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Innovative Solutions to New Challenges in English Language Education: Aligning National Outcomes to Global Standards

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NOTE from Editors

Introducing Innovative Solutions to New Challenges in English Language Education: Aligning National Outcomes to Global Standards

The 24th MELTA International Conference discusses and deliberates on innovative solutions to meet new challenges in English language education, with the view of aligning national outcomes to global standards. The conference encourages ELT professionals to share innovations in policies, pedagogies and learning systems. MELTA believes that any attempt to innovate solutions to meet new challenges in English language education has to take into cognizance the evolution of the English language, both regionally and globally, its transforming purpose, its use in changing contexts and its role in reframing communication.

The 24th MELTA International Conference proceedings is our effort to gather the opinions, thoughts and concerns of the many national and international education policy makers, scholars and practitioners, who have painstakingly advocated the advancement of innovative solutions to the challenges within the context of English Language Education, and provide a pathway for their voices to be heard in aligning national English Language Education outcomes to global standards. Their professional views, research, best practices, theoretical perspectives and understanding of issues and research in English language education will hopefully inspire more English Language educators to be involved in advancing methodologies, policies, curriculum, materials and resources, programme design, ICT, differentiated instructions, linguistic and language awareness, professional development and teacher education, within their practice.

It must be noted that the 34 papers are not peer-reviewed but just copy edited for language suitability and appropriateness, typos, formatting and reference checking so as to ensure compliance with the formatting required for the proceedings. The papers are organized thematically into 6 main categories:

- i. Speaking, Listening & Communication
- ii. Reading & Writing
- iii. Technology & ICT
- iv. Creativity & Cognition
- v. Grammar
- vi. Others

It is our hope that these 34 papers will ignite rigourous academic discussions and encourage further scholarly initiatives, leading to effective and innovative solutions to new challenges. Eventually, it is hoped that the existing standards in nations will rise in par with the accepted global standards in the area of English language education.

Editors:

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May 2015

A Classroom Experience: Digital Story Board for Youngsters

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Introduction

Digital Storytelling combines traditional storytelling with digital technology. This means anyone with a computer can create a simple short video on a story that can be produced in CD, DVD or a web. A digital storytelling is like a postcard. Most of the stories used in education typically last between 3 to 10 minutes long. All one needs are pictures, background music and a story to tell. The topics used in digital storytelling may range from personal experiences such as love story and friendship to tales and historical events. Digital storytelling of course begins with a story. The best way to begin is writing the digital story with the help of a storyboard. In writing the story, the storyboard must be well prepared. At first, it seems that using a storyboard will be a waste of time, but actually it will save so much time at the end. Storyboard forces the students to think of a story starting from the beginning, content and conclusion of the story. Storyboard drafting process is also a great opportunity to collaborate with other students. Students sit down with all members in a class and toss ideas around. It helps the students manage and organize the project from the beginning to final product. In creating digital storytelling, one need to narrate the story, add pictures, a little music, sound effects, title and transition. Sophisticated digital stories can be interactive movies that include highly produced audio and visual effects. One of the techniques is through the use of Windows Movie Maker. It is easy, fun and a great way to tell the story. Some learning theorists believe that as a pedagogical technique, storytelling can be effectively applied to nearly any subject. British photographer, author, and educator [Daniel Meadows](#) defined digital stories as “short, personal multimedia tales told from the heart.” The beauty of this form of digital expression, he maintained, is that these stories can be created by people everywhere, on any subject, and [shared](#) electronically all over the world. Today the use of digital storytelling is being practiced in neighborhood community centers, schools, libraries, businesses, and by technology users with advanced skills. In the field of education, teachers and students from early childhood classrooms to graduate schools digital storytelling are used in many different content areas and across a wide range of grade levels.

Significance of Digital Storytelling

According to Robin (2015), there are two types of educational uses for the digital storytelling: as an effective instructional tool for teachers; and as an effective learning tool for the students.

Digital Storytelling as an Effective Instructional Tool for Teachers

There are various ways that Digital Storytelling can be used in education. One of the first decisions to be made when deciding to use this tool in the curriculum is whether educators will create the Digital Stories or have their students do it. Some educators may decide to create their own stories and show them to their students as a way to present new material. An engaging, multimedia-rich digital story can serve as an anticipatory set or hook to capture the attention of students and increase their interest in exploring new ideas.

Teacher-created digital stories may also be used to enhance current lessons within a larger unit. It is a way to facilitate discussion on topics and making abstract or conceptual content more understandable. Research has shown that the use of multimedia in teaching helps students retain new information, and aids comprehension of difficult material. Digital Storytelling provides educators with a powerful tool to use in their classrooms.

Digital Storytelling as an Effective Learning Tool for Students

Digital Storytelling can also be a tool for students to create their own stories. After viewing sample digital stories created by their teachers or other storytellers, students are given assignments requiring them to research a topic and then choose a particular point of view. This type of activity can generate interest, attention and motivation for the "digital generation" students in today's classrooms. The process can capitalize on creative talents of the students as they begin to research and tell stories of their own. They learn to use the library and the Internet to research rich, deep content while analyzing and synthesizing a wide range of content. In addition, students who participate in the creation of digital stories may develop enhanced communications skills. They learn how to organize their ideas, ask questions, express opinions, and construct narratives. The process helps students to create stories for an audience, and present their ideas and knowledge in a meaningful way.

Also, when digital stories are published online, students have the opportunity to share their work with their peers and gain valuable experience in critiquing their own and other students' works. This interaction can promote gains in emotional intelligence and social learning. Digital Storytelling appeals to students with diverse learning styles and can also foster collaboration when students work in groups. It also enhances students experience through personal ownership and accomplishment. Digital Storytelling is designed to help teachers recognize that technology, pedagogy, content, and context as interdependent aspects of teaching content-based curricula effectively with educational technologies (Harris, Mishra & Koehler, 2009).

Seven Elements of Effective Digital Stories

Lambert in Bull (2004) identifies seven elements of effective digital stories. The seven elements of digital storytelling include:

a. A point of view

The goal of digital storytelling is to allow a writer to experience the power of personal expression. Therefore, students' digital stories need to be constructed from their own experience and understanding.

b. A dramatic question

A story that holds the attention of audience has a dramatic question that is resolved by the end of the story. Story circle activities allow students to shape their stories into a text that rewards and surprises their audience.

c. Emotional Content

The most effective digital stories evoke an emotion from the audience. We often see laughter, tears and expressions of pleasure from the audience when digital stories are screened.

d. Economy

The curricula objective of language arts classroom is to encourage writing and storytelling. Lambert has found that effective digital storytelling uses only a few images, a few words and even fewer special effects to clearly and powerfully communicate intended meaning.

e. Pacing

There is an important interaction between economy and pacing. Novice storytellers often attempt to shoehorn several pages of scripts into a two-minute digital story by narrating it as rapidly as they can. This is achieved at the expense of pacing,

because this approach does not allow them to pause or vary the pace. For students, pacing means pulling back or racing forward when the story calls for it, as opposed to when the time limit approaches. This may require tough decisions about what parts of the story can be omitted. It is important to confront these decisions during the script revision process to allow a natural pace and varied flow when the digital story is constructed.

f. The gift of your voice

The process of digital storytelling allows students to record themselves narrating their own scripts. The pitch, inflection, and timbre of the storyteller's voice convey meaning and intent in a highly personal way. This has proven to be one of the most essential elements that contribute to the effectiveness of a digital story.

g. An accompany soundtrack

Music is an important element of the professional cinema. Properly employed music can enhance and underscore the accompanying story, adding complexity and depth to the narrative. When time becomes an issue, the story can be screened in a draft format.

Significance of the Study

This study provides knowledge of an applied digital storyboard into the subject of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) for undergraduate students of English Department in Adi Buana University. The creation of an interactive digital storyboard; require students to be well-prepared, organized and technological savvy. These skills also support the teaching learning process and improvement of their English language skills.

Implementation

This study shall contribute significant and practical skills to English teachers when they are expected to be able to innovatively create their own digital storyboard. Digital storyboard activities can create productive environment where the undergraduates' students develop their creative personality and more positive attitude to learning the foreign language.

Classroom Experience

The digital storyboard project was assigned to the thirty students of fourth semester class B at University of PGRI Adi Buana. The ICT class students were required to produce four digital storyboards on topics such as friendship, love story, unforgettable experience and Indonesian folk tales. The subject of ICT (Information, Communication and Technology) is compulsory for the students. It is intended to improve students' English competency for technology and language skills applications. The students were divided into groups of four to five for each group. This grouping was heterogeneous based on students' language ability. The purpose was to have group dynamic between weak and strong students and understanding differences among themselves.

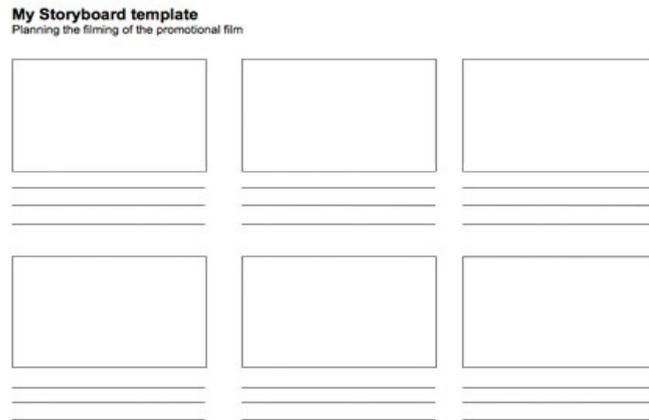
The following were the activities during the process of creating digital storytelling: (Adapted from the course syllabus of Robin &McNeil, 2015)

a. Choosing a suitable topic for the final project

The teacher introduced the students to the basics of digital storytelling, for example: what digital storytelling is; how to create an interactive story and the benefits. The students learnt to identify the basic elements of a good digital storytelling and reviewed some examples. By the end of the first session, they were able to choose a topic and defined the story they wanted to create.

b. Writing a script and creating a storyboard

For the second and the third sessions, the teacher focused more on learning the steps of writing a script for a digital story. First of all, the teacher gave the students storyboard template and played the videos on how to do storyboard. Storyboard videos helped the students to minimize mistakes, identify weaker scenes, help in editing, and as a checklist. It gave the students more understanding about storyboard. The students explored the basic elements of a script, such as introduction (introduce the character), middle and the end of the story, that were necessary in developing a useful script.



By the end of these sessions, they began to understand the important steps and elements of scriptwriting. They also learnt to recognize the importance of selecting appropriate images and the value of creating a storyboard. During the meetings, they also explored several useful ways to choose images for their digital story. These included taking their own photos with a digital camera, using software applications to create charts, graphs and other images. In addition, they also browsed and downloaded suitable images from the web based on size, quality, type and usage rights.

c. Recording audio narration

In the next session, they learnt to record audio narration using digital devices so that their voice could be added to the digital story they created. They gained hands-on experience using some of the most common features of audio recording software to create high quality audio narration. In addition, they explored ways to improve their audio recording with basic editing tools. One of the audio recording software being used at that time was audacity. Furthermore, they also learnt how to find and download appropriate music for their digital story from public domain or free of copyright restrictions.

d. Using technology to build a digital story

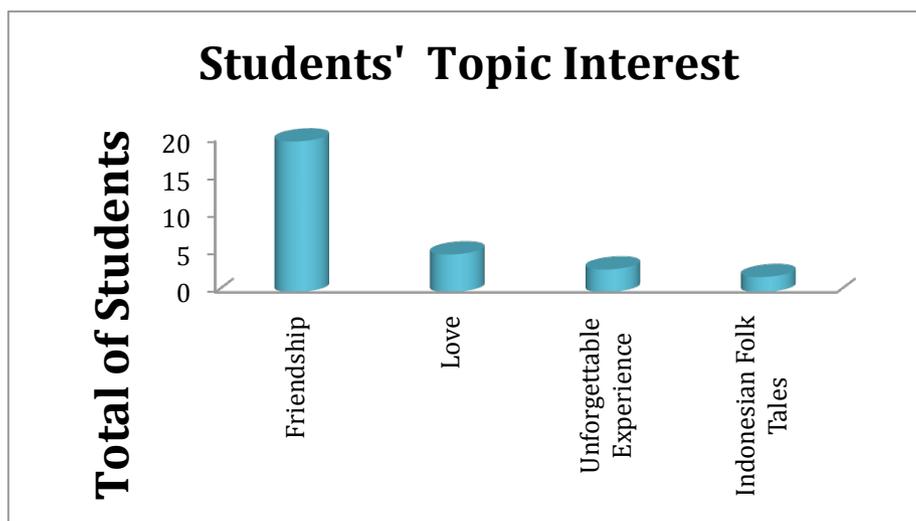
In the fifth and sixth sessions, the students learnt to use Windows Movie Maker, a free video editing application to assemble all of the elements (text, images, narration, music) to create a full version of the digital story. In addition, they learnt to use basic editing techniques to improve the digital story so that all components of the story fit together and look and sound good. Some of the students were

allowed to use another programmes such as: Adobe Pro Premiere, WeVideo, and other software for creating the digital story.

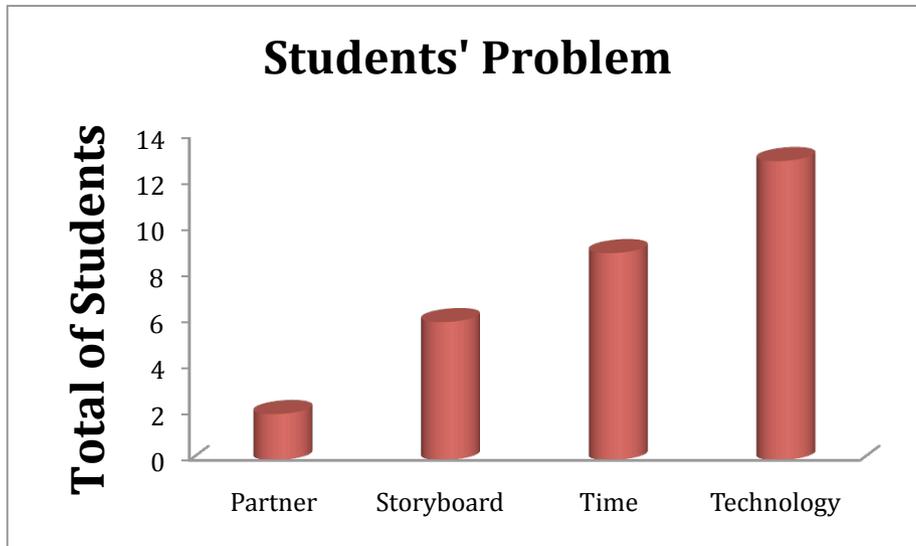
e. *Revising, publishing and sharing the final digital story for use in the classroom*

In the last session, they did a review of the final digital story, published it online and discussed how it might be used in the classroom to support teaching and learning activities. They also had an opportunity to reflect on the digital storytelling process and discussed the challenges they faced and how they dealt with those challenges. One of the most significant lessons they learned was how they can use digital storytelling in the classrooms.

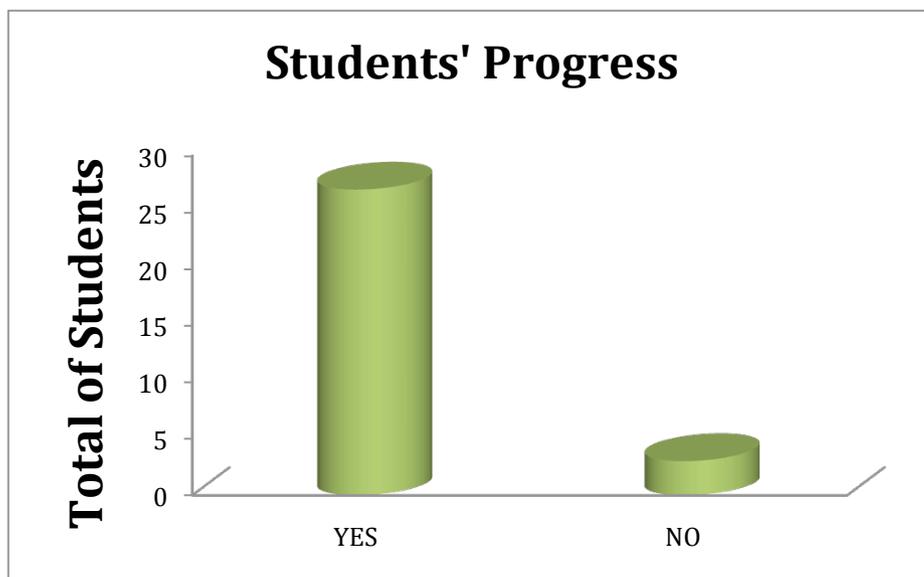
Results and Discussion



The data above show 30 students' topic of interests for activities of creating digital storytelling. There were four major topics given to the students such as friendship, love, unforgettable experience, and Indonesian folk tales. It can be seen from the data that the most popular topic chosen by the students was friendship. The reason they chose friendship because it was an easier topic compared to the others; and it was also closely linked to their personal experience.



There were 30 students who gave responses on problems they faced in doing the digital story. Thirteen (13) students found to have difficulty with the technology such as: how to operate the Windows Movie Maker, insertion of background of music, images, how to use audacity for voice recording and etcetera. To overcome this problem, they usually asked the teacher or friends for assistance. Nine (9) students faced problem in managing their time. They felt that seven sessions were not enough to complete the whole project. Six (6) students found difficulties in creating storyboard because they lacked drawing skills for its drafting. Lastly, 2 students had problem working with their friends because they were not helpful at all.



The data above show that 27 students had good progress when doing this project. They became more confident in creating and telling their own story through digital storytelling. This activity helped to improve their speaking and writing skills. The digital storyboard made by the students was truly their own creation and innovation. The progress and results were seen as positive impact on both students and English teachers for more future projects.

Conclusion

Digital storyboard projects are powerful ways to motivate students to understand an academic concept while building their narrative presentation. It allows the students space for peer-to-peer learning. Digital storyboard also adds practical experience that supplements the lecture materials. Having been through the process, the writer is convinced that the digital storyboard is an excellent mechanism for language skills production among higher-level English language learners. Storyboard is also highly engaging, motivating, and creative. The benefits of digital media production outweigh some issues and challenges. Teachers should realize that in today's classroom, the integration of technology, pedagogy, and content leads to "a deeper understanding of the different and more powerful roles that digital media can play in both teaching and learning" (Robin 2008, 227). This research and the writer's classroom experience show that digital storyboard for youngsters do play such roles and have a positive effect on students learning outcomes especially in improving speaking and writing skills.

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Appendix 1.

Pre-Evaluation Questionnaire

This questionnaire serves to understand your perspective on the importance of digital storyboard for youngsters. Your responses are very much appreciated. Thank you very much for your time and effort. All responses will be kept confidential.

NAME

GENDER : Male Female

SEMESTER _____ :

DATE : _____

1. Have you ever made a film? If so, tell us about it. If not, would you like to make a film one day? What kind of film would you like to make?

2. If you have to choose, which topic do you prefer more?

- a. Friendship
- b. Love
- c. Unforgettable experience
- d. Indonesian folk tales

3. What do you know about digital story telling?

4. Have you ever heard about storyboard before? Please explain it briefly.

Appendix 2.

Post-Evaluation Questionnaire

This questionnaire serves to understand your perspective on the importance of digital storyboard for youngsters. Your responses are very much appreciated. Thank you very much for your time and effort. All responses will be kept confidential.

NAME

GENDER : Male Female

SEMESTER

:

DATE : _____

1. Did you enjoy doing the task given? Yes No
2. Which step out of the following did you enjoy most?
 - a. Choosing a suitable topic for the final project
 - b. Writing a script and creating a storyboard
 - c. Recording audio narration
 - d. Using technology to build a digital story
 - e. Revising, publishing and sharing the final digital story
3. Please give a brief explanation of what you didn't enjoy about the task.

4. What difficulty did you face doing the task and how do you overcome those difficulties? Write a 3-5 sentences response to the question

5. In what ways does digital story telling helps to improve your English skills?
