Chapter 16

Hoot the Story!

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ABSTRACT

The ultimate goal of reading is for readers to become independent and proficient in comprehending the meaning of the texts. Hoot the Story! is an innovative project which aims to promote reading comprehension through the use of digital storytelling and Kahoot! as an assessment tool. One of the informative texts from Get Smart Plus 3 Textbook, The Street Food, is selected and adapted into a fictional digital story. The purpose of the project is to present the information of a nonfiction text in a fictional manner. Year 3 pupils of several schools from Melaka and Selangor were selected as the participants of the projects. They completed a pre-test, which was the comprehension exercise on the informative text from the textbook. Throughout the project, they watched the digital story and carried out instructional activities, based on the teachers’ lesson planning. In the end, the participants answered comprehension questions via Kahoot! as a post-test. The findings showed that pupils comprehension skills improved via the integration of digital storytelling and Kahoot! This project can be extended on other informative texts in the textbook for enhancing the pupils’ comprehension level in the reading lessons.

Key Words: Digital storytelling, gamification, reading comprehension

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading skills are an essential skill to lower primary pupils, especially as this prepares for the next higher level of reading in upper primary. Reading is an essential skill as it develops the mind, and as the mind is a muscle, it needs exercise. When it is done over a period of time, it helps the mind grow in its ability. Reading is also fundamental in everyday living as many children who cannot read progress into adults who struggle to read. This issue may affect them in their daily living from filling up forms, reading labels, finding a job and following a map to become a chore. These struggles in turn produce
frustrated and stressed out adults. Day to day activities that many people take for granted becomes an object of fear and anger. Reading skills help pupils to understand what the other party is communicating. A pupil is limited in their ability when they cannot accomplish good reading and comprehension skills.

Reading skills also develop imagination. What can be achieved by just watching for amusement and reading for amusement is different. When a child reads, he travels to a world beyond his imagination. They can be a king, a princess or an adventurer. Reading develops creativity amongst children, as they are always thinking of how the story would end. Reading also develop a good self-image of the pupils. Non-readers or poor readers usually have a meagre opinion of themselves, low self-confidence and tend to feel the world is against them. They do not feel adequate or good enough. They can perform poorly in other subjects as they struggle to read themselves. Pupils usually tend ‘to give up’ even without attempting the questions.

Pupils who are immersed in literacy at an early age become lifelong readers. Reading is an essential skill to pupils as it helps produce a well-balanced, happy and confident adult. Pupils today have many opportunities to read and gather information. Books are not the only tool that the child is exposed too. Pupils nowadays have access to many digital tools such as a smartphone, reading from an electronic tablet or researching on a computer. This opens to the vast opportunity of gaining knowledge and information.

Informative texts are generally used to convey information on a topic to pupils. However, some characteristics of the texts like lengthy text, can bore pupils easily. Also, unattractive plots may make the young reader not to pay attention to details. This is also relevant to contexts that are beyond their age or suitability. Struggling readers may find this unattractive and dull. This in turn demotivates the pupils especially young learners. Pupils are always on a constant lookout for materials that are attractive and colourful.

As such, digital platforms have been found to be a useful platform for pupils nowadays as they are constantly surrounded by technology, an evolving new frontier. Many pupils have a keen sense of learning through digital platforms. Many different skills such as reading skills, writing and critical thinking skills can be built using digital platforms. Digital storytelling offers the pupils a wonderful opportunity for pupils to listen, evaluate, read and keep that motivation to learn language. Visuals and audios stimulate young minds and creativity and in the process enhance their motivation to read. Digital storytelling also helps a pupil to improve their concentration that an informative text may lack. Pupils learn new vocabulary and terminology in the story and remembers them better.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital storytelling can be defined as the practice of creating a short video which includes digital artefacts such as illustrations, text, video clip, animation, and music by using computer software (Robin & McNeil, 2019). Digital storytelling is a dynamic tool where it integrates multimedia and storytelling to meet the various needs of individuals (Sarica & Usleul, 2016). Therefore, it serves as a useful material for the educators to tackle a
variety of issues faced by the students, such as writing, reading comprehension, and speaking. As compared to the traditional on-paper text, storytelling which includes moving imagery and sound will attract the attention of the students, especially those who have shorter attention span (Robin, 2008). Previous research has shown that integrating visual images with written work will improve and stimulate students' comprehension skill (Burmark, 2004). Moreover, among other learning skills that can be improved through the use of digital storytelling, including problem-solving, cooperative learning, and critical thinking (Sarica & Usleul, 2016).

Gamification is the use of game mechanics to promote desired behaviours, and it has emerged as an effective strategy in domains such as marketing, health and fitness, as well as education (Lee & Hammer, 2011). It is deemed effective due to its ability to stimulate the motivational power among the learners and apply it to real-world problems, in our case, the reading comprehension issues among the learners. Other than motivating the pupils, gamification also provides a better tool for the teacher to reward the learner, and get them to bring their full selves to the pursuit of learning (Mohamad, Jaya, Sazali, & Salleh, 2018). According to a literature review done by Hamari, Koivisto and Sarsa (2014), gamification can be conceptualized into three parts (Figure 1).

The motivational affordances of gamification will result in psychological outcomes, and further enhance the desired behavioural outcomes. The integration of Kahoot!, an online game-based learning platform, into a lesson as an assessment tool will create a fun learning environment for the learners and eventually create a meaningful learning experience for them.

Reading comprehension skills is one of the most vital skills for the learners as those who have difficulties in understanding information will face problems in school and their communities (Broek, Kendeou, Lousberg, & Visser, 2011). The effect will extend to the future life of the learners as many aspects of their lives will be severely hindered. Reading comprehension skills are essential for the readers to decode language units and construct a mental representation of the text (Zwaan & Rapp, 2006). Research carried out by Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2011) shows that storytelling session has a significant positive effect on learners’ reading comprehension. Storytelling sessions build learners’ interest in the reading process, stimulate discussion and enhance the self-confidence of the learners. Besides, listening to stories helps the learners inculcating strong listening skills, and it will lead to improvement of comprehension through consistent exposure to the interesting and meaningful content of the stories. Therefore, combining the advantages of storytelling and the multimedia elements, it will enhance and motivate the learners’ reading comprehension skills.
3. METHODOLOGY

The pupils completed a pre-test, which was the comprehension exercise on the informative text from the textbook, which is Get Smart Plus 3 textbook. Street Food is an exciting topic that introduces a variety of street food from different countries. The chosen text was adapted to digital storytelling. Throughout the project, they watched the digital story and carried out instructional activities, based on the teachers’ lesson planning. In the end, the participants registered themselves as players in the classroom context and played the game with the Pin code provided. They answered comprehension questions via Kahoot! as a post-test. A comparison result would be made and presented.

4. MAIN RESULTS

There is a significant difference between pre and post-test after the intervention of Hoot-the-Story. Pre-test on the comprehension was carried out before the intervention showed that 40 out of 51 students unable to score more than 50% marks while only 11 out of 51 students were able to score more than 50% marks on the pre-test. The result indicated that the number of students that unable to comprehend the informative text given is higher than those who can comprehend the text. This result indicated that the conventional way of reading is not sufficiently effective to be applied to the students who have difficulties in comprehending the informative text.

The intervention was carried out as pupils watched the digital story and answered the post-test via Kahoot! The result of the post-test indicated that almost 70 % or 36 out of 51 students showed improvement in the students’ results in post-test as 26 out of 51 students were able to score 100% marks in post-test and 10 out of 51 students were able to score more than 50% marks in their post-test. The number of students who were unable to score more than 50% decreased to 15 out of 51 students.

Based on the pre and post-test, there is a tremendous change in the number of students who can score more than 50% marks. The number of students who can score more than 50% has increased by almost 49%. The difference between pre and post-test indicated that Hoot-the-Story indeed has a positive impact on the students’ reading comprehension. The participants also responded positively in the survey saying that Hoot-the-Story enables them to understand the informative text. Thus, it is clear that Hoot-the-Story has a positive impact on participants’ reading comprehension on the informative text.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Hoot-the-Story is one of the effective teaching and learning activities that show a positive impact on participants’ reading comprehension in the informative text. Digital storytelling has to turn informative text into a fun and entertaining learning tool that engaged the poor reading skills pupils. The findings above clearly stated that Hoot-the-Story has a more significant impact on teaching and learning as it breaks the
conventional ways of reading activities into exciting and engaging reading activities that enables the pupils to comprehend the informative text better. The features of digital storytelling have proved to be better approach to be used in the reading activities and also cater to the 21st century learning as it integrated with the use of gamification; Kahoot! For future research, the researchers will look into the effective use of digital storytelling and Kahoot! to improve other language skills such as listening, speaking and reading.

REFERENCES


