



The Storytelling Approach: A Parent's Perspective

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ABSTRACT

In the study of Reamy (2002) storytelling is the art of using language, vocalization, and/or physical movement and gesture to reveal the elements and images of a story to a specific, live audience. The primary purpose of this study is to determine the parents' perceptive as co-facilitators in the utilization of storytelling approach to Grade 1 learners in developing their listening and comprehension skills in the absence of teachers during the pandemic. This study utilized the qualitative research design, specifically the narrative method. Moreover, the study was conducted across the elementary schools in Calubian South District, Calubian, Leyte during the school year 2020-2021. Based on the results of the study, the parents as co-facilitators perceived that the utilization of storytelling approach has not only developed the Grade 1 learners' listening and comprehension skills, but also their macro skills in general, communication skills, reading habit, values and confidence, vocabulary, and visual imagery. Thus, in the absence of teachers, the parents have continued delivering instruction, especially in teaching storytelling during the pandemic. For more effective implementation of the storytelling approach, it is highly recommended that teachers should facilitate the modification of learning materials to ensure efficient instruction. Hence, teachers may consider other teaching strategies such as digital storytelling that might be effective in teaching through the pandemic.

Keywords: *Storytelling approach, parents, teachers, learners, pandemic*

1. INTRODUCTION

Reamy (2002) stated that storytelling is the art of using language, vocalization, and/or physical movement and gesture to reveal the elements and images of a story to a specific, live audience. Furthermore, stories are the original edutainment out of which all cultures flow. Before we had TV's, social media, books, and formal plays, we had stories. Families and communities would gather and listen to stories from elders. They would sing them, set them to music and dance, draw them, and most importantly, enact them so that the essential values would be communicated and preserved (Singh, 2018).

Moreover, both storytelling and story reading have been found to be successful educational strategies that create significant improvements in language acquisition in young children (Lucarevschi, 2016; Miller & Pennycuf, 2008; Speaker et al., 2004); improve their oral or spoken language (Cooper, 2009; Cremin et al., 2018; Isbell et al., 2004; Typadi & Hayon, 2010); and develop reading comprehension (Craig et al., 2001; Haven & Ducey, 2007).

In addition, it has been long-established that the teacher's specific task is to help problem readers translate the thinking they do in speaking and listening situations to the written language before them. Techniques teacher's use must tap the thinking of the problem reader, and help organize it for better understanding (Perez, 1981).

Conversely, as teachers often exercise the most natural form of storytelling, relaying anecdotes from their own lives. When children focus on such stories told by their teacher, consciously or not, that teacher is in 'story mode' (Rubright, 1996).

Meanwhile, Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) expressed that listening has an important role in the communication process. Of the four macro skills, listening is the most important of all. In listening comprehension, listeners try to construct a meaning when they get the information from the

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listening source. An anonymous writer once wrote that every good conversation starts with a good listening.

The statement of Perez (1981) is still true when he said that if children have trouble comprehending what they read, teachers are faced with an especially difficult responsibility. He emphasized that it is not always easy to improve the comprehension of problem readers, and that there is no magic method that will work for all teachers and for all children. The teacher's responsibility is made even more difficult by some suggested methods of teaching reading comprehension, which often are vague or limited to simple questioning of children after reading.

Moreover, the researcher also believed that listening skill is essential to learning, for it is not a skill which children acquire naturally as they grow and develop. They commonly accepted fact that children become good listeners, as they mature, is gradually changing in today's education. Today, more than ever, there is a greater need for the development of listening skills.

Nonetheless, in this time of pandemic were teachers are parents surrogate and as facilitators of learning were not present to discuss and help the learners understand the stories they read, hence, the parents is being placed as a responsible and accountable in the development of the child through modular distance learning. Thus, parents played an important role in this new normal of educational set-up in the country. Many have questioned its capability to produce quality learners, yet most of us are already used to it and most parents have even came up with their own strategy to facilitate utmost learning. After all, as cited by DepEd Secretary Leonor M. Briones, learning must continue and education must never stop in light of the fact that no child is left behind.

Toward this end, the researcher opted to conduct the study to clearly explore the perspective of the parents when it comes to the utilization of the storytelling approach in developing the learners listening and comprehension skills in the absence of teachers in Calubian South District.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the parents' perceptive in the utilization of storytelling approach to Grade 1 learners in developing their listening and comprehension skills in the absence of teachers during the pandemic.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the qualitative research design, specifically the narrative method. Qualitative-narrative research design is deemed appropriate because the researcher gathers data or facts from one or two subjects through interviews, documents, etc. over a period of time. Based on the theme, these are then pierced together to derive answers and questions (Vashishtha, 2019). Moreover, the study was conducted across the elementary schools in Calubian South District, Calubian, Leyte during the school year 2020-2021.

This study utilized purposive sampling, where the participants were sought after the pre-selected criteria: (1) parent of Grade 1 learner; (2) male or female; and (3) any parent who is willing to participate in the study. This research involved the 12 parents of the Grade 1 learners from among the elementary schools in Calubian South District, school year 2020-2021.

Furthermore, the study utilized a structured interview guide as the primary tool in gathering the data. This interview guide was a product of the researcher's in-depth readings of literature from various citations. After validating the instrument, the researcher herself facilitated an in-depth interview, and video recording was utilized to get the full and detailed views and r participants' responses. The questions in the interview guide revolved around the narratives of parents of the pedagogies they used in story telling despite the absence of teachers. The data gathered from interviews were arranged and summarized according to categories. The researcher then analyzed and interpreted the information provided by the participants in accordance with the purpose of the study.

The researchers used thematic analysis in analyzing the qualitative data gathered utilizing the Clarck and Braun (2013) six phases of thematic analysis that were followed in the data analysis of this study.

The researchers familiarized the data by immersing themselves in and become intimately familiar with the data, reading and re-reading the data, and noting any initial analytic observations. Then, they coded the data by generating pithy labels for essential features relevance to the research question guiding the analysis. Afterwards, they searched for themes, which is a bit like coding to identify the similarity of the data. Moreover, the researchers reviewed the themes by checking that the themes "work" with both the coded extracts and the full data-set. Further, the researchers defined and named the themes by conducting and writing a detailed analysis of each theme; identifying the "essence" of each theme; and constructing a concise, punchy, and informative name for each theme. In writing up, the researchers weaved together the analytic narrative and data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data and contextualizing it in relation to existing works of literature.

The current research adopted the fundamental approaches in analyzing the output from the interviewees. The analysis includes data reduction, transcription of interviews, data display, and conclusion drawing. The approach involves arranging the data in order to create explanations and create new finding.

In lieu, the participants were made aware of the purpose of the study. They were treated as more important than the research itself; and therefore, have always been respected. The convenience of the participants was also considered, especially in their professional line of work in the current setting. The researchers was the one who visited and initiated the interviews. Data gathered were treated confidential and purely for research purposes. Audio recording was deleted upon completion of the analysis.

In this study, the interviewer focused on staying neutral when information was exchanged so that her presence could have no effect on the perceptions or answers of the participants. The questions were then addressed to the participants in a natural and unforced manner with a reference to the interview schedule to ensure completeness of topic coverage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Several themes emerged through the analysis of data collected. Aside from many other benefits, the co-facilitators perceived that the utilization of storytelling approach has helped the learners develop their macro skills, comprehension skills, communication skills, reading habits, values and confidence, vocabulary, and visual imagery.

The most dominant theme that emerged was the development of the four macro skills.

Develops macro skills. Participants believed that storytelling develops the macro skills of the learners such as listening, reading, writing, and reading.

Storytelling approach is one of the best methods to develop learners' listening skills (P1, L10-11, p42).

Mahalagang ma develop ang listening skills... (P2, L33-34, p43).

Sometimes, I let her watch short video clips with subtitles to develop her listening and reading skills (P3, L52-53, p45).

Developing listening skills is very important because it is a way to develop their communication skills. As a guardian, I make sure that my grandson can read a story (P5, L87-90, p46).

Storytelling is very important in developing the listening skills of the child (P6, L107-108, p47).

...this way to help maintaining their interest of listening (P12, 250-251, p53).

This statement validates that claim of Perez (1981), who said that listening is closely related to reading, for both are receptive communication processes. In listening activities, children should focus on the spoken message so that they can understand more mature and interesting material than if they were silently reading the text.

...and listen actively if they need to listen to others who are talking (P6, L117-118, p47).

I make sure that he is listening (P6, L113, p47).

As the facilitator of my nephew I make sure that he is ready to listen during storytelling (P7, L137-139, p48).

When it is his time to read, I will assure him that I will listen to him so that he will read it properly (P7, L140-141, p48).

Guide the child in reading... (P8, L164-165, p49).

Give them a reason to listen and focus so that they will know the importance of listening a story (P9, L181-182, p50).

Further, Perez (1981) posited that listening comprehension activities can develop concentration and thinking, which are prerequisites for comprehending what is read. Tape stories for listening or use the tapes that accompany books. Students need not have the books in front of them to follow as they listen.

My perception as co-facilitator is that the utilization of storytelling approach can develop the listening...of the pupils especially when they are involve in the activity (P10, L210-203, p51).

Facilitating storytelling is a way of learning where learners are targeted to connect and engage to develop skills of understanding situation in the community at the same time developing their behavior of listening (P12, L244-247, p53).

That's where listening...develops (P12, L255-256, p54).

As a facilitator, I strategize to consistently catch their attention using different manners and characters within the story, this way to help maintaining their interest of listening (P12, L248-251, p53).

The most logical step in helping students to understand what they read begins with oral language experiences. Helping pupils to think about what they have heard will help prepare them to comprehend what they read (Perez, 1981).

Develops comprehension skills. Second to the development of the four macro skills, some participants also highlighted that it develops the learners' comprehension skills.

Binabasa ko ng paulit-ulit ang kwento dahil alam ko na sa paraang ito, matutulungan ko ang aking anak na mas maintindihan ang kwento (I read the story repeatedly because I know that by doing it, I can help my child understand the story better (P2, L31-33, p43).

...at comprehension skills ng mga bata (and the comprehension skills of the learners (P2, L34, p43).

Developing comprehension skills is very important because it is a way to develop their communication skills. As a guardian, I make sure that my grandson can read and comprehend a story (P5, L87-90, p46).

...especially if the child can comprehend the story he is reading (P6, L109-110, p47).

...developing the comprehension skills of the child (P6, L107-108, p47).

Always remind the child the names of the important character in the story.

Ask questions to the child after reading a story (P8, L164, p49).

...comprehension skills of the pupils especially when they are involve in the activity (P10, L202-203, p51).

That's where...comprehension develops (P12, L255-256, and p54).

Perez (1981) accentuated that when children have trouble comprehending what they read, teachers are faced with an especially difficult responsibility. It is not always easy to improve the comprehension of problem readers. There is no magic method that will work for all teachers and for all children. The teacher's responsibility is made even more difficult by some of the suggested methods of teaching reading comprehension, which often are vague or else limited to simple questioning of children after reading. The comprehension ability of problem readers will not be helped a great deal by relying entirely on questioning.

Other skills developed through the utilization of storytelling approach are communication, reading habit, values and confidence, vocabulary, and visual imagery.

Develops communication skills. Some participants revealed that the utilization of storytelling approach is one way of enhancing the learner's communication skills.

...dahil dito mas lalong matututo makipag communicate ang bata (through this, the child will learn more how to communicate well (P2, L34-35, p43).

...because it is a way to develop their communication skills (P5, L88, p46).

... through storytelling, a child can communicate well (P6, L108-109, p47).

Storytelling is very important to develop communication skill of the child (P7, L141-142, p48).

...it is very important to develop the communication skills (P8, L165-166, p49).

...to enhance their ability to communicate well (P9, L182-183, p50).

Develops reading habit. One very essential benefit of storytelling is the formation of learners' reading habit. Participants revealed that they read and re-read the story many times before letting the child read it for himself.

As a facilitator, I read the story many times before I let the child read it by her own (P3, L51-52, p44).

...make the storytelling exciting for the kids to be interested and cooperative (P4, L70-71, p45).

Before I will let him read, I will read it first to him may times (P5, L90, and p46).

I will read it aloud for so many times (P6, L112, p47).

As a co-facilitator, I let my son read a lot of stories not just the stories in the modules provided by the teacher (6, L110-111, p47).

...and at the same time I let him point the words that I am reading (P6, L114, p47).

When it is his turn to read, I will correct each mispronounce words and some other mistakes in reading (P6, L115-116, p47).

I let him focus before I read the story many times (P7, L139, p48).

Develops values and confidence. Other skills that need to be developed are the values formation and confidence. The participants believed that storytelling helps develops these skills.

It instills values and fosters their imagination as well (P1, L11-12, p42).

In my opinion, I think that as co-facilitator you should have the patience and knows how to make the storytelling exciting for the kids to be interested and cooperative (P4, L69-71, p45).

It can help the child learn to pay attention (P6, L116-117, p47).

...and to boost his confidence (P7, L142-143, p48).

I have to be flexible and patient since my child still at the state where he easily get distracted (P11, L223-224, and p52).

Perez (1981) highlighted that students will, in effect, develop the attitude that they have some valuable ideas to share with the other students

and the teacher.

However, this statement contradicts the words of Plato when he said that poets and storytellers are dangerous fellows who put unreliable knowledge into the heads of children (Denning, 2011).

Develops vocabulary. One participant boldly stated that storytelling approach develops the learner's vocabulary.

Children listening to a story also have scope for better understanding of language and wider vocabulary (P12, L254-255, p54).

This statement supports the claim of Perez (1981), who said that vocabulary deficiencies are often associated with difficulty in comprehending. Before children can comprehend what they are reading, they must know what the individual words mean, particularly words basic to the meaning of the reading passage. To eliminate vocabulary difficulties, teachers should help students understand unfamiliar words before they read them.

Develops visual imagery. Improving visual imagery has been shown to improve reading comprehension (Levin, 1973).

...with facial expression and sometimes I use different voices (P6, L112-113, p47).

...this is to help bringing them to a real situation, bring them to the new meaning to live with each story. You're empowering your child to imagine new areas that he has not yet explored (P12, L251-254, pp53-54).

Students, according to Perez (1981), should be encouraged to form visual images based on their specific comprehension strengths and weaknesses. Students who have problems representing character traits should be encouraged to form visual images of what a story character might look like. Moreover, students having problems with inferring cause-effect relationships would be urged to visualize such information. Through incorporation of each piece of story information into a summary picture, students should begin to understand how to visualize relationships between ideas within a story.

Nonetheless, one participant desperately said that the value of storytelling is at risk in this time of pandemic.

If the pandemic continue the importance of value of storytelling approach will be vanished not unless the facilitators at home will find a way on how to conduct the said approach (P7, L135-137, p48).

In human culture, storytelling is a long-established tradition. The reasons people tell stories are manifold: to entertain, to transfer knowledge between generations, to maintain cultural heritage, or to warn others of dangers (Lugmayr et al., 2016).

Further, Perez (1981) recommends that teachers should search the reading selection for words likely to give trouble. In some cases, it may be necessary to go a step further and have students use the words in other ways, such as making up sentences using key words, breaking words into meaningful parts, creating new words based on inflectional endings, affixes and roots, or simply keeping a word bank of key vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

The parents perceived that the utilization of storytelling approach has not only developed the Grade 1 learners' listening and comprehension skills, but also their macro skills in general, communication skills, reading habit, values and confidence, vocabulary, and visual imagery. Thus, in the absence of teachers, the co-facilitators have continued delivering instruction, especially in teaching storytelling during the pandemic. With this, the researcher concluded that the storytelling approach greatly affect the development of the child specially on the enhancement of the child's listening and comprehension skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. School heads may consider investing in technological resources for the teachers to enhance the teaching-learning process. Establishing a strong internet connection may help the teachers improve their lesson preparation and enhance the learners' macro skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
 2. For more effective implementation of the storytelling approach, teachers may facilitate the modification of learning materials to ensure efficient instruction.
 3. Teachers may adapt other teaching strategies such as digital storytelling that might be effective in teaching through the pandemic.
 4. Future research should be conducted by focusing in constructing educational design principles for effective instruction delivery in this time of pandemic.
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