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Using Storyboard for Enhancing EFL Writing Skills of Primary Stage Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to Use Storyboard for Enhancing EFL Writing Skills of

Primary Stage. The study adopted the quasi-experimental design as there were two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The participants in the study were two classes of 6th grade primary school students that are randomly selected from El-Sayeda Khadeegaa School at Mansoura city, Dakahleya governorate. The study tools were a Check list of the required writing skills for primary stage students, A writing test to measure the development of writing skills for 6th year primary school students, and a Rubric for assessing writing skills for primary stage students. The study found that the Storyboard was effective in achieving its aims and the Storyboard was effective enough to help students Enhance their Writing Skills.

Keywords: Storyboard, Writing skills, primary stage, EFL, TEFL

مستخلص الدراسة

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى استخدام السيناريو المرسوم للقصة لتعزيز مهارات الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلاب المرحلة الإبتدائية. اعتمدت الدراسة على التصميم شبه التجريبي حيث كان هناك مجموعة واحدة . وكان المشاركون في الدراسة فصل من طلاب الصف السادس الابتدائي تم اختيارهم عشوائياً من مدرسة السيدة خديجة بمحافظة الدقهلية. وكانت أدوات الدراسة قائمة على قائمة بمهارات الكتابة المطلوبة لطلاب المرحلة الابتدائية ، واختبار مهارات الكتابة لقياس تطور مهارات الكتابة لطلاب الصف السادس الابتدائية. وأسفرت نتائج الدراسة على أنه يمكن وصف السيناريو المرسوم للقصة بأنه فعالة في تحقيق أهداف وأن السيناريو المرسوم للقصة كان فعال بما يكفي لمساعدة الطلاب على تحسين مهارات الكتابة.

مصطلحات الرسالة

السيناريو المرسوم للقصة ،مهارات الكتابة، المرحلة الابتدائية، اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية ، المريس اللغة الانجليزية كلغة اجنبية .

Introduction:

English is a universal language which is commonly used all over the world. Thus, learning English is a vital and necessary need for all students. To make learning English easier and more effective, the four skills of English language; listening, speaking, reading and writing should be developed. Writing is considered a very important skill that should be emphasized because it enables the learner to make a connection between ideas, thoughts and feelings and words, sentences and passages. Through writing the learner can turn abstract concepts in one's mind into a written context.

Writing is not an easy process, as mastering grammar and punctuation marks are not enough elements to be a good writer. A person needs a mastery of various elements to use the language to convey thoughts, wishes, intentions, feelings and information in a written form. The ability to organize ideas and thoughts are necessary elements for being a good writer. Even sometimes a native speaker of the English language may experience complication in a tricky situation. Basically writing skill requires a well-structured way of the presentation of thoughts in an organized and planned way (Braine & Yorozu, 1998).

Writing skill is considered a purely productive skill in which the writer expresses his\her thoughts. The ability to write something in a productive way is an indicator of success during the learning process (Geiser & Studly, 2001). It is a productive skill in which the writer attempts to concretize his perception and understanding of the world. Through writing we verbalize our ideas into written words. To conclude, the writer translates his/her ideas and thoughts into written words, so writing is a purely productive process.

Writing well is a major cognitive challenge, because it is at once a test of memory, language, and thinking ability. It demands rapid retrieval of domain-specific knowledge about the topic from long-term memory (Kellogg, 2001). This means that writing does not only depends on recent knowledge of the writer but also it depends on the previous knowledge of the writer and relating it to his\her recent knowledge.

According to Yagelski (2015:625), there are some essential and vital strategies and skills necessary for writing:

- a. Developing a suitable writing style
- b. Writing an effective paragraph

- c. Summarizing and paraphrasing
- d. Synthesizing
- e. framing

The process of writing:

Writing is a uniquely individual process as no two people write exactly in the same way using the same words. But the cleverest writers have common elements. One of these elements is that they have learned to take their writing through a process which is consisted of a number of steps (Hatcher.D& Goddard.L, 2005:11)

Clouse(1997) stated the principal steps to the writing process: prewriting, drafting and revising .

a. Prewriting:

The first stage in the writing process is called prewriting. In this stage, the writer makes several attempts to generate suitable ideas. The first way to produce ideas is free writing which makes the writer does not stop to write, think and criticize. Secondly, clustering as this way is effective in providing the writer with thoughts. Thirdly, listing which is like a shopping list as the writer writes down ideas and thoughts on the topic of writing. Finally, brain storming in which the writer puts questions about the topic of writing like what, why, where, and when. To conclude pre writing can be used in the absence of inspiration to help the writer collect ideas on the topic of writing.

The following are different prewriting options:

- 1. **Free writing:** Allows the writer to generate thoughts that will help you formulate ideas to write about. The writer begins to write and does not stop writing, organizing and criticizing.
- 2. **Clustering:** This is a good visual aid that shows the connection between thoughts and allows patterns to be seen. In the center of the page, main idea or stimulus word should be written with a circle around it.
- 3. **Listing:** This is like a shopping list of phrases. On the paper, any thoughts or feelings are written that about a particular topic. This is similar to free writing. This process will be helpful in getting all of those mixed up thoughts in the writers' head down on paper.
- 4. **Brainstorming:** questions about the topic of writing are asked. Who, what, when, where, why and how are good questions to start with. These questions will be helpful in drafting stage.

b. Drafting:

Once writers feel they have generated enough ideas during prewriting to serve as a departure point, they make their first attempt at getting those ideas down. This part of the writing process is drafting Typically, the first draft is very rough, which is why it so often is called the rough draft. The rough draft provides raw material that can be shaped and refined in the next stages of the writing process.

c. Revising:

Revising calls on the writer to take the raw material of the draft and rework it to get it in shape for the reader. This reworking is a time-consuming, difficult part of the process. It requires the writer to refine the content so that it is clear, so that points are adequately supported, and so that ideas are expressed in the best way possible and in the best order possible. This step is focused on the content of your draft; spelling, grammar and punctuation will come in the final stage of the writing process.

In fact, there is a high connection between story board and enhancing writing skills. Essley (2008) argues that Storyboarding, or picture writing, is the origin of all written languages, used by ancient cultures before text evolved and as a natural bridge to text. The Chinese language was built using pictographs. Egyptians used storyboards, or hieroglyphics, first etched in stone and later written on papyrus, to organize a complex society and to rule the ancient world. To conclude, the author in this book highlights the strong connection between story board and developing language skills in general and writing skills in particular.

Storyboard:

Storyboards are visual organizers, typically a series of illustrations displayed in sequence for the purpose of pre- visualizing a video, web-based training or interactive media video.

Storyboards can be defined as "series of images or illustrations contains visual layouts of events, text description and graphics that present movement and camera details" (Langveld, 2010)

Storyboarding is a powerful technique to concisely convey a concept or idea. Its linear nature and visual representation let people quickly grasp what is communicated. It is also much more interesting than yet another PowerPoint presentation.

Importance of Using Storyboards

There are many reasons for using storyboards: visually displaying an overview of information, stimulating divergent thinking, organizing judgmental problem solving, generating a plan of action, demonstrating functionality of elements, showing navigational schemes and finding cross-referencing linkage possibilities, checking completeness, helping graphical sizing and organization, helping one to think about appropriate activities, and simply informing the story boarder how the project will appear in final form (Iowa State University Extension, 2004; Mallon, 1995; NCREL, 1999; Stanton, 2001; Usability Net, 2003). Perhaps most importantly, storyboards provide a simple means of understanding the relation of one element to the overall scheme, and how various knowledge elements can become interconnected.

Creating Storyboards:

Storyboard can be created in many different ways. This process depends up on one's needs, preferences, and source referred to. There are many resources which highlight the necessary elements for creating a storyboard (DAF, 1993; Lee, 2000). All storyboards should have certain elements in common though. These include: date, version, name, lesson, topic, frame (from a flowchart), rough drawings, audio or video sequence or script, interaction instructions, screen text, and navigation and information linkages. As Chapman (1995) writes, "Script-storyboard formats from the past are inadequate for designing today's interactive training."

Before Beginning

In this stage, the template is selected and there are several steps for this template to be carried out for effective and useful product. Firstly, identifying the target audience, this storyboard for whom. The second step is the definition of teaching style used by the teacher. The third step is the identification of goals and learning objectives. Final, methods for generating ideas takes place like brainstorming, listing, clustering etc.

Storyboarding Process

Once the information is organized and media chosen, the actual storyboarding process begins. Many storyboard templates exist (Allessi, 1985; Hirumi, 2002), but in our simplified method, the actual text and images do not necessarily need to be finished, only visualized in concept in the beginning as revision is often used. Like templates, many process outlines also exist (DAF, 1993; Lee, 2000; Heinich, 1999; Iowa State

University Extension, 2004; Usability Net, 2003). There are some steps for producing an educational storyboard.

Steps:

- 1. Organize all information and media elements.
- 2. Review rationale for materials choice.
- 3. Produce flowchart or screen-by-screen outline.
- 4. Write preliminary text.
- 5. Produce initial storyboards.
- 6. Check the fit of overlaying displays and interactive elements.
- 7. Check content elements for fit and appropriateness in the given context.
- 8. Build information linkages.
- 9. Review flowcharts and storyboards.

Putting Storyboards into Practice

By creating a complete overview of a course through storyboarding, one can better place content and interactivity in an effective manner the first time a course is developed. Certain pitfalls such as missing information, redundant information, poor transitions, etc. can be avoided with properly developed storyboards. There are also fewer questions among a group of developers. The storyboard can serve as a constant reference point by which the design process can follow (Manichander, 2016:33).

Storyboards are also finding their way into the classroom. Technology classes are digital storytelling, where the students use their creativity to design their storyboard on paper, use a camera to shoot a video, and then edit their video using computer software (Jonassen, Howland, Marra, & Crismond, 2008). Storyboarding can be used for more than videos in the world of education as well. Because it is such an easy way to plan, it can be used if students are creating a series of visuals as well. Storyboard planning could be easily used to arrange a series of Power Point slides, transparencies, or a series of computer screens (Smaldino, Lowther, & Russell, 2008). This process could also cement series of events to memory for history class, help to visualize biological processes in life science, or create patterns to remember computer programming steps in technology, all by drawing and adding text to the storyboard.

There are many studies aimed at enhancing writing skills.

Nasir, Naqvi& Bhamani (2013) conducted a study which aimed at improving written expression (composition) skills of 5th grade students of an elite private school. The research was designed under the paradigm of action research. A total sample of 39 students' from the same grade was chosen for the study. The baseline assessment was carried out to explore the pre-intervention writing skill score of the students prior to the intervention cycle one. Later, intervention and writing skill support strategies were carried out for eight weeks. In the end, post-test was carried out to explore the differences occurred in the writing score of the students as a post intervention effect. The findings obtained from the quantitative data showed the improvement in the written expression skills of the students.

Aminloo (2013) conducted a study which aimed at examining the effect of group work and collaborative writing on EFL learners' writing ability at elementary level. Sixty four learners in two groups (treatment & control) participated in the study. The Learners in treatment group wrote their writings collaboratively while the other group wrote them individually. The writing samples were rated based on the TOEFL iBT task 2 writing scoring rubric (ETS, 2006). The results showed that both the treatment group and the control group improved significantly from the beginning to the end of the instruction as assessed through the use of two paired samples t tests. However, the two groups showed a significant difference in their posttest.

Conroy, Marchand &Webster (2009) conducted a study which aimed at motivating elementary students in writing, specifically in the areas of creativity, detail, and accuracy. The teacher researchers wanted to develop self-motivated and knowledgeable writers. This project was conducted from September 2nd, 2008 to January 30th, 2009. The targeted students enjoyed learning about the writing process and became more confident in their writing abilities during the duration of the project. The teacher researchers observed more positive behavior towards writing in the classroom and therefore the action research project was successful.

Some studies ensured the effectiveness of using storyboard to enhance English language skills.

Al Kaaf (2014) conducted a study aimed at understanding how storytelling strategy is taught in the composition lessons and how this influences pupils' performance in their story writing. In order to achieve this aim the story telling strategy was explored via written compositions, prepost tests. Classroom observations and questionnaires, interviews to explore

the perceptions of teachers and pupils. There are two groups the experimental group and the control group in grade seven. The findings shows that the experimental group outperformed the control group in the story writing skills. The mean score of the experimental group was higher than the mean score of the control group in the story writing skills.

Clabough (2011) conducted a study which describes his experience in a sixth grade world history classroom, working with students who created storyboards about a primary source. Further, the author will discuss how student work illustrates some possible benefits of the storyboard activity that relate to current best practices in the middle school classroom. For middle level instruction, teachers need to use divergent approaches to actively engage students in the learning process (AMLE, 2010). The classroom atmosphere that teachers should strive to construct should encourage creativity, exploration, and inquiry by students in all academic disciplines (NCSS, 1991). Students need to analyze and evaluate the content of varied sources (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). The examination of different sources allowed students to be able to discover and articulate alternative points of view. Students can gain a better understanding of the cultural Clabough values of different groups around the world through the inspection of alternative points of view (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). By establishing a classroom atmosphere that incorporates these factors, teachers utilize teaching strategies and classroom activities that help students gain the appropriate skills and attitudes to be lifelong learners (NCSS, 1991).

Hana's (2010) the main aim of this study was to improve EFL primary stage students' listening skills through a training program based on story telling activities. The proposed program was administered to a sample of students at Manyet-Maha-El Damana primary school during the first semester in the academic year 2009\2010. In this study, two instrumentations were designed by the researcher, the first was a listening comprehension skills questionnaire, the second pre-post listening comprehension skills test. The results indicated that (1) there were statistically significance differences between the mean score of the experimental group students on the pre- and post- applications of the listening skills test in favor of post one. (2) there was a significant improvement in students, listening skills component dimension.

Pilot study:

To provide an evidence for the problem, the researcher conducted a pilot study to determine students' writing skills level. So, a writing test was designed based on student's book. This test was applied to a sample of twenty four 6th grade primary stage students at El-Sayeda Khadeega primary school.

The results of the test are illustrated in the following table:

Table (1) pilot writing test scores

sub skill	Max. score	Mean scores	Percentage
Organization	6	1.58	27%
Development	6	1.71	28.5%
Word choice	6	1.95	32.5%
Mechanics	6	2	33%

The previous table showed that 6th year primary school students have a problem in writing sub skills, the mean score of sub skills didn't Exceed the half of Max score: (Organization: Mean score 1.58 of 6 Max score, Development: Mean score 1.71 of 6 Max score, Word choice: Mean score 1.95 of 6 Max score, Mechanics: Mean score 2 of 6 Max score). They also had a problem in organization as their writings lack logic and using transitions with a percentage of (27 %), the Development skills was (28%), word choice (32.5 %) and mechanics (33%).

Statement of the problem:

Depending on the pilot study administered to 6th year primary school students it is noticed that 6th year primary school students have a problem in writing skills. They have a problem in organization as their writings lack logic and using transitions. Secondly, the development of the topic in their writing lacks using evidence and using sufficient examples. The third problem is in word choice. Also, these students have a problem in using grammar to produce a well-structured sentence. They also face difficulties in the mechanics of writing which illustrates that there are many errors in punctuation marks, capitalization and spelling. So, there is a dire need for developing writing skills of 6th year primary school students. Thus, the story board will be used to enhance their English writing skills.

Questions of the study:

The current study attempted to answer the following questions:

- 1 What are the writing sub-skills that should be mastered by 6th grade primary students?
- 2 How can storyboard be used for developing writing skills for 6th year primary school students?
- 3 What is the impact of using storyboard for enhancing writing skills for 6th year primary school students?

The Hypotheses of the study:

- 1- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the treatment group on both pre and post administration of the writing test.
- 2- The Storyboard has a satisfied level of effectiveness in Enhancing EFL Writing Skills of Primary Stage pupils.

The study design:

The study adopted the quasi-experimental pre-test post-test design as the researcher assessed the students' writing skills before the application of a storyboard based program. Then, the researcher applied a writing post-test after the application of the proposed program.

Instruments:

The researcher designed the following instruments in order to identify writing skills for primary stage as well as a writing test to assess the students

- 1. A pre post Check list of the required writing skills for primary stages students.
- 2. A pre post writing test to measure the development of writing skills for 6th year primary school students, in addition a rubric which was used for scoring the test.

Participants:

The participants in the study were one class of 6th grade primary school students that was randomly selected in El-Sayeda Khadeegaa School in Dakahleya governorate. The researcher assessed the students' writing skills by using a pre-test before applying the story board-based program. Then, the researcher used a post-test to ensure the effectiveness of using storyboard in enhancing writing skills.

Procedures:

The procedures followed by the researcher in conducting the current study could be summarized as follows:

- 1. Reviewing literature related to storyboard as well as writing skills.
- 2. Designing a questionnaire for identifying writing skills necessary for primary stage students.
- 3. Preparing a writing skills test and validating it by a jury committee of specialists.
- 4. Calculating the reliability and validity of writing test.
- 5. Preparing the materials necessary for using storyboard.
- 6. Selecting the sample of the study.
- 7. Administering the writing test (pre-post).
- 8. Administering the treatment by using storyboard with the treatment group
- 9. Administering test after the treatment for the treatment group (post-administration).
- 10. Analyzing data by using the appropriate statistical methods.
- 11. Interpreting results and making conclusions and recommendations.

Definition of terms:

Writing can be defined as "a set of visible or tactile signs used to represent units of language in a systematic way, with the purpose of recording messages which can be retrieved by everyone who knows the language in question and the rules by virtue of which its units are encoded in the writing system." Coulmas, Florian, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1999), P.560

The researcher adopts the definition offered by Coulmas, Florian (1999) defined writing as "the most visible items of a language, scripts and orthographies are 'emotionally loaded', indicating as they do group loyalties and identities. Rather than being **mere** instruments of a practical nature, they are symbolic systems of great social significance which may, moreover, have profound effect on the social structure of a speech community."

A storyboard is" a series of diagrams that shows a sequence of displays. This can have a fixed timeline such as that in a video or digital animation. Some storyboards do not have a fixed timeline because the sequence depends on choices made by the user or viewer, for example: interactive media products and computer games. There are two main parts to a storyboard. The first is the sequence of different scenes to tell the story. The second is the information that is provided for each scene." From ocr.org.uk, the OCR(Oxford Cambridge and Rsa) guide to storyboard

The researcher adopts the definition offered by Langveld (2010) who defines storyboards as "series of images or illustrations contains visual layouts of events, text description and graphics that present movement and camera details"

Summary

Writing is a uniquely individual process and the same individual may use different methods to express him or herself. Characteristically, the writing process approach recognizes that there are many stages to writing and that these stages are fluid and overlapping (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1983; Flower & Hayes, 1980; Murray, 1982). Writing skill is considered a purely productive skill in which the writer expresses his/her thoughts. The ability to write something in a productive way is an indicator of success during the learning process (Geiser & Studly, 2001). It is a productive skill in language use in which the writer attempts to concretize his perception and understanding of the world. Through writing we verbalize our perception of reality and the place of man in the scheme of things. The writer is thus playing a mediating role between objective reality and the rest of mankind that make up the audience. Through what has been written, the audience also has an interesting insight into the personality of the writer and his perception of the world.

Storyboarding is a powerful technique to concisely convey a concept or idea. Its linear nature and visual representation let people quickly grasp what is communicated. It is also much more interesting than yet another PowerPoint presentation.

There are many reasons for using storyboards: visually displaying an overview of information, stimulating divergent thinking, organizing judgmental problem solving, generating a plan of action, demonstrating functionality of elements, showing navigational schemes and finding cross-referencing linkage possibilities, checking completeness, helps graphical sizing and organization, helps one to think about appropriate activities, and simply informing the story boarder how the project will appear in final form (Iowa State University Extension, 2004; Mallon, 1995; NCREL, 1999; Stanton, 2001; Usability Net, 2003). Perhaps most importantly, storyboards provide a simple means of understanding the relation of one element to the overall scheme, and how various knowledge elements can become interconnected.

The purpose of this study was to Use Storyboard for Enhancing EFL Writing Skills of Primary Stage. By the end of the study the following questions were answered:

- 1. How can storyboard be used for developing writing skills for 6th year primary school students?
- 2. What is the impact of using storyboard for enhancing writing skills for 6th year primary school students?

Results:

The results are summarized as follows:

- 3- There was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and the mean scores of post-test of the experimental group
- 4- The Storyboard had a satisfied level of effectiveness in Enhancing EFL Writing Skills of Primary Stage pupils.

Conclusions:

Based on the results of this study, the following conclusion were reached:

- 1. The current study provided evidence to the effectiveness of using Storyboard for Enhancing EFL Writing Skills of Primary Stage Students.
- 2. Using Storyboard can substantially have better effects on EFL Writing Skills of Primary Stage Students if they are implemented using technological and animation methods.
- 3. The current study provided evidence to the importance of Enhancing EFL Writing Skills of Primary Stage Students.
- 4. The study highlighted the need for giving attention to using storyboard technique by teachers in English language classes to promote students' English language writing skills.
- 5. The present study presented a model of Using Storyboard can substantially have better effects on EFL Writing Skills to be applied in all Primary schools.
- 6. It is important to take into consideration the integration of storyboard technique in the teacher education programs in the Faculties of Education.

Recommendations

Based on the previous results, the researcher recommends the following:

For Teachers:

• Storyboard can be used by teachers to develop and motivate the students' writing ability.

 The English teachers should provide interesting activities and materials, in order to motivate students and encourage them to learn English, especially writing.

For Students:

The students should practice more in writing English to improve their writing ability. They also need to increase their vocabulary in order to use appropriate word for every kinds text, then should be active and creative in learning activity.

Suggestions for the Further Research

This research focused on the influence of Using Storyboard for Enhancing EFL Writing Skills of Primary Stage Students. Therefore, it is suggested for the next researchers to:

- 1- Investigate the use of Storyboard in other English skills such as listening skill, reading skill or speaking skill.
- 2- Investigate the use of Storyboard for preparatory, secondary or university stage in Enhancing EFL listening, reading or speaking skills.
- 3- Use the internet to provide on-line storyboard for the students in the light of e-learning theories. Or Making use of the social media websites to develop EFL Writing Skills of university Students.

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