'STELLER' AS DIGITAL STORYTELLING APP: COLLEGE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS IN EFL WRITING CLASSROOMS

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Abstract: The integration of digital storytelling in EFL writing instruction has been widely explored due to its potential to enhance student engagement and writing proficiency. This study investigates students' perceptions of using Steller, a multimedia storytelling application, in EFL writing classrooms. The study used a qualitative case study approach, while this study gained data from fourth-year university students in Medan through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Thirty students responded to the questionnaires, and six students participated to follow in-depth interviews. Questionnaire data were analysed descriptively, while interview data underwent thematic analysis. The findings indicate that most students found the benefit of Steller in organizing their writing clearly, integrating multimedia, developing creativity, facilitating easier editing through drag-and-drop features, providing various writing formats, and improving collaboration. However, challenges such as internet dependency and the complexity of some features were the obstacles to usability. While some findings highlight the advantages of Steller in EFL writing instruction, they also suggest the need for improvements in accessibility and ease of use. This study contributes to the growing body of research on DST in language learning by providing insights into how Steller can support students in the writing process.

Keywords: *college students, digital storytelling, perceptions, Steller, writing*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most complex and demanding skills in English language learning, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. It involves multiple cognitive and linguistic processes, including pre-writing, drafting, revising, and publishing (Dewi, 2021; Flower & Hayes, 1981). During the process, students often perceive several difficulties in organizing ideas, producing vocabulary, using appropriate grammar, and developing the creativity in writing (Hyland, 2016; Thi & Suwannabubpha, 2021). In the context of EFL instruction at the university for this study,

many students still struggle with writing tasks due to limited exposure to interactive learning tools and a lack of motivation during conventional writing instruction. Based on preliminary observations and informal interviews with several students, it was found that students often experience difficulties in organizing their ideas, maintaining coherence, and staying engaged throughout the writing process.

To address these issues, the integration of digital technology in education has significantly transformed language learning, particularly in EFL writing classrooms. Under the Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) framework, digital tools provide students with interactive learning opportunities that enhance their writing development (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) suggests that students are more likely to engage with digital platforms if they find them useful and easy to navigate (Davis, 1989). According to Al-Munawwarah (2014)**,** students' positive perceptions of digital tools contribute to increased motivation and participation in language learning. As the result, the integration of digital technology in language education has shown significant improvements in the development of all four core language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The study by Isakova (2024) highlighted how emerging technologies have transformed traditional methods of teaching and learning these skills, increasing the engagement, accessibility and efficiency of language learning. For this reason, digital technology integration in writing is the appealing issue to be investigated nowadays for language learning.

Among various digital tools used in EFL writing classrooms, platforms like Wattpad and Padlet have shown promising results. For instance, the study using Wattpad as digital technology significantly enhanced EFL students' creative writing skills in junior high school. Students reported that community interaction and feedback on Wattpad application helped boost their motivation and confidence in writing. However, some challenges such as the lack of editing tools and limited writing guidance suggested that proper support is necessary to maximize its effectiveness in classroom settings (Rachmah et al., 2025). Meanwhile, research showed that Padlet was perceived positively by university students, as it was easy to use, accessible across devices, and engaging. It supported collaborative writing, creativity, and increased interest in writing. While a few students initially struggled with certain features, teacher guidance helped them navigate the platform successfully (Suryani & Daulay, 2022).

Besides, another common digital innovation that has attracted attention in improving writing is digital storytelling tool. Digital storytelling (DST) provides the real-world nuances combining the digital visual aid to engage the students into the content deeply (Robin, 2008). Digital storytelling (DST) has emerged as an innovative approach that integrates multimedia elements to make writing more engaging and meaningful (Sadik, 2008). DST has contributed the significant impacts in language proficiency through vocabulary, creativity, and writing skill among EFL students in Taiwan using collaborative DST (Chen & Yeh, 2024). In line with that, Munajah et al. (2022) emphasized that both offline and online learning require innovative approaches to engage students, suggesting DST's potential in fostering an active and enjoyable learning process. These positive results of DST are also shown by Iranian students who received the effectiveness in DST for EFL writing classroom toward students' motivation through creating interactive and student-centered learning environment (Alemi et al., 2022). In

addition, Yang and Wu (2012) found that students who use storytelling apps demonstrate higher confidence and engagement in writing. Additionally, Putra et al. (2024) highlighted improvements in writing structure, idea articulation, and grammar, while Amaliah et al. (2022) found DST boosted student motivation and engagement. Another research conducted by Haetami (2023) reported significant improvements in writing test scores, with the experimental class achieving higher post-test scores compared to the control class.

Prior research consistently demonstrated how well digital storytelling (DST) helps students view learning English—especially in improving their writing and reading skills. Bhakti (2020), for example, verified that adding DST into the classroom significantly enhanced students' writing skills; many said it helped them enjoy and understand the writing process. They also underlined that their writing was more orderly and interesting since DST clarified important writing components. Similarly, Hidayati and Maisarah's (2024) research indicated that students found DST an effective reading improvement tool since it made reading activities more enjoyable and helped them better understand narrative texts. Supporting these results, Apsari and Satriani (2016) emphasized that DST improved writing and reading comprehension, increased classroom participation, and motivated greater interest in writing. Students liked the lively atmosphere it created, which increased their learning motivation. Likewise, Zuhriyah (2023) reported that students enjoyed using multimodal digital storytelling in online learning because it was fun, motivating, and helped them structure their stories clearly. These studies support the view that DST is a worthwhile and versatile instrument in English language skill formation.

From the previous case, many students reckon that nowadays, the conventional approach to writing classrooms seems less enthusiastic about improving their writing skills. Conventional approach in writing often leads to monotonous interaction, less engagement, lower motivation, and lack of creativity (Rahimi & Fathi, 2021). The DST integration in writing, such as applications, is required to solve this issue. With the rise of mobile learning, applications such as Steller align with the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, which emphasizes the effective combination of technology, pedagogy, and subject matter (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). This integration helps make writing instruction in EFL classroom more engaging, allowing students to receive instant feedback and explore diverse storytelling techniques. The 'Steller' as the DST tool approach implicitly encourage the students' critical thinking and digital literacy skill for the advance nuance of EFL writing classroom (Ohler, 2013).

'Steller' offers a promising platform for enhancing writing skills in EFL classroom through the integration of text, images, and videos. The digital storytelling app, Steller, has gained public attention as a platform public user to digitally share stories about special moments they have captured and narrated. In addition, Martin (2016) describes Steller as a well-designed iPhone app that allows users to curate photo collections or combine photos and videos in a format similar to an electronic coffee table book. Overall, Steller functions as both a content-sharing tool and a creative medium for visual storytelling. Steller, as described by the U.S. Department of the Interior (2016), is a privately owned social media platform that operates on the web and is accessible to the

public. It functions as a content-sharing space where users can create digital stories by combining images and text. These stories can then be widely shared, searched, and commented on within the Steller community, fostering interaction and engagement among users. It offers features for searching, sharing, and commenting within its community.

Steller, the user-friendly platform, allows students to create engaging stories using visual elements that can be easily shared with peers and educators. The app stimulates students' critical thinking by encouraging them to focus on key aspects of their writing's projects, including narrative approach, coherence, and creativity. In this regard, Steller enables students to work independently while considering the appropriate language use, syntactical structures, and stylistics aspect of their publications. Additionally, Sylvester and Greenidge (2009) emphasized that DST tools, such as Steller, positively influence students' writing skills through a collaborative approach that enlarge social communication and self-confidence in EFL classrooms. This is largely due to the peer feedback provided in the comment section which motivates students to engage in self-evaluation and interact with their peers more effectively.

Several studies have the correlation to the use of DST apps, such as Steller in students' writing ability. A study compiled by Khalili (2020) revealed that using Steller for eighth grade students in junior high school significantly improved students' recount text writing, with the experimental group showing a greater increase in post-test scores compared to the control group. The study highlights how Steller's multimedia integration helps students structure their writing more effectively and engage actively in the learning process. Another research on the use of *StoryJumper* as another digital storytelling application indicated a significant improvement in students' narrative writing skills, with notable increases in test scores. Furthermore, students showed improved focus, involvement, and active participation in the writing process (Nurlaela et al., 2022). Finally, Handayani et al. (2023) examined how another DST tool, Book Creator, affected students' writing performance—more especially procedural texts. By encouraging creativity, involvement, and improved idea organization, the Book Creator tool greatly improved students' capacity to create procedural texts.

The studies above urge the researcher to investigate how students view the DST tool—especially Steller—in EFL writing classrooms. The students' perceptions of the Steller app in helping them with their writing are examined in this paper. Although many studies have explored the positive effects of DST, few have particularly researched how Steller might be used as a writing tool in students' perceptions area. The gap emphasizes the need for more research on how EFL writing classroom students view Steller, given a more interactive, interesting, and visually supported learning environment. This study offers important insights into the advantages and difficulties of incorporating Steller into writing instruction by examining students' perceptions. By being aware of these perceptions, teachers can improve their teaching methods, make the most of technology in EFL classes, and remove any obstacles to its effective use. As a result, the researcher has a distinctive chance to use Steller as a DST app to investigate how students perceive it during the writing process. The research problem formulated for this research is: What are students' perceptions of using the "Steller" application as a DST app in EFL writing classrooms?

METHODOLOGY
Subjects

Thirty fourth-year university students in Medan are the study's participants; they were chosen using purposive sampling, a method that can be used to find people who fit particular requirements related to the study's main topic (Fraenkel et al., 2019). The inclusion criteria required that participants have previously used the Steller application as part of their coursework to ensure they could offer knowledgeable opinions on its use.

Design and Procedures

This study utilizes a case study design and a qualitative methodology to investigate how students perceive using the "Steller" application in an EFL writing class. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate since it enables the researcher to explore students lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of incorporating technology into writing instruction (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Yin (2014), case studies are particularly useful for thoroughly examining events in their actual settings.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

This study employed two data collection techniques: a questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The questionnaire was distributed to thirty fourth-year university students who had previously used the Steller application in their writing coursework. It consisted of eight closed-ended items using a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). The questionnaire aimed to determine how students perceived using Steller in an EFL writing class and to assist in selecting diverse participants for interviews. Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) were used to analyse the questionnaire responses. Although the questionnaire utilized a Likert scale, it served to preliminarily map student tendencies, while the in-depth interviews constituted the primary qualitative data, analysed through thematic analysis.

Following the questionnaire, six students chosen through purposive sampling participated in in-depth interviews for analyzing better their experiences and viewpoints (Knott et al., 2022). It was also carried out to learn more about the students' answers to the questionnaires and whether using Steller in the writing learning process has any benefits or disadvantages. The selection of participants for interviews was based on three criteria: (1) varied responses in the questionnaire (both positive and critical), (2) active participation in the writing class using Steller, and (3) willingness to share in-depth reflections on their learning experience.

The interview protocol consisted of ten open-ended questions to explore students' personal experiences, perceived benefits, and challenges of using the Steller application. These questions expanded upon the dimensions assessed in the questionnaire, offering deeper insight into student perceptions that could not be captured through closed-ended survey items. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and was recorded with consent from the participants. Combining questionnaires and interviews made a thorough grasp of students' perspectives possible (Patton, 2015).

Interview data were transcribed verbatim and analysed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework: familiarization with the data,

generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. From this analysis, four major themes emerged: (1) structured writing support through templates, (2) enhanced creativity via multimedia and design features, (3) increased ease of editing, flexibility and interactive feedback, and (4) usability challenges. The results of interviews and questionnaire were combined to create a cohesive account of the students' experiences with "Steller." Data triangulation compared trends across questionnaire results and interview findings to improve the study's validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings

The study explored Steller's advantages and limitations in supporting the EFL writing process. Based on questionnaires and in-depth interview results, students' perceptions were further examined to identify key themes related to their experiences. Six perceptions were positive, including structuring writing clearly with the template feature, elevating writing with multimedia integration, enhancing creativity with design elements, editing efficiently with the drag-and-drop feature, using flexible story formats for various writing types, and receiving feedback & collaborating through the comment section. Meanwhile, students perceived two limitations of Steller, including internet dependency challenges and complex feature usage. The findings were categorized into eight key themes, as outlined below.

Structuring Writing Clearly with the Template Feature

Steller provides pre-designed templates that help students organize their writing in a structured and visually coherent manner. These templates offer a step-by-step framework that guides students in arranging their content, ensuring clarity and logical flow in their work. Most students found that Steller's pre-designed templates helped them organize their writing efficiently. Out of 30 students, 22 agreed and strongly agreed, indicating that the structured format aided in clarity and coherence. Six students remained neutral, while only two students disagreed.
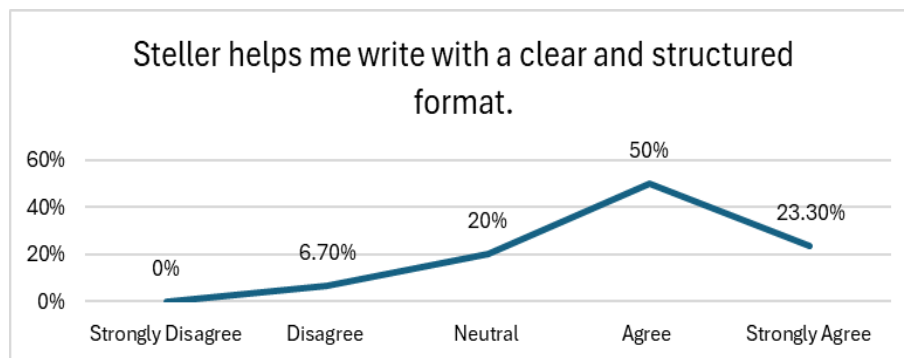

Figure 1. Students' perceptions of Steller's writing templates

The positive responses suggest that students value a structured writing approach, especially when dealing with complex writing tasks. Some participants revealed their opinions regarding to this perception.

> *"The templates in Steller guide me step by step, making sure my writing is well-organized." (P1)*
> *"I found the structured format really helpful. When I write, I usually struggle with organizing my ideas, and that slows me down. But with Steller's templates, I don't have to think too much about structuring my writing. The framework is already there, so I can focus more on what I want to say rather than worrying about how to arrange it. It definitely reduces the mental effort needed to organize my work." (P5)*
> *"Using templates in Steller keeps my writing structured and prevents me from forgetting important sections." (P2)*

P1 response indicates that students who struggle with structure find templates useful as a guiding tool. Additionally, P5 noted that the structured format reduced cognitive load, allowing them to concentrate on content rather than organization. In another case, P2 found the templates helpful in maintaining consistency This suggests that students who focus heavily on generating ideas may benefit from pre-structured formats that eliminate the need for extensive planning.

> *"Using templates in Steller keeps my writing structured and prevents me from forgetting important sections." (P2)*
> *"I don't have to think too much about formatting—I can focus on the content because the structure is already there." (P3)*
> *"They (Steller templates) help me organize my ideas logically, especially when I'm not sure how to start." (P4)*
> *"When I first used Steller, the templates gave me a clear direction, making the writing process less overwhelming." (P6)*

P3's response highlights the efficiency of using Steller's structured templates, emphasizing that they save time by eliminating the need to manually format and organize content. P4's statement underscores the organizational benefits of Steller's templates, particularly for students who find it challenging to initiate their writing. P6's comment emphasizes the supportive role of templates for beginners, indicating that Steller reduces the initial writing anxiety by offering a clear direction. These answers support that Steller's templates provide a structured framework that helps students organize their writing efficiently, save time on formatting, and guide them through the writing process—especially for those who need more support in structuring their ideas.

Elevating Writing with Multimedia Integration

Steller's multimedia integration feature allows students to enhance their writing by incorporating images, videos, and other visual elements alongside text. This capability

transforms writing into a more interactive and engaging experience, making content more visually appealing and dynamic. One of the most positively rated features was the ability to integrate text, images, and videos, with 25 students agreeing and strongly agreeing that multimedia elements enhanced their writing experience. Only one student disagreed, while four students remained neutral, possibly indicating that some students did not find multimedia integration necessary for their writing tasks. Students who favored this feature highlighted its ability to make their writing more interactive and visually appealing.
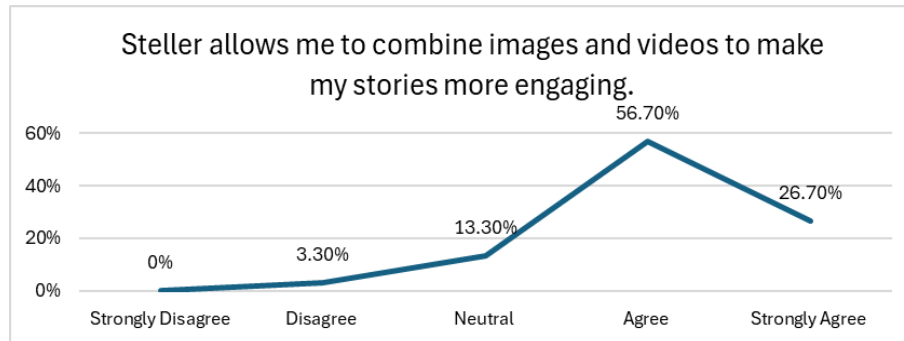

Figure 2. Students' perceptions of multimedia use in Steller

In digital storytelling, the integration of multimedia elements such as images and videos plays a crucial role in enhancing the clarity and engagement of written content. Many students found that using *Steller*'s multimedia features made their writing more dynamic and expressive, helping them convey their ideas more effectively. The following responses highlight how students perceived the impact of multimedia on their writing process:

> *"Adding pictures and videos with the Steller apps makes my writing more dynamic and visually appealing. It's different from just writing plain text." (P2)*
> *"Sometimes, words alone can't fully express what I want to say, but images and videos make my point clearer. That's why, I make use videos and images features in Steller are really helpful." (P6)*
> *"When I add images, my ideas become clearer. Readers can understand my story better without me having to explain too much." (P1)*

P2 compared the experience of using Steller was like "creating a digital magazine" This response suggests that students see value in multimedia as a way to enhance storytelling and create content that is more engaging for readers. Similarly, P6 noted that multimedia helped them communicate complex ideas more effectively. This indicates that students who struggle with expressing abstract ideas purely through text benefit from multimedia as a supporting tool for clarity and emphasis. P1 stated that combining text with images and videos made their writing easier for readers to understand

"When I write a story, especially a narrative, I want my readers to really feel the atmosphere and emotions in the scene. Adding pictures and videos helps a lot because it makes the story more alive and interesting to read. Instead of just describing a setting, I can show it directly, which makes my writing more engaging. It is the best thing the Steller can provide" (P3)

"I love how I can easily add images and videos in Steller without switching to another app. It keeps my workflow smooth." (P5)

"Using images and videos in Steller allows me to set the mood of my writing. A single picture can evoke emotions that words sometimes cannot." (P4)

P3 added that the visualizations approaches (image and video) in Steller increased the appeal of their writing, especially when creating narrative stories. P5 mentioned that multimedia integration really helped them make their stories more interesting, because the visualizations supported the overall content of the writing. Finally, P4 also highlighted the emotional impact of multimedia integration This suggests that students appreciate the ability to use visuals not only for clarification but also to create a more immersive and emotionally engaging experience for their audience. The findings indicate that Steller's multimedia integration plays a crucial role in making writing more engaging and expressive process.

Enhancing Creativity with Design Elements

This perception refers to how Steller's design customization features—such as fonts, colors, and layouts—help students express their creativity and make their writing visually appealing.
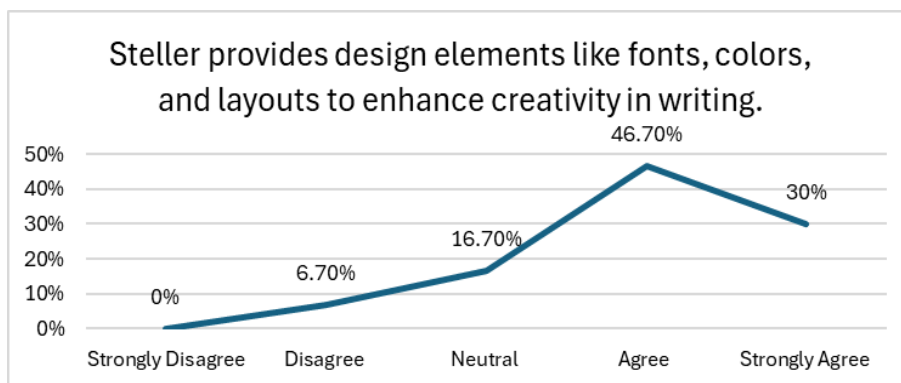

Figure 3. Students' perceptions of design customization in Steller

By allowing personalization, these design tools enable students to create unique and engaging content that aligns with their intended tone and message. Rather than just focusing on text-based storytelling, Steller encourages students to think about the visual impact of their writing, making it more immersive and expressive. Steller's customization features (fonts, colors, and layouts) were also highly appreciated, with 23 students agreeing and strongly agreeing that these tools helped them create more visually appealing writing. However, five students remained neutral, while two students

disagreed, indicating that a small percentage of students found the design features either unnecessary or limited.

Students who enjoyed this feature highlighted how personalization made their writing feel more unique and expressive. The features revealed students' enthusiasm, motivation, and engagement. Additionally, students emphasized that the design elements in Steller help personalized content and P2 found visual customization motivating. Students responded for this point can be viewed below.

> *"I love experimenting with different fonts and colors in Steller because it makes my writing stand out." (P3)*
> *"I like how I can experiment with colors and fonts in Steller to make my writing look unique. It feels more like my own work." (P1)*
> *"When my writing looks aesthetically pleasing, I feel more encouraged to put extra effort into refining my content. Steller improve my work in content presentation" (P2)*

P3 and P1 emphasize how the ability to experiment with fonts and colors allows them to create visually distinct and personalized writing, making their work feel more unique. This suggests that customization fosters a sense of ownership and creativity, which can increase motivation in the writing process. Meanwhile, P2's statement indicates that an aesthetically pleasing presentation encourages greater effort in content refinement, aligning with research that suggests visual appeal can enhance engagement and writing quality.

> *"Even a simple story becomes more interesting when I can play around with fonts, colors, and layouts with Steller." (P4)*
> *"Steller can be able to adjust colors and typography that allows me to create a mood that matches my story, making the writing experience more immersive." (P5)*
> *"By choosing the right fonts and layouts in Steller, I can better convey the tone of my writing, whether it's formal or casual." (P6)*

P4 highlighted how the design elements made their writing more engaging. P5 emphasized the importance of visuals, stating. Similarly, P6 noted that customization helped improve storytelling. These responses confirm that Steller's design elements significantly contribute to creativity by enabling personalization, enhancing engagement, and improving storytelling. The ability to modify fonts, colors, and layouts motivates students to refine their work and make their writing more expressive.

Editing Efficiently with the Drag-and-Drop Feature

The drag-and-drop feature in Steller allows users to easily move text, images, and videos within their projects. Instead of manually copying and pasting or reformatting content, students can simply click and drag elements to reposition them, making the editing process more intuitive and efficient. The drag-and-drop feature was widely appreciated for simplifying the process of arranging and editing writing elements. 25

students agreed and strongly agreed, while only one student disagreed, and four students remained neutral. The high approval rate indicates that this feature significantly reduces the difficulty of formatting and organizing text, images, and videos.
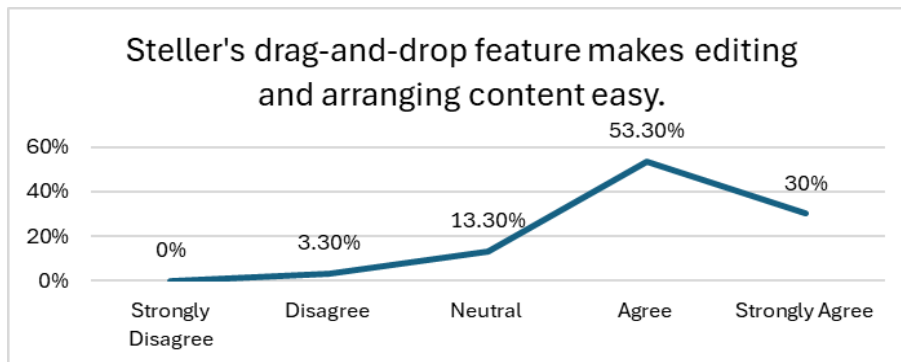

Figure 4. Students' perceptions of editing with drag-and-drop in Steller

One of the most appreciated features of Steller is its drag-and-drop functionality, which allows students to move text, images, and other elements easily without disrupting the overall layout. This feature simplifies the editing process, making it more intuitive and efficient compared to traditional methods that require copying and pasting. Students find this function particularly helpful in restructuring their ideas, as it allows for greater flexibility and organization in their writing. The following responses illustrate how students benefited from this feature:

> *"This feature saves me so much time! I can easily move text and images without messing up my layout." (P5)*
> *"Before, I had to copy and paste text to rearrange my ideas, but now I can just drag things where I want them." (P2)*
> *"It (Feature) helps me organize my content easily. If I feel like a paragraph fits better somewhere else, I can just move it without retyping." (P1)*

The responses from P5, P2, and P1 emphasize how Steller's drag-and-drop feature enhances the efficiency and flexibility of the writing process. P5 highlights the time-saving aspect, indicating that the feature prevents formatting issues, which can often be frustrating when editing. Similarly, P2 contrasts Steller with traditional methods, explaining how dragging elements directly is much easier than manually copying and pasting text. Meanwhile, P1 focuses on the organizational benefit, noting that the feature allows for seamless content rearrangement without needing to retype or adjust the layout manually. Collectively, these responses suggest that Steller's user-friendly editing tools not only improve workflow but also support idea development and structural clarity in students' writing.

"Rearranging text and images is much faster compared to traditional editing tools using this 'drag' feature. It saves me a lot of time when revising my work." (P3)
"I like how I can adjust the placement of images and text until I find the best layout with this feature. It makes my writing look more polished." (P4)
"I can try different arrangements without worrying about ruining my formatting. It encourages me to refine my work more freely." (P6)

The responses from P3, P4, and P6 highlight how Steller's flexible editing tools contribute to a more efficient and polished writing experience. P3 focuses on the time efficiency of rearranging content, emphasizing that the process is significantly faster than using traditional editing tools. This suggests that students can make quick revisions without being slowed down by technical formatting issues. P4 highlights the visual organization benefit, explaining how the ability to adjust placement enhances the overall presentation and professionalism of their work. Meanwhile, P6 appreciates the freedom to experiment with different layouts without the risk of ruining the formatting, which encourages more detailed revisions and refinement. Collectively, these responses indicate that Steller not only simplifies the editing process but also promotes better organization, creativity, and efficiency in writing. The findings suggest that the drag-and-drop feature enhances usability by making editing more efficient and less cumbersome. This function is particularly useful for students who frequently revise and reorganize their work, allowing them to focus more on content development rather than mechanical adjustments.

Using Flexible Story Formats for Various Writing Types

Steller provides students with the ability to create various types of writing formats, such as storytelling, academic reports, essays, and other structured content. This flexibility allows users to adapt the platform to different writing purposes, making it a versatile tool for both creative and formal writing.
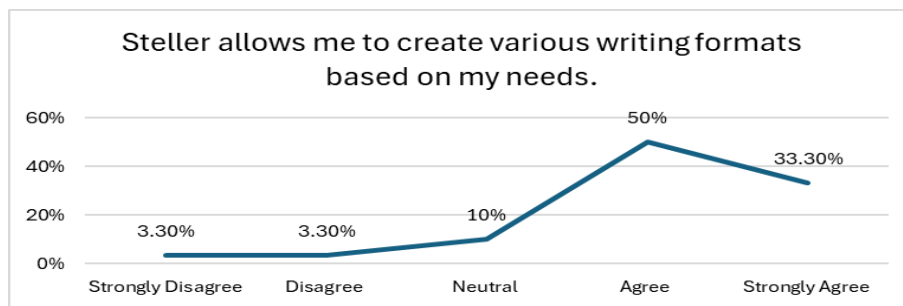

Figure 5. Students' perceptions of Steller's writing format flexibility

A notable 26 out of 30 students agreed and strongly agreed that Steller allowed them to create various types of writing formats, including stories, reports, and essays. Only one student strongly disagreed, and three students remained neutral, indicating that

the app's flexibility was widely recognized. Students who appreciated this feature highlighted its adaptability across different types of assignments.

One of the key advantages of Steller is its flexibility in supporting different writing formats, making it a versatile tool for students. Unlike traditional word processors that are often limited to either academic or creative writing, Steller allows users to switch between storytelling, essays, reports, and other structured formats with ease. This adaptability enables students to explore various writing styles, catering to both academic and creative needs. The following responses highlight students' perspectives on this feature:

"I like that I can use Steller for both storytelling and formal reports. It's flexible." (P1)
"The fact that I can switch between different writing styles makes it more useful than other writing apps I've tried." (P3)

P1's response highlights Steller's versatility in accommodating different types of writing, from storytelling to formal reports. This suggests that students value having a single platform that accommodates both academic and creative writing, making Steller a versatile tool for various writing tasks. Similarly, P3 emphasized that having multiple format options made Steller stand out from other writing apps, saying. This indicates that students appreciate being able to experiment with different writing formats without needing to switch between different platforms. Steller's flexibility enhances its appeal as a multifunctional tool, allowing students to adapt their writing for different contexts.

"Through using Steller, I can start with a narrative format but then adjust it for a more formal structure if needed. It makes switching between assignments easier." (P2)
"I enjoy experimenting with different formats—sometimes I write a short story, other times I create a report. Steller lets me adapt my writing to different needs." (P4)
"Steller can help me build several structure essays, reflections, or even presentation-style reports in one app saves me time and effort." (P5)
"I can combine storytelling with analysis using Steller, which is useful for creative projects and research-based assignments." (P6)

In addition, the responses from P2, P4, P5, and P6 highlight Steller's flexibility in supporting various writing formats. P2 appreciates the ability to switch between narrative and formal writing, making assignments easier to manage. P4 values the freedom to experiment, while P5 emphasizes the convenience of structuring different types of writing in one app, saving time and effort. P6 finds Steller useful for combining storytelling with analysis, benefiting both creative and research-based tasks. Overall, Steller's adaptability enhances both academic and creative writing, making it a versatile tool for students. These responses reinforce that Steller's flexible format options make it

a versatile tool for both creative and academic writing. Students value the ability to adapt their writing styles, whether for storytelling, structured essays, or mixed formats.

Receiving Feedback and Collaborating through Comment Section

Steller provides a commenting system where teachers and peers can highlight specific parts of the text and leave suggestions. The ability to share writing and receive feedback was another well-received feature, with 22 students agreeing and strongly agreeing that it helped them improve their writing. However, six students remained neutral, and two students disagreed, possibly indicating that while most students found peer collaboration beneficial, some did not engage actively with this feature. Students who actively used the feedback feature noted that it helped them identify mistakes and improve their writing.
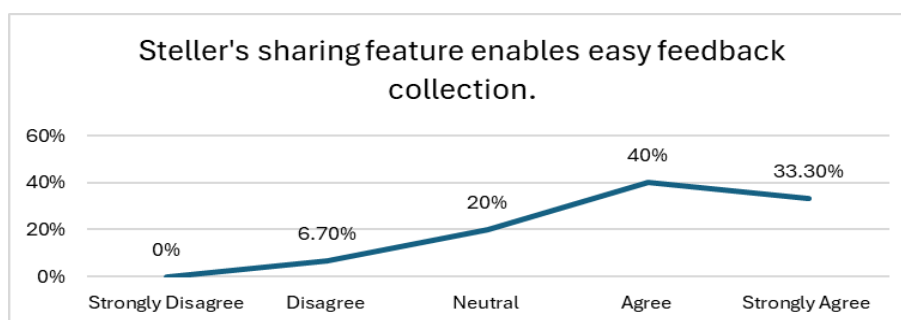

Figure 6. Students' perceptions of peer feedback in Steller

One of Steller's key advantages is its peer feedback feature, which allows students to receive direct comments on their writing. This interactive feedback process helps students identify mistakes, refine their ideas, and improve their overall writing quality. Many students found that peer feedback provided new perspectives and made revisions more effective. The following responses illustrate how students benefited from this feature:

> *"When I get feedback in Steller, I realize things I didn't notice before. It helps me improve a lot." (P4)*
> *"My friend's comments helped me correct my mistakes immediately." (P6)*
> *"Having my friends' feedback directly on my work helps me understand exactly what needs improvement." (P1)*

P4 emphasized the value of peer feedback. It suggests that students who are open to feedback find the collaborative aspect of Steller useful in refining their work. Similarly, P6 found teacher feedback particularly helpful, saying. This response indicates that direct feedback from instructors within the app enhances the learning process, allowing students to revise their work more effectively. P1 highlighted the value of teacher feedback suggesting that instructor involvement enhances the effectiveness of feedback.

> *"Knowing that my classmates will review my writing, pushes me to be more careful and detailed in my drafts."(P2)*
> *"When I receive feedback from different people, I get new ideas on how to improve my writing. Sometimes, my classmates notice things I hadn't thought about." (P3)*
> *"Discussing feedback in class after submitting work on Steller makes the revisions more meaningful." (P5)*

The responses from P2 and P3 highlight how Steller's peer feedback feature enhances the writing process. P2 found that knowing their classmates will review their work pushes them to be more careful and detailed, indicating that Steller fosters a sense of accountability and precision in writing. Similarly, P3 appreciated receiving diverse perspectives, as classmates often point out aspects they hadn't considered, helping them refine their work. This suggests that Steller's collaborative environment not only improves writing accuracy but also promotes active engagement and critical thinking, making the revision process more effective.

Accessing the Platform with Internet Dependency Challenges

This point refers to the challenges students face in accessing and using Steller due to its reliance on a stable internet connection. Unlike offline writing tools, Steller requires continuous internet access for editing, saving, and publishing content, which can be problematic for students in areas with weak or inconsistent connectivity. This dependency can disrupt the writing process, causing delays or even loss of progress if the connection fails while saving work. As one of the lowest-rated aspects, Steller's accessibility provided 17 out of 30 students disagreeing and strongly disagreeing that they could access and edit their writing anytime and anywhere. Eight students remained neutral, while five students agreed, making this the most polarizing issue in the questionnaire results. In this point, the perspective examines the challenges students faced due to Steller's reliance on an internet connection.
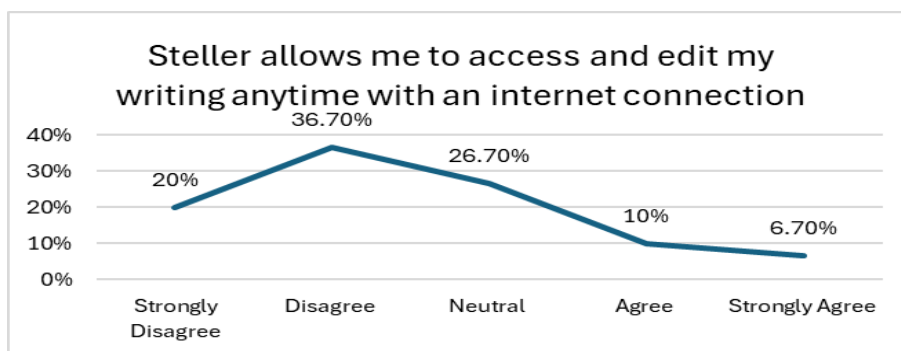

Figure 7. Students' perceptions of internet access issues with Steller

Several participants reported difficulties in accessing and saving their work due to connectivity issues, which disrupted their writing flow. These technical limitations were particularly frustrating when students were working under deadlines or trying to upload

multimedia elements. The following responses illustrate how internet dependency affected their writing experience:

> *"There were times when I wanted to continue my writing, but the app wouldn't load properly because of the poor internet connection. It was really frustrating." (P6)*
> *"I lost part of my draft once because the app disconnected while saving. I had to rewrite everything from memory." (P2)*
> *"If I don't have a stable internet connection, I can't upload pictures properly, and it slows down my writing process. It's annoying when I'm on a deadline." (P5)*

P6 expresses frustration over frequent loading issues, which prevented them from continuing their work smoothly. P2's experience of losing a draft due to a failed save function underscores the risk of data loss, making writing on Steller feel unreliable. Meanwhile, P5 emphasizes how slow uploads for images hinder their progress, especially under tight deadlines. Collectively, these responses suggest that Steller's reliance on internet connectivity can interrupt workflow, increase frustration, and reduce efficiency, indicating a need for offline functionality or auto-save improvements to enhance user experience.

> *"I tried working on my writing from my phone and later switched to my laptop, but sometimes my edits didn't sync properly, and I had to redo them." (P3)*
> *"The internet connection is a big issue for me. Sometimes, when I'm in a place with weak internet, I can't access my drafts or make edits. It's frustrating when I need to review my writing, but the app won't load properly." (P1)*
> *"If Steller had an offline mode where I could edit my work and sync it later, it would be much more convenient." (P4)*

Another issue was raised by P3, who mentioned difficulties in syncing progress across devices. This indicates that while Steller is designed for cross-device use, inconsistent syncing due to internet issues can hinder the writing process. Similarly, P1 shares that they struggled to work in areas with unstable internet, making it difficult to edit or review their writing when needed. P4 suggested a possible solution. This response shows that students see potential in Steller as a more accessible tool if offline functionality were available. Steller's internet dependency is a major drawback, particularly for students with unstable network connections. Implementing an offline mode could significantly improve accessibility and usability, allowing students to work on their writing without interruptions.

Using Complex Features with Navigational Difficulties

For this issue, students encountered while using Steller due to certain features being unintuitive, complex, or requiring extra time to learn. The lowest-rated aspects,

Steller's complicated features usage, was only 8 out of 30 students agreeing and strongly agreeing that they could use the features of Steller easier in writing task. Four students remained neutral, while most students, approximately eighteen of them, disagreed and strongly disagreed with this statement. In these sections, students found that some features of Steller were complicated to use and need extra time to learn it.
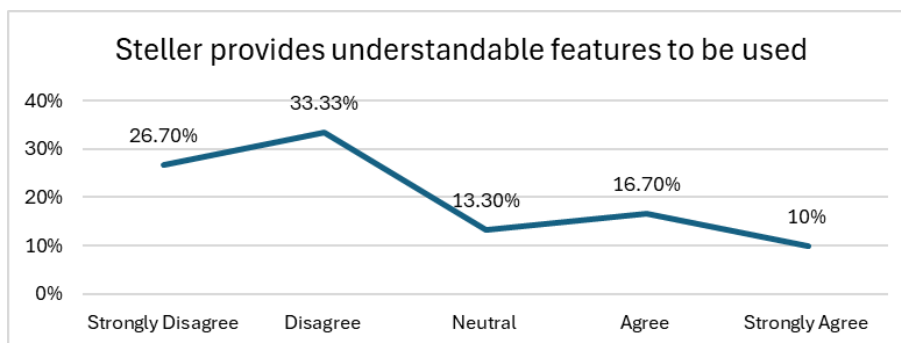

Figure 8. Students' perceptions of usability challenges in Steller

While Steller offers a range of features to enhance the writing experience, some students found certain tools difficult to use or unintuitive. Students reported needing extra time to familiarize themselves with the interface, especially when trying to balance text organization with multimedia elements. The following responses illustrate these challenges from the students can be viewed below:

> *"I need extra time to utilize the features properly. Steller features are quite difficult to be understood" (P3)*
> *"Some tools in Steller aren't very intuitive. It took me a while to figure out how to format my text and images properly." (P6)*
> *"The biggest challenge I faced when using Steller was adapting my writing process to a tool that prioritizes visuals over text organization. I often found myself rearranging content repeatedly because the formatting options were not as flexible as I expected." (P2)*

The responses from P3, P6, and P2 highlight usability challenges in Steller. P3 mentions that they needed extra time to learn the features, suggesting that the app requires more effort to master compared to traditional writing tools. P6 specifically points out that some tools are not intuitive, making it difficult to properly format text and images. Meanwhile, P2 finds it challenging to adapt their writing process to a platform that prioritizes visuals over text organization, leading to frequent rearrangement and formatting struggles.

> *"At first, I struggled to figure out where certain tools were located. The interface looks nice, but it took me a while to understand how to use all the features effectively." (P1)*

"I wanted to create a structured layout for my writing, but sometimes the text boxes would move unexpectedly, and I had to keep adjusting them." (P4)
"If I make a mistake or accidentally delete something, it's not always easy to undo the action. Sometimes, I have to redo entire sections of my work." (P5)

In addition to these concerns, other students shared similar frustrations. P1 found the learning curve for some features to be steep. This suggests that while Steller offers many functionalities, the user experience could be improved with clearer navigation and tool placement. P4 also experienced difficulties with text formatting. This indicates that some students found the text-editing tools unpredictable, requiring extra effort to maintain proper formatting. P5 expressed frustration with the limited undo and revision options. This suggests that the app's revision tools could be improved to allow for more flexibility and better error recovery. Overall, these responses indicate that while Steller provides creative and interactive writing tools, some features are not as user-friendly as students would like. The difficulties in formatting, navigation, and revision suggest that improving usability and offering better guidance on tool functionality could enhance the overall writing experience.

Discussion

The results of this study show that students generally favor using Steller as a digital storytelling (DST) tool in EFL writing classrooms. According to data from surveys and interviews, most students felt that Steller helped them organize their writing, incorporate multimedia, encourage creativity, support a variety of writing formats, collaborate better, and improve the editing process. Specifically, 22 out of 30 students agreed that the template option made it simpler to plan their work. On the other hand, 25 students believed that multimedia integration enhanced their interest in their writing. Twenty-five students also considered that Steller's drag-and-drop feature made editing easier. In addition, 23 students enjoyed the personalization options, and 26 valued the flexibility of different writing formats. Collaboration and peer feedback were also advantageous; 22 students reported that receiving comments improved their writing. Nevertheless, some issues surfaced, with 18 students stating that some complex features required additional study time and 17 students reporting issues because of their internet dependence.

The findings of this study support previous research showing that digital storytelling (DST) is an effective tool for improving writing skills in EFL classrooms. Overall, students had a positive experience using Steller, especially in structuring their writing, integrating multimedia, boosting creativity, editing more easily, and collaborating with others. These results align with previous studies highlighting how DST increases students' motivation, engagement, and writing quality (Alemi et al., 2022; Putra et al., 2024). One of the biggest advantages of Steller was its template feature, which helped students organize their writing more clearly. This aligns with the findings of Putra et al. (2024) who found that DST tools improve students' ability to arrange their ideas logically. It also supports Flower and Hayes's (1981) theory that writing is a complex cognitive process requiring good planning. With Steller's ready-

made templates, students could focus more on their content instead of struggling with structure.

However, students appreciated Steller's multimedia integration, which allowed them to add images and videos to make their writing more engaging. This aligns with the findings of Chen and Yeh (2024), who found that using multimedia in DST enhances creativity and participation. Similarly, Yang and Wu (2012) discovered that DST tools encourage students to explore different storytelling techniques, making them more motivated to write. With this feature, students felt that their writing became more interactive and visually appealing. However, the ability to customize fonts, colors, and layouts in Steller was another feature that students enjoyed. Many felt that these tools helped them express their creativity and make their writing feel more personal. This supports the research of Apsari and Satriani (2016), who found that DST tools allow students to take ownership of their storytelling, increasing their engagement. Similarly, Sylvester and Greenidge (2009) stated that digital writing tools help students feel more confident because they can personalize their work.

Another highly rated feature was Steller's drag-and-drop function, which made editing easier. Students found it helpful for quickly rearranging text, images, and videos without disrupting their layout. This finding aligns with research by Bhakti (2020) who noted that DST tools with user-friendly editing features improve students' writing efficiency. Instead of spending extra time formatting, students could focus on refining their ideas. This suggests that intuitive design features like drag-and-drop can reduce cognitive load and improve the writing experience. Students also valued Steller's flexibility in supporting different writing formats, such as storytelling, essays, and reports. This adaptability aligns with the findings of Munajah et al. (2022) who emphasized that DST tools should accommodate various writing needs to enhance both academic and creative expression. The ability to switch between writing styles makes Steller more versatile compared to traditional writing apps. As students reported, this feature helped them apply their writing skills to different contexts, making Steller useful beyond storytelling.

Furthermore, students found Steller's collaboration and feedback features useful. Being able to receive comments from peers and teachers helped them improve their writing. This is consistent with the study by Munajah et al. (2022), which highlighted the importance of peer interaction in DST for encouraging self-evaluation and learning. Bhakti (2020) also found that DST allows students to reflect on their writing through feedback, leading to better-structured and more polished work. Despite its benefits, some students faced challenges using Steller, particularly regarding internet access. Many found it frustrating that they needed a stable connection to use the app properly. This issue was also noted by Zuhriyah (2023), who pointed out that online DST tools can be difficult to use in areas with poor internet access. Another challenge was the complexity of some features. Some students needed extra time to learn how to navigate the app, which aligns with the findings of Al-Munawwarah (2014). According to the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), students are more likely to use technology when it is easy to understand.

Finally, the findings of this study align with previous research on the effectiveness of digital storytelling (DST) tools in EFL writing but also highlight certain usability challenges. Similar to Khalili (2020), who found that Steller improved junior high school students' content organization and engagement, this study confirms that university students also benefited from its structured templates and multimedia features. Additionally, the results resonate with Handayani et al. (2023), who found that Book Creator fostered creativity, engagement, and structured writing, similar to how Steller was perceived. However, unlike Book Creator, which was considered intuitive, Steller required more time for students to master its tools. These findings suggest that Steller requires to improve the accessibility and practicality features.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study examined students' perceptions of using Steller in an EFL writing classroom and found generally positive responses. Students appreciated its support in organizing ideas, integrating multimedia, fostering creativity, and enabling feedback. The app's templates and customization features made writing more engaging, while collaboration tools encouraged self-assessment and communication. However, some students faced challenges due to internet dependency and complex features. Although Steller shows promise for writing instruction, improvements in usability and accessibility are needed. The study was limited by a small sample size and focused on perceptions rather than measurable improvements in writing skills.

Future research should use experimental studies to examine Steller and similar DST tools' effects on writing outcomes. Investigating their effectiveness across diverse educational settings and student backgrounds can improve understanding. Comparing Steller with other DST platforms and addressing technical issues, such as offline functionality, would enhance its practicality. Studies on teachers' perspectives and methods for using Steller in writing instruction can also provide valuable insights. By exploring these areas, future research can contribute to more effective, technology-enhanced writing instruction across various learning environments.

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