THE USE OF STORYTELLING IN IMPROVING CHILDREN'S RETENTION SKILLS

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the use of storytelling in improving children's retention skills. It utilized the quasi-experimental research design which sought to determine the association of a variable-storytelling to assess the improvement of children's retention skills. The participants were eight (8) Grade 3 pupils of the Baliuag University Basic Education Department. The first instrument was composed of 12 Multiple- choice items that served as the Pretest and Posttest while the second instrument is a survey questionnaire consisted of indicators in assessing how storytelling is helpful in improving the children's retention skills. Survey questionnaires were administered via Google form. Results of the pretest and posttest were interpreted using the DepEd Order no.8, s. 2015 scale in determining the level of pupils' performance in the test. The study showed that the average pretest scores of Grade 3 pupils had the verbal interpretation of Did Not Meet the Expectation while the result of the average posttest scores revealed that there is an increase in the value and interpreted with satisfactory remarks. Using the paired t-test, it was found that there is a significant difference between the weighted average of the pretest and posttest results. With regards to the respondents' perception on the use of storytelling in improving their retention skills, they strongly agreed that it helps them understand the moral lesson of the story, they find it more enjoyable listening to the story and recognize its characters better. Based on the results of the study, it was revealed that storytelling could improve the children's retention skills.

Keywords: storytelling, children's retention skills

Introduction

Storytelling has always been a vital part of learning for children in all cultures and a key to educating people through generations. From the early cultures of Egyptian hieroglyphics, Greek mythology, Aborigine rock art, and Native American elders' oral traditions have been used to pass down history to the next generation (Roby, 2010). Storytelling is a natural method of human communication and is dominant in all aspects of human social interaction. People tend to make well sense of complex ideas, concepts, or information when it occurs thru storytelling (Chung, 2006). It inspires children to recognize more the characters, and the story as it explains. It is an entertaining passage for self-expression and interpersonal connection, but it also has a solid effect on academic success of the students.

Storytelling can be an effective way to increase pupils' ability, listening skills, retention, imagination, expand vocabulary as well as attention span. Storytellers can supply a deep understanding of their world and fill their brains with knowledge. The use of storytelling can improve the children's retention as they can recognize easily sounds of the animals, they became familiar with the words and language and also it helps them develop their brains, focus on their ability and the concentration.

Some kids seem to forget things all the time, including what they were just asked to do, what you already said to do, what they need to remember. They might have trouble following directions and remembering lessons. This is very frustrating — not just for the kids, but for the adults around them. Parents, caregivers, and teachers may feel like they are constantly repeating themselves and giving reminders. There are many reasons kids are forgetful, including stress and lack of sleep. Being hungry can also have a big impact. But sometimes when kids have trouble remembering information, they may be struggling with a skill called working memory. It is like a temporary sticky note in our brain. It holds new information in place so the brain can work with it and connect it with other information.

Being exposed to interesting literature at the correct level may promote a more positive attitude in a reader, which could help promote life-long reading. Since many pupils are not passionate about reading, it is important that they find interesting books so they can immerse themselves more deeply in stories and they can deeply understand what the story is all about.

Review of Related Literature

Storytelling

Storytelling is a subject that has a plethora of wide-ranging application to human learning, teaching and society in general. Storytelling and its role(s) in society predates written human history as oral storytelling was the only tool available to people to preserve and share cultural customs, beliefs and heritage. Story proved to be the oldest and the most substantiated means for humans to remember and story information (Abrahamsen, 1998). Thus, storytelling proved to be a highly effective way of coding knowledge in oral cultures because it made them more memorable and easily passed on to others. In fact, Abrahamsen claims that civilizations survived as a result of storytelling because they ensured the continuity of life experiences to subsequent generations.

Children automatically love books and stories as they are presented to wonderful ideas, places, and creatures they haven't before encountered, through storytelling children are encouraged to listen to others, whether it be the storyteller or others listening to the story, in addition helping children learn to translate meaning and use language, story reading is thought to have many other benefits, and reading books aloud to children inspires their imagination and expands their understanding of the world.

Both telling and listening to stories impart a sense of joy in language and words that makes children want to read. Listening stimulate the powers of imagination and visualization, which are keys to comprehension and higher order thinking skills. In telling stories students develop their oral communication skills, which are a critical tool for real world success.

One of the prominent techniques that are useful for teaching English to pre-school pupils, flashing their interest in learning and improving their language output is storytelling (Brewster, Ellis & Girald, 2002; Ellis & Brewster, 1991; Enever, 2006). Mourao (2009) states that storytelling symbolizes a holistic approach to language learning and teaching in which learners can immerse in rich and authentic examples of the foreign language. A study examined the impact of storytelling technique on Vietnamese preschool pupils' vocabulary retention and some activities serving this purpose proposed by teacher trainers. This study emphasized on how primary teachers use stories in English lessons to teach 3 to 6-year-old students. Observations, interviews are used to collect data. Through analyzing the findings, it was clear that storytelling technique is beneficial for recalling new words and some learning activities are shown to be useful in supporting teachers in achieving this desired result. In the study by Gonzales (2009), he described that storytelling is a bond between mother and daughter, such as the mother can tell a story of a chapter of a book every night or watch DVDs of the fairy tale of Beauty and the Beast. In inference, the review of previous studies has confirmed that storytelling produces latent effects on young learners' vocabulary retention and pointed out certain unsought issues that may discourage the practice of storytelling in English classes.

Storytelling is not a new process. Storytelling has been around since the beginning of time. It was the principal way of telling and recording history. In the past research, it shows that the art can have the result of higher academic achievement of the students, and through storytelling and story reading in the classroom, it is a way to get students attention and make themselves involve in the discussion. It is also a method by which imagination can be stimulated and in turn leads to higher cognitive level in student's responses.

According to Kumon, storytelling can provide the learners to understand more the culture, storytelling has been proven to help develop a sense of empathy as children are encouraged to put themselves in the position of the story's hero; to consider their actions and reactions and why they may have made them. Ellis (1997) suggests that storytelling is the most effective way to develop listening skills. Storytelling also provides an opportunity to experience the difference between listening quietly and listening actively, by participating in the process. Colon-Vila (1997) agrees that storytelling helps teach children to listen; it helps develop skills in both oral and written communication, while developing understanding of story schema.

Librarians should also consider archiving and cataloging children's storytelling efforts as part of their collections. In that way, the entire school community can access them and incorporate them across the curriculum. Furthermore, students can share their stories with their friends and families and feel proud that their stories are preserved in the library. Challenges nowadays in storytelling is that learners in the new generation are more on technology and social media. Digital storytelling is also very audience-driven because of the need to help your learners understand your story through various media. By taking part in various digital storytelling activities, students can reflect on their own projects and on those of their peers.

Student's Perception on Storytelling

Children have an inborn love of stories. Stories generate magic and a sense of wonder at the world. Stories teach us about life, about ourselves and about others.

Storytelling is a unique way for students to progress an understanding, respect and appreciation for other cultures, and can promote a positive attitude to people from diverse status.

According to the article of Maxine Alterio (2003), entitled "Using Storytelling to Enhance Student Learning", it was showed that storytelling is a powerful and enduring means of communication that has widespread appeal. It crosses cultures and communities; in fact, many of our earliest learning experiences most likely involved stories, some told to us directly, others read and, still more, played out around us. Storytelling is an ideal teaching and learning tool, for it takes seriously the need for students to make sense of experience, using their own culturally generated sense-making processes (Bishop and Glynn, 1999). Storytelling also has the capacity to provision and improve the deep understanding of the students. In addition, sharing and reflectively processing stories provides students with opportunities to develop authentic relationships with their peers. To learn through storytelling is to take seriously the human need to make meaning from experience, to communicate that meaning to others, and, in the process, learn about us and the world in which we reside. Students who learn through storytelling and reflectively processing their stories develop skills that enable them to link subjective and objective perspectives, capture the complexity of experience and bring about thoughtful change to self and practice.

Retention

Retention is defined as "the fact of keeping something in one's memory. German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus first scientifically studied memory and in 1885 published a book about it called "Memory: A Contribution to Experimental Psychology." Stories and storytelling activities are outstanding tools for increasing retention in training. Stories are the important building block of how we

understand and remember information. They enable us to connect to content on a deeper and richer level, more than a simple list of facts or a practical work process can. Storytelling is one of the effective tools for increasing retention in training. Stories are the important building block of how we understand and remember information. They allow us to connect to content on a deeper and richer level, more than a simple list of facts. Meaning is derived and content retained by connecting data and events to each other through our own past experiences.

Hermann Ebbinghaus stated also that storytelling boosts retention in four (4) very separate ways:

1. By using storytelling as a needs assessment and evaluation tool, a trainer can pare down the workshop content to a manageable size.

2. By creating a context for the information, participants cognitively retain it more completely and efficiently.

3. Storytelling is a dynamic process that involves the listener as much as the speaker. Therefore, learners, when presented with stories, are more actively engaged than when they are just faced with facts.

4. Stories are more interesting—and inherently laden with richer meaning—than lists and data. If we were numbers, we might be more interested in numbers. But as human beings, we care about people and their stories.

According to the study of Connie Swee Hoon Seng (2017) entitled; "Teachers' and Students' Perception of Storytelling as a Language Teaching and Learning Resource", revealed that storytelling advocates are convinced that hearing or reading stories improves language skills such as vocabulary building, comprehension, sequencing and story recall. They also believe that it encourages creative writing as

it fires children's imagination and inspires them to tell and write their own stories.

Storytelling as Intervention

Storytelling takes place in every culture in the form of entertainment, education, cultural preservation and instilling moral values. Listening to tales can be considered significant community practices, capable to impact on young generations, empowering and preparing them for the future. Study found that children expand their vocabulary in regular story listening experience because of a broad range of words they encounter through stories and the ways the vocabulary is presented (Cooper, Collins, & Saxby, 1992; Elley, 1989). Storytelling method can affect children's development of expressive or receptive language (Anggraeni et al., 2019). This is in connection with Yarger (2006) study who found out that storytelling with big book can better affect children's listening skill. According to Francois Breuer (2010) study entitled; "Storytelling as interactive intervention", emphasized that storytelling as an intervention brings symbolism to life, stories that tell the events from the history of the generation and of persons who appeal to the imagination that he remembers. If you collected those stories and tried to interpret them, you would find out that they celebrate the successes in a symbolic way, the heroes and the villains of the organization are honored and the peculiarities and folklore of all sorts of typical behavior are passed on.

Theoretical Framework

Storytelling as brain-based learning

According to the authors of Brain/Mind Learning Principles in Action (Caine, Caine, McClintic, & Klimic, 2005), educators must employ the following elements of brain-based learning for effective learning to take place:

1) Relaxed Alertness: A state of mind that should be created in brain-based classrooms so students can attain levels of higher order thinking.

2) Planned Immersion: The creation of an environment where students are exposed to or engaged in experiences relative to the objectives of the course or particular lesson.

3) Active Processing: Utilization of learning methods that encourage the students to reflect and integrate the information in a manner that is personally meaningful.

While the subject of brain-based teaching is not particularly new, a teaching method that meets brain-based learning theories that has been receiving increasing attention is storytelling. Additionally, storytelling as an effective teaching and learning method is advertised by several other educational theorists and researchers who underscore storytelling as a reflective, transformative, and/or experimental teaching education. Storytelling is a form of communication that predates written human history as a means of teaching lessons and passing history down from one generation to another (Rossiter, 2002) In this study, the researcher uses this theory, stories help us feel a better sense of connection to one another. They can increase our understanding and often help support our highest ideals such as sympathy and kindness. As we connect with the characters in a story, our brain releases oxytocin, often known as the "bonding" or "love" hormone.

Theory of Multiple Intelligences

According to Howard Gardner, the multiple intelligences can be link to the storytelling. The eight intelligences relate to storytelling: Linguistic, re-tell & rewrite the story using own words and thinking of words that best describe what the story is all about.

Logical-mathematical storytelling makes them think through the reason, they can use their critical thinking to think beyond the story and promotes inventive thinking and problem-solving skills. Spatial, they can draw the sequence of the story as they remember it, bodily – kinesthetic they can use movements & gestures instead of words to tell parts of the story and act out the story without words. Musical, find sound patterns in the story, add rhythms to enhance the action & words, do sound effects for the story, tell the story in rap or rhyme. Interpersonal ability to learn with another, aware of other's feelings and moods from their actions, discuss how people in the story feel about the events of the story. Intrapersonal, knowledge of self, being aware of own strength & weakness. Naturalist is the understanding of physical world & the environment, telling stories of how things in nature might have come to be, and last is the Existentialist, they can do create stories based on questions about the world and events around you/them. Storytelling is the oldest and most powerful teaching & learning method known, can utilizes skills listening, responding, speaking, creating, memorizing, imagining the world and the other world.
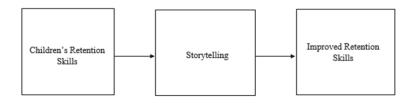
Schema Theory

The Schema theory fundamental principle assume that the written text does not carry meaning but only provides direction to the readers as to how they construct, imagine, identify meaning on their own ability. Schema is the background knowledge; it is what a person already knows before. In this theory, schemata represent knowledge about concepts: objects and the relationships they have with other objects, situations, events, sequences of events, actions, and sequences of actions. Therefore, classroom environments that include well-stocked libraries, magazines, reading tables, and areas with comfortable chairs will enhance students' intentions to read. Prior knowledge is viewed as affecting the attitude reading relationship by influencing the intention to read. In the theory through regular storytelling, children develop a story schema that has been proved to be a scaffolding mechanism for reading and listening comprehension and information retrieval (Jennings, 1991; Pahl, 1987; Turetzky, 1982).

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this study is to determine the benefits of storytelling in improving the retention skills of grade 3 pupils. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study.

Figure 1. The Use of Storytelling in Improving Children's Retention Skills

The Problem

The research study aimed to investigate the use of storytelling in improving the retention skills of Grade 3 pupils.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. How may the retention skills of the pupils be described:
    1.1   before the use of storytelling;
    1.2   after the use of storytelling?

2.   Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of pupils after storytelling has been conducted?

3. After the storytelling, how may the perception of the pupils on storytelling be described

Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of students after storytelling has been conducted.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The research study was conducted at the Baliuag University Basic Education Department during the Second Semester of School Year 2020-2021. It was limited to Grade 3 section Faith with eight (8) pupils that were enrolled during the said school year. Each of the respondents were asked to answer the questions about the story of Tiktaktok and Pikpakbum. The said story was used because the grade 3 pupils are scheduled to read this book in the 3rd grading period. Pretest and Posttest were conducted to assess the pupil's retentions skills.

Method

This chapter presents the research design, research locale, the population/ sample size and the instrument utilized to collect the data, including the analysis and statistical treatment of data.

Research Design

A quantitative approach was used, specifically a quasi-experimental research design which sought to determine the association of a variable-storytelling, to assess the improvement of children's retention skills. A quasi-experimental design aimed to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between an independent and dependent variable.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were consisted of eight (8) Grade 3-Faith pupils, ages 9-10 years old who are currently enrolled in Baliuag University, Basic Education Department. Grade 3 pupils were chosen as respondents of the study since reading literacy is important because it is the stage where children are beginning to move from "learning to read" to "reading to learn", for imaginations and they can retell the stories based on what they heard and learn using the different elements of the stories.

Instruments of the Study

The study utilized the story of "Tiktaktok and Pikpakbum" and validated researcher made pretest and posttest with similar content and arrangement. The first instrument was composed of 12 multiple-choice items which were answered by the pupils through google forms. A 10-item survey instrument was also utilized as indicators in assessing how the storytelling is helpful in improving the children's retention skills.

Data Gathering Procedures

The researchers prepared all the necessary administrative documents, namely: request letters to the Dean's office of the College of Education and Human Development and the Baliuag University Basic Education Principal's Office. Permission and approval were asked from the Principal before conducting the said survey. The researcher conducted the survey as well as the storytelling to the Grade 3-Faith pupils on February 22 and 24, 2021 via Google Form. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and were guided during the answering of the survey instrument in order to collect accurate data.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

The researcher gathered, tabulated and analyze the data using the following statistical tools.

1. Mean and Standard Deviation to determine the measurement of the differences of each observation from the mean.

2. T-test to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of two groups.

To determine the level of students' academic performance, the DepEd Order no.8, s. 2015, was utilized:

Descriptors	Grading Scale	Remarks
Outstanding	90% and above	Passed
Very Satisfactory	85-89%	Passed
Satisfactory	80-84%	Passed
Fairly Satisfactory	75-79%	Passed
Did Not Meet Expectations	74% and below	Failed

A Likert Scale was also used to assess the pupils' perception on the use of storytelling in improving retention skills.

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation
4	3.50 – 4.00	Lubos na Sumasangayon
3	2.50 – 3.49	Sang - ayon
2	1.50 – 2.49	Hindi sumasang - ayon
1	1.00 – 1.49	Lubos na Hindi sumasang - ayon

Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the data gathered, the results of statistical analysis and interpretation of findings. These are presented in tables followed by their analyses and interpretations.

Table 1
Mean and Standard Deviation Interpretation for Pretest Scores

Inventory Score

	N	M	SD
Pretest	8	6.63	3.16

Table 1 presents the average score on the Pretest (M=6.63, SD=3.16, $N>^2$) of the respondents. The average scores of students in the 12-item test were only 6.63 which when computed the result falls to Did Not Meet Expectations.

Table 2
Mean and Standard Deviation Interpretation for Posttest Scores

Inventory Score

	N	M	SD
Posttest	8	10.5	1.20

Table 2 presents the average score on the Posttest (M=10.5, SD=1.20, $N>^2$) of respondents. The results revealed that there is an increase and significant difference in their score in Pretest and it falls to the Satisfactory remarks.

Table 3
Difference between Pretest and Posttest Results using Paired Sample t-test

Pre-test		Posttest		t	df	p
M	SD	M	SD			
6.63	3.16	10.5	1.20	-3.68	7	0.01

Table 3 shows the results of paired sample t-test which was used to determine whether there is a significant difference in the pretest and posttest. As shown in the table, pretest results (M = 6.63, SD > 7.5^0) and the posttest results (M = 10.5, SD > 5.64) were compared and there is a significant difference between the two; t (7) = -3.68, p = 0.01.

Table 4
Perception of Students on the Use of Storytelling in Improving Their Retention Skills

Inventory Score

	Mean	Remarks	Rank
1.Nasisiyahan ako sa pakikinig ng kwento.	3.88	Lubos na sumasang - ayon	2.5
2. Naiintindihan ko nang lubusan ang kwento.	3.62	Lubos na sumasang - ayon	5
3.Nailalarawan ko sa aking isipan ang kwento.	3.38	Sumasang – ayon	8.5
4.Naaalala ko ang bawat detalye sa kwento.	3.38	Sumasang – ayon	8.5
5.Nagkakaroon ako ng karagdagang kaalaman.	3.75	Lubos na sumasang - ayon	4
6.Nahahasa ang aking memorya.	3.5	Lubos na sumasang - ayon	6.5
7.Lumalawak ang aking imahinasyon.	3.25	Sumasang - ayon	10

Continued

Table 4. Continuation

Inventory Score

	Mean	Remarks	Rank
8.Nakikilala ko nang husto ang mga tauhan sa kwento.	3.88	Lubos na sumasang - ayon	2.5
9.Naiintindihan ko ang mga magandang aral ng kwento.	4.0	Lubos na sumasang - ayon	1
10. Nakatutugon ako sa mga katanungan ukol sa nilalaman ng kwento na nagpapakita ng aking pag-unawa.	3.5	Lubos na sumasang - ayon	6.5
Overall Mean	**3.61**	**Lubos na sumasang - ayon**	

Table 4 presents the perception of the participants on the use of storytelling in improving their retention skills. The item *"Naiintindihan ko ang mga magandang aral ng kwento* ranked 1 with a mean score of 4.00 interpreted as *"Lubos na sumasang – ayon".* Results show that the grade 7 students strongly agreed that they understand the moral of the story better when using storytelling. Moreover, the item *"Nasisiyahan ako sa pakikinig ng kwento"* and *Nakikilala ko nang husto ang mga tauhan sa kwento* both ranked 2.5 interpreted as *"Lubos na sumasang – ayon."* Results showed that the respondents enjoy listening to the story very well and get to know the characters of the story. The overall mean was 3.61 with an interpretation of *"Lubos na sumasang – ayon."*

According to a website entitled Stanford Storytelling: Why retention is higher through stories? revealed that the results of the study with the long-term recall had exceptionally different results. Two (2) professors in Stanford who are really fascinated about the stories and memories had created two groups, the first group was asked to memorize a list of words, all unrelated and all random. The second group was asked to do the same. But this group was asked to create a story that included all the words. The story

was their own to imagine using their unique and creative minds. But it had to include every word on the list. Both groups were asked to remember every word on one of the 12 lists. For those who memorized the words in list form, average recall was only 13%. For those who memorized the words in story form, average recall was 93%. Through stories, you'll find your memory capacity is far larger than you ever imagined.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Based on the results, the pupils' retention skills may be described based on the following:

   1.1 The pupils' retention before storytelling was conducted showed that the participants' performance during the pretest had the verbal interpretation of did not meet expectations.

   1.2 The pupils' retention after storytelling was conducted showed that the participants' performance had an improvement during the posttest that had the verbal interpretation of satisfactory.

2. There is a significant difference on the pre-test and post-test scores of pupils after storytelling has been conducted.

3. The perception of the respondents on the use of storytelling in improving their retention skills revealed that they strongly agreed that it helped them in understanding the moral lesson of the story, they find it more enjoyable listening to the story and recognize its characters better with the use of storytelling.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. Conduct more storytelling activities among pupils in the primary level to further sharpen their memories, improve their retention skills and gain interest in reading stories.

2. Teachers must provide a list of recommended stories that pupils can comprehend and give a showpiece of the whole process of storytelling task and check their progress.

3. The administration should consider acquiring additional interesting story books and big books in the library that the librarian or teacher may utilize in the conduct of storytelling.

4. Consider storytelling as one of the programs/activities in the library so that more pupils will visit the library to read and listen to stories.

5. Future researchers may conduct the study in a face-to-face set-up with the actual interaction among the students.

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