

## Digital Storytelling in Early Childhood Online Classes

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### Abstract

As COVID-19 continues to influence the way we operate our everyday lives, educators are expected to adjust and adapt their curricula in order to accommodate not only online learning, but also to keep their students engaged and motivated. Children are now born into a world dominated by the media. They engage with technology so much from infancy that they are often referred to as "digital natives." However, early exposure to and experience with technology does not always lead to digital competency. Since digital ways of reading and writing are becoming more integrated into our lives, the role of technology in the development of digital literacy in kindergarten children is a timely and important subject. The paper analyses the use of digital storytelling as a vehicle to help students build capacity for storytelling, engage in literacy practices, and strengthen interactions with others in and out of the classroom.

**Keywords:** *Digital Storytelling, Child-Computer Interaction, Early Childhood Care Education*

### Introduction

The tradition of storytelling is extensive and has grown and extended to assume a complex, contemporary appearance in a variety of settings and functions. Emerging digital methods are modifying the essence of storytelling and allowing for new forms of collaboration. These approaches promote repositioning learners as co-producers of knowledge who collaborate on problem classification, theory formulation, and solution implementation in the learning environment. Technology's ease of use, interactivity, and affordability have resulted in a rapid and diverse expansion of participatory storytelling strategies. Digital storytelling has been demonstrated to be an effective method for teachers encouraging students to participate in discussions and improving content comprehension. Digital storytelling is the use of a digital medium to tell a story. Digital tales, in their simplest form, are those that include images, videos, animation, sound, music, and text. Like traditional storytelling, digital storytelling focuses on the creation of a specific theme or focal point for the story. Students usually brainstorm, perform research, write a script, and create an interesting story as part of this process. A variety of interactive multimedia technologies are used to promote digital storytelling.

### Review of literature

Storytelling as a creative counselling tool for children is well supported in counselling literature (Bradley, Whiting, Hendricks, Parr, & Jones, 2008; Burns, 2004; Pehrsson, 2005). Storytelling, whether in the form of oral, pictorial, written, or film media, has been an essential element in the lives of mankind throughout history (McClean, 2007). Stories facilitate the transfer of knowledge from one individual to another. With the rise in popularity and accessibility of multimedia resources, the use of storytelling as a therapy method with children can be extended. Both the creator and the audience will benefit from the production of digital stories. End users will be able to build or download digital stories, which will serve as a multimedia tool for supporting therapy sessions with clients, allowing them to more effectively narrate or explain their own personal stories, and assisting them in recognizing and improving social or behavioural skills.

Olney, Herrington, & Verenikina (2009) study looks at how iPods were used with preservice early childhood educators in an introductory ICT course. The mobile devices were used as cognitive instruments to complete a complex and authentic project. Students worked in groups to develop digital stories in the form of a children's picture book for very young children using iPods. The study looked into the students' responses to the task as well as the pedagogical

benefits of the devices in an early childhood environment. As a result, it proved to be a challenging and rewarding experience for students to learn to use mobile and other technologies as cognitive instruments to produce a genuine product and significant learning outcome.

(Dreon, Kerper, & Landis 2011) While digital storytelling can be an engaging way to instruct and assess students, it is not without its challenges. Despite the fact that our society has become expert on being digitally connected, educators who use any web-based form of instruction must be concerned about equal access for all learners, taking into account an individual's socioeconomic background and learning needs. While there are numerous platforms for creating and sharing digital stories (e.g., iPod Touch, Animoto, ScribePics), teachers who use digital storytelling for instruction must weigh the educational benefit for all students and ask, "Would all of my students be able to access content online or benefit equally from its presentation?" While offering digital stories that are culturally relevant to today's students may be beneficial, teachers must ensure that all students have equal access to the content. What we say to our students is only as important as how we say it. In today's world, the noise of information can be a little extra, and competing for students' attention can be exhausting. It would be a matter of broadcasting on the frequencies that students are paying attention. The digital narrative, which dials into digital natives and links them to the curriculum, represents one of our most effective instructional tools today.

According to Rubegni, & Sabiescu (2014), the educational potential of digital storytelling as an evolving research and practice field with a focus on modalities for bridging the gap between research-based innovation and formal education implementation. The key point is that DST's educational potential can be better realized by conceptualizing it as an educational practice that is consistent with the pedagogical curriculum and structured to meet particular educational goals. Digital storytelling as an educational activity (DSTE), a framework for the design, implementation, and assessment of DST interactions in structured educational settings, demonstrates the viability of this role.

The three key features of DSTE:

- alignment to the scholarly curriculum
- emphasis on the generation of educational outcomes
- co-design involving researchers and school teachers – frame DST as an educational practice that can be tailored to the needs of each pedagogical context and is likely to become part of the standardized approach to learning used by schools all over the world.

O'Byrne, Houser, Stone, & White (2018) research examines an instructional model aimed at empowering students as emerging visual storytellers in an early childhood classroom. Educators may use digital storytelling to help students learn by empowering them to organize and share their ideas and knowledge in a unique and meaningful way, all while cultivating voice and computer interaction skills. This work also aids in the development of traditional communication skills, teamwork, and emerging literacy activities. Students improve their communication skills by learning to organize their thoughts, ask questions, share opinions, and create narratives by creating digital stories with others and computers. In the early childhood educational context, the "Emerging Digital Storytellers" instructional model focuses on social-emotional growth and finding student voice through writing and digital content creation. This study contributes to the field's understanding of how children develop their voice through storytelling. Higher order skills are incorporated into this medium and related resources, as well as social interactions in and out of the classroom. This gives further insight into CCI, as well as the use of digital technology and their impact on a child's motivation to write, develop, and share their stories.

According to Yuksel-Arslan, Yildirim & Robin (2016) study looks at how early childhood education (ECE) teachers implemented interactive storytelling in their classrooms, as well as the difficulties and successes they encountered along the way. In-depth phenomenological interviews, observation, and focus group interviews were used to gather data after the teachers completed a multimedia storytelling workshop. Phenomenal data was obtained from five kindergarten classrooms, each with about 20 students and a teacher. The study included examples of how ECE teachers had used interactive storytelling to improve

student learning. The findings revealed developing strategies would help teachers, parents, educational researchers, and policymakers use technical resources in the learning environments of young children.

Papadimitriou, Kapaniaris, Zisiadis & Kalogirou (2013) emphasize that digital Storytelling is discussed as an alternative method for improving children's ability to express themselves in the kindergarten classroom. Storytelling is a worldwide culture that depicts how people work, feel, and communicate. Especially in early childhood, storytelling emerges naturally in children's play, allowing them to practice a wide range of skills. Digital storytelling is a modern form of storytelling that has emerged as a result of technological advancements. The narrative, on the other hand, is enhanced by a variety of multimedia elements. Children can develop their own interactive stories that allow children to become co-authors in the story writing process. This paper describes a teaching experiment that took place in a kindergarten in a Greek city in February 2012. The three-week teaching experiment was a success. The research presents an attempt to create an educational environment in which children may combine different elements and Information Computer Technology resources in order to express themselves and create a digital tale. Children were found to be engaged in the process demonstrating responsibility, self-confidence, and teamwork skills.

Yoon (2013) aims to see how using digital storytelling in an after-school English class affects Korean ELL learners' attitudes and perceptions about learning English. 32 ELL students in the 5th grade engaged in a 12-week study in which they were exposed to digital storytelling in English class at a public elementary school in the Eastern Kyunggi province of South Korea. The researcher designed and developed 'digital storytelling' as a primary teaching and learning resource, which was adopted and adapted. A mixed study approach was used to examine students' responses in order to determine the influence and effect of digital storytelling. Students' self-evaluation reports and lecture summary reports, as well as quantitative data from a pre-/post-survey on the improvement in students' learning attitudes and reading comprehension, were gathered for data analysis. The results revealed

that the possible benefits of digital storytelling had a positive impact on the attitudinal changes of 5th grade ELL students in learning English by assisting them in having a deeper understanding of the lesson, which contributed to their voluntarily active involvement in class. The findings also showed that digital storytelling engaged students in the story's content not only by encouraging motivation and interest, but also by instilling faith in their ability to learn English.

### **Methodology**

The research has been done using secondary data source. The choices of measure of similarity are based on multidimensional observations. Online libraries and open educational resources were used for collecting data.

### **Online learning and digital story telling**

E-learning systems that simply convert conventional educational material like books, lecture notes, written material into digital media fail because e-learning content that only presents facts and figures loses learners' interest more quickly than a good teacher. A good teacher tries to catch the learners' attention with personal charisma. The lack of a personal link with a real teacher can be resolved with e-learning material by developing "educational stories" that follow good storytelling principles. Since Aristotle, masters of storytelling have formulated good storytelling values. These ideas can be used to create good educational stories as well. A story's narration must interact with the learner's emotions and generate emotional movement in order to catch and retain the learner's interest. Any learning that occurs as a result of a story, especially one that provides an emotionally moving experience, is much more durable and therefore easier to remember. The use of e-learning material that inspires learners to be imaginative and inventive necessitates the use of innovative pedagogy. Digital storytelling can be used to create this creative pedagogy. To keep the learner interested, these digital stories must be engaging, with a well-defined spine and a moving plot. However, further research is needed to determine how to inspire creativity and instill the spirit of innovation through e-learning content. A successful educational story must generate new insights by connecting information from various domains, as imagination implies obtaining some new insight. Similarly, drawing on concepts from various

fields multiplies one's ability to invent. Thus, in order to create e-learning content that fosters creativity and innovation, it must facilitate the simple amalgamation of information from various fields. Today's e-learning technologies, especially online systems, can provide a wealth of knowledge. We need models and resources that promote the systematic development of good educational narratives in order to create good e-learning stories.

### Discussion

According to Bruner (1986–1996), both adults and children are capable of narrative thinking. Children are competent storytellers thanks to the narrative thinking skills they can draw on, that also emerge through symbolic play (Yuksel, 2011). When children pretend to be doctors, for example, they are making up a story. In Vygotsky's idea of creativity (1962), making up stories is also a creative act, because in order to do it children must combine the things they know to create something new. Making up stories is therefore an interactive task that enables children to act freely (the right to make up whatever story they want), but within a set of constraints that guide their thinking and action. Digital storytelling is becoming more popular as audio-video capturing technology and making it easier to create innovative e-learning content presented as digital stories. Such creative content will help students learn more deeply while also making content more appealing.

Inviting children to make up stories (storytelling) means encouraging them to develop narrative thinking as well as a range of other skills, such as linguistic and artistic abilities. Digital storytelling promotes digital competency as well. Making up stories entails using materials and previous experience to create new story sequences. The process allows children to acquire new knowledge about the world and to consolidate the knowledge they already have (Barret, 2006). Moreover, it enables them to acquire or consolidate their skills (digital and narrative) through action. Ausubel (2000) would call this process "learning by discovery" (as compared to mechanical learning). Story-centred curriculum, proposed by Roger Schank (2007), and scenario-based curriculum growth, proposed by Ray Bareiss & Sukhjit Singh (2007), are two recent pedagogical models based on storytelling. "Learning by stories" is a common thread that runs through both of these pedagogical models.

Since prehistoric times, stories have been used as an educational tool because they encapsulate four key aspects of human communication: information, knowledge, context, and emotions (Norman, 1993).

Child-computer interaction (CCI) is an evolving area of research that focuses on the reciprocal actions between children and the Internet and other communication technologies (Read and Markopoulos, 2013). Read and Bekker (2011) define CCI as the "Study of the Activities, Behaviours, Concerns, and Abilities of Children as they interact with computer technologies, often with the intervention of others (mainly adults) in situations that they partially (but generally do not fully) control and regulate. For creating engaging e-learning material, embedding stories as digital media, i.e. digital storytelling, is not only desirable, but almost necessary. It is entirely reasonable for parents to be worried about their children's inappropriate use of digital devices and screens. There is no doubt that excessive screen time has significant implications, including children communicating mostly through screens rather than in person and children being sedentary and insular. Will we then discourage children from using digital devices and displays in every way possible? In this case, digital storytelling removes many of the objections levelled at screen-based play in several of its manifestations. It usually involves children in physical activity including photography, videography and interaction with the natural world. Such interaction leads to constructing and producing their stories. Digital storytelling provides enormous developmental possibilities as well as being something children find immensely enjoyable and engaging. Story content can easily be translated into films, CDs, television, PowerPoint presentations, and shared on the Internet, as well as uploaded for use on personal media players like the iPod. Digital storytelling can take on a variety of forms, ranging from simply reading a story aloud and filming the performance to developing a fully-fledged digital production of their own invention. Such endeavours help a child in developing confidence, creativity and boost's the vocabulary. Although sometimes digital storytelling may be criticized for diverting child's attention away from writing and language development but this can be overcome by encouraging a component which will help to

improve writing, spelling, and language skills in the digital storytelling itself. Every day, the availability of digital texts and resources that can be used to manipulate data and enhance student education is growing. This proliferation of technologies, spaces, and activities (such as mobile devices, digital cameras, editing software, authoring tools, and electronic media outlets) has inspired teachers to use a variety of approaches and technical tools to help students create their own narratives and present and share them more effectively over the last decade. Activities employing creative techniques such as music, art, drama, and collaboration may assist children and adolescents in gaining insight about their own behaviours and beliefs while giving them the opportunity to learn healthier ways of expressing their emotions (Veach & Gladding, 2007). It is hypothesized that students will benefit greatly from digital storytelling because they will be able to learn how to make their own digital stories. Students may improve their knowledge and academic skills by researching a subject, looking for pictures, recording their speech, and then selecting a specific point of view. By using digital storytelling as the underlying model, e-learning systems can play a major role in offering creative and innovative pedagogic solutions. Besides having media literacy competencies, educators and teachers need to be competent in teaching media literacy (cf. Blömecke 2000), which cannot be acquired by explanations, but by using and reflecting medias as a result, educators and teachers are much more than content presenters when it comes to the use and reflection of media. It is also important for educators and teachers to understand how to apply pedagogic techniques in ECCE. One way to promote media literacy in this way would be to use digital storytelling as a situated didactical approach. Educators and teachers must understand the structure and functionality of digital tales, as well as the basic steps for preparing a digital storytelling project, in order to effectively implement digital storytelling. They must also have the requisite experience to carry out a digital storytelling project and the ability to evaluate the potential of digital storytelling for competence growth. The

didactic design follows a constructivist view of learning assuming that knowledge is a result of individual construction processes (e.g. Reich 2002, Reinmann-Rothmeier & Mandl 1999). Furthermore, using props to provide visual representations helps children form more vivid memories of the idea, which improves their ability to apply the experience in real-life scenarios. Art, drama, music, and movement, in combination with photography or visual images, may help improve the ability to transmit information. Music has the power to activate and release feelings, as well as unspoken emotional desires and messages. Digital storytelling is a tool for exploring social behaviour and sharing personal experiences that incorporates various techniques such as narrative therapy, drama, music, and visual imagery. Creators may adapt practically every medium to depict their own personal experiences and beliefs, including personal narratives, school or community-based scenarios, and documentaries. Group brainstorming and discussion of story ideas will bring previously unnoticed circumstances and attitudes to light, allowing for accessible discovery, dialogue, and, ideally, clarification of acceptable behaviours and actions. Individuals will be better able to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences as they explore them through digital storytelling. Internalization happens as they begin to make sense of their experiences, and they will be able to adapt their actions and apply what they've learned to other areas of their lives. The digital story can be created using student's native language art, drama, photography, or music; this practice can give the English-language learner the opportunity to share a deeper level of emotion.

### Conclusion

By collaborating with children to create digital storytelling, they will learn that everyone has a story to tell. These stories can be created and shared using multimedia, allowing children to understand that learning can be fun. They learn to relate their own life stories to their studies. Digital storytelling is a great way to let students learn and share their experiences.

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