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DIGITAL STORY CREATION: ITS IMPACT TOWARDS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

When students are engaged in the process of creating a digital story, they synthesize a variety of literacy skills for the authentic product: researching, writing, organizing, presenting, interviewing, problem-solving, assessing, as well as employing interpersonal and technology skills (Baggett, 2007). With all these skills to be developed among students, digital story creation is found a highly valuable undertaking. This paper lays down the perceptions of college students about digital technology. Specifically, this research examines the rigors and benefits of digital story creation pertaining to 1) its influence towards *academic performance*, and 2) its role in promoting *communicative competence*. Hence, this paper investigated students' experiences in creating and using digital story books as used among classrooms in the tertiary level. Surveys, interviews, reflective journals and analysis of created digital stories served as data gathering tools in completing the paper.

KEYWORDS

Digital Story Books, Creation, Communicative Competence, Academic Performance

1. INTRODUCTION

Sadik (2008) considers digital story telling as a meaningful technology-integrated approach for engaged student learning. This poses a huge truism in that nowadays, it is not easy to capture the learners' attention; more so that psychologists claim that typical attention span of lasts from ten to fifteen minutes only. Hence, something has to be done with the kind of learners today, learners who are so adept and equipped with technological know-how. Teachers then need to keep up with this fast changing trend.

However, Jacobsenn (2001) believes that many teachers worldwide are not able to adopt technology for teaching and learning tasks, and the gap of technology presence in schools and its effective use is too wide. Many teachers believe that technology integration is a difficult, time consuming and resource-incentive endeavor and is therefore more trouble than it is worth (Heingold & Hadley 1990) as cited by Sadik (2008). These statements were proven true among some instructors of Capitol University. Most of the time, teachers use chalk-talk as a teaching strategy. However, majority of the teaching populace were into technology integration. Basic English and Literature classes made use of Digital Storytelling.

Digital story telling is an innovative, technology-based method by which 21st century students utilize technologically advanced resources to produce meaningful stories and presentations that in turn allow for an enriched co-construction of knowledge (La France, 2012). La France further cited Xu, Park and Basek (2011) who described three major elements of digital story telling: flexibility, universality, and interactivity with regard to community formation. These researchers further posited that flexibility is construed as a non-linear fashion for it allows the story teller a wide array of communicative options framed in a technologically based pedagogy. Universality on the other hand is seen as a result of the widespread dissemination of recording technology which has become vastly available today. Lastly, interactivity is distinguished as a convenient means of material and information exchange.

This paper then explored digital storytelling and creation among Education students of Capitol University. Teachers used the strategy to introduce topics relative to the course such as writing, multimodal composing and geographical setting. As observed, digital storytelling and creation aided tertiary level students to prepare them for leading roles in educational contexts. It somehow engaged these learners and stimulated the reflective learning in them.

2. METHODOLOGY

The subsequent headings describe the phases that this research underwent.

Population Identification

The study regarding digital storytelling as a learning tool was conducted first semester of school year 2006-2007. The populace consisted of 68 students participating in an English Literature class as part of the course curriculum. Students were contacted after the course ended to request access to their reflections for this study. Fifty five chose to participate in the research. Among the participants, fifty were female and five were male. The respondents were between the ages of 16 and 20.

Data Collection

Archival data in the form of student reflections were collected as part of the course requirement. No right or wrong answer for purposes of the reflection was dinned to minimize non-participation of those who were not fond of writing. This was done to earn valuable feedback from the group. Hence, these were accessed by the researcher with assent from both teacher and student. A random interview was moreover conducted which served as basis for the analysis of the digital story creation. Demographic queries involving age, gender and field of specialization were asked during the survey-interview. Blizzard's 2002 data collection model was dished up as a research pattern.

The rationale of this paper explored the pedagogical benefits of digital storytelling. Therefore, it took course on avenues like student engagement, educational outcomes, and teacher-learner perception.

3. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper investigated the influence of digital story creation among college students. It focused on exploring the latency of digital story telling as an instructional strategy and how it influences student engagement and student outcomes such as describing academic performance.

As mentioned by Sadik (2008), the use of technology is only effective if the teachers have the expertise to customize the use of technology for story creation. This was observed as a positive outcome of the paper. The teacher respondents were indeed well versed with technology. They had created much from the background knowledge of their learners. All praises were gathered from the fifty five respondents regarding the strategy used (digital storytelling and in turn creation).

The English Literature Teachers additionally started by giving an orientation among their students followed by workshops during the first two weeks of classes to support and engage them in the final project. Workshop one objectified the concept of digital storytelling which recalls past experiences with digital sound, video and storytelling. The moviemaker software was introduced in the second workshop. Interestingly, the learners found this topic splendidly enthralling. Their reflective journals showed thumbs up signs. During the workshop, moviemaker-digital-story-creation tiled up the topic. In the activity sessions, topics were chosen by students for the digital story creation which was evaluated by the teacher concerned for suitability.

A huge impact of the strategy utilized in the entire semester was noted. Students performed extremely well in the class activities making use of the digital storytelling and creation technique. They beamed with pride presenting their laid out stories for the week, more so when they manipulated the computer laboratories for the digital creation part. Indeed they rated high in the course as manifested in their instructors' records. Several skills were enhanced such as writing, design, library and research, technology and communication. In addition, digital storytelling helped students with tasks they formerly found very difficult including spelling,

sentence formation and building, and forming the whole body of a text. Hence, this integration of technology in digital creation assisted students to overcome their writing problems.

Furthermore, teachers observed that students were learning without realizing. Provided that students are clearly informed about the task that is required of them, digital storytelling is useful as an all-round skill development tool; the use of digital storytelling can therefore reinforce various complementary skills. As a result, teachers had positive attitude towards the use of DST as a teaching tool in their classrooms. Both teachers and students had the opportunity to improve their technological skills which includes the electronic devices necessitated. They auxiliary stated that Digital Story Telling may not only be used among English classes but would prove useful even in History and the Social Science subjects; Mathematics and the Humanities.

Furthermore, teachers confirmed that the use of digital stories in education is beneficial for Universities receiving foreign entrants. The ability for expression through visual media rather than words facilitates communication for new students and builds their confidence. In addition, teachers fulfilled the role of facilitator, consultant and could scaffold the learning process more effectively when they used digital storytelling in class.

Lastly, the new knowledge generated by this research can inform future educational policy. A number of story development models had been created in the past to help educators achieve better learning outcomes with the intent to promote communicative competence yet none provide a holistic pedagogical framework for reeking Communicative competence during the various stages of learning. This research presented an e-learning DST technique that lumps up communicative competence development among learners. Learners here were found to have fully enjoyed the said DST as they developed their communication skills to the maximum.

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