



Digital Storytelling in Building Emotional Literacy and Social Skills in Early Childhood (Qualitative Analysis at TKIT Al-Huda Wonogiri in Wonogiri District, Indonesia)

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Abstract

Digital storytelling is a short production of digital media that allows us to share the aspects of their stories. It comes in an emotionally attractive and interactive form through movies, audios, or other forms of media. Storytelling builds communication through child communities that allows us to learn the cultural background of the children. Through social and emotional experience, storytelling can help the development of spoken language and improve the literacy skills of early childhood and build cultural literacy awareness. Broadly speaking, digital storytelling is a literacy strategy that can be suited to the characteristics of children through the use of information technology in any kinds of learning. Several articles, illustrating the study of the effect of storytelling techniques in improving children's emotional literacy, contributed to the idea of this research. This research applied a qualitative approach with descriptive data analysis and interpretation analysis to determine the effect of the use of digital storytelling in building emotional literacy and social skill in early childhood in Wonogiri District. The data were collected by using documentation and interview. The findings of the research found that the use of digital storytelling as a form of learning in early childhood can help in assuming children's oral ability in communicating or interacting with friends and teachers, help to better remember the contents of the story, retell the story with confidence and build their literacy that is in accordance with their skill namely looking at the picture on the book.

Keywords: *Digital Storytelling; Emotional Literacy*

Introduction

Utilization of technology in the current renewal system of learning is one of the influences of technological developments in the world of education, communication and information. The renewal effort aims to create an intelligent generation who is capable of building and enriching social skills and learning of literacy especially in early childhood.

One of the learning media used in the era of development of information and communication technology recently is the multimedia of digital storytelling. The multimedia of digital storytelling is a computer-based technology used to convey a story to the listeners in the form of text, graphics, animation, audio, or video. The multimedia of digital storytelling allows us to develop lessons in the form of story.

Digital story is a short digital media production that allows us to share aspects of others' stories, which comes in an emotionally appealing and interactive form through movies, audio, or other forms of media. According to Banaszewski (2005), Digital storytelling is a practice of combining narration/ personal stories and multimedia (images, audio and text) to produce a short autobiography. Based on National Education Technology Standards (NETS) in 2007, there are 6 benefits of learning digital storytelling, as follow:

1. Creativity and innovation
2. Communication and collaboration
3. Research and accessible information
4. Critical thinking, problem solving and decision making
5. Digital society
6. The operation of technology and concepts.

Learning by using digital storytelling at TKIT AL-Huda Wonogiri becomes a daily study with different story themes. Different story themes in digital storytelling is aimed to make it easier for the children to understand the basic concepts of daily learning; especially for grade A of kindergarten students aged 4-6 years who are new to pre-school. Children aged 4-6 years are part of early childhood terminologically referred to as pre-school children. The age is the most sensitive childhood. The experts call the period as a golden age in which the development of intelligence during the time increases to 50%. At this period, the maturation of physical and psychic functions occurs so that the children are ready to respond to the stimulation provided by the environment. This period is the tempo to lay the foundation for developing the physical, cognitive, linguistic, artistic, social, emotional, self-discipline, religious values, self-concept and self-reliance (Isjoni, 2009). Through different backgrounds of different children, emotional and social experience of storytelling can help the development of spoken language, improve the literacy skill of young children and build cultural literacy awareness. Broadly speaking, digital storytelling is a literacy strategy that can be adjusted to the characteristics of children through the use of information technology in any learning.

Some types of digital storytelling include: 1) Personal narrative: it is a tale of a personal story of someone who has cultural or life values to be exemplary and learning; 2) Documentary Story: it is a story that examines dramatic events that can help us learn the history of the past; 3) Fairytale: it is a story that is created and designed to convey information or to tell the storyteller on a particular concept or practice.

Digital storytelling in the form of multimedia combines photos, video, animation, sound, music, text, and narration voice. The process of making digital storytelling can be performed in 8 (eight) stages starting from the emergence of ideas to the provision of feedback.

The process cycle is shown in the following figure:



Figure Digital Storytelling Proses

The existence of digital storytelling becomes one of the new media that can bring the creativity of children and become new media in learning that give positive impact in supporting learning process in school especially at TKIT Al-Huda Wonogiri.

It is similar to the research conducted by Christina Sylla, Clara Coutinho, Pedro Branco, Wolfgang Muller (2015) under the title “Investigating the Use of Digital Manipulatives for Storytelling in Pre-School”. The research had identified the need for interactive product design for children, as well as long-term studies investigating the effects of its use in the classroom environment by following the design and development of a digital manipulative system for storytelling which involves preschoolers and teachers in Portuguese Pre-School. The research findings showed that children use digital manipulative systems to create stories and language manipulation which are activities that encourage the development of spoken language and literacy skill. Another research related to digital storytelling was conducted by Carmen Gregori-Signes (2014) under the title “Digital Storytelling and Multimodal Literacy in Education”. The article supported the use of digital stories to encourage critiques of socio-educational focus including explicit multimodal teaching in the secondary education curriculum in Spain. Analysis of the fifty digital stories showed that the students develop a definite awareness of the issues chosen for their story (e.g. violence, racism, and war) when the final product transmits a critical perspective on the topic itself.

Articles that illustrate the learning using this new medium of digital storytelling techniques showed that children contribute to the idea of research. This article applied a qualitative approach with descriptive data analysis and interpretation analysis. The data were collected with documentation and interviews. Specifically, this article discusses how the influence of the use of storytelling techniques in building emotional literacy and social skills of early childhood in TKIT Al-Huda Wonogiri.

Methodology

This research applied qualitative approach. Kirk and Miller defined qualitative research as a particular tradition in social science that is fundamentally depended upon observation to the human beings within their own region and related with such persons in their language and terminology (Moleong, 2006).

The main reason for using such a qualitative approach was because the topic to be studied was related to determine the influence of the use of digital storytelling in building emotional literacy and the social skill of the child at the early age. This research was conducted on the teachers or storytellers as the main informant, the learners of TKIT Al-Huda Wonogiri, and the principal as the additional informant. The data collection techniques were performed through observation, interview and documentation. Data analysis technique was guided by qualitative data analysis steps proposed by Miles and Hubberman consisting of reduction, data presentation (display) and drawing the conclusion (verification).

Implication Theory

In describing the phenomenon of this research, the author attempted to use digital storytelling approach and communication model of SMCR by David Kenneth Berlo. Berlo's communication model introduces an SMCR term to describe one type of linear communication model consisting of various components including source/sender, message, channel and receiver. The main attention in developing the concept of digital storytelling which refers to the selection of media include: text, images, audio, video, and so forth to create the concept of source/sender. In this case, the communication model becomes very important to accommodate the purpose of digital storytelling in accordance with the media that are going to be used. One form of communication that is relevant to the concept according to Mulyana (2007) is the

SMCR model that combines public communication, interpersonal and written communication, and other forms of communication. The relationship between digital storytelling with this communication model lies in channel component, which means maximally utilizing the senses possessed by human beings.

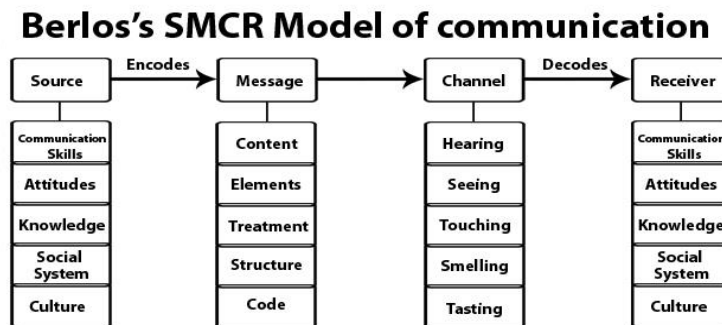


Figure Berlo's Communication Model

In Berlo's communication model, the source is the designer who acts as a visual communication maker or teacher as a storyteller who conveys the story content. The messages contained in the content of the story are in the form of religious values and morals, ethics, courtesy, habits, and laws, which are certainly in accordance with the characteristics of early childhood. Pictorial stories presented through the slides as the medium of communication delivery of the story are in the form of visual illustrations and text. In this case, channel is in the form of visual and sound, so that the senses involved are eyes and ears. Receiver in digital storytelling activity is that the children from the early childhood are expected to capture the messages of the story that are full of religious values and morals, moral, social, custom, and law, and provide feedback.

Currently, various forms of communication style in storytelling activities develop with the existence of technology equipment, such as printing machines, computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones which have shifted the form of conventional storytelling delivery into digital storytelling. The storytelling activity provides benefits such as: 1) developing children's imagination, 2) improving language skills, 3) increasing children's reading interest, 4) building emotional intelligence, and 5) characterizing children's empathy. In addition, there are other benefits such as improving the children's IQ, developing children's skills in listening to the stories, and improving reading habit.

Result and Discussion

The research began with the observation to the implementation activities of storytelling with the use of slide media. The first preparation was to determine the theme that would be presented in storytelling. After determining the appropriate theme, the storyteller then mastered the storyline to be delivered. Next, the flow of the story was presented in the form of a presentation that could attract the attention of the children. The story theme raised in the storytelling activity of the moment was about the process of butterfly breeding in which the metamorphosis of a butterfly starts from the egg phase then into a larva or a caterpillar, then into a pupa or cocoon, and eventually become a butterfly. It was presented in the form of interesting slides. The next was the process of storytelling that was to present the story in digital storytelling learning with good storytelling method delivered by storyteller.

Storytelling is an art of telling a story that can be used as a means to teach good values in children without patronizing them (Asfandiyar, 2007). Storytelling is a creative process of children's development and children's imagination that not only gives priority to the left brain but also the right brain.

In this storytelling process, an interaction occurred between storyteller and the audiences. Through this storytelling process, communication was established between storyteller and the audiences. There are stages in storytelling namely the techniques used in storytelling to determine whether or not this storytelling process runs smoothly.

1. Stages of storytelling. Bunanta (2005) mentioned that there are three stages in storytelling, namely preparation before starting the storytelling, the process when the storytelling activity takes place and the process after the storytelling activity is done.
 - i. Preparation before starting the storytelling. The first thing to do is to choose an interesting and memorable book title in which it will give benefits for the audiences and readers.
 - ii. Process when the storytelling activity takes place. The most important process in storytelling is when the storytelling takes place. In approaching the storytelling session, the storyteller must wait for the condition so that the audience is ready to listen to the tale that will be delivered. There are several factors that can support the process of storytelling so that it would be interesting to listen to, namely:
 - 1) Eye contact
When the storytelling takes place, the storyteller must make eye contact with the audiences. Storytellers should look at the audience and pause for a moment. By making eye contact, the audiences will realize that they are being cared for and are invited to make an interaction. In addition, by making eye contact, we can see whether or not the audiences listen to the story line of the storytelling. Thus, the storytellers may know the reaction of the audience.
 - 2) Facial expression
When the storytelling takes place, the facial expression of the storyteller can support the excitement of the story being delivered. The storyteller must be able to express his/her face in accordance with the content of the story.
 - 3) Gestures
The gestures of the storytellers during the storytelling process may also provide support in describing more interesting story. The stories that are being delivered would be different if the storytellers perform some gestures that reflect what the characters do within the story being delivered. However, if the story is boring, finally the audience will no longer enthusiastic in listening to the story.
 - 4) Voice
High/low level of the voice can be used by the storytellers to make the audience feel the situation of the story being delivered. The storytellers will elevate the intonation of his/her voice to reflect on the story that begins to enter a tense stage. Professional storytellers are usually able to mimic the voices of characters such as the sounds of a chicken or an open door.
 - 5) Speed
Storytellers should be able to keep the pace or tempo during the storytelling. It should not be too fast that can make the children confused or too slow that can make the children boring.

6) Props

To get the attention of the children during the storytelling process, the props need to be provided such as hand puppets to represent the characters within the story. In addition to dolls, it can be performed by wearing funny animal costumes. Basically, it requires the props that could make the children feel curious about the story that is going to be presented.

iii. The process after the storytelling activity is done. When the storytelling process is done, it is time for the storyteller to evaluate the story. It covers what can be learned through the story. Next, the storytellers can invite the audience to love reading and recommend books with other themes and interesting contents.

2. Techniques of storytelling. There are several techniques that become basic knowledge for us to tell the children stories.

- i. Read many story books or fairy tales that are really appropriate for children as well as read a lot from the experiences.
- ii. Get in the habit of chatting with the children because it may let us know many children's language.
- iii. Give emphasis to a particular dialog or phrase in the story we read or we tell then look at the children's reaction.
- iv. Express the emotional expressions in the story, such as anger, sickness, shock, happiness, and joy.
- v. Tell the story at the right time when the children can listen well.

When the process of storytelling activity is carried out, based on the author's observation in TKIT Al-Huda Wonogiri where the research was conducted in kindergarten A class, it was an early-childhood educational institution that had applied storytelling technique in learning activities in school with different story themes. The observation was supported by the interview results between the writer and TKIT Al-Huda Wonogiri School Principal, Mrs. Menik. The following is the excerpt of the interview:

“Basically, storytelling learning is almost implemented daily to explain to the children about the day's activities and that it is sustainable” (interview on July, 24 2018).

The observation continued until the completion of the storytelling process. In the storytelling process, there were some steps taken in the activity, including preparation and implementation of the storytelling. The first preparation was to prepare the device that was going to be used in storytelling activities, namely laptop, LCD projector, screen, story theme and storyteller. The next was arranging the seats of the children. In the process of implementing the storytelling activity: 1) the children were arranged to sit on their own seats, 2) the storyteller started to tell the stories by greeting them previously, 3) reading the attendance list, 4) asking the children to calm down during the storytelling process; 5) beginning the storytelling process; 6) evaluating the content of the story.

After the storytelling process was over, the results of the observations and interviews performed with the teacher/ storyteller found that the children were very enthusiastic in the storytelling activity and made interaction with the storyteller who was delivering the story with the use of interesting intonation, sound, facial expressions, and gestures to the children. Therefore, the contents of the story could be understood by the children. Digital storytelling learning provided the concept of learning while playing on TKIT Al-Huda and it had positive influence on child psychology. In the psychological study, there are some influences of playing for the children development including the encouragement to communicate. Playing with other children will indirectly help the children to communicate well (Fadlillah, 2014). In addition, communication with children as a form of children's involvement with the story may provide fresh and exciting atmosphere and unique experience for the children. The findings of the research found

that the use of digital storytelling as a form of learning in early childhood can help in assuming children's oral ability in communicating or interacting with friends and teachers, help to better remember the contents of the story, retell the story with confidence and build their literacy that is in accordance with their skill namely looking at the picture on the book.

The success of teachers/storytellers could not be separated from the confidence of the teachers/storytellers of TKIT Al-Huda Wonogiri. It was supported by the results of the interview between the author and the teacher/storyteller, Husein. The following is the excerpt of the interview:

“The teacher/storyteller is required to be really expressive in delivering the content of the story/message to the children. The teacher/storyteller must be expressive otherwise he/she will be left alone by the children” (interview on July, 24 2018).

To meet the competency standards of teachers in storytelling, a sustainable training of storytelling method was required. However, there were some obstacles experienced by the teachers/storytellers namely the lack of training of storytelling method obtained by the teachers/storytellers. The following is the excerpt of the interview:

“Teachers/storytellers who are required to be expressive require training of storytelling methods. However, the technical guidance of the storytelling method for the teachers/storytellers was implemented only once”. (Interview on July 24, 2018)

Conclusion and Suggestion

Overall, the implementation process of digital storytelling went well. It was evidenced by the evaluation of the story content between the storytellers and children. In addition, digital storytelling also encouraged children to communicate well. In addition to the benefits, digital storytelling also aimed to: 1) foster the soul of patriotism, 2) train the comprehension and concentration of the children, 3) train the thinking and fantasy skills of the children, 4) create a fun atmosphere in school, and 5) embed the values manners (<https://addienbk.wordpress.com/2013/02/07/story-telling/>). However, there were some constraints experienced by the teachers/storytellers namely the lack of training of storytelling method obtained by the teachers. Therefore, to improve teacher/storyteller skills in storytelling learning methods, it needs a training of storytelling methods that require all teachers/storytellers to join. In addition, the principal needs to provide motivational encouragement to the teachers to broaden their horizons and improve the skills of the storytelling method as a lesson to the children. The school also needs to provide facilities to support the learning activities at school.

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