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Visual Communication Design Training Using Piktochart Platform For 8th Grade Students Of Makassar Junior High School 25

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Abstract
Piktochart application training was conducted as an effort to empower visual literacy among high school students. This activity targeted 8th grade students of Makassar Junior High Scool 25 to introduce the basic techniques of making attractive and informative digital posters. Through lectures and hands-on practice, participants were trained to use Piktochart's main features to express ideas into poster designs. The training was held on March 2, 2025 and facilitated by a team from the Akba University of Technology Makassar. The results of the training showed high enthusiasm and a significant success rate, where the majority of students were able to produce posters worthy of being displayed on school media. This activity opens up further opportunities for the development of students' digital creativity and the application of graphic design technology in educational settings.

Keywords: Digital Poster, Piktochart, Junior High School, Training, Visual Literacy

Introduction

The development of information and communication technology has brought great impact in various aspects of life, including in the field of education. In today's digital era, the ability to convey information visually is one of the important skills that students need to have. One form of effective information delivery is through digital posters, which combine text and visual elements in an attractive manner. However, not all students have the understanding or experience in using appropriate visual design tools for educational and public communication needs.

Makassar Junior High School 25 is one of the high schools located in the Makassar, South Sulawesi. Based on the results of preliminary observations, it is known that most grade VIII students are not familiar with web-based graphic design applications such as Piktochart. In fact, mastering this application can

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support various school activities, ranging from making activity posters, visual presentations, to delivering information in the form of infographics. Lack of training and access to digital design media is one of the causes of low visual literacy among students.

As a form of contribution to the development of technological capacity among students, the Akba University of Technology Makassar carried out community service activities in the form of training on the introduction and use of Piktochart application for class VIII students of Makassar Junior High School 25. This training was designed with a hands-on approach so that students are not only familiar with the basic features of Piktochart, but also able to apply them in making informative and interesting posters. This activity also involved students from the Informatics Study Program as facilitators who assisted the student learning process during the training.

The main objective of this activity is to improve students' visual design skills and encourage them to be more creative and adaptive in utilizing digital technology. In addition, this training is also a learning medium for students in applying knowledge and building positive relationships with the community. It is hoped that through this activity, a productive synergy will be created between universities and schools in supporting the strengthening of digital literacy and student creativity in the era of evolving technology.

Materials and methods

The training methods used were lectures and hands-on practice. The training was held on Sunday, March 2, 2025, at 09.00 to 12.00 WITA, located in the multipurpose room of Makassar Junior High School 25. This activity was attended by class VIII students and was carried out by five Students from the Akba University of Technology Makassar. The material was delivered through a brief explanation, then continued with the practice using the Piktochart application directly by the participants with assistance from the implementation team. The stages of implementation are as follows:

a. Initial Survey and Coordination

Prior to the implementation of the activity, the implementation team conducted an initial survey to Makassar Junior High School 25 to find out the field conditions, the needs of the participants, and ensure the readiness of the venue and facilities. In addition, direct coordination was carried out with the school regarding the technical implementation of the training.

b. Preparation of Proposals and Permission Letters to Schools

The team compiled a complete community service activity proposal and compiled a letter requesting permission for implementation addressed to the school. This proposal and letter are the basis for the implementation of organized and scheduled activities.

c. Preparation of Training Materials

Training materials were prepared by a team from the Akba University of Technology Makassar by adjusting the level of understanding of grade VIII students. The materials focused on the introduction of Piktochart's basic features and the practice of making digital posters with an easy-to-understand approach.

d. Implementation of Training Activities

The training was held on Sunday, March 2, 2025, at 09.00-12.00 WITA, located in the multipurpose room of Makassar Junior High School 25. The activity began with an opening, followed by lectures, then hands-on practice using the Piktochart application with assistance from four of the implementing team.

e. Activity Monitoring and Evaluation

During the activity, the team directly monitored the activities of the participants, especially during the practical sessions. Evaluation was carried out through discussions, observations of participants' designs, and question and answer sessions to measure students' understanding of the material provided.

f. Preparation of Final Report

After the activity was completed, the team compiled an activity report as a form of documentation and final evaluation. This report includes a series of implementation, photo documentation, and conclusions of the activity results, as part of the accountability of community service activities.

Results

The training on the use of Piktochart for students of class VIII Makassar Junior High School 25 was interactive and applicable. All participants followed the stages of making digital posters from the initial stage to the final result with direct guidance from the implementation team. Based on the observation and evaluation of the activity, 98% of the participants understood the material being trained and successfully completed the poster design independently with an appropriate structure and attractive visual appearance. This shows that most students are able to understand the training materials and apply them directly in the practice of making digital posters using Piktochart.

a) What is Piktochart

Piktochart is a web-based application used to easily and quickly create various types of visual designs, such as infographics, posters, presentations, reports, and other visual media. It is designed to be used by anyone, even without a graphic design background. With an intuitive interface and drag-and-drop feature, users can arrange elements such as text, images, icons, graphics, and colors as needed.

Figure 1. Opening of the Training Activity

b) Practice Stage

Step 1: Opening the Piktochart Website and Logging in to the Account

First, participants are asked to open their usual browser, such as Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox. Then, type the address **www.piktochart.com** in the search bar and press Enter. Once the Piktochart main page opens, most participants who do not yet have a Piktochart account are directed to create a new account by clicking the “Sign Up” button to create a new account. Registration can be done using an active email address or by logging in through a Google account to make it faster. After successfully logging in, participants will be

directed to the main page or dashboard, which is where all design projects are stored.

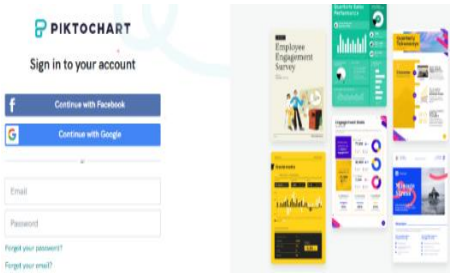

Figure 2. Piktochart home view for beginners

Step 2: Start a New Project

Once on the dashboard, participants can start a new design by clicking the "Create New" or "+ New" button located on the top left side. There will be several choices of project types that can be created, such as infographics, presentations, or reports. In this training, participants will start with a simple task of creating a poster for a wall magazine. For that, participants need to select the "Poster" option so that the format and size of the design match the desired needs.

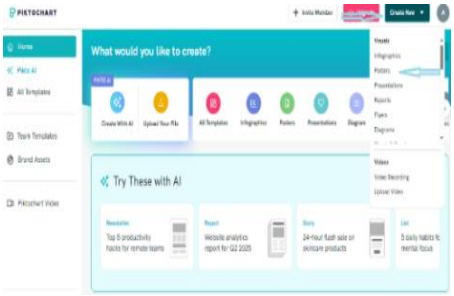

Figure 3. Poster making

Step 3: Selecting a Poster Template

After selecting the "Poster" project type, participants will be presented with various ready-made design templates provided by Piktochart. These templates are basic designs that have been organized, so participants only need to customize the content. Participants can choose a template according to the desired theme, such as environmental, education, health, or social themes. If you do not have a specific theme, you can choose a template with a simple design that is easy to customize. After selecting a suitable template, participants can click the "Use Template" button to start editing.

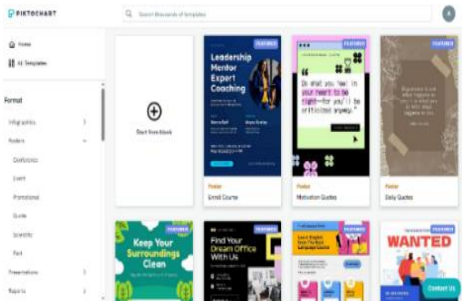

Figure 4. Display of template options in Piktochart

Step 4: Changing the Title and Organizing the Poster Content

Once on the Piktochart editor page, participants can start by changing the title of the poster. Simply click on the title text section (usually located at the top of the poster), then type in a new title, such as "Stop Plastic Waste!". Next, participants also need to change other parts of the text content according to the content that has been prepared previously, such as:

- A brief explanation of the topic
- Important facts in point form
- A call to action sentence or slogan that catches the reader's attention

Participants are advised to write information in a concise manner so that it is easy to understand and does not make the poster look full.

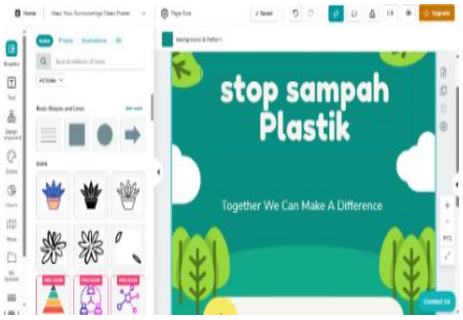

Figure 5. Editing

Step 5: Adding Images or Icons

To make the poster look more attractive, participants can add supporting images or icons. This is done by clicking on the "Graphics" menu located on the left side of the editor. Within the menu, there is a wide selection of icons, illustrations, and shapes. Participants can also upload their own images, such as school logos or photos, by selecting the "Upload" menu and then selecting a file

from the device. Once the image is successfully inserted into the project, participants can adjust the position, size, and rotation of the image as desired.

Step 6: Change Colors and Fonts

Participants are also given the opportunity to customize the appearance of the design by changing the background color, text color, and font type and size. To do so, participants simply need to click on the element they want to change, then use the toolbar that appears at the top of the editor. It is important to ensure that the text color has enough contrast with the background to make it easy to read. For example, if the background is dark, then light-colored text should be used. In addition, participants are also advised not to use too many fonts to keep the design neat and pleasing to the eye.

Step 7: Arranging the Layout for a Neat Poster

At this stage, participants need to ensure that all elements in the poster are arranged neatly and proportionally. Avoid overlapping text or images. Piktochart provides a grid feature that appears automatically when elements are moved. Participants can utilize this feature to adjust the alignment and spacing between elements, so that the overall design looks symmetrical and easy to read.

Step 8: Saving and Downloading Poster Results

Once all the elements are completed and the design is appropriate, participants can save and download their work. You can do this by clicking the “Download” button in the top right corner of the screen. Select the desired file format, for example PNG for image format or PDF if you want to print directly. For wall magazine printing purposes, it is recommended to choose the “High Resolution” option so that the print results are sharper and not broken. The downloaded file can then be saved into a folder that is easily found on the participant's computer.

If participants require a preview session before downloading, this can be done by clicking the “Preview” button usually available at the top of the editor. Through this full view, participants can review the entire design without the distraction of editing elements, and make any final corrections before downloading.

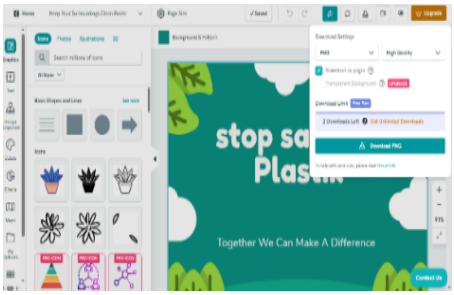

Figure 6. Saving

Seeing the enthusiasm and involvement of students during the training, the team plans to develop similar activities with other technology topics. The hope is that this advanced training can expand students' knowledge and experience in utilizing various digital applications productively and creatively.

Table 1. Evaluation

Knowledge & Skills Practiced	***Results***	
	Before(%)	***After(%)***
Knowledge of Piktochart	-	100
Skill development	-	98
Happy & enthusiastic about the training	-	100
Find it easy and helpful & better prepared for school projects	-	100

Discussion

The training on the use of Piktochart succeeded in improving students' understanding in designing digital posters with an easy and interactive approach. Students were able to complete each stage from creating an account, choosing a template, compiling content, to downloading the design results independently after initial assistance from the implementation team. This process demonstrates the effectiveness of hands-on methods in improving digital media usage skills among high school students (Kapici et al., 2019).

Similar results were also found in the data visualization training using online applications in a school setting, where the hands-on approach was able to foster interest in learning and significantly improve students' visual communication skills (Chen et al., 2020). This kind of activity also encourages

creativity as students not only absorb the material, but also actively produce digital content relevant to their world (Marpaung, 2024).

In contrast to online training activities without direct interaction, the face-to-face approach in this activity provides more space for discussion, immediate feedback, and correction of student work (Goodman et al., 2016; Misbah, 2022). This interaction also strengthened technical understanding and accelerated adaptation to digital application features such as Piktochart.

This training showed a success rate of around 98% based on the achievement of the basic skills targets. This kind of activity needs to be further developed with advanced topics such as making data infographics, school campaign content, or creative presentation materials so that students have a broader and more applicable digital literacy provision (Patmanthara & Hidayat, 2018).

Conclusions

The training on the introduction and use of Piktochart for digital poster making succeeded in creating an active, creative, and fun learning atmosphere among the 8th grade students of Makassar Junior High School 25. With a simple yet applicable approach, participants not only understood the basic concepts of visual design, but were also able to produce informative and aesthetically pleasing posters. The 98% success rate of the participants reflects their enthusiasm and high absorption of the material provided. This activity proves that digital literacy can be effectively instilled from the middle school level, especially through visual media that is relevant to students' daily lives. This experience is expected to be the starting point for broader and more sustainable digital skills development in the future.

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