

## Design Case: Character Design Workshop for SDH Kupang Highschool Students

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### ABSTRACT

This paper is a design case for a character design workshop for Sekolah Dian Harapan Kupang students. The workshop was designed by gathering information regarding the profile of the students, and also the format of the workshop. Afterward, the authors prepared materials for the workshop. The workshop was done offline on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and was attended by 36 high school students. The workshop itself went well, with various adjustments along the way. The evaluation of the workshop also shows a positive response, with most noting that the workshop is fun. Through this design case, the authors concluded that designers and workshop instructors must be flexible when conducting a workshop, as many unpredicted factors can influence the workshop's conduct.

**Keywords:** Design Case, Character Design Workshop

### INTRODUCTION

This article details a community service initiative undertaken by the authors. The authors were invited to Sekolah Dian Harapan (SDH) Kupang to conduct a character design workshop. The workshop was offline on October 27, 2023, within the school premises. The workshop's primary objective was to familiarize the students with character design principles, aiming to equip them with the skills to create compelling character designs. This article is written as an elaboration on how the workshop was conducted and also the result of the workshop.

The article is structured by first providing a short introduction regarding the community service and article. The following section is the literature, where the authors elaborates on the theory used for the workshop presentation. Methodology explains the steps that the authors made for preparing the workshops. The result and Discussion are structured, mirroring the steps elaborated from the methodology. The conclusion provides a summary and also limitations and recommendations regarding similar workshops.

Using the classical IMRAD structure, the authors reports the community service with a design case report approach. Design cases are a description of artifacts or experience that has been intentionally designed (Boiling, 2010). Design cases focus on elaborating the critical decisions and transparency of the decision-making process (Howard, 2011; Smith, 2010).

## LITERATURE

Character design is crucial in animation work, serving as the critical element that propels and shapes the narrative within the animation (Wisly & Heryanto, 2021). The significance of character design cannot be overstated, as it can either enhance or hinder the overall impact of an animation project. To achieve effective character design, one adheres to four fundamental principles (Rori & Wahyudi, 2022). The first principle emphasizes the importance of aligning characters with the narrative, ensuring their design is seamlessly integrated into the storyline. The second principle focuses on the significance of shape, highlighting how a character's form contributes to defining its identity. The third principle, flow, emphasizes the role of movement patterns in imbuing a character with personality. Lastly, the fourth principle underscores the need for distinct characteristics that make a character easily recognizable.

In visual design, a solid grasp of shape theory is indispensable for creating characters that aptly convey their characteristics and personalities (Tenardi & Heryanto, 2021). This understanding forms the cornerstone of crafting characters that fulfill their narrative roles and resonate visually with the audience.

## METHODOLOGY

In preparing the workshop, there are several stages that the authors conducted. The steps can be seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1 Workshop Design Stages (Source: Authors, 2023).**

The first stage is gathering information regarding the workshop. This is done by asking the school about the facilities, duration of the workshop, the profile of the students, and also the school's expectations regarding the workshop.

The second stage is preparing materials based on the information gathered. The workshop's material consists of the presentation and worksheets used in the workshop. Two worksheets are used in the workshop. The participants used the first worksheet before the presentation regarding character design. The participants used the second worksheet after the presentation. Results from the two worksheets are compared for evaluation of the workshop.

The third stage is the workshop itself. The authors traveled to Kupang to conduct the workshop on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October, 2023.

The last stage is the evaluation. The authors uses the worksheet to get feedback regarding the workshop. Based on the overall conduct of the workshop, the authors also evaluates the overall community service project.

## **RESULT & DISCUSSION**

### **Gathering Information**

Gathering information for the workshop takes around one week. The school cannot provide a fixed number of students for the workshop participants but can tell that they should at least be interested in visual communication design as the students are asked to choose what workshop they would like to attend. The duration of the workshop is 100 minutes, and there will be two sessions of the workshop. The workshop space is the student's classroom, with a computer and projector for the authors to present.

### **Preparing Materials**

Preparing the material also takes around one week until the workshop itself. Based on the information gathered regarding the duration of the workshop, the authors structured the workshop, as seen in Table 1.

**Table 1 Rundown of the Workshop (Source: Authors, 2023).**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Introduction	5 minutes
Students doing the first worksheet	30 minutes
Presentation	10 minutes
Students doing the second worksheet	30 minutes
Presentation & Review	20 minutes
Closing	5 minutes
Total	100 minutes

The prepared presentation focuses on teaching the students about character design and the principles of good character design. The teaching method prepared was an interactive discussion between the authors and the students. Many examples and case studies are also prepared for the workshop. The authors wanted to keep the theories explained simple so the students would not feel too lectured and quickly bored.

To increase participation and interaction, the authors prepared gifts such as books and stickers so that the students are incentivized to answer questions from the authors during the presentation.

The worksheets were designed to collect information or profile of the students, the student's work, and feedback regarding the workshop. Each worksheet had two design challenges for the students: design any character design and a character based on the folklore story of Mauraja Mountain.

### **Workshop**

It is informed that the number of participants of each workshop will be 18 students from the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> social science and natural science programs. The summary of the participants can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2** Rundown of the Workshop (Source: Authors, 2023).

	Amount	Percentage
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	14	38.89%
Female	22	61.11%
<b>Grade</b>		
11	15	41.67%
12	21	58.83%
<b>Program</b>		
Natural Sciences	22	61.11%
Social Sciences	14	38.89%
<b>Interest in Visual Communication Design</b>		
Very Not Interested	1	2.78%
Not Interested	2	5.56%
Unsure	16	44.44%
Interested	13	36.11%
Very Interested	5	13.89%
Total	36	100%

During the workshop, the authors discovered that the students were unaware of the Mauraja Mountain folklore story. Therefore, the students were not required to do the second design challenge. Instead, the authors allocated more time to the presentation by providing more examples and showing animation works with excellent character design.



**Figure 2** Character Design Workshop Session (Source: Authors, 2023)



**Figure 3 The Authors and the Participants of the First Session (Source: Authors, 2023).**

The first session ended late. The authors then evaluated the issues found in the first evaluation, such as the time expected on presenting took much more time than prepared. Another issue was that the students took too much time doing the worksheet as they found it fun. So, although the students were only asked to do one design challenge per worksheet, it took too much time, thus making the whole session late.

Another point that the authors failed to consider is that the authors had no time to evaluate the student's work and to review them. The students were also hesitant and shy about showing their work, making it hard to conduct the presentation and review section. Therefore, the time designated for this section is reallocated to the presentation. The adjusted rundown for the second session can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3 Rundown of the Workshop (Source: Authors, 2023).**

Activity	Duration
Introduction	5 minutes
Students doing the first worksheet	30 minutes
Presentation	30 minutes
Students doing the second worksheet	30 minutes
Closing	5 minutes
Total	100 minutes

The second session still ended late as the students did not come in time for the session. The break between the two sessions was not enough for the students, making them tardy and entering the class late. The students of the second session also seemed uninterested compared to the students of the first session.

The authors found out that the second session was for students who chose this workshop as their second option. Therefore, it can be said that the students in the second session are less interested compared to the first session. The lack of interest and exhaustion from attending another workshop made the students seem unfocused during the worksheet sessions. However, the students still finished all the design challenges required from the worksheets.





**Figure 4 The Authors and the Participants of the Second Session (Source: Authors, 2023).**

**Evaluation**

Feedback from the SDH Kupang students is generally favorable. Some input and feedback can be addressed for further character design workshops. The feedback and inputs can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 4 Rundown of the Workshop (Source: Authors, 2023).**

<b>Students Feedback</b>	<b>Authors’s Response</b>
The workshop can also consist of materials teaching students to draw.	This is a good input that can be easily integrated into the presentation.
Please give topics on the design challenge so the students do not take too much time to think about what to draw.	Initially, there were two design challenges. The first challenge was free, but the second challenge was given a topic. However, the second challenge was canceled due to time constraints and the students’ unfamiliarity with the topic.  Nevertheless, this input can be integrated into the next workshop.
Include anatomy drawing	Anatomy drawing is another topic that may need another different session. So, for a character design workshop, the information may be added as additional information, but it would be hard to be part of the workshop’s focus.
More games	It can be implemented in the next workshop as part of the tutor and participant’s interaction.

The objective and instruction of each worksheet need to be more apparent.	The worksheet and brief can be improved in the next workshop.
Add more examples and explanations on each character design.	It can be implemented in the next workshop as part of the presentation.
Increase the duration of the workshop.	This would be the most challenging part, as each workshop may have a different time duration based on the school's schedule. However, other than that, this input can be seen as an evaluation that the participant thinks the duration is not enough for the current workshop structure.
Add examples of digital art or designing digitally	This would also be challenging as each workshop facility may be different, and not every facility supports digital workspace for the students to try designing digitally.
The tutor speaks too fast.	The input is well received and will be part of the authors' essential notes.

Besides the student's feedback, the authors also receives feedback from the teacher present during the second session. The teacher informed the authors that the presentation was quite simple and could easily be understood by the students, which is good.

Based on the authors' experience and evaluation, the authors sees that the workshop can be significantly improved. With more information regarding the student's nature and interest, the authors may have designed a different approach depending on the student's skill level or interest. The approach to asking the students to do two different worksheets is also a conundrum. On one aspect, the two worksheets can be used to gauge the effect of the presentation on the student's comprehension. However, having the students do two design challenges may require too much time. So perhaps the overall structure of the workshop may need to be evaluated and changed depending on the purpose and scope of the workshop.

## CONCLUSIONS

This paper illustrates the design case of designing a character design workshop for students at SDH Kupang. The paper is structured so that the design decisions regarding preparing, conducting, and evaluating the workshop can be understood. The character design workshop received positive comments with several constructive inputs that can be addressed in the next workshop.

As the authors conducted the workshop, the authors sees the paramount necessity for workshop instructors to adapt to situations surrounding the workshop. Adjustments to the material may be necessary when the participants do not respond well. Time is also a significant factor in designing a workshop, as the time or duration planned may not always go according to plan.

The authors sees that the student's interest in the topic is also a significant factor in the workshop's atmosphere. Since the second workshop recorded a lower interest in visual communication design and was conducted after the students had a break, the participants felt more unorganized compared to the first session.

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