STUDENTS' VIRTUAL DRAMA PERFORMANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE DIGITAL ERA: CREATIVITY AND ADAPTATION IN LEARNING

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Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated rapid adaptation to digital and remote learning, fundamentally altering traditional pedagogical practices. For English Education students, especially those engaged in literature courses, drama performance has long been a valuable tool for exploring and expressing literary understanding. However, the sudden shift to online learning environments presented unique challenges, pushing students to reconceptualize drama performance in a virtual setting. This study investigates how English Education students creatively adapted to these changes by producing virtual drama performances through the Zoom platform. The integration of virtual backgrounds, designed using Canva, allowed students to construct imaginative settings that supported narrative immersion, despite the physical separation. This research highlights the ways students utilized digital tools to convey dramatic elements and literary interpretation, transforming conventional stagecraft into an innovative, digital form of storytelling. Through in-depth analysis, this article explores how these virtual performances not only maintained the integrity of drama as a medium for literary education but also fostered critical technological skills that are increasingly relevant in the digital era. The findings demonstrate that virtual drama projects encouraged students to combine creativity with technical proficiency, enhancing their adaptability, digital literacy, and ability to collaborate in a remote context. This study underscores the evolving role of literature-based performance in English Language Teaching (ELT), suggesting that the integration of digital tools in creative projects may serve as a sustainable model for literature education in the post-pandemic future.

Keywords: *Virtual Drama, English Language Teaching, Technology Integration, Creativity &Adaptation.*

INTRODUCTION
Drama performance has long been recognized as an effective method in teaching and understanding literature. However, the COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed the landscape of education. With campus closures and physical restrictions, traditional teaching methods had to be modified to remain relevant in the context of distance learning.

English Education students were challenged to find new ways to continue learning methods that involve social interaction and creativity, such as drama performances (Zhang, 2021; Schenker, 2021; Inderawati et al., 2023).

Drama performance has transcended spatial and temporal boundaries as one of the most powerful and engaging teaching methods. Literature, with all its complexity and beauty, can often be brought to life through physical expression, emotions, and interpretations involved in dramatic performances (Guo & Chen, 2018). Alongside technological advancements, drama performances have evolved from traditional stages to modern screens. However, in 2020, the world suddenly came to a halt, trapped in the web of a rampant pandemic - COVID-19. This pandemic not only threatened physical health but also shook the established foundations of education (Inderawati et al., 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic, with all its changes and challenges, has forced educators, students, and educational institutions to adapt to a new and uncertain environment. Campus closures and social restrictions have fundamentally altered the educational landscape. Physical activities such as classroom meetings, group discussions, and, not to mention, drama performances, had to be temporarily abandoned. However, humans have an extraordinary instinct for adaptation (Tanasijević & Janković, 2021). This pandemic triggered the birth of new innovations in education, encouraging the search for alternative ways to maintain the essence of learning while ensuring the safety of all individuals involved (Tam, 2020).

In the digital age, virtual drama performances have become a notable milestone within literature education. This innovative approach enables educators and learners to transcend physical and geographical constraints, fostering engaging and impactful learning experiences. Though originally considered a temporary adaptation during the pandemic, virtual drama performances have demonstrated their lasting effectiveness as a teaching tool (Cziboly & Bethlenfalvy, 2022; Inderawati, 2022).

Modern education in the digital realm prioritizes not only the transmission of knowledge but also the cultivation of a diverse skill set. Virtual drama performances incorporate interactivity and creativity into literature education, enriching the learning process, enabling students to enhance communication, problem-solving, and teamwork skills crucial for today's job market (Hazaymeh, 2021; Halim & Sunarti, 2021). According to Peñalver and Laborda (2021), these performances also facilitate the improvement of oral communication skills, essential for effective interaction in diverse environments.

Incorporating technology into these performances demonstrates a mastery of tools like Zoom and Canva. Students quickly adapt to technological changes, showcasing their ability to leverage technology, which is essential in today's workforce (Suadi, 2021; Li, 2021). The transformation of Zoom from a meeting tool to a dynamic virtual stage illustrates this shift, allowing students to express creativity and engage in literature learning (Sneed, 2021). Moşteanu (2021) emphasizes that maintaining student attention in a virtual environment is critical, highlighting the need for engaging methodologies that virtual drama can provide.

The auditory dimension is equally vital; students learn to modulate their voices for clarity and emotional impact, bridging the connection with the audience (Puspitasari & Hanayanti, 2023). Canva plays a crucial role in crafting immersive backgrounds that support the narrative, enhancing the audience's experience through cohesive visual storytelling (Nurhayati, 2016; Trang, 2024). This multimedia approach resonates with the findings of Somara et al. (2021), who noted that students' engagement in virtual learning is significantly influenced by the quality of visual and auditory resources.

Combining Zoom and Canva allows students to create performances that provide a deeper experience, affirming that technology transforms literature interaction (Tang et al., 2022; Senderoff, 2021). Their creativity and adaptability illustrate that theater transcends physical boundaries, thriving in the digital realm (Mandasari, Rido, & Kuswoyo, 2022). Additionally, Pambudi and Samoal (2022) argue that ICT-based learning innovations can significantly enhance educational quality, especially during unprecedented times.

The ELT course is pivotal in connecting virtual drama performances with the curriculum, reflecting a commitment to bridging tradition and innovation (Erliza & Septianingsih, 2022). Despite successes, challenges persist, including varying technology accessibility and digital skills among students, necessitating efforts to ensure inclusivity (Apriliani & Puspitasari, 2022; Hardianti & Irmansyah, 2024). Yuliana (2021) also points out that the implementation of information and communication technology in teaching must

address these disparities to maximize the learning experience for all students.

As a result, the findings indicate that virtual drama performances extend beyond being a temporary solution to pandemic challenges; they represent a lasting innovation with a positive influence on literature education. Through the integration of interactivity, creativity, and technological proficiency, these performances help English Education students prepare for an increasingly complex and interconnected global landscape (Nurhajati, 2021; Umralieva et al., 2021; Asfihana et al., 2022). This demonstrates the adaptability and resilience of educational methods when confronted with obstacles, setting the stage for continued advancements in teaching and learning.

In English Education, teaching literature is crucial for fostering an understanding of foreign cultures and languages, with drama performances playing a pivotal role (Barekat & Nazemi, 2020; Santosa & Hardiyanti, 2022). These performances allow students to deeply engage with characters, conflicts, and themes of literary works, creating lasting and impactful experiences. Yet, when direct social interaction poses health risks, the question arises: how can the richness of social engagement be preserved while utilizing effective teaching strategies? This article investigates how English Education students confront this challenge and uncover inventive solutions (Alvarado, 2021).

Throughout history, challenges have often led to innovative breakthroughs (Risdianto et al., 2019). The pandemic has motivated educators to devise novel methods for keeping learning engaging and meaningful, even when limited to digital interactions. Though virtual drama performances may initially appear to conflict with the inherently social nature of traditional drama, they have become an integral component of contemporary educational programs (Mu'awanah et al., 2021; Zakopoulos et al., 2023).

Advancements in technology not only enable virtual drama performances but also create new possibilities for interaction, collaboration, and presentation (Tang et al., 2022; Inderawati et al., 2024). Prestigious institutions such as Cambridge English have promoted the integration of technology within language instruction, including drama-based activities (Bereczki & Karpati, 2021). Their stance is that virtual platforms allow for the incorporation of interactive and visual elements in literature education, thereby enhancing its depth and engagement.

Additionally, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) underscores the significance of employing creative strategies in teaching literature. They emphasize that technological tools, including virtual drama performances, can spark students' imaginations, foster multiliteracy skills, and bridge literature with the increasingly digital environment (Bee Choo et al., 2022).

Although the concept of virtual drama performances in English language education is not entirely new, numerous studies have examined their possibilities and effects (Karwandi et al., 2022; Thao et al., 2022). Nevertheless, a research gap persists. While existing research has touched on virtual drama performances, more investigation is needed to understand how English Education students specifically engage with and adapt to this approach within a rapidly advancing digital landscape. This article seeks to fill this gap by centering on students and their involvement in developing innovative and meaningful learning experiences in the dynamic world of education. Consequently, this study contributes valuable perspectives to the realms of English education and literature learning in the digital era.

METHOD

This research adopts a comprehensive qualitative approach to examine the experiences of English Education students as they transition to distance learning and engage in virtual drama performances. Creswell (2014) emphasizes that qualitative research is an effective method for exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups attribute to social or human challenges, making it particularly well-suited for gaining deeper insights into how students adjust to changes in their educational settings and the ways they overcome challenges associated with virtual performances.

This research employed three main methods for data collection: observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observation involved closely monitoring and capturing behaviors, interactions, and non-verbal cues that might not be apparent during interviews or through documentation. The in-depth interviews focused on students who actively engaged in virtual drama performances on the Zoom platform. Interviews are particularly useful for gaining a "comprehensive understanding of how individuals perceive and interpret specific situations" (Seidman, 2006). These sessions allowed students to share their experiences, highlight challenges they faced, describe their solutions, and reflect on

how their educational experiences evolved. By listening to their personal stories, the researcher gained detailed insights into students' emotional, academic, and social adjustments to the new learning environment.

In addition, document analysis formed a key component of the research. This analysis included student-created drama project assignments and virtual backgrounds designed using Canva. The drama projects revealed how students applied dramatic techniques within a virtual setting, addressed technical challenges, and expressed their literary understanding in an online format. Analyzing the Canva-designed virtual backgrounds also offered insights into students' visual interpretation skills, showing how they attempted to convey the atmosphere of literary works through design elements. Yin (2018) highlighted that document analysis enhances other qualitative data sources by offering a deeper insight into the surrounding context and background.

A triangulation approach was employed to validate the findings, with data from observation, interviews and document analysis enriching each other, thereby providing a more holistic and comprehensive perspective on students' virtual drama experiences. The triangulation of these methods allowed the researcher to corroborate findings and enhance the reliability of the insights gained.

An inductive approach was employed for data analysis, enabling themes and patterns to naturally emerge from the collected data (Patton, 2002). Interview transcripts and documents underwent a continuous, detailed review to identify recurring patterns, distinctions, and commonalities within students' experiences and reflections. This analysis highlighted their adaptation process, the creative approaches used in virtual drama, and their increasing proficiency with technology.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The detailed findings of this study illustrate that English Education students not only adjusted rapidly to the shift in learning paradigms triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic but did so with remarkable creativity. The sudden loss of physical stages led them to explore uncharted territories in the form of virtual drama performances.

During this period, virtual drama served as a vital means for students to stay engaged and actively participate in the learning process. Faced with the challenge of limited face-to-face interaction, they embraced technology,

transforming platforms like Zoom into virtual stages that facilitated new ways of collaboration and engagement. They navigated technical features such as screen sharing and virtual backgrounds, creatively adapting these tools to convey dramatic elements in fresh and captivating ways.

Beyond merely adapting to new technologies, students demonstrated a high level of creativity in their integration. Tools like Canva were utilized to create virtual backgrounds, reflecting their inventive approach. These thoughtfully crafted backdrops did more than enhance visual appeal; they set the stage for nuanced portrayals of literary works, enriching the virtual experience for audiences. As a result, students moved beyond simply completing assignments and crafted immersive and sensory-rich performances.

Below is the result from observation. Firstly, from the video, the researchers could verify whether these challenges had any visible impact on the final product. The video showed students having to adjust their environment to overcome background problems, there was an evidence of poor audio/video quality due to signal issues. Secondly, the video could reveal how well the students worked together during the performance. They seemed coordinated. Furthermore, the researchers could assess whether these props and costumes were effectively integrated into the performance. The students could highlight creative adaptations and enhance the characters in the story. Lastly, during the observation, they could evaluate if the technical challenges were reflected in the video quality (e.g., poor background, unclear video due to signal issues).

The interview findings shed light on the diverse experiences and challenges faced by English Education students during the preparation and execution of virtual drama performances. M1 shared initial struggles due to hardware limitations, as their laptop frequently overheated and failed to support Zoom's virtual backgrounds, leading them to borrow a friend's laptop. This challenge, however, turned into an engaging experience through persistent rehearsal and recording efforts. M8 highlighted technical difficulties such as unreliable internet connections and challenges coordinating rehearsals with group members situated in various locations. Additionally, issues with virtual backgrounds, which sometimes obscured participants' faces and headscarves, further complicated their efforts.

M12 detailed the benefits of repeated practice sessions, noting that their group's final recording session went smoothly due to prior rehearsals and

the use of costumes and props provided by their lecturer, Ma'am Rita. Their familiarity with the script and storyline contributed to a seamless performance. Similarly, M23 emphasized the collaborative aspect of text editing, which fostered stronger bonds among classmates. Initially perceived as an insurmountable task, the virtual drama project became an enjoyable endeavor thanks to the lecturer's flexible and supportive approach.

In contrast, M4 encountered relatively few difficulties during recording but acknowledged the challenges posed by unstable internet connections and scheduling conflicts with other participants. M17 expressed that while virtual drama is feasible, it is best suited for simpler stories requiring fewer costumes and props. Despite its imperfections, they found the experience rewarding and memorable. M25 reflected on their journey from struggling with basic laptop functions to mastering creative tasks involved in drama production, ultimately appreciating the opportunity to learn and adapt.

M27 conveyed enthusiasm for the experience, appreciating the guidance provided by Ma'am Rita, while M30 emphasized the alignment of virtual drama with the 4th industrial revolution. They underscored the importance of such activities for fostering key skills, including collaboration, creativity, and technical prowess in areas such as editing and makeup. For these students, virtual drama served as a valuable platform for both personal and academic growth, highlighting its potential as an innovative educational tool in the digital age.

Here is a table that categorizes the interview results into themes related to the preparation and process of conducting virtual drama performances.

Table 1. *Interview results*

Category	Aspect/Details	Student Response (ID)
Technical Challenges	Laptop overheating and inability to utilize Zoom backgrounds due to camera issues; resolved by borrowing a friend's laptop for the performance.	M1
	Signal and connectivity issues; coordination of practice times among students from different locations; virtual backgrounds often malfunctioning (covering faces, hair, etc.).	M8
	Signal disruptions occasionally required adjustment of schedules with friends during recording.	M4
Collaboration and Coordination	Collective text editing improved relationships among classmates; flexibility and freedom from the lecturer enhanced the experience and overall enjoyment.	M23
	Coordination during costume preparation and practice based on suggestions from the instructor; frequent rehearsals led to smooth final recording.	M12
	Coordinating practice schedules due to varying availability.	M4
Creativity and Adaptation	Use of creativity to solve technical challenges, including virtual background adjustments and prop-making (e.g., crafting simple costumes and accessories).	M25, M8
	Using simpler stories for a virtual medium, as they demand fewer props and costumes; first-time experience led to an enjoyable performance despite limitations.	M17
	Learned new skills (e.g., operating a laptop, being creative with limited resources); transformed challenges into opportunities.	M25
	New and exciting experience, guided by an instructor from beginning to end, while building unique skills.	M27

Benefits and Skills Developed	Development of critical 21st-century skills, such as collaboration, creativity, and incorporating multimedia elements (sound editing, makeup skills, etc.) relevant to technological advancement in learning.	M30

This table aligns with the thematic analysis of the interview responses and categorizes aspects that were discussed by the students, highlighting their experiences, challenges, creativity, and skill development through the virtual drama project.

In addition to observation and interview, documentation was another primary instrument in this research. The documentation was obtained by capturing the virtual drama performance, the equipment used by the students, and the property created by the main characters. Here is a summary regarding the virtual drama performance video "Beowulf":

Students encountered several obstacles during rehearsals, such as issues with backgrounds not displaying correctly, the necessity of a premium Zoom account, connectivity problems, and inadequate lighting.

Throughout the recording process, students experienced minimal difficulties overall, though occasional internet connectivity issues required adjustments to accommodate the group members' schedules.

One student demonstrated creativity by crafting a crown out of cardboard and decorating it with golden mangosteen paper, while another improvised by using a distinctive blanket to portray a king, adding black patches as a moustache and beard.

A student who regularly wears glasses ingeniously modified a cardboard mask to conceal their glasses while performing.

Figure 1. *Student's performance*

Based on the findings from the research instruments: interviews, documentation, and observations, the results can be qualitatively elaborated by using a scale of "rarely," "sometimes," "often," or "always" for several of the key categories of findings that have been described. First of all, student Collaboration and Independence was frequent. Second, creativity in overcoming challenges was also frequent. Next, technical barriers and adaptation was frequent as well. Finally, meaningful Learning was categorized as: Always. The figure displays the categories from the triangulation.
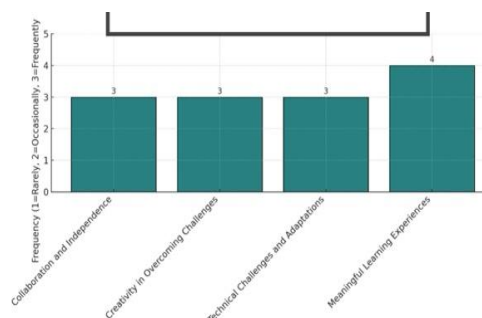

Figure 2. *Categories from the triangulation*

Moving into the era of the New Normal, where technological adaptation becomes ever more essential, the use of virtual drama performances in English education continues to hold significant relevance. Even as opportunities for in-person interaction grow, students still regard technology as their primary means of conveying dramatic narratives. This viewpoint highlights the forward-thinking approach of English Education students, who see technology not just as a tool but as a medium through which they can engage with literature, language, and audiences in a highly connected world.

The challenges faced by students, such as issues with backgrounds not appearing, the need for a premium Zoom account, connectivity problems, and lighting difficulties, reflect typical obstacles encountered in virtual learning and performance settings.

These technical barriers can negatively impact the quality of student engagement and performance in online settings.

Studies have shown that virtual learning environments, especially when involving performance-based activities like drama, can face technological barriers. For example, issues with bandwidth and the need for premium tools have been highlighted in research by Elumalai et al (2021), who argue that insufficient technological support can hinder the effectiveness of virtual learning in creative disciplines. Similarly, studies by Zakopoulos et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of stable connectivity and adequate

technical infrastructure to support interactive and collaborative learning, especially in performance-driven activities such as drama.

However, some research suggests that challenges related to virtual learning can be overcome through innovation and resourcefulness. According to Almufarreh & Arshad (2023), students can often adapt to such challenges by finding alternative solutions, such as using free online tools or collaborating on technical workarounds. In this recent research, the fact that students continued the process despite these challenges could indicate resilience and adaptability, which are valuable skills in remote learning settings.

These challenges may indicate the need for greater institutional support, both in terms of technology (such as providing Zoom accounts or better internet infrastructure) and training on how to handle virtual performance challenges. It also highlights the resourcefulness of students, who found creative solutions, such as improvising with backgrounds and equipment, to overcome technical limitations.

While the recording process itself was generally smooth, the issues of signal problems and scheduling adjustments reflect the ongoing challenges of managing collaborative work in a virtual space. Studies on virtual collaboration in educational settings (Oyarzun & Martin, 2023) emphasize the importance of communication and collaboration tools to facilitate teamwork. However, they also acknowledge that even when technological tools are effective, external factors such as internet connectivity and time zone differences can create significant challenges. Research by Hussein (2021) highlights how coordination problems, like scheduling issues, are common in group-based online projects, which could be a factor in this study's findings.

Some literature argues that virtual collaboration platforms can still support effective teamwork, even in the face of such challenges. For instance, Dissanayeke et al (2024) suggest that scheduling flexibility and the use of asynchronous collaboration tools (such as Google Docs, as you mentioned earlier) can reduce these problems significantly, enabling groups to work effectively even with connectivity issues. While the research acknowledges some difficulties with scheduling and connectivity, the overall success of the recording process indicates that the tools and strategies employed (e.g., adjusting schedules) were sufficient to overcome these barriers. It suggests that with careful planning, even virtual

environments with technical limitations can provide meaningful learning experiences.

The creative use of materials, such as cardboard for a crown and mask, and a blanket with black patches, reflects the improvisational and resourceful nature of the students' approach to their roles in the drama performance. These makeshift props and costumes are indicative of the students' willingness to adapt and use available resources in an innovative manner. Research by Haim & Aschauer (2024) on creative problem-solving in educational settings suggests that engaging with limited resources can foster creativity and innovation. For example, students involved in low-cost, DIY projects are often forced to think outside the box, which can lead to highly imaginative and resourceful outcomes. In this context, the use of common household materials like cardboard and blankets could enhance students' engagement and problem-solving skills.

On the other hand, some critics argue that relying on improvised props and costumes might compromise the professional quality of the performance. According to Ferri et al (2020), the lack of adequate resources in virtual learning environments may result in students being unable to fully realize their creative potential, which could detract from the overall educational experience, especially in performance-based activities that require high production values.

So, the use of improvised props in this study is a testament to the students' creativity and ability to adapt in the face of limited resources. It highlights the potential for innovative problem-solving even within constraints. While it may not have led to a high-production-value performance, the creative decisions made by students likely contributed to their learning process, fostering creativity and adaptability.

The student who modified a cardboard mask to accommodate their glasses is a particularly interesting case, as it reflects an effort to balance practical needs with creative expression. This solution suggests that students were not only thinking about their roles but also about how to make the performance functional and accessible. This case aligns with findings in educational research on accessibility and inclusion. Studies such as those by Maroungkas et al (2024) emphasize that students in virtual environments should feel that their needs (such as wearing glasses or other personal characteristics) are taken into account in the learning process. This mask modification demonstrates how students in online performances can apply practical thinking to

improve the accessibility and comfort of their virtual roles.

However, some researchers (e.g., Gravel, 2024) point out that such modifications might not always be ideal, as they could lead to practical limitations. For example, modifying the mask might not achieve the desired visual impact or could interfere with the actor's expression or interaction with other students. The modification of the mask in this case shows the student's initiative to address personal needs while participating in the virtual drama. It suggests that the virtual drama environment allowed for both creative freedom and the accommodation of individual needs, resulting in a more inclusive and thoughtful approach to performance.

In this research, the use of documentation to capture students' virtual drama performances offers valuable insights into the challenges and creative solutions that emerged. The challenges of virtual rehearsals, the smooth recording process, and the resourceful creation of props all highlight the students' resilience and adaptability. These findings are consistent with existing literature on virtual learning environments, suggesting that despite technical limitations, students can engage in meaningful and creative learning experiences.

While there were challenges, the adaptations made by the students demonstrate that creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving can thrive in virtual settings, with proper support and flexibility. The documentation not only provides a record of the performance but also offers insights into the students' learning processes, which can inform future virtual performance-based educational projects.

The properties created by the students not only reflect their creativity and resourcefulness but also contribute to their overall engagement with the material and their characters. These props are more than just accessories; they play a vital role in helping students connect with the narrative and express their understanding of the roles they are performing. Analyzing these props offers insights into students' cognitive and creative processes, shedding light on their learning experience in the virtual drama setting.

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The findings from the research instruments—interviews, documentation, and observations—can be qualitatively analyzed by applying a scale of "rarely," "sometimes," "often," or "always" to several key categories of results that have been outlined.

First of all, student Collaboration and Independence was frequent. Interview data indicated that students worked together to complete their virtual drama, sharing tasks, and adjusting schedules. Documentation supported this by showing the group work processes that occurred, such as role assignments, prop creation, and rehearsal coordination. Observation also showed consistent interaction and support among students throughout the process, despite the technical challenges encountered. This finding is supported by documentation, which highlighted their cooperative efforts in production and editing processes. It confirmed these aspects through the visible teamwork and interaction displayed during performance scenes, demonstrating effective coordination.

Second, creativity in overcoming challenges was also frequent. Both interview and documentation highlighted how students used limited resources to create props and costumes. Observations demonstrated their creativity in overcoming technical challenges and equipment limitations. It confirmed their innovative problem-solving skills, as seen in how props and virtual elements were integrated into the performances, adding depth to the storytelling.This suggests that students often had to think outside the box to achieve their desired outcomes.

Next, technical barriers and adaptation was frequent as well. Students often faced technical challenges such as internet connection, inadequate devices, and the use of virtual backgrounds. Interviews revealed how they adapted by borrowing devices or finding other solutions. While, observation showed the impact of these barriers, although they often found ways to continue the project.

Finally, meaningful Learning was categorized as: Always. All three instruments reflected that this experience provided meaningful learning. Interviews indicated that students felt they had gained new skills, while documentation showed the results they had achieved. Observation showed that each session led to improvements in their abilities, confidence, and skills they had mastered.

Observations of the recorded performances revealed both growth in confidence and increased proficiency as they showcased their mastery of dramatic elements.

Overall, the findings of the study indicate that students often worked collaboratively, demonstrated high creativity, and faced technical challenges with fairly good adaptation. The learning experience of this virtual drama project seemed to consistently have a positive impact, both in technical and non-technical aspects.

The triangulation of data from interviews, documentation, and observation indicates that the virtual drama project significantly enhanced students' collaboration, creativity, and resilience in the face of technical challenges. The experience provided an engaging, practical application of digital and interpersonal skills, demonstrating the potential of innovative, technology-driven educational initiatives. Despite challenges, the overall process proved to be enriching, pushing students to explore their capabilities beyond traditional formats.

CONCLUSION

Virtual drama productions by students in the English Education program serve as a concrete demonstration of how innovative solutions can address the learning obstacles created by the pandemic. In the New Normal era, mastering technology and harnessing creativity have transitioned from being mere options to essential skills. This current research highlights the significant role of creativity and adaptation in the learning process and reveals that students, when engaged in virtual drama activities, demonstrate increased creativity in their language use, performance skills, and digital tool utilization. The digital platform not only facilitated an innovative approach to learning but also allowed students to adapt their communication styles and learning strategies to suit the online environment. Moreover, the findings suggest that virtual drama performances offer an effective medium for enhancing students' language proficiency, critical thinking, and collaborative skills. As educational settings continue to evolve, integrating creative virtual performances into ELT can foster a more engaging and dynamic learning experience, aligning with the demands of the digital era.

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