

## Digital platform-based learning communication model at Tunas Unggul Junior High School Bandung

Ghina Hadiniyati<sup>1</sup>, Lucy Pujasari Supratman<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Faculty of Communication and Social Sciences, Telkom University, Bandung, Indonesia

### ABSTRACT

In the digital era, educational communication has undergone innovations through digital platforms in digital technology-based schools. Tunas Unggul Junior High School, or SMP Tunas Unggul, a Global Interactive School in Bandung, emphasizes technology in its learning models for all students. This study aims to describe the digital technology-based learning communication model communicated by the SMP Tunas Unggul Bandung teachers to students across all classes. The research used a qualitative method with a case study approach, wherein data were collected through interviews and observations, with researchers directly engaging in the classroom activities of teachers and students. The findings indicate that the learning communication implemented at Tunas Unggul Bandung is interactive and based on digital technology, involving various verbal and nonverbal symbols. Teachers utilized interactive media such as Canva and a Learning Management System. The interactive learning communication between teachers and students at SMP Tunas Unggul Bandung has served as a means to build bonds between teachers and students, ensuring that all stakeholders adopt digital media-based learning well. Its implementation has proven to improve the quality of learning, one of the indicators being the noticeable improvement in learning outcomes experienced directly by the students. The findings of this study are expected to serve as practical suggestions for communication processes in the education sector, particularly at equivalent levels. In the future, it is hoped that more research in learning communication, mainly digital platform-based learning, will enrich the literature of Communication Science in education.

**Keywords:** Digital platform; learning communication; model; students; teachers

### *Model Komunikasi pembelajaran berbasis digital platform di SMP Tunas Unggul Bandung*

### ABSTRAK

Komunikasi pembelajaran di era digital mengalami inovasi dalam penggunaan media platform-platform pada sekolah berbasis teknologi digital. SMP Tunas Unggul Bandung yang merupakan sebuah Global Interactive School, mengedepankan penggunaan teknologi digital dalam proses pembelajaran pada seluruh siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguraikan model komunikasi pembelajaran dengan basis teknologi digital yang dikomunikasikan oleh guru-guru SMP Tunas Unggul Bandung pada murid-murid di seluruh grade. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus dimana peneliti melakukan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara semi struktur dan observasi lapangan dengan turut terlibat langsung ke dalam aktivitas pembelajaran guru dan siswa di dalam kelas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi pembelajaran yang diterapkan di SMP Tunas Unggul Bandung adalah komunikasi pembelajaran interaktif berbasis teknologi digital yang melibatkan berbagai simbol, baik simbol verbal maupun non verbal. Para guru menggunakan media interaktif seperti Canva dan Learning Management System. Komunikasi pembelajaran interaktif antara guru dan siswa yang telah diterapkan di SMP Tunas Unggul Bandung menjadi sebuah sarana dalam membangun ikatan guru dengan siswa agar pembelajaran berbasis media digital dapat teradopsi dengan baik oleh seluruh stakeholder. Implementasinya pun terbukti meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran salah satunya ditandai dengan peningkatan hasil belajar yang dirasakan langsung oleh para siswa. Temuan pada penelitian ini diharapkan menjadi saran praktis bagi proses komunikasi di sektor pendidikan terutama pada jenjang yang setara. Pada masa mendatang, diharapkan lebih banyak penelitian-penelitian di bidang komunikasi pembelajaran terutama pembelajaran berbasis teknologi digital untuk memperkaya literatur Ilmu Komunikasi di bidang pembelajaran

**Kata-kata kunci:** Digital platform, komunikasi pembelajaran, model; siswa; guru

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**Correspondence:** Ghina Hadiniyati, S.I.Kom., Telkom University, Jl. Telekomunikasi No. 1, Terusan Buahbatu, Bojongsong, Bandung, Jawa Barat 40257. Email: [ghinahadiniyati@gmail.com](mailto:ghinahadiniyati@gmail.com)

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## INTRODUCTION

Communication plays a vital role in the field of education. Communication is a routine activity between teachers and students (Ghosh, 2022). Communication is a process that involves delivering messages through various media, including messages in the form of ideas, signals, or actions that trigger a response. Effective communication, moreover, is a skill that can be learned (Safi et al., 2022).

Communication is a fundamental activity and also one of the most critical and complex aspects of human life. Through communication, humans can interact with one another wherever they are. Communication permeates all aspects of human life, ranging from social, cultural, political, and economic elements to health and education (Ibrahim et al., 2022). The concepts and strategies of communication applied in the learning process can generate optimal and high-quality learning outcomes, from the planning process to the learning results. In short, the study of communication, especially learning communication, can support establishing an effective learning process that aligns with set goals and expected outcomes.

Since the development of the learning communication tradition, communication scholars have studied various aspects of communication in learning. These aspects

include the basic concepts of learning communication, forms and strategies of understanding communication, interaction processes in learning, the use of media, and obstacles in learning communication, among other aspects related to the communication process in learning.

Research by Maghfira and Mahadian (2018) discusses the exchange of symbols between teachers and students, both verbal and non-verbal. This research examines the learning process outcomes perceived by teachers, students, and parents by understanding their views on the importance of education and learning. This study discusses the interactions that take place between teachers and students both inside and outside the classroom. It also describes how verbal and nonverbal symbol exchanges occur within these interactions. The research states that the interaction built by the teacher with the students forms an interpersonal relationship, which supports the creation of more open communication. This, in turn, helps the teacher identify the difficulties students face during the learning process. However, the study does not explain which teaching media the teacher uses during the learning process (Maghfira & Mahadian, 2018).

Additionally, research by Hidayat (2018) aims to study the communication between teachers and students in the learning process

using an ethnopractical approach. This study states that the communication and interaction process between teachers and students must be established to achieve learning objectives. It also explains that observation, question-and-answer sessions, information gathering, reasoning, and communication are general learning themes. The communication structure in learning includes the introduction, core activities, and conclusion. This research uses an ethnopragmatic method and asserts that their cultural backgrounds highly influence the teacher's and students' communication process. However, the study does not describe the forms of communication or the teaching media used in the process (Hidayat, 2018).

Furthermore, research by Dhillon and Kaur (2021) explores the communication styles of instructors and their impact on the effectiveness of learning communication. This study concludes that the learning communication style significantly affects communication effectiveness. These studies provide insights into the importance of enhancing interpersonal relationships and building interactive communication to improve the effectiveness of learning, which in turn contributes to the quality of education. Similar to the two previous studies that have been presented, this study does not mention the teaching media used in the communication process between the teacher

and the students being researched (Dhillon & Kaur, 2021).

The previous studies above show a close relationship between communication and learning, emphasizing the vital role of communication in the planning, process, and outcomes of the learning itself. However, none of the three studies mention how the use of learning resources or media is applied in the communication and interaction process between the teacher and the students. This study was conducted to complement previous research on learning communication by focusing on using digital platform media in classroom learning activities.

This research was conducted at one of the private junior high schools in Bandung, namely SMP Tunas Unggul Bandung. This school is one of the leading private schools in Bandung that has produced fourteen generations since its establishment. SMP Tunas Unggul Bandung is accredited "A" under the Ministry of Education and Culture. Although it operates under the umbrella of the Ministry, which currently implements the Merdeka Curriculum, SMP Tunas Unggul has adopted an independent curriculum derived from the Merdeka Curriculum and the International Baccalaureate Curriculum, aimed at enabling its graduates to compete globally.

Knowledge, culture, values, norms,

behaviors, and human roles result from the consistency of the communication process. This means that these aspects are passed down from one generation to the next through the process of communication (Nofrion, 2016). Communication scholars have made advancements in the tradition of communication studies, including establishing a conceptual foundation for educational communication. Communication in the learning process in education is fundamentally the same as communication in other processes in human life. The teaching and learning process is a process of message distribution from one or more people to others, either individually or in groups, which reflects a communication process (Muhtadi, 2022).

Based on Ping, communication is a two-way process that requires complete understanding between the participants. The quality of communication heavily depends on the communication skills of the parties involved. In the learning process, the quality of communication is influenced by the relationship between the teacher and the students (Sejtanic & Lalic, 2016).

Implementing effective communication strategies positively impacts the development of students' potential and careers. Effective communication can serve as motivation that encourages students to strive hard to

develop their potential. Therefore, it can be said that effective communication needs to be conducted by both teachers and students in the learning process, including through various channels or media to support the learning process itself (Asrar et al., 2018). In addition, the ability to communicate effectively is also needed to maintain and enhance interpersonal relationships between teachers and students (Qodriyah & Rakhma, 2021).

The relationship between teacher and student is essential. Both teacher and student spend hours together almost every day. The relationship impacts the communication between both of them in the learning process (Asrar et al., 2018). Education is a process of interaction conducted by trainers and learners consciously, systematically, and in a planned manner. Education aims to realize the learners' full potential, also called students. The urgency of communication in education lies in the application of learning communication theories and concepts which can provide knowledge for teachers and students, serve as a tool to analyze and provide solutions to various issues, help develop soft skills for teachers and students, support the creation of values and character, improve good interpersonal relationships, and assist teachers and students in achieving educational goals (Kurniawan et al., 2023).

The quality of communication implemented has a significant impact on the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. In the learning context, teachers and students, as communication actors, simultaneously create a conducive communication atmosphere. This enables an effective communication process, thereby allowing the learning process to be effectively conducted as well (Muhtadi, 2022).

The foregoing discussion aptly illustrates the urgency of the communication process within learning. Theories and concepts from communication studies can be applied to all aspects of human life, including the learning process. Implementing communication theories and concepts can support a learning process according to objectives and procedures. Implementing these theories and concepts in learning can undoubtedly optimize the learning process itself. It can be concluded that communication is essential for the continuity of a learning process in the educational world.

In its implementation, learning communication involves a process of symbolic interaction. The transmission of knowledge in the form of teaching material from teacher to student consists of the exchange of various symbols (Smith, 2021). Symbolic interactionism is one of the theories in social science studies, which is based on meaning. This theory addresses ideas about an individual's self and relationship

with society. In symbolic interactionism, facts are based on and directed by a collection of symbols (Rina et al., 2019). Communicating through symbols allows individuals to express and interpret feelings, thoughts, and intentions (Simabur & Bailussy, 2022).

Symbols consist of two forms: verbal and nonverbal. The communication process conducted by individuals contains messages conveyed using both types of symbols. Verbal symbols are apparent when communication occurs in speech or writing. Various kinds of verbal symbols include oral, written, and digital symbols. Oral symbols are spoken words and represent the original form of verbal communication. Written symbols are words communicated in written form. Digital symbols represent verbal communication using digital platform-based media. The development of social media today has transformed verbal symbols into digital forms and facilitated the mass exchange of verbal messages. The first principle of verbal symbols is that interpretation is an effort to create meaning using denotation, connotation, or context. Second, communication is a symbolic and structured language process. Third, regulative rules represent when, how, where, and with whom to converse. Fourth, constitutive rules provide information on how to add meaning to an interaction (Liliweri, 2021).

The second type of symbol is nonverbal.

This symbol can be paralinguistics or vocal cues, proxemics or spatial arrangements, appearance, kinesics, which include gestures, posture, facial expressions, eye movements, touch, and time. Nonverbal symbols function to reinforce messages conveyed in verbal language, repeat and emphasize messages, manage and regulate interactions, express emotions, convey messages in specific relationships, promote honesty, and create persuasive situations to strengthen relationships (Liliweri, 2021).

Language is essential for humans to develop speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. All these skills support an individual's ability to communicate and make changes to support personal, societal, and national progress. Even in the current era of globalization, individuals, including students, are required to have good language skills to communicate effectively and politely, be creative, think critically, and collaborate and compete globally (Noermanzah, 2019).

The use of language in the learning process is inevitable and cannot be ignored. Language is a crucial element that facilitates the occurrence of learning communication. Communication actors, in this case, educators and learners, need to pay attention to language style so that learning communication can occur effectively. By focusing on language style, both parties involved can understand each other regarding

what is being expressed. The importance of language in the learning process is such that it is noted modern learning in the ongoing digital era has created a digital-based communication model in the educational environment, where language serves as the medium (Kurniawan et al., 2023; Wicaksono, 2016). The use of appropriate language by both teachers and students can reflect expressions and emotions in the communication process. Proper language use also helps create an egalitarian academic environment (Febrianti et al., 2023).

Currently, the world is entering the digital era. The digitalization of this era has also affected all aspects of the global population, including Indonesia. The use of digital media in Indonesia has also seen (Maryani et al., 2022).

In today's era of globalization, the use of media in communication is not uncommon, including in learning communication. New media have emerged in various forms and evolved following the advancement of technology, communication, and information. New media are inseparable from technology, as they are a form of new technology that supports sustainable development in communication (Nugroho, 2020).

Computer and internet-based media are utilized as tools to enhance the quality of learning. As a result, the learning process becomes more relevant to life, and this has become a standard



applied by various educational institutions (Srivastava & Dey, 2018). The internet has become a vital component in modern education, serving as a tool for accessing information and as a medium that supports students in pursuing their educational interests. It plays a significant role in shaping students' learning habits (Oluropo et al., 2024).

The communication process through digital media results in interactive communication, depending on the media used. Media based on digital platforms also makes the communication process limitless in terms of content quantity, able to reach audiences without being constrained by time and place, as long as they are connected to the internet (Maryani et al., 2022). Similarly, in the learning process, using media based on digital platforms will also lead to an interactive learning communication process. The selection and use of learning media must be carefully considered, considering the objectives and strategies and anticipating potential obstacles that may arise in the process.

Based on the discussion above, this study was conducted to show how the learning communication model implemented by teachers at SMP Tunas Unggul Bandung is communicated to students across all classes by utilizing media based on digital platforms. This research was carried out using a qualitative method supported by a case study approach,

where data in this study were obtained through interviews, field observations, and literature studies.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative method with a case study approach. Research using this method emphasizes that the information obtained in the field represents a socially constructed reality. In such research, the researcher is also required to be directly involved with the subjects under investigation (Chowdhury & Shil, 2021).

This study's object is digital platform-based learning communication, while its subjects are the teachers and students at SMP Tunas Unggul Bandung. The data for this study consists of both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews and field observations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten informants, comprising four teachers and four students as primary informants, one additional informant as a supporter, and one expert informant.

The criteria set by the author for the informants in this study are that the primary informants consist of several teachers from grades 7 to 9 who can be interviewed and observed in their classrooms during teaching. This criterion is expected to represent teachers in general regarding the communication process between teachers and students in learning at

SMP Tunas Unggul Bandung. The primary informants consist of students from grades 7 to 9 who have good communication skills and are active, making it easier for the researcher to conduct interviews. The primary informants from the student group are taken from the same class as the teacher, and the subject is observed at each level. The supporting informants are selected outside of teachers and students but still within the scope of SMP Tunas Unggul, with the criteria of understanding the learning process, including the communication process between teachers and students in learning. They are expected to support and/or provide clarification and validation of the data obtained from the primary informants. The expert informants are those with experience in teaching and learning. The selection of expert informants prioritizes university lecturers or practitioners currently active in the teaching profession and individuals who have experience training teachers related to learning at specific educational levels.

Field observations were carried out in four classes representing these primary informants. They were conducted in classrooms that included the primary informants, with the condition of selecting three classes representing Grades 7 to 9 to perform the learning process inside the school, and one random class to conduct the learning process outside the classroom. This was established to obtain a comprehensive

**Table 1 Informants Data**

| Informant               |             | Description   |
|-------------------------|-------------|---|
| Main Informants         |             |   |
| AR                      | Informant 1 | Indonesian Language Teacher for Grade 7   |
| FK                      | Informant 2 | Humanities Teacher for Grade 8  |
| AM                      | Informant 3 | Science Teacher for Grade 9   |
| AS                      | Informant 4 | PHE Teacher for Grade 9   |
| RAS                     | Informant 5 | 7th Graders   |
| KA                      | Informant 6 | 8th Graders   |
| AW                      | Informant 7 | 9th Graders   |
| KT                      | Informant 8 | 9th Graders   |
| Additional Informant    |             |   |
| RG                      | Informant 9 | Principal of SMP Tunas Unggul   |
| Expert Informant        |             |   |
| DR. Yeti Heryati, M.Pd. |             | Lecturer, Head of Study Tadris Bahasa Indonesia at UIN Bandung, National Facilitator at Tanoto Foundation 2018-2022 |

Source: Research Result, 2024

picture of how the communication process between teachers and students unfolds inside and outside the classroom. Secondary data were obtained through a literature review of books and journals relevant to the research topic.

The validity of the data in this study was tested using source triangulation techniques. In practice, the researcher performed triangulation by comparing data from interviews with data from observations, data from one informant with another, and field data with literature.



Implementing the data analysis technique in this study involves the researcher conducting a series of data collection processes through interviews, observations, and literature review. After collecting the data, the researcher performs data reduction on the obtained data. Data is reduced by grouping the data according to similar themes or categories. Once the data has been reduced and categorized, it is presented in the study as descriptions or elaborations, accompanied by several images taken from field documentation. The next step after presenting the data is concluding. Concluding becomes easier when the previous steps are carried out optimally.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interview results with informants indicate that the communication occurring during the learning process at SMP Tunas Unggul is an open and interactive communication model using a digital media platform during classes. Communication is one of the competencies a teacher must learn and possess (Paramita et al., 2020). Educators constantly strive to stimulate student participation by asking questions and expressing opinions. Informant AM even noted that teachers openly position students and themselves as learners. "I prefer interactive communication. That way, I know whether the students understand what I am explaining"

(Informant 3, Interview, 7 August 2024).

This aligns with the researcher's observations during field observation, noting that interactive learning communication impacts student participation in class. Students become more active in providing feedback during the learning process. Informant Argit stated that the initial step to establishing interactive and open communication is to build trust between students and the teacher. Previous research by Hashash et al. (2018) stated that when teachers openly accept student feedback, the students will be engaged and valued for contributing to the learning process in the classroom.

Open and interactive learning communication has a positive impact on both teachers and students. For teachers, implementing open and interactive learning communication facilitates monitoring the extent of students' understanding while posing a challenge for teachers always to stimulate student activity in learning. For students, open interactive learning communication makes learning more engaging and has successfully improved the learning outcomes achieved during their time at SMP Tunas Unggul. This was mentioned by Informant 7, a grade 9 student. Other informants, students at SMP Tunas Unggul, agree that open interactive learning communication provides comfort during the learning process and offers equal opportunities

for all students to understand the course material optimally. “I feel that my learning outcomes have continuously improved” (Informant 7, Interview, 7 August 2024).

The implementation of open interactive learning communication not only impacts learning outcomes but also serves as a means to build closeness between teachers and students and address issues beyond learning that affect student motivation. Informant 6, a grade 8 student, expressed that he feels comfortable with the communication established between teachers and students, which encourages her to openly share various things with teachers, both within and outside the learning context. “So far, I’m comfortable. Even outside the classroom, I often ask my teachers for their opinions, especially about organizations” (Informant 6, Interview, 15 August 2024).

This phenomenon was also noted in previous research by Maghfira and Mahadian (2018), which stated that teachers’ interactions with students, both inside and outside the classroom, encourage students to share many things with their teachers, including personal matters outside the learning context.

Encouraging and maintaining students’ engagement in learning is not without challenges and obstacles (Sudtho et al., 2015). The learning process at SMP Tunas Unggul fundamentally resembles other learning

processes that encounter obstacles. Some challenges experienced during the learning process at SMP Tunas Unggul include overly lengthy explanations that lead to student fatigue, the teacher’s too rapid speech pace during explanations, and technical difficulties related to devices and internet connectivity when using digital platform-based media. Obstacles related to digital technology-based media are indeed often found in previous studies. These range from differences in device specifications and students’ varying abilities to use technology to challenges related to limited network access and data quotas (Indriani & Prasanti, 2021).

Interactive communication provides opportunities to help teachers and students overcome the first and second obstacles related to boredom and the teacher’s speech tempo. Teachers actively conduct icebreakers to alleviate student boredom and refocus attention on the learning process. Furthermore, students are allowed to interrupt if the teacher explains too quickly, and teachers are open to this feedback, thus ensuring the material explanation process remains conducive. Informant 2, a social science teacher, often encounters student exhaustion due to too much content being delivered and finds ice-breaking to be an effective strategy to address this issue. “I found that ice breaking quite effective and beneficial as it gets the kids to move a bit so they aren’t too sleepy” (Informant

2, Interview, 15 August 2024).

Informant 2 statement indicates that ice-breaking effectively addresses challenges in the learning process related to students' physical and emotional conditions, such as sleepiness and boredom. This is consistent with research findings showing that ice-breaking has proven to increase student motivation by 55.2%, with the remaining influence by other factors (Muharrir Syahrudin et al., 2022). Regarding the last challenge related to devices and network issues, teachers always find solutions whenever these arise. If the issue is with the devices used by teachers or students, the teacher can take action by organizing group learning using a few devices in one classroom, meaning one device is used by several students so those with problematic devices can still participate in the learning process. If the issue relates to internet connectivity, teachers will do something similar. Students are formed into several groups using one device source connected to the internet or using the teacher's device displayed on the classroom screen to minimize network issues. Although the use of digital platform-based media facilitates teaching and learning, it often encounters challenges, especially related to devices and network connectivity.

From the above discussion, it can be said that teachers at SMP Tunas Unggul actively strive to build good interpersonal relationships

with students to achieve optimal interactive learning communication. The statement from informant 9, a supporting informant and the principal at SMP Tunas Unggul supports this effort. "We also build closeness with students to solve problems outside of learning because, indirectly, this impacts the learning process" (Informant 9, Interview, 16 August 2024).

The statement from Yeti, an expert informant supports the implementation of interactive communication in learning at SMP Tunas Unggul. According to her, choosing this form of communication is very positive for supporting learning. The learning process should not only focus on the teacher. Ideally, both teachers and students experience the learning process. Interactive communication in learning likely encourages students to express their ideas, opinions, and even feelings. Additionally, according to Yeti, interactive communication is appropriate for achieving active, creative, effective, and enjoyable learning. This aligns with research by Dhillon and Kaur (2021) which highlights that enhancing interpersonal relationships and building interactive communication is crucial in efforts to improve the effectiveness and quality of education.

Learning at SMP Tunas Unggul invariably involves various educational media, including new digital platforms. Digital media enables communicators to deliver messages in a

variety of formats, codes, and content. It also facilitates the integration of multiple elements in communication, including visual, textual, and auditory components (Metag et al., 2023). The use of online learning media can reduce access barriers, allowing students to participate in learning activities from any location without the constraints of time and space. Furthermore, online learning platforms enable students to study the material independently, at their own pace, according to their individual learning needs (Verstraeten et al., 2025).

According to the observations, the digital technologies utilized in learning process during classes include Canva and Learning Management System (LMS). Informant 9 states that the use of digital platform-based media in the learning process at SMP Tunas Unggul has reached 90%, particularly through LMS. Paper-

based worksheets are still available but rarely used.

First digital platform-based media is Canva. Canva is used to display teaching materials, including lesson content, reading materials, and assignments. Teaching materials created using Canva include text, images or models, and videos for some materials. In addition to being displayed on screens in classrooms during school hours, materials created through Canva are also uploaded by teachers to the LMS, allowing students to access them both before and after school hours.

The second digital platform-based media is the Learning Management System (LMS). LMS is used in classroom learning, assignments, and the assessment or exam process. It is used as a medium or space for storing educational materials, such as readings or assignments.



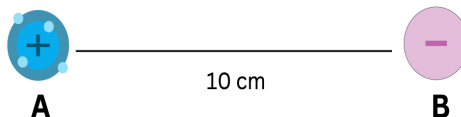
Source: Informant Document, 2024

**Figure 1 Teaching Material via Canva**



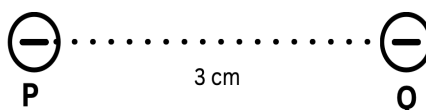
### Soal Hukum Coulomb

1. Dua muatan disusun seperti pada gambar di bawah ini.



Muatan di A adalah +6 mikro Coulomb dan muatan di B adalah -5 mikro Coulomb. Besar gaya Coulomb yang bekerja pada kedua muatan adalah...  
( $K = 9 \times 10^9 \text{ Nm}^2\text{C}^{-2}$ ,  $1 \mu\text{C} = 10^{-6} \text{ C}$ )

2. Muatan listrik P = -20 mikro Coulomb dan muatan listrik Q = -40 mikro Coulomb terpisah seperti pada gambar. Besar gaya Coulomb yang bekerja pada kedua muatan adalah...



3. Dua muatan besarnya  $4\mu\text{C}$  dan  $8\mu\text{C}$ . Jika besar gaya Coulomb yang dialami kedua muatan sebesar 80 N. Berapakah jarak kedua muatan tersebut ?

4. Dua buah muatan Q terpisah sejauh R memiliki gaya Coulomb sebesar F. Jika jarak kedua muatan diubah menjadi dua kali jarak mula-mula, maka besar gaya Coulomb yang dialami menjadi ....

L I S T R I K   S T A T I S

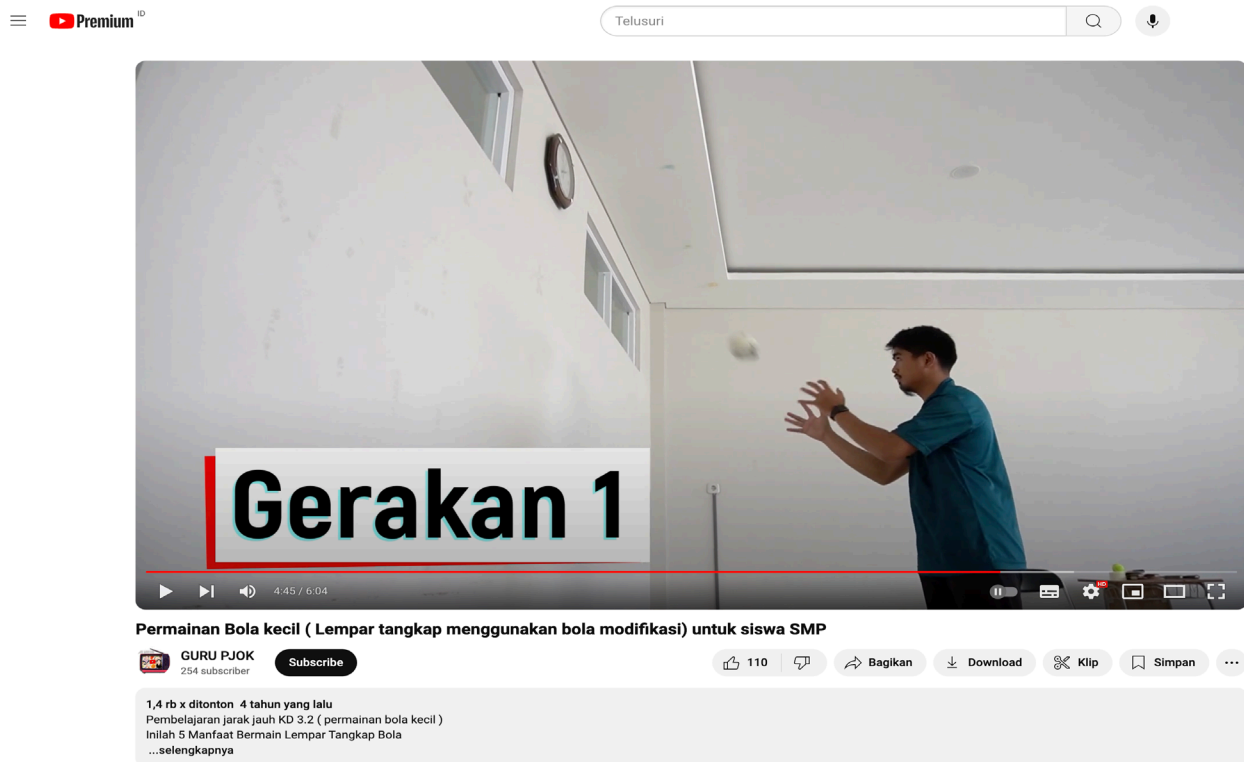
Source: Informant Document, 2024

### Figure 2 Teaching Material via LMS

Each student has an account that can be used to access the LMS, making the materials accessible anywhere as long as the student has internet access. This facilitates the learning process for both teachers and students. Students and parents are also given access to this LMS, providing a space for parents to monitor their children's understanding and progress. Learning using

LMS indeed has a positive impact not only on teachers and students but also on parents. However, because its use depends on devices and internet networks, challenges often relate to these two aspects.

Additionally, when the lesson requires material in the form of videos, the teacher displays relevant videos sourced from YouTube.



Source: YouTube Channel PHE Teacher SMP Unggul Bandung

**Figure 3 Teaching Material via YouTube**

The informant explains this as an effort to provide students with a clearer understanding of the lesson content. Subjects often conducted outside the classroom, such as PHE (Physical Health Education), are frequently learn by directly practicing the material. The explanation of the lesson content, in addition to being delivered through reading materials and slides uploaded to the LMS, also includes videos from YouTube that the teacher uploads and links to each student's LMS.

The use of digital platform-based media has a positive impact and facilitates the learning process. Furthermore, digital platform-based media are consistently utilized in the learning process at SMP Tunas Unggul to support

the school's mission and vision of preparing graduates to compete globally.

The process of learning that utilizes technological developments positively affects the learning process both in terms of communication and outcomes achieved. This aligns with Andriani (2015) who notes that the use of new media based on information and communication technology fosters non-passive communication. This means not only teachers but also students are required to be active during the learning process. This phenomenon promotes creativity and independence among students in their learning. The use of information and communication technology-based media also eliminates spatial and temporal constraints

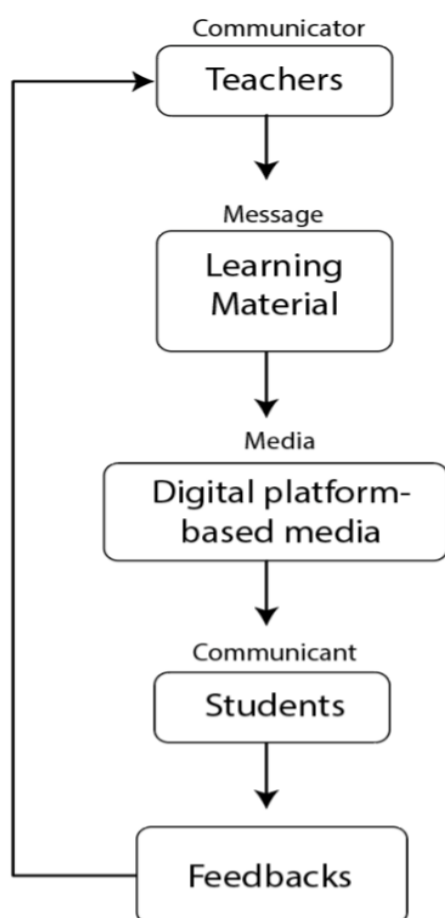


in education (Andriani, 2015).

Furthermore, if these media are used appropriately, students as learners can explore the knowledge they acquire. The use of digital platform-based media ensures that both teachers and students can keep up with the evolving trends in educational technology (Widianto et al., 2021).

According to the previous explanation, researchers conclude that the learning communication model implemented by SMP Tunas Unggul is as shown in Figure 4.

Teachers act as communicators who prepare



Source: Research Result, 2024

**Figure 4 Learning Communication Model at SMP Tunas Unggul Bandung**

teaching materials, select relevant media, and deliver them to students. In the learning communication process, teaching materials serve as the message to be conveyed, consisting of lesson content, reading materials, exercises, and assignments, as well as educational videos. These materials are then conveyed to students through the use of learning media. The next element is the students as communicants who receive the teaching materials and then actively provide feedback. In this study, the feedback provided by students to teachers during the learning process can take the form of questions, statements or ideas, and critiques and suggestions regarding the teaching methods. These five elements are always present in every interactive learning communication process implemented. Effective interpersonal communication in training and learning refers to the willingness of both the instructor and the learners to be open with each other, including giving and receiving honest feedbacks (Latifah & Muksin, 2021).

In practice, the interactive learning communication established by teachers towards students involves exchanging or interacting with various symbols. Observations indicate that the symbols apparent in the learning communication process at SMP Tunas Unggul consist of verbal and nonverbal symbols.

Learning communication through verbal

symbols significantly impacts students' learning success (Kasim & Joseph, 2022). Verbal symbols in the learning communication at SMP Tunas Unggul consist of oral, written, and digital symbols. Oral symbols refer to words spoken or conveyed orally by teachers and students. These words are structured in a language format understandable to teachers and students. The language used is informal Indonesian, both in explaining lesson materials by teachers and during dialogues between teachers and students. Scientific terminology appropriate to the subjects being taught is still presented in its original language, accompanied by explanations in simpler Indonesian to facilitate student understanding. The learning process begins with setting the mood and prayer, followed by a brief dialogue that includes greetings and exchanging news between teachers and students, reviewing the material from the previous meeting, and explaining the learning activities for that session. The choice of predominantly informal language, especially during dialogues with students, is intended to make the learning atmosphere more relaxed so that students feel more comfortable during the learning process.

Using informal and relaxed language makes students comfortable because communication flows smoothly. However, according to Expert Informant Yeti, teachers should use standard

Indonesian language that adheres to proper grammatical rules during the learning process. This approach aims to teach students about correct grammatical usage in learning so that they become accustomed to situations requiring the use of formal and standard language. More relaxed language can be used outside of the learning environment.

Besides oral symbols, there are also written symbols, which consist of words conveyed in written form. Based on observations, written symbols are frequently expressed through digital learning media. Therefore, this study concludes that written symbols are also categorized as digital symbols. Both use standard Indonesian language, which is correct and according to the EYD rules (Enhanced Indonesian Spelling System). In this study, written symbols include teaching materials, exercises, assignment sheets, and lesson content displayed through media such as Canva and the Learning Management System (LMS) using digital technology devices. Below are some examples of written symbols that are also classified as digital symbols.

Figure 5 displays written and digital symbols using the standard Indonesian language through Canva, which are shown on the classroom screen previously uploaded to the LMS by the respective teacher. The digital symbols used through media such as Canva and LMS include text, images, or models. Texts relate to



Source: Informant Document, 2024

**Figure 5** Written and Digital Symbols on LMS

the concepts and material of the lessons, while images or models represent lesson content or serve as enhancements to beautify the presentation of the material. The use of digital platform-based media is increasingly becoming multimodal. These media can accommodate images, videos, hashtags, text, and emoticons. Such platforms also allow content to be framed and edited before distribution, ultimately making the messages conveyed through digital media platforms a form of strategic and reflexive communication aimed at creating specific impressions about the sender, an object, a place, and so forth (Russmann & Svensson, 2017).

Nonverbal symbols observed during the study proved to be far more complex than verbal symbols. The researcher observed

various nonverbal symbols, including paralinguistics or vocal cues, proxemics or spatial arrangement, the appearance of both teachers and students, and kinesics. Throughout the learning process, paralinguistic symbols were integral to the communication executed by the teacher. The teacher consistently used vocal signals appropriate to the learning context, delivering material and engaging in dialogue with intonations suited to the situation. When explaining the core or central part of the material being discussed, the teacher conveyed it emphatically. The communication carried out by the teacher was not flat, lacking intonation, tone, tempo, or speech pauses. It was common for the teacher to repeat sentences that were considered crucial to the presented material.

As for proxemics, or the arrangement of space, the classroom layouts for Indonesian language in Class VII, Social Sciences in Class VIII, and Natural Sciences in Class IX utilized a plan where the teacher's desk was positioned at the front of the class, parallel to the TV screen displaying materials. At the same time, student seating was neatly organized into several groups facing the teacher's desk and screen. This setup facilitated easy discussion among students while allowing the teacher to maintain control during the learning process.

The next nonverbal symbol observed is the appearance of both teachers and students. The researcher's observations revealed that teachers dress neatly, appropriately, and conservatively. Female teachers 1 and 9 wear long-sleeved shirts, long skirts, hijab covering the chest, and socks, while 4 wears complete sportswear and a chest-covering hijab. Male teachers Informant 3 and Informant 2 are seen in collared shirts and long trousers, with their hair short and tidy. The students, Informant 5, Informant 6, Informant 7, and Informant 8, adhere to school uniform regulations, including socks. The researcher concludes that the teachers' appearance during lessons reflects their credibility as educators, and the students' appearance shows their readiness for learning. Both parties' attire demonstrates mutual respect.

Kinesics, another nonverbal symbol, was also evident from the observations. Kinesics is represented by body movements or gestures, posture, facial expressions, and eye contact. Oral symbols observed in this study are supported by kinesic symbols, meaning that when teachers explain materials orally or engage in dialogue, kinesic aspects are carefully integrated. Teachers explain materials with an upright posture and communicate expressively using facial expressions, hand gestures, or other body movements. Their gaze actively engages students, especially during dialogues with students who ask questions or provide feedback. It is common for teachers to move around the class, especially during discussion or Q&A sessions, partly to ensure that students understand the material.

This study finds that not only written symbols can be displayed digitally through digital platforms, but nonverbal symbols are also presented. For example, teaching materials in the form of instructional videos on YouTube, as described by Informant 4, a Physical Education teacher. Informant 4 explains that for the Physical Education subject, most activities are conducted outside the classroom, but teachers still provide teaching materials through readings and videos uploaded to the LMS connected to the YouTube channel of the Physical Education teacher at SMP Tunas Unggul. In these media,

there are videos related to the learning material demonstrated directly by the teacher. The teacher explains the material, which is then followed by demonstrations of movements relevant to the material being presented. The symbols apparent in these learning materials include verbal symbols, which are verbal, and a combination of several nonverbal symbols such as vocal cues, appearance, and kinesics.

The involvement of verbal and nonverbal symbols in the learning communication fosters students' awareness and understanding that interpersonal relationships between teachers and students are symbolically constructed. Students can recognize that communication is a transactional process. Communication through verbal and nonverbal messages is acknowledged as a process that builds personal relationships, which in turn influence how individuals communicate both verbally and nonverbally (Atkinson & McMahan, 2019).

## CONCLUSION

Open and interactive communication utilizing digital platform-based learning media implemented at SMP Tunas Unggul has positively impacted both the process and outcomes of learning. Open and interactive communication also facilitates teachers in monitoring the extent of students' understanding. It provides space for students to actively engage in the learning

process by asking questions, expressing ideas and opinions, and sharing their feelings and emotions. Furthermore, implementing open interactive communication in learning helps teachers build strong bonds with students, encouraging students' openness to teachers and assisting in identifying the root causes of issues affecting their motivation to learn.

Based on the research findings, teachers and students have directly experienced the positive impact of implementing interactive learning communication. For teachers, open and interactive learning communication serves as a platform for self-control and evaluation, both in monitoring student progress and developing better teaching strategies for the future. For students, open interactive learning communication creates a comfortable learning environment, which has been proven to improve learning outcomes.

The open and interactive learning communication process is inseparable from exchanging various symbols. Research findings show that the symbols involved in the interactive learning communication process at SMP Tunas Unggul include verbal and nonverbal symbols. Verbal symbols serve as the core of the symbolic interaction process; however, these verbal symbols can be conveyed more strongly and effectively with the support of various nonverbal symbols. Thus, both verbal

and nonverbal symbols complement each other and are inseparable.

The use of appropriate learning media partly supports the success of the interactive learning communication process at SMP Tunas Unggul. Digital platform-based learning media simplifies the learning process for both teachers and students and provides opportunities for parents to monitor their children's educational progress. The application of interactive communication methods, supported by the use of digital platform-based learning media, realizes an active, creative, and effective learning process.

This study contributes to the study of interpersonal communication and practical education. In the realm of interpersonal communication, this research contributes to the two-way communication between teachers and students, which is interactive and open. It serves as a way to build trust between them. Open and interactive learning communication in the classroom has also been proven to impact communication between teachers and students outside the classroom, becoming one of the strategies to address issues faced by students, both within and outside the school. These issues, whether directly or indirectly, affect the learning process and student achievement outcomes.

This research is expected to benefit practitioners in the field of education and

contribute to the study of interpersonal communication. Future research on similar topics is expected to address broader and deeper points, thereby complementing this study's findings. Thus, it can contribute to the study of interpersonal communication in the field of education.

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