If paths are well maintained, it means CC licenses/legal tools are kept up to date. Creators have more options for sharing their work, educators have an easier way to find and share OER, and students are empowered to build on what has gone before.



Figure 4. The resource person shows the types of Creative Commons

### Session 3: Digital Learning Resources in Lesson Plans

Session 3 was conducted virtually (online mode) using Zoom on July 8 2022. This session discussed the key steps in preparing lesson plans for the current curriculum. In addition, it also discussed the importance and strategies for integrating technology into lesson plans. This is based on the fact that technology has revolutionized the way humans interact and connect, and modern classrooms, homes, and offices are very different from those of 20 or 30 years ago. Today's students need to prepare for workplaces that are more open than ever to social media, television, video games, and other technological advances. By incorporating technology into lesson plans and bringing it into the classroom, teachers help prepare them to learn well and engage students for the future professional world.

The resource person also emphasized that when using the Internet, teachers and their students can access seemingly unlimited information. The learning process is no longer limited to the reach of textbooks in the local school library. Students can use Google to learn more about a topic in much less time. Teachers can use the information students have at their fingertips to challenge them and encourage them to delve deeper into subjects and master information. The bottom line supports what Sirait et al said. (2022) demonstrated that large classrooms with disproportionate student-to-teacher ratios make it difficult for a teacher to provide individual attention to each student. While the Internet is no substitute for in-person interaction, it does offer a variety of resources for teachers to use to help some students gain understanding of the material. The internet can be very helpful for students who have different



learning styles. There are probably some people who will study a subject best when they can read the material, take the time to digest it. Others may learn better through videos or interactive instructions. All of these methods can be taught simultaneously via the Internet.

Another key aspect emphasized in this session is that utilizing and implementing technology into lesson plans can ensure a more interactive classroom experience. Technology can reshape the future of education in a major way, forging new bonds between students and teachers, and with students and the entire learning experience. The traditional teaching model is no longer effective. Teachers develop lesson plans that may not convey learning messages in accordance with the times, as well as students' learning abilities. How can we fix this problem? By integrating technology into the classroom.



Figure 5. Integration of digital learning resources in lesson plans

#### *Session 4: Group Presentation (Reporting Group Progress)*

Session 4 was conducted virtually (online mode) using Zoom on August 5 2022. This session focused on presentation and discussion among participants regarding the group work that had been given previously. 5 (five) groups consisting of 3 (three) teachers in each group. Each group was asked to do 2 (two) group work given by the resource per-

son/facilitator, namely: finding Digital Learning Resources with a Creative Commons License and compiling lesson plans that integrate technology into them.

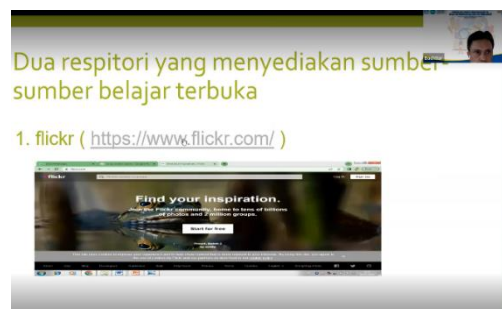


Figure 6. Accessible digital learning resources

In this session, participants demonstrated that they have a good understanding of determining the legal source of a digital learning resource with a creative commons license. All groups demonstrate procedures for identifying Creative Commons in both text and video. In addition, the participants also demonstrated that they could integrate technology into their lesson plans.

#### *Session 5: Review and Feedback.*

At Session 5 (at the end of this program), an evaluation was held, where the team, participants, and relevant agencies discussed and reviewed the implementation of activities, whether they had been running effectively enough, and what improvements or improvements needed to be made. There is a WhatsApp Group for participants and members of the community service team. In addition, there is at least one team, and it is also hoped that the participants and relevant agencies will provide feedback for the development of similar programs in the future so that similar programs can influence other strategic areas and more people (teachers) can benefit from them. application. Monitoring during and after the

program is carried out by the community service team. Therefore, this community service activity is expected to provide benefits for teachers in the city of South Tangerang in general, and especially for EFL teachers as participants in the activity.



Figure 7. Events closing activity devotion public

## CONCLUSION

Integrating digital technology into teaching English has many benefits for both teachers and students. Community service activities that have been carried out for junior high school EFL teachers in the city of South Tangerang have helped teachers to improve their knowledge and skills of digital learning resources. The majority of participants attended and actively participated in each community service session. Therefore, EFL teachers' understanding and awareness of the importance of using digital learning resources with creative common licenses is increasing. In addition, participating teachers can create digital-based lesson plans that have the potential to be implemented and have an impact on their learning outcomes. Community activities in the future have the potential to be carried out with other teachers from other subjects and in other places.

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