



Utilizing Canva to Foster Innovation in Early Childhood Education Learning Materials

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Abstract	
<p>Article Information: Received: 23 September 2025 Revised: 7 February 2026 Accepted: 2 April 2026 Published: 21 June 2026</p> <p>Keywords: Canva, Early Age Education, Interactive Learning.</p>	<p>Digital technological advancements require early childhood educators to develop more innovative learning media that align with the characteristics of digital-native children. To meet this need, the use of modern design platforms has become increasingly important. This study aims to explore the use of the graphic design platform Canva in fostering innovation in early childhood education (ECE) instructional materials. Focusing on the digital native generation of children, the study evaluates the effectiveness of Canva in assisting educators in designing creative, interactive, and developmentally appropriate learning media. A qualitative research method was employed. Data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews with ECE educators, and analysis of Canva-based instructional design outputs. The findings indicate that Canva enhances educators' creativity in developing visually appealing and pedagogically relevant learning materials. Canva's intuitive features-such as interactive templates, child-friendly illustrations, and easy design sharing-have proven to facilitate the creation of enjoyable and memorable learning experiences for young children. The implications of this study suggest that the use of graphic design technology like Canva can serve as an effective strategy for developing innovative ECE instructional content. The study recommends systematic training for educators to maximize Canva's potential as a technology-based learning support tool.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is an important foundation in shaping children's character and abilities in the future. A number of previous studies have shown that interactive and innovative learning approaches are key factors in supporting children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. For example, research by Agustina et al. (2023) used a quasi-experimental method to prove that project-based learning can significantly increase children's engagement. Lo & Wang (2024) conducted a longitudinal study of 120 children and found that participatory learning methods had a positive impact on critical thinking skills. A study by Meng et al. (2025), which used a controlled experimental design, also showed an increase in language development through digital learning media. Meanwhile, Yafie et al. (2021), through a qualitative study, emphasized that experience-based learning is key in building children's character. These findings are in line with modern educational theory, which emphasizes the importance of interactive learning approaches. However, the reality in

the field shows a gap between ideal theory and learning practices that are still traditional in nature (Mustofa & Maemonah, 2024; Seprie, 2024). This gap is the basis for this study to find solutions that are relevant to the needs of the times.

Field observations confirm that most early childhood teachers still use conventional approaches that are less appealing to digital generation children. This condition highlights the need for learning innovations that are not only easily accessible but also relevant to technological developments. One potential solution is the use of the Canva application as a medium for creating teaching materials. At Al Hidayah Sawentar 02 Kindergarten in Blitar Regency, teachers have begun to integrate technology-based learning by utilizing Canva's features to create visual materials that are attractive to children. Based on this background, the research question was then focused on: "How can the use of Canva encourage innovation in the development of early childhood education teaching materials?" This question aims not only to evaluate its effectiveness but also to explore the extent to which Canva can be a solution to the gap between theory and practice in early childhood education.

Previous studies have shown that technology plays an important role in improving the quality of learning (Aliyah & Masyithoh, 2024; Dewi, 2024; Maghfiroh, 2022). Using a mixed-method approach, it was found that the integration of technology improves children's focus on learning (Chen, 2024). In their meta-analysis study, it was concluded that visual-based learning technology can significantly improve concept understanding (Melati et al., 2023; Wahidin, 2025). In addition, El-Sabagh's (2021) research with controlled experiments showed that visual media can improve concept understanding by up to 40%. Research by Pabba & Kumar (2022), which used a survey of 300 teachers, showed that visual media encourages creativity and motivation in early childhood. Although a number of these studies discuss digital and visual media, specific research on the use of Canva in the context of early childhood education is still very limited. Therefore, this study provides a new contribution by focusing on the use of Canva as a tool for developing PAUD teaching materials (Apriliani et al., 2024; Ryantina et al., 2025).

The uniqueness or novelty of this study lies in its specific focus, namely how Canva can be used to encourage innovation among early childhood teachers in designing teaching materials. This section does not refer to previous research results, because novelty should not be based on citations. The novelty of this study is that it positions Canva not merely as a design tool, but as a pedagogical medium that can be adapted to the developmental needs of young children. This research not only tests the effectiveness of Canva, but also describes how its features can be utilized to create interactive, visual learning experiences that are appropriate for children's developmental stages. This approach also provides practical guidance for early childhood educators in integrating digital technology appropriately.

This study aims to answer how Canva can help early childhood teachers in creating innovative teaching materials (Elsa & Anwar, 2021; Hinchcliff & Mehmet, 2023; Saputra et al., 2022). Preliminary studies have shown that the use of Canva not only saves teachers time in creating teaching materials but also improves the visual quality and children's engagement in learning. Previous studies have shown that visual media can significantly increase children's interest and understanding. This study goes further by exploring how Canva features such as educational templates, interactive elements, and drag-and-drop designs can

be adapted into learning media that are in line with the principles of early childhood development. Thus, this study confirms that Canva has great potential as an innovative solution to learning challenges in the digital age.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, chosen to explore in depth how early childhood education (ECE) teachers utilize the Canva application to design innovative learning materials. It also aims to understand the processes, challenges, and outcomes of Canva integration in TK Al Hidayah Sawentar 02. Qualitative research is intended to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects—such as behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and actions—in a holistic and descriptive manner through words and language within a natural context (Moleong, 2012).

Data collection techniques employed several methods: Observation, used to gather data and information regarding phenomena in either real or simulated situations, including events and behaviors. Interviews with classroom teachers, conducted directly in a question-and-answer format between the interviewer (the teacher) and the respondent (students), without intermediaries. Documentation, which included photographs of activities, written records, and teachers' creative works as supplementary field data (Sugiyono, 2009).

The data sources consisted primarily of ECE teachers who used Canva to develop learning materials. Two types of data were used: primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly through observation and interviews, while secondary data were gathered from Canva-produced learning materials and related documentation of classroom activities. The data analysis technique followed a qualitative process through three stages: data collection, data reduction, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw data derived from field notes—a continuous and iterative process. The reduced data were then presented in narrative text, matrices, graphs, networks, and charts. The final step was drawing conclusions and verification, which were conducted continuously throughout the research process in the field (Sofwatillah et al., 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that training in teaching material development using the Canva application was carried out as an effort to improve the digital competence of teachers at Al Hidayah Sawentar 02 Kindergarten. This training was carried out during school holidays so that all teachers could participate in the activities without being disturbed by the students' learning schedules. Before the training began, the researchers collaborated with the deputy principal to analyze the teachers' digital competency needs. The analysis showed that some teachers were not yet proficient in design applications, especially Canva, and therefore needed intensive guidance. These findings became the basis for the school to prepare supporting facilities and infrastructure, including laptops, internet connection via Wi-Fi, projectors, screens, and inviting an expert resource person, M. Rizky Aziz, to guide the training. These preparations were made so that teachers could gain maximum learning

experience and improve their skills in developing digital teaching materials in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood.

The training began with a speech from the principal emphasizing the importance of utilizing Canva and belajar.id accounts in supporting the development of digital teaching materials. The principal emphasized that mastering digital design applications not only helps teachers create more engaging teaching media, but also stimulates teachers' creativity in delivering learning materials. After the speech, the resource person presented the material in a logical sequence, starting from the login process, introduction to basic features, to hands-on practice in creating teaching media in the form of picture cards, number cards, and interactive games. The training method applied was a combination of lectures, demonstrations, and hands-on exercises, so that participants could learn the theory and practice the knowledge they had acquired.

During the training, the teachers were very enthusiastic. Some participants even brought their personal laptops to try out Canva features that had not yet been explained. The resource persons actively provided assistance, offered solutions when participants encountered difficulties, and provided feedback on the teaching media designs that were created. At the end of the training, participants were given an evaluation questionnaire to measure their competency improvement and motivate them to continue developing their skills in utilizing Canva features. The results of observations and interviews showed that the training ran smoothly, was conducive, and was effective in improving teachers' digital skills. Teachers were able to follow the activities well, understand the material provided, and show confidence in creating teaching media designs. The communicative and friendly training atmosphere created a positive learning experience for participants. Field findings confirmed that teachers were able to produce works such as interactive games, number cards, and picture cards according to their respective learning topics. The results of the instrument evaluation show that the training has met the needs of teachers and helped them understand how to use Canva optimally. However, some teachers suggested that the practice time be extended so that they could develop more varied, creative, and interesting designs.

Before the training was conducted, the researchers observed and interviewed five teachers, namely Mrs. Arif, Mrs. Ida, Mrs. Ta'im, Mrs. Nurul, and Mrs. Dini. The results of the observation showed that the teachers' abilities in developing teaching materials still varied greatly. The preparation of teaching materials was usually done collaboratively in the teachers' room after school hours, but it still relied on manual methods such as the use of paper, markers, images from the internet, and Microsoft Word with images pasted into it. Some teachers were already familiar with Canva through the mobile app, but two teachers did not yet fully understand Canva's functions. In addition, three teachers are still limited in operating laptops, so they are more comfortable using mobile phones, even though access to Canva on laptops is more complete and its features are more optimal. These limitations have an impact on the results of the teaching media created; the material looks less attractive, less aesthetic, and often experiences image quality problems when printed. In addition, teachers rarely make optimal use of their belajar.id accounts because they lack confidence and initiative to search for tutorials independently.

The results of the study also show that the use of the Canva application in developing teaching materials has a positive impact on teachers' motivation to create an interactive and enjoyable learning environment. Based on observations, children showed greater enthusiasm and active participation when learning letters, reading syllables, and forming simple words through interactive games. Teachers modified videos by adding vowels and consonants, then asked children to tap or press the arrow icon on the screen to proceed to the next step. This activity engages children's physical, linguistic, and cognitive domains simultaneously. It not only involves gross motor skills but also trains children's ability to recognize letters, form syllables, and identify words based on images. Children appear to be more active and learn letters faster than with conventional passive learning methods.

Interviews with teachers reinforced these findings. Several teachers stated that they had difficulty determining the right images, were confused about choosing decorative elements, and did not yet understand the principles of visual design. Teachers relied more on references from social media or the internet, but still produced simple designs. One teacher still made letter and number cards manually using cardboard, while another teacher was confused about using PowerPoint because they did not understand how to combine images and other visual elements. In other words, the conditions prior to the training showed that teachers still needed to improve their technological skills, understanding of digital design applications, and skills in creating teaching media that were interesting and suitable for early childhood characteristics. These findings became an important basis for conducting Canva training at Al Hidayah Sawentar 02 Kindergarten.

The results of interviews with teachers participating in the training showed that the implementation of the training was influenced by supporting and inhibiting factors. The main supporting factor was the competence and assistance of the resource persons. Teachers mentioned that the resource persons delivered the material in easy-to-understand language, were patient and diligent, and provided direct examples, so that participants felt comfortable asking questions and did not hesitate to ask for help. This assistance helped teachers understand the steps for using Canva, with the theory always linked to practical needs so that it was more relevant.

Other supporting factors include practice-oriented training methods, the availability of adequate facilities, and a conducive environment. Teachers considered the training to be more effective because the material was accompanied by hands-on practice, question and answer sessions, and examples of features relevant to early childhood education. The school provided laptops, Wi-Fi, LCD screens, and projectors, while some teachers brought their own devices. The training room was comfortable, even though some participants sat on the floor. The interaction between teachers and resource persons was warm, which had a positive psychological impact and accelerated the mastery of Canva.

Constraints included limited training time, differences in participants' learning speeds, technical and network issues, and dependence on peers for help. Almost all participants stated that the training duration was insufficient for in-depth exploration of the material. Differences in participants' digital skills resulted in varying speeds of understanding. Some

participants experienced slow laptops and unstable internet connections, while others still relied on friends when facing technical difficulties.

Based on these findings, the participating teachers provided suggestions, including: increasing the duration of the training, especially the practical and question-and-answer sessions; improving the quality of facilities such as laptops with higher specifications and stable Wi-Fi networks; providing more intensive assistance for participants who are not yet familiar with using digital applications; and providing more examples or templates relevant to the theme of early childhood education.

Overall, the training on developing teaching materials using Canva at Al Hidayah Sawentar 02 Kindergarten successfully improved teachers' ability to create digital teaching media. Supporting factors such as the competence of the resource persons, practical methods, adequate facilities, and a conducive environment contributed positively to the success of the training. Despite several obstacles, particularly time constraints and differences in participants' abilities, the training still had a significant impact on improving teachers' digital literacy. Teachers not only understood the theory but were also able to apply Canva in creating picture cards, number cards, and interactive games. Hands-on experience, question and answer sessions, and guidance from resource persons proved effective in boosting teachers' confidence and creativity. The following is documentation of learning activities using Canva interactive media.



Figure 1. Children Playing Interactive Games on a Screen

The results of the study show that training in teaching material development using the Canva application at Al Hidayah Sawentar 02 Kindergarten significantly improved teachers' digital competence, creativity, and ability to create attractive and interactive teaching media. The training, which was conducted during the school holidays, allowed all teachers to participate in the activities without being interrupted by the children's learning schedules, while a needs analysis prior to the training showed that some teachers were still not proficient in design applications, especially Canva. These findings support the opinion of Alamin et al. (2023), who stated that teachers' understanding of digital design applications greatly

influences the quality of teaching media and children's learning experiences. Through the preparation of facilities such as laptops, projectors, Wi-Fi, and expert guidance, teachers gained maximum learning experiences in line with the principles of practice-based learning, thereby improving their skills in developing digital teaching media (Darmawan & Syamsiah, 2025).

The implementation of training using a combination of lectures, demonstrations, and hands-on practice has proven to be highly effective in improving teachers' skills. This is in line with previous studies that emphasize that participatory training with hands-on practice allows teachers to understand theory and apply it in the creation of teaching media, thereby increasing teacher creativity (Effendi et al., 2024; Pranata & Syamsijulianto, 2025; Simatupang et al., 2023). The high enthusiasm of teachers during the training, including the initiative to bring personal laptops to try out Canva's features, shows strong internal motivation and readiness to adopt digital technology (Ali & Armita, 2024; Delvia et al., 2025; Syahrani & Wiza, 2024). In addition, direct mentoring from resource persons provided constructive feedback on the design of teaching media, in line with the findings of Haerudin and Gustiana³ who stated that intensive mentoring improved teachers' ability to select visual elements, design principles, and material preparation in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood (Erdiyanti & Syukri, 2021; Maladisma et al., 2024).

Prior to the training, observations showed that teachers were still using manual methods, such as paper, markers, images from the internet, and Microsoft Word, which resulted in teaching media that was unattractive and aesthetically lacking. This is in line with the study by Resti et al. (2024), which confirms that teachers' limited digital literacy has a negative impact on children's motivation and learning effectiveness. The use of Canva as a digital medium provides a solution to this problem, as it allows teachers to create interactive media such as number cards, picture cards, and interactive games that support children's physical, linguistic, and cognitive domains simultaneously. Children showed higher enthusiasm and active participation in learning letters, syllables, and simple words, consistent with previous findings stating that interactive digital media increases children's learning motivation and engagement in early childhood education institutions (Aminudin et al., 2023; Destiawati & Dhika, 2024; Ningrum & Nur, 2023).

The training also emphasized the importance of supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of digital literacy. The main supporting factors include the competence of resource persons, practice-oriented methods, availability of facilities, and a conducive environment, which psychologically boost teachers' confidence and abilities. These findings are consistent with the research by Fatimah and Hasiana¹ which shows that training with competent resource persons and a supportive learning environment accelerates the mastery of digital technology. However, obstacles such as time constraints, differences in participants' digital abilities, technical constraints with laptops, and unstable internet connections pose challenges. This is in line with previous findings that emphasize the need for adequate practice time and continuous mentoring to ensure that teachers can explore the features of the application optimally (Prasojo & Yuliana, 2021; Prihatin et al., 2025).

Canva training has been proven to successfully improve teachers' digital competencies, encourage creativity, and facilitate the development of teaching materials

tailored to the characteristics of early childhood. Teachers are able to create more engaging and interactive learning materials, thereby supporting increased motivation and participation among children. This is in line with previous studies that emphasize that teachers' digital literacy, combined with hands-on practice and mentoring, significantly affects the quality of learning, teachers' creativity, and children's learning experiences. Therefore, the implementation of practice-based training such as this needs to be expanded and integrated continuously in the professional development of early childhood teachers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the use of Canva by early childhood education (ECE) teachers has proven effective in fostering innovation in the development of instructional materials. This application enables teachers to create engaging, colorful, and developmentally appropriate learning media that align with the cognitive stages and characteristics of young children. Canva not only enhances the visual quality of teaching materials but also increases student engagement in the learning process and supports teachers in preparing content efficiently and creatively. The integration of Canva into ECE learning contributes significantly to digital transformation, particularly in improving teachers' readiness to deliver meaningful, enjoyable, and relevant learning experiences.

Thus, this study affirms that utilizing Canva can serve as a practical solution to bridge the gap between modern educational theory and classroom practice. Canva holds the potential to become a primary tool for supporting ECE teachers in designing creative, contextual, and technologically adaptive learning environments.

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