

# Digital Storytelling

## *Joyfull Learning for Children in Kindergarten*

Reza Nawafella Alya Parangu<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Library and Information Science, Universitas Indonesia, Depok, Indonesia

**Keywords:** digital storytelling, education, kindergarten, learning methods.

**Abstract:** Telling and listening to stories is very beneficial for the mental and emotional intelligence of children. Storying stretches the child's imagination, encouraging children to learn different ways of thinking. The digital era is one of social and cultural phenomena and sometimes social and cultural practices have changed in this era, including storytelling. This study aims to analyse the role of digital storytelling in children's education in kindergarten. This study uses a qualitative approach, using the data obtained from the interviews of children in kindergarten together with their parents after doing storytelling activities in digital form. The data obtained are then reviewed and analysed with some related literature, so that to the results can be interpreted. The results show that storytelling in digital form is very effective for children who grow in the digital world today; with this method they are more enthusiastic about learning. Storytelling in digital form makes it easy to remember the storyline that occurs and the effect is that what they watch is applied to their daily lives.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Reading a story to a child looks like a small activity which if, we look deeper, turns out to be of great benefit for the child. Activities relating to reading a story from a book or just telling a story are fun for children, and also provide other benefits for children such as expanding the vocabulary of children, developing and maintaining the skills of children and helping the, to think creatively and broaden their imaginations..

Not just in everyday life but also in other contexts, reading a story or telling a story is a learning method that have been applied in the world of education, especially in the early childhood education stage in kindergarten.

An education is intended to prepare students to navigate the rapidly changing and complex world which is interrelated in a landscape that is increasingly digital and has resulted in mandatory curricula, integrating global civic education and digital technology in the classroom from kindergarten to Grade 12 (Truong-White & Lorna, 2015). Digital storytelling integrated into the educational curriculum,, increases the involvement of kindergarten students in shaping and emerging non-mainstream perspectives and self-reflection.

The digital era is one of social and cultural phenomena; sometimes social and cultural practices can change in this era, including storytelling. The rapid development that occurs in technology causes the activity of storytelling that originally present in oral form, is now increasingly becoming alive with a touch of technology. The most popular media in the digital stories are on video so the focus of this study is digital storytelling in the form of video.

The purpose of this article is to analyse the role of digital storytelling in children's education in kindergarten, by highlighting what issues make learning by using digital storytelling appealing to children and how digital storytelling can play a role in controlling child behaviour.

Previous research has been done by Yuksel-Arslan, Yildirim & Ross Robin with an article entitled *A Phenomenological Study: Teachers' Experiences of Using Digital Storytelling in Early Childhood Education*. This study investigates how early childhood education (ECE) teachers incorporated digital storytelling in their classrooms and the challenges and successes that they faced in the process. The study presented examples that illustrated how ECE teachers had used digital storytelling to enhance learning. The results show that the emphasis on specific points may assist

teachers, parents, educational researchers and educational policy-makers in using technological tools in young children's learning environments. In this study, the method used is qualitative phenomenology.

Then the difference between this research and previous research lies in the purpose and method of research. The purpose of this research is as mentioned earlier that is, to analyse the role of digital storytelling in childhood education in kindergarten, by highlighting what issues make learning by using digital storytelling appealing to children and how digital storytelling can play a role in controlling child behaviour. The method used in this research is a qualitative approach, using data obtained from interviews with children in kindergarten together with their parents after doing storytelling activities in digital form.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Digital Storytelling

Digital storytelling is an activity like telling a fairy tale or telling a story traditionally but by using different media; combining it with a touch of technology makes the story seem more alive. Another definition is that digital storytelling is a short story-making process that allows students and educators to improve their information-gathering and problem-solving skills, and to facilitate the ability to work in collaborative teams (Robin, 2008). Digital storytelling is a form of video communication that combines images and sounds along with narration to discuss perspectives or stories (Robin, 2008). Digital stories are different from the usual videos; digital stories for children in kindergartens are intentionally created to serve educational purposes. They can be produced simply and affordably by the instructor.

Digital storytelling is categorised into three types (Robin, 2008): 1) a personal story about one's experience, memory, or event; 2) an informative or instructive story that teaches a particular subject to the audience; and (3) stories that examine historical events. Basically, there are two narrations in the digital story, the open narration (the words in the story) and the secret narrative felt by the viewers of the image.

Digital storytelling video is used as the main content for the online part of this study because of the following practical advantages: (a) it can be produced simply and affordably; (b) it exploits

unique sources of knowledge from contributing researchers and educators; (c) it is available to students with online access; (d) it can be archived and used across semesters and available to students in the future; (e) it ensures consistent content presentation across instructors, and (f) resonates with preservice teacher audiences, as digital storytelling is a common educational tool (Shelton, Warren, and Archambault, 2016).

### 2.2 Digital Storytelling in Education

Digital storytelling was first popularised in the educational sphere of the 1990s, as accessibility to audio and video capture devices and digital media software expanded in those days (Lambert 2013). Digital storytelling evolved as a potentially powerful innovation to support the goals of global citizenship education while meeting the demands of a digitally immersed student population (Truong-White & Lorna, 2015). As an educational tool, digital storytelling has been used extensively throughout the curricula of kindergartens.

In using digital stories as a source of learning, it is important to note that educators need to be equipped with dialogue skills around controversial issues and understand dissent, so when students express their own perspectives, educators can respond, guide and direct them.

### 2.3 Kindergarten

Kindergarten, commonly referred to as preschool, is a school intended children of a young age. From Victoria's Department of Education and Training article entitled 'All about kindergarten', "Kindergarten is an important step for children and is strongly recommended for all children. Research shows that kindergartens improve the health and well-being of children, helping them develop strong social skills and encourage love of learning. Children who enter into a kindergarten program are more independent and hide-away and are more likely to make a smooth transition to primary school (Preparation)"

According to the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 137 of 2014 on the National Standard of Early Childhood Education, the age 4 to 6 is the ideal age for children to enter kindergarten, because, at this age, many children want to know, and have already developed the mental readiness to study outdoors. children are ready to adjust to the learning environment, both physically and mentally. They are ready to be away

from their parents, ready to meet new friends, ready to follow instructions from educators, and ready to do new things.

### 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used in this study is qualitative, using data collected and analysed through observation, interview and literature review. Interviews were conducted with children and their parents after a storytelling activity in digital form. Students came from kindergarten, from one class, which amounted to 18 people. I took a sample of five boys and five girls aged 5 years, along with their respective companions (mother / caregiver) to be observed.

### 4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Reading a story or story telling is one of the activities that children love. Through the story, the development of children's intelligence and character can form slowly, because childhood is a golden time to instill a good personality in them (Sukirman, 2016). Listening to a story helps a child imagine characters, places, plots and more, instead of seeing them in the visual media. It also enhances creativity, makes them more imaginative and open to ideas and free thinking.

Storytelling also has a good impact for children in sharpening their memory. Reading a storybook can help improve a child's memory. When we finish reading a story, we can ask him/her to repeat the same story after a few days. Another alternative way is for us to ask the child to develop the story further with his/her own version. This is a fun way to improve him/her memory and encourage concentration.

Digital storytelling also offers several advantages, including: 1) complex conservation topics can be delivered more holistically through video than with technical articles or textbooks; 2) incorporating recordings from around the world is important to convey the depth of the topic of a story (the unique advantage of the video is the ability to provide students with a representative experience that exceeds the range of possible experiences in real life); 3) telling stories in a digital form connects emotionally with students. Informative films that generate affective responses are also associated with increased topic interest and narrative engagement (LaMarre and Landreville, 2009). Digital stories

seek to promote learning and retention by providing a rich flow of information through various modalities. The evidence suggests that videos offer learning benefits compared to more traditional content formats, because they combine visual, moving images, and sound in a cohesive way (Burmark, 2004; Hibbing and Rakin-Erikson, 2003).

The results of interviews with children after a digital storytelling session in the form of a video about what made them love this learning method showed what makes digital storytelling appealing to children in terms of visual and audiovisual characteristics; the characters and the atmosphere featured in the storytelling video, character-filled sounds, storylines and songs that accompany stories that children can usually imitate are all important factors. After the video storytelling is played, then a quiz about the video reinforces elements, like mentioning the characters in the digital story, the traits that the characters have in the story, what good things they get from the story, and the bad things that are suffered. Then educators can close this digital storytelling activity by providing good and bad things that are necessary and unnecessary for children to know following on from the story.

The last question is whether they prefer storytelling in a traditional way or storytelling in digital form. Basically they liked both traditionally storytelling, that usually features characters like hand puppets, or characters made from paper which make them interested and happy to listen, but if it will be done again the storytelling activities of children more agree if done storytelling in digital form. This is because storytelling in digital form is not monotonous, the songs that accompany the story make them happy, they are not just listening to stories and they can sing and dance together.

Storytelling in digital form can be any story deliberately created for a child's education, usually stories that include moral values so that children can learn lessons from watching the video of the story. The use of digital storytelling by teachers in the teaching process can increase children's enthusiasm. Children in kindergarten tend to be more excited when their teachers read stories. Learning by using storytelling in a digital form makes them more interested in making it easier to absorb information. Digital storytelling has a lot of influence on the child in the development of the child's behaviour. The moral values contained in digital storytelling are absorbed by the child very well.

Their parents also pointed out that children follow what they see; thanks to watching the storytelling videos they see their favorite characters

doing good things. They also do good deeds, do good things with parents, friends, and nature, such as being honest, helping parents, making friends with everyone, not bullying friends, being frugal, saving, being independent, loving animals, throwing rubbish in the correct place, etc. Stories that are commonly used in kindergarten lessons are usually short stories to keep in mind, and stories of everyday life that children can equate to their lives.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The existence of a digital storytelling curriculum in education in kindergarten is an appropriate step to support children's education. Children in kindergarten are in a period of growth and development. They tend to imitate what they see.

Digital storytelling makes the child more enthusiastic, happy, and excited so that the information delivered by the story is easily absorbed by the child. It is not simply fun; with a digital story, the good behaviour in the traits that character possess in the story can be imitated by the child. The problem of digital storytelling is that children can be addicted to watching videos they like, so it takes the guidance of educators and parents to help children both to control their intense wish to watch video storytelling and to guide their perspective on the entertainment to better things. However, storytelling in a traditional way is not less interesting, but the drawback is that the child usually loses focus if the story is not interesting anymore. Storytelling in the traditional way is considered monotonous because there is only one voice from the storyteller; it is necessary to have storytellers who are trained to make traditional storytelling feel lively and fun.

Indirectly, the benefits gained from storytelling lead to the formation of good habits amongst children. Moral messages can be delivered by educators after the storytelling activities which have been both digitally and traditionally performed. Little things like helping parents, singing, friends, loving animals, saving, always being honest and independent, and stick in the child's memory and cause them to carry out the messages they have received.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thank you for PERTIWI kindergarten along with educators, accompanying parents and very funny

students who support this research. And this researcher is supported by Faculty of Humanities, University of Indonesia and the Directorate of Research and Community Service, University of Indonesia.

## REFERENCES

- Emert, Toby. 2014. Interactive Digital Storytelling with Refugee Children. National Council of Teachers of English, Vol.91, No.6 pp.401-415.
- Robin, B. 2008. *The Effective Uses of Digital Storytelling as a Teaching and Learning Tool, Handbook of research on teaching literacy through the communicative and visual arts*. Vol. 2. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Sawyer, Cheryl B. & Jana M. Willis. 2011. Introducing Digital Storytelling to Influence the Behavior of Children and Adolescents. *Jornal of Creativity in Mental Health*, Vol.6, No.4 pp.274-283.
- Truong-White, Hoa & Lorna McLean. 2015. Digital Storytelling for Transformative Gobal Citizenship Education. *Canadian Journal of Education*, Vol.38, No.2, pp.1-28.
- Yuksel-Arslan, Pelin, Soner Yildirim and Bernard Ross Robin. 2016. A Phenomenological Study: Teachers' Experiences of Using Digital Storytelling in Early Childhood Education. *Education Studies*, Vol.42, No.5, pp.427-445.
- Shelton, Catharyn C., Annie E. Warren, & Leanna M. Archambault. 2016. Eploring the Use of Interactive Diigital Storytelling Video: Hybrid Course. *Association for Educational Communications & Technology*. pp.465-474
- Sukirman. 2016. Digital Storytelling Interactive and Expending Using Augmented Reality (Digital Storytelling Interaktif dan Menggembirakan Menggunakan Augmented Reality). *Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta*. pp.55-60
- Lambert, J. 2013. *Digital storytelling: Capturing lives, creating community* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- LaMarre, H. L., & Landreville, K. D. 2009. When is fiction as good as fact? Comparing the influence of documentary and historical reenactment films on engagement, affect, issue interest, and learning. *Mass Communication and Society*, Vol.12, pp. 537-555
- Hibbing, A. N., & Rakin-Erikson, J. L. (2003). A picture is worth a thousand words: using visual images to improve comprehension in middle school struggling readers. *The Reading Teacher*, Vol.56, No.8, pp.758-770